

**Congregation OR SHALOM
835 Darby Paoli Road
Berwyn, PA 19312**



**Bar/Bat Mitzvah
Handbook**

Alan B. Daroff
Chairman, Ritual Committee

Alan J. Iser
Rabbi

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Dear Parents:

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an exciting time. Your child is about to reach the age of entrance into Jewish adulthood. As such, our tradition has developed a beautiful ceremony to mark this passage. The ceremony takes place as part of our regular Shabbat services.

We at Congregation Or Shalom view Bar/Bat Mitzvah as an opportunity for the student to demonstrate the capabilities that have been developed through participation in Religious School, life, and family experiences. Your child is encouraged to strive for skills not only in the reading of Haftorah and Torah but also in leading as much of the service as his/her abilities permit. We teach that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is just the first of many opportunities to take a leadership role in the synagogue. From this point forward the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is expected to be called upon to participate in all Shabbat and Holy Day services as well as being counted in the minyan.

Unlike all of the other Jewish life cycle events which are considered "rights"; Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a "privilege". According to Jewish law, a boy becomes officially responsible as an adult at the age of thirteen and a girl at the age of twelve with or without a ceremony. Consequently the participation in a special ceremony to mark the occasion is an earned privilege conferred by the synagogue.

We are here to make this experience as joyful as possible. Please feel free to call upon us to assist you and share in the excitement and anticipation of this simcha in your family life.

This Bar/Bat Mitzvah handbook is a guide for you and your child. It explains the process leading up to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. We hope that you will keep this book handy during the year prior to "the big day" and will refer to it often. Please read it carefully. Remember to fill out the forms attached to the back of the book as we will need them prior to your child's

Bar/Bat Mitzvah. We welcome your comments for improving this handbook and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process.

b'Shalom

Alan B. Daroff

Chair, Ritual Committee

Alan J. Iser

Rabbi

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PREPARATION OF THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH CANDIDATE

The Rabbi and the Ritual Committee Chair will arrange to meet with the family to discuss Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutorial and ceremony.

1. Lessons begin approximately six to eight months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date with a tutor to be assigned or approved by the Ritual Committee.
2. All candidates for Bar/Bat Mitzvah must meet our academic standards. Tutoring is required for any child not meeting these standards. The Conservative Movement, of which Or Shalom is a member, requires that the child shall have completed or be completing the *Hey* class or have through an approved program achieved its equivalent. This policy will be strictly observed.
3. In Conservative Judaism, it is required that all Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates be enrolled in an approved form of religious instruction at the time of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This instruction is in addition to Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons.
4. Our fee for Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation is \$925.00. Or Shalom is unique in its policy that this fee entitles your child to private individual lessons for his or her Haphtorah portion and for prayers. A copy of the *Sim Shalom* Prayerbook is also included in the fee. Should your child require more preparation or if he/she requires tutoring in order to meet our minimum standards, we will notify you and you will be billed accordingly.
5. The standard fee noted above includes approximately 24 lessons. These lessons are given on an individual basis; we require that attendance be regular and punctual. The tutor may require an additional fee to make up missed lessons. With your supervision and encouragement, your child is expected to be prepared for each lesson.

6. Preparation for Bar/Bat Mitzvah includes familiarity with Shabbat Services. You and your child will be expected to attend at least one Friday evening and one Shabbat morning service each month for the year preceding the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Attendance at school services (junior congregation, family services, etc.) will not count towards this requirement.

7. Bar/Bat Mitzvah should not be the culmination of five years of synagogue religious school training but should be the demarcation of the continuation of a lifelong involvement in Jewish learning and Jewish community. Therefore the candidate is expected to continue with some form of Jewish learning. Please contact the Education Committee to indicate your interest in the Gratz Hebrew High School program. This program includes study of various interests and experiences within the synagogue and the community as well as involvement with Jewish youth groups.

8. The Ritual Committee and the Rabbi have recommended that each child participate in a service project and prepare a commentary on the Torah or Haphtorah read at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. These activities are done under the supervision of the Rabbi. The service or “mitzvah project may be anything that is mutually agreed upon by the rabbi and the student. It must go on for at least three months and may be done any time during the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year. In addition, each student must research and write a brief paper upon a Jewish role model. The role model may be any prominent person from the Jewish past or the present. The choice is subject to approval by the rabbi. There is an option of giving a talk about the role model on the Friday night of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Shabbat

9. Both the Rabbi and the tutor are involved with Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation. The tutor provides lessons in the Hebrew portion of the service while the Rabbi reviews this preparation and provides help with the commentary or project. The Rabbi will also meet with you to review your responsibilities and honors that are accorded to the family during the religious services.

10. The Rabbi, the Ritual Committee, the Education Committee, the tutor, and the Sisterhood Hospitality Committee want to make sure that all of your needs and expectations are fulfilled. Do not hesitate to call upon them for assistance.

HONORS

Honors to the Torah are accorded to Jews who have passed the age of Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The only exception to this is the honor of opening and closing the Ark, which may be given to a Jewish child. As a member of The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism we only recognize persons as Jewish based on matrilineal descent or conversion.

Honors to the Torah are as follows:

1. Open and Close the Ark at the beginning of the Torah Service
2. Kohane* First Alliyah
3. Levi* Second Aliyah
4. Third Alliyah
5. Fourth Alliyah
6. Fifth Alliyah
7. Sixth Alliyah
8. Seventh Alliyah
9. Maftir *The Alliyah given to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah*
10. Lift the Torah
11. Tie the Torah
12. Open and Close the Ark at the end of the Torah Service.
13. English Reading, Prayer for our country (Page 415 in Siddur Sim Shalom)
14. English Reading, Prayer for Israel (Page 417 in Siddur Sim Shalom)

- * A Kohane or bat Kohane traditionally receives the first Torah honor. If you have a Kohane on your list, please give that person the first Alliyah. If you do not have a Kohane but you have a Levi, give that person the first alliyah. If you have a Kohane and Levi; give the Kohane the first alliyah and the Levi the second alliyah. If you have neither a Kohane nor a Levi; you may give these two honors to others.

Torah Honors are usually offered to people attending a service who are observing a yahrzeit, celebrating a wedding anniversary, recovering from an illness, returning from a long trip, getting married, etc. It is for these people that the synagogue reserves two alliyot. *A family providing an alliyah to a specific congregant is not a substitute for the synagogue alliyot.* Since we do not know in advance whether you will have a Kohane or Levi in your list and we do not know whether a Kohane or Levi will want the synagogue alliyah; we need flexibility on which alliyah to reserve for the congregation.

It is preferable to call only one person to the Torah for each alliyah. Under special circumstances, we will permit two people, such as a husband and wife, to be called together for one alliyah. *We will not permit more than two people to be called to the Torah for one alliyah.*

- ✧ Honors two through eight, require the honoree to recite blessings in Hebrew. Those being given the honor should be aware of this requirement before they accept. For those needing additional assistance, please provide them with a copy of page 15 from this handbook.
- ✧ Everyone coming to the Bimah to lead a part of the service or to have an honor must wear a head covering and Tallit. Please assure that your guests are prepared.
- ✧ The person given the honor of lifting the Torah must be strong enough to accomplish this task. During the fall months the Torah is heavy on the left side and during the spring the weight is heavy on the right side.

Our congregation is proud to allow full participation of women in our services.

The Rabbi will meet with you a few weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to review your list of honors. A complete written list must be given to the Rabbi prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The list must include the English names of all honorees and the Hebrew name of all people receiving the seven Aliyot. (The Hebrew name includes the name of the person as well as his/her parents.)

The Board of Directors has approved the following policy regarding the participation of a non-Jewish parent in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service:

The Rabbinical Assembly has adopted a policy that “A non-Jew who has accepted the Jewishness of his/her child and cooperated in providing a Jewish education for the child has earned a part in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. The non-Jewish parent should not receive an Aliyah or any honor associated with the Torah.” Therefore the non-Jewish parent may not come to the Bimah and stand with the Jewish parent when the Jewish parent has an *Aliyah*, since this would give the appearance of giving the non-Jewish parent an *Aliyah*. We will permit the non-Jewish parent to come to the Bimah when the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is called to the Torah and stand next to the Jewish parent. (At that point the Jewish parent is standing at the left side of the Reader’s table)

(Passage in quotation marks is from the opinion of Rabbi Kassel Abelson as adopted by the Rabbinical Assembly March 10, 1982. This was published in the “Proceeding of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards 1980-1985 on pp 129-142.)

SYNAGOGUE POLICIES

1. Males are required to wear a kippah while in the synagogue (Sanctuary and Social Hall). This applies to non Jews as well as Jews. A tallet is traditionally worn by Jewish males over the age of 13 but may be worn by Jewish women as well. The synagogue has a limited supply of kippot and talletot for those who have not brought their own. Many families choose to purchase special kippot for the occasion. These may be ordered through the synagogue gift shop.

2. Smoking is forbidden anywhere on synagogue premises or grounds during the Sabbath or Festivals. Also: Please turn off all cell phones and pagers.

3. Photographing, video taping, and tape recording are not permitted in the synagogue on the Sabbath or Festivals. Since photographs or videos help make the day more memorable, please arrange to have them taken either before or after the Sabbath.

4. We permit a small instrumental group to perform at the seudat mitzvah (luncheon following services). This group must have no more than four musicians and must play without amplification.

5. KASHRUT

A. All packaged prepared food brought into the synagogue must have a "hechsher", a symbol indicating that it has been inspected by an acceptable Rabbinical authority. Food handled with unkosher utensils is considered unkosher. Evaluating ingredients is not sufficient to determine kashrut with only very exceptional cases. For example apple juice made entirely of apples and water do not need a "hechsher". The Rabbi should be consulted concerning packaged goods which do not contain "hechsher".

B. Prepared, unpackaged food such as baked goods must come from a source acceptable to either the Rabbinical Assembly or recognized rabbinical authorities. A copy of acceptable caterers, bakeries and Hechsher authorities is available in the synagogue office or on our web site. <http://www.orshalom.com/ApprovedCaterers.pdf>

C. All food served in the synagogue must be either packaged goods as noted in paragraph A, purchased goods as noted in paragraph B or items prepared in the synagogue kitchen. Food prepared in the synagogue must be done under the supervision of those persons certified by the Ritual Committee. The presence of a certified Chester County food manager is also required.

D. ".Food cooked at home is not permitted in the synagogue in order to maintain a maximalist approach for observances in the synagogue.." (Proceedings of the Committee of Jewish Law and Standards of the Conservative Movement 1980-1985 p 234.)

E. Milk and Meat may not be served at the same meal.

F. Since many of our members eat meat for dinner, all food served in the evening must be pareve. This preserves the principle of waiting several hours after a meat meal before dairy is served and allows all attendees to eat in the synagogue.

G. All cooking must be completed before Shabbat but solid foods may be warmed up on Shabbat. Please consult with the Rabbi.

H. Cans may be opened on Shabbat, but only for use on Shabbat.

Regardless of your choice of setting for your reception or entertainment, we strongly urge you to reinforce the religious nature of this occasion by using a Kosher caterer and by observing the rules and traditions of Kashrut with all food served in your home or party place.

6. Please arrange to have all deliveries at the synagogue completed no later than 3:00pm prior to the Sabbath. In keeping with the dignity of the Sabbath items must not only be delivered prior to the Sabbath and nothing may be removed from the synagogue until after the conclusion of the Sabbath. All suppliers must be registered with the synagogue office on our standard reservation form. Please remember that the synagogue has only a part time staff so we must make sure that someone is in the building to allow your suppliers entry for delivery and retrieval.

7. The synagogue will not be responsible for any article of clothing, gifts or other items not in the hands of the host family or its guests.

8. The synagogue has a standard reservation form showing various charges for the use of synagogue facilities as well as for janitorial charges. This form must be on file with the synagogue office prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah .

9. Our Kitchen is certified by the Chester County Health Department. All caterers or individuals preparing food in our kitchen *must* be supervised by a Chester County certified food manager.

10. It is the responsibility of the parents of the B'nai Mitzvah to assure that all children (including teenagers) are under the supervision of an adult. Please assign a friend or family member to assume this responsibility for you. A baby sitting room can be provided at no charge.

ONEG AND KIDDUSH

1. It is customary for the family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to sponsor the Oneg Shabbat on Friday evening and the Kiddush on Saturday morning. The Oneg and Kiddush should be planned to accommodate the guests of the family as well as a reasonable number of congregants who may choose to attend services at that time.
2. As a minimum, the Friday night Oneg consists of cakes, cookies, and punch. The Saturday morning Kiddush traditionally includes wine, challah, cookies and cake. More elaborate food and beverage service may be arranged.
3. All arrangements for the Oneg and Kiddush may be made with a Kosher caterer of your choice or through the Sisterhood. The Sisterhood requires at least two months advance notice and many caterers require more so please don't wait until the last minute to make preparations. The Sisterhood will work with you to explain various costs and will try to work within the agreed upon your agreed upon budget. The Sisterhood can also arrange for napery, punch fountains flowers, etc. A detailed contract will be prepared for your signature. The contract will provide for payment in full not later than two weeks prior to the event. The contract provides that payment may be made by check payable to Or Shalom. In addition to charges for food, service, etc. there will also be a charge for a donation to Sisterhood and a 3% donation to Mazon, a Jewish organization which feeds the hungry.

FINANCIAL MATTERS AND OBLIGATION

1. Membership in our synagogue is required of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate's family. All synagogue financial obligations must be current. Please make sure that all of your bills with the synagogue are paid.
2. It is customary in celebration of a happy event to follow the tradition of making a donation to the synagogue. The Rabbi will be pleased to advise you of appropriate choices. The synagogue has many funds worthy of your support. Your generosity will be greatly appreciated.
3. The significance of this step into religious maturity for your child can be enhanced by encouraging her/him to make a contribution to the synagogue or Religious school as well as to any other worthy charity your child may select. Tzedakah is a noble Jewish precept to be learned at a young age and practiced throughout one's life. Therefore it is recommended that each student donate part of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah gifts in performance of this mitzvah.

Guidelines for Parental B'Nai Mitzvah Speeches

Many parents want to say a few words to their child during the ceremony. What was once brief has become longer and longer which adds to the length of the service. We have therefore instituted these guidelines for parents who wish to address their child. *Please note: It is not required for you to address your child during the ceremony.*

1. Only one parent may speak and the address should be less than five minutes
2. The purpose of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is to mark the child becoming an adult member of the Jewish community with the attendant obligations and responsibilities. Parental remarks should reflect this purpose and that it is a sacred occasion.
3. It is not appropriate to praise at length the child's academic, athletic, artistic, or other accomplishments. It is appropriate to talk about the child's spiritual/ethical development. Please bear in mind that this is not just a celebration of a child's coming of age but a child becoming part of a community.
4. The speech should ideally contain references to Jewish vales and texts and to the importance of community. It is fitting to refer to your aspirations for your child within the context of the above guidelines.

The name and address of the synagogue to be used on invitations:

**Congregation Or Shalom
835 Darby Paoli Road (Route 252)
Berwyn, Pennsylvania 19312**

Services begin a 7:30 pm on Friday and 9:30 am on Saturday

Services usually conclude on Saturday morning between noon and 12:15 PM. If you are planning a luncheon away from the synagogue, please base your plans on leaving the synagogue no earlier than 12:45 PM. so that you and your guests have time for Kiddush. If you are renting a bus to take guests to the luncheon, please instruct the bus company not to park in front of the sanctuary door.

Alliyot

Blessing before and after reading of the Torah

Please proceed to the Bimah when your name is called in Hebrew. Come up on the left side so that you are at the right arm of the reader. The reader will show you the place. Take the corner of your Talit, touch the place and then kiss the corner of your Talit.

Then recite this blessing:

Barchu et Adonai ha-m'vorakh

The congregation responds

Baruch Adonai ha-m'vorakh l'olam va-ed

Then you continue:

Baruch Adonai ha-m'vorakh l'olam va-ed

Barukh attah Adonai, eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher behar banu mi-kol ha-amim, v'natan lanu et torato. Barukh attah Adonai, noten ha-torah;

After the reader has concluded the portion, you will again be shown the place. Again, take the corner of your Talit and touch the place, kiss the corner of your Talit and then begin:

Baruka attah Adonai, eloheinu melekh ha-olam, asher natan lanu torat emet, v'hayei olam nata b'tokhenu. Barukh attah Adonai, noten ha-torah.

Now move to the other side of the reader to witness the next reading. At the conclusion of that reading, you may return to your seat.

Synagogue policy requires that a building use form be completed for all events held in the synagogue. This modified form may be used in lieu of the standard form.

Oneg Shabbat (Friday evening)	
Number of Guests expected:	
Will this be catered by an outside caterer or by the Sisterhood	
If an outside caterer, Please provide name and address	
Does this caterer have a certified Chester County Food Manager?	
Kiddush (Saturday Morning)	
Number of Guests expected:	
Will this be catered by an outside caterer or by the Sisterhood	
If an outside caterer, Please provide name and address	
Does this caterer have a certified Chester County Food Manager?	
Luncheon (Saturday) (If this is a private affair, the synagogue may charge a rental fee)	
Number of Guests expected:	
Will this be catered by an outside caterer or by the Sisterhood	
If an outside caterer, Please provide name and address	
Does this caterer have a certified Chester County Food Manager?	
Flowers (If a florist will make deliveries, Please provide name and address)	
Names of any other vendors coming to the synagogue to make deliveries)	

Name: _____

Date of Bar/Bat Mitzvah: _____

Erev Shabbat

Kabbalat Shabbat:	
Ma'ariv	
Kiddush	
Yigdal/Adon Olam	

Shabbat Morning

Birkot Hashakar	
P'sukei d'zimra	
Shacharit	
Torah Service	
Musaf	
Kiddush/Motzi	
Torah	
Haphtorah	

Aliyot

English Name	Hebrew Name	ben/bat Hebrew Name
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		

Maftir (Bar/Bat Mitzvah student)

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Hagbah (Lift Torah)

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Gelileh (Tie Torah)

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Ark Openings

Before Torah Reading

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After Torah Reading

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Family Information:

Name of Child (First and Last)	
Name of Child's Mother (First and Last)	
Name of Child's Father (First and Last)	
Student's Hobbies, Interests, etc.	
Other Information:	
Out of town guests or others to be mentioned:	
Siblings:	
Name: Age: (First and Last Name)	