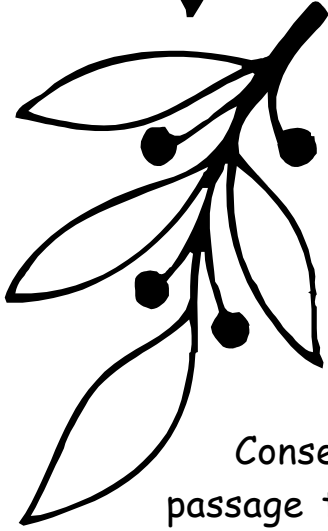


Mazal Tov on your child's forthcoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This simcha is a very happy and important occasion in your family's life, and a milestone to be cherished and remembered for many years to come.



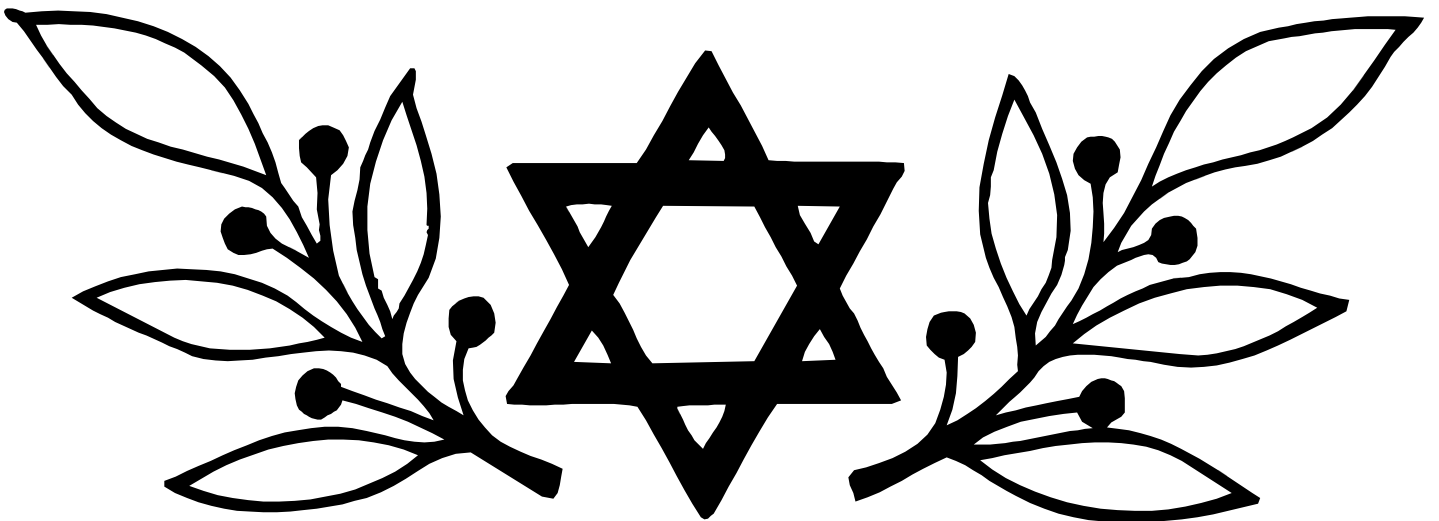
Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a beginning. At the age of 13 (12 or 13 for a girl), a boy or girl reaches the age of religious majority and is now able to take upon him/herself the privileges, obligations and responsibilities of living a full and meaningful Jewish life.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is meant to be a formal and public recognition of the young person's willingness to accept this new status within the wider Jewish community.

Consequently, the ceremony is viewed as part of a Jewish person's passage through life, as he/she grows and matures as a practicing and serious Jewish individual.

Much planning and thought will go into your child's special day. We at Ohev Shalom want to help make your celebration the best and most meaningful that it can be. For this reason, we have prepared this booklet which includes our Bar/Bat Mitzvah policies, as well as synagogue fees, timetables for appointments, catering information and much more.

Once again, MAZAL TOV.





## **BAR/BAT MITZVAH REQUIREMENTS**

The following are the policies and requirements for Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Ohev Shalom. The Rabbi, Education Director, Cantor and the Education Committee, as approved by the Board of Directors, present these requirements to ensure that our Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrants have a meaningful educational and religious experience at this milestone in their lives.

Each year, the Rabbi will call a meeting of parents of children who will be having their Bar/Bat Mitzvah in the next few years. The Rabbi, Cantor, Executive Director, and a member of the House Utilization Committee will be present. At that meeting, parents will have an opportunity to learn of the requirements and procedures for Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Ohev Shalom.

1. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah will take place when the child, boy or girl, has reached his/her 13th birthday as determined by Jewish law.
2. A child is entitled to a Bar or Bat Mitzvah Ceremony if one of the following requirements are met:
  - Satisfactory attendance and progress in the synagogue religious school from third grade through seventh grade.
  - Enrollment in a Jewish Day School through the seventh grade with the understanding that if such child leaves the Jewish Day School, he/she would enroll in our synagogue religious school.
  - Extraordinary and extenuating circumstances shall be considered on a case by case basis by a committee comprised of the Rabbi, Education Director, the chairpersons of the Education Committee and the Ritual Committee. If this committee is unable to arrive at a decision, the matter will be referred to the Board of Directors.
3. One of the goals of any synagogue religious school is to make the student knowledgeable and comfortable with our prayer services. A significant portion of our curriculum is devoted to prayer and an understanding of the synagogue services, especially for Shabbat.

This goal cannot be fully achieved unless our students attend synagogue on a regular basis. As your child approaches Bar or Bat Mitzvah, we highly recommend that he/she attend as many Shabbat services as possible, especially during the time period of Bar/Bat Mitzvah instruction.

### **MITZVAH PROJECT**

Every child is required to develop and execute a mitzvah project under the supervision of the Education Director. Consult the "Mitzvah Project Handbook" for more details.

## PREPARATIONS FOR BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Approximately seven months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, each family will have a private meeting with the Rabbi, Cantor, and Teacher, to discuss both the Bar/Bat mitzvah process and the options available for the ceremony. After this meeting the child will begin private weekly lessons with the teacher. Each lesson shall last for at least thirty minutes. The teacher will contact you at the appropriate time for your son/daughter to begin lessons. There will be 25-30 lessons per child. Parents are urged to supervise their child's practice time at home. A successful lesson usually depends upon adequate prep time at home.

Attendance at services on Shabbat will enhance and give more meaning to your child's special day. It is recommended that parents also attend Shabbat services, and other B'nai Mitzvah services, in order to become familiar with the pulpit and worship procedures.

Each child will be asked to take part in Friday night and Shabbat morning services in the weeks prior to his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah with the hope of increased participation at his/her celebration and into the future.

### MEETINGS WITH THE RABBI -- CHILD

Shortly after the joint meeting, the child will meet with the rabbi for an introductory session, to discuss the following:

- The D'var Torah (word of Torah) the child will be expected to deliver at his/her bar/bat mitzvah ceremony
- The meaning of the Torah and Haftara portions
- The meaning and spirituality of bar/bat mitzvah
- The child's Jewish identity and interests
- The child's other interests, academically and other

It is the child's responsibility to call or e-mail ([rabbicongohev@comcast.net](mailto:rabbicongohev@comcast.net)) the rabbi to set up this initial appointment. Subsequent to this meeting, three months prior to the ceremony, the child will meet with the rabbi four times, more as needed, to further discuss these issues and to work intensively on the child's D'var Torah. The D'var Torah will allow the child to absorb the meaning of his/her Torah/Haftarah portions, to make personal meaning of elements he/she finds interesting in the portions, and to share a related message to the congregation on his/her Bar Mitzvah day. The support of parents in this endeavor is critically important.

### MEETING WITH RABBI - PARENTS

Shortly after the joint meeting, the parent/s of the child will meet with the rabbi for one one-hour session, to discuss the following, and to ask whatever questions they may have:

- The spirituality and meaning of bar/bat-mitzvah
- Plans for community and private celebrations
- Plans for child's continuing Jewish education
- Family issues raised by the approach of the simcha

It is the responsibility of the parent/s to call or e-mail ([rabbicongohev@comcast.net](mailto:rabbicongohev@comcast.net)) the rabbi to arrange this appointment. The rabbi is fully available subsequent to this meeting to discuss any and all issues related the bar/bat mitzvah as they day approaches.



## WHAT WILL YOU & YOUR CHILD DO IN THE SERVICE?

The most important aspect of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is being called to the Torah for an Aliyah. By reciting the blessings over the Torah, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child makes a public statement to the congregation that he/she is prepared to be included as a religious adult in the life of the Jewish community.

In addition, the Haftarah (a portion from the Prophets) is chanted on Shabbat morning along with the blessings that accompany the Haftarah.

If the service is on a Rosh Chodesh, Monday or Thursday morning, or Shabbat Afternoon, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will read the portion from the Torah. (There is no Haftarah at these times)

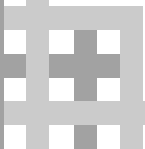
Every Child will be given the opportunity to participate in the Friday night service.

The child, based on the initial family meeting with the Rabbi, Cantor, and Teacher, may be encouraged to do other parts of the service such as Torah reading or leading prayers.

### **Each child must have his/her own Tallit.**

During the course of the service, the parents can recite a special prayer for their child. This speech can be provided by the Rabbi, or may be written by the parents with the approval of the Rabbi.

The Shehecheyanu (prayer of thanksgiving) is recited at the conclusion of the service by the child's relatives.



## ALIYOT AND OTHER HONORS

The Rabbi will provide you with a list to fill out and return to him. At least ten days prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, you need to submit to the Rabbi a list of those individuals whom you wish to honor.

There are seven aliyot (the prayer recited over the Torah in Hebrew) on Shabbat morning that can be distributed. There are only three such honors at the Shabbat Afternoon/Havdalah service or at the Monday/Thursday morning service. On Rosh Hodesh, there are four aliyot.

Ohev Shalom is a full egalitarian synagogue, so all honors and aliyot can be given to both men and women. We require that all women who come to the bema for an honor wear a tallit and a head-covering.

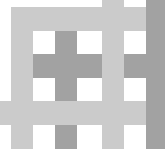
There are other honors that do not require the recitation of prayers in Hebrew. Hagbah (lifting the Torah) and Gelilah (binding and dressing the Torah) are two such important honors. There are also several honors for opening and closing the ark as well as other, such as removing the Torah from the ark or placing the Torah back in the ark. The Rabbi will explain all of the honors when you meet with him.

It is important to take note that the Torah Aliyot as well as Hagbah and Gelilah, require Hebrew names of those being honored. It will be your responsibility to obtain these names no later than ten days prior to the service. Please remember that the full Hebrew name includes the person's Hebrew name as well as that person's father and mother's Hebrew names. The Rabbi is always available to help you.

You may also honor a family member or good friend by asking them to lead a Hebrew or English prayer.

During the course of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony, presentations by various groups will be made. You will be allowed to choose one congregant in good standing with the congregation to present one of these gifts. Gifts are given by the following organizations:

1. Congregation/School
2. Sisterhood
3. Men's Club
4. Bnai Brith
5. Jewish War Veterans



## USE OF THE SYNAGOGUE FACILITIES

In order for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah to take place at Ohev Shalom, you must be a member in good standing. If there are any problems in this area, you should contact the synagogue president.

### 1. Friday Night Services

As you know, we hold our regular Friday night service at 6:00 PM

- Having your Bar/Bat Mitzvah child participate at the 6:00 PM service is an option.
- Some families choose to have their family Shabbat dinner in the synagogue following the service.
- There is generally not an Oneg Shabbat following a 6:00 PM service.

### 2. Kosher Catering

We encourage all families to hold their receptions in the synagogue. Not only will it be a kosher affair, in keeping with the religious spirit of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, but we will also utilize our second home, Ohev Shalom. A list of approved caterers and bakeries is enclosed in this booklet.

From time to time the congregation has had some trouble with a few of the caterers registering their security deposits with the synagogue office. Please check with the office one month prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to ensure that your caterer will not face any problems with the use of our building. All caterers must either have a current contract with the synagogue or establish one. This is a very easy process and can be discussed with the Executive Director.

### 3. Party Professionals

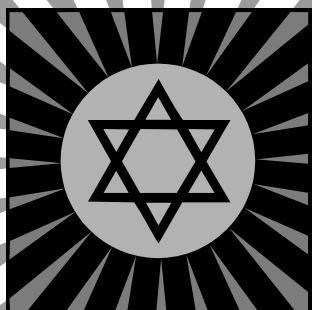
You must provide the names of your florist and/or decorator, band leader, photographer, and caterer when you book the synagogue.

### 4. Photography

If formal pictures are going to be taken, please reserve a date with the executive director at least one month in advance. Still photography is not allowed on Shabbat.

### 5. Facilities

Two weeks prior to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah please provide to the synagogue any diagrams for any setup of tables, chairs etc. in the social hall. White table cloths are standard. Color cloths must be ordered one month in advance. Your caterer may handle this, as well.



## WHAT YOU NEED TO PROVIDE

- For Shabbat morning your responsibility is to provide a kiddush for the community following services. This can be something simple as cake and cookies or a catered lunch. A festive meal in the synagogue after the ceremony is as integral to Jewish tradition as the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony itself. After services on Shabbat morning, we recite kiddush and motzi on the pulpit. You must provide two challahs and two bottles of kosher wine.

## SOME REMINDERS

- Nothing may be brought into or taken out of the synagogue after Shabbat begins on Friday afternoon until after Shabbat concludes on Saturday night. **Please remind your guests not to bring gifts to the synagogue on Shabbat.**
- **The only photography that is allowed at a Shabbat service is a video camera.** It must be set on a tripod at the far corner of the sanctuary on the right side. We recommend that video taping not be handled by a guest of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Video must be turned off at the conclusion of the service.
- **No writing is allowed in the synagogue on the Shabbat.**
- Please do not order any booklets with religious content without first consulting the Rabbi. **Any booklets that will be printed for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah must be approved by the Rabbi.**
- **There is no smoking on Shabbat in the synagogue or on the grounds.** Please advise your non-Jewish friends. Ohev Shalom is a smoke free building, thus there is also no smoking in the building at any time.
- **Directions to Ohev Shalom are available in the synagogue office.** You may want to include them in your invitations. A copy is attached for your use.

