



Temple Shalom in Broomall
55 N. Church Lane, Broomall PA 19008

B'nei Mitzvah Handbook

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Welcome Letter

Dear B'nei Mitzvah Family,

You are about to experience one of the most meaningful and exciting moments in your family's life. Your child is approaching adolescence and nearing adulthood. The B'nei Mitzvah ceremony marks and celebrates this remarkable transformation. The ceremony speaks of responsibility and recognition, of tradition, learning and growth. We at Temple Sholom in Broomall look forward to sharing this moment with you. We are here to guide you and support you as you enter this stage on your life-long Jewish journey.

Like all of our Jewish lifecycle rites, B'nei Mitzvah brings a moment of personal and family change into the community. Your child will stand before a community of adults who have gathered for worship and learning to celebrate this unique moment of growth. Your child will do what only adult Jews are permitted to do -- lead the community in prayer and teach Torah to the community. The best preparation for this special moment is to be a part of our community. Come to the synagogue for worship and learning. Your participation says something very powerful to your child about the importance of community, of tradition, and of Judaism in your life.

Following your child's B'nei Mitzvah, it is important that your child continue his or her participation in Jewish life through a regular program of Jewish learning through Rimon Noar and on to Confirmation in 12th Grade. Temple Sholom offers a variety of learning options as well as a dynamic program of teen activities through our youth group, ToaSTY. Encouraging your child's participation in these programs reinforces the important lessons of the B'nei Mitzvah ceremony.

We look forward to traveling this journey and celebrating with you.

Mazal Tov!

Rabbi Peter Rigler
Cantor Jamie Marx
Lori Green, Education Director

Our Philosophy of B'nei Mitzvah

We want every student to be successful in preparing for their service and to have learned what we feel is an essential lesson about adulthood: responsibility. Our goal is to have each student understand their responsibility to *tikkun olam* (“repairing the world”) and what it means to take responsibility for their actions.

We know that every student comes to our program with different strengths and challenges. Please share with us any insight you have as to what we can do to make this process a successful and empowering one for your child. We push each student to work to the best of their ability and we teach them how to break up this significant project into manageable pieces.

Although we begin with a similar menu of prayers and verses for every student, we tailor the Torah and Haftarah portions and prayer assignments based on each student’s pace of study and in consideration of the material that they have already mastered in Hebrew school.

As a part of our Rimon curriculum, our students become familiar with the structure of the Shabbat service as well as the prayers of the Friday evening and Shabbat morning liturgy. Regular attendance at Rimon and Hebrew school, consistent studying, and attendance at Shabbat services are all key to helping a student feel confident and prepared on the day of their b'nei mitzvah.

Assignment of B'nei Mitzvah Dates

WHAT DO WE NEED TO GET A DATE ASSIGNED?

Dates are assigned for most students in the 4th Grade year. (For families joining after a student's 4th Grade year, the date is assigned as soon as they become members.) In order to receive a date for your student, your family must be a member in good standing. That means:

Student must be enrolled and attending Rimon through the year of the B'nei Mitzvah
Membership dues and B'nei mitzvah fees must be current

These requirements hold from the initial assignment of dates through to the B'nei Mitzvah date. The Temple reserves the right to revoke the B'nei Mitzvah date if it is determined that these membership obligations are not fulfilled.

ASSIGNMENT OF B'NEI MITZVAH DATES

Whenever possible, students are assigned a B'nei Mitzvah date near their 13th birthday. However, most years we have a number of students with clustered birthdays, so a b'nei mitzvah date may be as far as 6-9 months after a student's 13th birthday.

B'nei mitzvah dates are not assigned for July and August. Children born in July or August will be assigned a date in late Spring or in the Fall.

There are also certain weekends during the year that cannot be assigned, e.g., around Passover and the High Holy Days. Children whose birthdays would fall on those Shabbatot are moved to the next available Shabbat.

JOINT B'NEI MITZVAH DATES

Sharing a b'nei mitzvah date is done out of necessity -- we are thrilled to have a growing b'nei mitzvah program and only so many Shabbatot available during the year. We strive to give each student and their families the same experience on their special day, regardless of whether the date is shared.

Even if you do not have a double at the time your date is assigned, you may still become a double up to one year before the date.

Regardless of whether the date is shared, students will be expected to learn the same amount of Torah, Haftarah, and prayers. In a joint service the students lead prayers on their own, so the prayers are divided up between the two students.

Families are designated an "A" family or a "B" family for the purposes of dividing up the prayers and some of the service honors, in alphabetical order by last name. You can see how the honors are divided up by looking at the Service Honors and Family Info Sheet at the end of this manual.

HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

If you have questions about the B'nei Mitzvah program or how a service flows, we encourage you to attend the meetings and classes for B'nei Mitzvah parents and their children offered during Rimon. It is also very important to watch a b'nei mitzvah service, as each synagogue does things a little differently and experiences you may have had elsewhere might not reflect exactly what our *minhag* (tradition) is at Temple Sholom.

You can watch services live on our website

Speak with your friends at Temple Sholom who have already been through this special lifecycle event and may be going through it again. You may of course call a clergy member or any member of the office staff with questions about any part of the B'nei Mitzvah process.

Preparation for B'nei Mitzvah

STARTING THE PROCESS

We begin B'nei Mitzvah preparation with a meeting between the parents, the student, and the cantor to discuss the process ahead. This meeting happens approximately eight months before the B'nei Mitzvah date. If you have any questions about when your child will begin their preparation, please feel free to speak with Cantor Marx.

Each student will have a Google Doc, shared with the family and maintained by the Cantor and the tutor, which clearly lays out all assignments as well as feedback on each lesson. This allows full transparency in the B'nei Mitzvah process, and both the Cantor and the tutor are available via email or phone to answer any questions you may have about your child's progress.

There are four tasks that we ask students to undertake:

- Torah and Haftarah Chanting
- Leading parts of the service (prayers and readings)
- Completing a mitzvah project
- Giving a d'var torah (sermon)

TORAH AND HAFTARAH CHANTING

Each student begins working on their Torah portions and prayers approximately 7 months before the B'nei Mitzvah date. Students meet weekly with Cantor Marx or with our tutor, Miryam Coppersmith, for a 15 minute, one-on-one session. All lessons are scheduled directly with Cantor Marx at the mutual convenience of your schedule and the b'nei mitzvah tutoring schedule.

Recordings of the Torah and Haftarah portions are shared with the student and/or family using Dropbox, a free app available at <http://www.dropbox.com/>.

PRAYERS

Students are expected to continue work on their prayers while studying their Torah portion. This work begins in Hebrew school and we push each student to master more of the prayers throughout the 7 months of tutoring.

MP3 recordings of all of the prayers are available on the Cantor's Corner page of the Temple Sholom website: <http://www.temple-sholom.org/life-long-learning/cantor-s-corner/>.

MITZVAH PROJECT

Each B'nei Mitzvah student is asked to participate in a “mitzvah project” to be agreed upon by the clergy and the student at the beginning of the b'nei mitzvah process. This project will give the student an opportunity to apply the concepts of tz'dekah (“righteousness” or “justice”) and social responsibility.

Here are some rough guidelines for choosing a mitzvah project:

- The mitzvah project should be a hands-on volunteer project (as opposed to, for example, writing a check to a nonprofit or asking your guests to bring canned goods).
- Students should plan to volunteer approximately 10-15 hours.
- The mitzvah project should be age-appropriate work. We don't expect you to start a foundation or raise \$50,000!
- You should choose a mitzvah project that you are excited to do. It doesn't benefit you or the organization to volunteer grudgingly.
- The organization could be local, national, or international.
- We have a strong preference that students volunteer to help people rather than animals.

SPEECHES

Every b'nei mitzvah student will write and deliver two speeches: a thank you speech and a d'var torah (sermon). The Rabbi will meet with the student and parents to discuss the Torah and Haftarah portions, helping them to prepare a speech for the day of the B'nei Mitzvah. Meetings usually begin approximately 2-3 months before the B'nei Mitzvah date. Half of the Torah speech will be focused on the Torah portion and what is meaningful about it to your student and the other half will focus on their volunteer work.

REHEARSALS

Students will typically have one rehearsal on the bima with Rabbi Rigler to review all of the prayers, readings, and Torah/Haftarah portions. The rehearsal helps acclimate our students to standing at the lectern, using a microphone, and presenting their materials as if it were the actual service. The rehearsal occurs during the last 6-8 weeks prior to the B'nei Mitzvah date.

The final rehearsal happens on the Friday immediately preceding the B'nei Mitzvah service and is run by Cantor Marx. This run-through rehearsal is held on the bima from 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM. During this session, the student will present all of the materials they have worked on for their B'nei Mitzvah, including speeches, prayers, English readings, and Torah and Haftarah portions. At least one parent must be in attendance, and siblings and extended family members are welcome to attend as well.

IF YOU NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Helping your child reach this wonderful milestone will make the journey more meaningful for you and for them. Ask your child to share their assignments with you. Attend services with your child. If you find

your child is having difficulty with any step of the process, please contact the Cantor or Rabbi, or Education Director. Working as a team, with you leading the way, we can ensure a positive experience for your child.

Participation in the B'nei Mitzvah Service

SHABBAT EVENING

During the Shabbat evening service prior to a child's B'nei Mitzvah ceremony, the family is given the honor of lighting the Shabbat candles and participating in Kiddush, the blessing over Sabbath wine. The student will also be invited to lead the chanting of the V'ahavta, Avot v'Imahot, and the G'vurot prayers if they have worked on them.

For families who are sharing their b'nei mitzvah date, family "A" has the honor of leading the candles and family "B" has the honor of leading the Kiddush and Motzi. Both students participate in the prayers together.

Friday night services start at 7:30PM except for Family Shabbat services, which occur on the 2nd Friday of each month and begin at 7PM. Services typically last an hour.

SHABBAT MORNING

Shabbat Morning services begin at 10:30AM. Solo b'nei mitzvah services are generally done around 12PM, and Joint b'nei mitzvah services are generally done around 12:30PM.

Service Honors

There are many opportunities for family members to participate in the morning service. Typically, parents, siblings, grandparents, aunts & uncles, cousins and close friends participate. At Temple Sholom, non-Jewish family members are always welcome to participate in any service honors.

Honors include:

- Opening and closing the ark
- Dressing and undressing the Torah
- Reciting the Torah blessings (also known as "having an *aliyah*"), either in Hebrew or English
- A reading in English

Torah Honors (Aliyot)

Torah readings are divided up into chunks called *aliyot* (singular form: *aliyah*). This is the same word used to describe the honor of reciting the Torah blessings. At Temple Sholom, students read no more than 4 aliyot. The typical order of the *aliyot* is:

1. Open to any family or friends
2. Open to any family or friends
3. Reserved for parents

4. Reserved for the B'nei Mitzvah student

Family and friends can participate in an *aliyah* in any combination, and can include as many people as you'd like.

Parents' Blessing

Parents are invited to offer a blessing to their child as part of the B'nei Mitzvah service.

Often called the "parents' speech," at Temple Sholom we make a distinction between the kind of a speech a parent might offer at the reception versus a speech given during a worship service. We encourage parents to focus on their hopes and dreams for their child, rather than an extensive list of thank yous.

An appropriate length is usually 3-5 minutes. Either or both parents may speak, as you feel is best for your family.

We strongly encourage parents to write out their words. It is an emotional day and having them printed will help you deliver a meaningful message to your child that includes all the wisdom and praise you want to include.

We have a sample blessing at the end of this packet.

B'nei Mitzvah Family Responsibilities

ONEG SHABBAT

It is customary for the parents to sponsor the Friday night Oneg Shabbat preceding the child's B'nei Mitzvah. Approximately one month prior to the B'nei Mitzvah, you will receive an Oneg Sponsor Form from the temple office. Should the oneg impose a financial burden on your family, a generous donor will cover the cost on your behalf. Please speak with Jeff Green (director@temple-sholom.org) should you have any questions.

BIMA BASKETS

It was long a custom for b'nei mitzvah families to purchase flowers for the bima on the occasion of their child's b'nei mitzvah. However, these flowers were often quite expensive and were thrown away after the service ended. A tradition arose at Temple Sholom that money spent on flowers could better be used to support those suffering from food insecurity in our community. We ask families to sponsor our "bima baskets," symbolically filled with donated food, and the vast majority of the cost of which is sent to a local food bank or soup kitchen.

USHERING

Students, and at least one parent, are required to usher at the B'nei Mitzvah immediately before their own. It is a learning experience for the family as well as a mitzvah. Grace Gherovici, our usher coordinator, will reach out to you a month in advance with ushering guidelines, the time to arrive, and to answer any questions. You can contact her at ushers@temple-sholom.org.

Logistics

RENTAL INFORMATION

Temple Sholom is honored to have you here and we want to help make your day as special as possible. Our Multipurpose Room is a wonderful space to hold a reception or luncheon. We also have other spaces available for rent for a quick grab & go.

The Rental Agreement, available from the Main Office, goes into greater detail regarding price breakdowns. If you are interested in renting the Multipurpose Room here for your B'nei Mitzvah reception, we ask of a few things from you:

- Please sign and date our Rental Agreement at least 6 months in advance and return to Temple Sholom
- Your caterer must sign off on the Rules and Regulations regarding the use of the Kitchen and Multipurpose Room.
- You must sign off on the Rules and Regulations regarding the use of the Kitchen and Multipurpose Room.
- You and/or your caterer must provide a floor plan of how you would like the room set up two weeks before your B'nei Mitzvah date.

If you have any questions regarding fees, logistics, or anything involving your reception, please do not hesitate to call or email Marissa Kimmel, community@temple-sholom.org.

PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY

Families typically take photos on Saturday morning prior to the B'nei Mitzvah service beginning. The clergy are not available before 9:15 am. If you would like the clergy to be there for photos, you need to let them know in advance. One clergy member needs to be present if you would like the Torah in your photos. If Saturday morning does not work for your photos, please contact Marissa Kimmel, community@temple-sholom.org, to find an alternative.

Photos can be taken during the service as long as your photographer remains stationary and does not use a flash.

You are welcome to have a videographer come or we can provide you with a digital version of our stream of the service. Technology glitches, although rare, can happen and we cannot guarantee the stream will work.

After the B'nei Mitzvah

Just as a child's emotional and educational growth doesn't end at 13, the same is true for their spiritual and religious development. Remaining connected to Temple Sholom throughout their teen years gives students a strong foundation for their college and adult years, and helps them develop tools for navigating the complexities of adult life.

TZEDAKAH

It is the custom at Temple Sholom for the B'nei Mitzvah family to express their appreciation to the clergy by making a contribution to the clergy discretionary funds in honor of this joyous occasion. You may also donate to a Temple fund of your choice.

RIMON NOAR AND CONFIRMATION

Our Rimon Noar program for 7th-12th graders offers a higher level learning opportunity for our students. The program covers topics like Jewish history, the Holocaust, social justice, Jewish culture, and Israel. It meets on Monday nights from 7PM-8:30PM.

Our students' participation in Rimon Noar culminates in 12th Grade with Confirmation, a celebration of their years of involvement at Temple Sholom and an opportunity to publicly share their gratitude and the story of their Jewish journey.

MADRICHIM AND SONGLEADERS

In addition to attending Rimon Noar, an important way some of our students remain engaged and connected at Temple Sholom is by working in our Rimon program as *madrachim* (student classroom aides) or songleaders. These are paid positions working with our K-6 students on Sunday mornings from 9:30AM-12PM. For information about how to become a *madrich/a* or a songleader, please email or call Lori Green (educator@temple-sholom.org).

Who Do I Contact For...?

Name	Email	Questions About...
Rabbi Peter Rigler	rabbi@temple-sholom.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Service planning and special needs accommodations ● B'nei mitzvah speeches ● Torah portion questions ● Rehearsal schedule ● Service honors ● Mitzvah projects
Cantor Jamie Marx	cantor@temple-sholom.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Service planning and special needs accommodations ● Tutoring process and accommodations ● Tutoring schedule ● Service honors
Jeff Green	director@temple-sholom.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Membership questions
Becky Krangel	bkrangel@temple-sholom.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shabbat bulletin ● Honors sheet
Marissa Kimmel	community@temple-sholom.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Logistics ● Oneg
Betsy Blackburn-Goslin	bookkeeper@temple-sholom.org	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Payment of fees

Mailing Address:
 55 N. Church Lane
 Broomall, PA 19008

Main Office: (610) 356-5165

B'nei Mitzvah and Confirmation: Yesterday and Today

Listing the stages in a Jew's life, the Mishnah (compiled around 200 CE) tells us that "thirteen is for *Mitzvah*." Judaism holds that, upon turning thirteen years old, each of us is obligated to fulfill all 613 commandments to the best of our ability. Reaching this special age accords a new status on a person. That is why we say one *becomes* b'nei mitzvah rather than one *has* a b'nei mitzvah.

Sometime during the 4th Century, it became the custom to mark this stage of life by permitting a young man (at the time, it was only for males) to be one of eight adults privileged to go up to the lectern on the bimah on a given Shabbat soon after his thirteenth birthday. He would read some verses from the Torah scroll, and blessings thanking God as author of the Torah were recited before and after the reading of those verses. In that era, Jewish girls who reached the age of 12 had a responsibility to observe *mitzvot*, but did not read Torah.

By the 16th century, it became custom to follow this first public ritual appearance with a party sponsored by the bar mitzvah family. This was usually held in the synagogue or at the family home on the Shabbat during which the young person ascended to the Torah. The very next morning, the Bar Mitzvah resumed his seat in his Talmud class in the community religious school, where he continued to study for five or more additional years. By the 18th century, some families had begun to hold festive meals in celebration of a girl's twelfth birthday.

With the advent of Reform Judaism in Germany in the 1800s, the early reformers looked askance at the bar mitzvah ceremony. While it was intended to signal the religious maturation of a young adult, they felt it had devolved into a mere "theatrical" experience and had become a "meaningless ceremonial." These reformers developed the service of Confirmation, which was conferred upon both girls and boys as early as 1846.

The first bat mitzvah ceremony in North America, which took place in May of 1922, was that of the late Judith Kaplan Eisenstein, daughter of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism.

At Temple Sholom, all students are treated equally in terms of the service and their preparation. Every student reads from the Torah, leads prayers, and delivers *divrei Torah* (words of Torah) from the *bima*.

Sample Parent Blessing

Dear (Child),

Judaism believes that each person is born in the image of God and within each person there is a spark of Holiness. Not only is this an enabling power that guides us in our relationships with others, but to me, it is also a connecting channel between a person and God. I have seen this connection through you on many nights after you recited Sh'ma. At first your prayer was an assurance that tomorrow will be a good day, but as you grew, so did the length of the time you took to pray with your eyes closed and your lips moving.

I hope that you didn't let the attractions or distractions of growing up pull you away from this link. Remain a child at heart and continue to wonder at the many ordinary, yet amazing goings-on around you. Add to your Jewish knowledge to gain further wisdom and insight into the adult life. As I always say...feed your soul. Know that faith gives you strength to overcome any challenge in life.

Let your deed, not words, tell who you are and what you believe in. May you always be inspired to do good! And may we always see in you good health and happiness.

We love you, and Mazel Tov!

Mom and Dad

Solo Service Honors Sheet

Saturday Morning Service Honors and Family Info Sheet for Solo B'nei Mitzvah

Student Name: _____

Student Hebrew Name: _____

(Format: Student Hebrew name **ben/bat/b'nei** Parent 1 name **v'** Parent 2 name)

Service Honors

Temple Sholom is a maximally inclusive synagogue and welcomes all family members and friends to participate in any honor, regardless of their faith tradition.

Tallit Presentation: *Typically parent(s)/guardian(s) or grandparent(s)*

Opening/Closing the Ark (beginning of Torah service):

Torah Pass: *Typically grandparents and parents/guardians. Please include name and relationship to student.*

Disrobing Torah:

Aliyot (Torah honors): *Include first and last name, their relation to the B'nei Mitzvah student, and phonetic pronunciation as needed.*

1. _____

2. _____

3. **Parent(s)/Guardian(s)** _____

4. **Student** _____

**Saturday Morning Service Honors and Family Info Sheet
for Solo B'nei Mitzvah**

Redressing Torah:

Opening/Closing the Ark (end of Torah service):

Special Yahrzeits: *Family members and friends who have passed away. Please print first and last name, relationship, and phonetic pronunciation.*

Kiddush (Blessing for Wine) and Motzi (Blessing for Bread):

Alternative Poems or Readings: *Four options are included in the "Readings" section of your student's white prayer binder.*

Joint Service Honors Sheet

Saturday Morning Service Honors and Family Info Sheet for Joint B'nei Mitzvah

Student Name: _____

Student Hebrew Name: _____

(Format: Student Hebrew name **ben/bat/b'nei** Parent 1 name **v'** Parent 2 name)

Service Honors

Temple Sholom is a maximally inclusive synagogue and welcomes all family members and friends to participate in any honor, regardless of their faith tradition.

Service Honors for Both Students

Tallit Presentation: *Typically parent(s)/guardian(s) or grandparent(s)*

Torah Pass: *Typically grandparents and parents/guardians. Please include name and relationship to student.*

Aliyot (Torah honors): *Include first and last name, their relation to the B'nei Mitzvah student, and phonetic pronunciation as needed.*

1. _____

2. _____

3. **Parent(s)/Guardian(s)** _____

4. **Student** _____

Alternative Poems or Readings: *Four options are included in the "Readings" section of your student's white prayer binder.*

**Saturday Morning Service Honors and Family Info Sheet
for Joint B'nei Mitzvah**

Special Yahrzeits: *Family members and friends who have passed away. Please print first and last name, relationship, and phonetic pronunciation.*

Service Honors for "A" Students

Opening/Closing the Ark (beginning of Torah service):

Disrobing Torah:

Kiddush:

Service Honors for "B" Students

Redressing Torah:

Opening/Closing the Ark (end of Torah service):

Motzi:

**Saturday Morning Service Honors and Family Info Sheet
for Joint B'nei Mitzvah**

Photography in the Sanctuary:

Each family gets 45 mins to take any family photos on the Saturday of the B'nei Mitzvah. The rabbi and/or cantor will be in attendance for 15 mins of each session.

“A” Family - 8:30 AM - 9:15 AM

“B” Family - 9:15AM - 10:00 AM

Clergy will be available for photos from 9:00-9:30 AM.