



# TEMPLE BETH EL BAR/BAT MITZVAH HANDBOOK



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[tbeboca.org](http://tbeboca.org)

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12-14

## TEMPLE BETH EL CLERGY AND STAFF

Rabbi Dan Levin   Rabbi Greg Weisman   Rabbi Laila Haas   Rabbi Ashira Boxman

Cantor Lori Brock   Michelle Cohen, Senior Cantorial Associate   Cantor Jake Harris

Heather Erez RJE, Director of Youth and Family Education and Engagement

Steve Kaufman, Executive Director

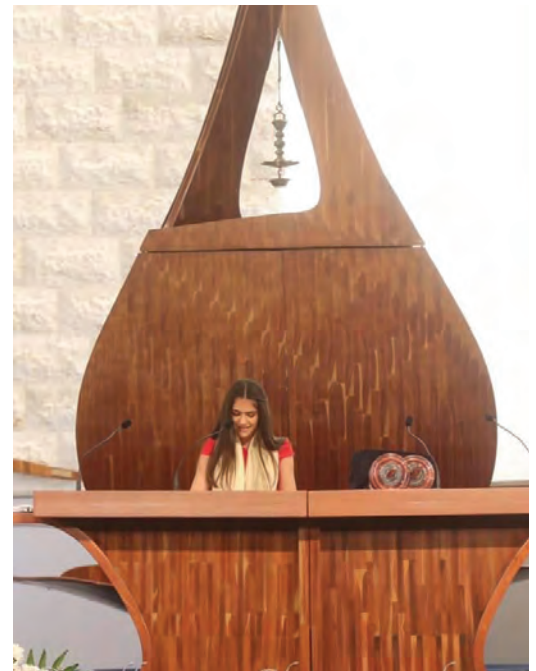
## INTRODUCTION

The celebration of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* marks the beginning of a young person's transition from childhood to adulthood in the Jewish tradition. It is a wonderful milestone and a memorable moment for family and friends to share. *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* asks a child to demonstrate their readiness to begin to take on adult responsibility, and that they have learned how the wisdom of our Jewish heritage is a tool to building a Jewish life. It is an occasion for celebration!

## HISTORY OF BAR/BAT MITZVAH

*Bar/Bat Mitzvah* literally means "Son/Daughter of Commandment." In earlier times, the term had legal weight, signifying that an individual would be held legally responsible for his/her actions. A boy was considered to be *Bar Mitzvah* upon reaching the age of thirteen. His father would be called to the bima at the service closest to his son's thirteenth birthday in which the Torah would be read, and he would recite a blessing thanking God that he was no longer legally responsible for his son's actions.

In later years, a thirteen year-old boy was supposed to have progressed to a point in his Jewish education where he was prepared to read from the Torah and know a good deal of *Mishnah* (Jewish knowledge.) Having understood the basics, the boy would be asked to show that he was ready to take the next step in his education by participating in a prayer service, reading from the Torah and *Haftarah*, and most importantly, giving a lesson or explanation of the weekly Torah portion called a *D'rash*. It became customary to celebrate at a *seudat mitzvah* or a celebratory meal that was in keeping with the spirit of the occasion.



## BAR/BAT MITZVAH AND REFORM JUDAISM

For many years, Reform congregations only celebrated Confirmation so that there would be equality between the participation of boys and girls. Later, the celebration of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* reemerged, and the requirements and participation of *B'nai Mitzvah* students vary from synagogue to synagogue.

*Bat Mitzvah* is a relatively new tradition – not more than seventy years old. It was introduced to emphasize the concept of equality of boys and girls in Jewish religious ritual and education. In most Reform congregations, the ceremony of *Bat Mitzvah* and the educational requirements are identical with those of *Bar Mitzvah*.

## BAR/BAT MITZVAH AT TEMPLE BETH EL

At Temple Beth El, the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* ceremony symbolizes the intellectual, emotional and moral passage from childhood to adolescence. The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is celebrated by participating in the Friday Evening, Shabbat Morning or *Havdalah* service. The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* ceremony demonstrates that the student has:

- \* Achieved an awareness and understanding of Judaism and basic Hebrew.
- \* Made a commitment to continue religious education through at least tenth grade and hopefully beyond.

**As a Reform Jew, a thirteen year old is obligated to continue to study his or her Jewish heritage and tradition.**



Families are encouraged to personalize the service by sharing individual talents and interests. Some ways could include playing musical instruments, singing additional songs, sharing creative writing, artwork etc.

## RELIGIOUS SCHOOL EDUCATION

We want our students to feel that one of the best parts of their childhood was being at Temple Beth El. Their closest friends were from classes and youth group, that they come back to our faculty and staff for advice and look to the adults in our community as role models. And that they love being Jewish, in their own authentic ways. To reach these goals, we need to expand our idea of what religious school is and remember that everyone connects and learns differently. We need to figure out how to be relevant and still hold on to our values and be ok with who we are.

Starting in Kindergarten our #OnwardHebrew program integrates Hebrew & prayer knowledge culminating in preparation for their *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Children learn Jewish traditions, values and holidays throughout.

Students who wish to have a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* at Temple Beth El are asked to be enrolled at least 2 years before their ceremony and throughout the school year of their ceremony date.

## POST BAR/BAT MITZVAH EDUCATION

At the age of thirteen, the student is just beginning to grasp the true importance and significance of Jewish teaching. Therefore, as a prerequisite for the celebration of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, an agreement is made by child and parent to continue learning through high school.

It is in this spirit that acquisition of Jewish knowledge begins with enrollment in religious school and continues through *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* and Confirmation, participation in high school and youth group activities, and carries on to adult learning and Jewish living within a congregation and community.



## 7TH GRADE: THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH YEAR

Most of our 7th graders are focusing and reflecting on their own experiences as they become *Bar /Bat Mitzvah*. They will be looking for personal meaning within the Jewish *mitzvot* and *middot* (commandments and values) while also turning their attentions outward as they find ways to give back to the community. As an independent focus, students will choose mitzvah projects that speak to their interests and schedule to make a difference (There is no additional *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* fee.)

The year includes:

- One-on-one *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Hebrew coaching
- Clergy meetings
- Approx. fifteen in-person Tuesday evening classes
- Approx. fifteen opportunities to relax in the Middle School Lounge on Tuesdays
- Individual Mitzvah projects



## TZEDAKAH CONTRIBUTIONS AT THE TIME OF BAR/BAT MITZVAH

At joyous occasions, and in the true tradition of our heritage and the custom of giving *Tzedakah*, you are encouraged to make a contribution to the synagogue or another community organization at the time of this *simcha*. You can create a lasting impact by dedicating a leaf on the Tree of Life, a brick on the walkway at Beck Family Campus, or you can choose from many other meaningful donations.

## TEMPLE BETH EL

**General Fund Donation**  
no minimum

**Beck Family Campus Walkway**  
\$100-\$1000 per brick

**Tree of Life**  
\$360 per leaf

**Yahrzeit Plaque**  
\$750 per plaque

**Named Endowment Fund**  
\$18,000

## OTHER JEWISH AGENCIES

**Jewish National Fund**  
\$10 per tree

**Mazon**  
National Jewish Food Bank  
recommends 3% of the cost of party

**ARZA**  
(Association of Reform Zionists of America.) \$5 Membership for students  
Includes personalized certificate

**Camp Jenny**  
NFTYSTR Mitzvah Corps bringing underprivileged children to URJ Camp Coleman

## LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

**Giving Tree**  
Collect holiday gifts and back to school supplies for local children

**Boca Helping Hands**  
Various options to assist local food insecure individuals and families

**Family Promise**  
Assisting local homeless families

**Sweet Dream Makers**  
Donations to purchase beds and bedding for children in need

**Get involved**  
Coach sports for special needs students, donate clothing, plan a tennis rally to raise money for a charity or volunteer at an organization that means something to you



# FAMILY CELEBRATION OF BAR/BAT MITZVAH

## THE SERVICE

### FRIDAY SHABBAT EVENING SERVICE

*Bar/Bat Mitzvah* families participate in the Shabbat Evening Service on the Friday evening prior to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* ceremony. You are encouraged to invite family and friends to join you for this beautiful service, where you will be seated on the Bima.

Friday Shabbat Evening Services begin at 7:30 pm except for the first Friday of the month when services begin at 6:00 pm. Please check the [tbeboca.org](http://tbeboca.org) calendar to confirm the service start time and any updated service start times.

### BAR/BAT MITZVAH SERVICE TIME OPTIONS

The Shabbat/Saturday Morning *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Service begins at either 9:00 am or 11:30 am.

The *Havdalah*/Saturday Evening *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Service begins at 6:00 pm.

Services begin promptly. Please phrase your invitation to ensure prompt arrival of your guests.

Please see page 12 for important information about catering and reserving space for parties.



## APPROPRIATE DRESS ON THE BIMA

The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* and family are expected to dress in a manner which reflects the sanctity and holiness of the sanctuary. **Formal evening wear is inappropriate at *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* services.** Families are invited to wear appropriate ritual attire, i.e. tallit, kippah.

## FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* family must be current in all of their financial obligations to the congregation, and remain so throughout the entire process, from the scheduling of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date, through Religious School, private instruction and culminating in the *simcha* of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Your cooperation is requested in order to avoid any embarrassment to either the Temple or yourself. Please contact the Temple if you have any questions or concerns regarding your financial obligations.

## ONEG SHABBAT

Annual tuition paid up until the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* year helps to offset the costs of the Oneg Shabbat, photographs for temple publicity, and individual *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* tutoring. If you start religious school later than the 3rd grade, a catch-up fee will be required when you save your *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date. Enhancements or additions to the celebration are often considered.

## SHABBAT EVENING - ONEG SHABBAT

The *oneg* included in your tuition includes assorted cookies and beverages. Many families choose to enhance the *oneg* with additional specialty items. For details and costs of the enhanced *oneg*, please contact Sharon Stern, at 561-391-8900 or [sstern@tbeboca.org](mailto:sstern@tbeboca.org).

## PARTICIPATION ON SHABBAT EVENING OF BAR/BAT MITZVAH

### FRIDAY EVENING

Please arrive at the Temple 30 minutes prior to the service and meet in the Mishpacha Room. *B'nai Mitzvah* students will be asked by the cantor to lead either the blessings over the candles or the Kiddush on Friday evening.



### PHOTOGRAPHS

To preserve the sanctity of the occasion, we ask that photographers position themselves in the back of the sanctuary and not move around during the service. Posed photographs are best taken either before or following the service or during the dress rehearsal. Please speak to the rabbi who is celebrating with you to determine the appropriate time for posed photographs. The Rabbis and the Cantor can be available for a staged photographs. Please schedule this photo session by calling the clergy office at 561-391-8900.

#### Important Notes:

- *Videographers must keep camera on a stationary tripod in the rear of the sanctuary – house left*
- *Still photographers should also inhabit the same area in the rear of the sanctuary – house left*
- *No flash*
- *Photographers are asked not to move during the service, but remain in the area in the rear of the sanctuary – house left*

Please notify the clergy office if the service will be recorded. The Temple will also broadcast the service on Livestream and the recording of the Livestream will be available for download following the service.

### PERSONALIZED BOOKLETS

Some families choose to personalize their *simcha* by creating a booklet used during the service. This booklet is optional and may include some or all of the following:

- Welcome letter from family
- Description of sanctuary symbols
- Explanation of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*
- List of *aliyot* and other honors
- Special readings

Sample booklets are available in the Religious School Office. The Rabbinic, Cantorial and Educational Staff is available to help you if you decide to create a booklet.

**ALL BOOKLETS MUST BE APPROVED BY THE EDUCATION OFFICE AT LEAST FOUR WEEKS PRIOR TO THE SERVICE.**

## BROTHERHOOD AND SISTERHOOD PRESENTERS

At the conclusion of the service, a member of Brotherhood and a member of Sisterhood will present a gift to each child. Should you desire to have a family member or close friend who is a member of Brotherhood/Sisterhood make the presentation, please let your officiating Rabbi know at the rehearsal.

## THROWING CANDY

Throwing candy is a custom that in recent years has been “borrowed” from wedding tradition. When the couple was called for a blessing upon their upcoming marriage, they were showered with candy to wish them years of sweetness together. It poses a safety hazard. **Please do not plan to throw candy during your celebration.**

## ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS AT FRIDAY & SATURDAY SERVICES

*B'nai Mitzvah* students and their parents are required to attend at least five (5) Shabbat Evening Services and five (5) Shabbat Morning or Saturday Evening *Mincha / Havdalah* services during the year prior to the scheduled *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Of course, we hope that you will attend much more than that and enjoy Shabbat and holidays as part of our Temple Beth El family.

## USHERING

**All *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* families are asked to usher at one Shabbat Evening Service.**

Our Shabbat Services schedule is as follows:

First Friday of the month	6:00 pm
All other Fridays of the month	7:30 pm

Please check the calendar for updated service times.

**All *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* families are asked to usher at one Shabbat Morning Service.**

It is important for you and your child to become familiar with the service, and serving as ushers gives you the chance to see what you will enjoy in the upcoming weeks. More importantly, it is a great *mitzvah* you perform for your fellow *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* family.

On the day of your *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, you will need other family ushers to direct your guests and keep order in the sanctuary. We also suggest that you appoint a few of your friends to sit among the children to promote proper conduct in the sanctuary. When you serve as ushers, it is necessary for both you and your child to stay for the entire service.

### **On Shabbat Evening:**

*Please arrive with your child 20 - 30 minutes before the service to welcome congregants at the front door of the Temple or at the sanctuary doors and distribute materials.*

### **On Shabbat Morning or Afternoon:**

*Families should arrive at the sanctuary entrance approximately 20 - 30 minutes prior to services to welcome congregants and distribute materials.*

# BAR/BAT MITZVAH PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS AND SCHEDULE

Families will be contacted by the religious school and clergy offices to schedule tutoring and clergy meetings. You are strongly encouraged to attend all of the appointments with your child, so that you will have a better understanding of the process and your child's progress, and you are able to lend support from home. Your child will be only as committed to his or her studies as you are.

**B'NAI MITZVAH ORIENTATION (6th Grade Students and parents required, held in the fall)** Clergy, educators, and families will meet together to discuss the importance of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* ceremony and its significance in the Jewish lifecycle. We will explore the what it's all about and creating a meaningful *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* experience, while covering foundational Jewish and textual topics, enhancing the meaning of this special day. *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* logistics such as picture taking, gifts, preparation etc. will also be addressed.

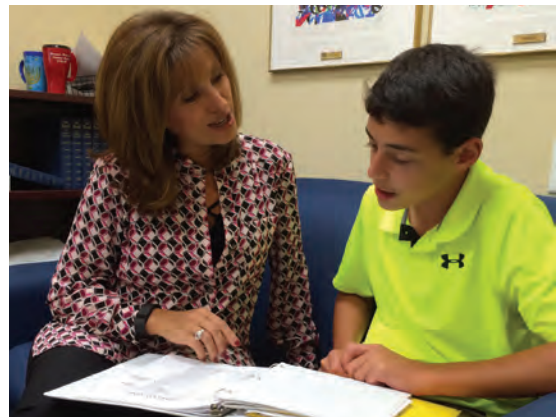
## BAR/BAT MITZVAH PREPARATION REQUIREMENTS

### INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION

About one year prior to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date, students begin instruction. Start times will be arranged with families and will take school breaks, vacations and camp into consideration.

### PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents are strongly encouraged to attend as many training sessions as possible to remain up to date on their child's progress. Your child will be only as committed to his or her studies as you are. The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Schedule, on the last page, will help you understand and participate in the process.



## PRIVATE INSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

### ONE SESSION - ONE HOUR

What's It All About? - Each family will spend time with the Rabbi who is conducting their service. It is an opportunity to get to know each other and discuss the meaning of this experience. At this time, the Rabbi will also discuss family participation in the service and other ways to make the service special.

### FOUR SESSIONS - 30 MINUTES EACH

Each student reviews the English translation of his/her Torah and *Haftarah* Portion. With parents, students and staff, the historical and/or ethical implication of the readings are discussed. Students are responsible for writing their own speeches, which include a summary, description and personal interpretation. At the end of the month, every student will leave with speeches in hand.

### APPROX. ONE YEAR PRIOR - 30 MINUTES

Students will review all of the Hebrew prayers in the service. Students will learn their Torah and *Haftarah* portion in Hebrew.

### 4-5 MONTHS PRIOR

Progress assessment with Cantorial Staff.

### EIGHT WEEKS PRIOR

Assessment with *B'nai Mitzvah* Faculty. Run through service including Hebrew, English, Torah, *Haftarah*, and speeches.

### FOUR TO SIX WEEKS PRIOR

Cantorial meeting to review details including honors, *aliyot*, and personalization of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* service.

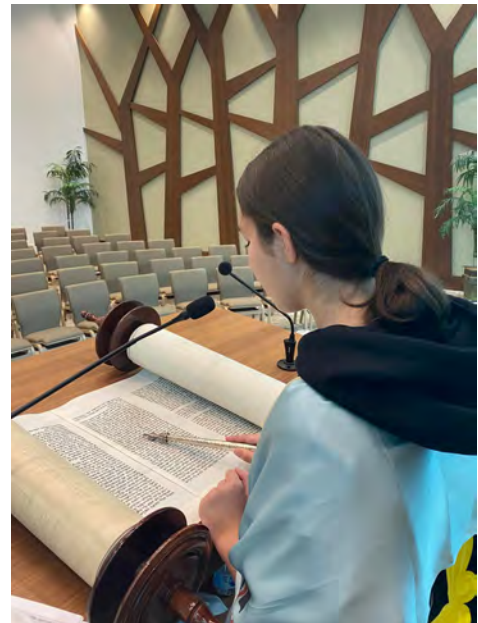
### THREE WEEKS PRIOR

### 2 SESSIONS - 1 HOUR EACH

Review and final preparation with Cantorial Staff.

### FINAL REHEARSAL

The Rabbi conducts a final rehearsal during the week prior to *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* with all family members who are involved in the service.



## BAR/BAT MITZVAH CATERING AT TEMPLE BETH EL

Many families choose to have their party, *Kiddush* lunch and/or Shabbat dinner right here at Temple. Not only is it a beautiful and festive setting, but allows you to entertain your guests in your own synagogue.



### ARTISAN FOODS IS THE TEMPLE'S IN-HOUSE CATERING PARTNER

Temple Beth El families have a special option for catered events which allows them to choose our in house catering partner- Artisan Foods Catering, Inc. OR rent the event space using the Artisan Foods supplied Facility Rental Agreement (FRA) and select one of the other Temple Beth El approved catering panel members. All information regarding these options can be obtained by contacting Artisan Foods Catering directly.

### SATURDAY EVENING HAVDALAH PARTIES

Many Beth El families choose a Saturday evening service (*Havdalah*) so they can begin their celebration party immediately after the service. If you select a Saturday evening *Havdalah* service, you are required to have your Saturday evening party at the Temple, using either Artisan Foods or one of the approved panel caterers (with a completed FRA). A "conditional hold" on your *Havdalah* ceremony date and the event facilities will be in place for a period of 5 months from the time of the initial date releases, done approximately 3 years in advance by the Religious School. **Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah service date will only become a firm reservation on the Temple's calendar once you provide the Temple with either a signed copy of your Facility Rental Agreement (FRA) from Artisan Foods or an Artisan Foods' catering contract.** For families that request a *Havdalah* date less than 3 years from the ceremony date, there will be a "conditional hold" for 30 days until either a Facility Rental Agreement (FRA) from Artisan Foods or an Artisan Foods' catering contract is signed. In either case, after the deadline threshold has passed, the "conditional hold" date will be dropped from the Temple calendar and those families will be asked to choose a new time and/or date if no agreement was signed. At that point, the Temple facilities are available for any client, including non-members, to book an event on that date. Later on, members will still have the ability to reserve the banquet facilities at the Temple by executing a Facility Rental Agreement (FRA) from Artisan Foods or an Artisan Foods' catering contract, so long as another event has not already booked on that date.

## BAR/BAT MITZVAH CATERING AT TEMPLE BETH EL

### SATURDAY MORNING BAR/BAT MITZVAH CEREMONIES AND PARTIES AT TEMPLE BETH EL

You may choose to have a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* ceremony in the morning and your party at Temple Beth El immediately after the service or that evening. An event immediately after the service in the morning is available on a first come, first served basis, since often there is more than one *Mitzvah* morning service. If there is no *Havdalah* ceremony on the evening of your morning service date and you prefer to have your party on that evening, you can do so provided there is no party or other event already scheduled. The ability to have the party in the evening is also on a first come, first served basis. There will be a 5-month "conditional hold" placed on the banquet rooms for either of the morning services to book for a party on a first come, first served basis. "Conditional holds" will only become a reservation in the Temple Calendar when a signed Facility Rental Agreement (FRA) from Artisan Foods or an Artisan Foods' catering contract is signed. If you receive or change your date less than 3 years before the *B'nai Mitzvah*, there will be a 30-day conditional hold before the date is open to others to book. That 30 day "conditional hold" will only become a reservation on the Temple calendar when a signed Facility Rental Agreement (FRA) from Artisan Foods or an Artisan Foods' catering contract is signed and submitted.



### KIDDUSH LUNCHEONS

Families that want a Kiddush luncheon will have the ability to reserve one of the two main banquet rooms (known as the Schmeir Family Center or social hall) beginning five months prior to the date of the event (based on availability and size of event). Congregants who want to lock in a Kiddush lunch date more than five months prior to the date of the event may do so, but they must agree to have the Kiddush lunch in an alternate space, allowing the Schmeir Family Center and social hall to be available for a major event. If ultimately a major event is not booked by five months out, then the Kiddush can be held in either the Schmeir Family Center or social hall (based on availability and size of event). Please note that restrictions may exist for a Kiddush lunch option if there is another *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* happening at the same time..

## FRIDAY EVENING SHABBAT DINNER

You and your child will be honored on the *bima* at the Schaefer Family Campus on the Friday evening before the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date by leading the Congregation in traditional Shabbat blessings. A wonderful way to begin your *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* weekend is to host a Shabbat dinner for your closest friends and family on that Friday evening before your big day. Artisan Foods, and Chez Gourmet are excellent choices for your Shabbat Dinner needs and we encourage you to contact each of them to learn about their diverse menu options and price points to fit your budget.



## BEAUTIFUL PARTY SPACES AT BOTH CAMPUSES

### SCHAEFER FAMILY CAMPUS

The Courtyard at the Schaefer Family Campus is now beautified with new landscaping, artificial turf and enhanced lighting to create a lovely outdoor space well suited for cocktail parties or outdoor luncheons. Renovated with a modern, neutral color palette and upgraded light fixtures, the Social Hall provides a gorgeous backdrop for any *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* theme and decor.

All *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* services will still occur at the Schaefer Family Campus.

### BECK FAMILY CAMPUS

A modern, beautiful 4,000 square foot reception hall with a full catering kitchen is available at the Beck Family Campus for *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* parties.

If you would like to speak with someone about the Temple's catering partnership with Artisan Foods, please contact Brad Friedman at [brad@artisanfoodsinc.com](mailto:brad@artisanfoodsinc.com) or 954-983-5338.

# BAR/BAT MITZVAH PREP OVERVIEW

## GROUP SESSIONS

In the fall of the 6th Grade year	B'nai Mitzvah Orientation	Rabbis, B'nai Mitzvah Staff, Executive Director, Director of Youth and Family Education and Engagement	Distribute BBM Manual, discuss importance of BBM ceremony, financial obligations, preparation process, personalizing the experience, mitzvah projects, etc.
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## PRIVATE SESSIONS

+/- 12 months prior	One-on-one sessions with Hebrew coach	Hebrew coach	Sessions to review and learn prayers, Torah and Haftarah portions and recognizing and reading Hebrew letters and vowels.
6½ months prior	Intake Meeting	Rabbi officiating at service	"What's it all about?" Get to know each other, discuss the importance of this experience. Discuss family participation, booklet, and mitzvah project.
First month ( <i>begins 6 months prior to date</i> )	Meetings for speech writing	Rabbis	Study Torah and Haftarah portions. Work on Torah & Haftarah speeches.
Before tutor begins Torah portion	30 minute session w/ Cantorial Staff	Cantorial Staff	Check prayers, introduce Torah chanting.
8 weeks before BBM	8-Week check in	B'nai Mitzvah Staff	Run through the service including Hebrew, English, Torah, Haftarah, and speeches.
4-6 weeks before BBM	Check-in and honors review	Cantorial Staff	Review honors, <i>aliyot</i> and personalization of service.
Last 3 weeks before BBM	2 rehearsal sessions	Cantorial Staff	Run through the service, "choreography," practice reading from Torah.
Week of BBM	Final Rehearsal	Rabbi officiating at service	Run through entire service with all family members involved in the service.

**Our Mission is to educate our children so that they grow to be literate and confident Jewish adults who find meaning in their identity and their tradition.**

