

## **Getting Ready: A Timeline For Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah Day**

### **A Guide For Parents of Bar/Bat Mitzvah Children**

*A child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is one of the most important events in a Jewish family's life. It is a year filled with excitement, anticipation and perhaps even a little trepidation, but just remember, it is also one of the most fulfilling experiences you will ever have, leaving you with shining memories to cherish forever. It's a family "affair", a learning experience that each family member shares with the Bar/Bat mitzvah.

No doubt, in the beginning, the process appears to be a little overwhelming. There is so much that has to be done. First and foremost is the studying. Torah and Haftorah portions and prayers must be learned. As the day gets closer, the B'nei Mitzvah must think about their speeches and the parents begin to think about addressing their children. And not to be forgotten is the planning of a proper celebration. For many of you, it is the first time you are planning for a family event. If you have already had a Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience, you will find that each one opens new vistas and questions. Everything always gets done. Your child and you will be ready for the big day. In the end, we can promise that you will have one of the most memorable days of your lives.

Whatever questions or problems arise, large or small, look to your Temple for answers. We are here to help you. We are just a phone call away. Attached is a suggested time frame to help you organize the upcoming months. Remember we are here to answer any questions you may have. Mark down our telephone numbers: Jadwiga Brown 671-8152, Wayne Smith 759-0917, or the Temple office at 671-4760. We look forward to working with you. Mazal Tov and have a great year!

#### **One Year Prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date**

Make Shabbat Service attendance with the family part of your routine. By attending *Shabbat Services*, your child will not only fulfill the 13 Bar/Bat Mitzvah attendance obligation, but will also begin to develop a familiarity with the *Shabbat Service*. This will create a comfort level that promotes greater self-confidence when it comes to conducting his/her own Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service.

Saturday Morning Services differ from Friday evening Services, so it is important to also attend these Services (consult the Temple Calendar for the schedule of Saturday Services). Do not be shy about coming; Shabbat Morning Services are open to all Temple congregants. It is important to observe an actual Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service at our Temple. Attending these Services will help you and your child better understand:

- a) The order of the Service
- b) How the honors (*Aliyot*) are handled
- c) The role the family plays in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service

#### **6 Months Prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service**

The process of studying now begins. First your child will work with a tutor. He/She will learn the *Maftir* portion, *Haftorah*, Shabbat prayers and the Friday Night *Kiddush*. A CD will be provided and this should now become part of the daily study routine. The key to success is practice and repetition!

If you feel that your child may need more time with a tutor, schedule a meeting with the Rabbi. As your child prepares his/her prayers, be aware of what is going on. If at any time you feel that your child is not progressing at a proper pace, speak to the Rabbi immediately. Should the Rabbi additional help is needed, the Rabbi will inform you.

#### **4 to 5 Months Prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Day**

It is recommended that your child practice a minimum of 20-30 minutes each day. Your child should practice his/her portions out loud, in front of you. It helps the child feel as if you are a part of the process and he/she is not going through it alone; it gives you the opportunity to catch any problems and it helps your child overcome the fear of “performing” in front of people.

#### **3 Weeks Prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Day**

This is the time that the Rabbi will meet with you and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. At these meetings, the Rabbi will need to know your child’s Hebrew name and your (the parents’) Hebrew names. The Rabbi will rehearse the Service with the Bar/ Bat Mitzvah, and discuss the *Aliyot* and speeches that will be made by your child and yourself. This is the time to explore the meaning of the *Maftir* and *Haftorah* to see how it can be incorporated into your child’s speech. This exercise helps the child better understand his/her *Torah* portion and give more meaning to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process. *Please note* that a *Bima* guest (usually a Board Member) will address your child and the congregation at your service. Please feel free to contact this representative in advance in order to become familiar with one another.

#### **The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Weekend**

##### ***Friday Night:***

Plan to arrive at the Temple 30 minutes prior to Services. Candles will be lit by a family member The Bar/ Bat Mitzvah child will lead the *Kiddush*. Other family members can also come up to the *Bima*. This will all be pre-arranged with the Rabbi. Before or after Services, the usual Oneg Shabbat will be sponsored by the parents. (see Jadwiga Brown for options).

##### ***Saturday Morning:***

Finally the day is here! Be sure to come to Temple by 10:00 a.m. Services begin promptly at 10:30 a.m. On the *Bima* will be your child, the Rabbi, the Cantor and a member of the Temple’s Board of Trustees. Just Prior to concluding prayers, the Trustee representing the Temple’s Board will make a presentation of gifts to your child. At the conclusion of the Service, the Rabbi will call up the Bar/ Bat Mitzvah family to join everyone on the *Bima* for the blessing of the *Challah* and the reciting of *Kiddush*.