

B'nai Mitzvah at Temple Emanu-El **Your Family Guide**



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Greetings!

From Our Clergy

Welcome to this exciting time in your family's life. To become bar or bat mitzvah (son or daughter of the commandment), means to take ownership of Jewish life. We invite your family to connect deeply with the rhythms, values and practices of Jewish life as you approach this wonderful milestone.

This handbook is your go-to guide for navigating the process. As always, please feel free to reach out to Temple Emanu-El clergy and staff for questions that aren't covered here. And most of all, enjoy, learn and breathe!

With blessings for the journey ahead,

Rabbi David Stern
Rabbi Debra Robbins
Rabbi Kimberly Herzog Cohen
Rabbi Michael Lewis

Rabbi Amy Rossel
Cantor Vicky Glikin
Cantor Leslie Niren



From Our B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator: Hallie Weiner

I am here to answer any questions and address any concerns families may have throughout this exciting and fun process. A big part of my job is to guide a family and be a resource on the journey. As a tutor myself, I know the joys and challenges for students and families. I hope to bring warmth and laughter, support and answers to this beautiful moment in a family's Jewish life.

Hallie



B'nai Mitzvah Timeline

3 years*

- Two parent meetings are held.
- *B'nai mitzvah* date is assigned.

15 months

- Meet with Hallie Weiner, our *b'nai mitzvah* coordinator at hweiner@tedallas.org.

12 months

- Enrollment in Youth Learning + Engagement at Temple Emanu-El or at a Jewish day school is required.
- Payment of *b'nai mitzvah* fees due 12 months before the service.

11 months

- Families are assigned to a tutor

10 months

- Worship space is confirmed.

9 months

- Tutoring begins.
- Students select verses from their Torah portions.
- Your tutor will be in touch with you to schedule a weekly meeting.
- The *b'nai mitzvah* fee covers 28 tutoring sessions.

5-6 months

- Clergy assignments are communicated by email.
- Clergy assistants contact families to schedule important meetings with the officiating rabbi and cantor.

3-4 months

- Attend meetings with officiating rabbi and cantor.

1-2 months

- Fill out The Window submission to share the good news with your Temple community.

2 Weeks

- The family is invited to lead the congregation in lighting the candles at the Friday night service.
- Rehearse the service.

Week of Ceremony

- Final check-in with officiating rabbi.

**The years and months listed are prior to the ceremony.*

See the B'nai Mitzvah Journey brochure for additional information. Extra copies are available in the cantors' office.

Tikkum Olam

Repairing the World

Participation in 10 hours of community service projects is required during the B'nai Mitzvah process. Our students are introduced to the study and practice of tikkun olam and to different ethical mitzvot (commandments), such as feeding the hungry, visiting the sick and more. As they become adults in the eyes of the community, giving back to the community becomes an even greater value.



Tikkun Olam

A Sampling of Current Partners

VNA Meals on Wheels Pet Project

Assemble and deliver pet food and toy kits.

Vogel Alcove

Make Bye-Bye snack bags for children in need.

North Texas Food Bank

Organize, sort and package food in distribution centers.

Dallas Furniture Bank

Provide basic household furnishings to families transitioning out of homelessness, escaping homes in crisis, or fleeing natural disasters.

Jewish Family Service

Participate in various projects.

Family Gateway

Organize donation closet, create and lead activities with children, play Bingo with adults, clean the playground.

Jill Stone Community Garden

Help take care of Temple's garden.

Austin Street Center

Make and get donations of sandwiches for homeless men and women.

The Bridge Homeless Recovery Center

Build welcome baskets for individuals who are residing at the Bridge

Vickery Meadow Refugee Support

Many of the Vickery Meadow community members are refugees from various regions including the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia. Help gather supplies.

Making Crafts/Activities for Kids

Volunteer will purchase materials to make activity kits, which will be distributed to children who come through our food distribution line with their parents.

Friendship Circle

Teenagers can volunteer in various ways to create inclusive environments and friendships between people of all abilities.

Leket Israel

Bake, create special crafts, make tote bags, compile recipe books, and more!

Hachnasat Orchim

Welcoming The Stranger

Hospitality and warmth are important values at Temple Emanu-El, and greeters for *b'nai mitzvah* services help ensure that everyone who comes to Temple on Shabbat feels welcome and comfortable in the service. Sixth graders and their families are encouraged to welcome guests at the ceremonies of their friends and other members of the class. Responsibilities include arriving early, saying a friendly "Shabbat Shalom" to those arriving for the service, handing out prayer books, inviting people to choose a seat and staying in the lobby or foyer for the first few minutes after the service begins to welcome latecomers, before going into the service themselves.

Once you sign up to participate in this part of the *b'nai mitzvah* program, you will get an email 10 days before the service with a friendly reminder and more details about the role.





Prayer Expectations

As part of preparation for bar or bat mitzvah, it is important to become more familiar with and involved in prayer at Temple. Attendance is required at the following Temple Emanu-El services on the date of your choosing:

- 3** Friday night services (6:15PM every Friday)
- 2** B'nai mitzvah services (10:30AM and/or 4:30PM most Saturdays)
- 1** Congregational Shabbat morning service led by one of our cantors (10:30AM every Saturday)

Please refer to The Window, The Weekly and tedallas.org for more details on the schedule of b'nai mitzvah services and clergy leadership.

Preparation

Tutoring

At Temple Emanu-El, tutors work individually with students to prepare for the service, including the Torah and Haftarah portions and blessings.

Tutors work closely with the cantors, who guide the overall learning process and help facilitate communication among the officiating team.

Here are some frequently asked questions. Please reach out to Hallie Weiner at hweiner@tedallas.org, B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator, with additional questions.

Assignments

Tutors are assigned 12 months prior to the ceremony. Once the student is assigned a tutor, assignments and schedules will be coordinated to set a weekly meeting time.

Sessions

Each student receives 28 sessions of 30 minutes each, which begin roughly 9 months before the bar or bat mitzvah. Extra tutoring is provided as determined by students' needs, tutor and cantor.

At-Home Preparation

Study at home is indispensable to success in the process! A minimum of about 20 minutes daily is the recommended amount of study. Daily practice is a sure way to have a smooth, stress-free *b'nai mitzvah* process.

Learning Differences

The clergy are here to work with your family. Please contact Cantor Leslie Niren at lniren@tedallas.org or Andrew Paull at apaul@tedallas.org if your child has a learning difference and/or needs a unique approach toward preparation. We are committed to creating an individualized learning plan that will ensure your child's success.

Role of Parents

Students have all the materials they need for success! Parents, we'd love your help in encouraging meaningful study time every day. Your greatest role is structuring the time and space for success. Although direct involvement in the study process is welcome, specific knowledge of Hebrew or chanting isn't necessary.

The Experience

Hebrew Words and Phrases to Guide You on the Journey

The Texts

Tanach תנ"ך

The Hebrew word for Jewish sacred texts, made up of these three parts:

T: Torah

N: Nevi'im, Prophets

K: Ketuvim, Writings

Torah תורה

The first five books of the Jewish Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. They may be printed in a book or handwritten in the Torah scroll. Bar and bat mitzvah students read from the Torah scroll.

Haftarah הפטרה

Selection from one of the books of the Prophets, thematically connected to the week's Torah portion.

Torah Decorations

Yad יָד

Pointer used for reading the Torah, means "hand" in Hebrew.

Rimonim רמונים

Torah crowns, which are used for decorating the Torah.

Physical Spaces

Bimah בימה

The platform (literally "stage") from which the service is led.

Aron Hakodesh ארון הקודש

The ark which holds Torah scrolls.

About the Service

Aliyah עליה

Based on the Hebrew word for "ascend," this honor means being called up to the Torah to recite the blessings before and after the Torah reading. It is also used to refer to each section of the Torah that is being chanted by the reader. Our *b'nai mitzvah* commonly chant 3-4 *aliyot*, and the bar or bat mitzvah will recite the blessings before and after the final section of Torah.



Parashah פָּרָשָׁה

The weekly portion of the Torah read in the synagogue.

Service Descriptions

Shacharit שַׁחֲרִית

One of three daily prayer services, the term refers to the morning service. It is held at 10:30AM.

Minchah מִנְחָה

One of three daily prayer services, referring to the afternoon service. At Temple Emanu-El, Mincha begins at 4:30PM.

Maariv מַעֲרִיב

One of three daily prayer services, referring to the evening service. *B'nai mitzvah* and their families are invited to light the Shabbat candles in the evening service preceding the *b'nai mitzvah* services.

Havdalah הַבְּדֻלָּה

Shabbat ends on Saturday evening with this beautiful ceremony, in which blessings are sung over wine, spices and a special multi-wicked candle. Afternoon *b'nai mitzvah* ceremonies conclude with a *Havdalah* ceremony.

Jewish Life

Tzedakah צְדָקָה

Meaning “justice” or “righteousness” in Hebrew, this word refers to the ethical obligation to do what is right and just.

Mitzvah מִצְוָה

Commandment, or Jewish obligation. The plural, *mitzvot*, are considered pathways to holiness, to becoming a better person and for creating a better world.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah בָּר/בַּת מִצְוָה

Son of the commandment, or daughter of the commandment: A person of bar or bat mitzvah age is considered to be an adult in the Jewish community and obligated to fulfill commandments.

Ritual Attire

Tallit טְלִית

Prayer shawl that is worn during morning services. The most important feature is the presence of fringes on the four corners. They represent the 613 commandments, or *mitzvot*, of the Torah. *B'nai mitzvah* families often choose to have a parent or a close relative present the tallit at the ceremony.

Kippah כִּפָּה

Traditional head covering. In Reform Judaism, the practice is optional and open to men and women. *Kippot* are available at Temple for those who would like to wear one during the service.

Planning the Celebration

Israel

Temple Emanu-El regularly organizes family missions to Israel that include bar and bat mitzvah celebrations. This is a transformative experience on personal, family and communal levels. Contact Rabbi Amy Rossel at aRossel@tedallas.org for details.

Event Spaces

We are thrilled when families choose Temple's beautiful spaces for their celebrations. Contact our Events Manager, Taylor Redfearn at tredfearn@tedallas.org to book the perfect space for your needs.

Honoring Your Family

Each service is unique, with family involvement that's just right for you. Here are some examples of how your loved ones can participate in the service.

- Presenting the tallit
- Opening and closing the ark
- Reciting the blessings over the Torah (*aliyah*)
- Undressing or dressing the Torah
- Holding the Torah
- Passing the Torah from generation to generation

Attire

Please dress appropriately and respectfully for the service. Avoid jeans or torn clothing, and wear shoes that allow confidence and comfort for carrying the Torah. Students are welcome to change afterward for the celebration. Should they choose to, *b'nai mitzvah* students and their guests are welcome to wear *tallitot* or *kippot*, provided by Temple. If you choose to provide custom *kippot*, please set them next to the prayer books so that guests entering can pick them up.



Flowers

Flowers are provided for each service at Temple. The expense is covered by the *b'nai mitzvah* fee.

Oneg Shabbat

Families are not required to provide food or drinks following the Friday night service, but many choose to enhance the congregational Shabbat celebration. For more information, contact Chevie Valentine at cvalentine@tedallas.org.



Photography and Livestreaming

Still photographs and preliminary videography should be completed 20 minutes prior to the start of the service. Still or time-lapse photography is not permitted during the service. Videographers must be located in the balcony or loft during the service and may not use artificial lighting. Officiating clergy can be available for posed photographs before or after the service. Livestreaming will be available through tedallas.org/livestream.



Spreading the News

Students will be featured in *The Window*, Temple's magazine, during their *b'nai mitzvah* month. Please submit the information on time as requested in the email that will be sent approximately two months before the service.



Contact Us

Learning Materials and Tutoring

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Tikkun Olam Projects

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Receptions and Oneg Shabbat Sponsorship

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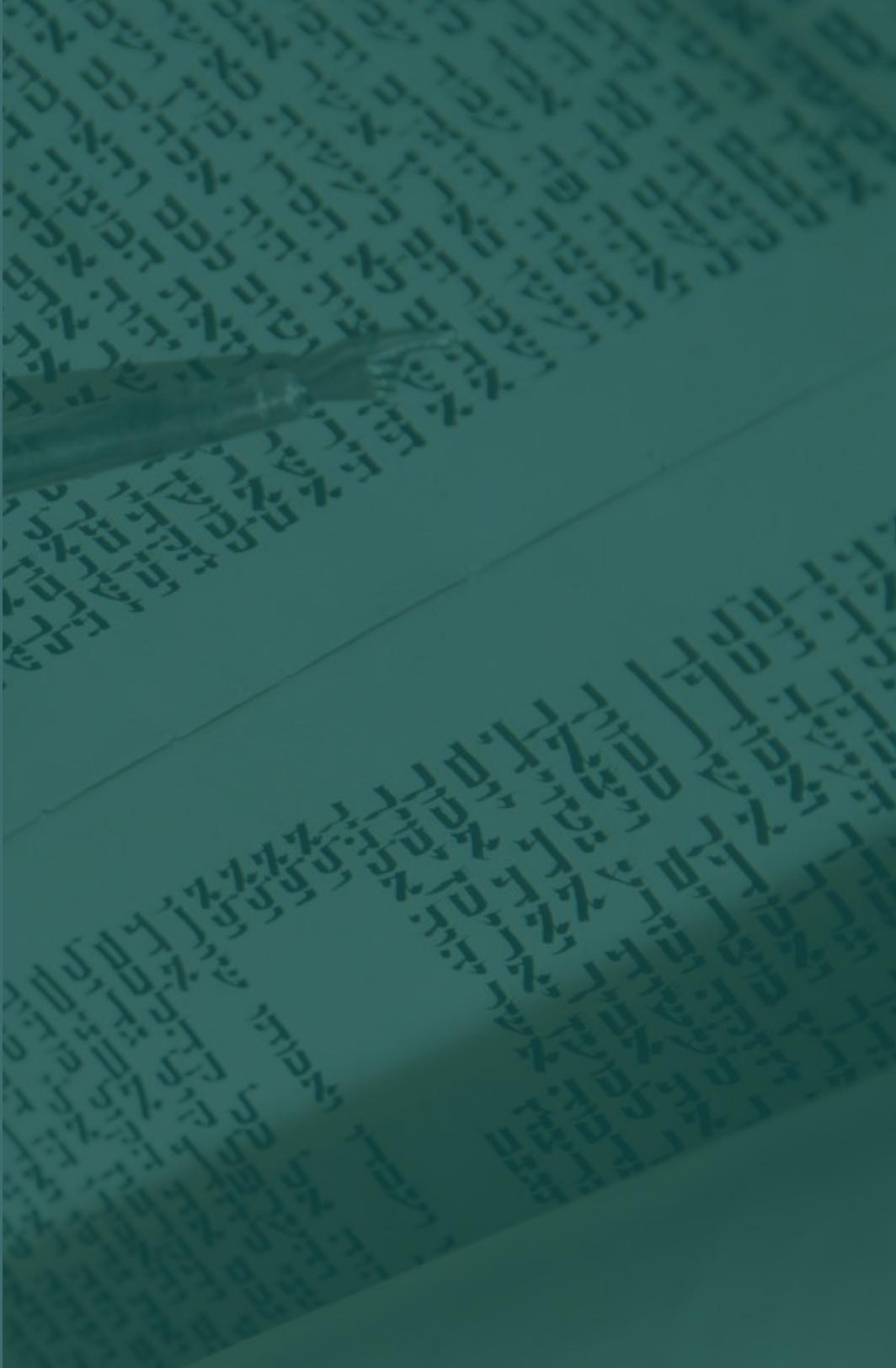
Israel Travel

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