

# Sinai Temple Bar & Bat Mitzvah PARENT GUIDE

*Updated Spring 2009 / 5769*



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# **I. BECOMING A BAR/BAT MITZVAH**

## **A. An Introduction**

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a rite of passage that Jewish families anticipate from the earliest age of a child's life. The ceremony itself symbolizes the recognition of a youth accepting the responsibilities of an adult in the Jewish community. For example, upon becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, the youth is counted as part of a minyan. The goal of this experience is to lay the foundation in our youth for a life-long sense of identification and participation within the Jewish community. Equally important is imbuing our youth with confidence that they may be secure in themselves to rely upon the teachings of Judaism throughout their lives.

B'nai Mitzvahs occur on Saturday morning. On rare occasions Friday night services may be considered. Students may participate in the Reform or Egalitarian Traditional service. Parents and students will have the freedom to create the special kind of service that reflects the child's and the family's Jewish values when meeting with the rabbi.

Sinai Temple provides a B'nai Mitzvah class, which is required for all students who want to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The Sinai Temple Education Director also arranges for each student to receive individual guidance and instruction in order to prepare for his or her Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The student will meet individually with a tutor for instruction in his/her Torah and Haftarah portion and, along with his/her parents, will meet with the rabbi to create a drash (speech) related to his/her Torah portion, life experience, and Jewish education. Each student also undertakes a mitzvah project.

B'nai Mitzvah preparation is a wonderful, enriching experience for the entire family. Although it is at times stressful, it is an opportunity for the family to develop close relationships, both among family members and with the Jewish community — with the rabbi, the child's tutor, and religious school staff, as well as other Sinai Temple families.

While the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child may be approaching the event with a mixture of anticipation and doubt, the parents may experience moments of eager anticipation, pride, and terror, especially if the Bar/Bat Mitzvah represents the first large social event that the parents have planned. It may help during the planning process to keep one central thought in mind: the weekend activities should be planned to enhance the experience for your family and friends -- the events should fit your approach to a celebration, as well as be consistent with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service and its meaning.

## **B. A Brief History**

The establishment of becoming a Bar Mitzvah at thirteen years plus one day for boys and a Bat Mitzvah at twelve years plus one day for girls has several origins. The Talmud records that during the time of the Second Temple (520 b.c.e.–70 c.e.), it was traditional for Sages to bless a child who had completed his first fast day at the age of twelve or thirteen. In Pirkei Avot ("Ethics of the Fathers," second century c.e.) it is written, "At thirteen one is ready to do mitzvot." By the time the Talmud was completed in the sixth century c.e., boys of thirteen years plus one day had assumed full responsibility for performing the mitzvot, hence the term bar mitzvah, "son of the commandment." This also had legal ramifications: These boys were

now counted in a minyan and could act as witnesses. There was no formal rite, only a public blessing by the father that he was no longer responsible for the sins of the son.

The earliest Bar Mitzvah ceremony consisted of blessing and reading the last section of the weekly portion of the Torah, the maftir, meaning the extra reading, since the boy was not a Bar Mitzvah until after the service, and reading the haftarah portion. The most important part of the rite was a d'rashah or d'var Torah, a sermonette on the Torah or haftarah portion. Since the Bar Mitzvah was assuming adult religious responsibilities, he was expected to show his understanding of those responsibilities to his family and, more importantly, to the community. Structurally, the Bar Mitzvah ceremony is essentially the same as it originally was. It wasn't until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that we find records of a Bar Mitzvah being invited to lead part of the worship service.

A public ceremony in celebration of a girl becoming a Bat Mitzvah, "daughter of the commandment," did not come into formal being in North America until 1922. Dr. Judith Kaplan-Eisenstein, the daughter of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, blessed and read the Torah portion from a book "at a respectable distance" from the Torah scroll. The regular celebration of girls becoming B'not mitzvah came into prominence in Reform congregations particularly in the second half of the 20th century and is generally identical in form to the celebration of a Bar Mitzvah.

It should be noted that the rite of Confirmation originated in the Reform Movement in Germany in 1810 and included girls in 1817. Since it was felt that a thirteen-year-old was too young to understand the precepts of Judaism, the celebration of a boy becoming a Bar Mitzvah was dropped in favor of Confirmation, which was held at age sixteen or seventeen because that was deemed a more mature age to assume the responsibilities of Judaism. Today, most congregations hold both ceremonies.

Historically, all joyous occasions were celebrated in some manner, and becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah was no exception. However, unlike weddings at which we are commanded to rejoice with bride and groom, the Bar Mitzvah has no such mandate. In early years the celebrations varied from a simple Kiddush of wine, brandy, and cake following the service to more elaborate meals for the family and friends. The Rabbis urged families not to have elaborate celebrations and always to provide for the poor in order to fulfill the mitzvah. The d'rashah was delivered by the Bar Mitzvah some time during the celebration in order to emphasize its religious aspects. Gifts were generally limited to books, or religious items, or "sermon gifts," which were small amounts of money given as thanks for the sermonette. Among Moroccan Jews, this money was given to the boy's teacher.

Historically, Bar/Bat Mitzvah has been viewed as a first step in a young person's acceptance of the obligations to family and community as a responsible Jew. It was and should continue to be the beginning of a lifetime of the performance of mitzvot, study, prayer, and a commitment to share the destiny of the Jewish people. (Compiled by Bert Wagner, and used with permission from UAHC 2002)

## C. Keeping the Bar/Bat Mitzvah in Perspective

- 1. Bar/Bat Mitzvah Is about the Acceptance of Responsibility.** In the final analysis, this is the bottom line of becoming a Bar and Bat Mitzvah. It's not about acquiring the skill of kriah,—“the reading of the Torah.” Rather, it's about acquiring the skill of responding to a challenge: a mitzvah. This is how Judaism defines maturity.
- 2. The Torah Is the Center of Judaism.** Everything we do as Jews, everything we believe, everything we value revolves around the Torah. The Torah is the testimony of our people's encounter with God. And however you interpret those events in the wilderness of Sinai some three millennia ago, what cannot be dismissed is the sacredness with which our ancestors have embraced this legacy. This is why the first mitzvah we expect our children to fulfill is to stand at Torah.
- 3. Bar/Bat Mitzvah Is a Community Observance.** It is not by coincidence that we choose to hold this initiation ceremony in public. To be a Jew means to live within a covenantal relationship—not only with God but with other Jews as well. Bar/Bat Mitzvah marks the entry of the child as a full-fledged member of the community. The awarding of an aliyah, (“being called to the Torah”), is a gift of the Jewish people. For this reason, the marking of the child's coming of age takes place in the synagogue—the communal home.
- 4. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Ceremony Is Not a Performance: It's a Celebration.** The synagogue is not a theater, and the bimah is not a stage, and the congregation is not an audience. More to the point, the only mistake one can make at a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is to lose sight of this truth.
- 5. Try to Think of the Reception That Follows Not As a Separate Event but As a Continuation of the Celebration.** In fact, Judaism has a formal name for the meal after a Bar/Bat mitzvah: It is a s'udat mitzvah. This meal is in honor of the performance of a mitzvah. It, too, is a sacred gathering. This is not to say that it must be solemn; it is to say, however, that the spirit of the morning's celebration should be perpetuated through the performance of mitzvot. The recitation of the blessings and the setting aside of a portion of one's bounty for the poor demonstrate that the morning's celebration was not an isolated event but a standard from which to follow.
- 6. The Meaning of Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah Is Enduring Only If It Takes Place within a Context of Continued Jewish Growth.** Being a Bat or Bar Mitzvah is not the experience of a lifetime. It is a lifetime experience—a state of being that remains with us throughout our lives. Indeed, the true measure of performance comes not on the day one becomes a Bat or Bar Mitzvah but in the days that follow. In other words, becoming a Bar or Bat mitzvah should be thought of as a Jewish “commencement,” marking not an end point but a beginning—a beginning of a lifetime of mitzvot, a beginning of a lifetime of learning. As such, it is our firm belief that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration is validated and enhanced by a commitment to continue religious education to Confirmation and participation in our Temple Youth Group. (From the Bar and Bat Mitzvah Handbook: A Manual for Parent and Student, Temple Ner Tamid, Bloomfield, NJ, and used with permission from UAHC 2002)

## **II. EDUCATION / PREPARATION**

### **A. Hebrew & Sunday School Requirements**

1. Students must attend both Sunday and Hebrew School in order to have a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at Sinai Temple.
2. Students are expected to begin Hebrew school in the Alef class and continue through to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah class. Students must be able to demonstrate an ability to read Hebrew and follow along in the prayer book. Exceptions must be approved by the rabbi.
3. Students must complete the Bar/Bat Mitzvah academic curriculum as set by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah teacher. This includes attending bi-weekly meetings of the class, participation in Shabbat or holiday services, class assignments, family projects, and class projects.
4. A student is considered ready for his or her Bar or Bat Mitzvah when he or she has achieved a level of skill to read the appropriate passages and have an understanding of the meaning and purpose of the ceremony. The rabbi may ask a student to postpone his or her Bar or Bat Mitzvah if the student is not prepared.
5. Parents must pay for the cost of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah class as well as for the additional tutoring fee. The fees include 26 weekly sessions with a private tutor, a Parashat HaShavua / Bar/Bat Mitzvah study guide (including the Torah and Haftarah portion) and a prayer book. Parents are responsible for paying for any additional costs. This includes additional tutoring sessions, replacement prayer books, or other such incidentals.
6. The Paula Deckard B'nai Mitzvah Memorial Fund provides money for the tutoring fee. It is available by contacting the Education Director. The Vice President will confidentially review and select recipient(s), if any.
7. The Sinai Temple and Religious School policy is that all students who have a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at Sinai Temple will continue at Sinai Temple Religious School through Confirmation.

### **B. Tutoring**

1. Students will be matched with a private tutor between six and nine months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Some families may choose to begin as early as a year before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and can make arrangements with the Education Director.
2. Students will be matched with a tutor who can best meet his or her individual needs. Should a "match" not work, the parents should notify the Education Director and arrange for a different tutor.
3. Students should meet weekly with the tutor. Arrangements should be made with the tutor for work to be completed during school or family vacations, summer camp, or Sabbaticals. It is very important to keep to a regular and consistent tutoring schedule.

4. Tutors report their hours and progress to the Religious School. All payments are made through the Religious School. Parents do not pay the tutor directly.
5. Tutors will call and arrange regular meeting times and location with the families. This should be a time and place that is mutually acceptable to both the family and the tutor. It should be a place that is free from distraction allowing the student to focus on his or her Torah or Haftorah portion. Families may arrange use of the Religious School rooms when school is not in session by contacting the Education Director.

### **C. Service Requirements**

1. All Hebrew school students are required to attend a specified number of services throughout the school year. It is especially important for the B'nai Mitzvah students to attend their 21 required services.
2. Students should attend a variety of different services including Friday evening and Saturday morning services.
3. Students should attend at least one of the Reform, Egalitarian Traditional, and English services to be able to compare and contrast the services offered at Sinai Temple.
4. Students will need to turn in either Service Summary Forms or Service Coupons to their B'nai Mitzvah teacher to account for the services they have attended.

### **D. Mitzvah Project**

1. Students must choose a Mitzvah project to complete prior to his or her Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Students may look through the Mitzvah Project Resource in the Religious School office, or select a Mitzvah project on their own.
2. A student's Mitzvah project should be a reflection of the student's personal interest. It should reflect on the character and personality of the individual. Although a parent may help in the completion of the Mitzvah project, the majority of the planning and organizing should be done by the student. It is the Temple and Religious School's belief that part of becoming an adult in the Jewish community is to perform mitzvot and this Mitzvah project is the student's first done as a "Jewish adult."
3. The student and his/her family should discuss the choice of Mitzvah project with the Rabbi and the Education Director.
4. Students may wish to advertise their Mitzvah project in the Temple bulletin or the Temple or Religious School weekly newsletters. For Temple publications, submit information to the Temple Administrator at [stoffice@sinaitemplecu.org](mailto:stoffice@sinaitemplecu.org). For Religious School publications, contact the Educator at [educator@sinaitemplecu.org](mailto:educator@sinaitemplecu.org).

### **III. THE SERVICE**

#### **A. Scheduling the Service**

1. B'nai Mitzvah dates are set in the spring for the following January to December year. Parents, whose son or daughter will be thirteen that following year, will receive a letter notifying them to submit their top five date requests. The Rabbi will assign dates based on a first-come basis with priority given to dates closest to a child's birthday.
2. Bar and Bat Mitzvah services are scheduled for Saturday mornings. On rare occasions, Friday night services may be considered, however, they are not as well suited for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience. You will have the freedom to create the special kind of service that you want when meeting with the Rabbi.
3. The parents, student, tutor and Rabbi will meet for a rehearsal prior to the scheduled service. Typically, the rehearsal will be the Friday morning before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

#### **B. Friday Night Service and Oneg**

1. **Service:** The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family is expected to attend the Erev Shabbat (Friday night) service preceding the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The student is invited to lead a selection of prayers and recite the Kiddush during the service. The B'nai Mitzvah class should go up together and lead the congregation in the V'ahavta.
2. **Oneg:** Members of the congregation volunteer to provide an Oneg (refreshments) for each Erev Shabbat service. Parents do not need to be involved. Oftentimes, friends of the family volunteer to provide the Oneg. Contact the Temple Administrator to find out who the Oneg hosts will be.

It is recommended that parents contact the volunteers for that evening's Oneg. Parents should inform the volunteers of the number of additional and/or out of town guests anticipated at the Friday evening service.

Parents may provide special table coverings, centerpieces, or decorations for the Oneg. These should be brought to the Temple early on Friday.

#### **C. Student Responsibilities**

1. **Leading the Service:** The Bar/Bat Mitzvah student will serve as the sh'liach tzibur. This translated literally, means the "representative of the community." Acting as the sh'liach tzibur, leading the congregation in prayer, is one of the oldest and most prestigious roles in the synagogue. Students will lead the congregation, from the bimah, in a Shabbat morning service, including a Shacharit and Torah service.

Students will also participate in leading some prayers during the Friday evening service prior to his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Students should be familiar with and comfortable leading the following prayers:

Readers Kaddish	Mi Chamocha	Shalom Rav
Barechu	V'shamru	Torah Service
Ma'ariv Aravim	Amidah: Avot v'Imahot	Haftorah Service
Yotzair Or	Amidah: G'vurot	Aleinu
Shema	Amidah: Kedushat HaShem	Mourner's Kaddish
V'ahavta	Amidah: Kedusha	Friday Night Kiddush

- 2. Reading the Torah / Haftorah:** Students will assume the role of the baal(at) kriah, "Torah reader," and chant the Parashah or Torah Portion for the week of his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The student is expected to read 21-24 lines of Torah. The portion for that week should be read. In the Egalitarian Traditional service, it will follow the Triennial Cycle. Students and tutors can make special arrangements with the Rabbi to alter which lines will be read. The reading should be divided up into a minimum of three aliyot with a minimum of three to four sentences of Torah read for each Aliyah. There is a maximum of seven aliyot plus the Maftir aliyah.

Each student will be assigned a tutor to learn to chant both the Torah and Haftorah portions using the trope or traditional cantillation melody. Tutors will map out a schedule with 10 to 12 weeks to learn the Haftorah and then 10 to 12 weeks to learn the Torah. Students will need to chant the Torah portion from the Torah scroll during the service. Students may chant the Haftorah using the Parashat HaShavua booklet he/she received in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah class.

*Note: Every bar/bat mitzvah celebration should be special. When circumstances necessitate an adjustment in the student's participation, we will do everything possible to work with each student as an individual. Our goal is to maximize his or her self-esteem and sense of accomplishment. Please feel free to discuss any concerns you might have with either the rabbi or educator.*

- 3. Speech / Drash:** After the Haftorah is read and the Torah has been returned to the Ark, the student will deliver a speech/drash. This will reflect the student's growth through this process, the student's understanding of his/her Torah and/or Haftorah portion, and the student's hopes and goals for future Judaic life and involvement. The speech should reflect the age and experience of the student. Parents are encouraged to help their child; however, the student, along with input from the Rabbi, should experiment with new ideas.

Approximately six to eight weeks before the service, parents should schedule five to six meetings with the Rabbi. Both parents and students will meet with the Rabbi. During these meetings, the Rabbi will guide the student in preparing his/her speech. This is a very important part of the learning process. At this stage, the Rabbi-student relationship is cultivated which leads to a sense of security and confidence in the student. It is also an opportunity to create long-lasting bonds of friendship between them.

## **D. Parent Responsibilities**

- I. Assigning Honors:** The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family is encouraged to include family and friends in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. There are many different honors that can be bestowed allowing for people to participate in the service. Parents will need to complete and submit the “List of Honors” form to the Rabbi at least one week prior to the event. A copy of this form can be found in the Parent Packet.

**Handing Down the Torah:** It is our synagogue’s tradition, that when the Torah is removed from the Ark, parents recite a reading and blessing to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Parents may wish to draft their own short reading. For examples and guidelines, see the Appendix.

After the blessing, the Torah is passed from one generation to the next, until it reaches the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student. The process usually includes grandparents, parents, and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. For variations, speak with the Rabbi.

**P’tichah (Ark Openers):** There are several instances when the ark is opened during the service. This may be assigned to siblings, family friends or the ushers. There is no age requirement for this honor. Honorees should check with the Rabbi to confirm when to come up on the bimah, when to open the ark, and whether they should stay up on the bimah to close the ark.

**Aliyot:** An Aliyah is the act of being called up to the Torah. A person or persons “receiving” an aliyah recites or chants a blessing before and after the Torah is read. A typical Reform service has three aliyot. There can be as many as seven aliyot plus a Maftir aliyah. The next to last aliyah is reserved for the parents. The last aliyah is given to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student.

An aliyah can be given to men or women over the age of 13. Aliyot can be given to a single individual or group of individuals. If the group contains both Jewish and non-Jewish participants, the person(s) reading the aliyah blessing must be Jewish. It is a nice honor to give the Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor an aliyah. Copies of the Torah blessings are included in the Parent Packet.

Parents will need to include, on the “List of Honors” form, both English and Hebrew names for those receiving aliyot.

**Hagbah (Torah Lifter):** After the Torah is read, it is lifted while opened. This honor should be given to someone comfortable with lifting and holding the Torah. {If the honoree has not done this at Sinai Temple s/he should arrive early for instruction from either the Rabbi or usher}

**G’lilah (Torah Dresser):** The G’lilah follows the Hagbah to a chair assuring that the Torah does not fall. When the Hagbah is seated, the G’lilah rolls the scroll shut. He/she will secure the scroll with the Torah binder, followed by the Torah mantle (cover). The Torah may also be adorned with a yad (pointer) and breastplate. {If the honoree has not done this

at Sinai Temple s/he should arrive early for instruction from either the Rabbi or usher.}

**English Readings:** There are a number of different English readings that may be included within the service. To include a reading not within the Mishkan T'filah service, please consult with the Rabbi.

2. **Program:** It is customary for parents to prepare an “order of service” to be given out Saturday morning along with the prayer books. Examples are included in the Parent Packet. Copies of others used in the past are kept in the Temple Office. You may contact the Temple Administrator to view them. The originals may not be removed from the Temple Office, but you may make copies for reference.

You are encouraged to leave a final copy of your Program with both the Administrator and Rabbi during the week before the service.

As with many aspects of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the Program can vary in the amount of elaboration and detail. Possible things to include are listed below.

The Program should contain:

- a. Student's English & Hebrew Name
- b. English & Hebrew Date of Service
- c. Location – Temple Name & City
- d. Name of Torah & Haftorah Portion
- e. Program (prayers and page numbers)
- f. List of Honors & their Relation to the Student
- g. Additional, optional content:
  - i. Welcome statement
  - ii. Invitation to join congregation for Kiddush & Lunch
  - iii. Meaning, history or purpose of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah
  - iv. Explanation of prayers and/or the service
  - v. Copy of Torah and Haftorah portion & translation
  - vi. Explanation of symbols or ritual objects in the sanctuary
  - vii. List of thanks to those who helped

There is no “required” format. The Program should reflect the character and personality of the student and family, while honoring the history and tradition of the event.

3. **Tallit:** The Bar/Bat Mitzvah student must wear a tallit during the service. The tallit is a special ritual “shawl” that may be worn once a child has become a bar/bat mitzvah.

Many parents present their child with the tallit at the beginning of the Saturday morning service. Grandparents and friends have also made the presentation to the student. If parents do not plan on purchasing a tallit for the student, they should arrange to borrow one from the Temple the week prior to the service.

**4. Parent Speech:** Although only the student is required to give a speech, many parents take this opportunity to speak publicly to their child. If one or both parents wish to speak, there are some general guidelines parents should follow:

- ★ Speeches should be written out several days before the event, allowing careful thought and organization to the speech. This should be shown to the rabbi prior to the rehearsal.
- ★ If both parents will be speaking, consideration for the length should be given. The student and Rabbi will both be giving speeches and there will also be presentations made by the Temple board president and Federation representative.
- ★ Parents may choose to give a short speech during the luncheon in lieu of one during the service.
- ★ Parent speeches are an opportunity to express a parent's pride and joy, as well as honor and recognize a child's achievements. This is not the time to embarrass or humiliate the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student.

**5. Ushers:** Families are responsible for asking an approved usher or ushers to be present during the service. Parents are encouraged to speak to ushers at least two weeks in advance of the simcha. If there are no approved ushers available that weekend, friends and families may receive training from the ushering committee.

Ushers have extensive knowledge of the facility and will be able to open the building, distribute prayer books & programs, orient guests, maintain or change the building temperature, adjust the sound system, and other tasks as needed. Ushers can also place "Reserved Seating" signs in the front row of the sanctuary for the family.

Ushers will pass out prayer books and programs as guests enter the sanctuary. Parents will want to be sure there are enough of both for the ushers. Typically, there are enough prayer books for about 100 guests. Should the family anticipate more guests than that, additional prayer books will need to be brought to the sanctuary lobby. Parents are responsible for taking out and returning the additional books.

Additional information on the role and need for ushers is listed in Section IV: Celebrating the Simcha, under "Building Management and Facilities Overview."

**6. Music / Soloist:** Some families wish to have a musician or soloist participate in the service. Examples include a piano player, guitarist, or soloist. There are many individuals who have worked with the Temple in the past and are familiar with the melodies and procedures at the Temple. You may wish to speak to the Rabbi, Temple Administrator or Education Director for recommendations. Be sure to inform the Rabbi should you choose to hire musical or vocal accompaniment.

The music director, Martha Alwes, arranges for music during the Friday evening service. If

you wish to arrange alternate music for Friday, be sure to discuss it with the Rabbi first, and then the Temple Administrator so that the music director can make appropriate arrangements.

- 7. Videotaping the Service:** The service may be videotaped only with the security system installed in the sanctuary. This system utilizes a fixed camera which cannot be moved. You must provide a blank videotape (VHS) for the ushers to use in recording the event.

Photography and videotaping may take place at any time following the service.

- 8. Child Care:** Some families choose to hire a babysitter to look after and supervise young children outside of the sanctuary during the service. In the past, unattended children have caused damage and have left debris around the building. Additional supervision can help protect against this.

Parents should arrange, with the Education Director, for a space for the children to use. The Youth Lounge is usually left open and has toys available. Whether or not child care is provided, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family is responsible for the youth lounge being clean and the toys put away.

The education wing (classrooms) is not to be used without the expressed consent of the Education Director.

- 9. Throwing Candy:** Some families follow a custom of throwing candy at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student after reading the Haftorah portion. Others find this custom to be disruptive. There are many explanations for this custom. One is that the congregation is wishing the student a “sweet life” as he/she makes the transition to “adulthood.” Children in the congregation are then invited to come up and collect the candy.

Should a family wish to participate in this custom, there are some general guidelines to adhere to:

- ★ Candy must be soft and individually wrapped.
- ★ Chocolate & other candy that may stain or become imbedded in the carpet may not be used.
- ★ Candy should be passed out just before the Haftorah reading. Some give this honor to children in the congregation or young family members. It should be done discreetly, without disrupting the service.
- ★ Leftover candy should be removed from the sanctuary after the service.

### **E. Kiddush & Motzi**

Families must provide Kiddush and Motzi at the Temple immediately following the service. When planning the Kiddush and Motzi, the following guidelines should be followed:

1. The family will need to provide kosher wine, grape juice, and challah, for the Kiddush (blessing over the wine) and Motzi (blessing over the bread). There should be enough wine/juice and challah for everyone attending the service.
2. The Kiddush and Motzi may take place in the foyer, north or south pod, Davis Chapel, or Cohen Garden.
3. Kiddush and Motzi are led by the Rabbi and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student. Parents may bring a special Kiddush cup or challah board & cover to be used.
4. It is recommended that the grape juice, wine, and challah be placed on a table or with servers some distance away from the sanctuary entrance to allow all congregants to exit the sanctuary.
5. Parents should arrange for wine and grape juice to be poured into small cups and challah to be cut up prior to the conclusion of the service. At least one challah should be left whole for the Rabbi and Bar/Bat Mitzvah student to use during the Motzi.
6. A list of challah bakers in the area has been included in the Appendix.

## **IV. CELEBRATING THE SIMCHA**

### **A. Building Management & Facilities Overview**

Sinai Temple has no office or custodial staff present in the building during weekends. Management of the building during the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and related events is your responsibility. It is advised that you contact one or more members of the volunteer Ushers Committee. (See Parent Packet for list of current ushers). You are encouraged to invite them to your event and ask them to serve as ushers. While these individuals are informally called “ushers,” because they do indeed handle prayer books, programs, and seating during the service, they can help with essential building management services, including:

- regulating the heating/air conditioning
- management of the sound system
- videotaping the event
- moving panels between the north pod, south pod and sanctuary
- assisting congregational members in the kitchen (members are sometimes clueless about how to make coffee or tea, run the dishwasher, or take out the garbage)
- showing you the procedures for making sure the building is locked, lights turned out after events, and the heating/air conditioning settings are correct

The moveable walls separating the sanctuary and the pods may ONLY be moved with the supervision of an approved usher or the custodial staff. Arrangements may be made through the Temple office to have the walls left open prior to the service.

## **B. Reserving Temple Space**

At least two weeks before your event, you must complete and submit a Space Request Form to the Temple Administrator. This form tells the janitor and ushers what spaces you will be using and how you want them set up. You must submit such a form, even if you are only using the sanctuary for the service, since you still need to arrange space for the Kiddush and Motzi.

There is a rental fee and damage deposit due with your space request form. The damage deposit will be returned after the function if there is no damage beyond normal usage. There may be an additional janitorial fee if clean-up costs exceed the rental and damage fees.

See attached fee schedule for current costs.

## **C. Access to the Temple**

You may wish to obtain a proximity card for the Temple from the Temple Administrator for your special weekend. Please speak with the Administrator at least one week in advance. The proximity card should be returned the week after the simcha.

The Temple will be open during the week from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. If you plan on accessing the building during other times, you will need to have a proximity card. In addition, either you or the usher will need to unlock the Temple doors Saturday morning before services.

## **D. Space Considerations**

The sanctuary accommodates around 120 guests. If you are planning on more than 120 guests, request on your space form that the north pod door be opened and additional chairs set up (specify how many).

The north and south pods together comfortably accommodate 230 for a sit-down meal.

The Davis Chapel seats about 120 for a sit down meal.

Sinai Temple has about 150 stacking chairs and about 200 folding chairs. The 10 rectangular tables can seat 10 people each, and the 15 round tables can seat 8 or 9 each.

You may wish to rent additional tables or chairs.

The kitchen is equipped to serve 200 people at a sit-down meal.

If there is additional seating set up in the pods for the service, and you intend to use the pods for the luncheon, chairs and tables will have to be moved immediately following services. You will need to arrange for someone to change the set up. You may wish to ask your friends, family or the caterers. Be sure to leave them a copy of your desired set up.

## **E. Guest List**

1. All students in the B'nai Mitzvah class should be invited to the event. It would be gracious to include each classmate's entire family.
2. You are encouraged to invite the following individuals to the service and luncheon, if applicable:
  - ★ Rabbi Klein
  - ★ B'nai Mitzvah Tutor
  - ★ Current and/or previous Hebrew & Religious School Teachers
  - ★ Ushers
  - ★ Musician/Soloist
  - ★ Temple Board President
  - ★ Education Director
  - ★ Temple Office Staff
  - ★ Champaign/Urbana Federation Director

## **F. Invitations**

1. Some families design and print their own invitations. Responses may be made by enclosing a card to be returned to the family, or by listing telephone numbers or e-mail addresses.
2. Invitations and other personalized items, such as thank-you notes and stationery, may be purchased through Sinai Temple. Proceeds go to the Sinai Temple Religious School. Please contact the invitations chair person, Karen Ray (359-7101). {This process is currently under review to determine if it is still a viable fundraiser.}
3. Start the process of picking out invitations at least three months before the event. If you are ordering invitation it may take up to three weeks after the order is placed for the invitations to arrive.
4. Prepare to order around 25 invitations in addition to the number you plan to send out.
5. If you plan your event for a month when many people are in town (for example, during the University semesters), you can expect an acceptance rate of about 75%. If, however, you plan the event for the summer months or semester break, your acceptance rate may dip to 67% or less.
6. Invitations should be mailed around six weeks before the event. The response date should be not less than two weeks before the event.
7. If your invitation is oversized, you may want to take one of the completed invitations with enclosures to the post office and have it weighed to determine the correct postage.

## **G. Temple Bulletin Announcement**

Families are encouraged to announce the Bar/Bat Mitzvah in the Sinai Temple bulletin. You will need to submit the announcement by the 15th of the month BEFORE you want it published. For example, if you want the announcement in the April bulletin, you must submit it by March

15th. Submissions should be sent to [stoffice@sinaitemplecu.org](mailto:stoffice@sinaitemplecu.org).

Many families include a picture of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child along with the child's year in school, his or her interests and hobbies, the child's family members, and mitzvah project. Samples are included in the Appendix. Please note that all submissions are subject to being edited for content and length.

## **H. Flowers**

Sinai Temple provides flowers for the bimah on Friday evenings. To use this arrangement on Saturday, be sure to notify the Temple Administrator. These flowers are given out to members of the community by the Flower Chairperson. Please be sure to leave them in the sanctuary after your service.

If you would like to purchase a special flower arrangement for the bimah, it should be delivered on Friday or on Saturday before 9:30 am. If you plan to use your own arrangement, please let the Temple Administrator know in advance so that the regular Friday arrangement can be canceled.

## **I. Gifts**

- 1. Gift Shop Registry:** Many Temple members will come to the Gift Shop to purchase Judaica items as gifts for the occasion. In order to ensure that your child receives what he/she likes, your child should register at the Gift Shop at least 2 months prior to the event. Additional items not in stock may be selected from catalogs. If you need to special order a tallis or kippot, you may do so through the Gift Shop.
- 2. Receiving Gifts:** It is common that guests bring gifts to the event. You may wish to have gifts placed either on the round table outside the sanctuary or on a table in the foyer. If the latter, make sure you request a table placed in the foyer.
- 3. Donations:** In lieu of gifts, families may wish to make donations to selected Tzedakah organizations in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The Union for Reform Judaism encourages donations to Mazon, "A Jewish Response to Hunger." It is a national organization that raises funds to feed the hungry.

Some Temple funds that may be considered include:  
Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fund  
Paula Deckard B'nai Mitzvah Tutoring Fund

For a list of Tzedakah organizations and Temple funds, see the Appendix.

## **J. Imprinted Kippot & "Birkat Hamazon Benchers"**

1. Some families choose to order imprinted kippot. Families may choose from a variety of kippot, such as satin, brocaded, leather, crocheted, velour, and the like. These are great keepsakes or "party favors" for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family and guests.
2. It is common to include the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's name, the Hebrew and/or English date, and

the name of the congregation.

3. Some families choose to order Birkat Hamazon Benchers (Grace After Meal booklets), to use after the meal at the luncheon. These, too, are great keepsakes.
4. Other imprinted items, such as napkins, party favors, and the like can also be purchased.
5. All imprinted items can be ordered through the Sinai Temple Gift Shop. Speak to a member of the Gift Shop Committee for more information.
6. You should allow at least six to eight weeks for delivery of imprinted items.

### **K. Sign-In Book/Display Table**

1. You may wish to prepare a photo montage of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to be displayed.
2. You may wish to put out a sign-in book or album. Be sure to include on the Space Request Form, that a rectangular table be placed in the foyer for this purpose. Sign-in books are not recommended for a Traditional Minyan event.

### **L. Luncheon after services**

It is common practice to provide a celebratory meal after services. It is customary to invite all guests at the service to the luncheon. Kiddush and Motzi need to be provided for the entire congregation prior to the luncheon. For details on the Kiddush and Motzi, see Section III E.

For a luncheon, there are three main options available:

- Arrange for a caterer to handle all of the details of meal preparation, serving, and clean up at Sinai Temple. Caterers can provide either sit-down service or a buffet.
- Prepare and serve food at Sinai Temple with the help of friends, paid kitchen help, and/or food purchased from caterers or restaurants.
- Hold a luncheon or buffet at a local hotel, banquet facility, or at your home.

#### **I. Caterer**

- ★ Speak with prospective caterers at least six to nine months in advance, especially if the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is at a busy time of the year. It will be helpful if you have some possible menu ideas and approximate number of guests, but the caterer can also work with you on ideas for menu selections and how to serve the meal. Be sure to keep in mind the guidelines for dairy and meat at Sinai Temple when you are planning the meal. If your meal cannot fit within the guidelines, please look into having your luncheon at another location.
- ★ Three of the possible types of meal service would be buffet, individual service for each guest, and family-style where there are platters for each table. Caterers can provide separate adult and children's menus.
- ★ Check to make sure the caterer is on the approved list, see Appendix. If the caterer is not on the list, he/she must go through a kitchen orientation with the Temple

Administrator. Please schedule an appointment for this to occur at least two weeks prior to the event.

- ★ Desserts may be provided by the caterer or by you and family and friends.
- ★ Drinks and wine may also be provided by either the caterer or you.
- ★ You may want to ask the caterer to pack up leftovers. Be sure to discuss this ahead of time. Either you or the caterer will need to provide containers.
- ★ You will need to provide the caterer with a copy of the Space Request Form indicating the placement of tables and chairs.
- ★ If you will be having the meal in the North or South Pod and there will be chairs set up there for services, you will need to arrange for either the caterers or friends to set up luncheon seating immediately following the service.
- ★ If you have assigned seating, place cards should be put on a table. You may wish to have them placed after the service begins, either by the caterer or a friend, so that people do not lose them. Be sure to include this table on your Space Request Form.
- ★ If you are having a sit-down meal at the Temple, it is recommended to have an extra unassigned table for additional guests who either did not receive an invitation or were accidentally left off the seating plan list.
- ★ A general rule of thumb for planning functions is that there may be up to 10% of guests who will cancel /not come at the last minute.

## **2. Do It Yourself**

If you are planning to serve the meal yourself with the help of friends, be sure to enlist the expertise of members who have done this before. The following are some ideas on how to organize a luncheon:

- ★ Go over the kitchen use policies.
- ★ Make a list of friends who have offered to help! They may assist with cooking and baking, as well as set up and clean up.
- ★ You may use the Sinai Temple china serving ware. You may wish to hire kitchen help to wash the dishes and serving pieces. A good rule of thumb would be to have one hired kitchen person per 50 guests. The Temple Administrator may be able to recommend individuals for this purpose. You will still need to have friends help with serving and with clean-up in the kitchen. It is your responsibility to be sure all serving ware has been cleaned and returned to its proper place.
- ★ Go through the kitchen and pantry areas and note the types and number of serving

pieces. If you need special items, equipment and serving pieces can be rented from local stores. Bring your food and arrange it on serving platters or dishes at Sinai Temple as equipment and serving pieces may not be removed from the Temple.

- ★ It is recommended that you ask one or two friends to act as coordinator for the meal. If you plan to have a separate sweet table, put one or two friends in charge of that.
- ★ Luncheons prepared by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family and friends are usually buffet-style dairy meals. You or the coordinator should call friends to cook and bake. To maintain a fairly uniform look for the serving tables, you might want to provide certain recipes and have your friends make multiple amounts of the same recipe. Keep in mind that with a variety of food available, guests will likely take a smaller amount of each dish than a regular-sized serving — except salmon.
- ★ Plan on having two or more serving areas, with lines moving on both sides of the tables. Recommended table configurations can be viewed with the Temple Administrator. Families may use the Davis Chapel in addition to the pods for serving or seating. Remember to show the exact placement of the serving tables and tables for seating on the Space Request Form.
- ★ You may wish to use a combination of purchased food and dishes made by friends. If something will be delivered to Sinai Temple, be sure to inform the Temple Administrator. You or your coordinator may need to be at the Temple for the delivery.
- ★ Schedule the event set up with the Temple Administrator. It is recommended that the rooms be set up a day or two before the event. If you are bringing any foods before the event, be sure they are labeled with the event and date.
- ★ You may use the coffee, tea, and sweeteners in the kitchen for your event. You may also use the plastic wrap, aluminum foil, and paper doilies. If you deplete any of these items during your event, please notify the Temple Administrator so they can be replenished.
- ★ The disposable paper goods, such as paper or foam plates, cups and plastic utensils in the kitchen may not be used.
- ★ Bring containers for leftovers and be sure to take them home after the event.
- ★ The kitchen belongs to all members. Please act responsibly and keep the kitchen in good working order.

### ***M. Table Decorations***

There are many choices for table decorations. One option is to use flowers. These may be provided by a florist, caterer or brought by the family. If you are providing your own flowers, check the number of small vases available in the pantry.

If using decorations such as shiny stars, fabrics, or the like on the tables, consider possible problems in cleaning up. Small foil sprinkles can be difficult to clean off of the carpet and may add to the professional cleaning time.

Other options include balloon decorations, family memorabilia or items to be donated to the mitzvah project. For example, one family purchased books for the Sinai Temple Library and used the books to anchor the balloons on each table.

## **N. Photography**

Some families have formal photographs taken by friends or professional photographers. Pictures may be taken before the service. No pictures may be taken during the service. Any photography that will take place in the sanctuary prior to the service should be completed by 9:45 AM, or 15 minutes prior to the start of the service. It is recommended that photography be done at the Friday rehearsal rather than just before the service as it is tiring to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child and there are fewer time constraints.