

Kehillah *community*



commitment

partnership

growth

A TRADITIONAL BNAI MITZVAH PROGRAM

KEHILLAH BNAI MITZVAH HANDBOOK

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FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION

A Story: The Guarantor For the Torah

When God was preparing to give the Torah to the Jewish people, God asked the people to provide a guarantee that they would keep the Torah and follow the commandments.

The people first offered all of the precious jewels and vessels that they took with them out of Egypt. God said that this was not a sufficient guarantee.

The people then offered their handmade silks and woven garments – the clothes from their backs. God said that this was not a sufficient guarantee.

Finally, the people offered their most precious possession – their children – as a guarantee.

God replied, “They are worthy guarantors. Because of the children, I will give you the Torah.”

(Based on Midrash Rabba, Song of Songs 1:4)

Dear Family,

As a child becomes a Bnai Mitzvah, they are standing in a long line of tradition. They become a chain in the link of “L’Dor Vador,” “From Generation to Generation.” When they lead a service, they are declaring themselves a member of our community. At that moment they have fulfilled their roles as the guarantors of the survival of Judaism. We are here to support them on their journey to Bnai Mitzvah. We have created a personalized program based on each child’s specific needs including their learning styles, interests and skills.

As a professional staff, we are here to be your Bnai Mitzvah team, to guide you through this process, support you in your decisions, and create a once in a lifetime experience. This handbook will explain our Kehillah (Community) Bnai Mitzvah Program.

This is a time of great blessing. We look forward to sharing it with you, your child, and your community.

Rabbi Jon Hanish

Cantor Shira Fox

Rabbi Becky Hoffman

THE JOURNEY TO BNAI MITZVAH

Education is an unfinished symphony.

Zalman Aranne, Former Israeli Minister of Education and Culture

***Bnai Mitzvah is a milestone on the road of Jewish education.
It is not an end, but the beginning of deeper learning and observance.***

The journey begins with participation in our religious school.

Our goal is to involve your child in Jewish life no matter their age. We recommend enrolling your child by the 4th grade. The younger the child, the deeper is their connection to Jewish life, to Kol Tikvah, to its professional staff and to the community. In religious school, your child will develop life-long friendships. In addition to being a part of our school community, your child will study the foundational concepts of Jewish life including Torah, modern Jewish issues, holidays and Hebrew.

While preparing for Bnai Mitzvah, your child will also be studying with peers in our Teen Tuesday educational program. This experience allows them to interact and to meet fellow classmates who are on the same journey to Bnai Mitzvah.

The journey continues with participation in Jewish life.

Families who attend religious services regularly have found their child's Bnai Mitzvah service to be an elevated lifecycle moment. The more you and your child feel comfortable in services, the more comfortable your child will be leading services.

During the year prior to your Bnai Mitzvah date, the student and their parents are expected to attend at least eight worship services at Temple Kol Tikvah. You may choose from Friday night, Saturday morning or Saturday afternoon worship services. Sorry, High Holy Days don't count!

The Journey never ends.

Membership in the Jewish community is a life-long commitment. Temple Kol Tikvah is here for the post-Bnai Mitzvah child and the entire family. Services, social programs, educational opportunities and social action events are available no matter your age. Carry the connections you make during the Bnai Mitzvah process into the future.

KEMACH: A MITZVAH PROGRAM

Ein Kemach Ein Torah. Ein Torah, Ein Kemach.

Without flour, there is no Torah. Without Torah, there is no flour.

Avot 3:21

Our tradition teaches that food and Torah only exist when both are present. We need to make sure that lives are sustained through nourishment so that words of Torah are not lost when spoken to those whose stomachs are empty. This teaching leads us to the practice of caring for those in need so that words of Torah can flow into our souls and into the world. All of our Bnai Mitzvah students learn that they can make a difference by helping those in need. This becomes another lesson in the power of the values we learn from studying Torah.

Beginning in the 6th Grade year, every student is required to earn 10 Mitzvah

Project Credits through our Kemach Program. The Temple's Informal Education Director oversees the Mitzvah Project Program and the earning of credits. Through various programs, students may earn credits. For example, if they attend Mitzvah Day, they can earn 2 credits. If they volunteer to stuff envelopes, they will earn 1 credit. There will be organized visits to locations like SOVA, the West Valley Food Pantry, Best Friends Animal Society and LA Family Housing to name just a few. There will be many advertised and organized opportunities for students to earn credits through the synagogue. Each student must accumulate 10 credits prior to their Bnai Mitzvah. If a student sees that they will not be able to earn credits through the programs offered at the congregation, or have an interest that they would like to explore, they are more than welcome to earn credits through a project of their own choice. They must receive confirmation from the Informal Education Director before volunteering in order to receive credit for their participation.

If your family would like to explore a different way of volunteering, the Temple Kol Tikvah Informal Education Director and clergy will serve as a guide to resources and organizations within the community.

THE *BNAI MITZVAH* SERVICE

Friday Night

The Friday night before the Bnai Mitzvah service your family will be honored with the lighting of the Shabbat candles. The Bnai Mitzvah will lead the V'ahavtah. At this service, your child will be presented with a gift from the congregation. **Please arrive at least 15 minutes before services. After the service, your child will experience a special Kol Tikvah tradition and receive the honor of taking the Torah home for the night.**

Saturday Morning Service

Our Saturday morning service begins at 10:00 a.m.

Havdallah Service

Our Saturday afternoon Havdallah service begins at 4:00 p.m.

Honors During the Service

1. *Aliyot*

- a) There are four *aliyot* given to each family. Two are for family and friends. The third is for the parents. The fourth is for the *Bnai Mitzvah*. If additional aliyot are needed to honor family and friends, please let the Cantor know at the family intake meeting so that she can separate the Torah portion accordingly.
- b) Anyone who is called for an *aliyah* must be 13 years of age or older. Non-Jews are welcome to come forward for an aliyah accompanied by a Jew. For those unfamiliar with Hebrew, they can elect to say the English translation of the blessing.
- c) We recommend that honorees practice the blessings so that they can recite them with ease at the service. The clergy can provide learning materials to assist them upon request.

2. *Optional Readings*

- a) There are two spots in the service for optional readings. Families may elect to have a family member or friend select a reading that will enhance the service.
- b) If you need help finding a reading, there are beautiful poems and stories in our prayerbook, *Mishkan T'filah*. Feel free to look through the book at Kol Tikvah and make copies of any readings. We ask that our congregants don't take the prayerbooks home with them.
- c) Before giving out the readings please email a copy of the reading/s to the Cantor.

3. *Opening and Closing the Ark*

There are two times when we open and close the Ark. Ark honors may be given to anyone.

4. *Lifting Torah (Hagbah) and Dressing Torah/Holding Torah (G'lila)*

a) One person lifts the *Torah* and up to three people may dress the *Torah* after it is read. The person who lifts the *Torah* sits and holds the *Torah* during the *Haftarah* and speeches. (The scroll is quite heavy.)

Speeches

1. The Rabbi assists students with their speeches. Each child will write a *kavanah* (a personal reflection) as an introduction to the *Shema*, a *D'var Torah* (a commentary on their *Torah* Portion) and *thank-you's* to special people in their lives.
2. Most parents choose to speak to their child on this special occasion. The parent speeches are meant as a blessing of the child, and not a review of the child's life and accomplishments.
3. We also give the opportunity for sibling's to express their love and affection.

Voluntary Contribution

It is customary to make a contribution to the Clergy in honor of this joyous occasion. Please make the check payable to:

•**Rabbi's Discretionary Fund**•

•**Cantor's Discretionary Fund**•

Tallitot

At the start of each service the parents present their child with their first *tallit*. We recommend making the purchase of this religious object a special event. There are many stores in the area where you can purchase the tallit – Shalom House, Gallery Judaica, the gift shop at the Skirball, the gift shop at the Museum of Tolerance, and online.

Kippot

For your guests, the wearing of *kippot* (head coverings) or *tallitot* (prayer shawl) is optional in our congregation. We have *kippot* and *tallitot* available at the back of the sanctuary as you enter. If you wish to provide your guests with personalized *kippot* for your service, these may be ordered through a variety of sources.

A person's honor is a reflection of their garment.

Exodus Rabbah 18

Dress Code for the *Bimah* – Please dress respectfully for participation on the *Bimah*. Blue jeans, bare midriffs or shoulders, and sports attire (i.e. sweats, jogging suits) are inappropriate.

CREATING A HOLY SPACE

A Bnai Mitzvah is a holy experience. While preserving your memories and participating in the service, it is essential that we work together to preserve the holiness of our prayer space.

Photography and Videography

1. Families may pose for flash pictures before the service. STILL PHOTOGRAPHY without flash is allowed during the service from the back and in the aisles and sides of the sanctuary. You may arrive up to an hour and half prior to your service to take pictures. Please inform the synagogue that you would like to take pictures before the ceremony and confirm that the building will be open for you.
2. Video cameras must be stationery, and may be set up in the back of the sanctuary only.

Ushers

If you will be handing out programs, and/or personalized *kippot*, it is recommended that you select one or two of your guests to perform this task. They must remain at the door for at least ten minutes after the service begins to accommodate late-comers.

Noise Control

Many of our students invite large groups of teenagers to their service. It is important that adults be seated with them to avoid disruptions. Remember, this is your child's special day.

Candy

The Sephardic custom of throwing candy demonstrates the wish that the child live a sweet life. Candy is provided by the Temple upon request.

Challah, Kiddush & Havdallah

All Bnai Mitzvah ceremonies end with the blessing over Challah. The morning ceremonies will also include Kiddush. Afternoon ceremonies will conclude with Havdallah. A Ceremonial Challah and all supplies for Kiddush and Havdallah will be supplied by Kol Tikvah.

Celebrations

It is customary in the Jewish tradition to conclude an important lifecycle moment with a celebration. We encourage you to create a celebration that is appropriate for children who are turning 13 years old and are properly supervised. Additionally, if you would like to hold your celebration at our beautiful facility, please contact the Business Manager for the additional rental fees.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS PRIOR TO *BNAI MITZVAH*

| | |
|--|---|
| Winter of the 4th grade year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive The Bnai Mitzvah Handbook • Select <i>Bnai Mitzvah</i> date and notify Kol Tikvah if you are planning to have an extended Kiddush or a party in the social hall. The social hall is available on a first come first served basis. • \$500 Deposit due • Family Gathering and Educational Program |
| Fifth Grade Year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two Family Gatherings and Educational Programs |
| 6th grade year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Family Gatherings and Educational Programs • Begin earning Kemach credits through Tzedakah and Tikkun Olam Programs • 2nd payment of \$700 due 1 year prior to Bnai Mitzvah Date |
| 7th grade year | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in Teen Tuesday (Required) |
| 9 months prior | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership dues and all other fees must be current • Buy a Tallit |
| Six months prior | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students begin preparation on an individual basis • 3rd Payment of \$700 due • Family intake meeting with the Cantor Parents and <i>Bnai Mitzvah</i> student create and sign the “study covenant” at the start of the tutoring program • Receive recordings and notebook with entire service including Torah and Haftarah portions • Establish 15-20 minute study periods per day • The Business Manager will contact you to confirm that financial obligations are met |
| Five months prior | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact Executive Director if you are using the Social Hall for your event to schedule a walk through |
| Four months prior | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A one hour family meeting with the Rabbi • Five individual 30 minute sessions with the Rabbi to be scheduled |
| Three months prior | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Payment of \$800 due • All other dues & fees current |
| One Week Prior | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D’Var Torah rehearsal with the Rabbi • Family rehearsal with the Cantor • Confirm picture time with synagogue office |

BNAI MITZVAH FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

| Required Bnai Mitzvah Fees (As of March 2015) | Amount | Due |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| Kol Tikvah Membership | Varies*-See Membership Form | Arrange with Business Manger by July 1 |
| Bnai Mitzvah Fee: Includes one-on-one tutoring with Cantor and the Rabbi, all ceremony needs at Temple, oneg shabbat sponsorship, ceremonial challah and candy for service. | \$2700* | \$500 Deposit due at date request \$700 Due 1 year prior \$700 Due 6 months prior \$800 Due 3 months prior |
| Teen Tuesday: All Seventh graders are required to participate in our Teen Tuesday program which includes our teen philanthropy program, Tzedakah Teens. | \$840* | Due July 1 |
| Optional Fees (As of March 2015) | | |
| Additional musicians are available (ie. drummers, klezmer band, etc) | \$250* each | Due 1 month prior |
| Tutor Fees: Some students will need additional assistance with their Hebrew. Tutoring can be arranged through our Religious School program. | \$75*/hour or \$45*/half hour | Billed as needed |
| Offsite Fee: Temple will arrange drop off and pick up of prayer books, other supplies and the returning of the Torah. (Up to 15 miles from Temple.) This fee is required for all offsite Bnai Mitzvah. | \$250* | Due 1 month prior |

*** All applicable fees are subject to change.**

WHOM SHALL I ASK?

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Rabbi Jon Hanish rabbihanish@koltikvah.org 818-348-0670 Ext. 222</p> | <p>The Rabbi is available to address any issues regarding your Bnai Mitzvah. His primary concern is that this be a special moment in time for everyone involved. He works hands on with the students exploring the meaning of their Torah portion and working with them on their speeches. Please share any questions or concerns regarding special circumstances, for example interfaith, single parent or blended families, separation or divorce with the Rabbi. His good counsel is available to help resolve any and all difficulties or dilemmas.</p> |
| <p>Cantor Shira Fox cantorfox@koltikvah.org 818-348-0670 Ext. 212</p> | <p>The Cantor is the Bnai Mitzvah supervisor, coordinating Bnai Mitzvah training and helping families throughout the Bnai Mitzvah process. It is her goal that this experience be meaningful for your family. Please keep in contact with her throughout the process with any questions, concerns, or ways in which she can help make this day special for your family. The Cantor is available to help with any of the concerns mentioned above.</p> |
| <p>Religious School Director Rabbi Becky Hoffman rhoffman@koltikvah.org 818-348-0670 Ext. 209</p> | <p>The Religious School Director can answer questions regarding Hebrew readiness, Teen Tuesday, additional tutoring and religious school.</p> |
| <p>Business Manager Laureen Waterman accounting@koltikvah.org 818-348-0670 Ext. 215</p> | <p>The Business Manager is available to help with any financial questions.</p> |
| <p>Executive Director Tiffany Kosloy tkosloy@koltikvah.org 818-348-0670 Ext. 214</p> | <p>The Executive Director can assist you with reserving a date, the social hall or other facility questions.</p> |
| <p>Experiential Education Fellow Samantha Duenas sduenas@koltikvah.org 818-348-0670 Ext. 218</p> | <p>The Experiential Education Fellow coordinates the Kemach Program and keeps track of Kemach credits.</p> |

GLOSSARY OF HEBREW AND JUDAIC TERMS

ALIYAH (*pl: ALIYOT*): During the *Torah* service certain congregants or their honorees will be called up to the *bimah*, pulpit, to bless the *Torah* before and after its reading. *aliyah* literally means “going up.” It is a special honor to receive an *aliyah*, usually reserved for those especially close to the *Bnai Mitzvah* family.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH: Person of covenantal obligation (literally, “son or daughter of the commandment.”)

BNAI MITZVAH: Plural of the above.

BNOT MITZVAH: Plural of the above, for two or more Jewish females.

BIMAH: This refers to the raised platform area in the front of the sanctuary, sometimes referred to as “the pulpit.”

CONFIRMATION: Confirmation is a ceremony created by the Reform Movement, in which young Jewish adults confirm their commitment to Judaism and the Jewish people.

D’RASH/D’VAR TORAH: During the service your child will deliver a short sermon based on the *Torah* portion. In this interpretation of the weekly *Torah* reading, the *Bnai Mitzvah* demonstrates study of the text and an understanding of one of its many messages, with an application to contemporary life.

HAFTARAH: Following the Shabbat morning reading from the *Torah* a passage called the *Haftarah* is read from the portion of the bible called the Prophets (*Nevi'im* in Hebrew). The *Torah* portion and the *Haftarah* are usually connected by a common theme, law, personality or event.

HAVDALAH: The ritual at the end of *Shabbat* (Saturday evening) which separates *Shabbat* from the rest of the week.

KIDDUSH: *Kiddush* is both a prayer and an act. As an act, it is the sanctification of *Shabbat* usually done with wine. *Kiddush* is also the prayer over wine on *Shabbat* and holidays. In an extended sense of the word, it includes the *Shabbat* morning reception which begins with the *Kiddush* prayer over wine.

KIPPAH (*pl: KIPPOT*): This head covering (also known in Yiddish as *yarmulka*) is a sign of respect. In a Reform synagogue the wearing of the *kippah* and the *tallit* are optional.

MITZVAH: Sometimes thought of as a “good deed.” In actuality, a *mitzvah* is a commandment, an obligation stated in the *Torah*. Jewish tradition enumerates 613 commandments handed down at Mount Sinai.

ONEG SHABBAT: Literal translation is “pleasure of Shabbat.” In practice, it refers to the company and refreshments we savor after *Shabbat* services on Friday evening.

PARASHA: Also called the *sidra*, the *parasha* is the *Torah* portion read and studied on a particular *Shabbat* or Festival (special holiday).

SE’UDAT MITZVAH: Sharing a meal with the community as a way to celebrate is rooted in Jewish tradition. The Bar or Bat *Mitzvah* feast was declared a *Se’udat Mitzvah*, a meal celebrating a commandment, in the sixteenth century. The *Se’udat Mitzvah* is a traditional way to celebrate the completion of a religious obligation. The feast is a joyous way of emphasizing the significance of the Bnai *Mitzvah* event in the life of one Jewish family.

SIDDUR: The Hebrew word *siddur* means “order” and is applied to the weekday and *Shabbat* prayer book, as the prayer book contains a specific order of the prayers. In the Reform Movement the official *siddur* is *Mishkan Tefilah*.

SIMCHA: A joyous occasion (literally means “happiness” or “joy.”)

TALLIT (pl: TALLITOT): This is the prayer shawl worn by Jewish adults in fulfillment of the commandment in the *Torah*, “You shall attach *tzitzit* (fringes) to the four corners of your garments.” The fringes remind us of our responsibilities to the Jewish community.

TORAH: *Torah* really has two meanings. In its broadest sense it refers to the entire body of Jewish law, lore, and teachings. In its narrowest sense, it refers to the scroll on which is written the five books of Moses (*Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy*.) Every *Shabbat* a consecutive portion of the *Torah* is read and studied.

TZEDAKAH: The giving of money or goods to those in need. *Tzedakah* translates to “justice or fairness.”

Education without vision is like a present without a future.

Gershon Shofman, Hebrew Novelist

We strongly encourage students to continue in our teen programs through High School to encourage lifelong education.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Books About Bnai Mitzvah

- Diam, Barbara: *Bat Mitzvah: A Jewish Girls Coming of Age*
David, Judith: *Whose Bar/Bat Mitzvah Is This Anyway?*
Leneman, Helen: *Bar/Bat Mitzvah Basics: A Practical Family Guide to Coming Together*
Kushner, Lawrence: *Book of Miracles-A Young Person's Guide To Jewish Spirituality*
Moskovitz, Patti: *The Complete Bat/Bat Mitzvah Book*
Rossel, Seymour: *A Spiritual Journey: Bar and Bat Mitzvah Handbook*
Seifer Sage, Linda: *The Complete Bar/Bat Mitzvah Planner*
Salkin, Rabbi Jeffrey K.: *For KIDS – Putting God on Your Guest List: How to Claim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Bar or Bat Mitzvah*
Salkin, Rabbi Jeffrey K.: *Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah*
Epstein, Ellen & Jane Lewit: *The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Planbook*

Books for Writing a D'Var Torah

- Beiner, Stan J.: *Sedra Scenes*
Fields, Harvey: *A Torah Commentary for Our Times, (Vol 1-3)*
Goldberg Loeb, Sorel & Barbara Binder Kadden: *Teaching Torah: A Treasury of Insights and Activities*

Other Recommended Books

- Borowitz, Eugene B.: *Liberal Judaism*
Buber, Martin: *Tales of the Hasidim*
Buxbaum, Yizhak: *Jewish Spiritual Practices*
Green, Arthur and Holtz, Barry W.: *Your Word is Fire*
Hertzberg, Arthur: *The Zionist Idea*
Heschel, Abraham Joshua: *The Sabbath*
Holtz, Barry W.: *Back to the Sources*
Mendes-Flohr, Paul and Reinhartz, Jehuda: *The Jew in the Modern World*
Neusner, Jacob: *The Enchantments of Judaism*
Plaskow, Judith: *Standing Again at Sinai*
Pogrebin, Letty Cottin: *Deborah, Golda, and Me*
Sachar, Howard M.: *A History of Israel*
Sarna, Jonathan: *American Judaism*
Shanks, Hershel: *Ancient Israel*
Spiegelman, Art: *Maus I and II*
Strassfeld, Michael: *The Jewish Holidays*
Telushkin, Joseph: *Jewish Literacy*
Waskow, Arthur: *Seasons of Our Joy*

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Websites

www.bnaimitzvahguide.com

www.bible.ort.org

www.jewschool.com

www.judaicaworldwide.com

www.mitzvahchic.com

www.mitzvahs.myevent.com

www.my-bar-mitzvah.com

www.myjewishlearning.com

www.ritualwell.org

www.storahtelling.org

www.virtualjerusalem.com

A very thorough resource and planning website
Navigating the Bible. An online Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutor.
Jew School: Two Jews, Three Opinions
Bnai Mitzvah gifts and kippot.
Website of the book on creating a “chic” Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration.
Create your own Bnai Mitzvah website.
Torah and Haftarah portions. Submit or search for a speech/story on a particular Torah portion.
My Jewish Learning: The Personal Gateway to Jewish Exploration
Ritual Well: Ceremonies for Jewish Living
Storahtelling: Jewish Ritual Theater Revived
A mega website that features a teen channel that includes articles of special interest, puzzles, jokes, and polls.

Social Action Websites

www.ajws.org

www.birthrightisrael.com

www.coejl.org

www.deltasociety.org

www.dorot.org

www.generationj.com

www.geshercity.org

www.hadassah.org.il/English

www.hazon.org

www.jewishbraille.org

www.jnf.org

www.jufj.org

www.kolot.org

www.mayan.org

www.mazon.org

www.myriamsdream.org

www.nif.org

www.nacoej.org

www.pal-o-mine.org/index.php

www.projectezra.org

www.rac.org

AJWS: American Jewish World Service
Birthright Israel
COEJL: The Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life
Delta Society
Dorot
Generation J
GesherCity: Bridging Young Adults to the Jewish Community
Hadassah Hospital
Hazon: New Vision, Inclusive Community, and Environmental Education
Jewish Braille Institute of America
Jewish National Fund
Jews United for Justice
Kolot: Center for Jewish Women’s and Gender Studies
Ma’yan: The Jewish Women’s Project
MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
Myriam’s Dream
New Israel Fund: Promoting Equality and Social Justice for All Israelis
North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry
Pal-O-Mine Equestrian
Project Ezra
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

www.shalomctr.org

www.shalva.org

www.songsoflove.org

www.tevaadventure.org

www.ujafedny.org

www.yadsarah.org

The Shalom Center

Shalva

Songs of Love

Teva Adventure

United Jewish Appeal

Yad Sarah