

## A Letter to Bnai Mitzvah

Dear Student,

This year you will enter Jewish adulthood. On the day of your ceremony, when you go up to the Torah, you will feel relaxed, be well prepared, and link yourself with the Jewish people and our covenant with God.

Each student is unique and we want you to be your best with the amount of material that suits you. Your bar or bat mitzvah preparation will include, for most students, chanting from Haftorah and Torah and leading prayers. We expect that you will regularly attend services on Saturday morning, work with me, your Rabbi and our tutors, and perform a 10-hour mitzvah project. We want you to gain the necessary skills that will allow you to feel comfortable in synagogue on weekdays, as well as Shabbat. I seek to make your bar or bat mitzvah a day of celebration and accomplishment. As your Rabbi, I look forward to our time together during this year of preparation for this milestone. I will study with you and your parents in the larger group at least once a month. I will also meet individually to discuss your mitzvah project and your *d'var Torah* and to rehearse a few weeks before your ceremony. We provide a team of people as a resource throughout your learning process. If you have any questions or concerns feel free to contact me.

We look forward to sharing with you and your family in your Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

*Mazal Tov,*

Rabbi Elie Spitz and the Ritual Committee

## A Message to Parents

Dear Parents,

Congratulations on your child's coming of age. A bar or bat mitzvah is a life-cycle moment for the entire family. We look forward to preparing your child to stand before the congregation as a confident adult who feels the joy of Jewish belonging and a great sense of achievement.

We are your partners providing a fine religious school, bar and bat mitzvah tutor, peer tutors, and monthly family education classes. To enhance your family's preparation we encourage your active involvement in a variety of ways:

- At least one parent is expected to join your child on Saturday mornings for services. Steady parental attendance will reinforce Jewish belonging and study. Such attendance will offer you, the parents, an added context, enhance your own synagogue skills, and offer support for your child's attendance.
- Please take an active interest in your child's learning. Studies show that children are more motivated and learn better when parents hear them practice. If you have concerns about your child's progress, please speak with anyone on our training team and know that you are invited to join your child in his or her tutor sessions, davener's clinic, or meetings with the Rabbi.
- We provide opportunities for you to learn in your child's year of increased Jewish study. The monthly life-cycle classes are designed for parent participation. In addition, if you would like to learn to chant a section of the Torah, even if you have never done it before, we will be happy to work with you to prepare.

The young people at CBI continue to be a source of great satisfaction. Each bnai mitzvah is unique and part of a chain of Jewish belonging.

I look forward to our time together during your child's bar or bat mitzvah year.

*L'Shalom,*

Rabbi Elie Spitz

## A Chronological Summary of What Parents and Children will Need to Prepare

### **10-12 months prior:**

**Parents** are asked to arrange a meeting with Rabbi Spitz for the family to discuss all questions and concerns and begin to formulate a family vision for your *simcha*.

**Parents** should contact Executive Director, Sandy Klein, to reserve facilities for Friday night dinner or Saturday night party rentals.

### **9 months prior:**

**Student** begins attending the Saturday morning services to start familiarizing themselves with the service and the prayers with at least one parent. It is encouraged they stay the entire service and then join the community for lunch following the service.

### **8 months prior:**

**Students** begin working with our synagogue tutor to receive Haftarah material, timeline and to discuss expectations. Students will continue to receive their tutoring during Saturday mornings with both group and one-on-one lessons with the tutor. Students are expected to remain in the sanctuary with a parent until the conclusion of the service.

### **4 months prior:**

The family will arrange a meeting with Rabbi Spitz usually to coincide with the completion of the haftarah. The goals of the meeting are to hear how the students' learning is progressing and to provide breakdown of Torah readings. At this meeting the student will also be provided with material and guidelines to begin working on their D'var Torah, the students teaching for the community. If the family would like a visitor to read a Torah portion on the day of the ceremony we expect that the reading takes place at the community standard and will ask the visitor to read in advance for a member of our ritual committee. A rehearsal date will be scheduled at this meeting.

**Parents** must check the CBI office for date to submit bar/bat mitzvah publication information for the quarterly newsletter.

### **8-10 weeks prior:**

**Parents** must contact Executive Director, Sandy Klein, to finalize details for the Shabbat *kiddush* luncheon.

Parents must e-mail Michael Bare at [michaelbare@yahoo.com](mailto:michaelbare@yahoo.com) to let him know what torah readings will be read by the bnai mitzvah, family and friends. Michael will fill in with readers from the congregation as necessary.

**The student** will submit a first draft *D'var Torah* to the Rabbi for his approval.

### **At rehearsal: (usually 2 weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah)**

Parents must submit to the Rabbi a completed honors form listing all those individuals who will be honored at the ceremony.

**As many families choose to use this rehearsal as a time for formal photos and/or a videotaping of their bar/bat mitzvah in performance mode, you may wish to contact your photographer and/or videographer to coordinate schedules.**

## Prerequisites for Bnai Mitzvah Financial

An invoice will be mailed to you at the onset of the tutoring sessions with the bar mitzvah fee. Payment arrangements, with executive director, Sandy Klein, need to be made ahead of time for your child's preparation to begin in a timely manner.

### Academic

- At least five years of study, or the equivalent, in a Jewish education program that is recognized by the religious and education committees of B'nai Israel.
- In addition to bnai mitzvah preparation during the bar/bat mitzvah year, the student must be currently enrolled in the CBI religious school or a Jewish day school, unless he or she has received special dispensation by the rabbi and the educational director of the CBI religious school.

**Families of those students who have in the past attended Jewish day school and (by permission only) are not currently enrolled in CBI's Hebrew school must attend the life cycle classes offered by the rabbi.**

### Ancestral

Students must be Jewish, per requirement of United Synagogue. Children born of a nonJewish mother will need to complete conversion prior to the beginning of bar or bat mitzvah training.

## *EVENT PREPARATION SCHEDULE AND PLANNING TIPS*

### **10-12 months:**

Contact CBI's Executive Director, Sandy Klein, to reserve the use of CBI facilities for events held on Friday evening, Saturday evening and Sunday of your celebration weekend.

### **8-10 weeks:**

Schedule a meeting with Sandy to review options for the Saturday kiddush luncheon and any other meal that you may be planning. With respect to the luncheon, you will be able to either:

1. Work with our in-house caterer OR
2. Pay a kitchen rental fee and contract with a different, CBI-approved kosher caterer.

**Please note that, as CBI cherishes our weekly opportunity to enjoy Shabbat together as a community, all luncheons are planned with the estimated total number of synagogue attendees in mind.**

### **Bima (Podium) Decor**

Families often adorn our sanctuary with flowers, placed on each side of the *bima*. Flower deliveries must be made no later than 12:00 pm on Friday.

CBI offers an alternative to flowers. Those families who make a donation of \$118 to CBI may display one of our beautifully arranged artificial flower arrangements.

### **Personalized programs:**

Many families create an explanatory "guide" for their guests who are unaccustomed to synagogue practices and Jewish life-cycle events; doing so is OPTIONAL. To see examples of what other families have done, ask to see the file in the office.

## Shabbat Morning Agenda and Requirements

Bar/bat mitzvah students attending services, particularly on Shabbat, should be **dressed appropriately for entering a house of worship**. This is a particularly sensitive area during a Shabbat when there is a bar/bat mitzvah. Each student should dress for these occasions as the student would want others to dress for his/her bar/bat mitzvah. Accordingly, tee shirts, strapless or spaghetti strap dresses, denim jeans, shorts, or other similar types of clothing should not be worn for Shabbat.

**An outline of Shabbat morning: Total time running: approx. 3 hours, 9:30 am-12:15 pm Our services are always followed by a *kiddush* luncheon for the entire congregation.**

**PART 1 – Birkhot Hashachar (Morning Blessings) and P’sukei D’zimra (Psalms of Praise)** We begin every morning service by reciting a series of blessings thanking God for the gifts of life (our ability to wake-up, the fact that we are endowed with wisdom, the fact that we can see and hear, eat, etc.). The opening psalms of praise are then woven together with verses of scripture which together serve as a warm-up that prepares our imagination and soul for a more intimate encounter with God in *Shacharit* (part 2).

### **PART 2 – Shacharit**

*Shacharit* (literally, “dawn”) are the main Jewish prayers on a daily basis. The liturgy recited on Shabbat is fuller than that recited the other six mornings of the week. The outline is as follows:

- 1) We begin thematically where we concluded *p’sukei d’zimra*, with more words of praise.
- 2) We are called to communal prayer as a group with “*Barchu*”.
- 3) We recite two blessings with introductory paragraphs that precede the recitation of the *Sh’ma*, three paragraphs taken from the Torah.
- 4) Concluding blessing of the *Sh’ma* that guides us into the *Amidah* – the high point of the prayer service.
- 5) We recite privately the *Amidah*, the standing prayer, on our own as an opportunity to have a personal conversation with G-d
- 6) The *Shaliah tzibur*, the prayer leader, repeats the *Amida* aloud.

### **PART 3 – The Torah Service**

The heart of Shabbat morning is the Torah service, which includes:

- 1) Removal of the Torah from the ark.
- 2) Escorting the Torah around the sanctuary.
- 3) Reading a designated passage from the scroll, divided into 7 parts, called *aliyot*.
- 4) Raising and dressing the Torah.
- 5) Chanting the haftarah - a designated passage from the prophetic literature.
- 6) Escorting the Torah around the sanctuary and replacing the Torah in the ark. 7) Presenting a sermon or study session.

Our Torah is the source of the Jewish people’s unity and identity. The physical and liturgical drama in the Torah service is meant to conjure up the image of revelation, when a united group of people stood at Sinai and were addressed by God.

### **PART 4 – Musaf (“Additional”) service**

The concluding service that is added after the Torah service on Shabbat and holidays, *musaf*, symbolizes the *supplemental* sacrificial Shabbat offering that was mandated when the Temple stood in Jerusalem. The service simply begins with an *Amidah* (a variation of the silent prayer recited during *Shacharit*), and concludes with a series of poetic prayers.

**At the conclusion of the musaf service, we prepare for our *seudat mitzvah* – the celebratory luncheon in honor of the bar/bat mitzvah – by reciting *kiddush*, doing the ritual washing and reciting the blessing over the *hallah* together in the sanctuary, led by the rabbi. All those who wish to make their own *kiddush*, wash and say *hamotzi* on their own, will be able to do so as they enter the social hall.**

### Shabbat Observance in a Conservative Synagogue

Congregation B'nai Israel abides by the standards of Shabbat conduct outlined by the Conservative Movement for the entire 25 hours of Shabbat - from 18 minutes prior to sundown on Friday until three stars can be seen on Saturday evening. As such, all bar / bat mitzvah families **and their guests** must be aware of the following:

- The use of any personal electronic equipment such as cell phones, pagers, cameras or electronic music equipment is prohibited within the synagogue or on the public grounds.
- Food cooked after sundown on Friday is considered forbidden and may not be consumed in the synagogue.
- Our sages discourage the carrying of anything from one location to another on Shabbat because, in this time period of rest and relaxation, everything is considered perfect under the roof where it is left on Friday afternoon. We urge all families to drop off everything they will be using on Shabbat (*tallitot*, haftarah booklets, etc...) on Friday before sundown and pick them up any time after Shabbat when the synagogue is open.
- No food may be brought into or taken out of the synagogue during the entire Sabbath. If you would like to collect the leftovers from your Friday night dinner, you may pick them up on Sunday morning.

Your thoughtful consideration of these practices will enhance your own Shabbat experience and that of your fellow congregants. Thank you!

### *Aliyot, non-speaking honors, and participation of guests*

The bar/bat mitzvah family is able to honor friends and relatives at this rite of passage. Here are some guidelines:

- Men and women must wear a head covering.
- Jewish Men must wear a tallit on the bima and women are encouraged to do so.
- Honors at the Torah are only available for Jews over the age of 13, though not limited to those who have had a formal bar/bat mitzvah ceremony.
- Only one person should receive an honor in a given Shabbat morning service.
- **Only two immediate family members** (spouses, siblings, or a parent and child) may come up for an aliyah together.
- Hagbah (the person lifting the Torah) should be strong and have previous experience.
- Non Jews are permitted to open/close the ark doors and read the prayers for Congregation, Country and Israel.

## Guide to Filling Out the Honor Sheet:

We look forward to sharing in your family simcha. The following are guidelines for the honors that you will assign, which include speaking and non-speaking roles. Please share for approval your completed honor sheet with Ana Cottle in our office at [cbi18@cbi18.org](mailto:cbi18@cbi18.org) one week before your rehearsal, and Ana will share it with the Rabbi. Wait until final approval by the Rabbi before printing your program.

### Some overarching principles:

Unless otherwise indicated below, honors are reserved for adult members of the Jewish community (over the age of 13).

Ours is an egalitarian community, so that honors can be given to either men or women. When coming up to the bimah (the front), participants must wear a head-covering and are encouraged to wear a talit (prayer-shawl).

Only one honor per person, except for passing of the Torah.

Any honors you are unable to fill with family and friends will be filled in with congregants by the Shamash (helper at your service).

### Speaking:

**Aliyot**, blessing over the Torah, are recited in Hebrew. Most Jews are Israelite and we have **three** Israelite aliyot set aside for the bnai mitzvah families, plus *maftir*, the final blessings that are usually done by the bar or bat mitzvah. For those who know that they are descendants of the Kohen or Levite clan, we offer the first and second *aliyot* respectively. Two Israelite *aliyot* are reserved for congregants. You may choose 1-3 members of an immediate family to share an *aliyah*.

**Prayers for Congregation, Country and Israel.** You may have 1-2 people share in leading the congregation in a reading, whether in Hebrew or English. NonJews may lead the prayer for the country.

### Non-Speaking:

**Passing of Torah-** from generation to generation, usually grandparents and parents. We do permit the participation of nonJewish family members as conveyors of sacred teaching.

**Hagbah**, raising of the Torah, and **gelilah**, wrapping of the Torah. Best that Hagbah has experience in that lifting the Torah is more about technique of leverage than strength.

**Opening of Ark Doors**, toward the beginning of the service, and **closing the ark doors** at the end may be performed by a nonJew. Usually two people do this honor, but it can be done by two couples.

**Opening and closing Ark Curtains** is part of the Torah service; each time, two people or two couples.

**Holding the Torah** is usually for someone pre-Bar Mitzvah.

**Rimonim (silver Torah toppers)-** carried by children, one or two.

**Only One honor per family member or friend is allowed**

**Honors are due to the Office at least three days before your rehearsal. [Cb18@cbi18.org](mailto:Cb18@cbi18.org)**

**(Please include relationship of aliyah and non-speaking honor, such as cousin, aunt, friend, etc.)**

*Honors for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah of:*

☆ \_\_\_\_\_ (English)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Hebrew - transliteration)

Father \_\_\_\_\_

Mother \_\_\_\_\_

Sibling \_\_\_\_\_

Grandparents \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parents' speech before Tallit presentation: \_\_\_\_\_

Musaf: \_\_\_\_\_

NON-SPEAKING

Opening the Ark Doors: (2) \_\_\_\_\_  
(*may be nonJews*) \_\_\_\_\_

Opening the Ark Curtains: (2) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Rimonim Carriers: (pre-bar mitzvah)

Passing Torah: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

1. COHEN ☆ \_\_\_\_\_ (English)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Hebrew - transliteration)

2. LEVI ☆ \_\_\_\_\_ (English)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Hebrew - transliteration)

3. ISRAELITE ☆ \_\_\_\_\_ (English)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Hebrew - transliteration)



4. ☆ \_\_\_\_\_(English)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Hebrew - transliteration)

5. ☆ CONGREGANT

6. ☆ CONGREGANT

7. ☆ \_\_\_\_\_(English)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Hebrew - transliteration)

8. MAFTIR ☆ \_\_\_\_\_(English)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Hebrew - transliteration)

Hagbah (raising Torah): \_\_\_\_\_

Gelilah (rolling Torah): \_\_\_\_\_

Holding the Torah: \_\_\_\_\_

Prayer for Our Congregation:  
(*may be nonJews*) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Prayer for Our Country:  
(*may be nonJews*) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Prayer for the State of Israel: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*(Indicate English or Hebrew)*

Closing the Ark Curtains: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Closing the Ark Doors:  
(*may be nonJews*) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

To ensure that the Torah service runs smoothly and efficiently, we ask that everyone in your party receiving an *aliyah* be told of their honor in advance and when it takes place in the service order.

# BNAI MITZVAH FEE PAYMENT SHEET

FAMILY NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

BNAI MITZVAH NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ BNAI MITZVAH DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## B'NAI MITZVAH FEE: \$1000

- A MINIMUM OF \$350 MUST BE PAID PRIOR TO TRAINING: 9 MONTHS PRIOR
- A MINIMUM OF \$650 MUST BE PAID 6 MONTHS PRIOR TO BNAI MITZVAH DATE
- \$1000 MUST BE PAID IN FULL 3 MONTHS PRIOR TO BNAI MITZVAH DATE

**PAYMENT OPTIONS** (please check and complete for ONE of the options below):

- Enclosed is a check for the **TOTAL BNAI MITZVAH FEE: \$1000.**
- Charge my credit card for the **TOTAL BNAI MITZVAH FEE: \$1000.**
- Charge my credit card in the amount of **\$334** (1/3 of the TOTAL BNAI MITZVAH FEE) today (prior to training) and 2 more charges of **\$334** on \_\_\_\_\_ 6 months prior and **\$332** on \_\_\_\_\_ 3 month prior to Bnai Mitzvah date as indicated above.
- Enclosed is my check # \_\_\_\_\_ in the amount of **\$334** (1/3 of the TOTAL BNAI MITZVAH FEE) (prior to training) and I will send in 2 checks: one in the amount of **\$334** on \_\_\_\_\_ 6 months prior and on one check in the amount of **\$332** on \_\_\_\_\_ 3 months prior, completing the total payment **THREE** months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date as indicated above.
- Charge my credit card \$\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_ consecutive months in order to pay the B'nai Mitzvah fee in full **THREE** months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.
- I will mail in checks in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_ consecutive months in order to pay the B'nai Mitzvah fee in full **THREE** months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

## CREDIT CARD INFORMATION

MasterCard\_\_\_ Visa\_\_\_ Account# \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date\_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**B'nai Mitzvah Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

B'nai Mitzvah menu based on 250 people

**Basic (\$2,800) price includes staffing fees**

Bagels and Cream Cheese

Choice of Salad -**Options on the back**

Choice Tuna or Egg Salad

Choice of Hot Dish or Mexican Dish -**Options on the back**

Soda, Coffee & Paper Goods

Challah & Dessert Baked Goods

Seasonal Fruit Plate

**Special (\$3,800) price includes staffing fees Basic**

**Menu, Plus:**

Second Salad Choice -**Options on the back**

**PICK ONE**

Lox with Relish Tray

Falafel Platter

Second Hot Dish Choice -**Options on the back**

Mexican Dish Choice -**Options on the back**

**Premium (\$5,400) price includes staffing fees Special**

**Menu, Plus:**

**Choice of: PICK ONE**

Fancy Cheese Platter and Nut/Dried Fruit Platter with Crackers

Poached Salmon with Lemon Dill Sauce

Herring (pickled or creamed)

**and: PICK ONE**

Hummus and Pita

Vegetable Platter w/ Ranch Dip

Premium Baked Goods

Ice Cream Sundae Bar

Prices are for buffet style food, table cloths, Kiddush wine & Kiddush cups. Set up includes 20 round tables with 200 chairs, 4 rectangular tables with 40 chairs, drink table, and 2 buffet tables.

Any table decorations or flowers are the responsibility of the client.

No refunds will be given.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call Sandy Klein at (714) 730-9693

Bimah Flowers donation (silk flowers put on bima) \$118

- or -

B'nai Mitzvah family bringing fresh flowers must be received by NOON FRIDAY

Grand total: \_\_\_\_\_

Payment method: \_\_\_\_\_ Check # \_\_\_\_\_

Visa/MC # \_\_\_\_\_

## **Please Check option choices**

Tuna Salad Egg Salad

### **Fish/Cheese Options:**

Poached Salmon with Lemon Dill Sauce

Herring (pickled or creamed)

Lox Platter (Tomatoes, Red onions, Olives)

Lox Spread (Tomatoes, Red onions, Olives)

Assorted Sliced Cheeses with Crackers

Fancy Cheese Wedges and Nut/Dried Fruit Platter with Crackers

### **Salad Options:**

Israeli Salad(diced tomatoes & cucumbers with lemon dressing)

Mixed Green Salad W/Herb Vinaigrette

Spinach Salad W/Strawberries

Pasta Salad with Peppers, Onions, Olives

Greek Salad

Broccoli Salad

Relish Tray (Tomatoes, Red onions, Olives)

Vegetable Platter w/ Ranch Dip

Cold Roasted Veggies

Caesar Salad

Quinoa Salad with Black Beans

Kale Salad with Cranberries

Orzo Salad with Feta, Peppers and Olives

Barley Salad with Diced Vegetables

Mexican Salad

### **Hot Dishes:**

Soup

Macaroni and cheese

Vegetable Frittata

Noodle Kugel with Apples and Raisins

Blintz Souffle

French Toast Casserole

Moroccan Vegetables with Sauce

Lasagna - Traditional cheese

Lasagna - Roasted Vegetables and Cheese

Baked Ziti

### **Israeli Options:**

Falafel and Pita with Israeli Salad and tahini sauce

Israeli Salad(diced tomatoes & cucumbers with lemon dressing)

Baba Ganoush and Pita

Hummus and Pita

Israeli Relish Tray (Artichokes, Pickles, Olives)

Dried Fruit and Nut Platter

### **Mexican Options:**

Enchiladas

Quesadillas

Burritos

Rice and Beans

Chips, Salsa, and Guacamole

Mexican Salad