

TEMPLE BETH EL

B'NAI MITZVAH

2026-2027 HANDBOOK (5787)

WELCOME

1 B'NAI MITZVAH PROCESS
PAGE 01

2 REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS
PAGE 04

3 CEREMONY LOGISTICS
PAGE 06

4 CONTACTS
PAGE 08

5 PARTICIPATION FORM
PAGE 09

B'NAI MITZVAH

AT TEMPLE BETH EL

Judaism is a lifelong journey. Our heritage has been passed down from generation to generation for more than 4,000 years, and there have always been vital moments in the life of our families. One of these is your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah—a community celebration of growing up, an important rite of passage, and a ritual that demonstrates an ongoing commitment to living a meaningful and successful life guided by Jewish values.

More than anything else, this is an exciting time, and we are here to be partners with you to ensure that the entire experience is fun, meaningful, and appropriately challenging. Your child is growing up right before your eyes, and it is a beautiful thing to watch them learn, grow, and take on greater responsibility.

Perhaps most important to remember is that a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is not a moment in time; it is a process. When your child stands before the congregation to lead prayer, chant blessings, and read from the Torah, it represents the culmination of that process—and the beginning of a lifelong connection to their Jewish community. In addition to all the work that goes into becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, it is our sincere hope that your family will remain involved at the Temple and that your child will continue as part of our Masa Teens and vibrant youth programs. Classes, programs, trips, and retreats are all part of continuing to build a strong Jewish identity.

This manual is designed to provide you with an overview of the process, answer logistical questions, and offer guidelines to help make your simcha everything you want it to be. Your Rabbis, Cantor, Director of Education, and Temple staff are all here to support you throughout the journey. Please feel free to reach out to any of us with questions, comments, or concerns.

Mazel Tov!



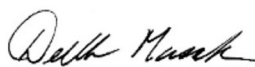
Rabbi Mark Miller



Rabbi Megan Brudney



Rachel Grey Ellis



Debbie Morosohk

B'NAI MITZVAH PROCESS

✓ FROM K – 3RD GRADE

In Masa, students are introduced to Judaism and begin developing the foundational skills of Hebrew language study. These early years play a vital role in preparing students for the more intensive learning of the B'nai Mitzvah program.

Masa remains an integral part of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah journey through the end of 7th grade. Continued participation from 8th through 10th grade leads to Confirmation, with the full Masa experience culminating in graduation at the end of 12th grade.

✓ END OF 3RD GRADE – DATE SELECTION

At the end of your child's 3rd grade year, you will receive a notification from the Cantor's office regarding the scheduling of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. All ceremonies are held on Saturday mornings and are scheduled as close as possible to each student's 13th birthday. Please be sure to submit any special requests so we can do our best to assign a date that works for your family.

✓ END OF 4TH GRADE – B'NAI MITZVAH KICKOFF

In the spring of your child's 4th grade year, we will host our first official B'nai Mitzvah-related program. Families will gather over lunch with our clergy and education team, along with fellow 4th grade families, to learn more about the journey and what to expect in the years ahead.

✓ END OF 6TH GRADE – POINTING THE WAY

At the end of 6th grade, we gather to mark the transition into the exciting year when the class's B'nai Mitzvah ceremonies will take place. Students come together with our clergy for community building and a meaningful art project, helping set the tone and mindset for the journey ahead.

Weekly Tutoring Begins

14 MONTHS IN ADVANCE

14 MONTHS OUT FROM BM – WEEKLY TUTORING BEGINS

B'nai Mitzvah preparation continues with one-on-one tutoring. The Cantor will be in touch to make the tutor assignment. Approximately 6 months will be spent on reading skills as well as learning and polishing the prayers that will be part of the service, and then 8 months will be devoted primarily to learning to chant the Torah portion.

Regular practice at home is very important during this time to reinforce the learning happening in the tutoring sessions.

10-12 MONTHS OUT FROM BM – INITIAL MEETING

As preparations continue, each student and their parents will have an opportunity to meet with a Rabbi. This is a chance to focus on the meaning of Bar/Bat Mitzvah in your child's life, review what will happen over the coming months, and for your student to learn more about his/her Torah portion so that they can choose the section they would like to chant for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

BETWEEN 3-9 MONTHS OUT FROM BM – CANTOR SESSIONS

In addition to tutoring with your assigned tutor, each student and their parents will sit down with the Cantor on at least two occasions to review their progress, and make sure their training is on course.

FINAL MONTH – REHEARSALS

During the month leading up to your Bar/Bat Mitzvah, there will be three rehearsals. Our rabbis and cantor will each be at one of the rehearsals, and by the end of three rehearsals most students are comfortable and ready for their ceremony. If, however, you would like additional time in the Chapel or Sanctuary to prepare, just check with the Rabbis' assistant to make sure we find a good time.

B'NAI MITZVAH

REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

✓ MEMBERSHIP

In order to celebrate a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Temple Beth El, the family must be members in good standing, having met their annual commitment.

✓ EDUCATION

Bar/Bat Mitzvah students must have completed a minimum of 3 years of Jewish education at Temple Beth El or its equivalent. Students must be currently enrolled and active in Masa at the time of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Your Jewish journey continues here at TBE through graduation in 12th grade. As our rabbis discuss with every family, Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not the end of a process, but an important celebration along the way to Jewish adulthood.

Becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not only about preparation, but also about developing responsibility and independence. While our clergy and staff are readily available to meet, respond to emails, or speak by phone, students are encouraged to take the lead in communicating with their rabbi, cantor, or B'nai Mitzvah tutor when they need extra support.

FEES

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutoring fee of \$2,500 will be billed at the beginning of the 5th grade year. It covers 5th Grade Hebrew tutoring, including all materials and books, as well as all tutoring and other preparation that takes place with our B'nai Mitzvah tutors and clergy. You will also be billed \$800 for a kiddush required following the ceremony. If you work with our caterer to plan an event, the \$800 will be credited toward that event. The fee can be paid up-front or a payment plan may be arranged with the Finance Office. All fees must be paid in full by six months before the ceremony.

ATTENDING SERVICES

Classroom learning is important, but it is also vital for any Bar/Bat Mitzvah student to become comfortable with the rhythms and experience of going to services at Temple. You are welcome to attend services any Friday night and watching any of our B'nai Mitzvah services will help your child get comfortable with what happens during the ceremony.

MITZVAH PROJECTS

Part of becoming a Jewish adult is recognizing that we have a responsibility to help repair the world. *Tikkun Olam* can take place in so many different ways, and our goal is for each student to find some project, organization, or cause that interests them. We are less concerned with the specific number of hours they spend on a project, and more concerned with them finding something they might want to continue beyond Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Our 6th Grade Masa program is designed around the concept of doing Mitzvot, and exposes our students to a variety of ways we can help others. Our ideal would be that through participation in this program, your child finds a personal project that inspires him/her to make the world a better place.

CEREMONY LOGISTICS

ARRIVAL

Please make sure you arrive early enough to get settled, greet friends and family, and meet in the Rabbinic Suite no later than 15 minutes before the service is scheduled to begin. If you would like to come early to take photos, please let us know so that we can arrange for the building to be open.

ATTIRE

We ask parents to make sure their student and anyone who will be part of the ceremony is dressed in an appropriate manner for being on the *bima* at Temple. If you have any questions, please ask one of the rabbis or cantor.

GUESTS

Please encourage your guests to sit closer to the front of the Sanctuary or Chapel, so that they can more easily take part in the service. Children are encouraged to sit with their parents; however, if they choose to sit with their peers, please remind them that they must be respectful and take part. Use of mobile devices is not allowed during the service.

PARTICIPATION

Our congregation takes great joy in participating enthusiastically through song and responsive readings. We invite all of our guests to participate with equal enthusiasm. Please note, however that applause is inappropriate during services.

SERVICES

Every student at Temple Beth El will be assigned a Saturday morning for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. Services begin at 11:00 am.

In addition, some families choose to deepen their family's experience by joining the regular Temple service on Friday night in order to sit on the bima, welcome your guests to Temple, and lead the congregation in *kiddush* and *motzi* (blessings for wine and challah).

Finally, for a variety of reasons, some families prefer a Saturday evening Havdalah service. Although we cannot guarantee specific dates or the presence of all Temple clergy, we are open to discussing this possibility. Please contact our Cantor if you would like to discuss this option. A Saturday evening service requires that the celebration takes place at Temple Beth El.

LOCATION OF SERVICES

If a family's guest list to the service does not exceed 200 people, his/her family may choose to worship either in the Maas Chapel or in the Helen DeRoy Sanctuary. Although the Maas Chapel does not offer the grandeur of our Helen DeRoy Sanctuary, it provides a beautifully intimate environment centered before the ark of our Woodward and Gladstone building. Please communicate your preference to the Cantor's office at least two months prior to your child's service date.

TZEDAKAH

Many parents and other family members wish to express their joy and gratitude on the occasion of this milestone with a donation to Temple or another charitable cause. With this in mind, many families commit to donating 3-10% of the total expenditure of their reception to those in need. Similarly, many B'nai Mitzvah students choose to donate the same percentage of any monetary gifts they may receive.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO

If you choose to hire a photographer, please make sure to confirm these guidelines so they do not disrupt the service:

1. No flashes are allowed during services.
2. Any camera sounds (including artificial shutter sounds) should be turned off, and movement kept to a minimum.
3. Photographers are welcome anywhere in the back of the Sanctuary or Chapel, but not in the aisles.

If you would like to video the service:

- We have professional cameras installed in both the Sanctuary and the Chapel for our live streaming program. We would be happy to provide you with a copy of the service. However, our recording is done for streaming purposes; as such, we cannot guarantee the production value or choices made about the video.
- You are welcome to hire any videographer you choose, but they will need to discuss our procedures ahead of time with our B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator.

YOUR SUPPORT TEAM



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B'NAI MITZVAH PARTICIPATION FORM

Student's Name: _____ Hebrew Name: _____

Both parents' Hebrew names (if applicable): _____

Friday Night Kiddush & Motzi: One nice way to extend the joy of this special occasion is to join us on the *bima* Friday night, and for your student to help lead the congregation.

Would you like to join us? Yes _____ No _____

Torah Transmission: Grandparents and parents typically participate as we physically pass the Torah "from generation to generation" – please list names: _____

Aliyot: It is a primary honor to be called to the Torah to read or chant the blessings before and after the Torah reading. You may include relatives or close friends here:

First Aliyah: _____

Second Aliyah: _____

Third Aliyah: Bar/Bat Mitzvah student. With parent(s) Yes No (or they do 2nd Aliyah) _____

Dressing the Torah: Often a younger sibling, but let us know who will help: _____

Hagbah (raising the Torah): Can be done by a parent or the clergy: _____

Kiddush/Motzi (or Havdalah symbols) at Conclusion (Usually immediate family): _____

***Would you like to bring/use your own kiddush cup, Havdalah set, or other ritual item(s)?** _____

If so, what item(s), and is there a story behind them: _____

Mourner's Kaddish: Please list the names of any family members you would like us to mention: _____

We encourage flexibility in personalizing this service! If you are interested in including any additional honors, or inviting someone to add a personal touch to your service, please talk directly with the Clergy

CLERGY

Mark Miller, Senior Rabbi

Megan Brudney, Senior Associate Rabbi

Deborah Morosohk, RJE
Director of Education, Cantorial Solist

Daniel B. Syme, Rabbi Emeritus

STAFF

Rachel Grey Ellis, Executive Director

Laura Gottlieb, Director of Cultural
Resources

Kenneth Jackson, Director of Security

Nicole Jahr, Director of Engagement

Damon Kaigler, Director of Facilities

Jamie Lefkowitz, ECC Assistant Director

Sumeira Chaudhry, Controller

Melanie Weber, Director of
Communications

Susie Weiner, Director of Early
Childhood Center

Executive Committee

Steve Tarnowsky, President

Ray Henney, Vice President

Claude Reitelman, Vice President

Carol Plisner, Vice President

Jared Rothberger, Vice President

Sarah Lyngaas, Treasurer

Anne Weiner, Secretary

Rochelle Nelson, Immediate Past President

AFFILIATES

Elaine Brockman, Beth Elders

Craig Matichuk, Brotherhood

Irene Soble, Sisterhood

Michelle Ernst, Kid-ish Club

