



Temple
CHAI

B-Mitzvah Guidebook

The study of *Torah* is equal to all the other *mitzvot*,
because it leads to their performance.
– After *Mishnah Peah* 1:1

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What does it mean to become B-Mitzvah?

Literally, *Bar Mitzvah* means “son of the commandment” and *Bat Mitzvah* means “daughter of the commandment.” Here at Temple Chai, we use the gender-inclusive term B-Mitzvah in discussing our program and when speaking about this rite of passage in general. Jewish law does not require children to follow the commandments, though they are encouraged to do so. At the age of thirteen, young people become obligated to fulfill the *mitzvot*. B-Mitzvah is not simply an event; rather it is a change in status. While we may perceive the age of thirteen to be in the midst of childhood, Jewish law allows B-Mitzvah to count in a *minyan* (the minimum number of people necessary for some prayers), to form binding contracts, and to serve as witnesses in religious courts.

A young person becomes B-Mitzvah at their 13th birthday; no ceremony is needed to confer adulthood. The celebration of *Bar Mitzvah* (the first *Bat Mitzvah* did not occur until 1922, and the term B-Mitzvah is even more modern), is fairly recent in Jewish history, dating back only five centuries – the blink of an eye in Jewish history! To show a community that a young man was now legally an adult, he would be called to recite the blessing before and after the reading of the *Torah*, a *mitzvah* and privilege reserved for adults. Over time, the ceremony was expanded to include the reading of the *Haftarah* (the additional reading from the Prophets chosen by the Rabbis of old because it amplifies a theme found in the *Torah* reading or corresponds to the time of year) and often the leading of worship following the *Torah* service.

Today it is the educational aspect of the experience of becoming B-Mitzvah, rather than reaching the age of majority, that is most important. At Temple Chai, B-Mitzvah students demonstrate their ability to lead services, read *Torah*, participate in *Tikkun Olam* (repair of the world), as well as teach the community. B-Mitzvah is not the end goal of Jewish education. We are all obligated to continue the study of Torah and the fulfillment of righteous deeds throughout our lives. The B-Mitzvah ritual celebrates a young person’s change in status and honors their new responsibility not only on the day of their ceremony but through ongoing commitments to our tradition and community.

What distinguishes B-Mitzvah at Temple Chai?

We encourage our B-Mitzvah students to embrace their new status as adults by leading our community in prayer, good deeds, and study. Preparation includes attendance at Religious School and B-Mitzvah Club; private tutoring to learn to chant prayers, a Torah portion, and a Haftarah selection; and meeting several times with the Rabbis and Cantor. Our B-Mitzvah ceremony occurs at communal worship services on *Shabbat* morning so our entire congregation can be a part of this meaningful event.

The B-Mitzvah journey is a significant milestone in our Jewish growth. The purpose of Jewish education is to provide the student with skills and knowledge required to be fluent in Jewish liturgy and customs and their meaning, as well as to participate in the life of the Jewish community. Jewish education is also meant to instill a love of Judaism in the hearts of our children. At B-Mitzvah ceremonies, our young people demonstrate that they have acquired many of these skills. One’s religious education is no more

complete at thirteen than one's secular education; **therefore, we strongly encourage all students to continue their learning through our meaningful Confirmation program, as the majority of students do.**

How is Confirmation part of B-Mitzvah?

Though they are both milestones in Jewish education, B-Mitzvah and Confirmation are quite different. B-Mitzvah is an individual event marking a young person's entry into our adult community. Though we no longer look upon a thirteen-year-old as an adult, B-Mitzvah symbolically marks the beginning of a more mature, self-motivated approach to one's Judaism and to one's involvement in the Jewish community.

Confirmation is a group event originally developed by the Reform movement as a means of educating young women equally with young men. It also extended the educational process beyond thirteen to an age (in most congregations, 16, and in some congregations, 18) when students can address questions of ultimate religious significance with greater sophistication, maturity, and intellectual capacity. The Confirmation ceremony takes place in early- to mid-May, and the Confirmation class communally confirms their responsibility to *Torah*, our Temple, and the Jewish people, thus reinforcing their Jewish identity.

B-Mitzvah services are distinct from Confirmation and not a substitute for it. Every student who is honored with the ritual of B-Mitzvah is **strongly encouraged to continue** with religious studies through Confirmation. Our Confirmation year, as well as our pre-Confirmation program, is filled with challenging experiences, adult-level discussions, and memorable moments for our high school students. During the Confirmation program, students concentrate on Jewish ethics and values, developing their own Jewish theology and spirituality, articulating their Jewish identity, what it means to be an active adult in a Jewish community, and Jewish religious concepts with a practical eye to developing a Jewish lifestyle as they leave their parents' homes. The Confirmation year meshes with real growth in our students' intellectual and conceptual capacities. Many students look back on their Confirmation year as both the most challenging and the most worthwhile (and fun!) of their Jewish education.

Opportunities for Middle Schoolers at Temple Chai

There are many ways for 6th-8th grade students to get involved.

During the B-Mitzvah experience and beyond, we invite and encourage you and your family to make the Temple Chai community a part of your lives – it's an exciting place to be!

Learning on Sundays: On Sunday mornings, our 6th & 7th graders learn, think, and grow together. Participation in Sunday learning is a core part of the B-mitzvah process and participation is mandatory. The program consists of three components: a Judaica track elective (such as sports, art, creative gaming, Discovery of Torah, etc.), a grade-level seminar class (Hebrew for 6th graders and Jewish Ethics and History for 7th graders), and madrichim training.

Students in 8th grade gather at 12:15pm on Sundays (after the younger students' religious school sessions conclude) for their own interactive, discussion- and project-based class. Also beginning in 8th grade, post-B-Mitzvah students are invited to apply to be part of our *Madrichim* Leadership Program (teacher's aides).

B-Mitzvah Club: Students participate in B-Mitzvah Club on Wednesdays from 5:30–7:30 P.M. during the spring semester of 6th grade. Students learn to chant Torah trope with the Cantor, have time with the Rabbis to discuss Torah, writing a *d'var torah*, and other topics, and students learn the meaning behind the prayers they will lead at their B-Mitzvah. The program is taught by Amy Isaacson, one of our master teachers. They also have opportunities to practice prayers as a group. This class is required and is essential to successfully becoming B-Mitzvah at Temple Chai, and it is a wonderful time of relationship- and community-building for the class. During the semester of B-Mitzvah club, 3-4 sessions are held for parents to join together as a group with our Rabbis, and these are opportunities for meaningful discussion and building friendships with other parents.

We also typically hold a Shabbaton or retreat for our B-Mitzvah families which is a time for meaningful learning, fun, and spiritual exploration. It is not to be missed!

Shabbat and Immersive Experiences: Part of the B-Mitzvah Club experience involves participation in Shabbat services. In addition to the Wednesday sessions, the program includes attending a number of Shabbat services, either Friday night or Saturday morning depending on the week. Together, the Club students will become familiar with the structure and meaning of the service. We also create Torah study sessions and other Shabbat events such as a hike, a learner's service, and Friday evening Shabbat dinner for parents and students to attend together.

There are many benefits to our students attending Shabbat services. They will learn the rhythm of the morning services and practice prayers to help them feel more comfortable during their own B-mitzvah service. It is also a meaningful opportunity for parents to model commitment to Jewish community and life. Our young people learn best by doing and by witnessing their adult role models engaging meaningfully in Jewish life themselves. Finally, it is another component in

the formation of the Club community. Your cohort is navigating the B-Mitzvah journey together and experiencing these ritual moments together will help them grow closer and become friends.

Tikkun Olam Project: Tikkun Olam means healing the world. As part of becoming B-Mitzvah, our students are asked to complete a Tikkun Olam project. This is a special opportunity to demonstrate the person they are and the adult they are becoming: a person who uses their skills, passions, and energy to make the world a better place, in accordance with Jewish values. There are many kinds of projects (volunteering time, fundraising for a worthy cause, collecting needed items, advocacy, and more), and this is a wonderful chance for students to see the difference they can make in the world *now*, and not only in the future as they grow. More detail can be found in the Tikkun Olam Project Handbook.

Youth Group: Tweens and teens are encouraged to attend our wonderful Youth Group events as part of TCTY Jr (5th-7th grade) or TCTY (8th-12th grade). TCTY stands for Temple Chai Temple Youth. Events are held monthly and are a great way to have fun with Jewish friends and to deepen connection to the Jewish community. For more information about TCTY Jr, contact our Youth Group Advisor Nicki Kaplan nkaplan@templechai.com

Madrichim Leadership Program: Beginning in the 8th grade year, post-B-Mitzvah students (or those students whose B-Mitzvah occur during the fall of the 8th grade year) have the opportunity to apply to be one of our Madrichim. The Madrichim Leadership at Chai Program is an intentional learning platform that teaches our teens how to engage, mentor, and connect with their younger peers and with each other. The goal of the program is to keep our teens involved in the Jewish development of the next generation of community members while learning hands-on leadership skills, filling identified needs of our school, and helping our teachers to make Temple Chai Religious School the best option for the Jewish education of our K-7 students.

Our Madrichim may choose from one of five different outlets:

- (1) Technical support for teachers
- (2) Chugim (electives)
- (3) Mentorship
- (4) B-Mitzvah Tutoring Support
- (5) Classroom Support

B-Mitzvah Timeline

Spring Semester of 6th Grade:

-Attend B-Mitzvah Club & fulfill its expectations

Appx. 12 Months in advance of B-Mitzvah service:

- Family meeting with the officiating Rabbi
- Family meeting with the Cantor
- Start reading the Torah portion in English.

8 Months in advance:

-Begin weekly tutoring with tutor to learn to chant prayers, Torah, and Haftarah.

6 Months in advance:

- Check-in lesson with the Cantor (no tutor lesson that week)
- Family meeting with the non-officiating Rabbi
- Begin working on the Tikkun Olam Project.

3 Months in advance:

-Meet two times with the officiating Rabbi to discuss Torah portion and work on d'var torah. Please bring the Torah parashah booklet to these meetings.

6 weeks in advance:

-Transition from tutor to the Cantor for weekly lessons, including time to practice on the Bimah.

4 weeks in advance:

- Email a completed honors sheet (below) to the Cantor
- D'var Torah should be completed and finalized with approval of officiating rabbi by this time
- Tikkun Olam project should also be complete by this time.

Week of B-Mitzvah service: Rehearsal with immediate family in the sanctuary. Bring typed final draft of D'var Torah and parents' blessing. We will review the entire service and read from the Torah.

Other Details and FAQ:

WHAT HAPPENS ON FRIDAY EVENING?

Helping to lead our service on Friday night is a special way the congregation gets to celebrate your family and to mark B-Mitzvah (coming of age within the Jewish community) during our main congregational service – that is, in community!

The nosh begins at 5:30pm. At 5:45pm, your immediate family will meet with the Rabbis and Cantor for a special, private blessing on the bimah. Your family will be invited to light Shabbat candles in the service. Towards the end of the service, your child will lead the congregation in the Kiddush, the blessing over the wine or grape juice.

SPONSORING NOSH ON FRIDAY EVENING

It is customary for B-Mitzvah families to sponsor the nosh on the Friday evening of the B-Mitzvah weekend to share with the community in celebration and joy. Nosh sponsorship typically ranges from \$100-400, and this donation can be coordinated in conversation with Joan Neer in the temple office.

WHAT HAPPENS ON SATURDAY MORNING?

- Plan to arrive with ample time before the start of the service; 30 minutes minimum is recommended.
- Younger siblings can participate in a variety of ways: as greeters, passing out programs/kipot, assisting in dressing the Torah, walking with your family as the Torah is carried around the room, opening the Ark, helping to pass out candy before the candy toss, and/or sharing an opening reading.
- Opening readings are optional. Samples are available beginning on page 14 of this guidebook. Our goal of this reading is to create a spiritually reflective environment.
- It is our custom to have the tallit formally presented to the student, often by a parent or elder family member. They are welcome to share a few words.
- Torah Service:
 - The Ark is opened when the Torah is removed and again when it is returned. You may designate one or more people for this honor.
 - As the Torah is removed from the Ark, it is passed to the eldest members of the family, who will hand it down the line to the student. Non-Jewish family members are invited (according to their comfort level) to participate as a part of the journey through which Torah has been given to the student. This ritual does not include aunts, uncles, siblings, or cousins; rather this ritual is specifically for grandparents, parents, and the B-Mitzvah, symbolizing the chain of Jewish learning and tradition.

- As the student begins to carry the Torah scroll through the congregation (*hakafah*), the Ark openers close the Ark and return to their seats. Immediate family should follow the B-Mitzvah in the processional.
- There are commonly 4 aliyot (groups of people who will chant the blessings before/after the Torah reading). This includes the parent(s) (3rd Aliyah) and student (4th Aliyah). It is helpful to provide your honorees with a copy of the blessings so that they have an opportunity to review them in advance, in case their Hebrew is rusty.
- Members of your family are welcome to lift (*Hagbahah*) and dress (*G'lilah*) the Torah.

WHAT IS A HAFTARAH PORTION?

Haftarah is a Jewish liturgical reading from the books of prophets in the *Tanakh* (Hebrew Bible). It is usually chanted in synagogue services following the Torah reading on Shabbat and on many holidays. The term Haftarah means an additional reading, and it is meant to complement the weekly Torah portion, sharing thematic or textual connections with the Torah text and/or the holiday or time of year during which the Haftarah portion is being chanted. The practice of reading Haftarah dates back to the time when public reading of the Torah was restricted, and the Haftarah served as a substitute. The Haftarah readings are typically taken from the books of the prophets, such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and others. The Haftara reading is an integral part of the synagogue service, providing additional insights, moral teachings, and thematic context that complements the lessons from the Torah.

Like Torah, Haftarah is chanted based on a system of trope markings but has a different and beautiful melodic sound. While Torah is chanted from an unpointed text (i.e., *without* punctuation, vowels, or trope markings within the Hebrew text in the scroll), Haftarah is chanted from a pointed text (including vowels, punctuation, and trope markings) on a sheet of paper or modern, printed book.

CANDY TOSS

It is a tradition in many congregations to gently toss candy toward the B-Mitzvah student who has completed their Torah reading, symbolically wishing them sweetness in their lives as they enter adulthood. This is not a mandatory part of services here at Temple Chai, but each family has the option of having the candy toss as part of the B-Mitzvah service. If you opt into the candy toss, please include at least two names on the honors sheet to help pass out candy during the service at the appropriate time.

We ask that families purchase the candy to be thrown (please purchase Sunkist fruit gems; these can be purchased at Smart & Final)) and bring the candy to your B-mitzvah Rehearsal so that it will be ready for the Saturday of your service.

SERVICE ATTIRE

We are often asked what attire is recommended during services, including B-Mitzvah services. We recommend attire (for adults) that would be appropriate for a slightly more formal business meeting while on the bimah, and either “business” or “business casual” in the congregation. For our B-Mitzvah students, we encourage them to wear clothing that is authentic to them, is comfortable without the need for adjusting or fiddling, and is in line with the modesty and formality described for adults as “business” attire. If you are not sure what is appropriate, please reach out to our rabbis or cantor. Everyone may choose to wear a kippah if they wish. Wearing a tallit is encouraged for Jewish attendees over age 13.

PHOTOGRAPHY

We encourage you to take pictures before or after the final rehearsal, or on the Friday before the B-Mitzvah celebration. Photography sessions are not possible on Saturday prior to the service, but they may take place after the service if needed and arranged in advance. Please contact Joan Neer, 602-971-1234 EXT 291 jneer@templechai.com, to schedule your photography.

During the service, any photography must happen in a way that does not disturb the sanctity of the service. If you arrange for photography, please inform your photographer that flash photography is prohibited during the service, and they may photograph only from the rear of the sanctuary, or on the side aisles (but not middle aisle), not stepping forward past where congregational chairs are set. At no time may the photographer step between individuals in the congregation and the bimah. If it is possible for the photographer to disable the “shutter” sound of their camera, they should also do so, in order to not disturb the service.

STREAMING & VIDEOGRAPHY

If you would like to stream and/or record the audio and video of the B-Mitzvah service, we are glad to help arrange a professional technician to do so. The cost for this is \$400 per service, and we ask at least six months’ notice in order to hire and book the technicians. Please note that if this request is made later than three months prior, we cannot guarantee availability of the technician. After the service, a link to the video will be emailed and a physical flash drive will be mailed separately. *Please note that the cost of the professional technician for streaming/audio subject to change based on the rates of the company with which we contract; this service is arranged for members at cost.*

If you wish to hire an outside videographer, they may film the ceremony from a stationary position in the back of the sanctuary on the right or left side so long as the walking path is not obstructed, for both safety reasons and in order to not impede the ritual of the service.

FACILITY USAGE

If you would like to continue the celebration on our campus, in the social hall, the small sanctuary, or the Jerusalem Courtyard for any part of your B-Mitzvah, please contact Joan Neer at 602-971-1234 or jneer@templechai.com, to reserve your space. This may include a Friday night dinner, a post-service Kiddush, a luncheon, or a party. We suggest you reserve the facility well in advance. Please note that all reservations are on a first-come, first-served basis. Once the

reservation has been made, please call the temple to schedule an appointment within 30 days prior to your event to finalize all of the arrangements.

Please note that aside from challah and wine/grape juice following the B-Mitzvah service and food for Nosh on Friday evening, Temple Chai does not arrange or provide catering services for family celebrations; that is arranged on an individual basis, and all events held at Temple Chai are required to follow the congregation's Kashrut Policy, included in this packet on page 20.

SECURITY

Security is a priority in everything we do, and there is no Jewish value of greater import to us than *Pikuach Nefesh*, saving and protecting life. In this time of antisemitism and concern regarding threats to Jewish institutions, we require security on-campus for all worship services as well as lifecycle celebrations. There is no additional fee for security during B-Mitzvah services. However, B-Mitzvah families are required to provide security for any luncheon or party held at Temple. *Security may only be arranged by Temple staff as it must align with Temple security plans and policies. The Temple office will arrange for security, which will either be an armed, off-duty member of the Phoenix police department or an armed security professional from a trusted security company. Whether security is a member of the police department or an armed security professional cannot be guaranteed in advance as this is fully dependent on police and security company schedules.* The cost for security during a Shabbat dinner or luncheon is \$200 or \$400 for a party.

Please reach out to our Executive Director, Wendy Cohen wcohen@templechai.com with any questions regarding security.

PRINTED PROGRAM

Some families choose to prepare a program of the service, including honors and a note from the B-Mitzvah to hand out to the congregation. This handout is optional.

Contact Joan Neer, 602-971-1234 (jneer@templechai.com) to request some samples.

CHOOSING JUDAICA ITEMS

The Temple Chai Judaica shop has a large assortment of gifts, yad pointers, tzedakah boxes, havdalah sets, and more.

Contact Joan Neer 602-971-1234 (jneer@templechai.com) to set up an appointment.

WHAT IF MY FAMILY MEMBERS AREN'T JEWISH?

We wish to honor who you wish to honor. Everyone is fully welcome regardless of background and identity. In your meetings with the Rabbis and Cantor, we will discuss ways to include your non-Jewish family members in the service.

WHAT IF OUR FAMILY DYNAMICS ARE COMPLICATED?

Every family is complicated in its own unique ways! Our goal is to create a smooth, easy service that keeps the focus on the student. Please feel free to share any concerning family dynamics with our clergy and we will form a plan together.

DO PARENTS SPEAK DURING THE SERVICE ON SATURDAY?

Either or both parents may offer a blessing to their child. Written remarks (total when combined if there are two parents speaking) should not exceed two written pages double-spaced (i.e., 5 minutes maximum). This is a moment to ground your thoughts in the context of blessings, prayers, and hopes. Thanking guests, listing accomplishments, or poking fun is best saved for any speeches given during celebrations, enabling this moment to be fitting to the sacred moment of the worship service.

Here are some questions to consider:

1. What do you wish for your child as they begin the journey into the adolescence/adulthood?
2. What strengths have you seen in their character? What type of person are they?
3. What cautions do you have for them? What do you wish you had known when you were their age?
4. What values do you hope that they will keep in mind?

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE FINAL REHEARSAL?

During the week of your service, the Cantor will meet with the student and immediate family to review the service and practice the prayers in the main sanctuary. We ask that you bring the following to the final rehearsal: Student's folder, tallit, shoes that they will wear during the service (to practice walking with the Torah), final copy of D'var Torah (speech), yad (if you have one). **Parent(s) must attend final rehearsal.** Siblings are welcome.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THE TALLIT AFTER THE SERVICE?

A tallit is not a B-Mitzvah uniform! It is a garment to be worn at any daytime service as well as Kol Nidre (Erev Yom Kippur). We encourage students to wear their tallit at future morning and Kol Nidre services. If the tallit worn during the B-Mitzvah is a family heirloom for the moment, they may select a tallit to wear during future services from the rack near the entrance on the left or you may wish to purchase a different tallit for them to wear regularly.

WHAT DOES THE B-MITZVAH FEE COVER AND WHEN IS IT DUE?

The fee for B-Mitzvah is \$1550. At least 50% (\$775) is due one year prior to your child's B-Mitzvah date, and the balance is due 3 months prior to the B-Mitzvah date. Payments may be made directly through your ShulCloud account. The B-Mitzvah fee enables us to provide weekly tutoring in the months leading up to B-Mitzvah, materials, security for the service, and other important elements of our program and the day of the service itself. Other optional costs may include streaming/videography, sponsoring Friday evening kiddush, or the cost of additional reservations for space and security if a celebration is held at temple. If you have any questions

please contact Joan Neer (jneer@templechai.com) or our Executive Director, Wendy Cohen wcohen@templechai.com.

OTHER FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

All families need to be members in good standing both the year prior to and the year of the B-Mitzvah date. This means that all dues, fees, religious school fees, etc., must be paid in full or have a payment plan scheduled in ShulCloud no later than 3 months prior to your child's B-Mitzvah date. Please contact our Executive Director, Wendy Cohen wcohen@templechai.com, with any questions.

I HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS!

Feel free to contact Rabbi Segal rabbisegal@templechai.com, and/or Rabbi Koppell rabbikoppell@templechai.com, with additional questions. We are here to help and look forward to continuing the journey with you. Joan Neer jneer@templechai.com is another wonderful resource and source of information!

Honors at a B-Mitzvah Service

Please email to the Cantor and officiating Rabbi at least four weeks before your service. They will go through its contents with you to ensure proper pronunciation and that all information is present.

Name of Student:

Parents:

Siblings:

of guests on Friday:

of guests on Saturday:

Friday Candle Lighting:

Tallit presentation:

Optional English Reading: (see the packet below for the options available)

1st Ark Opening (2-4 people):

Participants in Passing the Torah from Generation to Generation:

For the Aliyot (Torah blessings) we ask that you share the Hebrew name of each participant.
Example: Stacy Goldberg – Shoshanah bat Chayim v'Rivkah

1st Aliyah

full name - Hebrew name

2nd Aliyah

full name - Hebrew name

3rd Aliyah – Parents of B-Mitzvah

Parent(s) full name - Hebrew name

4th Aliyah – B-Mitzvah

Student full name - Hebrew name

Lifting the Torah – Hagbahah:

Dressing the Torah – G'lilah:

Do you wish to have candy thrown? Yes/No

If yes, two to three honors to help pass out candy:

2nd Ark Opening (2-4 people):

Kaddish Names:

Optional Readings for B-Mitzvah Services

#1

May the door to this synagogue be wide enough
to receive all who hunger for love, all who are lonely for fellowship.

May it welcome all who have cares to unburden,
thanks to express, hopes to nurture.

May the door of this synagogue be narrow enough
to shut out pettiness and pride, envy and enmity.

May its threshold be no stumbling block
to young or straying feet.

May it be too high to admit complacency,
selfishness and harshness.

May this synagogue be, for all who enter,
the doorway to a richer and more meaningful life.

Mishkan T'filah, p.185

#1, adapted

May the door of this Temple be wide enough
To welcome all who are in need of love, all who are longing for friendship.

May it invite all who have problems to solve,
Thanks to give, hopes to care for.

May the door of this Temple be small enough
To keep out narrow-mindedness and jealousy and bitterness.

May the entrance welcome everyone

May this Temple be for everyone
The doorway to a better and more meaningful life.

adapted by Jill & Anya Bloom

#2

There is grace that every dawn renews,
A loveliness making every morning fresh.
We will endure, we will prevail-
We, the children of Hope,
Children of the One
Who crowds the heavens with stars,
Endows the earth with glory,
And fills the mind with wonder!

Mishkan T'filah, p.187

#3

To You the stars of morning sing,
From You their bright radiance must spring.
And steadfast in their vigils, day and night,
The children of God, flooded with fervor, ring
Your praise; they teach the holy ones to bring
Into Your house the breadth of early light.

Mishkan T'filah, p.187

#4

It is not we alone who pray;
all things pray.
All things pour forth their souls.
The heavens pray, the earth prays,
every creature and every living thing prays. In all life, there is longing.
Creation itself is but a longing,
a prayer to the Almighty.
What are the clouds, the rising and the setting of the sun,
the soft radiance of the moon, and the gentleness of the night?
What are the flashes of the human mind
and the storms of the human heart?
They are all prayers -
the outpouring of boundless longing for God.

Mishkan T'filah, p.287

#5

We give thanks to You, O God, for this Shabbat day,
which unites us as a community of faith and hope.

For the holiness of Shabbat, which can lead us to fulfill
the best that is in us, we give thanks.

For the memories of Shabbat, enriched by generations of our people
who observed it and from it drew courage to face hardship,
and light to banish darkness, we are grateful.

We offer thanks for the peace of Shabbat,
the day consecrated to family love.

O God, our turning to You exalts our humanity.

You are the joy of our life,
the Source of its greatness, its power and its beauty.

Help us, O God, to find inspiration for the coming week;
help us to find peace within ourselves and one another.

Mishkan T'filah, p.287

#6

May my life be one link in a chain of goodness.
As I say the prayers of my ancestors,
help me to recall their devotion and faithfulness,
their joy and suffering, which are in every word.
Holiness is my heritage, may I be worthy of it.

May our tradition live in me
and pass from me to generations I shall never know,
enriched by the truth that I have found
and the good deeds I have done.
So may I fulfill my task on earth and receive my blessing.

And when the service ends and the prayers have ceased,
help me to bring their spirit into the world in which I live.
May I love God above all, and my neighbor as myself,
and be a living witness to the truth that never changes.

Mishkan T'filah, p.288

Appendix I: B-Mitzvah: What's in a name? A Note About Language

Language finalized Fall 2022

B-Mitzvah: What's in a name? A Bit of History, and This Moment

From its inception, Reform Judaism has centered on the idea that Judaism needs to adapt and change to embody our highest values and to meet each new moment in a way that reflects our history and our present with an eye to the future. Only through such development has Judaism (not just Reform Judaism but in fact all of Judaism) remained relevant and timely while accessing the timeless wisdom of our tradition. This enables us, as it has enabled the Jewish community in each generation, to engage in a Jewish practice that is meaningful and relevant while striving to make the world a better place, living out the mandate of *tikkun olam* (healing the world).

This effort includes the language we use to talk about ourselves and our Jewish practice. Historically, the commonly used terms in the Jewish world for those who come of age is *B'nai Mitzvah* (plural), *Bar Mitzvah* (masculine singular), and *Bat Mitzvah* (feminine singular). The essence of these terms refers to those who accept responsibility for the sacred obligations (*mitzvot*) of being Jewish and part of Jewish community.

In recent years, understanding of gender in society and in Jewish community has developed significantly. We now know that gender is not a binary “either/or” between only male or female options but that gender is a complex landscape, with an array of genders that individuals identify with (e.g., nonbinary, genderfluid). In many cases, our young people are teaching us and leading the way in our understanding of gender and we are grateful to them.

Therefore **at Temple Chai, as of the Fall of 2022, we have adopted the non-gendered term B-Mitzvah to refer to this lifecycle event** and to our program of learning and preparation for the milestone in order to have an inclusive term for all of our young adults.

Questions you may have:

I. Why this specific name, B-Mitzvah?

At Temple Chai we have chosen B-Mitzvah as it is one of the most common terms now used in Jewish communities for this lifecycle event, and **we find the notion of “Be” powerful**. *Bar/Bat/B'nai/B Mitzvah* is not an event you have, but one **becomes** *Bar/Bat/B'nai/B-Mitzvah*. It is something you are. This is a process of being and becoming: becoming a teenager, being present in community, becoming fully aware of what is right and wrong, of who you are, and of what our sacred obligations are as Jews. B-Mitzvah encompasses all of these ideas and we are excited to continue to be present with each young person and each family in our community as we explore what it means to “B/Be” in this moment together.

As societal and communal norms and conventions develop, language adapts as well. Furthermore, the words we use do not merely reflect our lives but they also shape the way we understand the world. B-Mitzvah reflects our broader understanding of gender and invites us to celebrate, embrace, and honor all of our young people as they come of age in Jewish community.

2. Are all Jewish communities making this change?

At this moment, numerous communities throughout the Jewish world are developing in similar ways, choosing updated names for this lifecycle event and for temple programs that lead to the milestone. This is not yet universal, but it is a growing trend. So far, there is not one singular name being used unanimously by Jewish communities or within the Reform Movement. It could be that over time, consistency will develop in the Jewish or Reform world and we will shift to using what becomes the commonly accepted name. This is a moment when we are continuing to learn and grow in understanding, and we remain committed to the conversation and to this ongoing development.

3. Is this the same program as before or does the name mean an entirely different experience?

Our cherished way of engaging with the children of our congregation and joining with their families in helping them gain the skills and insight necessary to celebrate this coming of age *is not changing*. What is developing is the language used in discussing both the lifecycle event and the program of study.

At Temple Chai, we emphasize and value each child's process of learning as well as their continued involvement in Jewish and congregational life as much as the very meaningful experience on the day of their service. As a team of clergy and educators, it brings us such joy to work directly with our young congregants to prepare for this rite of passage marking the time when a child assumes the Jewish responsibilities of adulthood, typically celebrated right at the moment when they are stepping into "teenagerhood."

4. Can I still call my service *Bat Mitzvah*, *Bar Mitzvah*, *B'nai Mitzvah*, or another name that fits me and my identity, or do we have to call it my "B-Mitzvah?"

Absolutely! When you meet with your officiating rabbi, you will be able to chat about what term you would like to use to make sure the name we use for the service celebrating this milestone is fitting to you and your identity. "B-Mitzvah" will be used as our name for our program and for the lifecycle event generally within temple communications, including for each B-Mitzvah service on our temple calendar. This will ensure consistency while making sure the language we use is honoring of each of our young people.

Appendix II: Temple Chai Kashrut Policy – August 8, 2022

The purpose of this document is to define how Temple Chai engages in the practice of *kashrut* (“keeping kosher”) in the purchasing, preparation, and serving of food for events sponsored by the synagogue, congregational affiliated groups, and all private rental parties and caterers that use Temple Chai for both member and non-member functions. While we recognize different members of our community observe *kashrut* in different ways, the goal of this policy is to ensure that everyone who enters Temple Chai, be they members of guests of our community, are comfortable in both participating in and eating at all events and programs to the greatest degree possible.

POLICY

This policy applies to all Temple Chai events (at the temple, on its grounds, or elsewhere), as well as all events held within the temple building or on its grounds. Private events held elsewhere by congregants (e.g., *B'nai Mitzvah* celebrations and other Jewish lifecycle events) are not covered by this policy; however, it is hoped that members look to this policy to inform their thoughtful decisions around food choices for their lifecycle event celebrations held off-site.

The following rules apply:

- Dairy and meat must not be offered during the same meal, *oneg*, *kiddush*, or *nosh* (or any other time food is offered) at temple. This includes potluck events. Please note that both poultry and red meat are considered meat whereas fish is pareve (neither dairy nor meat).
- Meat served at Temple Chai events is not required to be kosher.
- *Treif* (pork, shellfish, and other non-kosher meat or fish) are not allowed on the temple premises or at any program held by temple including off-site. Kosher fish have both fins and scales. If you are uncertain of a product’s status, please feel free to call the temple for clarification.
- A *hechsher* (kosher seal) is not required for dairy or milk products.
- Times when individuals bring their own meals without sharing food (such as ECC student or teacher lunches, staff meetings where each person brings or orders their own lunch, or events such as picnics which are congregational events but where there is no sharing of food and during which temple does not provide any food), it is admissible for each person or family to determine if what informed choice they will make regarding eating dairy, meat, or a combination thereof. Note that *treif* is still prohibited at such meals.

PESACH (PASSOVER)

During Pesach (Passover), in addition to adherence to temple’s general *kashrut* policy, we are forbidden to eat all leavened products except “Kosher for Passover” matzah, matzah meal, cookies, etc. To allow for greatest possible participation, temple follows the Ashkenazic tradition of *Pesach* *kashrut*. This means that *kitniyot* (rice, corn, beans, and other legumes including products made with those ingredients such as peanut oil or rice flour) are not permissible. For children or employees bringing meals or for events during which individuals or families bring their own food with no food shared or provided by temple, each person/family may choose to follow Sephardic (allowing the eating of *kitniyot*) or Ashkenazic (disallowing *kitniyot*) tradition based on family/personal practice. No leaven is to be brought onto temple grounds during *Pesach*.