
SINAI TEMPLE

ברֹבַת מצוה

Bar/Bat Mitzvah
A Spiritual Journey
for the
Entire Family

"I continue to seek God because I know this is the human task. I seek, because in that search there is life, and light, and meaning and even joy." Rabbi David Wolpe



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Today Rabah,
Cantor Joseph Gole
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**B'nai Mitzvah at Sinai Temple
A Child and Family Journey**

What I wish for my child
I wish for all our children.
I wish for you to be a
person of character
strong but not tough
gentle but not weak.

I wish for you to be
righteous but not self-righteous
honest but not unforgiving.

Wherever you journey, may your steps be firm
and may you walk in just paths
and not be afraid.

Whenever you speak, may your words
be words of wisdom and friendship.

May your hands build
and your heart preserve what is good
and beautiful in our world.

May the voices of the generations of our people
move through you
and may the God of our ancestors
Be your God as well.

May you know that there is a people,
a rich heritage, to which you belong
and from that sacred place
you are connected to all who dwell on the earth.

May the stories of our people
be upon your heart
and the grace of the Torah rhythm
dance in your soul

Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

A Message from our Clergy...

Celebrating a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a family journey. We at Sinai Temple are honored to share this journey with you and your child. Together we will link the sacred act of “going up” to the Torah with the spiritual process of “growing” in faithfulness to God and community.

Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah requires the child to learn certain synagogue skills, while parents focus on party planning, invitations, and guest lists. Children worry about learning the material assigned to them and parents worry about whether they can afford the costs of entertaining their family and friends.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrates the sanctity of family and acknowledges that a child has now ascended to religious adulthood within our tradition. A Bar/Bat Mitzvah binds the past and future generations, affirming faith in our tradition and in God.

Our goal at Sinai Temple is to create a Bar/Bat Mitzvah program that is a spiritual and religious experience connecting child and family to God, the Jewish people and to each other.

The Core Values of our Program

1. *Nurturing Environment:*

We want our Bar/t Mitzvah program to be nurturing and caring. We strive to always be gentle, kind, considerate, patient and sensitive to our students and parents. We want to create an environment that enhances the spiritual and religious experience of Bar/t Mitzvah.

2. *Parental Involvement:*

Parental involvement is key to the success of our program and the entire Bar/t Mitzvah experience. We encourage and nurture the involvement of parents with the students.

3. *Relationship Development:*

The continuous involvement of our professional staff with student and parents affords the opportunity for relationship development. Lasting bonds are created between student, parent, rabbis, cantors and instructor(s) during the course of each student's progress through our program.

4. *Excellence in Preparedness.*

We want our children to achieve a very high level of excellence. We want them to do the very best they can and encourage each child to participate, to the full extent of their ability. The better prepared our B'nai Mitzvah – the more positive the experience.

5. *Putting God on the Guest List*

We emphasize the religious and spiritual significance of Bar/t Mitzvah. We want to connect the child to Judaism, family, Israel and the Jewish people.

The Ultimate Parent's Bar/Bat Mitzvah Checklist

- 12 Months**
- Family meets with Cantor for Bar/Bat Mitzvah Orientation.
 - Student must attend Akiba Academy, Sinai Religious School or accepted school through year of Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
 - Payment of Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fee, confirm Synagogue Account is current.
 - Begin or continue to Light candles and say Kiddush on Friday Night with family.
- 11 Months**
- Students begin studying prayers and trope on our Sinai Temple website, (www.sinaitemple.org).
 - Create Jewish book list for family reading and Friday night discussion.
 - Meet with Jem Caterers to arrange S'udat Mitzvah.
 - Confirm the Hebrew name and Spelling of English name for preparation of Bar/Bat Mitzvah plaque with B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator.
- 10 Months**
- Attend Shabbat Morning and Friday Night Service.
 - Discuss with family ways to incorporate theme of "Judaism" into your simcha and S'udat Mitzvah (reception).
- 6-7 Months**
- Submit list of Aliyot and honors to B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator (Aliyot Form in Addendum).
 - Bar/Bat Mitzvah begins private lessons at Sinai Temple.
 - Bar/Bat Mitzvah begins daily study at home for fifteen to twenty minutes.
 - E-mail picture of Bar/Bat Mitzvah for Sinai Speaks to B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator and Public Relations Coordinator at: eherscher@sinaitemple.org; pdain@sinaitemple.org.
 - Attend *Repairing My World* – Parents and B'nai Mitzvah Program.
 - Family research websites online for Torah and Haftorah portion commentaries.
 - Research D'var Torah by visiting Sinai Temple Library.
- 4 Months**
- Parents and siblings begin learning Torah Reading(s).
 - Select and purchase Tallit, Tefillin and kippot (head coverings).
 - B'nai Mitzvah begin practicing by putting on their Tallit and Tefillin at daily Sinai Akiba service and Sunday Sinai Religious School service.
 - Arrange for creative centerpieces for S'udat Mitzvah, i.e. food for Sova, books for the Library, or athletic equipment for Akiba.
- 3 Months**
- Meet with Rabbi Dershowitz to prepare writing of D'var Torah.
 - E-mail article and confirm wording for pew bulletin and Sinai Speaks with B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator.
 - Bar/Bat Mitzvah writes one minute D'var Torah, (not more than 350 words).
- 2 Months**
- Meet with officiating rabbi.
 - ATTEND SERVICES WEEKLY ON SHABBAT.
- 2 Weeks**
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah meets with cantor.
 - Provide list of guests to B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator for Security clearance.
 - Contribute to Tzedakah in honor of simcha.
 - Schedule appointment with Judy Begin for photo session.
 - Buy soft wrapped candy at Sinai Temple gift shop to be thrown at service.
- Last Week**
- Final rehearsal with Cantor Gole.
 - The "Big" Weekend.** – Mazal Tov!

The "Big Weekend"

**Thursday Morning
Kohn Chapel 7:30 am**

B'nai Mitzvah are called to the Torah at our 7:30am morning minyan in Kohn Chapel. They recite the B'rachot HaTorah. The boys put on Tallit and Tefillin. The girls are encouraged to do so. The cantor blesses the B'nai Mitzvah by reciting a Mi Sheberach ("He who blesses..."). Sinai Akiba B'nai Mitzvah read from the Torah and recite the blessings on the Torah at their regularly scheduled weekday service.

Shabbat Friday Night

The service is held in Kohn Chapel and begins at 5:45 pm. The service is approximately an hour in length. B'nai Mitzvah recite the Kiddush and Aleinu. Participation and attendance at this service is optional.

**Shabbat Morning
8:45 am**

"The Big Day" - The service begins at 8:45am in the main sanctuary. The Family Minyan Service begins at 9:00am and Torah in the Round begins at 9:30am. In the main sanctuary service, the parents are called to the Torah for an *"Aliyah."* The Bar/Bat Mitzvah is called to the Torah, recites the blessings on the Tallit, Torah, reads the maftir portion from the Torah, delivers a one minute D'var Torah, recites the haftarah and haftarah blessings, receives a charge from the Rabbi, blessing from Rabbi and Cantor, leads the congregation in the chanting of the Aleinu and recites the Kiddush at the end of the service. See the Addendum for additional information on Torah in the Round and the Family Minyan Service. The participation at the Torah in the Round or Family Minyan Service provides an opportunity for B'nai Mitzvah to lead other parts of the service and for their family and guests to have additional honors.

**S'udat Mitzvah
(Reception)**

We encourage the B'nai Mitzvah to deliver a D'var Torah and thank you speech acknowledging parents, grandparents, teachers and important people at the S'udat Mitzvah. We will prepare the Bar or Bat Mitzvah for leading Birchot Hamazon after the meal and/or Havdalah for Saturday night.

The day after...

Choose ways to continue to celebrate the spiritual meaning and significance of Bar/Bat Mitzvah by participating in the performance of Mitzvot. Here are some ways to extend the true meaning of Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Judaism into your life:

- Celebrate Shabbat by lighting candles and saying Kiddush.
- Attend Shabbat Services together with your family.
- Attend morning or evening minyan.
- Participate in shiva minyan.
- Participate in Tikum Olam projects as family.
- Put on Tallit and Tefillin regularly.
- Read books with Jewish content.
- Continue your Jewish education.
- Schedule date to read from the Torah, chant the Shachrit Service, and/or recite P'sukei D'zimrah.
- Attend a lecture or concert with Jewish content.
- Contribute to Tzedakah.
- Plan a trip to Israel.

Don't Miss It! – The Opportunity for the entire Family to Participate

Parent Orientation with Cantor Gole

Parents meet in small grouping of families with Cantor Gole for an orientation to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah program. We discuss the goals of our Bar/Bat Mitzvah program and introduce you to the exciting opportunities available for the entire family to participate.

B'nai Mitzvah meet with Rabbi

All of our B'nai Mitzvah and their families meet privately with their officiating rabbi.

Repairing My World - Parents and B'nai Mitzvah

Repairing My World: Responsibilities of a Jewish Adult is a three-session family education program designed for pre B'nai Mitzvah students and their parents. We will apply Jewish Values to *Tikkun Middot* – Repairing our Moral Life, *Tikkun Bayit* – repairing our family life, and *Tikkun Olam* – repairing our communal life. We have designed a very special program for B'nai Mitzvah and parents with Rabbi Ahud Sela. We divide the year into smaller groups based on the five books of the Torah – B'reshit, Sh'mot, Vayikra, Bamidbar and D'varim. Your group corresponds to your child's parasha. We will meet two times and participate together – parents and B'nai Mitzvah students – in discussing personal values, Jewish home life and our impact on the world.

Mitzvot Program - B'nai Mitzvah

Our B'nai Mitzvah attending Sinai Akiba Academy and Sinai Religious School are involved in Mitzvah projects, which are part of the curriculum. *The Mitzvah project consists of assignments in three categories – Torah (study), Avodah (religious observance) and G'milut Hasadim (acts of kindness and community service).*

D'var Torah Preparation

Our students meet privately with Rabbi Dershowitz to discuss their Torah and Haftarah portion and the meaning of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Individual time is given to each student.

Shacharit Service

Our B'nai Mitzvah celebrating their service in the Main Sanctuary and Family Minyan may lead the Shacharit Service on the occasion of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. They learn the service in addition to the required material from their individual instructors. The Bar and Bat Mitzvah must demonstrate a complete mastery of the required material before they are assigned the Shacharit Service.

Individual Instruction

Our B'nai Mitzvah receive many hours of private instruction from either Cantor Arianne Brown or Aryell Cohen. They also rehearse privately with Cantor Gole during the last month prior to their simcha.

“Why should one be Jewish? Because Judaism can teach us how to deepen our lives, to improve the world, to join with others who have the same lofty aims. Judaism can teach us spiritual and moral mindfulness, a way of living in this world that promotes joy inside of us and also encourages ethical action. But finally, the answer to why be Jewish must reside in the mystery of each seeking soul, trying to find its place with others and with God.”...Rabbi David Wolpe

S'udat Mitzvah

A friend told me that when a caterer inevitably asked, "What's the theme of your daughter's Bat Mitzvah going to be?" he responded, "How about Judaism?"

Excerpt from the book "Putting God on the Guest List."

The meal of celebration is a S'udat Mitzvah (a meal in honor of the commandment). It is a continuation of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and a joyous and significant part of your simcha. We at Sinai Temple strongly urge you to remember the theme of the day should be a commitment to "Judaism."

Consider the importance of the message you give your child and your guests. What Jewish values do we hope this Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration will embody? You may want to discuss this with your entire family and make a list of them. Your list might include compassion, dignity, justice, learning, social action, generosity, humility, holiness, ruach, moderation, a love for the Jewish people and the Jewish homeland.

Here are some ideas as a starting point. Your family will want to come up with your own special way of celebrating your simcha.

- ◆ A Kosher meal with the recitation of the Motzi, Birchat Hamazon and Havdallah by Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- ◆ Bar/Bat Mitzvah delivers a D'var Torah at the reception..
- ◆ Bar/Bat Mitzvah may acknowledge teachers, family members, and clergy who have been important in their life.
- ◆ Themes based on great Jewish heroes, personalities, geographical places in Israel, events in Jewish history or Jewish expressions, poems and songs.
- ◆ A theme based on the Torah reading portion.
- ◆ Centerpieces comprised of books that can be donated to the Temple Library, baskets of food designated for SOVA, athletic equipment creatively wrapped which can be donated to Sinai Akiba, baskets of CDs, baskets of school supplies, etc.
- ◆ Parents may speak to their child and express the meaning and significance of the day.
- ◆ In lieu of a party – a trip to Israel.
- ◆ A donation or gift to the Synagogue, School, Jewish or charitable organization.
- ◆ The announcement at the reception of the contribution(s) to be given by the Bar or Bat Mitzvah and/or by the family in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- ◆ In lieu of a gift- ask guests to give to tzedakah in honor of Bar/Bat Mitzvah..
- ◆ Arrange to have left over food delivered to Food Pantry ("Extra Helpings" at 310-828-6016 for further details).

Our Jem Caterers or Sisterhood can help you plan an elegant affair. Receptions on the Shabbat and Festivals have a special reverence and sanctity. Vocal and instrumental music at a reception is to be Jewish, Israeli, Israeli folk music, klezmer music, Yiddish and Hebrew music and may be played by tape, disk or live ensemble. In the Addendum we have provided a list of musical selections for Shabbat and Festival receptions.

Venue Options

Torah in the Round, Family Minyan and Main Sanctuary

In an attempt to address your personal needs, **you have three very exciting Shabbat Morning Service options in which to celebrate your Bar/Bat Mitzvah simcha:**

1. The Service in the Main Sanctuary is usually with two B'nai Mitzvah and begins at 8:45 am. The parents are called to the Torah for an "*Aliyah*," the honor of being called to the Torah to recite the blessings over the Torah. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah is called to the Torah, recites the blessings on the Tallit, Torah, reads the Maftir portion (the last sentences of the weekly Torah portion) from the Torah, and delivers a D'var Torah – an English interpretation of the Torah reading. He or she also recites the Haftorah (the Prophetic reading of the week) and Haftorah Blessings, receives a charge from the Rabbi, a blessing from the Rabbi and Cantor, leads the congregation in the chanting of the Aleinu and recites the Kiddush, blessing over the washing of the hands, and the blessing over the bread, which is performed at the end of the service. The Bar and Bat Mitzvah may lead the Shacharit Service (the morning service) by participating in the Shacharit Choir and/or P'sukei D'zimrah (the introductory psalms and blessings). The Bar/Bat Mitzvah may also read additional portions of the Torah reading. On Friday night, all of our B'nai Mitzvah lead the congregation in Kiddush and Aleinu.

2. Torah in the Round is a service that stresses sing-along melodies and up-beat tunes. The service begins at 9:00 am in Kohn Chapel. If a larger attendance is anticipated or if the service does not fall on the third Shabbat of the month, the service is in Gold or Barad Hall. Families may elect to provide refreshments prior to the service for guests and the larger community. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family and guests are honored with Peticha (opening of the Ark), Aliyot (recitation of the Torah blessings), Laining (reading from the Torah), Hagbah and Gelilah (lifting and binding of the Torah). Parents publicly present their child with a Tallit (prayer shawl) and recite a blessing. The Torah is passed from generation to generation (L'dor v'dor) and dancing ensues around the bimah. The child and guests may chant as many p'sukim (sentences) of the aliyot (torah reading) as available with a minimum of Maftir and Haftorah. The child gives a d'rash – English interpretation of the Torah reading (up to three minutes in length) about the parasha (weekly portion). Candy tossed by the guests fills the bimah, followed by more dancing and celebration. The entire family must commit to attending three (3) Torah in the Round services prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. At these services, the family will be asked to familiarize themselves with Torah in the Round and to lend a hand greeting and ushering.

3. The Family Minyan is a single Bar/Bat Mitzvah in Kohn Chapel beginning at 9:00 am. The Family Minyan is a traditional, participatory, child-friendly minyan that meets every Shabbat. The intimate, largely lay-led, participatory nature of the service offers special opportunities for the bar/bat mitzvah and his/her family to lead portions of the service. The bar/bat mitzvah, family members, and guests may chant as many of the aliyot (Torah reading honor) as available. The minimum requirement being that the

bar/bat mitzvah chant the Maftir (final) aliyah and the Haftarah. Bar/Bat Mitzvah students also have the opportunity to lead the congregation in parts of the prayer services. Most choose to lead Torah Service and/or Musaf. A CD of the Torah and Musaf Service may be obtained from the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Coordinator. In order to assure there is ample time for the students to be ready to lead the services, they are encouraged to obtain the CD 10-12 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah so they may begin independent study. Candy tossed by the guests fills the bimah followed by dancing and song. The child gives a D'var Torah about the parasha and parents may address their child before God, the Torah and the community. The combined total of the parents' remarks and the child's D'var Torah is limited to 8 minutes. The child is addressed by, and receives a blessing from, the rabbi. **To create a sense of community and friendship in the Family Minyan for the day of the simcha and beyond, the family is required to sign a Hozeh (Contract) two years before the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah stipulating they will attend at least 14 Family Minyan services prior to their simcha.** Meetings with the rabbi following at least one visit to the Family Minyan will verify that the family intends to meet the responsibilities. Other meetings will affirm the combined agreement. **A family that does not fulfill their contract will not be able to hold their simcha in the Family Minyan.** Kohn Chapel, our usual venue, seats only 225 people. If you expect more than 175-200 guests who are not regular Family Minyan congregants, the service will be in either Gold or Barad Hall, subject to availability.**

*** Please note that there is an additional \$400 set-up/break-down fee for the alternate venues of Gold and Barad Hall. Barad Hall is available only if you have contracted a luncheon with Jem Caterers. The clergy establish the room set-up for these alternate spaces to meet ritual criteria.*

We encourage you and your family to attend the various services and discover the one which best meets your needs.

Family Participation & Honors

We want to encourage family participation and involvement. Here is a list of the opportunities afforded to our families on an equal basis for all the services. The various services offer different opportunities for family participation and honors. Participants must be Jewish and thirteen years of age.

Name of Honor	Description	Number of Honors
Torah Readings	We encourage the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and/or members of the family thirteen years and older to read from the Torah in the Main Sanctuary (MS), Torah in the Round (TITR) and Family Minyan (FM). The portion to be read will be assigned by the mentor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. In the Main Sanctuary, the B'nai Mitzvah may each read three additional Aliyot. A single Bar or Bat Mitzvah in the Main Sanctuary (SMS) may read all of the Aliyot. Family Minyan allows Bar or Bat Mitzvah and family (regardless of age) to read all seven Aliyot. In Torah in the Round – the B'nai Mitzvah and members of the family may read three Aliyot.	MS: 3 SMS: 7 TITR: 3 FM: 6
Parents Aliyah	The parents are called up to the Torah and recite the blessings before and after the reading from the Torah.	1
Aliyah	An Aliyah (“going up”) is an honor of being called to the Torah and reciting the blessings on the Torah. Up to four people may be called to the Torah for each “Aliyah.” Please make certain that those called to the Torah for an “Aliyah” are familiar with the b'rachot (“blessings”). A cd recording and transliteration of the Torah blessings are available in the Office of the Cantor, and on the Sinai Temple Website: (www.sinaitemple.org). Three (3) Aliyot are available in Torah in the Round and six (6) Aliyot are available in Family Minyan.	MS: 2 SMS: 3 TITR: 3 FM: 6
Opening the Ark	At the beginning of the Torah Service and upon returning the Torah to the Ark, we extend the honor of Opening the Ark to a member of the family or friend of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.	MS: 2 SMS: 4 TITR: 4 FM: 4
Hagbah & G'lilah	This honor is the raising up of the Torah after the Torah reading and the immediate binding of the Torah thereafter.	MS: 1 SMS: 2 TITR: 2 FM: 2
Shacharit, P'sukei D'zimrah and Torah Readings	The Bar/Bat Mitzvah may lead parts of the service or read additional selections from the Torah. To read from the Torah an additional portion, or to chant the Shacharit Service and/or P'sukei D'zimrah, your child needs to demonstrate the necessary proficiency and mastery of the required material. There must be adequate time for the student to master the additional material. In Family Minyan, the Bar or Bat Mitzvah may lead the entire service (though please note this may require additional independent study time. In Torah in the Round, the Bar or Bat Mitzvah does not have the opportunity to lead additional parts of the service.	

Private Mentoring Program

“When I became bar mitzvah, my grandfather, Eleazar of Amsterdam, of blessed memory, came to me one night in a vision and gave me another soul in exchange for mine. Ever since then, I have been a different person.” Shalom of Belz, Hassidic Master

- Individual Instruction** Starts six to seven months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. **INSTRUCTION TIME IS IN ADDITION** to regular attendance at Sinai Akiba Academy, Sinai Religious School or Sinai High. Lessons are for twenty minutes each week.
- Daily Home Assignment** **Student needs to practice a minimum of 20 to 30 minutes per day.** Mentor notates assignment in Mitzvah Tools (www.mitzvahtools.com). **If a student does not study – the student will be assigned less to do for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. If the student does not study – a parent will be required to attend all private lessons until such time that it is determined that the student is studying.**
- Parents Involvement** **Parents are required to attend private mentoring sessions a minimum of once a month.** Remind your child to study and make sure assignments are completed. Encourage working ahead and finishing the learning of the material well in advance of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.
- Progress Reports** At every lessons, notes, assignments and feedback are entered into Mitzvah Tools (www.mitzvahtools.com). Parents and students are asked to check the website weekly.
- Study Materials** Your Haftorah booklet will be given to you by your private mentor. Additional materials will be given out.
- Student’s Responsibility with Parent’s Assistance**
1. Perfect and punctual attendance at lessons.
 2. Please study daily and work ahead whenever possible.
 3. Make sure you are finished learning everything for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah at least one month in advance of your date.
 4. Please provide 24 hour notice if you need to cancel an appointment.
 5. Changes in appointment times are not always possible. If you need to change your appointment, please contact the Cantors’ Office and **SPEAK IN PERSON** with B’nai Mitzvah Coordinator, the Cantors’ Administrative Assistant. Voice mail messages **DO NOT** guarantee your requested change.
 6. If you are sick, please reschedule or set up a phone appointment.
 7. Bring all of your study materials to your lessons.
 8. B’nai Mitzvah, please wear kippot at all times in the Synagogue and offices.
- Recommendation and Food for Thought** Your child’s welfare is always our greatest concern. We as parents derive great *nachat* (pleasure and pride) when our children perform. Sometimes, it is difficult for us to distinguish between the fine line of gentle encouragement and pushing to hard. Think about the pressure our children feel as they prepare for their “Big Day” in front of family, friends and a congregation of 1,200 people. Please trust our

experience and ability to assess the extent of your child's participation, the religious content of our service and our desire to balance both families level of participation with the congregation's spiritual needs. Our goal is to create a meaningful, spiritual and religious experience for everyone in attendance.

School & Vacations

School and national holidays, and/or religious Holy Days and Festivals are observed and no instruction will take place.

Additional Tutoring

We are trying very hard to meet the needs of our students requiring additional tutoring. Your assistance by notifying us in advance when an appointment needs to be changed allows us to provide a student with additional time. We will continue to offer additional tutoring when necessary at no additional charge.

Skills Assessment

Our schools assess our children's progress by administering tests in Hebrew reading and Judaic knowledge. Tutoring in Hebrew might be required if your child is below a minimal standard. The schools determine if a child is prepared to proceed with private mentoring in preparation for Bar/Bat Mitzvah. **If the student does not pass the requirements of our schools, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is postponed to a later date.**

Special Needs

Should you be aware of your child requiring any special educational assistance – it is most helpful if you share this with our staff from the onset. Please contact Cantor Gole directly or speak with B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator, our Bar/Bat Mitzvah coordinator. Sinai Temple is sensitive to the special needs of our B'nai Mitzvah and their families.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fee

The cost of the private mentor, Shabbat Morning Kiddush, flowers, plaque, CD's, Xeroxed materials, time spent by clergy. Additional administrative costs are partially underwritten by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee. Any contribution to our Bar/Bat Mitzvah program or if you want to consider underwriting or wish to consider a contribution with a naming opportunity – please contact Cantor Gole.

Homework Assignments

If your child does not study we are going to limit the amount of their participation in the service to the blessings on the Torah and a few lines of the Haftarah. The student needs to be competent in the assigned material before being assigned additional material. We do not provide additional tutoring for students who do not study.

“Taking faith seriously means that it will touch you and change your life. That is threatening, both to our own complacency and to the settled attitudes of those who know us. We are told our faith is not supposed to be “too serious.” But religion that does not touch our lives is a hobby, not a faith. How can we take the ultimate questions of life lightly? Faith and fate and destiny need not be solemn – few traditions are as hospitable to humor as Judaism – but they are serious.” Rabbi David Wolpe

Religious Policies & Proper Etiquette

- 1. Music on Shabbat** Vocal and instrumental music is permitted at Sinai Temple at a celebration provided it evokes the spirit of the day. Rap, acid rock, new age, and pop music are not permitted. Selected Israeli folk dancing music, Yiddish and Hebrew music, by tape, disk or ensemble are allowed, provided they do not precipitate ballroom or rock dancing. A list of acceptable musical selections is included in the Addendum of this handbook.
- 2. Cell Phones and Pagers** In observance of Shabbat and Festivals, **we request all cell phones and pagers be turned off and/or silenced** so as not to disrupt the service.
- 3. Smoking** **On Shabbat, SMOKING IS PROHIBITED EVERYWHERE ON TEMPLE PROPERTY INCLUDING THE BUILDING, GARAGES AND PATIOS.**
- 4. Shabbat Attire** Women called to the Bimah must have their heads and shoulders covered and skirts should be of modest length. Women may wear slacks and are encouraged to wear a tallit (prayer shawl). Men must wear a tallit and kippa (head covering). Men who are not of the Jewish faith are requested to wear a kippa while in the Sanctuary.
- 5. Conduct and Etiquette** To ensure the dignity of the service and your Bar/Bat Mitzvah, think about your friends and guests and discuss with them the following Sinai Temple guidelines:

 - Newborns or infants should be with their parents in the stroller section (back pew) of the Sanctuary.
 - Older children are welcome under proper parental supervision. They must remain seated quietly while in the Sanctuary and escorted out when they become anxious or boisterous.
 - Our Midge's Club has programs for children of all ages and meets every Shabbat and Festival from 9:30AM to 12:00 Noon.
 - **DO NOT BRING GIFTS TO THE SYNAGOGUE SERVICE.** They can get lost or stolen. Lost or stolen gifts cannot be replaced and no responsibility for them is assumed by Sinai Temple.
 - People are going to be overjoyed at seeing family and friends at this festive occasion. However, kindly withhold greetings while in the Sanctuary during the service. Congratulations are certainly appropriate before or at the end of the service.
 - Gratuitous conversation during the service itself is inappropriate. In addition, no walking is permitted while the Ark is open, the rabbis are delivering the sermon, or the cantor is chanting the torah.
 - You are not just witnessing a ceremony or pageant, but partaking in a religious service. Join in when something is familiar to you and follow carefully when something is new to you.
 - Invite your child's school friends and classmates. However, please inform them that it is not appropriate to be absent from the ceremony and only attend the party or celebration.

- It is also inconsiderate to walk in and out of the Sanctuary or Chapel to visit in the foyer or restrooms.
- We recommend that adults accompany young guests to provide needed supervision during the service.
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6. Social Amenities and Derech Eretz

We are often asked to whom an invitation should be sent — our Rabbis, Cantors, educators and staff — some or all of them? This is your choice and no expectations exist. Each person will respond individually. You may send the invitation to Sinai Temple and it will be forwarded to the particular office.

If parents choose to invite faculty members from a particular grade, we encourage them to include all faculty members from that grade so that individuals do not seem favored over others. It is polite to invite their spouses as well.

For various reasons, it may not be possible to invite all your child’s past teachers to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. If parents would like suggestions how to honor their child’s teachers, the following are some ideas: purchase books on the teachers’ wish list at the book fair for them; donate books to the library in their honor; plant trees in Israel in their honor; make a donation to one of the Sinai Akiba or Religious School funds in their honor.

INVITATIONS TO CLASSMATES & FRIENDS

We ask you to be sensitive to feelings of 12 and 13 year olds. We urge you not to exclude a small number of students from your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah if you are inviting most of the grade or class. We also urge you **NOT** to issue invitations to classmates based solely on cultural backgrounds. Parents are urged at their receptions to have appropriate activities for children, to be sure that alcoholic beverages are not obtainable and provide proper supervision. We hope that seating of classmates at receptions is **NOT** based solely on cultural backgrounds.

7. Music and Flowers

All bands must adhere to dignified and lawful instrument and equipment loading and unloading procedures. Bands may use hallways, but never the Sanctuary. Also, **FLORAL DELIVERIES** for private luncheons **ARE NOT ACCEPTED ON SHABBAT OR FESTIVALS**, so please have your florist plan to deliver the day before. In addition, all vendors, including florists, bands, and disc jockeys must complete and send in a copy of their **Certificate of Insurance**. Our administration office has the proper form letter that your vendor will need to fill out and return to our Executive Office.

Almost Everything Else You Need to Know

Jewish National Fund, Mazon or SOVA

To underscore the spiritual aspect of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah, we encourage you to participate in one or more projects sponsored by the **JEWISH NATIONAL FUND, MAZON, OR SOVA**. It is suggested that you contribute a percentage (3% for example) of what your party will cost you to one or more charitable organizations. This is an important way to teach the true meaning of this day to your child. Please see the Addendum for additional Tzedakah possibilities.

Twinning Programs

Sinai Temple offers a different twinning program: The Masorti Movement, the Foundation for Conservative Judaism in Israel, sponsors this program. See B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator, Bar/Bat Mitzvah Coordinator for more information.

Honorarium

Honoraria are in keeping with the spirit of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. In honor of your simcha, it is customary to contribute in your child's honor to the officiating Rabbi and Cantor's Discretionary Funds. You may also wish to express your appreciation to your child's mentor.

Shabbat Morning Kiddush

The B'nai Mitzvah families host the Shabbat Morning Kiddush immediately following our services. The Kiddush is open to all who attend the service. Our Sisterhood takes pride in arranging a beautiful Kiddush and takes complete responsibility for purchasing, preparing and serving the challah, wine and pastries. The cost of the Kiddush is included in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee.

Judaica Shop

Our Judaica Shop has a beautiful and complete line of accessories available including tallitot, kippot, head coverings for men and women and tefillin. The gift store carries the soft candy which may be thrown when the Bar and Bat Mitzvah complete their participation in the service and after they receive their blessing from the officiating rabbi and cantor. The gift selection is varied and exquisite. The shop is open weekdays and Sunday and the hours are posted.

Audio Recording

An audio tape recording of the ceremony made by our engineer may be requested through the Main Office. It is our pleasure to provide you with a complimentary tape recording of the service. No tape recording by family members or guests is permitted. For Kohn Chapel, you need to choose between audio or vide recording and contact Judy Begin in our Administrative Office at 310 481-3222.

**Photography
Videography**

In observance of Shabbat and Festivals, no still photography or videotaping is allowed during the services. **However, our Temple- approved videographer may record from the audio room above the Sanctuary. Please contact the Temple-approved videographer, Peter Hacopian of Gold Reel Video at (818) 688-1346 to make arrangements for the video recording of your Simcha.** Sinai Temple has a fixed focus video camera in Kohn Chapel. Barad Hall and Traub Auditorium have similar rooms from which taping may be made by your videographer. No special lighting or flash attachments may be used on Shabbat.

Arrangements may be made to take still photographs or video recordings during the week. Videography of ritual services and appointments for still photography must be arranged in advance by contacting Judy Begin.

Bimah Floral Display

The B'nai Mitzvah families provide the floral displays for the Bimah in your venue. The cost of the flowers is included in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee.

Sinai Akiba Parents

On the Thursday morning preceding your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah, parents of Sinai Akiba students have the opportunity to join with the Sinai Akiba Middle School in Kohn Chapel where your child will lead services, be called for an Aliyah and read the weekly Torah portion. It is a special occasion because your child will be surrounded by his/her peers and addressed by members of the faculty and administration. A limited number of honors are available for the family, and it is customary to provide refreshments (e.g. cookies or donuts) for the Middle School. Please call Irit Eliyahu, the Sinai Akiba Academy Judaic Studies Director, to schedule your Thursday date and to receive further information. 481-3260.

Ushers and Gabbaim

Please observe the suggestions made by our Ushers and Gabbaim. They assist the K'lei Kodesh and help make your simcha run smoothly. Members of your family may serve as "greeters" to welcome your family and friends.

"God, help me learn to cherish peace, to pursue peace, to promote peace. Save me from the need to be always right – which leads only to tension and strife." ...Rebbe Nachman of Breslav

Most Often Asked Questions???

Who is in charge of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah program?

The entire professional staff is involved with varying aspects of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah program. The Executive Committee and Board of Directors of Sinai Temple establish certain policy and requirements. If you have a question and are not sure of who you should contact, please call Cantor Gole's administrative assistant, B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator 310 481-3235, and she will direct you to the member of our professional staff who will be able to assist you.

What is the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee applied to and when is it due?

The fee is used to underwrite a portion of the expenses incurred by the synagogue in providing your child a private tutor, materials, the additional cost of the congregational Kiddush for your guests, the cost of the perma-plaquet certificate, and a portion of the cost for the flowers on the bimah. One-half of the fee is due 30 days after the assignment of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. **The balance is due one year later. If the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee is not received, the date is forfeited and private mentoring will not begin.**

How many honors do we get to give out at the Shabbat morning service and why can't we have more?

If you are having your service in the main sanctuary, you receive two aliyot (with the opportunity of calling to the Torah four people for each Aliyah), one additional aliyah for the parents, one honor for one person of opening the ark, one honor for one person of closing the ark, and one honor for one person of binding or lifting the Torah. We wish we could give more honors to all of our families. We are blessed with many life cycle events, which are celebrated by being called to the Torah. Unfortunately, we do not have enough honors available to fulfill the many requests we receive every week. The B'nai Mitzvah and their families receive most of the honors. Please refer to Addendum and the section entitled Family Participation & Honors at the Service. Torah in the Round and the Family Minyan each have their own policy regarding honors for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah celebrated at their service.

Do I contact the Temple to schedule the various appointments my child will be having with the Rabbis, Cantor, and private instructors?

We will contact you to schedule your child's various appointments. However, infrequently an oversight may occur. If you think your child is overdue for an appointment based on the information contained in the section entitled the Parent's Ultimate Bar/Bat Mitzvah Checklist, please contact the appropriate office i.e. Rabbi, Cantor or private mentor, immediately.

What can I do to assist my child in preparing for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

Take an active roll in the B'nai Mitzvah process. Attend an adult education class. Light candles on Friday Night and recite the Kiddush. Attend Shabbat services with your family. Make sure your child is studying the assignments given by the private mentor. Attend private mentoring sessions periodically. Speak to the mentor. Study with your child. Encourage your child to chant their Torah, Haftarah, and Tefilot for you.

If you have a question – whom do you contact?

If you have a question, please call us at your convenience and the following persons will be delighted to assist you. Your questions are important to us, so please do not hesitate to call:

Current membership status and billing	Rachel Feldman 310 481-3237
Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date Scheduling	Ellie Herscher 310 481-3235
Private mentoring scheduling	Ellie Herscher 310 481-3235
B’nai Mitzvah picture and article for Sinai Speaks	Ellie Herscher 310 481-3235
Honors and aliyot in the Main Sanctuary	Ellie Herscher 310 481-3235
Honors and aliyot in Torah in the Round	Ellen Pierson 310 481-3234
Honors and aliyot in the Family Minyan	Rabbi Ahud Sela 310 476-9777 ext. 213
Scheduling of Photo session in the main sanctuary	Judy Begin 310 481-3222
Catering for your reception	Jem Caterers 310 481-3265
Assignment of additional Torah readings and prayers	B’nai Mitzvah’s individual Bar/Bat Mitzvah mentor
Questions regarding B’nai Mitzvah eligibility	Ellie Herscher 310 481-3235
Questions regarding Religious School – Sinai High	Danielle Kassin 310 481-3271
Questions regarding USY	USY office 310 481-3232
Questions regarding Sinai Akiba Academy	Irit Eliyahu 310 481-3260
For help in the Library, call	Barbara Goelman 310 481-3217
Torah in the Round Shabbat Morning Service	Rabbi Brian Schuldenfrei 310 481-3234
Family Minyan Shabbat Morning Service	Rabbi Ahud Sela 310 481-3234
Final rehearsal scheduling	Ellie Herscher 310 481-3235

What Happens the Day After? Post Bar/Bat Mitzvah Possibilities

Mazal Tov! You should be very proud of your achievements. You have learned so much and have come so far in these last few years. You see yourself in the mirror and can't believe it is really you looking back. Your friends and parents have seen the same changes in you and derive tremendous joy from the person you are becoming. However, you haven't finished changing. You have a long way to go and there is still a great deal more for you to learn.

SIHI – Sinai High is for Teens! (8th –12th graders) – join your friends in a new dynamic elective based program, SI HI! Twice a month on Sundays from 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM. Students will start out their morning with a latte and then learn in electives that they have chosen. Please contact us for more information at SIHI@sinaitemple.org or 310 481-3273.

Los Angeles Hebrew High School – an alternative for the coming year(s). LAHHS offers a full complement of classes, weekend encampments at Camp Ramah and the opportunity to meet with 400 high school students from all over the Los Angeles area. After a brief hiatus, LAHHS will be returning to Sinai Temple for either this coming or the following school year, depending upon interest. Incidentally, if you complete the entire LAHHS program (through 12th grade) you will be eligible for full foreign language credit for college. The LAHHS kids who come on Tuesdays will join the Sinai High-ers for dinner and *davening*.

USY – our United Synagogue Youth Chapter is one of the best in the far west region. We offer a full range of activities and programs for you and your friends. In one year we have gone to a Lakers game, skiing in Big Bear, attended a regional conference in Phoenix and raised a significant sum of money for various *tikun olam* projects. Students in 7th – 12th grades find the kind of friends in USY that they want to stay in touch with for the rest of their lives. As a Bar/Bar Mitzvah here at Sinai you automatically receive a free one-year membership. So, take full advantage of it! Go to awesome events and make wonderful friends! You can also join the USY board and organize and plan events. Whatever you choose, getting involved in USY is one of the best decisions you will ever make!

Trip to Israel – it is not too early to begin to plan for your trip to Israel between your sophomore and junior years of high school. Information is available in the Religious School Office. During the last few years a number of new and exciting trips have been created and a vast pool of scholarship money has become available. Contact Danielle Kassin who can help you decide which program you want to go on and how to finance the adventure.

No matter which program you select, your choice will fulfill the true meaning of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Jewish education is a life long spiritual journey. May you continue throughout your life to embrace our heritage and grow as a person by making Jewish study an integral part of your life.

Tzedakah List

This list does not represent everywhere that you could choose to send your money. It is a good extensive list of wonderful worthwhile possibilities. Look it over and discuss together as a family where you might want to send your money. If you have any questions either ask or, better yet, contact the organization directly.

State of Israel Bonds (310) 996-3000 or (800) 922-6637
1950 Sawtelle Boulevard, Suite 295
Los Angeles, CA 90025

Buy a single Chai Bond, which matures in five years, making it a vehicle to help a Bar or Bat Mitzvah child save for a trip to Israel or help defray college expenses. A gift of \$136 matures in five years from the issue date into \$180. This is a gift that connects a people's history, a nation's history and a family's joy.

ARMDI (212) 757-1627
888 7th Ave. Suite #403 www.armdi.org
NY, NY 10106

This organization is the Red Cross of Israel. They do everything there that the Red Cross does here. Unfortunately, for political reasons, they receive no support from the International Red Cross and therefore must raise all of their own funds.

Jewish Family Service (323) 761-8770
HIV/AIDS Program jfsla@jfsla.org
5700 Wilshire Blvd. #2614
LA, CA 90036

Formerly known as *Nechama*, they provide the complete range of services for Jewish AIDS patients throughout Southern California

Mazon (310) 442-0020
2940 Westwood Blvd. Suite #7 www.mazon.org
Los Angeles, CA 90064-4120

Mazon provides money (not food) for programs both Jewish and secular that are working to wipe out hunger in throughout the United States and around the world.

Camp Simcha/Chai Lifeline (212) 255-1160
48 West 25th street, 6th Floor www.chailifeline.org/
NY, NY 10010

This is the only *shomer Shabbat* and *shomer kashrut* camp available for young cancer patients in the United States and Israel. While children enjoy a "normal" camp experience the Camp provides for all of the needs (doctors, nurses, medicines, etc.) of the patients and their families.

Ziv Tzedakah Fund
3821 Wyoming Ave.
Milburn, NJ 07041

(201) 275-0346
www.ziv.org

Poet, teacher, speaker and all around *tsedakah* maven Danny Seigel collects money from groups and individuals to give to lesser-known charitable organizations around the world. However he devotes most of his time and money to organizations in Israel.

Diskin Orphanage
1533 44th street
Brooklyn, NY 11219

(718) 851-2598

An Orphanage in Jerusalem that is dedicated to helping Jewish orphans from around the world find good homes throughout Israel.

Jewish Braille Institute
110 East 30th street
New York, New York 10016

(212) 889-2525
<http://www.jewishbraille.org/>

The JBI provides everything for visually impaired Jewish population. They provide tutors, large-print books, magazines and *siddurim*, etc. all services are either free or at very low cost.

Jewish National Fund
6700 Fallbrook Ave. #201
West Hills, CA 91307

(800) 542-8733
www.jajz-ed.org.il

“The Tree People,” the truth is that they do a “tree”-mendous amount of work in building the infrastructure of Israel: roads, sewers, hi-ways, and, of course, forests.

**Simon Wiesenthal Center
Museum of Tolerance**
9760 West Pico Blvd.
Los Angeles, CA 90035

(310) 553-8403
www.wiesenthal.org

The premier repository of Holocaust related information on the West Coast. The museum is visited by hundreds of thousands of non-Jews every year to learn about hatred, violence, anti-Semitism and the holocaust.

Hadassah Hospital
455 S. Robertson Blvd.
B.H., CA 90211

(310) 276-0036
www.hadassah.org.il

This is the West Coast address of the Hospital. Hadassah Hospital provides perhaps the finest medical care in the entire Middle East. Since Israel’s inception residents of that part of the world have known that they could depend on Hadassah to care for the young, the sick and those that cannot care for themselves.

Union of Councils for Soviet Jews
1819 H Street NW Suite #230
Washington, DC 20006

(202) 775-9770
<http://shamash.org/ucsj/yad.shtml>

Now that freedom has arrived in the former Soviet Union the needs for practical day-to-

day Jewish life throughout Eastern Europe is acute. This is a loose knit group of organizations that are caring for Jews by taking care of one city or one project at a time.

Therapeutic Riding Club of Israel (972) – (9) 899-7776

P.O.Box 3168

Beit Yehoshua, ISRAEL

People young and old who suffer from various physical disabilities get remarkable benefits from riding horses. This organization takes care of a stable of horses to be used by those in need throughout Israel. This is a unique giving opportunity and worth looking into.

Yad Sarah (201) 944-7920

1 Parker Place

Fort Lee, NJ 07204

www.yadsarah.org.il/

Yad Sarah – Israel’s largest voluntary organization – provides a spectrum of free or nominal cost services to help sick, disabled and elderly people remain at home, and to ease the lives of their caregivers.

Concern for Helping Animals in Israel (703) 658-9650

(C.H.A.I.)

P.O.Box 3341

Alexandria, VA 22302

www.enviroweb.org/chai/

CHAI is a 501©(3) non-profit organization formed in the U.S. in 1984 to assist Israel’s animal protection community in improving the condition and treatment of Israel’s animals.

Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind (215) 343-0373

701 Easton Rd.

Warrington, PA 18976

<http://israelguidedog.org>

The Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind began operations on January 1, 1991 with just one objective – to help blind people in Israel to achieve independence and mobility through the use of guide dogs. At present, there are more than 70 of their graduates throughout Israel, all being safely guided by their trained dogs. Over 40 puppy-raising families raise the puppies. A professional staff of four handles all training and instruction. Noach Braun, the Director of the Center, is our Senior Guide Dog Mobility Instructor and is ably assisted by Guide Dog Mobility Instructors Raffia Taglicht and Yael Columbus, Orna Braun is Kennel Manager and Puppy Raising Supervisor responsible for the breeding quality of the puppies and their placement with over 40 Puppy Raisers.

This is a project that young people especially like to get involved with.

Tomchei Shabbos (323) 931-0224

353 ½ N. La Brea

Los Angeles, CA 90036

This organization delivers free food for Shabbat and holidays to anyone in need. Their work is done in a way to avoid embarrassing any one.

TEN BOOKS EVERY FAMILY SHOULD HAVE

By Rabbi David Wolpe

What are ten standard Jewish books that should be in every home? In compiling a list I have neglected many books that I love, but the idea is to suggest accessible books that have lasting value. Here is a list of books, which may be pulled off the shelf by an older child, or an adult in an idle hour. Some are for study, some for reading straight through. All should find their place in your Jewish library.

1. First is the **Etz Chaim**, the new Conservative Torah, which we use in the synagogue. This recent winner of the National Jewish Book Award is a collection of the best of recent Jewish scholarship and ancient commentary on the Torah.
2. Next is **TANAKH**, the Jewish Publications Society's translation of the entire Bible -- Torah (the five books) Nevi'im (the prophets) and Ketuvim (the writings.). In understandable English, the translation allows us access to the sacred texts of our people, and the central book of Western civilization.
3. An introduction to the Talmud. One useful compendium of teachings is **Everyman's Talmud** by Abraham Cohen. Also very good is the **Essential Talmud** by Adin Steinsaltz. Jacob Neusner has written several excellent books of introduction to the Talmud and midrash. Another popular writer who takes a more traditional line is Aryeh Kaplan.
4. A good introductory work of Jewish mysticism. Here I would suggest **The Mystic Quest** by David Ariel, or perhaps **The Thirteen Petalled Rose** by Adin Steinsaltz. For those who can find it, I would also strongly recommend Herbert Wiener's beautiful **91/2 Mystics**, an introduction to major mystics around the world. For the more ambitious, the standard works by Gershon Scholem and the new, brilliant scholarship of Moshe Idel are very important.
5. A history of the remarkable Jewish journey. The most readable and fun is Max Diamont's "**Jews God and History**." It is a little outdated, but for the excitement of the general sweep of Jewish history it remains unexcelled. Other readable general histories are Chaim Potok's **Wanderings** and Paul Johnson's **History of the Jews**.
6. A wonderful story is Milton Steinberg's "**As A Driven Leaf**" which introduces us to the world of the Jewish sages. No other novel gives so vivid a picture of the world of the Rabbis, and grippingly depicts how our tradition was shaped.
7. Abraham Joshua Heschel's classic **The Sabbath**. This is the brief, beautiful masterpiece of a wonderful theologian and writer who powerfully influenced modern Judaism.

8. **Jewish Literacy** by Joseph Telushkin or **Essential Judaism** by George Robinson. Both of these are useful as reference books, and delightful to simply read through to understand the byways of our rich, fascinating heritage. A similar book, compellingly written, is Herman Wouk's "**This is My God.**"

9. **Night** by Elie Wiesel. There are libraries of books on the holocaust but nothing else gives the condensed horror of this most chilling period in human history. Wiesel is a witness, an artist and a deeply learned Jew. All of his many gifts combined to create this enduring masterpiece. It stands alongside of Primo Levi's powerful "**Survival in Auschwitz**" and "**The Diary of Anne Frank**" as books that not only all Jews, but all members of the human race, ought to read.

10. A good prayer book. **The Sim Shalom** is one choice, but there are many, with annotations and additions. Buy one that you can hand down through the generations, since the more a prayer book is used the more holiness gathers in it.

As an addendum, a personal note: two of my books, "**Why be Jewish**" and "**The Healer of Shattered Hearts: A Jewish View of God**" have bibliographies in the back citing other works as well. There are also anthologies and many other works, which are helpful. Additionally, if you have small children, you might find a book I wrote called "**Teaching your Children About God**" useful as well. Good luck and good reading!

“There is no word for charity. The word that is used to denote assistance to others is Tzedakah, which means “righteousness.” In the ancient Temple there was a box called Tamchui placed in the rear. Contributions were placed in the box. At night the poor would take what they needed for their sustenance. The exemplary manner of giving is called matan baseser, or “giving in secret.” It is held to be morally wrong to embarrass those who cannot provide for their own needs. Every man is required to assist his fellow man, thinking: “Is he not created in the image of God?” According to rabbinic law, even the pauper who receives charity must give charity...”from the book “The Sages Speak” by Rabbi William B. Silverman

BIBLIOGRAPHY ON BAR & BAT MITZVAH FOR PARENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE

We are blessed to have one of the finest Judaica Libraries in all of Southern California. Our excellent staff will be delighted to assist you in finding books, which will help you and your family prepare for this wonderful journey of Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

The following selected books from the Sinai Temple Blumenthal Library can extend and enrich the experience of becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Those marked with an asterisk (*) are especially intended for pre-Bar/Bat Mitzvah-age readers.

Library hours are from 9:00am to 12:30pm on Sundays mornings; 8:00am-6:00pm on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday; 8:00am-8:30pm on Tuesday; and 8:00am-3:30pm on Fridays, (8:00am-2:30pm in winter). We are closed on Shabbat.

I. GENERAL WORKS ON JUDAISM

1. Freedman, E. *What Does Being Jewish Mean?* Prentice Hall Press, 1991. Summary: Read aloud responses to questions that Jewish children ask about history, culture, and religion.
2. Himelstein, Shmuel. *The Jewish Primer. Facts on File*, 1990. Summary: Questions and answers on all basic areas of Judaism.
3. Steinberg, Milton. *Basic Judaism. Jason Aronson*, 1987. Summary: Basic introduction to the origins, practices, and philosophy of Judaism.
4. Telushkin, Joseph. *Jewish Literacy. William Morrow*, 1991. Summary: Compendium on the essential trends, concepts and personalities of Jewish history, religion and culture.

II. INTRODUCTION TO BAR/BAT MITZVAH HISTORY AND CUSTOMS

1. Cohen, Nachman. *Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Beyond. Torah Lishmah Institute*, 1988. Summary: Manual following a traditional approach on the laws of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, review of mitzvot, and an in-depth study of the Thirteen Articles of Faith.
2. Davis, Judith. *Whose Bat/Bat Mitzvah is this Anyway? – A Guide for Parents Through a Family Rite of Passage. St. Martin’s Griffin*, 1998. Summary: Examines how the bar/bat mitzvah experience has a psychological effect on the entire family and what can be done to make it a meaningful experience for everyone involved.
- *3. Kimmel, Eric A. *Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah. Viking*, 1995. Summary: Provides historical background, explanations of ceremonial objects and rituals, and real-life stories about Bar Mitzvah.
4. Neusner, Jacob, ed. *Mitzvah: Basic Jewish Ideas. Rossel Books*, 1981. Sources and values oriented discussions.
- *5. Rossel, Seymour. *A Spiritual Journey – The Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah. Behrman House*, 1993. Summary: Combines practical issues of becoming a Bar or

Bat Mitzvah with exploration of the deeper emotional and spiritual meaning.

- *6. Salkin, Jeffrey K. For Kids: Putting God on the Guest List. Jewish Lights, 1998. Summary: How to claim the spiritual meaning of your Bar or Bat Mitzvah.
7. Strassfeld, Michael and Sharon. The Second Jewish Catalog. Jewish Publication Society, 1976, pp.61-81. Summary: An outstanding chapter on Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and modes of celebration. Many ideas are presented for supplemental leaning experiences (some of which could become family projects) and for party planning. (Incidentally, the three-volume Jewish Catalog set is a good Bar/Bat Mitzvah gift and home reference).

III. PRACTICAL GUIDES

1. Latner, Helen. The Book of Modern Jewish Etiquette: a guide for all occasions. Schocken Books, 1981.
2. Leneman, Helen, ed. Bar/Bat Mitzvah Basics – A Practical Family Guide to Coming of Age Together. Jewish Lights, 1996. Summary: Gives parents and teens the information they need to navigate the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process.
3. Lewit, Jane and Ellen Robinson Epstein. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Plan-Book. Scarborough House, 1991. Updated version of a 1982 work with a step-by-step approach to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah planning process and experience.
4. Reisfeld, Randi. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Survival Guide. Citadel Press, 1992. Summary: Practical, informative, and humorous look at the coming-of-age ritual.

“Genuine reverence for the sanctity of study is bound to invoke in the pupils the awareness that study is not an ordeal but an act of edification; that the school is a sanctuary, not a factory; that study is a form of worship. True learning is a way of relating oneself to something, which is both eternal and universal...” from “The Insecurity of Freedom” by Abraham Joshua Heschel

SINAI TEMPLE BAR/BAT MITZVAH ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

The policy requires that Bar and Bat Mitzvah candidates and their families fulfill the following requirements to be eligible for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony at Sinai Temple:

- A. The child must complete at least five (5) consecutive years of study in our Sinai Temple Religious School, or be a student at Sinai Akiba Academy enrolled by the 5th grade. Additionally, the family must be a member of Sinai Temple, in good standing, and its account must be current, including all membership fees, pledges, tuition, and any other financial obligations. A Bar or Bat Mitzvah date assignment may not be considered or discussed until these financial obligations are met.
- B. If the Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate does not meet the requirements as outlined in Paragraph “A” and the parents feel that there are extenuating circumstances, a B'nai Mitzvah Eligibility Request Form (“Eligibility Form”) needs to be completed by the child’s parents. The Eligibility Form is available from the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Coordinator. The form needs to be completed and submitted to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Coordinator. The Eligibility Form is reviewed by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Eligibility Committee (“Committee”). The Committee shall submit in writing to the family the requirements necessary for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah to be scheduled at Sinai Temple (“Requirement Letter”). If the terms of the Requirement Letter are acceptable and the family agrees to fulfill the requirements contained in the Requirement Letter, then the family needs to sign and return a copy of the Requirement Letter.
- C. The information requested in the Eligibility Form includes (i) a copy of the child’s transcripts if the child has attended another accredited religious school or Jewish day school, and (ii) written proof of family’s past congregational membership if not a member of Sinai Temple over the past three years. If any information provided regarding a child’s enrollment and attendance in an accredited religious school program or of the family’s past synagogue involvement is found to be inaccurate or misleading, Sinai Temple reserves the right to deny the scheduling of a date for Bar or Bat Mitzvah.
- D. The Eligibility Form shall be reviewed by a committee consisting of members of the professional staff, lay committee members, and the President of the Temple and/or his or her designee. The Committee shall review the information submitted. The committee may choose to meet with the family and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. In the event a child has not completed the requirements contained in paragraph “A,” the committee may require the Bar or Bat Mitzvah (i) be delayed (ii) the child may be required to take additional classes, (iii) the child may be required to obtain a private tutor, (iv) the child may be requested to complete additional projects and/or additional assignments. If the family has not been a member of Sinai Temple during the past three years, the committee may request a future commitment and/or payment of future membership dues to Sinai Temple past the date of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The decision of the committee is final.

- E. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah is required to complete his or her religious studies for the balance of the school year in which the celebration takes place. This means that if a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is celebrating a Bar/Bat Mitzvah service on or after October 1st of any given year, he or she is required to attend an accredited religious school program for the remaining academic year. Furthermore, students who have completed five (5) years of Religious School studies or have graduated from Sinai Akiba Academy or another accepted Jewish Day School prior to the year of their Bar or Bat Mitzvah are required to attend Sinai High, a Sinai Program for graduates of Akiba Academy, Milken Community High School, Shalhevet High School, Los Angeles Hebrew High School, or an accredited Jewish school in the year of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- F. Sinai Temple recognizes the needs of committed members of the congregation who have children with significant learning disabilities. Therefore, private instruction under the direction of our Director of Religious School may be discussed. A special Bar or Bat Mitzvah may be arranged with the Senior Cantor. The family needs to contact the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Coordinator to set up an appointment with the Director of the Religious School and the Senior Cantor to discuss the possible alternatives for the child with significant learning disabilities.
- G. If the Bar/ Bat Mitzvah Fee is not paid in full one year prior to the date of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, a cancellation of the reserved date may result.
- H. If the Bar and Bat Mitzvah Policy of Sinai Temple is not followed, a date for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah may not be given and immediate cancellation of a scheduled date may occur. Notification of a cancellation of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date shall be in writing and sent to the mailing address contained in our membership records by U.S. mail with a return receipt requested. Members that tender their resignation or do not renew their membership automatically lose their assigned Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

We have read and understand the Sinai Temple Bar/Bat Mitzvah Eligibility Requirements Policy adopted by the Board of Directors of Sinai Temple. We agree and accept the policy and shall adhere to its requirements.

Agreed:

Date: _____

Music Catalogue for Shabbat and Festival S'udat

In order to maintain the sanctity and spirit of Shabbat and Festivals, luncheon receptions at Sinai Temple following services on Shabbat and Festival afternoons must have appropriate music. Appropriate music is Jewish music – Israeli, Chassidic, Yiddish, and Hebrew. You may have a disc jockey or orchestra to enhance the celebration, but we ask that they select music from the following catalogue. The catalogue is a guide but by no means complete. If you have questions, or if your band has questions, we ask that you contact our Rabbis and Cantor for guidance and assistance.

1. Any songs from The Best of Debbie Friedman, Tara Music Publications.
2. Any songs from the Israel Goldfarb Jewish Center Songsters.
3. Any songs in the Great Songs of Israel collection, Tara Publications.
4. Any songs in the Chasidic Style Songs collection, Tara Publications.
5. Any songs in the Z'mirot Anthology collection, Tara Publications.
6. Any songs from the Safam collections.
7. Any songs from the collections of Craig Taubman on Jewish themes.
8. Any selections from the Great Jewish, Yiddish Classics series, vol. 1-5.
9. Klezmer/Yiddish band repertoire.
10. Selections from The Songs We Sing, A Harvest of Jewish Song, Fiddler on the Roof, Songs of the Chassidim (Tara Publications).

This list represents hundreds of titles and will enhance your celebration.

PARENT CHECKLIST

***This is a list of information that must be completed and turned into the
Bar/Bat Mitvah Coordinator***

Child Name:

B/M Date:

Venue:

Partner:

Instructor:

Enrollment Packet: _____ Date Rec'd: _____

- Eligibility & Enrollment Form - Signed
- Temple Policy on Eligibility & Assigning Dates - Signed
- B/M Fee Deposit to hold assigned date
- B/M Fee Balance Due by June 1st of Preceding Year
- Venue Selection
 - Main Sanctuary
 - Torah In The Round
 - Family Minyan

1st Lesson: _____ Date Rec'd: _____

- Schedule Appointments on www.bookingcalander.com/SinaiTemple
- Monitor Student Progress on www.mitzvahtools.com
- Contract Agreement - Signed
- Plaque Form/Certificate – Verified, Signed
- Child/Parents' Names – Pew Bulletin
- Child Article/Bio – Pew Bulletin
- Picture – Sinai Speaks
- Guest List
- Aliyot & Honors
 - Single
 - Double
 - TITR
 - Family Minyan

- Schedule 1st Appointment for preparation of D'var Torah Torah Readers
- Email Addresses/Cell Phone Numbers

Website References

SinaiTemple.org – Our synagogue website that has all of the prayers and blessings our B'nai Mitzvah need to learn for their Bar and Bat Mitzvah. Simply go online and type: www.sinaitemple.org. On the home page go to Temple or Education and scroll down to Bar/Bat Mitzvah for various links. Under Study Resources you will find MP3 and PDF files of the prayers and blessings along with Trope exercises for learning to read the Haftarah and Torah. Torah Reading Resources has the entire Torah Reading available with and without vowels and trope. We are in the process of adding additional links for your convenience.

Private Lesson Scheduling - We are now scheduling Bar/Bat Mitzvah appointments online. The website is www.mybookingcalendar.com/SinaiTemple. This website will be effective as of January 1, 2008.

MitzvahTools.com - A single place for parents to monitor the progress of their students, confirm the next lesson time, with accessibility from anywhere. You can track attendance and tardiness of students. The website generates progress reports for review by students, parents and clergy. The program helps to monitor every aspect and detail of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Hebcal.com - A Jewish calendar for looking up your child's Jewish Birth Date, Torah portion, candle lighting times and when Shabbat ends. It is customized by zip codes and converts between Hebrew and Gregorian dates.

D'var Torah (Speech) Research Websites – These three sites contain commentaries which may be used for research in preparing your child's D'var Torah (Speech). Additional sites may be found on the Internet and we encourage you to access our library – one of the finest Jewish libraries in our community.

http://www.uscj.org/Torah_Sparks_Weekly5467.html

<http://www.jtsa.edu/x1941.xml>

<http://israelvisit.co.il/top/previous.htm>

GLOSSARY OF TRANSLITERATED HEBREW TERMS
(from “*The Encyclopedia of Jewish Prayer*” by Macy Nulman)

ALIYAH - Pl. *aliyot* (lit. “ascending”); a term for describing a person(s) who is “called up” to the reading of the Torah.

AMIDAH – Lit. “standing”; the eighteen benedictions (now nineteen) that are said daily while standing. On Sabbath and festivals seven benedictions are uttered and on Musaf of Rosh Hashanah nine benedictions are recited. *Amidah* is also called *Sh’moneh Esrei*.

AVOT – “Fathers”; the first benediction in the *Amidah* naming the three patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

BA’AL K’ERIAH – Also called *ba’al korei*; officiant who reads the Torah from the scroll in the synagogue with proper accentuation and cantillation.

BA’AL MUSAF – Officiant who leads the congregation in *Musaf* (“addition”) service on the Sabbath and festivals.

BA’AL SHACHRIT – Officiant who chants the morning service (*Shachrit*).

BA’AL TEFILLAH – Lit. “master of the prayer”; generally used in contrast to *hazzan* to designate a person who leads the prayers with a pleasing voice and in a simple style.

BAR MITZVAH – Lit. “son of commandment”; a boy who has reached his thirteenth birthday is called a *Bar Mitzvah*.

BAT MITZVAH – Lit. “daughter of commandment”; a girl who has reached her thirteenth birthday is called a *Bat Mitzvah*.

BIMA – Lit. “platform”; the raised platform, in a synagogue, where the reading desk is placed; Sephardim call it *taybah* (“box”).

BIRKAT HAMAZON – The blessing for food known also as grace after meals.

BIRKAT HATORAH – The two Torah blessings pronounced over the Torah by the person honored with an *Aliyah*.

B’NAI MITZVAH - The masculine plural form of Bar and Bat Mitzvah.

B’NOT MITZVAH – The feminine plural form of Bat Mitzvah.

D’VAR TORAH – the B’nai Mitzvah delivers a brief address incorporating a personal interpretation of the meaning derived from the Parasha.

GABBAI – Pl. *gabba'im*; lit. “collector”; originally a collector of dues and/or charitable donations; later the synagogue official who oversees the religious needs of the congregation.

GEVUROT – Lit. “Powers”; name given to the second benediction of the *Amidah*.

HAFTARAH – Lit. “leave-taking”; a portion from which the prophetic books, read after reading the Torah portion on Sabbaths and festivals by B’nai Mitzvah.

HAGBAH – Lit. “a lifting”; the raising of the Torah scroll after the reading of the Torah.

HAKKAFAH – Pl. *hakkafot*; (1) processional circuits made with the Torah scroll on the festival of the *Simhat Torah*; (2) processional circuits made around with the deceased's coffin.

HALLEL – Lit. “praise”; Pss. 113-118 recited in the morning service of Rosh Hodesh, Hanukkah, and the Three Pilgrimage Festivals.

HAVDALAH – Lit. “separation”; the blessing recited over wine, light, and spices, by which the Sabbath and festivals are ushered out.

HAZZAN – Pl. *hazzanim*; in Temple and Talmudic days, a general Communal functionary; since about the sixth and seventh centuries, the reader (cantor) who recites aloud the prayers before the congregation.

HOL HAMO’AYD – Lit “weekday of the festival”; name applied to the intermediary days of *Pesah* and *Sukkot*.

KABBALAT SHABBAT – Lit. “Welcoming the Sabbath”; the opening service on the Friday evening preceding the ARVIT SERVICE.

KADDISH – Lit. sanctification”; the doxology recited to mark the end of principal sections in the prayer service. It is also a name given to the prayer for the departed.

KEDUSHAH – Lit. “sanctification”; name given to three different forms of prayer comprising scriptural verses (Isa. 6:3; Ez. 3:12; Ps. 146:10) in which angels sing of the holiness of God and sanctify Him. Various texts link these responses.

KIDDUSH – Lit. “sanctification”; the blessing (over wine) by which the Sabbath or festival is ushered in.

MA’ARIV – The evening service; a word used interchangeably with *Avrit*.

MAFTIR – The last aliyah and section of the Torah Reading reserved for the B’nai Mitzvah. Also refers to the HafTorah read by the B’nai Mitzvah.

MINHAG – Pl. *minhagim*; ritual custom(s) or synagogue rite(s). The prayer customs of a given sector of Jewry (Ashkenazim or Sephardim).

MINCHAH – Afternoon service. In the Temple times it referred to meal offering.

MINYAN – A quorum of ten male adults, the minimum required for public worship.

MITZVAH – “Commandment” or “good deed.”

MUSAF – Originally the additional sacrifice offered in the Temple. After Temple times it referred to the additional service comprising a supplementary *Amidah* recited during the morning service on the Sabbaths and festivals.

NUSACH – Pl. *nuscha'ot* (Ar.) or *nusachim* (Heb.); a word meaning “version,” applied to various rites of prayer (*Nusach Ashkenaz*; *Nusach Sephard*; *Nusach Ari*). The word is also applied to a melodic pattern or prayer mode in the synagogue chant.

OLEH – Lit. “ascender”; a person who ascends the reader’s desk for an Aliyah.

OMER – Lit. “sheaf”; the first sheaf cut during the barley harvest and offered as a sacrifice on the second day of Passover, before the new cereals of that year were forbidden to use. Seven weeks from that day and culminating on *Shavu'ot* (forty-nine days) is known as the period of Counting the *Omer*, a practice retained to this day.

PARASHAH – Pl. *parashot*; a section of the Pentateuch, that is, the “portion of the week” read in the synagogue on the Sabbath. The term is used interchangeably with **SIDRAH**.

PESAH – Passover; first of the Pilgrimage Festivals.

P'SUKEI D'ZIMRAH – Versus of Song; name designated for a number of psalms read at the beginning of the morning service. Sephardim call this section **ZEMIROT**.

ROSH HASHANAH – Lit. “head of the year”; the New Year commencing on the first of *Tishre*.

SEFER (1) A term denoting a Hebrew book; (2) the Torah scroll is also referred to as the *Sefer Torah*.

SHACHRIT – Lit. “dawn”; the first prayer service of the day that takes place in the morning.

SHALIACH TZIBBUR – An all embracing name meaning “messenger” or “emissary” of the congregation, applied to the person who recites the prayers aloud before the congregation.

SHEMINI ATZERET – The eight-day of the festival of *Sukkot* (Lev. 23:36) celebrated as a separate holiday.

SHEMONEH ESREI – Lit. “eighteen”; a term used synonymously with *Amidah*. Although an additional benediction was added, bringing the number to nineteen, the appellation *Shemoneh Esrei* was retained.

SHOFAR – Lit. “ram’s horn”; an instrument used during the prayer service, particularly during the High Holy Days.

SHOCHET – Ritual slaughter of animals or fowl.

SIDDUR – Pl. *siddurim*; word meaning “order: given to the daily and Sabbath prayer book.

SIDRAH – Pl. *sidrot*; a portion of the Pentateuch read in the synagogue on the Sabbath.

SIMHAT TORAH – Lit. “Rejoicing of the Law”; festival marking the completion of the reading the Torah in the synagogue. In Israel it is observed on the eighth day of *Sukkot*; in the Diaspora it is held on the following day.

SIVAN – The third month in the Jewish calendar, corresponding to May or June.

SUKKOT – The Feast of Tabernacles, one of the Three Pilgrimage Festivals.

TALLIT– A four-cornered shawl with tzitzit (fringes) at each corner worn during certain prayer services.

TAMMUZ – The fourth month in the Jewish calendar, corresponding to the month of June or July,

TEFILAH – Pl. *Tefilot*, prayer.

TEFILLIN – Phylacteries; small cases containing passages from the Scripture and affixed to the forehead and the arms.

TESHUVAH – Lit. “return”; “repentance.” The term implies a person’s return to the path of righteousness.

TEVET – The tenth month of the Jewish calendar, corresponding to December or January.

TISHA B’AB – The fast of the Ninth of Av commemorating the destruction of the First and Second Temples (586 B.C.E. and 70 C.E., respectively).

TISHRE – The seventh month of the Jewish calendar, corresponding to September or October.

TZEDAKAH – Charity.

YAHRTZEIT – A Yiddish word denoting the anniversary of the death of a relative.

YIZKOR – Lit. “He shall remember”; initial word in the Ashkenazic rite of a prayer recited on Yom Kippur and the last day of the festivals to commemorate the dead. It is the name popularly applied to the entire service.

YOM KIPPUR – Day of Atonement.

YOM TOV – Lit. “good day”; name given to a festival.

ZEMIROT – (1) Table-hymns sung during Sabbath meals and at the close of Sabbath; (2) name used by Sephardim for the section, “Versus of Song,” recited in the Morning Prayer service.