



## Becoming B'nei Mitzvah at Congregation Beth Am:

### A Guide for Parents



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Revised October 2013



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## Who to Contact at Congregation Beth Am

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As you begin your journey toward this milestone, we are providing this booklet as an aid to you. In it, you may find answers to many of your questions about the process of becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Beth Am. If you do not find answers to the questions you are asking, please feel free to contact us at any time with your questions. We are here to support you.

For questions regarding requirements or the  
B'nei Mitzvah process ..... **Cantor Lauren Bandman**  
cantor\_bandman@betham.org

For questions regarding Prayer Class assignments, parent responsibilities  
or general questions ..... **Alyssia Berkowitz**  
alyssia\_berkowitz@betham.org

For questions about scheduling appointments with  
clergy or tutors, reserving the Social Hall,  
luncheon or party set up ..... **Emily Osterman**  
eosterman@betham.org

For questions regarding payment of B'nei Mitzvah fees,  
school fees and dues ..... **Rachel Tasch**  
rtasch@betham.org

## Welcome to B'nei Mitzvah at Congregation Beth Am!

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B'nei Mitzvah is a Jewish rite of passage — a way to mark our children's progress on the path of life. As parents, our job is to guide our children toward becoming independent, contributing members of our congregation, the Jewish community and society as a whole. Through years of study at Beth Am, we try to instill in our children a sense of purpose, as well as a commitment to Judaism and to *tikkun olam*. By becoming B'nei Mitzvah, our young people demonstrate their ongoing commitment to both Jewish and universal values — values which include Jewish ritual practice, community prayer, education (both religious and secular), *tzedakah* and living a moral and ethical life.

Becoming B'nei Mitzvah at Congregation Beth Am involves a minimum of four years of study. Our children prepare to lead a congregational worship service and to chant from the Torah and Haftarah portions of the day. Our children also study Judaica, which aids them in their preparation for teaching the congregation a lesson based on their Torah and/or Haftarah portions. All of this study is important and necessary to successfully becoming B'nei Mitzvah.

Becoming B'nei Mitzvah is an important milestone in a young person's Jewish life. While it is a time of great excitement and joy, it can also be a time of some anxiety and self-doubt. The transition years from "tween" to "teen" are a time charged with great emotions. In addition to experiencing physical changes, young people begin to question authority and form opinions of their own. As all of this occurs they may ask questions about why they are engaging in the process of becoming B'nei Mitzvah. Occasionally, students convince themselves they are not capable of mastering the material, or that they are not up to the task in some other way. These self-doubts are not only natural but somewhat expected at this time in a young person's life. Remember that generations of our youth have asked these same questions and have, nonetheless, successfully and joyfully celebrated becoming B'nei Mitzvah.

At Congregation Beth Am we believe that every young person deserves the opportunity to celebrate becoming B'nei Mitzvah. We know that not all students learn the same way or have the same natural talents or abilities, and that they come from very different life experiences. We are committed to working with every student and to making this event a truly positive and enriching experience for every family. If you would like to discuss your child's special learning needs, please contact Cantor Lauren Bandman at (650) 493-4661.

\*Many of the Hebrew words in the document are defined in the Glossary on Page 64.

## Mission of Congregation Beth Am

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We strive to live as a **holy community** whose study and practice of Judaism inspires and challenges us to "**do justice, to love kindness and to walk humbly with our God**" (Micah 6:8).

## B'nei Mitzvah Program Goals

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Congregation Beth Am's B'nei Mitzvah program rests on three main pillars: (1) Jewish literacy and knowledge; (2) community; and (3) a sense of personal accomplishment.

Based on these three pillars, the B'nei Mitzvah program aims:

- To strengthen the student's familiarity with the Shabbat worship service and Hebrew liturgy. To that end, students should be able to:
  - Lead a portion of the service;
  - Chant Torah and Haftarah;
  - Put on a tallit and say the appropriate blessing;
  - Understand, discuss and teach his/her Torah or Haftarah portion;
  - Identify basic Hebrew words and easily decode Hebrew prayers.
- To create an ongoing sense of community at Beth Am for students and their families so that they can develop a deep and lasting connection with the synagogue, the staff and the Jewish people. This sense of belonging will lead to a desire to remain involved in their community and continue to participate in Jewish life after they become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- To enable students to work to their full potential, feel a sense of significant accomplishment, enhanced maturity and a sense of responsibility for one's self and others. As such, students will actively engage in *tikkun olam* as a way of demonstrating their acceptance of this responsibility.

## Requirements for Becoming B'nei Mitzvah at Congregation Beth Am

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Students become eligible for B'nei Mitzvah upon:

1. Reaching their 13<sup>th</sup> birthday (in either the Jewish or secular calendar).
2. Completion of four years of Hebrew in our Beit Midrash Hebrew program.
3. Continuous enrollment in one of our age-appropriate youth education programs for at least four consecutive years (this enrollment may start before Hebrew program but **must also** be concurrent with the years of Hebrew program attendance). In addition, attendance in one of our youth education programs is required for the entire school year in which a child becomes B'nei Mitzvah.

**Jewish Day School students** may waive our Hebrew and Judaica requirements, although we encourage youth education enrollment since attendance helps students make friends in the Beth Am community.

**For families new to the area**, enrollment in another accredited Hebrew and Judaica program (in another synagogue) for the requisite years will be accepted toward Beth Am's four-year requirement.

PLEASE NOTE

Students who become B'nei Mitzvah at Congregation Beth Am are strongly encouraged to continue their Jewish education here at least through Confirmation. Becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not a conclusion, but an important milestone on the Jewish journey of lifelong learning.

### Fees

To support the special instruction your child will receive throughout the B'nei Mitzvah preparation process, Congregation Beth Am assesses a B'nei Mitzvah fee to cover the costs of prayer classes and tutoring prior to beginning study with the Cantor/soloist and Rabbi. *Please be advised that the current fee is \$875.* This fee will be added to the statement you receive. The amount is to be paid in full when your child begins his or her training seven months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

### **Attendance and Practicing**

During the seven months of tutoring, we expect your child to be regularly practicing at home between tutoring appointments. We recommend practicing 30 minutes per day, six days per week. We also require 24 hour notice if you are going to miss a tutoring appointment or prayer class (last minute illness is an excused absence). Please keep your child home if s/he is sick. If either of these requirements are not met, you will be billed an additional fee for the missed appointment at the rate of \$30/half hour to cover the lost time of the tutor or prayer class teacher.

### **Publicity**

In general, Congregation Beth Am's privacy guidelines allow congregants' names and identifying information to be used only in internal communications. The photo and biographical information we request about each bar/bat mitzvah student are included in the monthly email sent to members but not in the Builder newsletter. However, it is our custom for b'nei mitzvah students and their parents to be listed in the "Mazel Tov" section of the *j. weekly* publication. If you would prefer that we not include your child's name in the *j. weekly*, please let Rachel Tasch know (at [publicity@betham.org](mailto:publicity@betham.org)) at least 6 months before the bar/bat mitzvah date.

### **A Note About Parking**

We understand that many times parents are stressed and rushed dropping their children off or picking them up for Prayer Classes, tutoring and other Beth Am programs. While it may be tempting to park in the Handicapped Parking next to the building, those spots ARE reserved for those who have mobility issues. We encourage parents to be mindful of the individuals who need these Handicapped Parking spaces. Also, for your information, the current fee charged for being ticketed by the Sheriff's Department for parking in a Handicapped zone is \$336.

## B'nei Mitzvah Expectations

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On the day of his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the student becomes the teacher as s/he stands on the *bimah* alongside the Rabbi and Cantor. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah will help the clergy lead the service, chant Torah and Haftarah and teach the congregation in his/her D'var Torah and/or D'var Haftarah. While every student is different, making each service is unique, students typically fulfill the following service components.

### **Service**

The B'nei Mitzvah will lead the prayers alongside his/her partner, the Cantor or Cantorial Soloist and the Rabbi.

### **Torah Reading**

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah student will read four aliyot of Torah. When there are two B'nei Mitzvah on the same Shabbat, a total of eight aliyot of Torah will be read, four for each family. Each *aliyah* normally consists of three verses of Torah, which means they will read a total of approximately 12 verses. Your family may designate people who will have an aliyah to recite the blessings over the Torah for three aliyot (you may invite any number of people per aliyah). The fourth aliyah is for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

The older of the two B'nei Mitzvah students will read Torah first, and the younger student will read Haftarah first.

If your son or daughter is becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah on a weekday, or on a Shabbat if there is no partner, there will be four aliyot of Torah read. Your family may designate people who will have an aliyah to recite the blessings over the Torah for three aliyot. The fourth aliyah is for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

### **Haftarah Reading**

Each Torah portion has a corresponding Haftarah portion (a reading from the Prophets). Each student will read approximately three verses. The younger student will read first and the older student will read second. The first reader will begin with the blessing before reading the Haftarah, and the second reader will conclude with the blessing after reading the Haftarah.

### **D'var Torah/Haftarah**

Each student will be given the opportunity to teach the congregation about the Torah or Haftarah portion. The student will work with his/her officiating Rabbi to find a meaningful connection between the portion and the student's life. Partnered students will decide together who will speak about the Torah and who will speak about the Haftarah. If needed, they will flip a coin.

## The Preparation Process

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### Securing a Date for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Ceremony

Approximately 24 months prior to your child's 13th birthday, you will receive a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date packet containing the following items:

1. A letter notifying you of your child's current eligibility for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. This letter will explain the complete process for securing a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.
2. A list of all students at Beth Am who are eligible to become B'nei Mitzvah in the same calendar month as your son or daughter. This list will include birthdates and phone numbers.
3. A form to fill out and return to us, letting us know your date preferences as well as an opportunity to request a specific partner for your child. You may find your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah partner or ask us to find one for you.
4. Instructions explaining how to fill out the forms and what happens after you have filled them out.

All children become B'nei Mitzvah in a congregational worship service — no service is a private event. Therefore, when two young people become B'nei Mitzvah together, the joy of our community is increased.

Once you have selected a date for the B'nei Mitzvah ceremony, the next step is the actual service preparation process. A great deal of preparation has already been done by your Bar/Bat Mitzvah-to-be in either their Day School or Beth Am's youth education programs. S/he probably already knows a great deal of the service and has some facility with the prayers s/he will be leading. The best way for your entire family to prepare for the B'nei Mitzvah ceremony is to attend services at Beth Am regularly. Through regular service attendance, your family will learn the prayers and the prayer melodies, and become familiar with the B'nei Mitzvah ceremony.

The final preparation process generally follows the timeline below.

### Seven Months Before

- Prayer Class - The first three months of the seven-month preparation process will be spent in a 12-session prayer class. For one hour each week, students will meet with a tutor in small groups (2 – 5 students) to learn the 30 prayers that each student leads.
- Family Meeting – Approximately five months before the B'nei Mitzvah ceremony, there will be a meeting with the Cantor for the student and parents to address any questions or concerns. This meeting also serves as an opportunity to check in about the process thus far and to look ahead for what to expect as the process continues. At this meeting Cantor Bandman will review general study and preparation guidelines for each Bar/Bat Mitzvah student.

### **Four Months Before**

- Individual Tutoring - Approximately four months before the ceremony, the student will begin weekly tutoring with a Beth Am B'nei Mitzvah tutor to learn the Torah and Haftarah portion that s/he will be chanting. These sessions are ten weeks of 30-minute one-on-one classes.

### **Six Weeks Before**

- Parent Meetings - During the last six weeks, parents will meet once with Cantor Bandman or Cantorial Soloist Heather Klein to discuss **honors** for your family and friends who will be called to the *bimah* during the service. Parents will also meet once with the officiating Rabbi to discuss the  **blessing** for their student. Each meeting is 30 minutes.
- Student Meetings - The student will meet weekly with Cantor Bandman or Cantorial Soloist Heather Klein and also with the officiating Rabbi. During this time, the student will polish his/her Torah and Haftarah portions and prayers with the Cantor. With the Rabbi, s/he will begin preparing the D'var Torah or D'var. Each meeting is 30 minutes, with the exception of longer *bimah* practices (see below).

*Bimah* Practices – During the last two weeks, students will meet in the Sanctuary on the *bimah* with Cantor Bandman or Cantorial Soloist Heather Klein and the student's partner (60 – 75-minute sessions) to become comfortable with the space, practice reading from the Torah scroll and gain comfort in singing with their partner while working through the entire service.

### **One Day Before**

- Family Practice – The Friday morning before the ceremony, the B'nei Mitzvah students and their parents practice on the *bimah* with the Cantor or Cantorial Soloist for a final rehearsal. This practice typically takes place from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. and is for the student and both parents (not the entire family).

### **The Friday Evening Before**

- The Friday evening immediately prior to the B'nei Mitzvah service, your family will participate in the Shabbat evening service by helping to lead the Shabbat candlelighting and kiddush. Our B'nei Mitzvah lead the chanting of the Friday evening Kiddush, v'ahavta and haMotzi.

### **The Day of the B'nei Mitzvah Ceremony**

Enjoy! 😊

**Note: See the Journey and Timeline at Appendix H.**

## Important Questions Regarding B'nei Mitzvah Preparation

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- **What if my child has special learning needs?**

If your child has special learning needs, please contact Cantor Bandman to discuss B'nei Mitzvah study arrangements. If your child is enrolled in our Hebrew program, Rabbi Jennifer Clayman should be made aware of your child's learning needs. She will accordingly plan that your child starts her/his B'nei Mitzvah studies earlier than seven months prior to her/his date. If you are not sure if your child should start learning earlier, please feel free to make an appointment with Rabbi Clayman so that she might evaluate your child's Hebrew progress. Cantor Bandman will decide with you the best starting date for your child. Special learning needs should not be a deterrent to your child's achieving this important Jewish milestone. At Beth Am we are committed to offering the opportunity to celebrate becoming B'nei Mitzvah to all of our children.

- **What if I want my child or my family to go out of town for several weeks during the seven months prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah?**

As you can appreciate, it is important that your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah study be a priority during the seven months prior to your date. When B'nei Mitzvah study is interrupted for two or more consecutive weeks, the study process may be seriously compromised adding unneeded stress for your child. This may mean modifying camp schedules, travel plans and family vacations. Please make a note of this and **do not schedule more than two weeks away from home** during the seven months prior to the B'nei Mitzvah ceremony.

If a student misses more than two consecutive weeks, please also note that there will be a charge, in addition to the B'nei Mitzvah fee, for each half-hour session to cover the extra tutor/teacher time.

- **What if my son or daughter could benefit from outside tutoring in addition to the tutoring s/he will receive at Beth Am? How will I know if this is the case?**

Sometimes, for a variety of reasons, students benefit from working with other tutors in our community in addition to Beth Am's B'nei Mitzvah tutors. If our Cantor, Cantorial Soloist or tutors believe that a student could use some extra help with structuring her/his study time, or with Hebrew, they will recommend extra tutoring to the student and to you. There are wonderful tutors in our community who can supplement the teaching a student is receiving from Beth Am tutors. A list of these teachers will be made available to you should the need for extra tutoring arise.

- **Can a B'nei Mitzvah student work only with tutors outside of Beth Am?**

B'nei Mitzvah students must work with Beth Am tutors and with Cantor Bandman or the Cantorial Soloist. This time spent together enables those of us at Beth Am to come to know our students as individuals. We value these relationships very highly and look forward to creating them. It is the time we spend with each individual student that enables us to personalize every B'nei Mitzvah experience.

## Parent Responsibilities at the B'nei Mitzvah Ceremony

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**Parent support is essential throughout the entire project. This includes encouraging daily practice sessions, timely arrival at sessions with the tutor or clergy and regularly attending Shabbat services. Reading sections of Jeff Salkin's book, *Putting God on the Guest List*, together as a family may be especially helpful.**

**Aliyah (Blessings recited before and after the Torah reading)** – On Shabbat, there will be eight aliyot of Torah read. An aliyah normally consists of three or more verses of Torah. Each B'nei Mitzvah reads four aliyot. Any number of people may be called up for an aliyah. Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family may choose people to recite the blessings for three aliyot. The third aliyah is usually given to the parents of the B'nei Mitzvah. **Please see Appendix C for the blessings, including transliteration.**

**Parents' Blessing** — Parents are given the opportunity to bless their child in front of the open Ark just before we take the Torah out and pass it through the generations to your B'nei Mitzvah. The blessing may be written by the parents. Your blessing should be spoken to your child in the presence of the Congregation. However, it is not a speech to the Congregation. This is a very powerful moment for your son or daughter. Please remember that at the celebrations surrounding the service, you will have ample opportunity to speak at length with, and about, your child. However, out of respect for the congregation and the integrity of the communal service, we ask that you keep your blessing to your child during the service brief (one paragraph, no more than half a page in length) and from the heart. **Please see Appendix A for examples.**

**Friday Night *Hors D'oeuvres*** — Every family is asked to provide the pre-service *hors d'oeuvres* before the Friday night service at 6:15 p.m. This is typically one large tray each: fruit, cheese cubes, veggies with dip and three boxes of crackers. We encourage you to discuss this and coordinate with your partner family when applicable.

**Kiddush Lunch following B'nei Mitzvah Service** – If you are providing a kiddush lunch following the service, we ask the B'nei Mitzvah families to include those attending from the congregation at large. Whether or not a Kiddush lunch is being provided, B'nei Mitzvah families also provide grape juice and a large (five pound) challah for the Saturday Kiddush.

**Assigning Honors to Friends and Family Members** – **Your** family has the opportunity to designate many of the people to be honored in the service during which your child will be called to the Torah for the first time. Each family meets with the Cantor or Cantorial Soloist to discuss these honors in the two-four weeks prior to the service, and then turns in the final honors form the Monday before the B'nei Mitzvah service. Beth Am uses the information to create a service program (the Shabbat Shalom handout) that is distributed at Friday night and Saturday morning services. **For detailed information, refer to Appendix B.**

## Ushering

### IMPORTANT

**To develop a greater sense of community in the B'nei Mitzvah class, Beth Am requests that your family usher for the B'nei Mitzvah Saturday morning service preceding the service when your child becomes Bar/Bat Mitzvah. It is often, but not always, the Saturday morning service preceding your date. We request that your entire immediate family come to the B'nei Mitzvah service for which you have been assigned to usher. You will be contacted by the B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator to give you the date when your family is to usher.**

Ushering duties include:

- Arrive 15 minutes before services begin in order to be in the foyer and greet people as they arrive. Please smile, and welcome everyone with "Shabbat Shalom" as you hand them a prayerbook. Remember that you will be the face of Beth Am that morning.
- If necessary, please remind the videographer and photographer to remain in the foyer during the service and to not block the center aisle. We do not allow flash photography at any time during worship at Beth Am.
- Please stay in the foyer for 15 minutes after the service has started in order to greet latecomers and show them where we are in the prayerbook.
- Please take your seats in the back row of the synagogue and be alert for young people and others who may be disruptive. Please separate large groupings of young people if necessary.
- If the service at which you are ushering is a single Bar/Bat Mitzvah, your family will be called forward for an ark opening toward the latter part of the service.

## Answers to Some Frequently Asked Questions

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- **What time do services begin?**

On Friday night, the service begins at 6:15 p.m. Your attendance at the Friday night service before your child's becoming a bar/bat mitzvah is required.

On Saturday or weekday mornings, the service begins at 10:30 a.m. At 10:15 a.m. your family — along with grandparents if you wish — will meet with the Rabbi in her/his office.

- **What photography or videography is allowed during the service?**

Photographs are not permitted during the service, except from the foyer. Flash photographs are not permitted at any time during the service and may not block the center aisle.

Videographers must also be in the foyer during the service (not blocking the center aisle).

- **Do we need to bring flowers for the bimah?**

Flowers are not required. However, you and your partner family may bring in a floral arrangement for the bimah if you choose. Any display or arrangement of flowers may not exceed three feet in height and four feet in width. We encourage families to use a bimah display that reflects their values — for instance, books to be donated to a school or canned goods to be donated to the hungry are also options for a bimah display.

- **What honors are available to my non-Jewish friends and family?**

There are honors in the service that may be offered to non-Jewish family members and friends, while other honors must be performed by Jews. Please see page 15 titled "Including and Honoring Non-Jewish Family and Friends" or speak with Cantor Bandman, Cantorial Soloist Heather Klein or Rabbis Marder, Prosnit, Rosenwasser or Weissman for details. You will have an opportunity to speak in depth about honors with your cantorial officiant in your honors meeting.

- **Does the student give a speech?**

B'nei Mitzvah do not give "thank you" speeches during the service. Instead, students will teach the congregation a lesson about their Torah and/or Haftarah portion, and will apply these lessons to our life today. We encourage students to offer their thanks to family members and friends at the party or reception following the service.

- **How is the service divided between two young people becoming B'nei Mitzvah?**

When two people become B'nei Mitzvah on the same day, they will lead most of the service together, joining with our clergy. Our goal is to engage the entire congregation in worship and song so the room is filled with the beautiful sound of voices lifted up together.

Some of the prayers are chanted responsively by the prayer leader and the congregation. These prayers will be divided between the two students becoming B'nei Mitzvah.

Each set of parents will have an opportunity to give a blessing to their son or daughter before the open Ark. We will then take two Torah scrolls out of the Ark and pass them through each family's generations to each B'nei Mitzvah. Each B'nei Mitzvah will carry a Torah around the sanctuary. We will read from one Torah.

The older of the two B'nei Mitzvah will have the honor of reading from the Torah first. The younger of the two will have the honor of reading Haftarah first.

Generally, one of the B'nei Mitzvah will give a D'var Torah and the other will deliver the D'var Haftarah. The assignment will be determined by either: 1) the students' preference, if they are in agreement; or by 2) the flip of a coin.

## **Including and Honoring Non-Jewish Family and Friends**

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It is the goal of our congregation to balance many aspects of kavod, that is, giving honor and respect, as we formulate the role of non-Jewish parent and family members in our congregational worship. The following considerations all play a role in guiding our thinking:

Judaism is both a universalistic and a particularistic faith tradition. While many of its central ideas are shared by the great faith traditions of the world, its prayers, its holy language and many of its practices are particularistic — unique to the Jewish people. These holy deeds are incumbent upon Jews as a way of life but are not binding on non-Jews.

Some of our words of prayer are particularistic. Certain prayers, such as the blessings before and after reading from the Torah, refer to the particular obligations Jews owe to God. Moreover, some actions also fall into this category (for example, lifting the Torah into the air, hagbahah). While those who are not Jews are welcome to say these blessings at home or along with the congregation, it is not considered fitting (as it is not their obligation) for them to lead the congregation in these blessings. Though the parallel is not perfect, a Christian or Buddhist or Muslim would not lead Jews in the performance of a mitzvah, just as a Jew would not lead a Christian in taking communion or lead the call to worship in a mosque.

On the other hand, certain prayers, such as “haMotzi,” do not contain these particularistic words. These prayers are appropriate for anyone to say. Moreover, there are other actions, such as opening the Ark or dressing the Torah, which may be performed by any person your family would like to honor.

You will have an opportunity to discuss your family’s honors in detail during your honors meeting with Cantor Lauren Bandman or Cantorial Soloist Heather Klein.

## Celebrations

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This section is devoted to helping you plan your celebration. We delight in celebrating when our sons and daughters reach this important milestone in their lives. The kind of celebration that is appropriate for your family can only be determined by you, your family and your partner family together. We offer here some thoughts, guidelines and practical information that can guide you through this process.

### **What Makes a Good Party?**

Think about all the parties you have ever been to in your life — the big and the small. What made the meaningful events meaningful? What was it that contributed to the dissatisfaction you experienced at other events?

Was it great to see Aunt Rose? How did it feel having all of your family together in one place at the same time? Did good friends bring special meaning to the event or to the day? Did watching Bubbe and Zeyde dance together “make” the party?

Was the music too loud? Could people who hadn’t seen each other in years actually carry on a conversation together? Were there too many distractions? When you wanted to talk to someone, were they always busy getting a henna tattoo or having their picture taken? Did you keep asking yourself, “Wow, I wonder what Herb (or Sally or Joe) spent on this?”

Some questions you will need to consider in planning your celebration are:

- Do you want to have a party, or would you rather take a trip to Israel, to Jewish New York or someplace else? Would your son or daughter enjoy going somewhere special with friends?
- Do you prefer a simple Oneg Shabbat, a buffet kiddush lunch or a more elaborate luncheon with assigned seating? Or are you more of the evening party type?
- Does your family do best at small gatherings? Or do you like big affairs?
- Does it make sense to have a buffet kiddush lunch and then have just a kids’ party later on?

Perhaps the most important questions to ask are:

- How can we celebrate in a meaningful way?
- How can we retain the religious and emotional significance of the event?
- Does our celebration express the values of community, family, caring and *tzedakah*?

## Invitations

Choosing invitations is one of the more fun activities associated with your celebration. There are myriad designs to choose from. Some things to consider as you look are:

- What kind of paper are the invitations printed on? Some companies use recycled paper, which may be a nice step toward the mitzvah of cherishing the earth's resources. You may wish to take this a step further and consider electronic invitations, eliminating the need for paper or stamps.
- Is there any Hebrew on the invitation? Does it look like it has something to do with B'nei Mitzvah?
- Can you print an especially meaningful line from your son's or daughter's Torah portion on the invitation?
- Have you used your son's or daughter's Hebrew name, as well as their English name?
- As you choose the wording, remember that someone "becomes" a Bar or Bat Mitzvah; they do not "have" a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. We therefore don't invite people to the Bar /Bat Mitzvah. Instead we invite them to the community service during which a young person "will celebrate becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah," or "will be called to the Torah as a Bar or Bat Mitzvah."

## Communicating Your Values and Project

Many Beth Am students and their families have sent additional notes with their invitations in order to communicate the Jewish values on which they wish to focus. These values have included expectations for dress and conduct during the worship service, Judaic information for non-Jewish guests (for further information, **see Appendix D "Information to Help Our Guests Understand and Share in the Service," Appendix E "What Non-Jews Need to Know,"** and suggestions for giving *tzedakah* in lieu of gifts. It might also be appropriate to mention your *tikkun olam* project and suggest ways of giving that reflect the focus of your project. For instance, if you helped out at the local Humane Society, you might suggest that guests give to the Humane Society or Israeli Guide Dogs for the Blind Society. If you helped serve food at a shelter, you might suggest that contributions be made in your honor to that shelter, or to Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger. See the following pages for Jewish giving suggestions. We encourage families to use a *bimah* display that reflects their values — for instance, books to be donated to a school or canned goods to be donated to the hungry.

Following are some examples of notices that students in our congregation have included in their invitations.

**In an enclosed, photocopied letter:**

Dear Friends and Family,

In thinking about what is important to me in becoming a Jewish adult, one of the things I feel is very important is giving to charities. *Tikkun olam*, which means "repairing the world," and *gimilut chasadim*, which means "acts of loving kindness," are Jewish values I think are very meaningful. I enjoyed working in a soup kitchen this year and hope to work with underprivileged preschoolers next year. I also enjoyed giving some of my allowance each Hanukah to various charities. Three organizations I especially want to help this year are described below.

[Jewish and non-Jewish giving suggestions were listed here,

with 3-5 sentences of description that the Bat Mitzvah wrote herself.]

So, if you are thinking of giving me a gift in honor of my Bat Mitzvah, I wanted you to know that I would greatly appreciate a contribution to one of these organizations.

Thanks and Love,

Rachel

**or enclosed as a card that matches the invitation:**

Dear Family and Friends,  
Your presence on July 14th is the only  
present I need! If you would like to do more,  
I would appreciate your contribution to the  
American Diabetes Association, American Heart  
Association, American Cancer Society, or a charity  
of your choice. See you soon!

Love,

David

**Budget**

Every family's celebration budget will be different. Important items to consider when putting your budget together include invitations, postage, food, music, flowers or other center pieces, photographer, videographer, site fees, decorations, entertainment and *tzedakah*. Including *tzedakah* in your celebration budget will ensure that you do not forget to plan for it. Beth Am encourages every family to make *tzedakah* a part of your celebration. There are many ways to do this. You might create centerpieces for your tables using toys or books or canned goods to donate. You might encourage guests to make a donation in lieu of a gift. You might make a donation to MAZON — A Jewish Response to Hunger — or some other organization. Be creative — there are so many opportunities for *tikkun olam* in this joyous occasion!

For more in-depth celebration planning, a good resource is *The Complete Bar/Bat Mitzvah Book* by Patti Moskowitz (much of the material in this section has been adapted from Patti's book).

## **Our Expectations**

Building friendship and community is a very important part of life at Beth Am. Toward this end, we encourage our young people to include their entire Hebrew program class at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration. No one likes to feel left out, and by encouraging students to reach out to one another, we fulfill the mitzvot of kindness and concern for others.

At Beth Am, the kiddush lunch immediately following the Shabbat morning service is open to everyone who joined the Shabbat service or Friendship Minyan, extending the joy of celebrating Shabbat together. By including the congregation, we avoid making any of our members feel unwelcome on Shabbat morning and build ties to the greater Beth Am community as well. In practice, families should expect and plan for approximately five - ten extra attendees at their luncheon.

## **Celebrating at Beth Am**

*(based on a policy approved by the Beth Am Board of Directors, September, 2012)*

The Beth Am Social Hall is our dedicated space for a kiddush luncheon following the Shabbat service, as well as afternoon celebrations. We encourage families to discuss their intentions for the Kiddush lunch as part of choosing a partner family/date. For partnered B'nei Mitzvah families, the kiddush lunch is a shared experience, unless one family prefers to go off-site for their luncheon. Typically, partnered families share the expenses of the kiddush lunch proportionate to their number of attendees. If partnered families both prefer to hold an afternoon celebration (typically more elaborate) instead of a kiddush lunch, they can share that celebration at Beth Am or elect to go off-site. Should a partner be assigned to an originally non-partnered family during the process, it is expected that the kiddush lunch becomes a shared experience. In cases where one family prefers a kiddush lunch and the other an afternoon celebration, preference toward using the Social Hall will go to the kiddush lunch.

For Saturday evening celebrations, as well as Shabbat dinners on Friday evenings, Beth Am usually has multiple spaces available for our congregants to rent. These spaces can include the Conference Room, Beit Kehillah and Social Hall.

There is a fee for use of the Social Hall as well as our other event spaces. Please contact Emily Osterman (eosterman@betham.org or (650) 493-4661) in the Beth Am office for our current fee schedule and to obtain a contract for your event. Additionally, our Executive Director, Rachel Tasch, is available as a resource for families who would like to discuss the planning process in general.

**For more information and for a description of our use policies and house rules, please see Appendix F: Use of Synagogue Facilities for your Celebration.**

## APPENDIX A

### **Examples of Service Honors Assignments and Original Parents' Prayers**

## Examples of Service Honor Assignments

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1. On Shabbat, there will be eight aliyot of Torah read. An aliyah typically consists of three verses of Torah. Any number of people may be called up for an aliyah (Torah blessing). Each B'nei Mitzvah family may choose "blessers" for three aliyot. The third aliyah is usually given to the parents of the Bat/Bar Mitzvah.
2. The family of the B'nei Mitzvah who reads the first three aliyot may offer friends and family the honors of opening the Ark and lifting and dressing the Torah once in the service. The family of the B'nei Mitzvah who reads the second four aliyot may offer family and friends the honors of opening and closing the Ark twice in the service. Each family may also designate a member of Beth Am Women to present the kiddush cup to the B'nei Mitzvah following the service, and any number of family and/or friends to lead the haMotzi.
3. The two B'nei Mitzvah will lead many of the prayers together; some will be divided between the two.
4. Two Torah scrolls will be passed "from generation to generation" (one for each family, and each Bar/Bat Mitzvah will carry a scroll through the congregation).

### Parents' Blessings for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Before passing the Torah to your son or daughter, at the beginning of the Torah service, you will have the opportunity to offer your personal words of blessing in front of the Aron HaKodesh (Holy Ark). We encourage parents to write a joint blessing up to half a page in length. Either one or both parents may speak.

This is a time to reflect, with love and pride, on the significance of this sacred moment, its meaning for your family, and your hopes for the future. You may find it helpful to refer to the sample parents' prayers below when composing your own blessing; or feel free to use one of the texts below in lieu of creating your own.

In the weeks leading up to the service in which your child will be called to the Torah, your family will meet with the Rabbi who will be officiating at the service. Please bring a draft of the blessing with you to that meeting.

#### Prayer #1

Into our hands, O God, You have placed Your Torah, to be held high by parents and children and taught by one generation to the next. Whatever has befallen us, our people have remained steadfast in loyalty to the Torah. It was carried into exile in the arms of parents that their children might not be deprived of their birthright.

And now I pray that you, . . . . ., will always be worthy of this inheritance. Take its teaching into your heart, and in turn pass it on to your children and those who come after you. May you be a faithful Jew, searching for wisdom and truth, working for justice and peace. Thus will you be among those who labor to bring nearer the day when God shall be One and God's name shall be One.

**Prayer #2: What I Wish For My Daughter/Son  
I Wish For All Our Children.**

I wish for you to be a  
person of character  
strong but not tough,  
gentle but not weak.

I wish for you to be  
righteous but not self-righteous  
honest but not unforgiving.

Wherever you journey, may your steps be firm  
and may you walk in just paths  
and not be afraid.

Whenever you speak, may your words  
be words of wisdom and friendship.

May your hands build  
and your heart preserve what is good  
and beautiful in our world.

May the voices of the generations of our people  
move through you  
and may the God of our ancestors  
be your God as well.

May you know that there is a people,  
a rich heritage, to which you belong  
and from that sacred place  
you are connected to all who dwell on the earth.

May the stories of our people  
be upon your heart  
and the grace of the Torah rhythm  
dance in your soul.

—*Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso*

**Prayer #3**

May your eyes shine with the light of Torah,  
May your face be radiant as the brightness of the sky.  
May your lips speak words of wisdom.  
And may the world you live in be the world of your dreams.

May you see your world created in your lifetime  
May you see your visions come to be.  
May your hope touch every generation to come  
These are the prayers we have for you.

May you be blessed with understanding,  
With wisdom and compassion in your heart.  
May your tongue be filled with song,  
And your lips sing out for justice.  
These are the prayers we have for you.

*(Words by Debbie Friedman, based on Talmud Berachot 17a)*

## Original Parents' Prayers

### A Blessing for Michael

**Lynn:** Michael, as you will learn, every child born into a family is a special treasure. Today we treasure and honor and bless you. Most often we share these thoughts with you privately. However, our tradition gives us a special day to proclaim our love for you and honor and bless you in a very public way. Today is that day.

**Rich:** Watching you grow up has been an awesome experience. We are excited and humbled to reach this milestone in your life's journey – the day of your Bar Mitzvah celebration. We are proud of you for taking the responsibility to prepare yourself for this day.

**Lynn:** Your family, friends and the Beth Am community have gathered together to help you celebrate the first time you will be Called to the Torah. This is their gift to you.

By your willingness to share this day with the community, you have brought together family from all over the country to meet, become reacquainted and celebrate with you. And this is your gift to them.

Today is a joyous day.

**Rich:** Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, a famous 18th century Chasidic Rabbi who emphasized living life with joy and happiness, tells us "the entire world is a very narrow bridge and the main thing is crossing it without fear."

As you walk along this narrow bridge, we pray that you will be strong in spirit and character.

That you will be a good friend.

That you will find a path in life that brings you joy and satisfaction.

And that you will seldom be afraid.

We love you very much.

## **Blessing for Jessica**

**Tim:** Jessica, Judaism has a rich tradition of blessings. We have blessings for almost every aspect of life, blessings for special days, for ordinary days, for healing a broken heart, for celebrating the birth of a child. We have borrowed from blessings of our tradition to convey our most heartfelt feelings and wishes for you. We offer these blessings to you on our own behalf, and on behalf of our entire community, which is so richly represented today from across the country and beyond. You can be sure that this community, your community will always be there for you in love and support.

**Chris:** You have been a remarkable blessing for us. Your kind, caring, creative, compassionate, passionate and joyful way is your wonderful gift to all those you encounter and therefore you will be a blessing in this world.

**Tim:** As you grow into a woman, may you continue to grow as a woman of worth; using language of compassion, reaching out to those in need, using words of wisdom, remembering laughter and instilling trust in everyone you meet.

**Chris:** May God grant you a long life,  
A life filled with friends and family  
Love and laughter

**Tim:** A life of blessing and of peace  
Of prosperity and of health

**Chris:** A life of *Tzedekah* and goodness  
A life lived without shame

**Tim:** A life rich and honest  
A life filled with the blessings of the Torah

**Together:** May your eyes shine with the light of Torah and your face reflect the brightness of the heavens.

**Chris:** May God make you grow like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah,

**Tim:** May God bless you and help you see all the blessings in your life.

**Chris:** May you feel God's presence near you at all times.

**Tim:** May God give you peace and help you to bring peace to your own soul, to your family and to all the world.

**Together:** May this be your blessing, Amen.

## APPENDIX B

**Instructions for Honors Sheet  
for B'nei Mitzvah Parents  
and  
Honors Worksheets**

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## Instructions for “Honors Sheet for B’nei Mitzvah Parents”

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**Friday night** - There is a short English reading before the candle lighting, generally led by the mothers of our B’nei Mitzvah. After the candles are lit, we will chant the candle blessing as a community. Our B’nei Mitzvah students will lead Kiddush. There is an English reading prior to Kiddush led by the fathers of our B’nei Mitzvah.

### For All Services

**Aliyot to the Torah** - The information required includes the English name and the Hebrew name and the relationship with the child. **Both men and women are asked to wear a tallit when called for an *aliyah* at Beth Am. Tallitot are available at the entrance to the Sanctuary.**

#### PLEASE NOTE

**For every person called to an Aliyah, we need a complete Hebrew name, i.e., *Rivka* (student’s name) *bat Avraham* (father’s name) *v’Sarah* (mother’s name).**

One parent’s name is sufficient. For example, Shmuel ben Rachel, or Leah bat Mordechai.

**Open the Ark - P’ticha** - People who have aliyot to open the Ark will be called up to the *bimah* by their English names.

**Lift and dress the Sefer Torah - Hagbahah and G’lilah** - The person lifting the Torah needs to have some degree of upper body strength and a good amount of confidence. If s/he has never before lifted a Torah, s/he can step into their local synagogue to ask or we can teach her/him how to do this. The Torah dressers will be assisted by the Rabbi during the service. All of these people will be called up to the *bimah* by their English names.

**Presenter of the Mezuzah** - A member of Beth Am Men (BAM) will give a gift of a mezuzah to each child who is becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah. All adult male members of Beth Am are eligible to present the mezuzah.

**Presenter of the Kiddush Cup - This person should be a member of Congregation Beth Am as well as a member of Beth Am Women (Sisterhood).** If none of your guests qualifies, the synagogue Board member sitting on the *bimah* that day, or the Rabbi or Cantor, can make the presentation, which customarily takes place at the end of the service.

**The *haMotzi*** - is often recited by young relatives, but it can be recited by anyone you choose to honor by involving them in this way.



## HONORS SHEET FOR NON-PARTNERED B'NEI MITZVAH

\*\* Only English names are needed unless otherwise indicated. Please write the names as you would like to see them printed in the Shabbat Shalom handout. **If individuals sharing an honor are married or partners, use the "&" between names. Otherwise, use a comma between names.\*\***

### **FRIDAY EVENING**

#### **Candle Lighting**

*Traditionally, the mother of the student (and the student if she is a girl) along with other close female family members (if you wish) lead the candle lighting.*

### **SATURDAY MORNING**

#### **Passing the Torah**

*The Torah is passed from Grandparents (if present at the service) to the Parents to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.*

**P'ticha** (opening and closing the Ark)

*One opening, 1, 2 or 3 people. If individuals are married, please use the "&" between names.*

#### **Aliyot to the Torah**

*Please note that in order to come up to the bimah for an Aliyah, the honoree must be a Jewish adult (13 years of age or older **and** Jewish) because the language of the blessing identifies one as such.*

<b>ENGLISH NAME</b> <i>**If individuals sharing an honor are married or partners, put an "&amp;" after the first name and put the other name on the next line.**</i>	<b>HEBREW NAME - example</b> <b>Rivka bat Avraham vSarah</b> <b>Name    Father    Mother</b>
1.	
2.	

<b>3. Parents/Guardians</b>	
<b>Special Blessing, if applicable</b>	
<b>4. Bar/Bat Mitzvah</b>	

*\*\*For additional names, please include them in the notes section at the bottom of this form and indicate while aliyah they are for.*

**Lift and dress the Torah**

- Lifter (*Hagbah*)

*1 person. Must be a Jewish adult (13 years of age or older and Jewish).*

- Dresser(s) (*G'lilah*)

*1 or 2 people.*

**Presentation by Beth Am Men**

*Presenter can be any male member of Congregation Beth Am.*

**Presentation by Beth Am Women**

*Presenter must be a member of Congregation Beth Am and a member of Beth Am Women.*

**Motzi**

*Blessing recited over the challah.*

**Notes**

*Please include any additional information here.*



## HONORS SHEET FOR PARTNERED B'NEI MITZVAH – FIRST TORAH READER

\*\* Only English names are needed unless otherwise indicated. Please write the names as you would like to see them printed in the Shabbat Shalom handout. **If individuals sharing an honor are married or partners, use the "&" between names. Otherwise, use a comma between names.** \*\*

### FRIDAY EVENING

#### **Candle Lighting**

*Traditionally, the mother of the student (and the student if she is a girl) along with other close female family members (if you wish) lead the candle lighting.*

### SATURDAY MORNING

#### **Passing the Torah**

*The Torah is passed from Grandparents (if present at the service) to Parents to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.*

**(First) P'ticha** (opening and closing the Ark)

*1, 2 or 3 people can participate.*

#### **Aliyot to the Torah**

*Please note that in order to come up to the bimah for an Aliyah, the honoree must be a Jewish adult (13 years of age or older **and** Jewish) because the language of the blessing identifies one as such.*

<b>ENGLISH NAME</b> <i>**If individuals sharing an honor are married or partners, put an "&amp;" after the first name and put the other name on the next line.**</i>	<b>HEBREW NAME - Example</b> Rivka bat Avraham v'Sarah <b>Name      Father      Mother</b>
1.	

<b>3. Parents/Guardians</b>	
<b>Special Blessing, if applicable</b>	
<b>4. Bar/Bat Mitzvah</b>	

*\*\*For additional names, please include them in the notes section at the bottom of this form and indicate while aliyah they are for.*

**Lift and dress the Torah**

- Lifter (*Hagbah*)  
1 person. Must be a Jewish adult (13 years of age or older **and** Jewish).
  
- Dresser(s) (*G'lilah*)  
1 or 2 people.

**Presentation by Beth Am Men**

*Presenter can be any male member of Congregation Beth Am.*

**Presentation by Beth Am Women**

*Presenter must be a member of Congregation Beth Am and a member of Beth Am Women.*

**Motzi**

*Blessing recited over the challah.*

**Notes**

*Please include any additional information here.*



## HONORS SHEET FOR PARTNERED B'NEI MITZVAH – SECOND TORAH READER

\*\* English names are needed unless otherwise indicated. Please write the names as you would like to see them printed in the Shabbat Shalom handout. **If individuals sharing an honor are married or partners, use the "&" between names. Otherwise, use a comma between names.**\*\*

### **FRIDAY EVENING**

#### **Candle Lighting**

*Traditionally, the mother of the student (and the student if it is a girl) along with other close female family members (if you wish) lead the candle lighting.*

### **SATURDAY MORNING**

#### **Passing the Torah**

*The Torah is passed from Grandparents (if present at the service) to Parents to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.*

**(Second) P'ticha** (opening and closing the Ark)

*1, 2 or 3 people can participate.*

#### **Aliyot to the Torah**

*Please note that in order to come up to the bimah for an Aliyah, the honoree must be a Jewish adult (13 years of age or older **and** Jewish) because the language of the blessing identifies one as such.*

<b>ENGLISH NAME</b> <i>**If individuals sharing an honor are married or partners, put an "&amp;" after the first name and put the other name on the next line.**</i>	<b>HEBREW NAME - Example</b> <b>Rivka bat Avraham vSarah</b> <b>Name    Father    Mother</b>
5.	
6.	

<b>7. Parents/Guardians</b>	
<b>Special Blessing, if applicable</b>	
<b>8. Bar/Bat Mitzvah</b>	

*\*\*For additional names, please include them in the notes section at the bottom of this form and indicate while aliyah they are for.*

**(Third) P'ticha** (opening and closing the Ark)  
*1,2 or 3 people can participate.*

**Presentation by Beth Am Men**  
*Presenter can be any male member of Congregation Beth Am.*

**Presentation by Beth Am Women**  
*Presenter must be a member of Congregation Beth Am AND a member of Beth Am Women.*

**Motzi**  
*Blessing recited over the challah.*

**Notes**  
*Please include any additional information here.*

## APPENDIX C

### **Torah Blessings**

## Being Called to the Torah - עליה לתורה

You are being called for the **Honor of Blessing the Torah**.

The Torah service begins about midway through the service. After the Torah has been removed from the Ark, brought forward and unrolled on the center table of the *bimah* (the raised pulpit area), the Rabbi will speak briefly to the Congregation. The Cantor will then call the people forward in turn. The Rabbi will announce each person's English name. When the Rabbi calls your name, please come forward promptly, approaching the *bimah* on the Rabbi's side. Take your place next to the person reading the Torah on his/her right hand side.

Both men and women are strongly encouraged to wear a *tallit* (prayer shawl) when called for an *aliyah* at Beth Am (*tallitot* are available at the entrance to the Sanctuary). If you wear a *tallit*, you may wish to follow the traditional practice of touching the open Torah (at the place where the reader will be reading) with one of the *tzitzit* (the fringes at the corners of the *tallit*), then kissing the fringe. The Blessings are then recited while holding on to one of both wooden handles of the Torah.

You need not bring a copy of the Blessings up to the *Bimah* with you as there is a copy of the prayer on the table in large type, in both Hebrew and transliteration. However, if you are more comfortable doing so, you certainly may.

We **strongly** encourage those who do not recite the Blessings regularly to practice them ahead of time in order to reduce anxiety and nervousness. Feel free to ask a friend, a family member, one of the Rabbis or the Cantor for a refresher on the words or melody.

When you finish the blessing after the reading, please shake hands with the Rabbi, then move to stand next to the Cantor. Remain there until the next person completes the blessings and comes to that spot. Shake hands with that person and return to your seat unless you have the final *aliyah*. In that case, please remain where you are until the Torah and its decorations have been carried away. Then return to your seat.

*Mazal tov* and thank you for helping make the service a beautiful and meaningful one.

### **How to Learn the Melody to Chant the Torah Blessings on the Beth Am Website**

<http://www.betham.org/worship/prayers-blessings>

- Scroll to bottom to "Blessing before reading from the Torah" and "Blessings after reading from the Torah"

### **Special Blessing for Non-Jewish Parent**

As explained on page 15, it is not fitting for non-Jewish participants to chant the Torah blessings. For this reason, a non-Jewish parents may recite a special blessing which can be found at the end of the next section, ALIYAH LA TORAH.

ALIYAH LA-TORAH

עלייה לתורה

Each person called up to the reading of the Torah touches it with tzitzit (the fringes of the tallit), kisses the tzitzit, holds the handles of the Torah and says:

**Blessing Before the Reading:**

←Reader בְּרַחוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְּבֹרָךְ:

← Congregation בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

← Reader בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבֹרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ:  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה:

Reader: *Ba-r'chu et Adonai ha-me-vo-rach!*

Congregation: *Ba-ruch Adonai ha-me-vo-rach l'o-lam va-ed.*

Reader: *Ba-ruch Adonai ha-me-vo-rach l'o-lam va-ed.  
Ba-ruch a-ta Adonai, Eloheinu meh-lech ha-o-lam, a-sher  
ba-char ba-nu mi-kol ha-a-mim,  
v'na-tan la-nu et to-ra-to.  
Ba-ruch a-ta A-do-nai, no-tein ha-to-rah!*

Praise Adonai, to whom our praise is due!  
Praised be Adonai, to whom our praise is due, now and forever!  
Blessed are You, Eternal One, our God, who has chosen us from all peoples  
by giving us the Torah. Blessed are You, Adonai, Giver of the Torah.

**Blessing After the Reading:**

← Reader בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת, וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכֵנוּ:  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה:

Reader: *Ba-ruch ata Adonai, Eloheinu meh-lech ha-o-lam,  
a-sher na-tan la-nu to-rat eh-met, v'cha-yei o-lam na-ta b'to-chei-nu.  
Ba-ruch ata Adonai, no-tein ha-to-ra.*

Blessed are You, Eternal One, our God, Sovereign of the world, who has given  
us a Torah of truth, and planted in our midst eternal life. Blessed are You,  
Eternal One, who gives the Torah.

**Special Blessing Made by Non-Jewish Parent During Torah Service**

Before the Jewish parent's Torah Blessing, recite:

Blessed are You, Holy One of Being:  
May the words of Torah be sweet to us and to our offspring,  
May the values of Torah be inscribed in our hearts.  
We praise you, Holy One, Giver of Torah.

After the Jewish parent's Torah Blessing, recite:

Blessed are You, Holy One of Being,  
Who has given a Torah of Truth  
Who has given eternal life and light  
Blessed are You, Eternal One, Giver of Torah.

## APPENDIX D

### **Information to Help Our Guests Understand and Share in the Service**

## Information to Help Our Guests Understand and Share in the Service

(Please feel free to copy and mail to invited guests)

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We are delighted that you will be with us to share our joy on this special day.

We appreciate that the service at Congregation Beth Am may be unfamiliar to you, and have provided the information below to help add to your understanding and enjoyment.

The Congregation Beth Am, which means “House of the People” in Hebrew, was designed to resemble the tent of the patriarch Abraham, which was open on all sides so as to welcome strangers and guests. Our sanctuary is surrounded by glass to convey this same sense of inclusion and openness. Services are led from the *Bimah* (pulpit) at the front of the sanctuary. On the eastern wall of the *Bimah* (facing Jerusalem) is the Holy Ark, which contains the Torah.

Above the Ark is a small light, called the Ner Tamid (Eternal Light), which reminds us of God’s constant presence in our midst.

### **The Torah**

The Torah is the sacred scroll, hand-inscribed in Hebrew, with the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). Our Ark contains several scrolls, each with the same text. It is considered a mitzvah (commandment) to have more than one Torah scroll. Whenever the Ark is opened or the Torah is lifted, the congregation rises to show respect for our holy teachings. It is a special honor to be invited to open and close the Ark during the service.

### **Dress and Decorum**

You may notice that some people in the congregation have their heads covered with a *kippah* (Hebrew for skullcap; also called a *Yarmulke* in Yiddish). Wearing a *kippah* is not required. It is a sign of reverence, indicating our awareness that there is One who is above us. Some adult Jewish worshippers also wear a *tallit* (prayer shawl). The fringes (*tzitzit*) of the prayer shawl remind us of the mitzvot (commandments) in the Torah.

Some of you have asked about the dress code. Dress as you would for any special occasion, and be mindful of the holiness of the place — boys should wear a jacket or a nice sweater, no T-shirts or jeans please, and girls should wear skirts, dresses or a nice pantsuit (no very short skirts or bare shoulders). Please be aware, as well, that loud talking, giggling and gum chewing are inappropriate in our sanctuary. **We ask that you turn off all cell phones so as not to disturb the service.**

## The Service

Our Shabbat worship service is a joyous and peaceful celebration of the seventh day. It takes place every Saturday morning, whether or not a young person is becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah that day. Jewish worship in a Reform synagogue is expressed through songs and prayers, some ancient and some contemporary, in both Hebrew and English.

You will pick up our Siddur (prayerbook) in the foyer on your way into the sanctuary. It opens from right to left, as Hebrew is written. Our Siddur explains the reasons and history behind many of the prayers. It also prompts you, explaining when to sit, stand, etc. (be sure to read the text insertions in "boxes" for these commentaries and explanations).

The service is highly participatory — the congregation is meant to be actively involved rather than silent spectators. Be sure to use the prayerbook, and to join in as much as you can. If you arrive a few moments early, take a moment to look through the Siddur to acquaint yourself with the service. Many of the prayers and songs appear in Hebrew, English and transliteration (the English phonetic version of the Hebrew). So even if you do not know Hebrew, you can say the Hebrew words by sounding out the transliteration.

**About Children** - The service will last about two hours, depending on whether there are special events taking place that day (a baby naming, prayer for a new month, a blessing for a couple who are about to be married, special prayers for a festival, etc.). The service may be a bit long for youngsters. Folks with children usually sit at the back or sides of the sanctuary, so they can get outside easily if they wish. Feel free to take your child out to the playground or elsewhere in the building if he or she becomes restless.

## Structure of the Service

A Jewish worship service is a collection or set of prayers grouped into major sections. These headings are indicated in the prayerbook.

It's the Sabbath - the day of rest and refreshment of the soul. Our service opens with song, followed by some study, psalms of praise and blessings that remind us of the miracles of daily life.

**Friday Night** - Our Friday night service begins with the lighting of the Shabbat candles. The mothers of our B'nei Mitzvah have the honor of lighting the Shabbat candles. The Friday night kiddish will be chanted by the B'nei Mitzvah, preceded by an English reading led by their fathers.

**The Call to Worship** - The service officially begins with the chanting of Bar'chu ("Let us Praise"). It is a "call and response" prayer. The Cantor or Cantorial Soloist invites the congregation to praise God, and the congregation responds, while bowing, then stands straight. This gesture is an expression of humility in the presence of God. The Translated Prayer: "Praised be the Holy One, the Infinite, now and forever!"

**The Sh'ma and its Blessings** - The Call to Worship is followed by a blessing that acknowledges God as creator of the universe (Yotzeir Or, "The One Who Creates Light" in the morning service, or Ma'ariv Aravim, "The One

Who Brings On The Evening” in the evening service), and a second blessing that thanks God for showing love to the Jewish people through the gift of Torah (Ahavah Rabbah, “With Great Love” in the morning service, or Ahavat Olam, “Eternal Love” in the evening service). These blessings lead into the Sh’ma, the central affirmation of Jewish faith, taken from our Torah - Deuteronomy 6:4–9.

The words of the Sh’ma are the last words that an observant Jew says at night, and the last words spoken before dying. It states the Jewish belief that God is singular and unique, and proclaims our duty to love, study and teach God’s word. Translation: “Hear, O Israel, the Eternal is our God; the Eternal is One.” You may notice that some people close or cover their eyes while reciting the Sh’ma. This custom helps us shut out external distractions and focus on the meaning of the words.

Following the Sh’ma is the Ge’ulah (Redemption) prayer, which recalls the Israelites’ exodus from Egypt and thanks God for helping us survive other dark times in our personal and national life.

**The Amidah** - The Standing Prayer is said standing, facing east, towards Jerusalem. It is a central section of our liturgy, evoking what the Jewish people need: to be linked to our ancestors; to believe that there is a reality which transcends the grave; to feel part of God’s holiness; to open our heart with sincerity to God; to give thanks; to find fulfillment, peace and shalom (wholeness).

The Amidah consists of seven blessings on the Sabbath (on the weekdays there are 19 blessings). We recite the first few blessings together, then continue individually in silence. This is a period for personal prayer or meditation. If you wish, you may follow the traditional liturgy, or read the English prayers, poems and meditations in the Siddur, or take time for your own thoughts and prayers. When you finish, you may be seated.

**The Torah Service** — The centerpiece of the Shabbat morning service is the reading of Torah and a text from the Prophets (the Haftarah). The Torah, containing the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, is a link with Jewish history and with Jews throughout the world, who will read the same Torah portion on this day. Standing before the Ark, the parents of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah offer their child some personal words of blessing, before passing the Torah through the generations and placing it in their child’s arms. Opening the Ark during the Torah service is considered to be a great honor. This honor is often given to friends or family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

It is customary to carry the Torah scroll through the synagogue for everyone to see and touch. This Hakafah (circling) recalls the Israelites’ journey through the wilderness; it also demonstrates that the Torah belongs to all of us, not just those who stand on the *bimah*. The congregation sings as the Torah is carried through our midst. At this time, many people touch the Torah with the fringes of their prayer shawl or the corner of their prayer book, and then kiss the fringes or the book. This shows our love for our ancient and holy teaching. We honor the Torah by never turning our back on it, so it is proper to turn around and follow the journey of the Torah, watching as it is carried through the congregation.

The young people who are celebrating Bar or Bat Mitzvah (the age of religious responsibility) will be called for the first time for an aliyah (the honor of reciting the blessing before and after the Torah reading), and will read

from the Torah. Reading Torah is not easy, Hebrew is difficult: It reads from right to left and there are no vowels or punctuation in the Torah scroll. Torah readers must also learn a special chant (trop) for the public reading of Torah.

Before the Torah chanting, one of the B'nei Mitzvah will deliver a D'var Torah—a commentary on the weekly Torah portion, which teaches about some element of Jewish history, values or practice, and applies the lesson to our lives today. This ability to study and teach Torah or Haftarah is a mark of maturity, and is an honor accorded those who have attained the age of religious responsibility in the Jewish community.

The weekly Torah portion is divided into sections, each preceded and followed by a blessing. Friends and family, as well as members of our congregation, are honored by being invited to recite these blessings. The congregation follows along with the reading, in Hebrew and/or English, in the *Chumash* (from the Hebrew word for “five”), a book containing the Hebrew text of the five books of the Torah, Haftarah, Commentary and an English translation.

During the Torah reading, our congregation offers a Prayer for Healing (Mi shebeirach) on behalf of those who suffer from illness of body or spirit. Feel free to say aloud the name of someone for whom you are praying when the Rabbi invites you to. Once the Torah reading is complete, the Torah is lifted into the air (hagbahah) and dressed (g'lilah). Lifting and dressing the Torah are considered to be great honors. These honors are often performed by friends and family of the B'nei Mitzvah.

The Haftarah (reading from the Prophets) is usually linked thematically to the Torah portion for the week. A D'var Haftarah—a commentary on the Haftarah—will be given by one of the B'nei Mitzvah. Following this introduction to the portion, the Haftarah will be chanted, along with the blessings that precede and follow the reading. The congregation follows along in the Chumash.

At the conclusion of the Haftarah chanting, the Torah will be returned to the Ark, and the Rabbi and Cantor or Cantorial Soloist will invoke God's blessing upon those becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah before the Holy Ark.

**Concluding Prayers**—Concluding prayers begin with the Aleinu, which acknowledges that God has given the Jewish people a unique destiny: to strive for the repair and healing of our broken world (*tikkun olam*). After the Aleinu, we recite the Mourners' Kaddish, to honor the memory of those who have died. The Kaddish does not mention death, but praises God and acknowledges the precious gift of life.

For those who respond better to visual descriptions, a flowchart of the service can be found on the next page.

# SHABBAT SERVICE SATURDAY MORNING

SHACHARIT (the morning prayer service) is divided into seven major sections which "ascend" to the Torah Reading Service, the high point of the service, and then "descend" through the closing prayers.

**VI. SEDER K'RIAT HATORAH**  
 ("Service for Reading the Torah")  
 Removing the Torah from the Ark (Pg. 44-46)  
 Aliyah laTorah - Blessings Before and After the Torah Reading (Pg. 46-47)  
**READING OF THE TORAH**  
 Mishebeyrach - Prayer for Healing (Pg. 47)  
 Blessings Before & After the Haftarah (Pg. 48-49)  
 Haftarah (Reading from the Prophets)  
 Returning the Torah to the Ark (Pg. 51-52)

**VII. CLOSING PRAYERS**  
 Aleinu - Jewish Distinctiveness (Pg. 72-73)  
 Kaddish - Memorial Prayer (Pg. 76)  
 Kiddush - Blessing Over Wine (Pg. 83)

**V. THE AMIDAH**  
 ("Standing Prayer")  
 Avot v'imahot - Our Ancestors (Pg. 29-30)  
 G'vurot - God's Power (Pg. 30)  
 Kedushah - God's Holiness (Pg. 31-32)  
 Kedushat Hayom - Holiness of Shabbat (Pg. 32-33)  
 Avodah - God's Acceptance of Our Worship (Pg. 34)  
 Hoda'ah - Giving Thanks to God (Pg. 35-36)  
 Birkat Shalom - Prayer for Peace (Pg. 37-38)  
 Additional Meditations on the Themes of the Amidah (Pg. 39-41)

**IV. THE SHEMA AND ITS BLESSINGS**  
 Bar'chu - Call to Worship (Pg. 21)  
 Yotzer Or - Light of Creation (Pg. 21)  
 Ahavah Rabbah - God's Love (Pg. 23)  
 **SHEMA** - God Is One (Pg. 24)  
 V'ahavta - You Shall Love (Pg. 24-26)  
 Mi Chamocho - Redemption (Pg. 28)

**III. CHATZI KADDISH**  
 ("Half-Sanctification")  
 Separates Preliminary Prayers from Shacharit (Main Part of Morning Service) (Pg. 20)

**II. P'SUKEI D'ZIMRA**  
 ("Verses of Song")  
 Psalms of Praise (Pg. 14-20)

**I. BIRCHOT HASHACHAR**  
 ("Dawn Blessings")  
 Getting Warmed Up (Pg. 4-14)



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### **Kiddush and haMotzi**

Following the service, there will be some special presentations to the B'nei Mitzvah. We also join together in Kiddush, the blessing over wine (a symbol of joy in Judaism), and haMotzi, the blessing which thanks God for bringing forth bread from the earth.

#### **REMINDER**

**Beth Am's Photography Policy on Shabbat** — A brief outline of the photography policy of our synagogue is posted above the entrance to the main sanctuary. The full policy states: Please refrain from flash photography during our Shabbat and festival worship services. Flash-free photography is permitted from OUTSIDE the sacred space of our sanctuary — whether the main sanctuary, outdoor sanctuary, or the Beit Kehillah. Please set up all cameras, tripods, and video cameras just outside the sanctuary entrance and **do not block the center aisle**. This will enhance the worship experience for all in attendance.

Once again, we are delighted that you will be sharing this special day with us! We truly appreciate your show of support, respect and love. Please contact us at (650) 493-4661 if you have any questions or concerns.

## APPENDIX E

### **What Non-Jews Need to Know**

## What Non-Jews Need to Know

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*This material is adapted from Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah by Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin, published by Jewish Lights Publishing, P.O. Box 237, Sunset Farm Offices, Rte. 4, Woodstock, VT 05091. The publisher grants permission to you to copy this for distribution to your guests.*

Jews and Christians look at many things differently. We have a different theology, a different liturgy, a different holiday cycle, and a different life cycle.

But Jews and Christians share certain things, and that sharing is no less profound than the differences. As philosopher Martin Buber once said, "Jews and Christians share a Book and a hope" — a Messianic hope. Jews and Christians "share" the first five books of the Bible. We both believe in a God that can be approached through prayer and worship. We believe in a God who loves and who is revealed through Scripture and holy interventions in history.

Jews and Christians also share a belief in the power of ritual. Rituals make a group distinctive and transmit identify from generation to generation. They dramatize a religious group's beliefs about the world and about how God interacts with it.

Bar and Bat Mitzvah means that a thirteen-year-old Jewish child is old enough to perform mitzvot (the commandments of Jewish life). It is one of the most venerable and most potent of Jewish symbols and rituals. When a Jewish child becomes Bar or Bat Mitzvah, he or she publicly reads a section from the Torah, the Five Books of Moses. Each week, every congregation in the Jewish world reads the identical passage. In this way, the youth is linked to the entire Jewish people, regardless of where the thirteen-year-old happens to live. The youth also reads a Haftarah, which is a selection of the weekly section of the prophetic writings—from Isaiah, Amos, Hosea, etc., or from historical books like Judges, Samuel or Kings.

### **There is More to the Service than Meets the Ear**

The Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremony occurs during the Sabbath worship service. The first part of the service ends with the congregation singing *Mi Chamocho* ("Who is like You among the gods that are worshipped?"). It echoes the song that Moses and the Israelites sang at the shores of the Red Sea when the Israelites had been saved from the Egyptians. The second part of the service ends with a prayer for peace for the Jewish people and for the whole world. During the third section of the service, the Torah is read. The Haftarah, by tradition, must end on a note of *nechemta* (comfort). This portion of the service ends with the implicit hope that all humanity will embrace God's words.

The entire service concludes with two prayers: *Aleinu*, a triumphant plea that the world will ultimately recognize that there is only one God, and *Kaddish*, a plaintive mourner's prayer which proclaims that God's Kingdom, the fulfillment of God's hopes for the world, will come someday. *Kaddish's* form and function are closely related to the Lord's Prayer.

The ultimate message of the service is the triumph of hope: Hope for freedom, hope for peace, hope that all our words will end on joyful notes, hope for universal redemption.

### **There is More to the Torah Scroll than Meets the Eye**

The Torah symbolizes the moment when God met the Jewish people at Sinai and made a covenant with them. It reminds us of God's revelation and of God's intervention in human history.

The Torah also symbolizes all that the Jewish people hold sacred: stories, laws, histories, poetry. When a Jewish child reads from the Torah, he or she is enveloped in its heritage, in its power, in the majesty of Sinai. He or she says to the community: "I am now thirteen years old. I am now ready to fulfill the covenant with God by being responsible for performing mitzvot, the obligations of Jewish life."

### **Many Ritual Moments of Becoming Are Similar**

Most religions—many cultures—have their moments of becoming. It is a moment when an individual goes from childhood to maturity, a moment of sacred initiation.

Historically, age 13 was when a child was considered to be spiritually and legally mature — in other words, responsible for their own choices. There is a prayer that has been recited by parents thanking God for releasing them from responsibility for the child who has now become Bar or Bat Mitzvah. At a brit milah or baby naming the parents make a pledge that their infant will grow up to study Torah. Now the child takes that responsibility on him or herself.

Bar and Bat Mitzvah is a symbolic way to usher a child into the adult Jewish community, a way for the entire community to say to that no-longer-child, "All we cherish, all we hope to be, the sum total of our visions, we place them in your hands. May God make you ready. May God make you strong."

## APPENDIX F

### **Use of Synagogue Facilities for your Celebration**



CONGREGATION BETH AM  
26790 Arastradero Road, Los Altos Hills, CA 94022, 650/493-4661

## Facility Use Rules

### 1. **Time Limitations On Use of Facilities:**

In March 1998, the Town of Los Altos Hills imposed certain conditions on Beth Am's use of its facilities in the form of a Use Permit. To comply with these conditions, the Board of Directors has established the following rules, which apply to all functions held on the premises.

#### 1.1 **Saturdays:**

All music, entertainment and/or catering must stop at **11:00 p.m.** and the building must be completely cleared by 12 midnight. Parking lot lights will turn off at 12:00 midnight.

#### 1.2 **Sundays through Thursdays:**

All music, entertainment and/or catering must stop at **9:30 p.m.** and the building must be completely cleared by 10:30 p.m. Parking lot lights will turn off at 10:30 p.m.

#### 1.3 **Sundays before a Monday Federal holiday:**

All music, and entertainment and/or catering must stop at **10:30 p.m.** and the building must be completely cleared by 11:30 p.m. Parking lot lights will turn off at 11:30 p.m.

### 2. **Security Deposits for Facility Use:**

In addition to rental fees for the use of the facility, refundable security deposits in the amount of \$250 will be required 2 weeks before the event from each caterer, band or DJ contracted to perform services for the party, to assure their compliance with the rules set forth here. However, exceptions will be made for caterers and entertainers who are known to Beth Am and have in the past complied with the House Rules.

The security deposit of \$250 shall be forfeited in the event that any of these regulations are violated. Any caterer or music vendor who violates these regulations may be barred from future rendering of services at Beth Am.

### 3. **Catering Regulations: All caterers must provide proof of liability insurance to Beth Am one month prior to event.**

3.1 Any food or drinks delivered to Beth Am in advance of the event must be clearly marked with the host family's name. Caterer/congregant has to make arrangements prior to delivery.

3.2 **Shellfish and pork may not be served at Beth Am at any time.** In addition during Passover no baked goods containing leaven may be served. No meat and dairy may be served together in the same appetizer or entrée, i.e. no cheeseburgers, meat lasagna, etc.

3.3 No food service is allowed in the Sanctuary, outdoor chapel or indoor chapel.

3.4 To avoid disturbing the neighbors during an evening event, all bottles and glass must be

carefully placed one at a time in the recycling bin by the caterer - and **not** thrown into the dumpster.

- 3.5 All garbage must be securely wrapped and put in the dumpster outside the main kitchen back door. All leftover food must be removed from the kitchen and refrigerators.
- 3.6 Loading and unloading of catering vans is to be done with a minimum of noise and conversation. Vans must park behind the sound wall of the main kitchen. When servicing the small Beit Kehillah kitchen, use the parking lot near Beit Kehillah, except temporarily when loading or unloading. **Do not park vans on any section of the main driveway.**
- 3.7 Catering personnel may not gather/congregate outside either of the kitchens to talk, eat or smoke, to avoid noise disturbing the neighbors
- 3.8 No Beth Am kitchen serving equipment or supplies may be borrowed for use during a catered event. Examples include coffee pots, pitchers, paper napkins, sugar, etc. The custodians are instructed to keep all cupboards and closets locked. Maintenance supplies to clean the kitchens will be made available for use. The stove, kitchen counters and movable carts must be cleaned after use. Floor must be swept and mopped.
- 3.9 For Shabbat Onegs that are catered, Beth Am will provide the customary coffee, tea and water.
- 3.10 Caterers are given one hour after the completion of the event to clean up and pack their things.

#### 4. **Band or Other Music Regulations:**

- 4.1 All noise must be kept to a level that is within legal limits and which does not generate complaints from neighboring residents.
- 4.2 No outdoor sound amplification of music for social events is allowed.
- 4.3 **The back main kitchen door, the backstage door, and the Social Hall doors to the outdoor patio must be kept closed at all times when music is being played. The Beit Kehillah doors must also be kept closed when music is being played.**
- 4.4 The host family is responsible for monitoring compliance with these rules and shall cooperate with the on-site custodian if they are informed that the noise level must be lowered.

#### 5. **Use of the Sanctuary and Beit Kehillah:**

- 5.1 After a ceremony, the Sanctuary area will be closed off and no one may enter except for photographic purposes. **No food or drink may be brought into the Sanctuary.**
- 5.2 Flowers for the *bimah* cannot exceed the 36 inch height of the reading table, to avoid interfering with the service. No nails or tape may be used to affix flowers or decorations to anything on the *bimah*. **Please inform your florist.**
- 5.3 No throwing of flower petals, rice, candy, or any other item is allowed in any part of the facility, or on the synagogue grounds during weddings, or B'nei Mitzvah.

5.4 No flowers or ribbons may be taped to the pews in the Sanctuary or the wood of the chuppah as the tape damages the wood. The wood chuppah has a fabric tack strip at the top to affix decorations.

5.5 No videotaping or photography is allowed in the Sanctuary during a religious service except from one of the foyer doorways and not blocking the center aisle. Artificial lights and flash attachments are not permitted. Videotaping in Beit Kehillah must be done at the rear of the room, near the doors. All equipment shall be placed so as to avoid interfering with access to or exit from the Sanctuary or Beit Kehillah.

**6. Reserving Facilities:**

In order to reserve and use the facilities, all member families who contract for events at Beth Am must be current in their dues payments.

**7. No candles are permitted except Shabbat and ceremonial candles.**

**8. False Fire Alarms:**

The Social Hall and Beit Kehillah have sensitive fire detectors near the ceiling that can set off an alarm if balloons float to the ceiling area because they are not securely tied down. **THE USE OF FOG MACHINES ARE PROHIBITED, THEY WILL SET OFF THE ALARMS. Any Fire Department charge for a false alarm will be charged to the host family.**

**9. Erecting Tents or Canopies:**

Tents or canopies must be up by noon on Friday and, on days when Sunday Program or other programs are in session, down by Sunday morning at 8:00 am. Tents or canopies are not permitted when the Sukkah is erected.

**10. Damage:**

The host family will pay for any damage to the synagogue facilities or to any other area of the synagogue premises, or to its equipment.

**11. Miscellaneous:**

No use of generators permitted. Cotton candy machines for outside use only.

**I have read the above and will comply with the rules stated.**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
[Please Print]

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
[For Vendors]

Company Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



Congregation Beth Am  
26790 Arastradero Road  
Los Altos Hills, CA 94022  
(650) 493-4661 www.betham.org

### Approved Vendor List

The following is a list of local businesses that have been used by members of Congregation Beth Am for special occasions, such as bar/bat mitzvahs and weddings and are approved vendors of Beth Am.

#### Caterers

Antica Sciamadda Catering	Nelly Capra	(650) 575-7620	onehappyfamily@mac.com
Avi~ously Delicious	Avi Cohen	(415) 892-7685	www.aviouslydelicious.com
Beli Deli	Eugenia	(510) 632-9133	www.belideli.com
Café Primavera		(408) 885-8804	www.cafeprimavera.com
Cassis Catering	Ayelet Perry	(650) 261-1650, ext. 1	www.cassiscatering.com
Continental Caterers	Wendy Kleckner	(650) 322-4189	www.continentalcaterer.com
Deliciously Yours Catering	Lucy Fried	(408) 202-2103	
Dror Catering	Inbar & Yair	(408) 234-2610	www.drorcatering.com
Entrees Unlimited	John Costa	(408) 280-0910	www.entreesunlimited.com
Schumann's Four Seasons Catering	Frank	(650) 968-9308	www.schumannsfourseasonscaterers.com
Jeff Edelman**		(408) 245-4336	
Haute Cuisine Catering	Lusine Sargsyan	(650) 279-8965	info@hautecuisinecatering.net
House of Bagels	Jeff	(408) 218-5333	
Izzy's Bagels		(650) 329-0700	www.izzysbrooklynbagels.com
Judy Ocken		(650) 493-3025	
Milk & Honey	Debra Kellerman	(650) 212-6455	www.milkandhoneycatering.com
Oren's Hummus		(650) 752-6492	www.orenhummus.com
Oren's Kitchen	Arnon Oren	(510) 847-6265	www.orenskitchen.com
Parsley, Sage, Rosemary & Thyme		(800) 798-8377	hwww.psrt.com
Posh Bagel	Chuck Whelan	(650) 968-5308	

#### Kosher Caterers

Dina's Catering		(650) 827-1309	dinaskoshercatering.com
Kavod		(650) 968-9308	
Kosher Gourmet Catering	Yair Luria	(916) 396-9123	www.koshergourmetcatering.com
Mana Kosher		(650) 212-6455	Division of Milk & Honey
Too Caterers		(650) 322-4189	Kosher Division of Continental Caterers

#### Smoked Salmon Vendor

Brookside Fish Company	Larry Main	(650) 776-8587	mainlarry@comcast.net
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#### Florists/Decorations/Supplies

Ah Sam		(650) 341-5611	www.ahsam.com
Flowers by Edie	Edie Groner	(650) 493-1932	
			<a href="https://picasaweb.google.com/101029535529545095418/FlowersByEdie#">https://picasaweb.google.com/101029535529545095418/FlowersByEdie#</a>
Anna Gorelik**		(650) 464-3365	
Lori Chestnut Florist		(650) 325-9926	www.lauriechestnutflorals.com
Ornamento	Orna Maymom	(415) 385-2808	www.ornamento.com
Personalized Gift Stop**	Lauren Herbstman	(650) 917-8697	www.personalizedgiftstop.com
Mindy Rosenberg Design	Mindy Rosenberg	(847) 826-2184	www.mindyrosenberg.com

**Supplies (Invitations, Thank You Notes, Ketubot)**

Only the Best (15% discount)		(408) 356-7362	www.onlythebestlosgatos.com
Paper Pizzazz**		(650) 858-0771	www.paperpizzazz.invitations.com
Paper Reflection**	Barbara Goldman	(408) 257-5505	www.paperreflections.invitations.com
Paperwhirl in Palo Alto		(650) 328-6141	www.paperwhirl.com
SendOutCards**	Kim Hunter	(650) 867-5037	khunter@factpoint.com
The Write Invite	Marian Sosnick	(650) 578-9215	www.thewriteinvite.net

**Musicians/DJs**

Alan Waltz Musical Entertainment	(408) 243-4931		www.alanwaltz.com
Denon & Doyle	Louis Zahorak	(800) 944-9585	
DJOJ	Oren Merry	(650) 919-3433	<a href="mailto:djmerrymusic@gmail.com">djmerrymusic@gmail.com</a>
JJ the DJ		(888) 487-5535	www.jjthedj.com
Joel Nelson		(408) 446-5000	www.joelnelson.com
Jordan River Entertainment		(408) 978-0979	www.a-dj.com
Late Notice Jazz Band**	Julian Pitt		www.latenoticeband.com
Merging Traffic		(408) 270-4407	www.mergingtraffic.net
Nothin' But Fun Band	Linda Garber	(415) 350-5602	nothinbutfunband@gmail.com
Sound in Motion	Kevin O'Scanlon	(415) 640-8949	www.soundinmotion.com

**Photographers**

Erez Avraham Photography		(408) 726-2530	www.erezavraham.com
Leon Brauer Photography		(650) 575-2611	leon.brauer@gmail.com
Fine Photography by Igor		(650) 493-3223	
Jordon River Photography		(408) 978-0979	www.jordanriverphoto.com
Murry Kalish		(650) 941-5207	
Kids on Location	Maggie Vittori	(650) 596-8541	kidsonlocationphoto@yahoo.com
Scott Lasky		(408) 363-0654	www.laskyphoto.com
Boris Levitsky		(650) 814-0379	
Michael Loeb			Michael@loebphotography.com
Steve Maller Photography		(650) 685-6999	www.stevemaller.com
Richard Mayer Photo		(650) 340-9904	www.mayerphoto.com
Erica Oriya		(415) 845-3019	www.ericariya.com
Sheldon of Los Altos		(650) 948-3823	www.sheldonla.com
Vignette Films – photo & video		(213) 925-4449	vladimirperlovich@gmail.com
Visual Evidence	Patrick Wong	(408) 296-2088	

**Rental Companies**

ABCO	Liz	(650) 365-3050	
Linen Lady	Joanne	(408) 871-3199	
Stuart's		(650) 968-4401	
Blue Water Party Rentals	Jennifer	(650) 875-1144	

**Video**

Blue Moon Productions		(408) 206-6505	
Joel Cook Video Production		(415) 563-3348	
Custom Video Connection		(650) 269-6086	
D&M Video Productions		(408) 745-7544	
Steve Johnson (V.T.I)		(650) 589-9729	
Bob Kat Productions	Bob Kelley	(916) 715-3903	www.bobkatproductions.net

Mark Schreiber\*\* (650) 917-8460

**Party Planners/Helpers**

A Gala Event**	Amy Albert	(650) 814-5312	
Always RSVP	Suzy Somers	(650) 854-6399	<a href="http://www.alwaysrsvp.com">www.alwaysrsvp.com</a>
AVSO Events	Janet Lash	(650) 906-6512	
Fantasy Events	Ilona Rubashevsky	(408) 655-2617	
Rick Hems Productions		(650) 366-7008	
Gloria Juarez		(408) 644-5243	
Orna Maymon		(415) 385-2808	<a href="http://www.oranamento.com">www.oranamento.com</a>
Anjelica Nolazco & Maria Tapia		(650) 387-5131	
Lynn Osband		(408) 981-8422	<a href="http://lynnosband.wordpress.com">http://lynnosband.wordpress.com</a>
Reach for the Stars	Amy Shulman	(650) 207-8796	<a href="mailto:starparties@gmail.com">starparties@gmail.com</a>
Simcha Sisters		(925) 984-7024	<a href="http://www.simchasisters.com">www.simchasisters.com</a>
The Party Helpers**	Ann Sullivan & Linda King	(650) 948-2599 or (408) 391-6179	

## APPENDIX G

### **Saturday Morning Service Checklist**

Prayer Class Teacher and Start Date \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Tutor \_\_\_\_\_

## B'nei Mitzvah Saturday Morning Service Checklist (Red Siddur)

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_ Partner's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents' Names: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Service: \_\_\_\_\_

Torah Portion and Aliyot: \_\_\_\_\_

Haftarah Portion and Verses: \_\_\_\_\_

D'var Torah/Haftarah (circle one) Given Materials for: Torah \_\_\_\_\_ Haftarah \_\_\_\_\_ (please initial)

### Prayerbook Assignments:

Page #	Track#	Prayer	Date Assigned	Date Completed	Deadline by	Comments/ Review Dates
Handout	30	<i>Candle lighting Blessing</i>			12 wks, if time	
Handout	1	<b>Friday Night Kiddush</b>			6 wks	
1		<b>Tallit blessing</b>			6 wks	
11-13	2	<b>Nissim B'chol Yom The Daily Miracles</b>			6 wks	
18	3	<i>Psalm 150</i>			9 wks	
20	4	<i>Chatzi Kaddish Reader's Kaddish</i>			9 wks	
21	5	<i>Ba'rchu</i>			9 wks	
21	6	<i>Yotzeir Or</i>			9 wks	
23	8	<i>V'haeir Eineinu</i>			12 wks	
23	9	<i>Vahavieinu</i>			12 wks	
24	10	<i>Sh'ma/Baruch Shem</i>			6 wk	
24 26	11	<b>V'ahavta and L'ma'an Tizk'ru</b>			6 wks	
28	12	<i>Mi Chamocha</i>			9 wks	
28	13	<i>Tzur Yisrael</i>			9 wks	
29	14	<i>Adonai s'fatai tiftach</i>			9 wks	
29-30	15	<i>Avot v'Imahot</i>			9 wks	
30	16	<i>G'vurot</i>			12 wks	
31-32	17	<i>Kedushah</i>			12 wks	
45		<b>Havu Godel</b>			6 wks	
45	18	<i>Ki Mitsion</i>			9 wks	
45	19	<b>Sh'ma/Echad Eloheinu</b>			6 wks	
46	20	<b>Aliyah L'Torah: Blessing Before the Reading</b>			6 wks	

Page #	Track#	Prayer	Date Assigned	Date Completed	Deadline by	Comments/ Review Dates
47	21	<b>Torah Blessing After the Reading</b>			6 wks	
48	22	<i>V'Zot HaTorah</i>			12 wks	
48	23	<b>Haftarah – Blessing Before the Reading</b>			6 wks	
48-49	24	<b>Haftarah – Blessing After the Reading</b>			6 wks	
Handout	25	<b>Shehecheyanu</b>			6 wks	
72	26	<i>Aleinu</i>			9 wks	
73	27	<i>V'ne'emar/Bayom Hahu</i>			9 wks	
76		Mourner's Kaddish			12 wks, if time	
83	28	<b>Kiddush for the Morning of Shabbat</b> <i>V'sham'ru →</i>			6 wks	
83	29	<b>Al Kein and B'racha</b>				
Handout	30	<i>Candle lighting Blessing</i>			12 wks, if time	

**Torah Aliyot:**

(Circle one: 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Reader)

Aliyah	Verses	Date Assigned	Date Completed	Comments
<b>I</b> with <i>n'kudot</i> (vowels)				
<b>I</b> without <i>n'kudot</i>				
<b>II</b> with <i>n'kudot</i>				
<b>II</b> without <i>n'kudot</i>				
<b>III</b> with <i>n'kudot</i>				
<b>III</b> without <i>n'kudot</i>				
<b>IV</b> with <i>n'kudot</i>				
<b>IV</b> without <i>n'kudot</i>				

**Haftarah:**

(Circle one: 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Reader)

Verses	Date Assigned	Date Completed	Comments

**Bold – Lead**

*Italic – Sing along*

Regular – learn once you know everything else

## APPENDIX H

### **Other Useful Information**

## BAR-BAT MITZVAH JOURNEY

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Seven months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah:</b><br/>Begin Prayer Class.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Five months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah:</b><br/>Family meeting with the Cantor Bandman.<br/>This is a get acquainted meeting - questions &amp; answers regarding Bar/Bat Mitzvah learning process.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Four months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah:</b><br/>Begin one on one tutoring and learn Torah portion.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Two months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah:</b><br/>Student will have completed Torah portion and begins Haftarah portion.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Six-to-eight weeks before Bar/Bat Mitzvah:</b><br/>Individual parent meetings with Cantor or Cantorial Soloist to discuss service honors.<br/>Individual parent meeting with Cantor or Cantorial Soloist to discuss service honors.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Six weeks before Bar/Bat Mitzvah:</b><br/>Student begins meeting with one of the Rabbis in order to prepare D'var Torah or D'var Haftarah.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Six weeks before Bar/Bat Mitzvah:</b><br/>Final preparation begins:<br/>Student meets with the Cantor or Cantorial Soloist for next six weeks. The last two of these weeks are on the <i>bimah</i>, familiarizing the student with the service choreography, acclimating to the sanctuary and putting all the parts together.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Three weeks before Bar/Bat Mitzvah:</b><br/>Torah portion and Haftarah portion are completed. Individual parent meeting with one of the rabbis to discuss parent blessing for Bar/Bat Mitzvah.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Friday before Bar/Bat Mitzvah:</b><br/>Parents and student have a family rehearsal in the sanctuary with the Cantor or Cantorial Soloist. <b>*We suggest that the student wear the shoes to be worn at the service*</b></li> </ul> |
|--|--|

### A General Outline

Please check appropriate boxes as you complete each step.

Check here after each Prayer Class attended: <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Check here after meeting with the Cantor or Cantorial Soloist includes the family practice: <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Check here after each meeting with the Tutor: <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Check here after each meeting with the Rabbi: <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>My Tzedakah/Tikkun Olam project is</b> _____	

**FOR ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS,** please call (650) 493-4661

<b>Cantor Lauren Bandman</b> cantor_bandman@betham.org	for service and ritual concerns and preparation; all concerns and questions regarding the B'nei Mitzvah process
<b>Officiating Rabbi</b>	for service and ritual concerns and speech writing
<b>Emily Osterman</b> eosterman@betham.org	for scheduling prayer class, tutors, the Cantor, Cantorial Soloist and Rabbis; scheduling the Social Hall, Beit Kehillah, room set-ups and facility questions
<b>Alyssia Berkowitz</b> alyssia_berkowitz@betham.org	for information regarding pre-Shabbat hors d'oeuvres, ushering, resource lists and general questions regarding the B'nei Mitzvah process

**B'NEI MITZVAH  
PREPARATION TIMELINE**

TIMELINE (in months)	7m prior	6m prior	5m prior	4m prior	3m prior	2m prior	1m prior	B'NEI MITZVAH DATE
<b>ACTIVITY</b>								
1. Prayer Class - weekly 1 hour/week x12 wks								
2. Tutoring - weekly 1/2 hour/week indiv. x10 wks; Family Meeting (FM) (student + parents) with Cantor								
3. Meet with Cantor/soloist - weekly 1/2 hour x6 wks; *Bima rehearsals w/partner (lasting 1 hour 15 min.) Parents meet w Cantor re: Honors (Hn)								
4. Meet with Rabbi - weekly 1/2 hour x6 wks; Parents meet w Rabbi re: Blessing (BI)								
5. Serve as Usher at Shabbat service (U)								
6. Family practice (FP) (student + parents): Friday 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.								



# BAR/BAT MITZVAH PARENT CHECKLIST

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## **One year before Bar/Bat Mitzvah, if you haven't already:**

- Reserve the Beth Am Social Hall and/or outside facility for Kiddush Lunch and/or celebration. Be sure to contact the partner family (if your child is partnered) to coordinate this reservation.
- If you choose to have your event at Beth Am, contact Emily Osterman to reserve the Social Hall for a Kiddush lunch or celebration.
- If you would like to have a family dinner at Beth Am the Friday night before your child's bar/bat mitzvah, contact Emily Osterman to inquire about reserving space.

## **Nine months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah, if you haven't already:**

- Reserve caterer or food provider, if desired.
- You are strongly encouraged to purchase the tallit for your bar/bat mitzvah child.

## **Six months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah:**

- Order invitations, DJ, photographer, if desired. If you do not have a caterer, and need linens, order now.
- Throughout the next six months, consider attending B'nei Mitzvah services, even of students you may not know, in order to become more comfortable with the service.

## **Two months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah:**

- Touch base with caterer, photographer, and D.J. and rental company.
- Order the 5 pound challah at this time from your caterer or food provider. If you have a caterer, please request that the challah is sliced. (Izzy's Brooklyn Bagels in Palo Alto, House of Bagels in Los Gatos are good providers of challah.)
- Begin preparing decorations, if applicable.

## **Six weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah:**

- You will receive a notice to usher for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah prior to your child's service. Please note that families are not always scheduled to usher the week immediately preceding their child's service.

As a reminder, you can write the date you will usher here \_\_\_\_\_.

## **One month before Bar/Bat Mitzvah:**

- Order flowers or prepare the Tzedakah/Tikkun Olam project arrangement for bimah (example: books, canned goods, etc.), if desired.

**Wednesday before Bar/Bat Mitzvah:**

- Time to order the Friday night hors d'oeuvres provided by the B'nei Mitzvah families. If you have a partner, both families share the cost for this.
  - large tray sliced cheese
  - large tray veggies
  - medium tray fruit
  - 3 boxes of crackers

If you order from Safeway or Lucky, etc., you must order 24 hours in advance.

**Friday before Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

- Family practice is typically from 11:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.  
Please note: Participants are only the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and parents, not siblings, grandparents or any other family members, even those with honors in the service.

**Friday night before Bar/Bat Mitzvah:**

- Please deliver the hors d'oeuvres for before the Friday night service to Beth Am by 5:00 p.m. on Friday afternoon and put in the Social Hall kitchen refrigerator. Please clearly label all items with your name.
- Any food, linens or other items that you bring or have delivered, should be labeled with your name and placed in the Social Hall kitchen.

**Day of Bar/Bat Mitzvah:**

- The 5 pound challah as well as white grape juice for the congregational kiddush should arrive in the Beth Am kitchen by 10:00 a.m. Saturday. Plan for (1) liter per 60 of the little cups for the congregation; Beth Am provides those cups. The challah and grape juice for the *bimah* are provided by Beth Am. Again if you have a partner, both families share in the cost.

**Take a big deep breath and enjoy the day!**

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**FOR ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS OR TO RESERVE BETH AM FACILITIES, PLEASE CALL 650/493-4661**

**Emily Osterman**  
**eosterman@betham.org**

scheduling the Social Hall, Beit Kehillah, Conference Room,  
room set-ups and facility questions

**Alyssia Berkowitz**  
**alyssia\_berkowitz@betham.org**

information regarding pre-Shabbat hors d'oeuvres, ushering,  
caterers, resource lists and general questions regarding the B'nei  
Mitzvah process



## *Tzedakah/Tikkun Olam*

You are not required to complete the work,  
but neither are you free to desist from it.

~Rabbi Tarfon, Pirkei Avot

We know there are myriad organizations that do incredible work and are always looking for volunteers. Students are free to work with whatever organization they choose for their *tzedakah/tikkun olam project*. Below are some ideas to get you started.

**Urban Ministry of Palo Alto (UMPA) Soup Kitchen:** Every 5th Sunday, Beth Am volunteers prepare and serve dinner to our less fortunate neighbors for the Urban Ministry of Palo Alto (UMPA) soup kitchen at Trinity Episcopal Church in Menlo Park.

Contact: Carole Katz, 650/941-2731

**Chicken Soupers:** One Sunday a month the Chicken Soupers meet at Beth Am to cook meals to deliver to homebound elderly and others in need. Volunteers are always needed to help with both cooking and delivery. No cooking skills are needed. A great project for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah student and a parent.

Contact: Sophia Zaslavsky, sdz45@hotmail.com

**Home and Hope:** A new Beth Am project that works with homeless families on the road back to self-sufficiency. We volunteer at different churches and synagogues throughout the area. Volunteer opportunities include tutoring, playing with younger children, and meal preparation. The next Beth Am Home and Hope week is in August 2013.

Contact: Rabbi Jonathan Prosnit, rabbi\_prosnit@betham.org

**Computer Buddies:** A great project for the computer savvy Bar/Bat Mitzvah Child. We are partnering with Senior Residents of the Moldaw Senior Residence to help Senior Citizens use computers. Training in skype, email, photo sharing, video chat, and more. Allow a senior to stay in better contact with his/her family.

Contact: Terry Sand, tsand@moldaw.org

**Ecumenical Hunger Project:** Beth Am has a long running partnership with the Ecumenical Hunger Project (EHP) in East Palo Alto. Volunteers offer a range of services, from packing food boxes, interviewing clients, sorting food and clothing, and data entry. EHP also has a garden that is in need of love and support for those who like to get their hands dirty. Finally, EHP is always looking for donations of food items and toiletries for those wanting to do a drive around the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Contact: Rabbi Jonathan Prosnit, rabbi\_prosnit@betham.org

**Costaño Project: Collect Books, Build Bookshelves!** We have an ongoing partnership at Beth Am with the Costaño School, an elementary school in East Palo Alto. We collect new and gently used books to give to children at Costaño. There are also opportunities for reading buddies between a 13

year old and a younger student. This is a wonderful joint project with the Jewish Coalition for Literacy.

Contact: David Moss, [ssow777@gmail.com](mailto:ssow777@gmail.com)

**Support our Jewish Troops:** A Bar and Bat Mitzvah Project for Our Jewish Troops has been launched by JWB Jewish Chaplains Council. It is designed to create awareness among members of the Jewish community about the 10,000 Jews who are on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces often serving far away in dangerous places. Jews in the military face religious isolation and with your help the JWB supplies them with what they need to observe *Shabbat*, Jewish holidays and more.

Contact: [www.jcca.org/jwb](http://www.jcca.org/jwb)

Chaplain Shlomo Shulman , Iraq, 2008



**Letter Writing/Advocacy:** Write to (or organize a campaign) to advocate for an important social or political issue. The Religious Action Center has a list of various issues with connections to Jewish Values.

Contact: [www.rac.org](http://www.rac.org)

**B'nei Mitzvah Partnerships:** For students who choose, Beth Am participates in two worthwhile and meaningful partnership projects.

**(1) Remember Us Holocaust Project:** A Bar/Bat Mitzvah student is “paired” with one of the 1.5 million children who perished during the *Shoah*. During the B'nei Mitzvah process, the student learns about that child and participates in acts of remembrance, such as doing mitzvot b'shem (in the name of the child) and saying Kaddish.

Contact: Mike Kalb, [michael.kalb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:michael.kalb@sbcglobal.net)

**(2) Beth Am of Poltava Ukraine:** We support our sister Congregation, Beth Am Poltava, a member of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, financially and spiritually. The B'nei Mitzvah project partners the Beth Am (California) student with a student in the Ukraine. We pair individuals and use Webcams and Skype to facilitate communication opportunities, allowing our students to share the skills and knowledge that helps the young person in Poltava embrace their Jewish life with gusto. There is a small financial commitment for this project that goes to support the Poltava congregation.

Contact: Cherie Half, [cghalf@att.net](mailto:cghalf@att.net)

**A note on giving *tzedakah* and gift cards:** Jewish sources promote the idea of financial contributions to *tzedakah*. We encourage every B'nei Mitzvah family to discuss the responsibility of giving a fixed percentage (usually around 10%) of monetary B'nei Mitzvah gifts to *tzedakah*. We find these are wonderful conversations to have as a family. Furthermore, many organizations find gift cards (Best Buy, REI, Macys, Movie Theaters, etc.) to be the perfect gifts for needy teens for birthdays and holidays. EHP is an organization that provides these holiday gifts to numerous teens and families in need.

## Glossary

- Aliyah/Aliyot (plural)** ..... Literally, "going up." Refers to ascending the *Bimah* for an honor to the blessings recited before and after the Torah reading and to the Torah reading itself.
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah** ..... Ceremony for 13-year old or older boy or girl welcoming him or her into the adult community
- Bimah** ..... Raised platform in the synagogue from which the Torah is read
- B'nei Mitzvah**..... Plural of Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- Challah**..... Braided egg bread eaten on Shabbat and festivals
- Chumash**..... From the word "Chameish," meaning "five," as in five books of Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Refers to the books which contain Torah, Haftarah and commentary. At Beth Am we use the Gunther Plaut Torah Commentary, or the Plaut Chumash.
- D'var Torah**..... Literally, a "word of Torah." Refers to the interpretation and explanation of the Torah portion which the Rabbi and a Bar/Bat Mitzvah deliver.
- D'var Haftarah** ..... The interpretation and explanation of the Haftarah portion.
- G'lilah** ..... Dressing the Torah
- G'milut Chasadim**..... Acts of lovingkindness
- Haftarah** ..... A section from the books of the prophets which is assigned to a particular Shabbat or Festival. Haftarot (plural) often are attached to a particular Torah portion, but may instead be attached to the day. For example, there is a special Haftarah portion for the Shabbat between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.
- Hagbahah** ..... Lifting the Torah into the air after the reading is completed
- haMotzi** ..... Blessing said over the challah
- Kavod** ..... Honor, esteem
- Kiddush** ..... Blessing said over the wine
- Mitzvah** ..... Commandment
- Morasha** ..... Inheritance, legacy
- Tallit**..... Prayer shawl

**Tikkun Olam** ..... Repairing the world

**Torah** ..... The first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Also known as the five books of Moses.

**Trop** ..... In Hebrew, the "Ta'amei HaMikrah." Refers to the signs in the Torah and Haftarah text that indicate how the text should be chanted.

**Tzedakah** ..... Righteous giving

**V'ahavta**..... One of the prayers students lead on Friday evening and Saturday morning which follows the Sh'ma and is drawn from Deuteronomy (Deut. 6:5-9)

## Sources/Bibliography

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Bar/Bat Mitzvah Handbooks and Guides from the following congregations were especially helpful in preparing this manual:

- Congregation Har Zion of Denver, Colorado  
Particularly the section on Interfaith Families from which much has been borrowed.
- Temple Emanu-El of San Jose, California  
Particularly the introduction and the history of Bar/Bat Mitzvah from which much has been borrowed.

Also helpful in preparing this handbook was:

- "The Complete Bar/Bat Mitzvah Book: Everything You Need to Plan a Meaningful Celebration", by Patti Moskovitz (Career Press)  
Particularly for the section on celebrations.
- "Putting God on the Guest List, 3rd Edition: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah", by Jeffrey K. Salkin