



B'nei Mitzvah Manual

“At thirteen years old one is obligated to observe Mitzvot... Turn the Torah over and over for everything is contained within it.”

Pirkei Avot 5:25-26

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Dear Bar or Bat Mitzvah Candidate,

Congratulations for having reached this very important point in your Jewish life. You are about to go through a process of transition, where you will become an adult member of the Jewish community. You'll no longer be only a student, but now will also be a teacher; no longer a child, but a young adult in the eyes of the members of Temple Shir Shalom. This means that we will ask you to take on even greater responsibility in our congregation, like reading from the Torah, leading Services, and doing all of the other Mitzvot that a Jew is required to do.

One of the most important Mitzvot is Tzedakah, making the world a better place by helping others. Therefore, we will ask you to choose a yearlong Mitzvah Project to do. You'll choose it yourself and you'll carry it out yourself. It is yours to do to prove to yourself and to your congregation that you can make a difference.

During the year prior to your Bat or Bar Mitzvah you'll meet with different teachers to talk about this big change in your life, to study your Torah portion, prepare your service, write a speech, and discuss your Mitzvah project. You will also prepare for your service and begin to understand what it means to become a Bat or Bar Mitzvah.

The Shir Shalom community and I are here to help you in any way we can as you prepare for this very important day in your life. Both you and your parents should read through this booklet as it will tell you the important things you need to know about your Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

Your community is very proud of your choice to become a Bar or Bat Mitzvah and we look forward to welcoming you into the congregation as our newest member.

Mazel Tov!

Cantor Kim Singer

Welcome to the Temple Shir Shalom B'nei Mitzvah program!

Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, a son or daughter of the commandments, marks the beginning of your child's journey into adulthood, hence their becoming an adult member of our congregation, not only as a student, but a teacher as well. Hopefully, this manual will help you sail smoothly through this challenging and rewarding time. It will inform you of what to expect throughout the process, the requirements for becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, information about our Temple facility, and includes handy tips on throwing a celebration that suits your child after the event.

Please keep this manual in an accessible place and bring it with you to your family's first meeting with Cantor Kim.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Family Commitment

What is the B'nei Mitzvah family required to do?

Attend services regularly. We encourage your family to attend services as frequently as possible so that your child understands your commitment to Judaism, to the synagogue and to his/her spiritual growth. Service attendance also helps reinforce the prayers the students are learning. During the year leading up to your Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, attending and participating in at least 12 Shabbat services, and all of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah services of the B'nei Mitzvah class, will significantly help the candidate and family prepare for what will be asked of them. B'nei mitzvah students are also strongly encouraged to attend High Holiday services on both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (at least one service for each holiday).

Provide supplemental Hebrew instruction during the year prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. If necessary, we will supply you with a list of competent, reasonably priced tutors. You are not required to have a tutor, especially if a parent is a competent Hebrew reader and willing to work with their student – this can make for a wonderful bonding experience for both of you.

Learn the meaning of your child's Torah portion and support them through thoughtful conversation in the preparation of his/her D'var Torah.

Work on a community service or mitzvah project throughout the year. This reinforces the belief that we are all responsible to repair our world and will be a demonstration of your child's commitment to our community. The project needs to be discussed with and approved by Cantor Kim. Some ideas for mitzvah projects are listed under "Doing Mitzvot" on page 15.

Model Acts of Loving Kindness for your child by giving as a family. We ask that you consider a family commitment to a charity or cause to help your child understand the importance of supporting the community at large.

Attend Friday night service the night before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah takes place in the context of our community Shabbat observance. It is the family, as part of a Jewish community, who brings a child to Torah. Your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah is your family's weekend to celebrate this milestone with your Jewish community, so it is important for your plans to include being with our Temple community on Friday night. On a practical level, it gives your child a first opportunity to lead the congregation and banish any last minute butterflies. On a practical level, a Temple Shir Shalom Bar/Bat Mitzvah student is traditionally invited to lead a prayer on Friday night. This gives your child an opportunity to lead the congregation and banish any last minute butterflies.

Sponsor the Oneg in your child's honor on the Friday before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Your family can either provide the Friday night Oneg or enlist friends and/or relatives to provide/sponsor the Oneg in honor of your child, following the Kosher, set-up and clean-up guidelines of Temple Israel. One idea that has worked well is to trade with another Bar/Bat Mitzvah family – you provide/sponsor theirs and they provide/sponsor yours. Another way to do it is to have the B'nei Mitzvah class families work as a team to sponsor each student's Oneg as a group. This way, the cost and responsibilities get split amongst many families, as opposed to falling upon just one. This option also brings the class families together as a supportive and close-knit unit.

Provide a Kiddush for Saturday following services. You may plan whatever you would like, but the minimum required is challah and juice. Families have done everything from providing bagels and fruit to providing a fully catered lunch. If providing a Kosher luncheon, please plan 50 additional plates to cover the inclusion of Temple Israel's membership. Approved caterers include Bagel King and Temple Israel's Sisterhood. Please direct any additional questions to our Oneg or B'nei Mitzvah Coordinators. If using the Temple Israel sisterhood catered luncheon, pricing generally starts at \$6 for the first 50 attendees and \$10 per each additional attendee for their basic menu items.

If you choose to just provide juice/challah after Saturday morning services, classrooms #2 and #3 are available at no cost to TSS MAGAL families. The family supplies the food, drink, table covers and paper products. The family sets up and cleans the classrooms.

What are the prerequisites for all B'nei Mitzvah candidates?

Enrollment and attendance at Temple Shir Shalom Religious School.

1. Continuous enrollment and regular attendance in Religious School for a minimum of three (3) years is required beginning in the 5th grade (including the 7th grade school year). Members whose children have been continuously enrolled in Religious School prior to 5th grade will receive priority in scheduling dates.
2. For children 10 years or older with no prior religious education, a minimum of three (3) years of regular Religious School attendance is required (including the 7th grade school year). The scheduling of Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates for all new families is at the discretion of the Spiritual Leader & Religious School Director, based on the child's Hebrew proficiency and knowledge one (1) year prior to B'nei Mitzvah. No date will be set until proficiency is determined.
3. For new members whose children have been continually enrolled in religious school at another synagogue, we will do our best to accommodate you; however existing Temple members will receive priority in scheduling dates. As stated above, scheduling of Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates is at the discretion of Cantor Kim, based on the child's Hebrew proficiency.
4. Students who are enrolled in the Jewish Academy are required to attend TSS Religious School for at least their 7th grade year; however, we encourage enrollment in 6th grade in order to bond and forge friendships with their peers in their B'nei Mitzvah class.

5. Any exceptions to any of the above require the approval of Cantor Kim and the Education Team Leader.

Adequate Hebrew fluency. The TSS Religious School Hebrew program, Mitkadem, provides ongoing evaluation of your child's Hebrew proficiency. Formal evaluations also occur mid-year in 4th grade, and again in 5th grade if needed. A proficiency evaluation is required for all students newly enrolled at TSSRS.

Attendance at TSS Religious School. Per school policy, students are expected to attend a minimum of 21 scheduled Religious School sessions during each school year. This includes their 7th grade year. Becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah does not mark the end of Jewish learning, but the beginning of increased responsibility. Please plan to have your child complete the year as a mark of his/her obligation and support of the other class members.

Usher and help put ritual equipment away at classmates' Bar/Bat Mitzvah services. The B'nei Mitzvah class is responsible for ushering at each other's Bar/Bat Mitzvah services. Please arrive by 9:30 am to hand out siddurim, kippot, song sheets and any other information. You are also responsible for helping to put everything away after services. The Temple Shir Shalom Ritual Team lead will assign ushering and tear-down responsibilities.

Invite classmates to celebrate! It is customary, as well as common courtesy, to invite ALL the other students in the B'nei Mitzvah/7th Grade class to your service and any festivities. This includes the Temple Israel classmates since we are one school and the 6/7 teacher.

Make Tzedakah a part of the event. Though not a requirement, it's nice to think about a way to give back to the Temple for making your bar/bat mitzvah possible. Like all tzedakah, the amount or cost is not important; it's the thought and appreciation behind it that make it meaningful. This can also take the form of a class gift or several families contributing toward a joint gift. Past families have made donations to various Temple funds, donated our Israeli flag, the large tallit for our chuppah, a standing menorah, Shabbat candlesticks & Kiddush cup, our Ner Tamid and the Rimonim on the Torah.

What does Temple Shir Shalom provide?

Hebrew instruction at Religious School. Your child will learn the basics of decoding and many, if not most, of the prayers that are part of the Saturday morning worship service. Additional study will be needed to master all of the material for your child's particular ceremony. This can be provided by a knowledgeable parent or relative, or by hiring a Hebrew tutor.

Coordinating a date with Cantor Kim. Priority is given to members whose children have been continuously enrolled in Religious School prior to 5th grade.

A chance to practice with the Torah. Cantor Kim will provide the candidate with photos of their Torah portion as it appears in the Torah that will be used during their service. The Temple Torah will be made available for your final meeting with Cantor Kim for a “dress rehearsal” the week or so before your big day (see “Two Weeks Before” on page 20).

Plenty of help, support and friendship to help you get through the big event!

What does Cantor Kim provide?

Cantor Kim has been guiding families through the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process for many years. She brings this experience, a deep passion for Jewish prayer and song, and a commitment to helping you create an experience that will be meaningful to your child and your family. She will be in contact with you to select a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, and to set a time for an initial meeting. Please respond promptly when that invitation arrives, dates are "first come first served."

At your initial meeting, Cantor Kim will spend some time getting to know your child and family, explain the process of becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah at TSS, and answer any questions you might have. This will also be an opportunity to evaluate your child's Hebrew proficiency. You'll learn a little about the Torah portion so that you can read it over as a family to choose which section your child will chant/read on the "big day." You will receive recordings of the prayers that are usually chanted at our services, and a copy of the text of the service in Hebrew and English. When you have selected the Torah verses your child will learn you'll receive recordings of that as well.

Throughout the year you will have three additional family meetings with Kim, to check in on your child's Hebrew progress and to work on a d'var Torah (speech). A week or so prior to the Bar/Bar Mitzvah date you will have a complete dress rehearsal, including chanting from the Torah scroll--then you'll be good to go!

Please note: Due to allergy concerns, we ask families not to have live flowers on the bima.

What are the costs?

The B'nei Mitzvah fee is \$500 which covers all of Cantor Kim's professional services, including 4 individual sessions with each Bar/Bat Mitzvah, all materials and the B'nei Mitzvah day service. **There will be a separate \$400 fee for the use of the Temple's facilities** the day of your event. These fees are in addition to religious school tuition and tutoring. At the beginning of 6th grade, your child will also be given their own copy of Mishkan Tefilah for their B'nei Mitzvah studies. This \$54 charge will be billed separately from the annual Religious School book fee. (If you choose an afternoon service, there is also a \$20/hr security fee)

The B'nei Mitzvah fee is due to the Temple upon receiving a confirmed Bar/Bat Mitzvah date to hold your place on the Temple calendar and to reserve the Temple's facility. Facility fees will be billed 90 days prior to your event. If you need to make special payment arrangements, please contact the Temple Treasurer at treasurer@templeshirshalom.org. We are very flexible and all arrangements are confidential.

It is Temple policy that you must be a member in good standing and be current in all of your financial obligations (religious school tuition, membership dues and building fund) in order to stage a life-cycle event. If these obligations are not met 60 days prior to your B'nei Mitzvah date, the Temple reserves the right to cancel your event unless prior arrangements have been made.

Should the family choose to have their child's B'nei mitzvah outside our Temple community (i.e. Israel), a one-time consultation with Cantor Kim will be arranged to provide your child with the materials necessary to prepare. The fee for this one-time consultation is \$180 and is in lieu of the \$500 B'nei Mitzvah fee.

Service Information and Information about Temple Facilities

On the day of your service, you have use of the Temple facilities from 9 am – 2 pm. (3p-6p for afternoon B'nei Mitzvah services) The room will be set up from services the evening before but if you are expecting an especially large crowd, please let us know ahead of time so we can be sure to set up enough chairs. (smaller than 60 attendees can use the chapel) The Temple has kippot and tallit; however, some families choose to provide special kippot for the occasion.

You are responsible for providing a plain, unsliced challah for the bima for both Friday and Saturday (see “One Week Ahead” on page 20). The Temple has a Kiddush cup, challah tray and challah cover, however you are free to bring your own. The front several rows on both sides are customarily reserved for the B'nei Mitzvah family. Please discuss any photography/video plans with Cantor Kim – no photography is permitted at Temple Israel on Shabbat. This includes during the service and oneg/luncheon activities.

If you are having many guests who are not Jewish or are unfamiliar with our Temple, it's nice to provide a program or information sheet. Suggestions include explaining the significance of becoming a bar/bat mitzvah; etiquette and customs of the congregation, explanation of the service, information about the Torah portion, your child's mitzvah project and who will be performing certain honors during the service. Many books and websites have ideas on making these yourself and what to include. If you choose to create a program booklet, please provide Cantor Kim with a copy for proofreading at least two weeks prior to your event.

Our Oneg Coordinator is available to help you plan your Friday night Oneg and Saturday Kiddush. We strongly suggest you enlist the help of several friends or other B'nei Mitzvah families who will be attending to set out food and clean up, leaving your family to enjoy the event with your guests. Whether you need the help of our coordinator or not, please let him/her know who is sponsoring your oneg a month before your event so we can properly acknowledge and thank them!

Contact Information

We are here to help in any way we can to make this a wonderful simcha for you and your family. However, since we are a small Temple, we must count on you to be a responsible partner in this process. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact one of us and we will do our best to help.

Kim Singer, Cantor

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Goals of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah student will go through a transformation from being one whose Judaism is modeled and managed by parents and other family elders, to one who is responsible for his/her own Jewish identity.

In Pirkei Avot we are told that world depends on three things: Torah, Worship and Acts of Loving-kindness. Each of these pillars of the world represents a relationship that the student will realize during his/her year of study.

- The study of Torah represents the relationship of the student with Judaism.
- The understanding and leading prayer represents the relationship of the student with God.
- Performing acts of loving-kindness represent the relationship of the student with society.

All of these relationships will be developed in combination with Torah study.

Temple Shir Shalom's Bar/Bat Mitzvah program has been designed to help each student

- Understand what it means to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- Feel responsible for his/her own Judaism.
- Form a sense of community with other B'nei Mitzvah students.
- Build a closer relationship with Jewish mentors.

We also strive to connect the family and the child to the community through the bringing of a child to Torah.

Throughout the next year, the student will learn what it means to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah through their work with Cantor Kim during their training and through their participation in TSS Religious School. This is the foundation for them learning to be responsible for their own Jewish obligations through the performing of mitzvot. We encourage the practice of six mitzvot:

- **Tefillah (Praying)**, through studying the meaning and significance of Jewish prayers and through praying at home and with the community at Shabbat and holiday services.
- **Shaleeach Tzibur (Leading the Community in Worship)**, by leading an entire Shabbat service from beginning to end, including reading from the Torah and teaching a lesson from the Torah.
- **Talmud Torah (Studying)**, by preparing to lead a Shabbat Service, by chanting Torah, and through study with Cantor Kim, at Religious School and with parents or tutor.
- **Lilomayd Torah (Teaching)**, by preparing and presenting a D'var Torah and helping fellow Bar/Bat Mitzvah students with their studies.
- **Tzedakah (Acting Justly)**, by planning and participating in an individual Mitzvah project for Temple Shir Shalom or the greater Orlando Jewish Community.

- **Torah Lishma (Studying for its own Sake)**, by answering the call to read Torah on other occasions and by committing to continue formal Jewish education after becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah student will be going through this process with other students and they will form their own community in the process. They will study together in and out of Religious School, participate in activities together and share the experience of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah by attending each other's Bar/Bat Mitzvah services. They will also celebrate each other through the year as each becomes a Bar/Bat Mitzvah!

Since they will be working closely with Cantor Kim, and in most cases a dedicated tutor, many of our students are able to develop close relationships with people in the Jewish community who also become their mentors in their Jewish life.

While the majority of the study and preparation work falls to the student, it is also our hope that the family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student will join in the preparation process. If you are able to work with your child directly, we encourage you to do so. If your child is working with a Hebrew tutor, we hope you will actively communicate with him/her about the student's progress and what support you can give. Plan to attend family meetings with Cantor Kim. Help with your child's mitzvah project and attend Shabbat services as a family throughout the year.

Prayers Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah is Expected to Lead

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate typically leads the prayers listed below on the day they become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Many of them will have been learned through our TSS Religious School Mitkadem program, but some may be new. (Pages refer to the Mishkan Tefilah, prayers part of Mitkadem noted with a *). We believe our students should be challenged but not overwhelmed by this process. Adjustments to the requirements are made as needed.

Read the Blessing over Tallit p. 289
 Read Eilu d'varim p. 298
 Read Laasok B'divrei Torah p. 296
 Chant the Morning Blessings p. 293-296
 Chant the Reader's Kaddish p. 299*
 Read the Bar'chu/Yotzer p.313*
 Chant the Sh'ma/V'ahavta p.318-319*
 Chant the Avot V'Imahot p. 323-324*
 Chant the Gevurot p. 325*
 Chant the Torah Blessings p. 368*
 Chant the Haftarah Blessings p. 372*

Choosing a Torah Portion

There is a parsha (Torah portion) – sometimes two! – for every Shabbat. You will receive an English translation of “your” portion to read over with your family. In consultation with Cantor Kim, you will choose the excerpt of the portion (usually 10-15 verses) that your child will chant. She will provide you with the Hebrew text and recordings of the traditional chanting.

Mitzvah Project

You are about to become Bar or Bat Mitzvah. **Becoming** Bar or Bat Mitzvah is much different than **having** a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. "Having" implies that someone else is doing something to or for you. "Becoming" implies that you are responsible for it happening. It will involve a series of events and it does not just suddenly magically happen. In fact it will take a lot of work and determination on your part.

You are not only becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah; you are becoming a more mature and responsible person. Part of this is being able to look beyond yourself to others around you and to others in the world. You are becoming a person who can change the world by making it a little bit better. As part of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation, you are to pick a Mitzvah Project to do during the year. It should be something you decide to do (see page 15 for more information and ideas) and you should spend an average of about three hours a month doing it. Be creative with your idea and work out all the details about how to carry it out. You will discuss it with Cantor Kim many times over the next year. Good luck and be proud of what you do, it is very important!

D'var Torah (Speech)

The D'var Torah is a very important component of becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah. It demonstrates that you have connected the words of a Torah portion to the candidate's life. Here are some guidelines for constructing a speech:

- Read over the English of your Torah portion. Try to find one word, thought or idea that is meaningful and interesting to you.
- Make your D'var Torah personal. Share something that happened to you or someone you know.
- Talk through or write down your thoughts before you try to write your speech. Cantor Kim or your tutor can help you organize your thoughts into a structured speech.

Here are some additional suggestions for structuring a D'var Torah:

1. Re-tell the highlights of your parsha in your own words.
2. Describe something you learned about your parsha.
3. Share thoughts, relevant to your parsha, that you think are important for the congregation to hear.
4. Relate the parsha to the state of the world and culture today.
5. Thank the people who have supported you as you trained through the last year (parents, teachers, tutors, etc.).

We encourage the use of other sources for reference material (Chumash, 10 Minutes of Torah, internet sources, etc), but **do not** copy someone else's D'var Torah. This is your Bar/Bat Mitzvah and we are all interested in hearing your unique perspective.

B'nei Mitzvah Program - Doing Mitzvot

“The world stands of three things: Torah, Worship and Acts of Loving-kindness.”

These words from Pirkei Avot act as a cornerstone to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year. In addition to our kids learning the building blocks of Hebrew which enable them to lead the prayers and chant Torah, we also require them to put what they have learned to work in the community. Some people call it a “Mitzvah project.” However a project implies that after completion the task is over. This is not the case. The objective of *doing mitzvot* in addition to *studying mitzvot* is to train our kids while they are young to be part of a culture of giving.

Here are some ideas/suggestions to discuss with your child regarding “Doing Mitzvot”:

- Find a mitzvah that the family can do together: feeding the homeless, helping the elderly, visiting sick children in the hospital.
- Raise money (creatively) to help Magen David Adom (The Israeli Red Cross), send pizza to IDF soldiers or care packages to American soldiers.
- Support Mazon, the Jewish response to hunger
- Volunteer to read books on tape for the blind.
- Volunteer at afterschool mentoring programs and use his/her best talents to help kids who need tutoring/mentoring
- Help maintain a facility that is in need of help; a school, VFW building, after-school center, a cemetery
- Help take care of animals
- Teach kids a sport or skill that he/she is good at

We aren't measuring the number of hours that our kids spend serving the community. We hope that each family would stress to their children the importance of giving back and that the reward is in the mitzvah itself. As each child writes his/her D'var Torah, teaching from his/her Torah portion, these mitzvot will provide another experience on which to draw to make their D'var Torah more compelling and relevant in today's world.

Doing mitzvot is not just a part of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, it is part of being Jewish.

Bima Information for Services

There will be many opportunities to make this important event in your life a family event. Below is an honor sheet to fill out so that your family and friends can participate in the service. The honors should be reviewed with Cantor Kim at least one month before the date of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

It is the family's responsibility to reach out to all honorees and invite them help you celebrate this simchah!

Name

_____ (as you wish to be called up to the Torah)

Parent's Name

_____ (as you wish to be called up to the Bima)

Hebrew name of Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Hebrew name of Father

Hebrew name of Mother

Erev Shabbat (Friday Night)

Which prayer will you be chanting at this service? _____

Candle Lighting _____

Kiddush _____

Shabbat (Saturday Morning)

Honors Given to Family/Friends

Who will be presenting the tallit? _____

Reading of Ashrei (up to 3) _____

Opening of ARK DOORS (Torah Service) _____

PASSING OF TORAH (Usually parents and grandparents, but may also be older relatives)

Undressing the Torah _____
(1 or 2 people)

Torah Blessings

1st Aliyah _____

2nd Aliyah _____

3rd Aliyah reserved for Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Hagba (lifting the Torah) _____
Our Torah is quite heavy and this person must be capable of lifting the Torah with arms spread for several seconds. They will be asked to demonstrate that they are capable of doing so before the service.

Dressing the Torah _____
(1 or 2 people)

Reading Haftarah _____
(1 or 2 people)

Opening of the Ark for Aleinu

Kiddush Blessing _____

Leading Hamotzi _____

Bima Honors for Giving of Gifts

(These representatives may be invited by the family; otherwise they will be assigned.)

Board of Trustees _____

Religious School _____

Additional Information

Are there any special needs or concerns that we should be aware of (e.g. access to the Bima for handicapped honorees)?

What was your Mitzvah Project?

The Weekend of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service

Erev Shabbat Service

At Friday evening's Service the immediate family will be invited to lead the congregation in the blessings over the Shabbat candles and/or wine (Kiddush). The Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate will be invited to choose a prayer to read or chant at Friday night's service. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate and their immediate family will sit with extended family and guests in the congregation.

Sanctuary Etiquette

1. During the Service, the use of cameras is prohibited in the synagogue. A video camera may be placed in the back of the sanctuary on a tripod and started at the beginning of the Service and to be left unattended for the remainder of the Service. Temple Shir Shalom will help you identify the best place for videography based on the service location.
2. Still photographs on a case by case basis in the Chapel, including with the Torah, may be taken on Saturday morning, but must be completed by 9:15 on Saturday morning. Pictures may be taken in the Social Hall up to 9:30am. You can also make arrangements for pictures with Cantor Kim and Temple Israel prior to Shabbat by contacting the Temple Israel Administrator. We strongly encourage you to do pictures before Friday night/Saturday Shabbat if you want them in the Sanctuary. Arrangements can be made through the Temple Israel office administrator.

How To Plan A Great Bar / Bat Mitzvah Celebration!

This is just a suggested timeline. There are many helpful books and websites with lots of information. The most important thing is to remember what the day is truly about and to spend only what you can afford.



1+ Year Ahead

- Get a date from the synagogue
- Start looking for the perfect place to hold your celebration
- Decide on DJ or band
- Think about a theme – let your celebration reflect your child
- Start looking for a photographer/videographer
- Set a budget and stick to it!!

8-10 Months Ahead

- Send out “Hold the Date” notices/emails to out-of-town family and friends
- Book hotel rooms for out-of-town guests especially if your event falls over a holiday or special event weekend, (ie. UCF football games, President’s Day Weekend, UCF graduation or homecoming).

5-6 Months Ahead

- Create your guest list
- Order invitations. (This can be done later, but don’t push your luck! You want to make sure if they are late or are done incorrectly, you have enough time to fix things!)
- Finalize theme/colors

3-4 Months Ahead

- Book hotel rooms for out-of-town guests (if you haven’t already)
- Make any needed transportation arrangements for guests
- Order kippot
- Shop for a tallit
- Plan/Order those great party favors, centerpieces and decorations
- Shop for a calligrapher or figure out how to make labels on your computer

6-8 Weeks Ahead

- Mail invitations - make sure to include directions to the service and party.
- Order flowers, centerpieces and decorations if you haven’t already (just remember, no live flowers on the bima due to Kim’s allergies)
- Email your child’s announcement for the Temple Mishpacha newsletter to newsletter@templeshirshalom.org. You may also include a photo of your child. Please include child’s full name, grade and school information, academic or other honors, hobbies, interests, mitzvah project information and where friends and family are traveling from for the event. This is the same information you can also send to the Heritage Florida Jewish News (see below).
- Shop for clothes (have fun!)
- Finalize plans for your Friday night Oneg and Saturday Kiddush. Inform the Oneg Coordinator of the Oneg sponsors.

1 Month Ahead

- Confirm hotel reservations
- Confirm the caterer
- Send your child’s picture and announcement to the Florida Heritage Jewish News. (Must be in at least 3 weeks in advance. The announcement is free for subscribers and \$25 for non-subscribers.)

- Confirm with DJ or band and give request list.
- Decide who from the Temple Board and Religious School (2 people) you would like to sit on the Bima with your child. If you request someone, they should receive an invitation to the service. These 2 people will present your child with their bar/bat mitzvah gifts from the Temple and offer moral support during the service. You will receive a Bima Honors form to bring to your 3rd meeting with Kim to indicate your 1st and 2nd choices (just in case someone is unable to attend). It's ok if you don't want to request anyone; this just gives you the opportunity to do so.
- Decide on honors for the service, fill out sheets and bring with you to final meeting with Cantor Kim. Don't forget to ASK the people you want to participate! (and be sure to give them information on their part, if necessary)

2-3 Weeks Ahead

- Make seating charts for the reception. Contact anyone who did not return their RSVP to find out if they are coming.
- Write candle lighting ceremony if you are having one. Decide who will be honored, what will be said and what music will be played. Don't forget to give a list of music to the DJ/band.
- If you don't already have the Torah, contact Kim and arrange to pick it up for your final meeting with her.
- If you are having one, finish your program or information sheet so you have time to make copies. Provide a copy to Kim for proofreading before printing copies.
- Order your cake (if caterer is not providing)
- Write your parent speech, if you are giving one.
- Make sure everyone has something to wear for Friday night, Saturday morning and the celebration! Get alterations if needed.

1 Week Ahead

- Go ahead – confirm everyone one more time!! (Caterer, hotel, DJ, photographer, etc.)
- Give caterer and hotel final numbers.
- Finalize table arrangements and make/print place cards.
- Make copies of everything – the service, prayers, speech, candle lighting, anything important! (Tip: leave a set of everything in your car in case you forget anything at home!)
- Order challahs (Bagel King and BJs are good sources for Kosher Challah):
Friday night – 1 plain unsliced for the Bima
Saturday morning – 1 plain unsliced for the Bima (depending on how many people you are expecting and other Kiddush plans)

Friday

- Take favors, place cards, decorations and centerpieces to the celebration location
- Pick up challahs and cake (or have someone else pick them up!)
- Plan ahead - bring as much with you (challahs, kippot, programs, paper goods, etc.) to Temple tonight so you don't forget tomorrow morning.
- Arrive at Temple early for services and don't forget to eat dinner!
- NO - this is NOT the time to freak out!
- Try to relax and enjoy every minute – it will be over before you know it!

Saturday Morning

- Get everyone to Temple early! (especially if you are taking pictures before the service)
- Make sure you have challahs & juice (you should have picked them up yesterday) and any food for the Kiddush.
- Enjoy! This is a once in a lifetime experience for your family! So, go ahead - sing, smile, shed a few happy tears! (Don't forget Kleenex!)
- When it's all over, go ahead – relax and enjoy the celebration!

Covenant of Bar/Bat Mitzvah

The following covenant must be signed by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student and returned to Cantor Kim Singer.

I have received a copy of The Bar and Bat Mitzvah Manual, have read it, understand it and agree to the requirements, expectations and criteria of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah program. I have reviewed what is expected of me between now and when I become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah with Cantor Kim.

I commit to becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

I commit to attending Shabbat and Holiday services at Temple Shir Shalom.

I commit to continuing my Jewish education through attendance at Temple Shir Shalom Religious School.

I commit to performing a Mitzvah Project before my Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Signed,

Bar / Bat Mitzvah Candidate

Parent

Parent



Temple Shir Shalom B'nei Mitzvah Agreement

The following agreement must be signed and returned to the Temple Shir Shalom Treasurer.

I/We understand that the Temple B'nei Mitzvah fee is \$500 which covers all of Cantor Singer's professional services - 4 individual sessions, all materials and the B'nei Mitzvah day service. There will be an additional charge for the Saturday rental of the Temple facility for which we will receive a separate bill from the Temple 90 days before our Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

I/We understand that our B'nei Mitzvah fee is due to the Temple upon receiving our confirmed Bar/Bat Mitzvah date to hold our place on the Temple calendar and to reserve the Temple facility. I/We understand the facility rental fee of \$400 will be billed 90 days prior and is due to the Temple 60 days prior to our Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. I/we understand this fee is nonrefundable.

I/We also understand that we must be a member in good standing and be current in all of our financial obligations, including religious school tuition, dues and building fund, in order to stage a life-cycle event. If these obligations are not met 60 days prior to our Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, the Temple reserves the right to cancel our event.

If we need to make any special payment arrangements, I/we will contact the Temple Treasurer at treasurer@templeshirshalom.org. All financial arrangements are confidential.

Child's name _____

I/We have read and accept the terms above.

Parent signature

Date

Parent signature

Date