

**Congregation Or Shalom  
835 Darby Paoli Road  
Berwyn, PA 19312**



**Bar/Bat Mitzvah  
Handbook**

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Rabbi**

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## **PURPOSE OF THIS HANDBOOK**

This goal of this handbook is to clarify as much as possible the process of preparing for the joyous occasion of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. **It is very important that you read it carefully**, so that you, your family, and (most importantly) your child, are fully prepared for the event.

This handbook may seem lengthy, but this is necessary. If you have not already experienced a Bar/Bat Mitzvah with an older child, you will be surprised to learn how complicated the process is and how much preparation is required.

Most families are able to follow the guidelines in this handbook. If you are unable to do so, it is very important that you discuss any and all deviations with your tutor and the Rabbi.

## **LETTER FROM RABBI KNAPP SCHECHTER**

Dear Parents:

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an important moment in the life of your child and of your family. Your child will now be viewed as an adult in the Jewish community. The tradition of marking the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is observed in our community in a public fashion at a time when the Torah is read in the presence of the community.

The synagogue community views Bar/Bat Mitzvah as an opportunity for the student to lead our community with the skills that have been developed in our school and in life. The goal of the synagogue program is to prepare the young person to read from the Torah, from the Haphtarah and to conduct parts of the Shabbat service as a Shaliach Tzibbur (prayer leader). From the moment that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah reaches the age of majority it is hoped that your child will participate actively in all Shabbat and holiday services as well as participating regularly in the synagogue minyan.

It is our hope that this manual will be helpful to you as you plan for your child's upcoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please feel free to call upon the synagogue staff to assist you in your planning and preparation for this important milestone event.

Kami Knapp Schechter  
Rabbi

## **BAR/BAT/ MITZVAH TIMELINE**

1 – 3 years prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- ◇ Bar/Bat Mitzvah date is assigned.

1 year prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Engage and coordinate meeting times with the tutor
- Begin regular attendance at adult services on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. See page 6 for details.
- Students are contacted to begin classes with tutor.
- Parents and students meet with Rabbi to begin conversations about the student's parashah.
- Parents are to select tutor from approved list. Parents pay tutor directly

In fall of Vav year (about one year prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah)

- Rabbi will meet with the entire Vav class and their parents, to review the Bar Mitzvah process and answer questions.

8-10 months prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Parents and students should submit a proposal to the Rabbi for an acceptable Mitzvah project.
- Mitzvah project begins after approval by Rabbi.

8-12 months prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Lessons begin. There are normally 25 one-hour lessons.

6 months prior to the Bar/ Bat Mitzvah

- Child's family beings to join in part of the monthly meetings with Rabbi.

4 months prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Complete Date Reservation Form (Appendix A) and submit to the office.

- Contact the office to discuss catering options for Kiddush for your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

### 3 months prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Student begins to write d'var Torah. This talk will be given on Saturday morning.
- Student begins to write speech for Friday night. This is optional. Possible topics include the meaning of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, a Jewish hero, or a description of the child's *Mitzvah* project (see page 12).
- Parent begins to write the parental speech, to be delivered on Saturday morning.

Note: These must be reviewed with the Rabbi. Please bring to a scheduled meeting.

### 2 months prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Decide who will receive honors at your child's ceremony.
- Ensure student has a tallit and kippah for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.

### 1 month prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- End of mitzvah project.

### 3 weeks prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Student submits a draft of the d'var Torah to Rabbi.
- Parents submit Family Information Sheet (Appendix F) to the office.
- Parents submit list of all honorees (including English name, full Hebrew names of the person and both his/her parents, and relationship for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah) to the head of ritual committee and Rabbi. It would be appreciated if these were submitted on index cards.
- If parents choose to make a parent speech, the draft must be submitted to the rabbi for review

### Final week prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Contact office to review/confirm arrangements for the day.
- Review and practice final draft of d'var Torah with Rabbi.
- Participate in "dry run" of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with tutor and Rabbi.

## **BECOMING A BAR/BAT MITZVAH**

The following congregational standards have been set to meet the goals stated in our philosophy:

1. In keeping with our Jewish tradition, all Jewish children, whether Jewish by birth or by conversion, who are reaching or have passed their thirteenth birthday may be called to the Torah for an *aliyah* at one of the services when the Torah is traditionally read.
2. Central to the theme of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is the value of a Jewish education. The child must have already begun his or her fifth year of instruction at Congregation Or Shalom Religious School or its equivalent, or be enrolled in a Jewish Day School. The student must currently be enrolled and in good standing in the religious school (in the Vav class) or day school.
3. The family must be a full and current member in good standing of Congregation Or Shalom to be entitled to Bar/Bat Mitzvah privileges.
4. Approximately 8-12 months prior to your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah individualized training will begin. At that time all financial obligations must be current.
5. To ensure familiarity with our Shabbat service, the child is required to attend **regular** Friday night and Shabbat morning services at Congregation Or Shalom. Parents and families are encouraged to attend with their children. We require that children attend services three times per month, during the year preceding their Bar/Bat Mitzvahs. These 3 times should include at least one Friday night service each month and one Saturday morning service each month. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah student should be accompanied by one or both parents and their siblings.
6. In the months prior to the Bar/Bat mitzvah celebration, the child is required to plan and complete an activity which fulfills a particular Mitzvah. Families often participate in these activities as well. The Mitzvah Project should be planned and approved by the Rabbi. This project should last at least 6 months.

7. It is a mitzvah for a young man to use *tefillin* during weekday morning services. As an egalitarian congregation, we encourage young women to wear *tefillin* as well.
8. It is our tradition at Or Shalom that the families of the class of students marking their Bar/Bat Mitzvah join together to present the synagogue with a gift. While the decision about the actual gift will be made by the class families, the Rabbi and the leadership of the synagogue will provide the Bar/Bat Mitzvah class families a list of items that will be of special meaning and benefit to the synagogue.

### **ASSIGNMENT OF DATE**

Approximately three years prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah the Rabbi will choose a date for your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The date will correspond as closely as possible to your child's Hebrew birth date. Once assigned, any requests to change a date must be made to the rabbi. Any changes in date must be confirmed in writing from the rabbi before the change becomes effective.

### **SELECTING A TUTOR**

Approximately one year prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the family must select a tutor for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student, from the list of tutors approved by Or Shalom. Please contact the Rabbi for an updated list.

### **TRAINING OF STUDENTS**

Approximately 8-12 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony, students will be contacted to begin individual classes. These sessions will meet for about one hour weekly, up to the time of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. The scheduling of the private lessons will be mutually convenient for parents, student, and teacher. Lessons will not be scheduled during Religious School classes. Lessons may or may not be scheduled during school vacations, depending upon the schedule of the tutor and the student.

If your child has a special educational need, please contact the Rabbi in advance.

Note that attendance at regular Shabbat services is considered to be an integral part of the training of the students. Only by attending services regularly will the child learn and understand the sequence and



choreography of our services. This is also an important opportunity to become familiar with our melodies and customs.

## **MEETINGS WITH THE RABBI**

At the beginning of the student's Vav year in our religious school, the Rabbi will schedule a meeting with all the class students and their parents, to review the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process and answer questions.

One year prior to the bar/ bat mitzvah the Rabbi will begin to meet with the student monthly. At six months the family will be asked to join for part of the one time a month meeting. These meetings are to review their progress and to answer questions which may arise. Parents who feel additional meetings with the Rabbi are needed, are encouraged to contact her directly, to schedule such meetings.

## **ROLE OF BAR/BAT MITZVAH IN SERVICE**

It is a tradition at Congregation Or Shalom that a Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate may participate in the service to the extent of his/her abilities. The determination of this ability will be made by the Rabbi and tutor in concert with the parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

The following outline describes the minimum required participation for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah child at our synagogue at various services. In special cases, at the discretion of the Rabbi, some of these requirements may be relaxed.

### **Friday Evening**

1. Act as a *shaliach tzibbur* (prayer leader) for all or part of the Kabbalat Shabbat and Maariv services.
2. Prepare and deliver a personal statement on the value and importance of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. (Optional.)

### **Shabbat Morning**

1. Reading the *maftir* from the Torah. (\*)
2. Recitation of the blessings before and after the reading of the Torah. (\*)
3. Chanting of the *haphtarah* (\*)
4. Recitation of the blessings before and after the Haphtarah. (\*)

5. Preparation and delivery of a personal D'var Torah on the connection the Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate has with that week's Torah reading. (\*)
6. Acting as a *shaliach tzibbur* (prayer leader) for the Torah service and Musaf service.
7. The Bar/Bat mitzvah may act as a *shaliach tzibbur* for Schacharit if he/she has accomplished all of the above listed requirements.

**Important: Only the items marked with an asterisk are required. The others are optional and depend on the child's individual abilities.**

## **SERVICE PROCEDURES AND PREPARATION**

### **Shabbat Morning**

1. The Shabbat morning service begins promptly at 9:15 a.m. Note that we begin the morning services on Bar/Bat Mitzvahs 15 minutes earlier than our normal starting time (which is 9:30), because this service tends to run a bit longer when we celebrate Bar Mitzvahs.
2. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Family may receive Torah honors during the service. Seven *aliyot* (individuals or pairs) may be assigned for blessings over the Torah. Additional honors include lifting the Torah (Magbiah) and dressing the Torah (Golel). Also, people may be honored by opening and closing the Ark, and the leading of special prayers as indicated below. Honors are as follows:
  - a. Open and Close the Ark at the beginning of the Torah Service.
  - b. *Kohen* - First *aliyah*
  - c. *Levi* - Second *aliyah*
  - d. *Shlishi* - Third *aliyah*
  - e. *Revii* - Fourth *aliyah*
  - f. *Chamishi* - Fifth *aliyah*
  - g. *Shishi* - Sixth *aliyah*
  - h. *Shevii* - Seventh *aliyah*
  - i. *Maftir* - The *aliyah* given to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah
  - j. *Hagbah* - Lift the Torah
  - k. *Gelilah* - Tie the Torah
  - l. Open and Close the Ark at the end of the Torah Service.
  - m. English reading of the prayer for our Country (page 415 in the *Siddur Sim Shalom* prayer book).

- n. English or Hebrew reading of the prayer for Israel (page 416 or 417 in the *Siddur Sim Shalom* prayer book).
- o. Prayer for peace or prayer for the congregation (page 415 or 417 in the *Siddur Sim Shalom* prayer book).

These honors will be assigned by the parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

- 3. Honors (b) through (h) require the honoree to recite blessings in Hebrew. Those being given the honor should be aware of this requirement before they accept and should prepare adequately.
- 4. Everyone coming to the Bimah to lead a part of the service or to have an honor must wear a head covering. Jewish males must also wear a *tallit*. Jewish females should wear one. Only Jews may wear a *tallit*. Again, please assure that your guests are prepared.
- 5. The person given the honor of lifting the Torah must be strong enough to accomplish this task. During the fall months the Torah is heavy on the left side and during the spring the weight is heavy on the right side.
- 6. All honorees must be Jewish by birth or by conversion, with the exception of honorees (m), (n), and (o). If in doubt, please consult the Rabbi. We also permit non-Jewish parents and non-Jewish grandparents to accompany their spouses on the Bimah.
- 7. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah service provides the ideal opportunity for family participation. It is important that family members carefully review and practice the Torah Blessings so that they are comfortable with them within the context of the service. Additional help is available by contacting the Rabbi or tutor.

To avoid embarrassment to all, honors in the service, i.e. *aliyah-Magbiah/Golel*, should not be assigned to friends or family members who do not know how to perform them correctly.

- 8. All men should wear a *kippah* at all times while inside our synagogue. Each man who receives an *aliyah* should wear appropriate synagogue attire as well as a *kippah* and a *tallit*.

9. All women and young girls should be dressed appropriately e.g. no short skirts. Shoulders must be covered in the sanctuary. Each woman who receives an *aliyah* should wear a head covering. The wearing of a *tallit* by women is encouraged.
10. Candy may be thrown on the Bar/Bat Mitzvah at the conclusion of the reading of the *maftir*. Please distribute the candy during the reading of the preceding *aliyah* (i.e. last *aliyah* before Bar/Bat Mitzvah child), so that it is minimally disruptive.
11. On a Shabbat that we celebrate Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, Saturday morning services usually conclude between noon and 12:15 PM. If you are planning a luncheon away from the synagogue, please base your plans on leaving the synagogue no earlier than 12:45 PM. so that you and your guests have time for Kiddush. If you are renting a bus to take guests to the luncheon, please instruct the bus company not to park in front of the sanctuary door.

## **OPTIONAL FRIDAY NIGHT SPEECH**

Optionally, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah may deliver a short speech on Friday evening. The purpose of this speech is two-fold:

- a. To demonstrate an understanding of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah in the lives of Jews.
- b. To find a personal connection to the event.

The message should suggest both that the student understands the Jewish significance of the day and show that there is a connection between the event and the life of the child.

In order to assure that the tone and message of the speech are appropriate the student should submit the speech for the Rabbi's review three weeks before the service. That will allow time for editing and revisions.

Possible topics for this speech include:

- What my Bar/Bat Mitzvah means to me.
- A Jewish hero or role model.
- The child's *mitzvah* project.

## **D'VAR TORAH**

We require the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to deliver a D'var Torah on Saturday morning. This short speech should relate to the Torah reading of the day. Again, the purpose of this speech is two-fold:

- i. To demonstrate an understanding of the Torah reading for that day. The speech should highlight the main issues of the passage as a way of introducing the reading to the Congregation.
- ii. To find in the passage a personal connection. The student should not only summarize the passage but find a message of personal meaning in the reading. The message might relate to the student's interests or activities.

The message should suggest both that the student understands the Jewish significance of the day and show that there is a connection between the message of the reading and the life of the child.

If the child does not intend to deliver a talk on Friday evening, then the *d'var Torah* should include a few sentences about the child's *mitzvah* project.

In order to assure that the tone and message of the speech are appropriate the student should submit the speech for the Rabbi's review three weeks before the service. That will allow time for editing and revisions.

## **MITZVAH PROJECT**

The goal of the Mitzvah Project is to broaden the student's awareness of his or her place in society and how at this moment of transitioning into adulthood, he or she can contribute to improving the world. Ideally the project should involve a real hands-on commitment to working, in a setting that will teach the young person about the values of work, compassion, understanding, and the need to be cognizant of the needs of others.

People often mistake *mitzvah* as "good deed." But it really means "commandment." Therefore, becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah literally means "son or daughter of the commandments". What that means is that when you are 13 you become responsible for doing the things that God commands of us, many of them things that are in fact, acts of lovingkindness (*gemilut hasadim*).

The goals of the *Mitzvah* project are as follows:

1. To have students experience *mitzvot* that they will be able to incorporate into their lives.
2. To give students an understanding of the Jewish values that flow from the Jewish view of the responsibilities of *mitzvot*.
3. To help students understand what is uniquely Jewish about *mitzvot*.

We want to give your child a knowledge and an experiences of a wide range of *mitzvot* and the Jewish values that these *mitzvot* promote.

In the year of their Bnei Mitzvah, each student will choose two different *mitzvot* to fulfill throughout the year of Zayin class, one from each of the following categories:

*Mitzvot* between People and God  
*Mitzvot* between People and People

Fulfilling the two selected *mitzvot* will become the student's Mitzvah Project.

Approximately ten months before the scheduled date of your child's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, the family and the prospective *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* should submit a proposal to the Rabbi for an acceptable *Mitzvah* Project. The student should

discuss his/her choices with both the family and the Rabbi and should receive their approval. The Rabbi will schedule follow up meetings with the student to make sure that the project is progressing.

**The numbers of hours devoted to fulfilling these *mitzvot* should not be less than 18 (chai).**

The student should choose **one** *mitzvah* to write about. This will become the student's **Mitzvah Report**. We recommend recording notes regularly throughout the project, to help the student remember his/her experiences, thoughts and feelings during the process. Then later, when writing the *Mitzvah* Report, the student will be able to provide sufficient details.

The student will present his/her report at the end of the school year. We will have a special presentation of all the reports of the Zayin class at that time.

The following is an outline of the report:

**Introduction:** Description of the *Mitzvah* that you completed. What is the commandment that tells us to perform this *mitzvah*? Why did you choose to perform this *mitzvah*?

**Description:** Explain what you did as you completed this project. Where were you when you performed this *Mitzvah*? How much time did it take? Was it hard or easy? Explain? What was the most satisfying aspect of your project? What was the most difficult part of the *Mitzvah*?

**Conclusion:** How did this *Mitzvah* help you change? What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about others? How did you help others? What was Jewish about your project? Explain why your project was a *mitzvah*? How has your project helped you better understand what it means to be a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*? How has your project helped you better understand what it means to be a Jew?

How do you think that completing this project will change the way you will act in the future?

If possible include some pictures of yourself performing the *mitzvah*. If you cannot take pictures or if you prefer, draw a picture or create a collage about the *Mitzvah* you performed.

Please keep in contact with the Rabbi

## **PARENTAL TALK**

A speech by a parent may also be delivered during the service. This is a choice that each family can make. Some families choose to have a parent speak during the service and many families decline this opportunity. The speech may be offered by either of the child's parents even if one of the parents is not Jewish. The speech will be included in the service at a moment of the Rabbi's choosing. The purpose of the speech is to enable a parent to offer special thoughts to the child. During the speech the parent may share with those present the special meaning which this day has for the family. The speech should attempt to reference the morning's Torah reading. Only one speech per family, please!

The parent's speech will be delivered towards the end of the service. Therefore, it should not be more than a few minutes long, as guests and congregants will have been sitting for over two hours at this point. If desired, this speech may be submitted to the Rabbi for review. If you choose to do so, please do so approximately three weeks before the event, in order to allow ample time for revision.

## **SYNAGOGUE DECORUM**

**To avoid any embarrassment, please inform your guests regarding the following synagogue policies:**

Out of respect for the sanctity of the synagogue service, all cell phones, electronic games, etc., must be turned off at all times while in the Sanctuary. Additionally, use of cell phones anywhere inside the synagogue building is prohibited on Shabbat. There are no pay phones on the Congregation Or Shalom premises.

**No photography, video recording or audio recording is permitted anywhere inside the synagogue or on our property, during Shabbat.** This includes both inside and outside the building.

**Guests are requested not to bring gifts to the synagogue on Shabbat.** This includes envelopes.

**All guests are requested to dress in appropriate and modest synagogue attire for all services.** All males in attendance, Jewish and non-Jewish, are required to wear *kippot* in the sanctuary, social hall, and throughout the building.



In accordance with synagogue regulations, there is **no smoking** at any time within the synagogue building. In keeping with Shabbat observance, smoking anywhere on synagogue grounds is also prohibited.

Young children and invited friends of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child are requested to be supervised by a parent or designated adult at all times during the service to ensure proper decorum and safety. It is the responsibility of the parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to designate those supervisors.

## **IDEAS FOR PERSONALIZATION AND ENHANCEMENT**

Below is a list of suggestions to make your Simcha more meaningful and more personal for you and your family. This list is by no means complete. We encourage you to think creatively and to use our committee members and synagogue staff as resources.

### **Kehilah**

In the spirit of Kehillah (community), we urge families who are planning larger celebrations to invite their child's entire Religious School class to the child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah service and celebration. This enhances the children's sense of connection to each other and also avoids the hurt feelings which arise from being excluded from a classmate's Simcha.

### **Service Program**

You may create a personalized program supplement to be distributed. A draft of the materials must be reviewed by either the Rabbi or the head of the ritual committee. Printed booklets must be delivered to the office by the Thursday prior to your Simcha.

### **Tzedakah**

A meaningful and most appropriate way of marking the feelings of blessing associated with a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is through an act of Tzedakah, sharing your good fortune with those less fortunate. We encourage the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to make a personal contribution independent of his/her parents' contribution and talk about this contribution either on Friday evening or Saturday morning.

Some ideas for tzedakah contributions are as follows:

- **MAZON** is a Jewish response to world hunger. For details of MAZON works and how you can participate, please call (310)442-0020 or go [www.mazon.com](http://www.mazon.com).
- **Philabundance** is now a fixture in the Philadelphia area. Contributions or non-perishable foods will be distributed to the hungry of our city. For more information, contact Philabundance at (215)339-0900 or [www.philabundance.org](http://www.philabundance.org).
- **Jewish Federation Mitzvah Food Pantry** and **Jewish Relief Agency**. Both organizations help to feed our Jewish community at large. For more information on the Mitzvah Food pantry visit [www.jewishphilly.org](http://www.jewishphilly.org). For more information on the Jewish Relief Agency, visit [www.jewishrelief.org](http://www.jewishrelief.org).
- **Jewish National Fund**, Israel's tree planting and nature conservation organization, working to make and keep Israel green.
- **Magen David Adom** is the Jewish Red Cross. For more information, visit [www.afmda.org](http://www.afmda.org)
- **Hadassah Hospital** is Israel's premier hospital and one of the leading hospitals in the world. For more information, visit [www.hadassah-med.com/English](http://www.hadassah-med.com/English)
- **Neve Hanna** is a children's home in southern Israel. For more information, visit [www.nevehanna.org](http://www.nevehanna.org)

## **AFTER THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH**

The synagogue recognizes that one of the responsibilities of becoming a Jewish adult is the lifelong commitment to continue Jewish study. Becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a very important step in that process of lifelong Jewish learning, but is not to be considered the end but rather the beginning of a Jew's obligation to study Torah as an adult. It is our expectation that B'nai and B'not Mitzvah will complete their studies in Religious School or Day School in the year of Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and will continue their Jewish studies through their High School years.

### **BAR/BAT MITZVAH CELEBRATION PROCEDURES**

#### **Date Reservation Form**

At least four months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, the family must complete a Date Reservation Form (see Appenix A). This form can be

found on our website (<http://www.orshalom.com/OrShalomForms.htm>), picked up in the office, or you can call the office to have the form emailed to you.

You may select any caterer from our approved catering list. In addition, Congregation Or Shalom requires that the outside caterer, florist, photographer, musicians and any other service providers you hire to work at Congregation Or Shalom have a current Certificate of Insurance on file at the synagogue, for limits not less than \$1,000,000.

### **Bimah Flowers**

Please provide two floral arrangements to adorn the *bimah*. The flowers will remain in the synagogue.

### **Kippot**

It is customary to provide personalized or plain kippot for your guests.

### **Oneg Shabbat/Kiddush Arrangements**

It is customary for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah parents to sponsor the Oneg Shabbat on Friday evening and the Kiddush on Saturday morning. The Oneg Shabbat and Kiddush should be planned to accommodate the guests of the family as well as a reasonable number of congregants.

Note: It is the custom at Or Shalom, that the Oneg Shabbat on Friday evening be *parve*, to accommodate members and guests who may have had meat for dinner.

All arrangements for the Oneg Shabbat and Kiddush must be made with a Kosher caterer (see Appendix B for the approved catering list) or through the Sisterhood (contact Julie Miller at [jlmphotomiller@gmail.com](mailto:jlmphotomiller@gmail.com)) to make the appropriate arrangements).

### **Invitations**

The variety of invitations from which you might choose is extensive. Invitations should feature the Bar/Bat Mitzvah as a religious ceremony and the celebratory party as an enhancement. Please make certain that your invitations reflect the proper starting time for the service. The proper wording on the invitation is "(Child's name) will be called to the Torah as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah." Or, "(Child's name) will become a Bar/Bat

Mitzvah". Or, "(Child's name) will participate in the service as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah".

### **Sisterhood Gift Shop**

Ritual items, including tallit, tefillin and kippot , as well as B'nai Mitzvah gifts may be purchased through the Sisterhood Gift Shop. Contact the synagogue office for Gift Shop hours.

### **Shabbat Appropriate Entertainment**

A cappella groups, Israeli folk dancing and group singing at a Bar/Bat Mitzvah luncheon are encouraged because they lend festivity to the occasion. Instrumental or electronic music is permitted on Shabbat but it should maintain the spirit of Shabbat (e.g. no heavy metal music). Flames, candle lighting, writing and the like are not permitted on Shabbat.

### **Photography**

Families may arrange for photographers and/or videographers to come to the synagogue during the week before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah in order to take "set shots" and/or to videotape parts of the service which the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and others may be leading. These arrangements should be made several weeks in advance with the office.

Photography sessions involving religious school students should not be arranged during religious school hours.

As stated above: No photography, video recording or audio recording is permitted anywhere inside the synagogue or on our property, during Shabbat. This includes both inside and outside the building.

### **Seudat Mitzvah**

The *Seudat Mitzvah* is the meal immediately following the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service.

The policy of our synagogue is that the reception and celebration of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah following the service be considered a *seudat mitzvah*, an extension of the ceremony itself. The *seudat mitzvah* is considered an integral and essential part of the celebration and as such should be

celebrated in a fashion consistent with the values of the synagogue. Therefore, the meal itself should be kosher.

If the *seudat mitzvah* is held in the synagogue all food must be prepared and served under strict rabbinic supervision according to the rules and guidelines set by Rabbi Knapp Schechter. A current list of caterers under rabbinic supervision, approved for use in our synagogue, can be found on our website (<http://www.orshalom.com/ApprovedCaterers.htm>). If the *seudat mitzvah* is to be held away from the synagogue and a caterer not under rabbinic supervision is employed, it is recommended that all food served should be dairy or parve, with no forbidden foods served.

Important: Any food brought into the synagogue must be kosher. Please consult with the Rabbi, before any food is brought into the synagogue by anyone other than an approved caterer.

### **BAR/BAT MITZVAH RELATED FEES**

Note that the following fees are correct as of January 2020 and may be subject to change:

Janitorial Fee	\$250
Catering Fee	10-15% of fee charged by caterer (*)

Note: Recently, our Board of Trustees decided to charge caterers for the use of our facilities. Most synagogues in the area follow this practice and have been doing so for years. The intention of this fee is to compensate the synagogue for use of utilities, our kitchen, and for wear and tear. While we realize that the caterers may not absorb this cost and may pass it on to our families, this really is a matter between the caterer and Or Shalom and should not directly involve our families.

## **BAR/BAT MITZVAH CLASS GIFT**

It is our tradition at Or Shalom that the families of the class of students making their Bar/Bat Mitzvah join together to present the synagogue with a gift. While the decision about the actual gift will be made by the class families, the Rabbi and the leadership of the synagogue will provide the Bar/Bat Mitzvah class families a list of items that will be of special meaning and benefit to the synagogue.

## **RECOMMENDED READINGS**

### **A. Bar/Bat Mitzvah Literature for Parents**

***A Spiritual Journey: The Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah handbook*** by Seymour Rosse. West Orange, NJ: Berhrman House, 1994

This handbook helps to answer basic questions of Bar/Bat Mitzvah ritual. It is meant to be read together by students and their parents and is presented in clear and concise question and answer format. A leader's guide accompanies the short text.

***Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah*** by Jeffrey K. Salkin. Woodstock, VT: Jewish lights Publishing, 1992.

This book stresses the performance of mitzvot in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah life cycle event. It also contains a resource list for places to send Tzedakah and a list of resources for Jewish parents.

***The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Planbook*** by Jane Lewit and Ellen Epstein. Chelsea, MI: Scarborough House, 1991.

A family guide for planning both the ceremony and celebration as Jewish religious occasions. A step by step approach.

***The Ultimate Bar/Bat Mitzvah Celebration Book*** by Jayne Cohen and Lori Weinrott. New York, NY:Clarkson Potter, 2004

A guide to inspiring ceremonies and joyous festivities.

### **B. Bar/Bat Mitzvah Literature for Ages 9 – 12**

***The Bar Mitzvah Lessons*** by Harry Squires from ***World Over***, Vol. 41, No. 9, 1980.

A short story about the Bar Mitzvah of a refugee who was trained for his Bar Mitzvah by U.S. Army soldiers.

***A Bar-Mitzvah of a Different Kind*** by Esther Adler. New York: Jewish national Fund, 1990.

A story about an American boy's Bar Mitzvah celebration in Israel.

***Bar Mitzvah: An Anthology on Tefillin and Bar Mitzvah*** edited by Yechezkel Rittenberg. Israel: Netzach, 1974.

A collection of essays and short stories on the meaning of Bar Mitzvah and Tefillin for young men about to become Bar Mitzvah. The stories are written by rabbinic leaders throughout Jewish history.

***Coming of Age: Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah*** by Benjamin Efron and Alvan D. Rubin, New York: UAHC, 1977.

A slim text for students age 11 -13 introducing the ritual of Bar Mitzvah: history, customs and significance.

***Bar Mitzvah*** by Howard Greenfield. New York: Holt. Reinhart & Winston, 1981

A short book describing the origins and customs of Bar Mitzvah.

***King of the Seventh Grade*** by Barbara Cohen. New York: Lothrop, Lee & Shepard, 1982.

When a Bar Mitzvah class student learns that his mother is not Jewish, his soul searching becomes a positive Jewish experience towards a conversion and Bar Mitzvah.

***Does Anyone Here Know the Way to Thirteen?*** By Stephen Kaufman. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1985.

A novel about the trials and tribulations of a pre-Bar Mitzvah adolescent.

***About the B'nai Bagels*** by E.L. Konigsburg. New York: Atheneum, 1975.

The adventures of a Jewish little league team and its teen members. Told with humor and insight.

***Bar Mitzvah Lessons*** by Martin Elsant. Los Angeles: Aleph Designs, 1993.

A short novel whose hero, David, fears his approaching Bar Mitzvah which causes him to alienate five rabbis who try to help him. However, a deep relationship develops between 12 year old David and his Bar Mitzvah tutor.

***Good If It Goes*** by Gary Provost & Gail Levine provost. New York Alladin books, 1990.

A humorous novel about one boy's efforts to cope with the pressures of Bar Mitzvah and adolescence (for ages 11 – 13).

***The Narrowest Bar Mitzvah*** by Steven Schauer. New York, UAHC, 1986.

A tale about a Bar Mitzvah ceremony that almost wasn't but turned out to be a very significant event.

***Pink Slippers, Bat Mitzvah Blues*** by Freida Wolff. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989.

A novel which deals with decision making for a busy, concerned eighth grader right after her Bat Mitzvah.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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**Appendix A - Date Reservation Form**

**Date Reservation Form**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ End Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Room: \_\_\_\_\_

I have a key: Y/N

I need someone to help open/close the building: Y/N

Group Sponsoring the meeting/event: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of meeting/event: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected number of people in attendance? \_\_\_\_\_

Special needs for meeting/event (i.e., table and chair set-up, food, etc.)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation Or Shalom – 835 Darby Paoli Rd – Berwyn, PA 19312  
~ 610-644-9086 – [office@orshalom.com](mailto:office@orshalom.com) ~

## **Appendix B – Maintaining Kashrut at Or Shalom**

Only kosher food may be served at Or Shalom.

- Please visit our website ([www.OrShalom.com](http://www.OrShalom.com)) for a current list of approved caterers. Please confirm your selection with the Rabbi.
- Any food brought into the synagogue must be kosher. Please consult with the Rabbi, before any food is brought into the synagogue by anyone other than an approved caterer.
- Food prepared in the synagogue must be prepared under the supervision of a certified Chester County food manager.
- Food cooked at home is not permitted in the synagogue.
- Please arrange to have all deliveries at the synagogue completed no later than 3:00 pm prior to the Sabbath. In keeping with the dignity of the Sabbath items must not only be delivered prior to the Sabbath and nothing may be removed from the synagogue until after the conclusion of the Sabbath.
- All suppliers must be registered with the synagogue office on our standard reservation form.
- Please remember that the synagogue has only a part time staff so we must make sure that someone is in the building to allow your suppliers entry for delivery and retrieval.

## **Appendix C – Blessings recited before and after an *aliyah***

Please give copies of these blessing to all your guests that will be honored with an *aliyah*. The blessings can be found below. To hear them chanted, please copy the following link into your web browser:

### **Blessings before and after reading of the Torah**

Please proceed to the Bimah when your name is called (in Hebrew). Come up on the left side so that you are at the right arm of the reader. The reader will show you the place. Take the corner of your Talit, touch the place and then kiss the corner of your Talit. Then recite this blessing:

#### ***Barchu et Adonai ha-m'vorakh***

The congregation responds:

#### ***Baruch Adonai ha-m'vorakh l'olam va-ed***

Repeat the verse that the congregation just chanted, i.e.:

#### ***Baruch Adonai ha-m'vorakh l'olam va-ed***

Then immediately continue:

#### ***Barukh attah Adonai, eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher behar banu mi-kol ha-amim, v'natan lanu et torato. Barukh attah Adonai, noten ha-torah***

After the reader has concluded the portion, you will again be shown the place. Again, take the corner of your Talit and touch the place, kiss the corner of your Talit and then begin:

#### ***Barukh attah Adonai, eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher natan lanu torat emet, v'hayei olam nata b'tokhenu. Barukh attah Adonai, noten ha-torah.***

Please remain on the Bimah to witness the next reading. At the conclusion of that reading, please return to your seat.

## Appendix D - Building Use Form

Synagogue policy requires that a building use form be completed for all events held in the synagogue.

<b>Oneg Shabbat (Friday evening)</b>	
Number of Guests expected:	
Will this be catered by an outside caterer or by the Sisterhood	
If an outside caterer, Please provide name and address	
Does this caterer have a certified Chester County Food Manager?	
<b>Kiddush (Saturday Morning)</b>	
Number of Guests expected:	
Will this be catered by an outside caterer or by the Sisterhood	
If an outside caterer, Please provide name and address	
Does this caterer have a certified Chester County Food Manager?	
<b>Luncheon (Saturday) (If this is a private affair, the synagogue may charge a rental fee)</b>	
Number of Guests expected:	
Will this be catered by an outside caterer or by the Sisterhood	
If an outside caterer, Please provide name and address	
Does this caterer have a certified Chester County Food Manager?	
Flowers (If a florist will make deliveries, Please provide name and address)	
Names of any other vendors coming to the synagogue to make deliveries)	

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Bar/Bat Mitzvah:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix E – Worksheet for Assignment of Honors

Please complete the following with the names (both Hebrew and English, if possible) of all those you wish to honor with an *aliyah* or with participation in the various parts of the Friday night and Saturday morning service. It is important that you discuss your selections with Rabbi Knapp Schechter and that she verify that the people that you have selected as honorees are capable of the task.

### Erev Shabbat (Friday Evening)

Kabbalat Shabbat	
Ma'ariv	
Kiddush	
Yigdal/Adon Olam	

### Shabbat Morning

Birkot Hashakar	
P'sukei d'zimra	
Shacharit	
Torah Service	
Torah Reading	
Hafatarah Reading	
Musaf	
Kiddush/Motzi	

## Aliyot

<p><u>(1) Open &amp; Close Ark (Before Torah Service)</u></p> <p><b>Name (English) &amp; Relation to Bar/Bat Mitzvah</b></p> <p><i>Note: This honor is often given to a child over 10 years old.</i></p>	<p><u>(2) Pass Torah (From Generation To Generation)</u></p> <p><b>List of Names (English):</b></p>
<p><u>(3) 1<sup>st</sup> Aliyah – 7<sup>th</sup> Aliyah</u> * (7 index cards)</p> <p>For each index card:</p> <p><b>Name (English) &amp; Relation to Bar/Bat Mitzvah</b>  <b>Names (Hebrew): Honoree’s name &amp; father’s and mother’s names</b></p> <p><i>Note: 7<sup>th</sup> Aliyah is usually given to parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah</i></p>	<p><u>(4) Maftir Aliyah</u></p> <p><b>Names (Hebrew): Bar/Bat Mitzvah name, father’s and mother’s names</b></p> <p><i>Note: The Maftir is given to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah</i></p>
<p><u>(5) Lift &amp; Dress the Torah</u></p> <p>Lifter (Hagba) -- <b>Name (English) &amp; Relation to Bar/Bat Mitzvah</b></p> <p>Dresser (Galila) -- <b>Name (English) &amp; Relation to Bar/Bat Mitzvah</b></p>	<p><u>(6) Chant Haphtarah</u></p> <p><b>Name (English) of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah</b></p>
<p><u>(7) Prayer For Our Country</u> p. 415</p> <p><b>Name (English) &amp; Relation to Bar/Bat Mitzvah</b></p> <p><i>Note: This honor may be given to a non-Jew</i></p>	<p><u>(8) Prayer For Israel</u> p. 416 or p. 417</p> <p><b>Name (English) &amp; Relation to Bar/Bat Mitzvah</b></p> <p><i>Note: May be recited in Hebrew or in English.</i></p>

<p><u>(9) Prayer For Peace p.417</u></p> <p><b>Name (English) &amp; Relation to Bar/Bat Mitzvah</b></p> <p><i>Note: This honor may be given to a non-Jew.</i></p>	<p><u>(10) Open &amp; Close Ark (After Torah Service)</u></p> <p><b>Name (English) &amp; Relation to Bar/Bat Mitzvah</b></p> <p><i>Note: This honor is often given to a child over 10 years old.</i></p>
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**(\*)** A Kohen or bat Kohen traditionally receives the first Torah honor. If you have a Kohen on your list, please give that person the first *aliyah*. If you do not have a Kohen but you have a Levi, give that person the first *aliyah*. If you have a Kohen and Levi, give the Kohen the first *aliyah* and the Levi the second *aliyah*. If you have neither a Kohen nor a Levi, you may give these two honors to others.



## Appendix F - Family Information

Name of Child (first & last)	
Mother's Name (first & last)	
Father's Name (first & last)	
Siblings Names (include ages)	
Grandparents Names	
Aunts & Uncles Names (include great Aunts & Great Uncles)	
Students Hobbies & Interests	
Other Pertinent Information:	

**Use an additional sheet of paper if necessary.**

## **Appendix G – Participation of Non-Jewish Parents**

Or Shalom welcomes blended families and welcomes the participation of non-Jewish parents in the Bar Mitzvah celebration, as much as is possible according to Halacha. Rabbi Knapp Schechter's position is to say "yes" to requests whenever possible and to say "no" only when absolutely necessary.

So, among other ways, a non-Jewish parent can:

- Stand on the bimah, next to his/her child, when that child is reading from the Torah.
- Lead the congregation in the reading of a psalm, in English.
- Lead the congregation, in English, for our country, for peace, or for the congregation.

The non-Jewish parent cannot receive an *aliyah*, because he she cannot recite the required blessing that includes the words "who has chosen us among all peoples".

If you are a blended family, please discuss your wishes with the Rabbi. You will find that she is extremely accommodating.