

KEHILLAT MA'ARAV B'NAI MITZVAH HANDBOOK

לך-לך מארצה וממולדתך...
אל הארץ אשר ארצה .
ואברכה... והיה ברכה

"Go Forth from the Land of your Childhood....and I will bless you...and
you will be a blessing" (Genesis 12:1 – 2)



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Dear Families,

For many a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a time to unwrap presents and set up a bank account. May I suggest that you strive to make it a time to “unwrap” your child’s religious development, help your child set up a “moral” bank account. Think of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process as a holy opportunity for sharpening one’s religious identity, think of it as a spiritual undertaking for your entire family.

I liken the preparation for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah to that of a couple preparing for their wedding. They’re no longer simply boyfriend and girlfriend, but neither are they husband and wife; they’re in transition - they’re engaged. So too with your child and your family, you’re in transition. The process has begun; it’s up to you to become, “engaged.”

Whether it’s starting up, or adding to your home’s existent Jewish library, buy Jewish books. Attend Shabbat services and reevaluate your family’s observance of Shabbat, Kashrut, Jewish thought and holidays. Gauge your connection to God, Torah and Israel—Judaism’s theological triumvirate. This is a great time for your family’s religious growth, introspection and exploration.

At Kehillat Ma’arav, we are proud to do our part to help prepare your child. I fervently hope the process of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah begins a wondrous—fun filled—journey. Above all, I hope it is part of a continuous engagement in the teachings, values and joys that define our vast and glorious Jewish People.

This important milestone of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is experienced not only by your child, your family and friends, but also with our entire synagogue community. Whatever we can do to help make this process more meaningful and enjoyable, please let us know and we will do all that we can.

Congratulations in advance, and may your child be a great source of inspiration to your family, our synagogue community and to God’s precious world.

Mazel Tov,

Rabbi Michael Gotlieb



2. Preparation

Setting a Bar or Bat Mitzvah (B/M) Date

Approximately eighteen (18) months prior to the B/M each family should setup a B/M date. The Cantor is available to meet with the parents to address scheduling needs.

Private Mentoring/Tutoring

Individual lessons begin approximately 9-12 months prior to the B/M date. B/M lessons are taught individually, and the duration of each lesson is approximately 30 minutes. All of the material your child will need to contribute to the Shabbat service will be covered during his/her weekly lesson.

The Rabbi will meet with the B/M child approximately 6 weeks in advance of the celebration in preparation for the B/M address (D'var Torah) to the congregation.

The Rabbi strongly encourages attendance of parents in his office when meeting with your child for the preparation of the D'var Torah.

Each celebrant is invited to prepare a small column with his/her picture in the congregational newsletter. The article should contain relevant information about the celebrant. In order to have an article published, it must be sent to the Synagogue office prior to the first of the month proceeding the month of the B/M, (i.e. April 1st for a May B/M).

B/M Material

We encourage the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to lead as much of the Shabbat morning service as possible. Including the following portions of the Saturday morning service:

- Shacharit Service
- Torah service
- Selected Hebrew readings in the Torah portion, including the Maftir Torah reading
- Blessing before the Haftorah
- Haftorah
- Blessing after the Haftorah
- Musaf service

- Kiddush/Motzi

To facilitate B/M studies, a CD or Mp3 of the aforementioned portions of the service, including the Haftorah and Torah readings specific to the individual B/M portion, will be prepared for each student, along with a folder of his/her B/M material. The B/M will also be given their own Mitzvah Tools account (an interactive B/M website), to help with the monitoring of and progress of each weeks study assignment.

Good Study Habits

ENCOURAGEMENT OF GOOD STUDY HABITS IS GREATLY APPRECIATED AND BENEFICIAL. Minimally, students should study for 30 minutes each day. Please maintain awareness of your child's progress.

Rehearsal

A complete rehearsal should be arranged for the B/M and the parents to take place during the week before the occasion.

If you wish the Rabbi and Cantor to be included in a photo session, this may be accomplished at the rehearsal. Be sure to schedule the rehearsal with the Rabbi, Cantor and Executive Director - Kathie Rose, so that your picture session is booked into our synagogue calendar

Family Shabbat and Synagogue participation.

To make the service more meaningful we encourage and strongly recommend regular attendance at Saturday morning services. It is hoped that this attendance both by parents and students will make the services more meaningful and better understood, so as to generally enrich your religious experience of the Shabbat and of this B/M occasion - see the BM Timeline Guide.

2. Synagogue Standards

Administrative

The B/M Mitzvah fee includes approximately 9 months of individual instruction, all materials, an unedited DVD of the Shabbat service, and use of the facility. Consider consulting with our in-house event coordinator.

ALL B/M FEES MUST BE PAID WHEN TRAINING BEGINS.

In addition, each B/M family must be current in payment of all dues and fees, including pledges, when training begins. Or other arrangements made with the Executive director.

Academic

The educational requirement for B/M is at the discretion of the Rabbi, Cantor and Director of education. Students are expected to meet the Religious School prayer and curricular expectations prior to their B/M. All 5th and 6th graders and their families are required to attend all 6 of the B'nai Mitzvah Family seminars. Special exceptions are made on a case-by-case basis.

All students who are enrolled in class (7th grade), and have their ceremonies in the fall, are expected to finish the full year in June with their classmates.



3. Shabbat Morning Service

Shacharit service, 9:30 AM

Shabbat Morning Service & Family Participation/Honors

- TORAH SERVICE, Saturday morning. The parent(s) and the grandparents are invited to join the B/M prior to the opening of the Ark.
- The Rabbi introduces the Torah portion.
- Aliyot, Saturday morning. The designated honorees are called to the Torah to recite the blessings before and after the Torah, preferably in the following order: Kohen, Levi, #3-#7. Typically, the parents of the B/M are invited for the 7th Aliyah, followed by the Maftir Aliyah, assigned to the B/M.
- Maftir, the Cantor will call up the B/M by his or her Hebrew name, after which the B/M will recite the Maftir portion with the accompanying blessings. Rabbi will offer the B/M a public blessing after the Maftir reading.
- Hagbah, lifting the Torah & Gelilah, binding the Torah.
- The Rabbi introduces the Haftorah.
- The B/M chants the blessings and Haftorah.
- B/M delivers address (D'var Torah) to the congregation.
- It is customary for parents to say a few meaningful words to their child in front of the congregation. The purpose is to charge the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with the duties and responsibilities of being a young adult in the Jewish community and to give thanks for being able to celebrate this sacred moment. Your blessing should be tasteful and brief, and both parents should not exceed 5 minutes in total. For further advice, please speak with the Rabbi.
- Rabbi addresses the B/M
- Certificate presented to B/M from Rabbi
- Prayer for Peace, Prayer for Our Country, Prayer for the State of Israel (optional), Ashrei, Torah returned to Ark.
- (Musaf) additional service
- Presentation by President or Board of Directors member to B/M

Ark Openings & Aliyot

It is necessary that you ascertain beforehand that those individuals being honored are able to recite the blessings. For your convenience a copy of the blessings before and after the Torah portion has been included along with transliterations for you to copy and give to those you wish to honor.

The Enclosed Honors sheet must be submitted to the synagogue office by Thursday prior to the B/M Shabbat (See Honors Request Sheet - Appendix B)

- 1) Ark openings, Hagbah (Torah lifting), and Gelilah (Torah binding) do not require a Hebrew recitation. There are English readings available, such as Prayer for our Country and Prayer for Peace.
- 2) Kindly make every effort to limit the number of Aliyot and other honors to those on the enclosed worksheet. Aliyot may be shared.
- 3) Husbands and wives are encouraged to take an Aliyah together.
- 4) Please notify the people you are honoring in advance and encourage them to be in their seats at 9:30 am Saturday, when Shabbat services begin.
- 5) Decorum on the Bimah requires men who are being honored wear a Kippah and a Tallit. Please notify your guests in advance. Both Tallitot and Kippot are available in the atrium every Shabbat morning.
- 6) If candy is to be gently tossed after the reading of the Haftorah, please let the office know. The synagogue will provide soft Kosher candy for this purpose. Candy should only be passed out during the recitation of the Blessings after the Haftorah.

Seating

Immediate family (parents & siblings) may sit in the front row in the center section, in front of the Rabbi's lectern. Parents may also choose to sit on the Bimah. Our preference is that the B/M sits on the Bimah during the entire service.

Religious Policies and Proper Etiquette

Photography/Videography

In order to add to the holiness of Shabbat, picture taking, video-recording, etc., are not permitted on Shabbat, either before, during or after the service. This must be strictly observed. Kehillat Ma'arav is pleased to offer you a DVD copy of the service using our in-house equipment which is set up prior to Shabbat.

Community Commemorations

Kehillat Ma'arav is a congregation blessed with many joyous occasions. We therefore anticipate that other celebrations and commemorations may likely occur during the same Shabbat as the B/M celebration. These events are not mutually exclusive of the B/M and in no way compete with, or detract from, a B/M celebration. Our synagogue primary purpose is to celebrate Shabbat communally.

Dress code

The Jewish value of "*Tz'niyut*" or modesty is observed in our congregation. Please be mindful to dress appropriately, with shoulders covered and proper synagogue attire

4. Celebration**Community – wide Kiddush**

It is Kehillat Ma'arav's synagogue policy and tradition, as well as a wonderful privilege, for our B/M family to sponsor the Saturday morning congregational Kiddush following services. Your Kiddush should include both your invited guests as well as congregants. Please contact the office for more information.

Please consider having your B/M party here at KM, thereby maintaining a spirit of community and *ruach*. As a benefit of your membership, there is no facility use fee. Contact the synagogue office for more information and a list of Kosher caterers from which to choose. If you decide to go elsewhere, we strongly encourage B/M parties be held at an establishment with Kosher catering options.

To avoid embarrassment and help to strengthen the bond between the students and synagogue community, we request that your invitations include all of your child's religious school class.

In all cases regarding matters of precedent, procedure, and propriety at religious events held at Kehillat Ma'arav, Rabbi Michael Gotlieb, as the religious authority of our congregation, will be the final arbitrator.



Hidur Mitzvah (Beautification of the Mitzvah)

Where to buy Tallitot/Kippot

Many families choose to purchase monogrammed Kippot for the congregation and their guests to honor this special occasion. Tallitot and Kippot can be purchased or ordered through the Kehillat Ma'arav Gift Shop. Contact the office to schedule an appointment.

Flowers & Decorations

Flower arrangements for the Bimah and /or the food tables can be purchased from a florist at your discretion. This is not mandatory but it does enhance the occasion. If flowers, balloons or decorations will be delivered, please instruct vendors to do so before 12:00 noon on Friday. Please give the office the name and telephone number of your florist (just in case the flowers are not delivered on time). You may wish to contact the office for recommended vendors.



BM Timeline Guide

The timeline guide below is meant to be a planning guide and should be modified to account for your personal plans and individual circumstances, together with the Rabbi and Cantor.

Synagogue Activities - B'nai Mitzvah Timeline	
24 months	Attend the B/M family seminar programs 5th and 6th grade.
14 months	Schedule the date and time for your B'nai Mitzvah. Submit all Hebrew names.
1 year	Attend services regularly to feel comfortable in the Sanctuary and learn the service and logistics - get ideas from others celebrating their B'nai Mitzvah.
10 months	Receives handbook. Assigned a Tutor. Begin private studying of B/M material. Begin or continue to light candles and say Kiddush on Friday night with family. Child receives Mitzvah Tools account.
	Child receives lesson plan (breakdown of minimum material per lesson).
	Determine type of Kiddush and hire caterer if this is the option chosen.
6 months	Step up your Shabbat attendance.
	Discuss with family ways to incorporate theme of "Judaism" into your Bar/Bat Mitzvah party.
3 - 4 months	Bar/Bat Mitzvah writes brief biography, (not more than 350 words) for the Voice.
	Parents and siblings begin learning Torah Reading(s).
	Select and purchase Tallit, Tefillin, and Kippot.
2 months	Child will begin studying with the Cantor Parent to meet with the Executive Director regarding logistics for the day of.
6 weeks	Should have completed Torah and Haftorah reading. Child meets with Rabbi to prepare <i>D'var Torah</i> (speech).
1 month	Order your flowers for the Bimah (optional). Decide on honors and obtain Hebrew names for Aliyot honors.
2 week	Child will practice with Cantor from the Torah Scroll on the lectern. Buy soft wrapped candy to be tossed at service. (optional)
1 week	Complete and submit the Honor (Aliyot) Form (attached) .

HAGBAH (Lifting the Torah) and G'lilah (Dressing the Torah):

ARK CLOSING (1 or 2 persons):

1

2

Optional Readings (page 415-417):

Prayer for
peace:

Prayer for
State of Israel:

Prayer for our
Country:

BAR/BAT MITZVAH SHABBAT MORNING HONORS

NOTE: Please print the names of each honoree and the relationship to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah so that the Rabbi can announce them

to the congregation. If someone comes from far away, you may want to include that information also. Make two copies: one for

the Rabbi and one for the Gabbaim.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Parent(s):

Grand Parent(s):

ARK OPENING (1 or 2 persons):

1

2

Grandparents and Parents will ascend the Bimah
to open the Ark.

TORAH
PROCESSIONAL

TORAH RECESSIONAL

ALIYOT: persons called to the Torah to chant the blessing before and after the reading. Please give both the English and Hebrew names for this honor.

Aliyah	English Name	Hebrew Name	Relationship
<i>EXAMPLE:</i>	<i>Joshua Heller</i>	<i>Yehoshua ben Moshe</i>	<i>Uncle from Detroit</i>
1 Kohen			
2 Levi			
3			
4			
5			

6 Reserved for Congrega tion			
7 Parent(s) of Bar/ Bat Mitzvah:			
8 Maftir: Bar/Bat Mitzvah			

Mitzvah Project - Appendix C

Most B'nai mitzvah students are rightfully focused, and often overwhelmed, with preparations for the bar/bat mitzvah. As a result, the 'mitzvah' project is not usually given sufficient attention.

For this reason, we have instituted a Post B'nai Mitzvah Honors Program. Overseen by our staff, students can craft a Judaic project based on their personal interests.

You will be invited to learn more about this meaningful, interactive Jewish learning endeavor.