



CONGREGATION  
SHAAREYZEDEK

# B'NAI MITZVAH HANDBOOK



Dear Friends,

*Mazel tov!* Your child is coming to the age of *mitzvot*. This is defined in the *Talmud* as a person who becomes fully responsible for fulfilling our tradition's sacred obligations: a person of duty. Entrance into religious adulthood is heralded with the privilege of being called up to the *Torah* on or after one's thirteenth birthday. A Jew remains a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, a person of duty, for life. From this time forward, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an adult in all religious respects, such as being counted as one of the 10 adult Jews necessary for a *minyan*, the minimum required for congregational worship.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah marks an important turning point in a young person's life, celebrating the individual's deepened Jewish self-consciousness while beginning a meaningful journey into Jewish adulthood. Earning the status of Bar/Bat Mitzvah through Jewish study and acts of *tzedakah*, a young adult exhibits the willingness and the ability to take a more mature role in his/her Jewish life.

The day of Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a momentous occasion for the celebrant, the family and our community. Everyone at Congregation Shaarey Zedek wants to help make this celebration meaningful and memorable. We want the day on which your Bar/Bat Mitzvah is called to the Torah to be a day of spiritual inspiration and lifelong meaning for everyone involved.

To that end, we provide this manual to help you plan for this sacred occasion. It explains our procedures and, hopefully, answers many of your questions. Although there is much to do, we will accomplish the tasks in manageable pieces. Remember, the clergy and staff at Shaarey Zedek are happy to assist you. Please do not hesitate to ask!

May this spiritual landmark be a time of fulfillment and joy for our B'nai Mitzvah, your family, and every witness to this significant event.

*L'shalom,*



Rabbi Aaron Starr



Hazzan David Propis



Rabbi Yonatan Dahlen



Assistant Cantor Leonard Gutman

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*Handbook updated September, 2019*

**Who Should I Contact?**  
**Congregation Shaarey Zedek: 248.357.5544**

**Marci Iwrey, B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator: [miwrey@shaareyzedek.org](mailto:miwrey@shaareyzedek.org) (ext. 40)**

Rabbi Aaron Starr: [rabbistarr@shaareyzedek.org](mailto:rabbistarr@shaareyzedek.org) (ext. 26)

Rabbi Yonatan Dahlen: [rabbidahlen@shaareyzedek.org](mailto:rabbidahlen@shaareyzedek.org) (ext. 30)

Hazzan David Propis: [dpropis@shaareyzedek.org](mailto:dpropis@shaareyzedek.org) (ext. 29)

Assistant Cantor Leonard Gutman: [lgutman@shaareyzedek.org](mailto:lgutman@shaareyzedek.org) (ext. 37)

Robert Rich, Executive Director: [rrich@shaareyzedek.org](mailto:rrich@shaareyzedek.org) (ext. 66)

*Please call Robert Rich for any questions regarding reserving a room for private parties or luncheons.*

Ari Reis, Director of Youth and Family Learning: [areis@shaareyzedek.org](mailto:areis@shaareyzedek.org) (ext. 43)

Shabbat Lunch Volunteer Coordinator: [sisterhood@shaareyzedek.org](mailto:sisterhood@shaareyzedek.org) (ext. 48)

Quality Kosher Catering (248.352.7758)

*Please call Quality Kosher Catering to cater at Congregation Shaarey Zedek for your party or for a private family lunch or dinner.*

## B'nai Mitzvah Preparation Timeline

### 2 Years/24 Months Prior

- Letter confirming B'nai Mitzvah date

### 18 Months Prior

- Hebrew skills assessment & tutoring recommendations by Director of Youth & Family Learning/Hazzan

### One Year/12 Months Prior

- Family Orientation Meeting with clergy & staff
  - Receive personalized Student Workbook\* and Parent Handbook
  - Schedule & begin Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutoring\*\*
  - Meet other families with Bar/Bat Mitzvahs
  - Receive Mitzvah Project materials
  - Children's class roster encouraging invitations to all classmates
  - Schedule meeting with Hazzan to review progress

### 10 Months Prior

- Meet with Rabbi on Mitzvah Project

### 6 Months Prior

- Submit a clear, high-resolution headshot photo and family names information to B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator for CSZ publications.
- The B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator will be happy to submit your child's photo and information to the Jewish News for you.

\*Student Workbook includes: trope guide, Torah portion, Haftarah portion, D'var Torah guide & prayers.

\*\*B'nai Mitzvah tutoring does not replace Religious School or Hebrew Day School.

## 5 Months Prior

- Meet with Rabbi
  - *D'var Torah* preparation
  - Service attendance requirement
  - Mitzvah project discussion

## 4 Months Prior

- Check in with Hazzan for second time to review student progress
- Discuss *bimah* flowers & other sponsorships

## 2 Months Prior

- Finalize aliyot (*bimah* honors)\* with Assistant Cantor
- *T'fillah/Torah/Haftarah* check-in
- All dues and tuition must be paid in full
- Payment due for *Kiddush* and Lunch to Sisterhood

## 1 Month Prior

- *D'var Torah* due to Rabbi
- Schedule final rehearsal and event photos in our Sanctuary with B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator
- Schedule weekday *minyan* service with Assistant Cantor
- Send photo & announcement to Jewish News

## 3 Weeks Prior

- Submit final count for *Kiddush* and lunch to Sisterhood

## 2 Weeks Prior

- Submit final *Aliyot* (honors) to Assistant Cantor
- Work with Rabbi on *D'var Torah* delivery

## 1 Week Prior

- Lead Ashrei in the Sanctuary on Shabbat immediately before B'nai Mitzvah weekend

Notes

## **2 Weeks Prior**

- Submit final *Aliyot* (honors) to Assistant Cantor
- Work with Rabbi on D'var Torah delivery

## **1 Week Prior**

- Lead Ashrei in the Sanctuary on Shabbat immediately before B'nai Mitzvah weekend

## **Week of Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

- Participate in a weekday *minyan* (Saturday eve, Monday morning, or Thursday morning prior to Mitzvah date)
- Final rehearsal and photo session (Thursday prior)

\*While pulpit honors are spiritually and theologically appropriate only for Jews, there are opportunities for non-Jewish parents or grandparents to participate. The Rabbi or Hazzan will explain all of these during the private family meeting, in which individual family circumstances can be discussed.

## What is a Bar Mitzvah?

**“At five, one should study Scripture; at ten, one should study Mishnah; at thirteen, one is ready to do mitzvot (sacred obligations); at fifteen, one is ready to study Talmud; at eighteen, one is ready for the wedding canopy; and at twenty, one is responsible for providing for a family.”** *Mishnah Avot 5:24*

Nobody is sure when the first Bar Mitzvah ceremonies were held. We do know that, looking at Jewish history as a whole, Bar Mitzvah ceremonies are relatively new. They have only been customary, we think, for about seven or eight hundred years. In fact, the Bible sets the age of adulthood at twenty: that is the age at which a young man can be drafted or called to priestly service. It was only later that the rabbis, as in the passage cited above, moved the age of adulthood down to 13. This was the age at which all the *mitzvot* (sacred obligations) were obligatory for the young Jew.

Also, there are many stories in rabbinic literature about what our biblical heroes did when they were 13 years old. At 13, Abraham smashed the idols in his father’s house. At 13, the twins, Jacob and Esau, went their separate ways: Jacob to the worship of God, Esau to idolatry. At 13, Betzalel, the great biblical artisan, designed the Tabernacle.

Furthermore, it became customary during rabbinic days that a certain prayer, *Baruch shep’tarani me-onsho shel zeh*, “Blessed is the One who has now freed me from the responsibility for this one,” was recited by fathers when their sons turned 13 years old. The point seems clear: no longer are the parents to be held responsible for the actions of their child. Now when that child makes decisions, positive or negative, those decisions will reflect solely upon the child and not upon the parent.

Jewish law sees the performance of *mitzvot as optional* for children under 13 years of age and *required* for those 13 and older. At 13, a boy’s vows are considered binding: a boy may serve on a *beit din* (rabbinic court), read out of the *Torah*, and is subject to all of the other commandments of Jewish law.

Throughout the ages it became customary to call a young man to the *Torah* on the *Shabbat* which coincided with or immediately followed his Jewish calendar birthday. He would read the final section of that week’s *Torah* portion, the *maftir*, and the *haftarah* portion (selection from prophetic writings) as well. This became the essence of the Bar Mitzvah ceremony.



## Origins of the Bat Mitzvah Ceremony

Bat Mitzvah is much more recent in origin. In fact, the first Bat Mitzvah ceremony that we know of was held in May of 1922. This was the Bat Mitzvah of Judith Kaplan Eisenstein, the daughter of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism. She fondly recalls the events of that day. The *Torah* scroll was taken from the ark and, since girls were not allowed to read directly from the *Torah*, she read her *Torah* portion from her own Bible. Then, as Mrs. Eisenstein goes on to relate, "That was it. The scroll was returned to the ark with song and procession, and the service was resumed. No thunder sounded, no lightning struck. The institution of Bat Mitzvah had been born without incident, and the rest of the day was all rejoicing."

The first Shabbat morning Bat Mitzvah held at Congregation Shaarey Zedek occurred in 1982. Conservative Judaism does not distinguish between Bar and Bat Mitzvah, though according to custom a girl may be considered an "adult" at age 12.

## Goals of the Shaarey Zedek Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program

The process of becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah has evolved into a meaningful opportunity for Jewish learning and spiritual growth. We look forward to sharing this journey with you and hope that this handbook will help guide you through the process.

The following goals are specific and realistic, and their implementation is flexible:

**To help your children reach their religious, moral and spiritual potential** through the encouragement, guidance and support of the clergy, tutors and teachers.

**To instill a thirst for Jewish knowledge** through the study of Judaism's rich heritage and culture, and to inspire your children to stay involved in Judaism as their personal way of life.

**To encourage the regular practice of the *mitzvot* of *Torah*, *Avodah* and *G'milut Chasadim*** – that is, the life-long study of Judaism, regular participation in community worship, and the continual performance of acts of lovingkindness.

**To gain the skills necessary to lead the congregation** in prayer, to chant the ancient melodies of *Torah* and *Haftarah*, and to understand and explain the content and the meaning of the *Torah* passage chanted.

**To further develop a connection between Congregation Shaarey Zedek and the home** so that families feel not only a religious connection to our synagogue but an understanding that our synagogue is a place to nurture their religious growth.

## Requirements for Bar/Bat Mitzvah Families

- 1) The Bar/Bat Mitzvah student must be enrolled in our Religious School or at Hillel Day School at the time of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- 2) Families are expected to attend at least 10 *Shabbat* services during the 12 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, six of which must be Saturday morning services at CSZ.
- 3) The family must be a member in good standing at Congregation Shaarey Zedek; no Bar/Bat Mitzvah date will be confirmed until members are in good standing.
- 4) Families may schedule children's Bar/Bat Mitzvahs as early as age 7½. Any date changes must be coordinated with the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator.

If you wish to reserve Congregation Shaarey Zedek for your party, please contact **Quality Kosher Catering** and the **Executive Director** (see page 2 for the contact information).

Notes

## Explanation of Honors

### Sharing Your *Simcha*: A Double Mitzvah

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration is a gratifying day for our Shaarey Zedek community as we welcome our children into the congregation as adults. This occasion can be an even more rewarding and memorable experience when shared with a classmate. Any questions regarding your *simcha* being shared or not should be directed to the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator.

The following honors are available for the families who **share** their *simcha* with another Bar/Bat Mitzvah family:

Three *aliyot*\* (the “going up” to the *bimah* and reciting the blessings before and after the *Torah* is read) is given to family members -- parents will receive one of these three.

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah will receive the *maftir* (last *aliyah*) and chant the *maftir* portion of the *Torah* reading.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah will share the *Haftarah* portion, though each child must learn it in its entirety.

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah will deliver a full *D'var Torah* or *D'var Haftarah*.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah can share in leading prayers and additional *Torah* readings.

One family will receive *Hagbeah* (one person is lifting the *Torah*) and *G'lilah* (one person is dressing the *Torah*). The other family will have an ark opening.

All of the parents of the B'nai Mitzvah are given the honor of the first ark opening, which includes the presentation of the *tallit*.

As coordinated by the Hazzan, a child(ren) from one family will lead *Ein Kelohenu* and a child(ren) from the other family will lead *Adon Olam*.

## A Single Bar/Bat Mitzvah

The following honors are available for your family during a single *simcha*:

- Up to four *aliyot*\* (*Torah* Blessings) for family members—parents will receive one of these; the *maftir* (last *aliyah*) is reserved for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- *Hagbeah* (one person is lifting the *Torah*) and *G'lilah* (one person is dressing the *Torah*).
- One ark opening.
- We encourage pre-Bar/Bat Mitzvah- age children to lead *Ein Kelohenu* and *Aleinu* and/or *Adon Olam*.
- The Bar/Bat Mitzvah will receive the *maftir* (last *aliyah*) and chant the *maftir* portion and *Haftarah*.
- The Bar/Bat Mitzvah will deliver a full *D'var Torah*.
- The Bar/Bat Mitzvah are encouraged to lead aspects of the prayer service.

**\*Remember:** *Aliyot* recipients recite the *brachot* (blessings) before and after the *Torah* reading. Please instruct honorees to practice their *brachot* reading so as to be properly prepared for this honor. For those who need them, feel free to ask the Hazzan for the transliteration of the prayers, as well as a CD. Personal assistance, if required, is also available.

Notes

# B'nai Mitzvah Aliyot Worksheet

## Shabbat Morning

Please bring this form to your meeting with the Cantor.

Please submit this completed form  
to Assistant Cantor Leonard  
Gutman by this date:

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Hebrew Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Bar/Bat Mitzvah: \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_ Child's Tutor: \_\_\_\_\_

**Tallit Presentation (parents) English names -- 2-4 people on each:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Aliyot (Torah Blessing) Honors:

Please indicate if any of the Honorees in spaces 1-4 are a Kohein (K) or Levi (L)

K	L	English Name	Honoree's Hebrew Name	Honoree's	Parents' Hebrew names
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	1. _____	_____	ben _____	(ben = "son of")
		_____	_____	bat _____	(bat = "daughter of")
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	2. _____	_____	ben _____	
		_____	_____	bat _____	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	3. _____	_____	ben _____	
		_____	_____	bat _____	

**Hagbeah** (lifting the Torah) – 1 person, English name: \_\_\_\_\_

and

**G'lilah** (dressing the Torah) – 1 person, English name: \_\_\_\_\_

*Hagbeah* and *G'lilah* and the ark opening are both available to you (for a single, non-shared Bar/Bat Mitzvah only). Please fill in both spaces in above section.

**Additional Aliyah Honor:**

☐ ☐ 4. \_\_\_\_\_ ben \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ bat \_\_\_\_\_

For a single Bar/Bat Mitzvah, there are: 4 Aliyot, Hagbeah and G'lilah, and an Ark Opening.

For a shared B'nai Mitzvah, each family receives: 3 Aliyot, and either Hagbeah and G'lilah **OR** an Ark Opening.

Will your **Bat Mitzvah** wear a *Tallit*? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Is your child reading additional *Torah* segments? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Are any other members of your family reading *Torah*? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Please list English names of family members and which segments they are reading:

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### Concluding Prayers – pre-Bar/Bat Mitzvah children:

1. *Ein Keiloheinu* and *Aleinu* \_\_\_\_\_

2. *Adon Olam*: \_\_\_\_\_

Will your family be attending the morning *minyan* the week of your *simcha*? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

Saturday night, or Monday or Thursday morning? \_\_\_\_\_

Is your child reading any weekday *Torah* segments? \_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_ No .

Please verify date and time of *minyan* with Assistant Cantor Leonard Gutman or Marci Iwrey.

## 6 Months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah

During the months before your *simcha*, we highly encourage students to attend their fellow B'nai Mitzvah classmates' Shabbat morning services. This will show support for their friends, as well as give the opportunity to see the actual Bar/Bat Mitzvah service in action.

## Week before Bar/Bat Mitzvah

During the week before your *simcha*, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is strongly encouraged to participate in the *minyan* and receive the honor of being called to the *Torah*. This can occur on Saturday evening, or Monday morning or Thursday morning. On Monday and Thursday, *t'fillin* and *tallit* (*girl's choice*) are worn. These services offer excellent practice opportunities for your child, as well as the opportunity to become counted as part of the *minyan*. This is an important stepping stone in becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please feel free to discuss these options with the Assistant Cantor. You may also sponsor the minyan breakfast in honor of your child, immediately following the service.

During the week before a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, final rehearsal and photography sessions take place. Rehearsals are scheduled with the Assistant Cantor, on the Thursday before your *simcha* at 4:00 p.m. and last about an hour. If there is a double *simcha*, often one family is given time before the rehearsal and the other family is given time after the rehearsal to allow for photographs. Rehearsal and photo times are scheduled with the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator. You must make your own arrangements with the photographer of your choice.

# Day of Bar/Bat Mitzvah

## Shabbat Morning Services

Important--please remember to bring:

- 1) *Tallit and kippot* (if you will be presented with these at the service);
- 2) B'nai Mitzvah Workbook with *D'var Torah* in it

Notes

*Shacharit* services begin at 9:00 a.m. Please invite your guests to arrive no later than 9:00 a.m. At 9:40 a.m., parents and Bar/Bat Mitzvah come to the *bimah* for an ark opening and *tallit* presentation, marking the beginning of one's Jewish adulthood.

The service continues as follows (times are approximate):

9:45 a.m. -- *Torah* Service

*D'var Torah* given by Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Seven *Aliyot* (chanted *Torah* segments)

Bar/Bat Mitzvah called to *Torah* for *Maftir Aliyah*

Lifting and dressing the *Torah* scroll

Bar/Bat Mitzvah chants *Haftarah* with blessings

Tossing candy provided by the synagogue (to shower the child with sweetness as he/she becomes a Bar/Bat Mitzvah)

The Rabbi delivers Bar/Bat Mitzvah charge

10:45 a.m. -- Congregational prayer, *Ashrei* and *Torah* returned to Ark

11:00 a.m. -- Sermon

11:15 a.m.-12 Noon -- *Musaf* Service, concluding prayers and announcements, followed by *kiddush* and lunch in the social hall



# Congregational Shabbat Lunch and Kiddush

## Coordinated by Shabbat Lunch Volunteer Committee

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### Pricing for Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Mazel tov on your *simcha*! There is so much to look forward to. Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family sponsors our wonderful Kiddush and Lunch which is enjoyed by all every Shabbat after services. Our Lunch is supported exclusively by our generous donors and contributors. Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family sponsors the Congregational Kiddush and Lunch. Families can choose lunch options from our standard Shabbat lunch menu (see below). Various lunch enhancements are also available at an additional cost. Linens and centerpieces are provided, and families can choose linen colors from our limited selection.

All Contributors are listed in the Shabbat card on the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, which is distributed to the congregation and acknowledged from the Bimah.

**The cost is a flat fee of \$1,500, regardless of the number of guests you have attending.** This amount represents less than 50% of the actual cost to serve our congregation and B'nai Mitzvah guests Kiddush and Lunch. The balance is subsidized by our donors and contributors to Shabbat Lunch and ongoing fundraising campaigns, run by our Shabbat lunch volunteers.

So we may plan and have the appropriate amount of food for your *simcha*, we recommend you include an RSVP for lunch in your invitation to avoid a food shortage. The Shabbat Lunch Coordinator will call you 4 weeks prior to your *simcha* for a final count, enhancements and other sponsorship opportunities for family members. Tables are reserved for your family and guests.

The \$1,500 fee for the Congregational Kiddush and Lunch, any additional enhancements and/or sponsorships is due and payable to the Shabbat Lunch Fund **prior** to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

We are happy to accept credit cards. If a payment plan is needed, please discuss with the Shabbat Lunch coordinator.

The standard Shabbat lunch menu is:

- Noodle Kugel or Challah French Toast (choose 1)
- Salad – Greek, Garden, Michigan, Caesar, or Oriental (choose 1)
- Tuna salad
- Egg salad
- Bagels & cream cheese

An enhanced lunch menu is available for an extra charge:

- Lox
- Herring
- Cottage cheese
- Mac & cheese

### **Private Luncheons**

Private luncheons in the shul must be arranged through Quality Kosher Catering. **You are still responsible for the base fee of the Congregational and Kiddush and Lunch.** This fee is payable to “Shabbat Lunch Fund.”

### **Additional Sponsorships**

Grandparents, parents, siblings, relatives and friends are welcome to contribute to all of the following:

Bimah flowers: \$150

Kiddush: \$200

Lunch: \$450

Minyan breakfast sponsorship: \$200

\*to sponsor a morning minyan breakfast, please contact Assistant Cantor Leonard Gutman or the B’nai Mitzvah Coordinator.

All pricing is subject to annual market fluctuations.

Fees may be refundable if the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is cancelled.

# The Mitzvah Project

Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is only the beginning of a child's lifelong commitment to performing *mitzvot* (sacred obligations). Commitment to the performance of *mitzvot* should be an active and ongoing part of every Jew's daily life.

It is for this reason that all B'nai Mitzvah at Congregation Shaarey Zedek are required to engage in a significant volunteer opportunity, requiring a minimum of 12 hours during the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year. There are many projects available at our synagogue and throughout the community for students and their families to perform *mitzvot*. If you have any questions about a particular volunteer opportunity or how to fulfill it, please consult a member of our clergy.

Donating one's time to the synagogue is an important aspect of building community, and is a good starting point in considering *mitzvah* opportunities. As a synagogue family, we also partner with many youth organizations that are committed to providing experiential B'nai Mitzvah learning opportunities.

Following are some of the wonderful programs we know make an impact in the lives of teens. This is a partial list – please see Rabbi Starr or Rabbi Dahlen for additional ideas, as there are always new and growing opportunities.

## Congregation Shaarey Zedek

We have many volunteer opportunities for teens becoming B'nai Mitzvah in our community. Opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- Assisting at one of our monthly Tot Shabbat programs for young families
- Helping to volunteer at a synagogue social action event
- Assisting with “kugeling” for our community Shabbat lunches
- Serving lunch at our senior “Game Day” program
- Helping to run a Shabbat craft or activity for younger children
- Babysitting for the High Holy Days, or one of our evening events

Notes

## Friendship Circle

On Sundays and afterschool on weekdays, B'nai Mitzvah teens are paired with young children with special needs for mentorship and activities.

## JARC - Jewish Association for Residential Care

Teens can perform community service hours with the following activities:

- Build and decorate a *sukkah* at a JARC home
- Help at a holiday celebration or party
- Plant flowers at a JARC home
- Assist at Mitzvah & Munchies Judaic programs
- Teach computer skills at a JARC home
- Assist at our monthly JARC BINGO games
- Become an e-buddy with someone JARC serves
- Play a musical instrument at a JARC home
- Visit with the men and women who live in a JARC home – play board games, Playstation, Xbox, bake, shoot hoops, do a craft activity
- Visit a home for a beautiful Shabbat meal, lead blessings, or enjoy an *oneg* and after-dinner discussion. Bring your family and share your experience.

## Jewish Family Services- Because We Care Bar/Bat Mitzvah Opportunities

These monthly, rotating service opportunities are planned and coordinated by JFS staff. Participants can sign up to engage in service that connects them to needs in our community, while providing an education about the supports offered through JFS and our partners. Come and serve every month, or sign up for the project or projects that relate to your interests and passions for service.

## J-Serve

J-Serve is the International Day of Jewish Youth Service. Since 2005, J-Serve has been a part of Youth Service America's Global Youth Service Day weekend.

J-Serve provides teens with the opportunity to fulfill the Jewish values of *g'milut chasidim*, acts of loving kindness, *tzedakah*, just and charitable giving, and *tikkun olam*, the responsibility to repair the world. Across the globe, teens will join each other to make their community and the world a better place.

## PeerCorps

PeerCorps is a year-long mentorship program inviting Jewish teens, B'nai mitzvah students and their families from all denominations to build deep relationships with one another and community. Mentors begin with a Gesher Week at the end of August. This immersive week of living, working and exploring together in Detroit provides an opportunity for mentors to develop mentorship skills, self-awareness, critical thinking, and to deepen their understanding of *Tzedek* through connecting Jewish values to learning about self and society.

B'nai Mitzvah students (Mentees) begin with a Mentor-led Gesher Day experience. Over the course of the school year, Mentors work and learn alongside Mentees at designated service sites in Detroit.

## Repair the World

Repair the World empowers individuals and entire communities through community organizing, Jewish services, and learning and volunteering opportunities. Teens spend time at sites serving populations in need across the city of Detroit. Repair the World also runs *Summer in the City*, an eight-week summer program where teens from metro Detroit suburbs are transported to the city to paint murals, plant gardens, and play with kids from Detroit. During the rest of the year, SITC operates a house in Southwest Detroit that serves as a hub for alternative break groups, and housing for social-justice minded young adults.

Notes

## Yad Ezra Kosher Food Pantry

Yad Ezra has a wonderful volunteer program for children becoming B'nai Mitzvah. Teens celebrate their B'nai Mitzvah with the following:

- Fulfillment of six hours of community mitzvah service at Yad Ezra (assist clients, stock shelves, prepare food packages)
- Receiving a Yad Ezra Candle that your teen can light at your celebration and remember those in need.
- Enjoying their *simcha* knowing that they have made a difference in the lives of those less fortunate!

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT B'NAI MITZVAH CELEBRATIONS AT CSZ

### Does the Bar/Bat Mitzvah give a speech?

Bar/Bat Mitzvah students teach the congregation a lesson about their *Torah* and/or *Haftarah* portion through a speech. Each student works with the Rabbi to prepare this speech, known as a *D'var Torah*.

### May children attend services?

We love having children at services! For small children, babysitting and often youth services are provided so that everyone attending the Bar/Bat Mitzvah may fully participate in and enjoy the service. Your guests may consult the ushers, board members, or the Shabbat card for ages, times and locations.

### Are women allowed to wear pants on the *bimah*?

Women are allowed to wear pants on the *bimah*, though we encourage skirts or dresses. In keeping with the Jewish value of *tzniyut* (modesty), all women who will be on the *bimah* should avoid short skirts and should cover their shoulders.

### Since boys and girls are treated equally at Congregation Shaarey Zedek, are boys and girls required to wear a *tallit* and *kippah*?

We ask that all our Bar & Bat Mitzvah students wear a *tallit*. It is traditional for married women receiving an honor to cover their heads, and Shaarey Zedek provides head coverings with pins. All men ascending the *bimah* on Shabbat morning must wear a *tallit* and *kippah*, which the synagogue provides if needed.

### May I have personalized *kippot* (yarmulkes)?

You may provide personalized *kippot* at your own expense.

### May a non-Jewish parent of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah participate?

All parents participate in the service. The Rabbi will assign appropriate and meaningful involvement for a non-Jewish parent.

Notes

## Notes

### **How can Congregation Shaarey Zedek assist with special family situations?**

Family situations arise, and our clergy will help you on an individual and private basis. Blended families, single parents, divorced or separated parents, gay and lesbian parents—all of these and more can present unique situations as you approach this joyous lifecycle moment. We will work with you to meet the needs of every student and family. Questions concerning the worship service participation of extended family and friends should be directed to the officiating Rabbi for discussion and clarification.

### **What should I include on the invitations?**

Your invitation should show the proper time of the service. A map with directions might be sent along with the invitation to help people who are not familiar with our location. A good way to welcome people who are unfamiliar with a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is to provide them with a brief explanation of the service. (See example on page 25 of this handbook.)

If you plan to include your child's Hebrew name on the invitation, you are welcome to verify the spelling with Rabbi Starr or Assistant Cantor Leonard Gutman.

In keeping with Shaarey Zedek's mission to be a family of friends, your child's religious or Day School classmates should all be invited to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, *kiddush* and lunch. You may call the Education Office to get a copy of your child's class list, with the names and addresses of each of his or her classmates. Hillel students are similarly accommodated.

### **Is photography or videography allowed during the service?**

In keeping with Jewish law, photography and videography are **not** allowed on Shabbat or holidays. Families are given opportunities to take photos or video in the sanctuary on another date or immediately before or after the final rehearsal. Please do not take any photos or videos **during** the rehearsal!

Each service is live streamed to our website, [www.shaareyzedek.org](http://www.shaareyzedek.org), thanks to the Richard and Sharon (z'l) Brown Live Streaming fund. In addition, the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator will provide each family with a DVD as a memento of their service.



**Are there restrictions on using the synagogue's social rooms?**

It is joyous to mark this celebration with a *S'udat Mitzvah*, a festive meal. Of course, the style and tone of the celebration should be in keeping with Jewish values—a kosher meal, appropriate dress, respectfulness in all aspects of the event. No cell phones, cameras or videos are allowed.

**What if the celebration is not held in the Synagogue?**

While we endorse the idea that Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a wonderful occasion on which to celebrate, we strongly recommend that the party be appropriate. The emphasis should be on the *Mitzvah*, not on the *Bar*. Jewish lifecycle events bring *kedushah* (holiness) into our lives. As such, families are encouraged to ensure that the food at such events is kosher or dairy so that everyone can feel comfortable attending.

Notes

## INFORMATION TO HELP YOUR GUESTS UNDERSTAND AND SHARE IN THE SERVICE

### Sanctuary Guidelines

Jewish tradition encourages the notion of *hiddur mitzvah* (the aesthetic enhancement of ritual). At Congregation Shaarey Zedek, we encourage those who worship with us to participate fully in services, and to conduct themselves in a manner befitting respect for the *Torah* and our community. In this spirit, we provide the following guidelines for worship:

#### Proper Attire

The sanctity of *Shabbat* is enhanced when we wear clothing that reflects the holiness of the day. In this spirit, we request that worshippers dress appropriately. All Jewish and non-Jewish men should wear *kippot*. It is the custom of the congregation that men seated on the *bimah* or called to the *Torah* for an *aliyah* should wear both *kippah* and *tallit*. Women on the *bimah* should cover their heads as well, and they may wear a *tallit* if desired.

#### Entering and Leaving the Sanctuary

We request that you avoid leaving or entering the sanctuary when:

- The Ark is open
- The congregation is standing
- The *Torah* and *Haftarah* are being read
- The Rabbi delivers the sermon and Bar/Bat Mitzvah charge, and during the student's *D'var Torah*

#### Sabbath Prohibitions

Out of respect for the sanctity of our services, please refrain from:

- Using any cell phone, texting device, pager usage or photography
- Eating, drinking and gum chewing in the Sanctuary
- Conversation during the service

## To our young adults and B'nai Mitzvah friends:

The synagogue is a place of worship. We request your assistance in creating an environment that helps us create a positive prayer experience. There should be no talking other than in a prayer response. Any young adult not behaving in an acceptable manner may be reseated or asked to leave.

Families with young children are requested to be responsible for these children throughout services.

## Sample of Behavior Guidelines

**SAMPLE**

### Behavior at the Service

In order to encourage proper behavior and appropriate respect for the sanctity of the service, we suggest you include a letter with your invitation or by e-mail, similar to the following:

To the Parents of \_\_\_\_\_'s Friends:

We are so pleased that your child will be attending \_\_\_\_\_'s Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This is a very special time in his/her life and \_\_\_\_\_ is looking forward to sharing it with his/her friends.

We have had many discussions filled with questions about the Bar/Bat Mitzvah day. The Bar (for boys) and Bat (for girls) Mitzvah ceremony is about a Jewish child entering adulthood. This "rite of passage" is a wonderful experience, full of traditions.

The ceremony takes place during a Saturday morning Shabbat (Sabbath) service. There will be prayers in Hebrew and English, so one may follow along. \_\_\_\_\_ will read from the sacred Torah (Five Books of Moses) and lead much of the service.

As you would expect, the dress code is nice clothing in celebration of the Sabbath and to show respect for the ceremony. Our ushers are there to help guests feel comfortable and to answer questions. Encourage your children to ask if they need guidance.

Congregation Shaarey Zedek is located in Southfield, on the corner of 11 Mile and Bell Road, ¼ mile west of Lahser Road. The Torah service begins at 9:45 a.m. and will conclude at approximately 12:00 noon. A *kiddush* and lunch will follow.

We would love to have you join us for our very special service, along with your child. However, if you choose not to do so, your child will be ready to be picked up around 12:45 p.m.

## Conclusion

There will be many times in the months to come when you will have specific questions about all the thought and planning that go into this important event in the life of your child and family. Please do not hesitate to call the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator at 248.357.5544 ext. 40, or send an e-mail to [miwrey@shaareyzedek.org](mailto:miwrey@shaareyzedek.org). The Rabbis, Hazzan and Assistant Cantor are also available to assist, depending on the question.

We also strongly recommend that you take advantage of the Congregation Shaarey Zedek spirit, our family of friends, by contacting another Shaarey Zedek family who has recently celebrated a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Perhaps there is a family whom you already know. If not, this is a wonderful opportunity to get to know someone else in your Shaarey Zedek family. Don't hesitate to call our B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator or Executive Director for references. After all, it won't be long before someone may be calling you for help and advice.

Your child is about to celebrate a very special day, one for which he or she has worked so hard. Your child is now becoming part of a larger community, and becoming a Jewish adult, with all of its responsibilities and challenges. As we read in Psalm 118:24, "This is the day the LORD has made; let us be glad and rejoice in it!" Even if there are ups and downs along the path and everything doesn't go exactly according to plan, keep it all in perspective. Set the proper mood for your child and participate fully in the process. When you enjoy and find meaning in the experience, your happiness and exuberance will be felt and shared by all.



**Additional Notes**