

B'nai Mitzvah Family Handbook

5767

Rabbi Steven L. Silver
Cantor Didi Thomas
Randi Sher, Director of Education
Robin Franko, Executive Administrator



1101 Camino Real, Redondo Beach, CA 90277
(310) 316-8444 www.templemenorah.org

Revised December 2006

Temple Menorah Bar/Bat Mitzvah Handbook

Dear Bar/Bat Mitzvah Families,

This is a special time for all the members of your family, for you the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, for you the parents, and for you the entire family. All of you have made a commitment of time and energy to express your connection to Judaism and to the generations who have gone before us.

Most of our students begin their formal Jewish education in Kindergarten with the Consecration service. Along the way, they begin to learn that Jewish learning continues for one's entire life. Bar/Bat Mitzvah is one more step along the path of becoming a knowledgeable and practicing Jewish adult. We hope that you will view this important life cycle event as such.

If the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is treated as a catalyst in your child's life -- a time for grappling with ideas and identities -- it can be an opportunity for growth and enrichment for you and your family. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, and the training and preparation that precede it, can be a time of deep meaning, high significance and everlasting commitment for you and your child.

I would be less than forthright if I did not also state that Bar/Bat Mitzvah can be a time of family and personal tension as well. Allow me to assure you that I will do everything in my power to allay your fears and concerns. Working together, your upcoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah will be one of the great religious and personal moments in your life.

Mazel Tov,

Rabbi Steven Silver

Temple Menorah

Educational Requirements

In order for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to be a meaningful service, it is crucial that the student fulfill the following requirements:

1. Each student is required to attend Religious School for a minimum of five years preceding Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Credit will be given to students transferring from other schools.
2. The student must attend our mid-week Hebrew program beginning in the third grade and successfully complete all five years. In the event that a student enters our program after third grade, he/she must maintain grade level and be current in work to be a candidate for Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
3. All Bar/Bat Mitzvah students must attend the Bar/Bat Mitzvah class in the year leading up to and including their date and all lessons with the Cantor.
4. A student who is a candidate for Bar/Bat Mitzvah must attend the Bar/Bat Mitzvah class including the Saturday component of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah class. Parents and Bar/Bat Mitzvah children must attend at least three (3) Friday night and three (3) Saturday morning services together prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Attendance at Shabbat morning services during the summer and on holiday weekends can be used to make up missed sessions during the school year.
5. Each student must continue religious education by attending the weekly Teen Academy program or Hebrew High following the Bar/Bat Mitzvah through Confirmation (10th Grade).

TZEDAKAH AS A WAY OF LIFE

The mitzvah of giving to others is a fundamental Jewish value. We suggest to our youngsters upon becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, that they contribute a percentage (usually 10% or a tithe) of the cash gifts they receive to a worthy cause (mention of this can be made in the child's D'var Torah). Their 7th grade mitzvah project focuses on this. The Rabbi will assist the family in selecting a cause or project meaningful to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This reminds us that even during a Simcha (a happy occasion) we need to think about those who are less fortunate.

SETTING THE DATE

Approximately two (2) years prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah a parent/child orientation meeting will take place to discuss the details and philosophy of our Bar/Bat Mitzvah program. Approximately 18 months to two years preceding the student's 13th birthday, the calendar will be reviewed to select a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, subject to the student's continued progress and attendance in Hebrew studies, and the family status as members in good standing (re: financial obligations to the Temple). As our classes grow, and the number of B'nai Mitzvahs increase each year, it may become necessary for two students to share a common date. A shared date involves the Service and Kiddush but not necessarily the reception.

Temple Menorah

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Preparation

During the Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation, students are expected to practice aloud at home at least 20 minutes, three times daily. Suggested practice times are:

- a) Before school,
- b) Immediately after arrival home from school,
- c) Right after dinner,
- d) Before going to bed.

Our Hebrew program focuses on synagogue skills and the performing of mitzvot, with emphasis on prayer. The curriculum gives the students general skills for participation in worship services and holiday celebrations, and begins to prepare them for leading their congregation in prayer.

In addition, the following are the specific procedures for the preparation:

1. In the summer prior to 7th grade, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student will begin the Bar/Bat Mitzvah class. The students will continue to attend school on Wednesday and Saturday during the Bar Mitzvah year.
2. Individual tutoring with the Cantor will take place approximately 6 - 8 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and will focus on the individual's Torah and Haftarah portions.
3. Approximately 4 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah the Rabbi will invite the family to a meeting to review the service and to help the student prepare the D'var Torah.
4. Students are expected to have mastered all the material for the service at least one month prior to the date of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah in addition to completing all attendance requirements.
5. Approximately 7 - 10 days before the service there will be a rehearsal with the Rabbi and the family. Rehearsals are scheduled for a Tuesday or Thursday from 4:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Since every student does not learn the same way nor at the same rate, each individual will receive the necessary preparation based on his/her needs and skills. Special provisions will be made for students with learning difficulties. Every opportunity will be given for each student to reach his/her potential. Those students who have the ability to create their own service will be encouraged to do so with the supervision and guidance of the Rabbi.

POSTPONEMENT OR CANCELLATION

The Temple and/or the Rabbi reserve the right to postpone or cancel a Bar/Bat Mitzvah for the following reasons:

- Significant lapses in the student's Hebrew readiness,
- Poor attendance at classes, services, and special meetings,
- Non compliance with financial requirements

Bar/Bat Mitzvah fees are non-refundable.

REQUIRED PRAYERS

Below is a list of the required prayers and Hebrew text for which the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student must be proficient.

1. Maftir with Torah Blessings
2. Haftorah with Haftorah Blessings
3. Shabbat evening prayers
 - A. Tallit Blessing
 - B. Shema and V'ahavta
 - C. Amidah
 - D. Kiddush (for Shabbat evening)
4. Shabbat morning prayers
 - A. Nisim b'chol yom
 - B. Ashreinu
 - C. Baruch she'amar
 - D. Ashrei
 - E. Hatzi Kaddish
 - F. Shema and V'ahavta
 - G. Amidah
 - H. Ain K'mocha and Shema with Echad, Gadlu
5. Additional aliyot
6. Additional prayers or parts of the service
 - A. Birkat Hamazon
 - B. Al keyn

Temple Menorah

Religious Worship Service

Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies are an integral part of the community Friday night and Saturday morning worship services of our congregation. On Friday evening, our young men and women are called to the pulpit to receive their tallit from their parents, and to lead the congregation in prayer and song. It is customary for the Mother, Grandmother or Sister of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to Bless the Shabbat candles. The Kiddush is led by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

The worship service in all cases belongs to the Congregation. The Shabbat of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah may also coincide with a guest speaker, graduation service, Tot Shabbat or other special event. The choir and/or band may also participate as determined by their annual schedule.

On Shabbat morning the Bar/Bat Mitzvah:

- (1) Helps to conduct the worship service,
- (2) Reads his/her Torah and Haftarah portions,
- (3) Delivers a brief D'var Torah which he/she writes with the guidance of the Rabbi,
- (4) Recites the Saturday morning Kiddush and the Hamotzi with his/her family.

HONORING FAMILY MEMBERS

As was mentioned above, the family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will participate in the service in various ways: (For information regarding non-Jewish friends and family, see Rabbi Silver)

FRIDAY NIGHT: Mother, Grandmother or Sisters light the Shabbat candles. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah parents place the tallit on their child.

SATURDAY MORNING: The parents pass the Torah to their child, after the service the parents and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah lead the congregation in the Kiddush and Motzi. In addition, parents have the option of briefly addressing their child following the D'var Torah.

Members of the family and friends may be honored during the Bar/Bat Mitzvah in a variety of ways including ushering, opening the Ark, and undressing and dressing the Torah. Forms are provided (and must be filled out) for all honorees.

In addition, we encourage family members who are able to read Torah to discuss this possibility with the Rabbi and Cantor.

Services involving non-Jewish family members will be handled on an individual basis with sensitivity by the Rabbi.

ALIYOT

During the Torah service, it is customary to honor immediate Jewish family members with an aliyah. An aliyah is the honor of being called up to the Bimah to recite the Torah blessings. (Please see the Honoree Form). On Shabbat morning there are seven aliyot plus the Bar/Bat Mitzvah; the Bar/Bat Mitzvah aliyah is called the Maftir, the last person to read. During the meeting with the Rabbi, you will have an opportunity to discuss the honoring of family members and other significant people. When you have given your list of aliyot to the Temple, we will send a letter of invitation to each honoree.

USHERS/GREETERS

One of the ways to honor members of the family is to designate two adults on Friday night and two on Saturday morning as ushers. They should station themselves in the foyer twenty minutes prior to the start of the service to greet the congregation and to hand out pulpit folders, kippot and tallitot as necessary. It is preferable that the usher/greeters be members of the congregation so that they can offer directions and information to our guests.

Temple Menorah

Food and Festivities

FOOD AND DRINK - SEUDAT MITZVAH

It is the policy of our congregation and a Jewish religious value that the Friday Oneg and Saturday Kiddush be open to the entire worshipping community. Our Simcha coordinator will help you plan accordingly. We would like to encourage you to hold your reception here at the synagogue. If you wish to have your evening catered at the Temple, please contact our main office. These arrangements should be made approximately one year prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Any caterer who is licensed and bonded may be hired.

Although the Temple does not have a kosher kitchen, all food served must be kosher style. This means no pork or shellfish, and that meat and milk must not be served at the same meal. For families who do want a kosher meal, arrangements can be made to kasher the kitchen.

State and Federal Law prohibits serving alcohol to minors - this is a felony. In addition, hosts serving alcohol to adults have been held legally responsible when guests leave the premises under the influence of alcohol. We encourage you to strictly monitor the alcohol intake of your guests and/or to serve alcohol-free punch only.

CELEBRATING APPROPRIATELY

The National Reform movement and our community strongly discourage ostentatious Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations and the excessive emphasis placed on them. Although it is a festive occasion, elaborate social entertainment is not a family obligation. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah event is a religious and spiritual one and care should be taken that celebrating does not overshadow the religious values of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Services end at approximately 12:30 p.m. Please allow an additional 20 minutes for Kiddush blessings. This should allow your Kiddush luncheon at the synagogue to begin at 12:45 p.m., and conclude by 4:00 p.m.

MUSIC

A disc jockey is permitted for a Saturday afternoon Kiddush lunch at the Temple, but should not begin playing until signaled by the Rabbi or Cantor. In keeping with the spirit of Shabbat, the disc jockey will stress Jewish and Israeli music and involve the children.

Our Shabbat band, Za'Atar, is available for Kiddush luncheons. Arrangements can be made with the Simcha Coordinator.

HAVDALAH FOR RECEPTIONS HELD ON SATURDAY EVENINGS

The magic of a darkened room, multi-wicked candle, sweet smelling spices, and concentric circles of family and friends, is an unforgettable experience. What a beautiful way to begin your reception by gathering together in a meaningful and moving Havdalah ceremony. The Rabbi and Cantor can provide you with information for this ceremony.

HAMOTZI

It is important to realize that the beautiful celebration depends on the kindness, work and energies of the Holy One and numerous individuals. This includes all of the people and processes which bring the food from the fields to the table, including the rain, sunlight, the wind and the earth. A meal designed to express the values of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah should begin with a blessing over the food, "Hamotzi". Please ask the Rabbi or Cantor to give you the text you will need. This can be an opportunity for another family member to participate. In addition, some families will want to recite Birkat HaMazon following the meal.

CEREMONIES HONORING FAMILY, FRIENDS AND TEACHERS

Many families wish to honor those who have influenced the life of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This provides the student with an opportunity to speak about these people. For example, some families utilize candle-lighting ceremonies at their Saturday night receptions as a means of inviting the honorees up to the center.

DECORATIONS

Temple Menorah encourages but does not require families to use table and room decorations that reflect the religious nature of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. Below are suggestions for your family's consideration:

Centerpieces

1. Food in cans to be donated to SOVA or MAZON (to feed the hungry)
2. Plants or flowers to be donated to a hospital or convalescent home
3. Jewish texts to be donated to the Religious School library
4. Decorations may be related to:

Texts: Books of the Bible
Parashot of the Torah
Popular Jewish Books

People: People of the Torah
Prophets
Famous Rabbis and Philosophers
Kings of Israel
Jewish Authors

Jewish Themes: Jewish Holidays / Mitzvot
Objects in the sanctuary or synagogue
Israel

Be creative and have fun!

MAZON

Our ancestors left the corners of the fields for the needy. You can follow in their footsteps by sending MAZON 3% of the cost of your celebration. Mazon funds a variety of organizations: Kosher meals-on-wheels programs for homebound elderly people, food banks and food pantries in the inner cities and rural areas, multi-service centers that provide homeless families with food, shelter and counseling, state and national organizations that work toward long term solutions to hunger. For you, 3% is only corners of your fields. For a hungry person, it is a gift of life. Contributions to MAZON are tax-deductible. You may send your contributions directly to:

MAZON, INC.
1990 South Bundy Drive, Suite 260
Los Angeles Ca 90025
Telephone: (310) 442-0020.

Temple Menorah Technical Details

INVITATIONS

When selecting your invitation it is good to keep in mind the religious significance of the occasion. They may be engraved, printed, custom designed, handmade, or simply hand written on stationery. They may be ordered through Sisterhood's Judaica Shop, which will also benefit the Temple.

Order your invitations well in advance (5 - 6 months). This leaves time for error corrections. Remember to order extra invitations and envelopes for the unexpected. Please be aware in the wording of invitations that the celebrant is not "Bar Mitzvahed" but rather that he/she "becomes a Bar/Bat Mitzvah".

😊 *It is expected that, in the spirit of community, you invite your child's entire Bar/Bat Mitzvah class to the service and any celebration. It is not expected that the invitation include entire families.*

APPROPRIATE DRESS

We encourage all guests and members attending services to dress appropriately for worship. *Formal attire (tuxedos, ball gowns, etc.) is not permitted.* Bar Mitzvah boys are required to wear a shirt, tie, sports coat or suit, and dress shoes. Bat Mitzvah girls are required to wear a dress or skirt and blouse. Strapless, backless, sleeveless dresses, mini-skirts, pantsuits or see-through clothes are not acceptable. Modest and tasteful dress is encouraged for children and adults alike. The proper attire for all Shabbat services is that listed above.

CD RECORDING

An audio recording is made available through the synagogue sound system. Parents who wish to have their child's service recorded must notify the Administrator two weeks prior to the service. There is a \$45 charge for the 3 volume CD recording of the service.

FLOWER FUND

Fresh flowers for the Bimah are automatically provided for every service. You are encouraged to make contributions to the Temple Flower Fund in memory of deceased family members and in honor of significant milestones. The money is used to help beautify the synagogue grounds. An acknowledgement of the contribution will be made in the Shabbat pulpit folder. The Bimah flowers, however, are the property of the Temple and may not be taken home. You may request special colors for an additional charge. *No additional flower baskets are permitted on the Bimah.* Please submit the Flower Fund Form at least two weeks prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with all the details. Checks should be made payable to: Temple Menorah - Flower Fund.

After the service the custodian will place the flowers on the Kiddush/Oneg table. If you would like to have centerpieces on the round Kiddush tables, we encourage you to use canned goods,

which will be donated to Tzedakah, or other similar items as suggested in the *decorations* section.

SPECIAL SERVICE BOOKLETS AND HANDOUTS

You might wish to create a special service booklet. Please inform the Rabbi when you meet with him four months before the service. Booklets or handouts must be approved by the Rabbi. The Rabbi's secretary will be happy to share examples of booklets with you. *The creation and printing of the booklet is the responsibility of the family.*

YARMULKAS/KIPPOT

The congregation provides yarmulkas for all services. If you wish, you may order festive custom imprinted yarmulkas from the Sisterhood Judaica Shop or similar vendors (Atarah, Solomon's, The Mitzvah Store, Kippot.com). These make appropriate souvenirs of the event.

TALLIT

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah must be presented with a Tallit at the Friday evening service. Families often choose to pass down a Grandfather's Tallit. We suggest that you also purchase a new Tallit, in hopes that it will become a family heirloom one day. The Sisterhood gift shop has a variety of Tallitot available.

On Shabbat morning it is required that all male members of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah party wear a Tallit. Wearing a Tallit is optional for females. Tallitot are provided at the entrance to the sanctuary.

SEATING

Final seating arrangements will be made with the Rabbi at the rehearsal. The family generally has the option of being seated on the Bimah or in the first few pews.

In addition, all members of the immediate family, 13 years of age and older and Grandparents or other significant relatives, may be invited by the Rabbi to be seated on the Bimah. The Bimah is accessible by wheelchair via a ramp off the Robing room.

Saturday Kiddush

It is our custom to drink a L'Chayim after the Kiddush. You are expected to provide the synagogue with two unopened bottles of whiskey, usually Scotch and Bourbon. Please bring them to the synagogue office on the Friday following the photo session.

Temple Menorah

Tzedakah Opportunities

GIFTS TO THE TEMPLE

Many families wish to show their appreciation by giving the Temple a gift, or by contributing to one of the Temple's many funds. They feel the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an appropriate time to thank the Temple for the part it has played in the spiritual growth of the child. You may consult with the Rabbi to determine the current needs of the Temple.

TREE OF LIFE

The new Tree of Life is located in the sanctuary. Many families wish to honor their Bar/Bat Mitzvah by dedicating a Leaf on the Tree of Life. (see B'nai Mitzvah Supplement). The Tree of Life dedication will take place following the service but before the Saturday Kiddush blessings.

HONORING FAMILY, FRIENDS AND TEACHERS

Many families wish to honor those who have influenced the life of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This provides the student with an opportunity to speak about these people when making contributions to Tzedakah in the name of the honoree(s). Helping other people is the greatest way of honoring family and friends and creates a tone that reflects the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and family's character and ethical concerns. For a list of Jewish and secular organizations, please contact the Rabbi's secretary.

Temple Menorah Photography/Videography Policies

The following are Temple Menorah's policies which apply to all photographers and videographers who have been hired in conjunction with events at Temple Menorah.

IN THE SANCTUARY - During the Service

Still photography, with or without flash lighting, is not permitted during services in the sanctuary. Videotaping during a service in the sanctuary is permitted. However, no additional lights or flash lighting may be used. The videographer must stand only in the spot designated by the Temple liaison and cannot move about during the service. Under no circumstance is anyone to attempt to connect auxiliary microphones to the Temple's microphones already on the *bimah*.

Do not rearrange flowers or furniture in the sanctuary. If you need something moved, please ask a Temple Custodian for assistance.

Friday Before the Service - An appointment has been pre-arranged with the Rabbi and Cantor for 11:30 a.m. on the Friday before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Torah scrolls are not to be removed from the Ark without permission from the clergy or the Temple office. Either the Custodian or the Temple Liaison will assist you with the appropriate Torah and how to handle it. If you open the Ark to take pictures, please be sure that you close it when you are finished.

Because there are so many events scheduled in the Temple on any given day, you must make an appointment **in advance** with the Temple office if you wish to take pictures in the sanctuary. This also applies to the time intervals immediately preceding and following your event.

OUTSIDE THE SANCTUARY

Please do not rearrange furniture. If you need something to be moved, please ask the Custodian for assistance.

Please do not block entrances, stairwells or hallways while taking pictures.

Please be mindful at all times of trailing cords or other devices that may cause hazards.

Please follow any directions given by either the Temple Liaison, the Custodian or Security Guard while you are working at the Temple.

.....
I agree with the above guidelines

Name of Photographer/Videographer _____

Telephone Number _____ Date of Event _____

Name of Temple Family _____

Glossary

PEOPLE

Bar Mitzvah	“A Son of the Commandment” refers to a Jewish male who at age 13 accepts the rights and responsibilities of Jewish adulthood.
Bat Mitzvah	“A Daughter of the Commandment” similarly refers to a Jewish female who at 13 years of age accepts the rights and responsibilities of Jewish adulthood.
B’nai Mitzvah	The plural of Bar Mitzvah; the plural of Bar and Bat Mitzvah together.
B’not Mitzvah	The plural of Bat Mitzvah.
Rabbi	The Spiritual Leader and teacher of the Congregation.
Cantor	An individual trained to lead the singing and chanting at the prayer services.

PLACES

Bimah	A platform or dais from which the prayer service is conducted.
Aron Ha-Kodesh	The “Ark of Holiness” in which the Torah scrolls reside.

HONORS

Aliyah	On Shabbat services, several people are “called up” to the Bimah to recite a blessing before and after the reading of each Torah portion.
Aliyot	The plural of “Aliyah”.
Maftir	The final Aliyah which is reserved for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah who recites the concluding verses of the Torah portion.

OBJECTS AND RITUALS

Siddur	The prayer book.
Sefer Torah	The handwritten scrolls of the Five Books of Moses which are housed in the “Ark of Holiness”.
Haftarah	A portion from the Prophets, the second section of the Bible. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah chants the Prophetic section following the Torah reading.
Yad	A ritual implement, usually in the shape of a finger, used as a guide in the reading of the Torah.
Tallit	Ritual prayer shawl with fringes (“tzitzit”) which may be worn during all daytime prayer services to remind Jews of the 613 biblical commandments.
Kippah or Yarmulke	It is customary to wear ritual head covering during services.
Parasha	A portion of the Torah that is read each Shabbat.
Torah	The Five Books of Moses which is the first section of the Bible. The Books are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
Shabbat	Shabbat, the 7 th day of the Jewish week when we celebrate our uniqueness as free persons who are able to separate ourselves from the work week, through communal prayer, study and rest. Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday evening and ends at sundown on Saturday evening.
Oneg Shabbat	The celebration following Friday evening services.
Motzi	Blessing over the bread. On Shabbat a special “challah” is used.
Shabbat Kiddush	Blessing over the wine and in honor of Shabbat. This also refers to the celebration with wine and cake following the Shabbat morning service.
Shehechianu	The blessing is recited at moments of great joy such as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Seudat Mitzvah

The special Meal in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah or celebrating the fulfillment of other Mitzvot.

Havdalah

Ceremony which bids farewell to the Shabbat with wine, candles, and spices. It is recited just after the appearance of three stars in the sky.