



Temple
CHAI

B'nai Mitzvah Guide Book

In this guide, you'll find a lot of information to help get you started and answer many questions.

Table of Contents

Page 2	Opportunities at Temple Chai
Page 3	B'nai Mitzvah Timeline
Page 4	Lessons with Rabbis and Cantor
Page 5	Mitzvah Project Brainstorming Page and Brit
Page 6	Service Honors Form (Please email to Cantor 4 weeks before service)
Page 7	Torah Blessings
Page 8	Optional Readings for B'nai Mitzvah Services
Page 9	Other Details and FAQ
Page 12	Sample Parents' Blessing

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Opportunities for Middle Schoolers at Temple Chai

There are many ways for middle school students to get involved.

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

Sunday Religious School, from 9:00 – 12:15, our 7th graders learn. Participation in Sunday learning is a core part of the B'nai mitzvah process and participation is mandatory. The program consists of three components: an elective (such as cooking, theater, dance, sports, etc), a Holocaust class, and madrichim training. A combined 8th and 9th grade class also takes place on Sundays.

B'nai Mitzvah Program (B'nai Mitzvah Club): Typically held during the semester before the B'nai Mitzvah date, students begin the B'nai Mitzvah Club. This takes place on Wednesdays from 5:30 – 7:30 pm. Students will learn to chant Torah trope with Cantor Wolman and learn the meaning behind the prayers they will lead at their B'nai Mitzvah. They will also have opportunities to practice prayers as a group. This class is required and is essential to successfully becoming B'nai Mitzvah.

Shabbat Experience: Part of the B'nai Mitzvah Club experience is participating in Shabbat services. As the Wednesday program draws to a close, the program will shift to attending Shabbat services; Friday night or Saturday morning depending on the week. Together as a club, the students will become familiar with the structure and meanings of the service. Some Torah study sessions and other Shabbat events such as a hike, a learner's service, a Friday night Shabbat dinner and more will take place and some will include parents.

We invite and encourage parents of our Bar/Bat Mitzvah students to join us for Shabbat. This is a meaningful opportunity for our Temple Chai clergy and staff to partner with parents in our community to model a commitment to Jewish community and life. Parents' attendance provides a level of comfort with the choreography and the service as a whole.

Mitzvah Project: Becoming B'nai Mitzvah means accepting the commandments and committing to Jewish life. In helping our students integrate mitzvot into their lives, B'nai Mitzvah students will complete a Mitzvah project. There are countless ways you can have an impact in our community and we are here to help you think through all of the possibilities. This is a great topic to discuss with the rabbi when you meet about 6 months before your celebration. You should let your rabbi know what you will be doing by completing the enclosed "Mitzvah Project" Form and giving it to her at the time of the Torah Study appointment. B'nai Mitzvah students are asked to contribute 13 hours of service towards their project.

TCTY Junior: Middle schoolers no longer need to wait to join our outstanding youth group TCTY (Temple Chai Temple Youth). They can get started on the fun with TCTY Jr, for 6th-8th graders. Contact Kaylie Medansky for information and to get event updates – kmedansky@templechai.com

B'nai Mitzvah Timeline

12 Months in advance:

- Family meeting with the officiating Rabbi
- Family meeting with Cantor Wolman
- 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 Cantor Wolman (no tutor lesson that week)
- Begin working on the Mitzvah Project.

3 Months in advance:

- Student "Walk and Talk" with the Rabbi

6 weeks in advance:

- Transition from tutor to Cantor Wolman for weekly lessons. Including time to practice on the Bimah.
- Family meets with the Rabbi to study the Torah portion.

4 weeks in advance:

- Email a completed honors sheet (below) to Cantor Wolman (cantorwolman@templechai.com)

3 weeks in advance:

- Family meets with the Rabbi to work on D'var Torah (student's speech).

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

Lessons with Rabbis and Cantor

1. **Family appointment with Cantor Wolman** (approx 1 year before) – is a chance for the student, parents, and Cantor Wolman to get to know one another, discuss the big picture of B'nai Mitzvah and go a bit deeper. Both parents and student are asked to attend. Siblings are welcome but optional.
2. **Your first visit with the Officiating Rabbi** (approx. 8-9 months before) will be a Family appointment. This is an opportunity to ask any questions you may have about the B'nai Mitzvah journey. The Rabbi will get to know you and your family in a casual office visit, and you will get to know her!
3. **The “Walk & Talk”:** The Rabbi and student will meet at Temple Chai and then spend about 45-60 minutes taking a walk or driving to a local destination. Through this process, they will continue to learn more about each other and strengthen their relationship.
4. **Torah Study:** Your family is invited to meet in the Rabbi's office to explore the themes of the weekly Torah portion (parashah) your child will be reading. On the day of your service, the student will teach their parashah to the community. At this appointment, the Rabbi will share some thoughts and ideas that will assist your child in preparing this D'var Torah (Word of Torah- i.e. the “speech.”) You may also discover thoughts that you wish to emphasize in your blessing of your child on that special day.
5. **D'var Torah:** Student will meet with the Rabbi to review and refine this draft of the D'var Torah. Students are asked to email a 1st draft to the Rabbi a few days before the appointment. They may exchange drafts by email prior to this appointment so that by the time of the meeting the text is in a close to final form.
6. **Meetings with Cantor Wolman:** In the last six weeks before the b'nai mitzvah, students will conclude lessons with their tutor and begin learning weekly with Cantor Wolman, who will guide them through the rest of the process. This will include a chance to practice from the Torah and practice from the bimah in the Main Sanctuary.

Temple Chai B'nai Mitzvah Project Brainstorming Page

Name:

B'nai Mitzvah Date:

Best parent to contact:

Name your favorite three activities

(for example: dance, band/clarinet, being outdoors)

1)

2)

3)

Name three causes you care deeply about

(for example: healing our environment, ending hunger, curing illness)

1)

2)

3)

What DON'T you want to do?

Project Ideas:

Brit Avodah – Covenant of Sacred Work

I agree to work with my mitzvah project mentor to create a project that will fuel my passion for social justice and tikkun olam.

Questions?

Please be in touch with Cantor Wolman – 602-971-1234 cantorwolman@templechai.com

Honors at Your B'nai Mitzvah

Please email to Cantor Wolman at least four weeks before your service. He will go through its contents with you to ensure we honor whom you wish to honor.

Name of Student:

Parents:

Siblings:

Officiating Rabbi:

of guests on Friday:

of guests on Saturday:

Friday Candle Lighting:

Optional English Reading:

Tallit presentation:

1st Ark Opening:

Participants in Passing the Torah from Generation to Generation:

1st Aliyah - Names and Hebrew Names

Example: Benjamin Goldberg – Shimon ben Chayim v'Rivkah

2nd Aliyah

3rd Aliyah – Parents of B'nai Mitzvah

4th Aliyah – B'nai Mitzvah

Lifting the Torah – Hagbahah:

Dressing the Torah – G'lilah:

2nd Ark Opening:

Kaddish Names:

Blessing Before the Reading of the Torah

Bar'chu et Adonai ham'vorach.

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ.

(congregation will chant 2nd line, then you repeat it)

Baruch Adonai ham'vorach l'olam va'ed.

בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Baruch atah, Adonai

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ

Eloheinu, Melech ha'olam,

אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

asher bachar banu mikol ha'amim,

אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים,

v'natan lanu et Torato.

וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ.

Baruch atah Adonai, notein haTorah.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

Bless Adonai who is blessed,

Blessed is Adonai who is blessed now and forever.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,

who has chosen us from among the peoples, and given us the Torah.

Blessed are You, Adonai, who gives the Torah.

Blessing After the Reading of the Torah

Baruch atah, Adonai

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ

Eloheinu, Melech ha'olam,

אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,

asher natan lanu Torat emet,

אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת,

v'chayei olam nata b'tocheinu.

וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכֵנוּ.

Baruch atah Adonai, notein haTorah.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who has given us a Torah of truth, implanting within us eternal life.

Blessed are You, Adonai, who gives the Torah.

Optional Readings for B'nai Mitzvah Services

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

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

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

Other Details and FAQ

PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY

We encourage you to take pictures before or after the Final Rehearsal, or on the Friday before the B'nai Mitzvah celebration. Please contact Joan Neer, 602-971-1234 EXT 291 jneer@templechai.com, to schedule your photography.

In order to maintain the sanctity of the service and to respect individual's privacy during prayer, there is no photography in the sanctuary during the service. Your photographer may shoot from the lobby, through the glass windows. Often people will arrange for formal photos in conjunction with the final rehearsal.

As of fall 2018, we are able to broadcast and record a video stream of the b'nai mitzvah service. This will neither be public nor streamed on social media. The Saturday service will be password protected and we will share the login info with you so you may share it with your loved ones. If you still choose to hire your own videographer, it is permitted during the ceremony from a stationary position in the back of the sanctuary on the right or left side at the direction of Temple Chai staff.

TREE OF LIFE

Family or friends are encouraged to purchase a leaf on our Tree of Life in honor of the B'nai Mitzvah. Some families choose to privately (before or after the service), or publicly, at your Friday night dinner or at the reception, present the leaf to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah as a permanent reminder of this special day. Years later the Bar/Bat Mitzvah can return and look at his/her leaf. To order your leaf in honor of this simchah or any simchah in your family, call the Temple at least one month prior to your date.

SERVICE ATTIRE

Respectful, modest attire is most appropriate. If you are not sure what is appropriate, please reach out to either of our rabbis. Guests may choose to wear a kippah. Wearing a tallit is encouraged for Jewish attendees over age 13.

HANDOUTS

Some families choose to prepare a program of the service, including honors and a note from the B'nai Mitzvah to hand out to the congregation. This handout is optional. Contact Joan Neer, 602-971-1234 (jneer@templechai.com) to request some samples.

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 Bar/Bat Mitzvah, please contact Sheana Abrams at 602-971-1234 or sabrams@templechai.com, to reserve your space. This may include a Friday night dinner, the 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.

KIPPOT/TALLITOT

Temple Chai Judaica Shop offers personalized service to order kippot for your guests, inscribed as you choose. The Judaica shop has a large assortment of tallit sets, gifts, yad pointers, tz'dakkah boxes, havdalah sets, and more. Contact Joan Neer to set up an appointment.

WHAT ABOUT SERVICE ATTENDANCE?

The more you attend services, the more comfortable you will be with the prayers and with the choreography of the service. Your child will be attending services with their B'nai Mitzvah Club and we ask both parents to attend at least half of them to familiarize yourselves with the service.

WHAT IF MY FAMILY MEMBERS AREN'T JEWISH?

We wish to honor whom you wish to honor. They are welcome like anyone else. In your meetings with Rabbi and Cantor, we will discuss ways to include your non-Jewish family members in the service.

WHAT IF OUR FAMILY DYNAMICS ARE COMPLICATED?

Our goal is to create a smooth, easy service that keeps the focus on the student. Please share family dynamics with clergy and we will form a plan together.

WHAT HAPPENS ON FRIDAY NIGHT?

Helping to lead our service on Friday night is a special way the congregation gets to celebrate you're your family. This is a core element to our B'nai Mitzvah Process.

The nosh begins at 5:30pm. At 5:45pm you will meet with the Rabbis and Cantor for a special 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.

WHAT HAPPENS ON SATURDAY MORNING?

- Plan to arrive at least half an hour before the start of the service.
- Younger siblings can participate in a variety of ways: as greeters, passing out programs/kippot, assisting in dressing the Torah, walking with your family as the Torah is carried around the room, opening the ark, and/or sharing an opening prayerful text.
- Opening prayerful texts are optional. Samples are available on page 8 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 arrived to the student.
 - As the student begins to carry the Torah scroll through the congregation (hakafah), the ark opens, close the ark and return to their seats. Immediate family should follow the BM in the processional.

- There are typically 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.
- **Parents' Blessing:** Either or both parents may choose to offer a blessing to their child. The **total time** for this moment in the service **shall not be more than 5 minutes**, and we request that you ground your thoughts in Torah and Jewish tradition. While we understand that you are proud of your child's many accomplishments, this is the time to focus on their Jewish lives.

Here are some questions to consider:

1. What do you wish for your child as s/he begins the journey into the adolescence/adulthood?
2. What strengths have you seen in his/her character? What type of person is s/he?
3. What cautions do you have for him/her? What do you wish you had known when you were his/her age?
4. What values do you hope that he/she will keep in mind?

WHAT IS A MITZVAH PROJECT?

The student is expected to participate in 13 hours of some activity that will help them to understand that part of being a Jewish adult is devoting time to service and support of our community. Your B'nai Mitzvah folder contains a variety of suggested opportunities. Please ask the Rabbi or Cantor if you need help, and bring the Mitzvah Project Form with you when you come to study Torah with the Rabbi.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE FINAL REHEARSAL?

During the week of your service, Cantor Wolman 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 (to practice walking with the Torah), final copy of D'var Torah (speech), yad (if you have one). **Both parents must attend final rehearsal.** While siblings are welcome, they may get bored.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THE TALLIT AFTER THE SERVICE?

A tallit is not a B'nai Mitzvah uniform! It is a garment to be worn at any morning service. We encourage students to wear their tallit at future morning services. If their tallit is a family heirloom, they may select a tallit from the rack near the entrance on the left.

I HAVE OTHER QUESTIONS!

Feel free to contact Joan Neer (jneer@templechai.com) or Cantor Wolman (cantorwolman@templechai.com) with additional questions. We are here to help and look forward to continuing the journey with you.

Sample Parents' Blessing

Dylan, there are very few baseball players that are considered "Five-Tool" Players. For those who are unfamiliar with the term, a Five-Tool player is a baseball player that can do the five key elements of baseball--hit for average, hit for power, can throw with velocity and accuracy, have speed and can steal bases, and can play their position--all exceptionally well. Most players have one or two of these skills. The all-stars may have four. But only the best of the best are considered five tool players.

Well, as you have been preparing for this day, and I began thinking about the sort of person you are becoming, it occurred to me that you are developing into what I would call a "Five-Tool Person". Now for those who didn't know what a "Five-Tool" baseball player was, a "Five-Tool" person is even more obscure--mainly because I made it up. My belief is that if you can work to master these five characteristics, Dylan, you will live a meaningful, purposeful, and fulfilling life. And as your parents, that is all we ever want for you. So here are the five characteristics of a "Five Tool" Person:

Number 1: Honesty. Even though you don't always tell me the truth about whether you brushed your teeth or not, your family and friends know that you are becoming a man of your word and that you are someone who can be trusted. That wouldn't be possible if you weren't honest.

Number 2: Accountability. You know this is a big one to me. The fact that you can own up to your mistakes is so important, and You are not afraid to take responsibility and face whatever consequences may come. It's how you learn. Whether it might have been a missed assignment in school (which doesn't happen often) or admitting when you were playing ball in the house, owning up to your actions will take you a long way.

Number 3: Be Open-minded. Being open-minded will allow you to learn from other's perspectives and realize opportunities that may come your way. While you may not always be so open-minded to trying new foods, you tend to be open to meeting new people and making new friends. It's a trait that will serve you well.

Number 4: Be Proactive. Being proactive and showing initiative is another trait that you are developing. Whether it is finding a child to read to as a madrich, or even taking out the trash occasionally without being asked, anticipating when something needs to be done and then doing it will keep you a step ahead of your peers.

Number 5: Be Humble. And so now that I've built you up as much as I have, I want to remind you to stay humble. Remember that there is a difference between arrogance and confidence. It's OK to be confident, but it's not OK to be arrogant. Be gracious in your defeats and be humble in your victories. You simply can't become a Five-Tool Person without a little humility along the way.

As in baseball, where there are coaches to help the players maximize their potential, there are guides in life to help you become your best. You can always count on the family and friends in this room, your teachers, and of course, the Torah. In fact, we heard about several of the five characteristics I described earlier within your Torah portion today. Abraham was open-minded and accepting of the three strangers. He was proactive in welcoming them and making them feel at home. And he was humble when acting as their servant.

Dylan, we are so proud of you and the young man you are becoming. You truly are becoming a Five-Tool Person. Yasher Koah on an amazing job today. We love you.