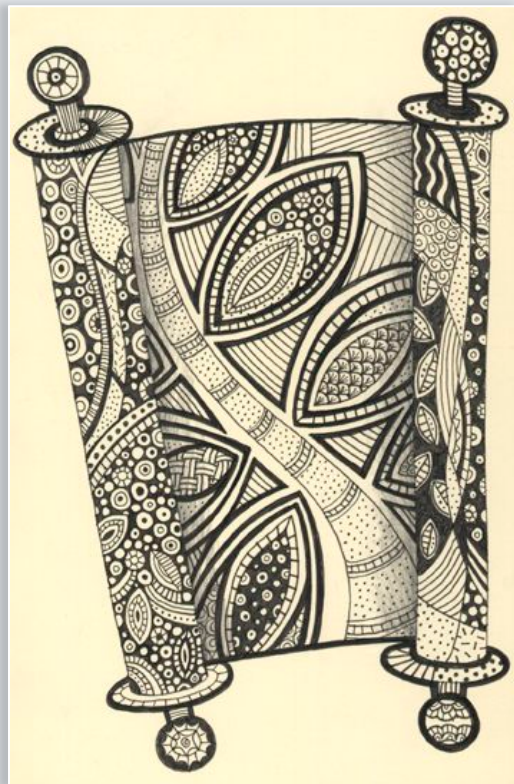


**Congregation Ohr Shalom**  
(Summit Jewish Community Center)

**Bar/Bat Mitzvah Handbook**

**March 2017**



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## WELCOMING WORDS FROM THE RABBI AND CANTOR

Dear *B'nai Mitzvah* Families,

*Mazal Tov!* If you have decided to open up this handbook, your *simchah* must be approaching. We share your excitement and we want to be here to help you. Whether this is the first such celebration in your family or a reprise, it has the potential to be both exhilarating and nerve-racking. We hope that it will be more of the former and less of the latter.

In his introduction to the book “Putting God on the Guest List,” our teacher Rabbi William Lebeau points out the significance of the choreography of young people becoming *B'nai Mitzvah*.

A young Jew is called to the Torah, which is also known in our tradition as the *Etz Hayyim* – the Tree of Life. The previous reader or the *gabbai* points to a word on the scroll, effectively offering the young person the opportunity to taste the fruit of the *Etz Hayyim*. At that critical moment, the thirteen-year-old must decide whether or not to partake. Upon making the decision, each young person touches the word, and brings it symbolically to his/her mouth – taking in the word of Torah. Ultimately, a *Bar Mitzvah* or *Bat Mitzvah* grabs onto the Torah scroll itself, symbolizing acceptance of God’s Torah as the source of guidance in life. It is a powerful and meaningful moment.

As you get closer to your child’s special day, there is something very important that you can do for your family and for your child. While it is true that a nice singing voice, good Hebrew skills and ‘*bimah*-presence’ can contribute to a young person achieving success, our collective experience tells us that one factor is more important than any of those. The *B'nai Mitzvah* who have the easiest time preparing and seem the most comfortable on the *bimah* are the kids who come to services most often. It is never too late to start attending services regularly. Give your child every opportunity to feel at-home in services and on the *bimah*.

We both take great joy in being a part of the *B'nai Mitzvah* process, when our young people express their desire to share in God’s Torah. We very much look forward to establishing a lasting relationship with your family as we prepare for this momentous occasion in your lives.

B’shalom,

Rabbi Avi Friedman

Cantor Janet Roth

## **What is the Parents' Role in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah?**

The time surrounding a child's bar or bat mitzvah becomes a significant time in the Jewish life for the entire family. If bar or bat mitzvah is perceived as only a one-time ceremony, it loses much of its spiritual and communal value for everyone.

The bar or bat mitzvah year is an opportunity for the parents as well as the child to become more fully involved in the synagogue and our Jewish community.

### **What do I need to do as a parent?**

- Encourage regular attendance at Shabbat and holiday services and Religious School
- Have your child attend Junior Congregation regularly beginning in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade
- Attend Friday night and Saturday morning services at least monthly beginning in 3<sup>rd</sup> grade
- During the year before the bar/bat mitzvah, attend Friday night and Saturday morning services regularly on Shabbat. This is one of the best ways for both the family and the child to learn the service and become familiar with the ritual.
- Be in touch with the Cantor frequently to find out about the progress of their child's preparation and what parts of the service they will recite.
- If you have any questions, please feel free to discuss them with the Religious Committee liaison

## **How Will My Child Prepare for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah?**

Both the Rabbi and the Cantor will give your child the following instruction for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

### **Instruction with Rabbi Friedman**

Begins about 12 months in advance of the bar/bat mitzvah date and is tailored to each child.

- ✧ Hebrew reading
- ✧ Torah and Haftarah trop
- ✧ Torah Blessings
- ✧ Torah Reading
- ✧ Kiddush
- ✧ Other areas where child may need support

## **Instruction with Cantor Roth**

Begins approximately 9 months before the bar/bat mitzvah, the Cantor becomes the primary teacher.

- ✧ Review and polishing of above material and
- ✧ Haftarah – Including Blessings
- ✧ Torah Service
- ✧ Friday Evening Service
- ✧ Shaharit (early Saturday Morning Service)

## **How will I know how my child is doing?**

The Cantor will decide what your child has mastered at about four weeks before is or her Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Your child will recite the portions of the service, prayers, and readings that he or she has confidently mastered.

Parents are urged to be in touch with the Cantor frequently to find out about the progress of their child's preparation. The Cantor can provide the names of congregants who provide additional tutoring.

If you have any questions, please feel free to discuss them with the Religious Committee liaison.

## **What else will my child need to do?**

### ***D'var Torah***

After the Haftarah chanting, each bar/bat mitzvah gives a speech about the Torah portion or the Haftarah and the student's own learning (d'var Torah).

Rabbi Friedman works with each student:

- beginning 3 months before the Bar/Bar Mitzvah date
- meets with each student approximately 4 times to discuss the Torah portion (parasha) and its meaning
- helps students to craft a personal and meaningful d'var Torah.

### ***Tallit/tefillin***

BOYS: Every boy over the age of bar mitzvah is required to wear tallit and tefillin as appropriate during services.

GIRLS: Every girl over the age of bat mitzvah is strongly encouraged to do so as well.

Rabbi Friedman will instruct all students in the practice and purpose of tallit and tefillin before the date of bar/bat mitzvah, either through the Religious School classes or in private sessions for those students not enrolled in the COS William and Dena Horn Religious School.

### ***Mitzvah Project***

Each bar/bat mitzvah completes a mitzvah project spanning several months of the bar/bat mitzvah year. Students discuss possible project ideas and work with Rabbi Friedman on mitzvah projects beginning 9 months before the date of the simchah.

### ***Torah Reading Club***

Torah Reading Club is offered under the auspices of the Religious School for students in 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

- meets approximately twice a month throughout the year.
- all 6<sup>th</sup> grade students are expected to:
  - attend a minimum of 10 times during the year
  - complete a Torah reading of at least 3 verses for Junior Congregation

### **What are the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fees and Honoraria?**

The family of the bar/bat mitzvah must be current members in good standing of the COS. All dues, building fund, Religious School tuition, and bar/bat mitzvah fees must be paid in full before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fee* <sup>@</sup>	\$1000
Rabbi Friedman Customary Honorarium**	\$180
Cantor Roth Customary Honorarium**	\$360

\* Families with twins that share the same date pay only 1 fee for use of the Social Hall and other service of the shul.

\*\* Honoraria apply per-child basis since instruction is on an individual basis.

<sup>@</sup> These are the fees and honoraria as of September 2016.

### **What does the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee include?**

- Friday evening Oneg (after services):
  - The Congregation provides coffee, tea, parve creamer (non-dairy), sugar and drinks.
  - The family provides fruit, cookies, cakes as desired.
  - If you are sharing the Friday night Oneg with another shul function, eg, Religious School, contact them to work out how to share the costs and what food items are needed
- Kitchen staffing:
  - one (1) person for 3 hours each Friday night
  - two (2) people for 5 hours each Saturday morning
- Custodial help for Friday night and Saturday morning and office support.

### **Inviting Guests**

It is customary to invite all of the children in the Religious School class, as well as those students who attend other schools (such as Solomon Schechter) and are in the same grade as the bar/bat mitzvah. The list may be obtained from the Religious School Director and Office.

## **Appropriate Shabbat Decorum**

- 1) On Shabbat, please refrain from smoking, photography, using cell phones, or pagers in or on the synagogue grounds. If cell phones or pagers must be on (such as for emergencies), please be sure they are in silent mode.
- 2) All men are required to wear a kippah and women are encouraged to wear a head covering. Jewish men should wear a tallit during morning services; women are encouraged to do so.
- 3) Jewish men must wear a tallit when having Torah honors, ie, opening the ark, carrying the Torah, having an aliyah to say the blessings, hagbah, (lifting the Torah) or gelilah (dressing the Torah)
- 4) No one should enter or exit the sanctuary when Rabbi or bar/bat mitzvah is speaking, during the Amidah, or when the ark is open.
- 5) Clothing should be appropriate to a synagogue service. Shoulders and backs should be covered and skirts or dresses should not be too short.
- 6) Children are welcome at all times in the sanctuary. However, if a child is disruptive to the service or the people around the child, then it is appropriate to remove that child from the sanctuary until s/he is calm again. Teenage guests are expected to follow all the rules, as well. Ushers may ask them to behave if they are not doing so.
- 7) It is not appropriate to bring gifts into the synagogue on Shabbat.

## **Photography/Video**

Photography is not permitted during Shabbat or Yom Tov services. Schedule a time with the Office if you want to take photographs during a “dress rehearsal” or at another convenient time. If you would like the Rabbi and/or Cantor to be present, please contact them and the Office to find a convenient time for all. Usually, photographs are done the Friday morning of the weekend.

Please contact the COS Office to find out about permissible video recording with a pre-set system.

## **How Do I Put An Inscription in the Sefer Chaim?**

The Sefer Chaim (Book of Life) is a composite of illustrated pages for each Torah portion (parasha), hand-painted by Linda Coppleson, artist and Hebrew calligrapher. Life-cycle events of the members of COS, eg, b’nai mitzvah, births, weddings, anniversaries, are inscribed on the page for the parasha of the week during which the event occurred. The Sefer Chaim provides a record of joyous life events of our members.

In our congregation, many families celebrate their child’s Bar or Bat Mitzvah with an inscription in the Sefer Chaim.

To have your child’s name and parasha inscribed, or for more information, call Penny Pincus at 908 273 2736 or e-mail [pcppincus@comcast.net](mailto:pcppincus@comcast.net).

## **What Can I Buy in the COS-SJCC Women's Group Gift Shop?**

The Women's Group of the COS is prepared to assist you with many aspects of your child's special day. Your patronage of our Women's Group Gift Shop helps support the shul as well as provides you with wonderful items for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

Women's Group Gift Shop sells a beautiful, wide selection of:

- Tallitot, tallit bags, tallit clips, and tefillin sets
- Personalized kippot for the bar/bat mitzvah
- Special personalized items such as bookends with the child's name, Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, and full Haftarah portion engraved in Hebrew.

*Visit the Women's Group Gift Shop on the COS Web site at [https://summitjcc.org/Gift\\_Shop](https://summitjcc.org/Gift_Shop)*

Contact: Sarine de Picciotto	973-635-5363	<a href="mailto:zazie59@aol.com">zazie59@aol.com</a>
Alice Barron	973-635-3791	<a href="mailto:akb118@aol.com">akb118@aol.com</a>

## **Where Can I Get Hebrew Calligraphy?**

Our congregation is blessed to have a soferet, a Judaic artist and scribe, who provides beautiful Hebrew calligraphy for our Sefer Chaim and for other documents such as invitations and ketubot. For more information, call Linda Coppleson at 973 325 2665, e-mail [lcoppleson@gmail.com](mailto:lcoppleson@gmail.com) or visit the website [www.ketubahsoferet.com](http://www.ketubahsoferet.com).

## **What is the Thursday Morning Service?**

It's customary for the bar/bat mitzvah family to attend the Thursday morning service before the simchah. It can serve as a "dress rehearsal" since it provides an opportunity for the *Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah* to read Torah in front of the congregation. It will also be the first time that the child will put on tefillin.

## **What Do I Need to Know About the Friday Night Service?**

The bar/bat mitzvah family must attend the Friday night service, which usually begins at 7:00 PM sharp and ends at approximately 8:15 PM. Confirm the start time for your weekend with the Office. Arrive 15 minutes before services begin.

The bar/bat mitzvah sits on the bimah with the Rabbi and Cantor. The family sits in the first row in front of the Bimah. The bar/bat mitzvah may lead sections of the service as determined by the Cantor.

The Friday night service "belongs to the congregation", i.e., the COS may schedule a specific event or speaker or have a congregational program even on a bar/bat mitzvah weekend. Check with the Office to find out if there is a planned event or guest speaker.



## **How do I arrange for a Shabbat Dinner in the Social Hall?**

You may wish to host a dinner at the COS prior to Friday night services. Contact the Office to schedule the dinner and discuss appropriate arrangements. There is a Use Fee associated with this event.

## **What do we need to do for Friday Night Oneg?**

The bar/bat mitzvah family provides part of the Friday night Oneg after services.

The Oneg Shabbat refreshments follow the Friday night service.

- The family provides fruit, cookies, cakes as desired.
- The Congregation provides coffee, tea, parve creamer (non-dairy), sugar and drinks.
- If you are sharing the Friday night Oneg with another shul function, eg, Religious School, a speaker, etc., contact the event sponsor to work out how to share the costs and what food items are needed
- If you would like a specific set-up of tables and chairs, additional food items provided at your expense, or a particular color scheme, speak with the Office Director. The family determines the setup of Sagan Hall for the Oneg.

Pam Levine in the COS Office has work sheets and planning directions for the Oneg.

## **What Do I Need to Know About the Saturday Morning Service?**

Shabbat morning services begin at 9:30 AM. It's a good idea to arrive 15 minutes before services begin.

- The bar/bat mitzvah sits on the bimah.
- The family sits in the first row in front of the bimah.

The Service has four parts:

Preliminary Service

Shaharit (morning service)

Torah Service, which includes the reading of the Torah chanting the Haftarah, and the D'var Torah.

Musaf, an additional service for Shabbat

The service ends at approximately 12:00 PM.

Rabbi usually recites Kiddush and Motzi in the sanctuary before going into the Social Hall for the Kiddush luncheon.

## **What are the honors for Shabbat morning?**

There are many honors that can be assigned to relatives and guests for participation in the service. There is a worksheet and Honors List that gives you the options for honors.

- While the bar/bat mitzvah family may assign all the available honors, it is not required to do so. The synagogue will assign those that the family does not want or use to congregants on that morning.
- When we celebrate several events on the same Shabbat, such as a baby naming or aufruf, the Rabbi will help decide the distribution of honors among all participants.
- All those given an honor should be appropriately dressed to ascend the bimah.
- The honors of lifting and carrying the Torah should be given only to those strong enough to manage it physically.
- Everyone given an honor should be sure to arrive at the COS on time.

## **What do I need to know about aliyot (Torah honors)?**

- These are at least even aliyot on a Shabbat morning, but for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah we often have eight. Two of the aliyot are reserved for congregants.
- Those who are called to the Torah for an aliyah must know the blessings, in Hebrew, in advance. A card with Hebrew and transliteration will be on the lectern for saying the blessings.
- It is your responsibility to assure all people with aliyot know the blessings. Men are required to wear kippot and tallitot; women are encouraged to do so.
- A copy of the Blessings with transliteration and a link to a teaching video will be mailed to you several months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- Only couples that are close relatives of the bar/bat mitzvah may share Aliyot: parents, grandparents, aunts/uncles.
- All other aliyot should be given to a single person only.
- The Hebrew and English names of all those called to the Torah must be given to the office at least 3 weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. These names are used to call the person up to the Torah.

## **What is the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Handout?**

The family prepares a personalized bar/bat mitzvah handout with explanation of the service and a list of the people with honors. The handout is based on a template, which will also be mailed to you about 3 months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The family is responsible for:

- ✧ Filling in the template with the appropriate information
- ✧ Printing and folding
- ✧ Bringing the Handouts to the shul before noon on the Friday before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

The Rabbi must approve changes to the layout or wording of the template.

## **Can we throw sweets at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah?**

If the family wishes to toss sweets at the bar/bat mitzvah for sweet wishes, only individually wrapped, kosher soft candies or marshmallows in mesh bags are permitted. Mesh bags for the marshmallows may be ordered through the Women's Group gift shop.

### **How does giving Tzedakah in lieu of individual gifts work?**

It is our custom at Congregation Ohr Shalom for each of the B'nai Mitzvah to make a donation themselves to the charity of their choice in the amount decided by the class parents. This obviates each child giving every other child a class gift.

- ✧ The parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah class agree on the donation amount.
- ✧ Each family is responsible for sending a check for that amount the child's charity of choice.
- ✧ A certificate to commemorate the donation in the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah's* name is prepared by the COS office staff. This certificate is typically presented by a member of the Board of Trustees along with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah certificate.

### **What do we need to do for Saturday Kiddush?**

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family sponsors a Kiddush luncheon even if a separate luncheon reception is planned for invited guests. There are several options for hosting a Kiddush:

- 1) The bar/bat mitzvah family may prepare and arrange the Kiddush independently, using COS kitchen help on that day.
- 2) The Kiddush may be prepared and served by an approved caterer. Caterers and bakeries must be on the approved kosher list of the COS. Check with the Office for the most up-to-date list.
- 3) The Kiddush may be prepared and delivered by an approved caterer, using the COS kitchen help on that day.
- 4) The COS may also be reserved for a private party, in which case the Kiddush is served first for the entire congregation, then reset for the invited guests.

Pam Levine in the COS Office has work sheets and planning directions for the Kiddush.

## **What Are the Presentations for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah?**

At Congregation Ohr Shalom, we have three presentations for a Bar/ Bat Mitzvah:

### **Men's Club Presenter:**

Presents the Men's Club gift and speaks to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Presenter must be a paid-up Men's Club member

### **Women's Group Presenter:**

Presents the Women's Group gift and speaks to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Presenter must be a paid-up Women's Group member

### **Board of Trustees Presenter:**

Presents the Mitzvah Project certificate and the COS Certificate of Bar/Bat Mitzvah.  
A list of current Trustees may be obtained from the Office.

- ✧ Presentations may be made Friday evening or Saturday morning
- ✧ Any presentations may be made at either service
- ✧ Presentations may be combined, eg, the same person could do both Women's Group and Board presentations

The speakers are requested to keep the presentation to about two minutes with a focus on Jewish themes and the child's relation to his or her Jewish learning, heritage and future.

The parents and the child choose the person to do the presentation. Please contact the presenters to request their participation and let the Religious committee and Office know your choices. If you do not have anyone you'd like to ask, Women's Group, Men's Club and the Board can provide a presenter. The contact information on is on the list of Important Contacts.

## Step-By-Step Countdown

### 12 Months Before

- Begin attending Shabbat services regularly as a family.
- Decide the format/venue of your celebration. If any function is to be held at the COS, contact Office to reserve the date.
- Select photographer, caterer, music, and florist.
- Start looking at invitations.

### 9 Months Before

- Think about Mitzvah Project ideas and discuss with Rabbi Friedman.
- Inform Cantor if you plan to ask family or friends to read from the Torah.
- Prepare a preliminary guest list.
- Schedule a meeting with the Office to discuss plans.

### 4 - 6 Months Before

- Make guest list complete with addresses and zip codes; specify number and names of children invited; note those attending which functions throughout the weekend.
- Order invitations, kippot, tallit, and tefillin.
- Make sure all financial obligations to the COS are paid in full.
- Decide who will prepare the Kiddush.
- Confirm photographer, caterer, music, florist, etc.
- Reserve a block of hotel rooms for out-of-town guests.

### 3 Months Before

- Receive worksheets from office for events at COS.

### 2 Months Before

- Mail invitations.
- Finalize arrangements and menus with caterer.
- Meet with Office to review plans.
- Schedule picture-taking session in COS with Office, Rabbi, and Cantor.
- Contact all those given honors during the service and send them study materials.
- Contact Kitchen Manager to schedule extra kitchen help as needed.

### 1 Month Before

- Pay deposits and rental fees for use of COS for private functions.
- Finalize honors and presenters (Men's Club, Women's Group, Board of Trustees), and forward information to the Office.

### The Week Before

- Attend Thursday morning minyan. Your child will be called to the Torah. Bar/bat mitzvah will put on tefillin.
- Confirm directions for kitchen staff or need for extra chairs with office.
- Prepare kippot basket, sweets, anything else to be brought into COS before noon on Friday.
- Check that all deliveries arrive **before noon** on Friday.
- Take photographs if scheduled.
- Delegate a friend to help with last-minute emergencies.
- Relax and enjoy the weekend!

## **Where Can I Find Worksheets, Checklists, and Handout Template?**

The following worksheets, checklists and handout template are available as WORD documents from Pam Levine in the COS Office:

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Family Worksheet

Honors Worksheet

Office Checklist

Torah Blessings: include links to teaching videos for an aliyah, hagbah, and gelilah

Handout template

## Important Contacts From Congregation Ohr Shalom

<b>Function</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone</b>	<b>E-mail</b>
Rabbi	Rabbi Avi Friedman	908-273-8130	<a href="mailto:rabbi@summitjcc.org">rabbi@summitjcc.org</a>
Cantor	Cantor Janet Roth	908-273-8130	<a href="mailto:cantor@summitjcc.org">cantor@summitjcc.org</a>
B'nai Mitzvah Chairperson	Kala Paul	908-273-5818	<a href="mailto:kala.paul45@gmail.com">kala.paul45@gmail.com</a>
Sefer Chaim Inscription	Linda Coppleson	973-325-2665	<a href="mailto:lcoppleson@gmail.com">lcoppleson@gmail.com</a>
	Penny Pincus	908-273-2736	<a href="mailto:pcpincus@comcast.net">pcpincus@comcast.net</a>
Hebrew Calligraphy	Linda Coppleson	973-325-2665	<a href="mailto:lcoppleson@gmail.com">lcoppleson@gmail.com</a> <a href="http://www.ketubahsoferet.com">http://www.ketubahsoferet.com</a>
Women's Group Judaica Shop	Sarine de Picciotto	973-635-5363	<a href="mailto:zazie59@aol.com">zazie59@aol.com</a>
	Alice Barron	973-635-3791	<a href="mailto:akb118@aol.com">akb118@aol.com</a>
Religious Committee Chairperson	David Ehrenfried	973-912-9659	<a href="mailto:Ehrenfried_dl@msn.com">Ehrenfried_dl@msn.com</a>
Honors/Aliyot Liaison	David Ehrenfried	973-912-9659	<a href="mailto:Ehrenfried_dl@msn.com">Ehrenfried_dl@msn.com</a>
Women's Group Presentation	Yola Levine	908-522-0917	<a href="mailto:rylevine@aol.com">rylevine@aol.com</a>
Men's Club Presentation	Mike Squires	908.391.6191	<a href="mailto:Mike.squires@blueprintit.com">Mike.squires@blueprintit.com</a>
COS Executive Director worksheets, checklists, information	Pam Levine	908-273-8130	<a href="mailto:office@summitjcc.org">office@summitjcc.org</a>