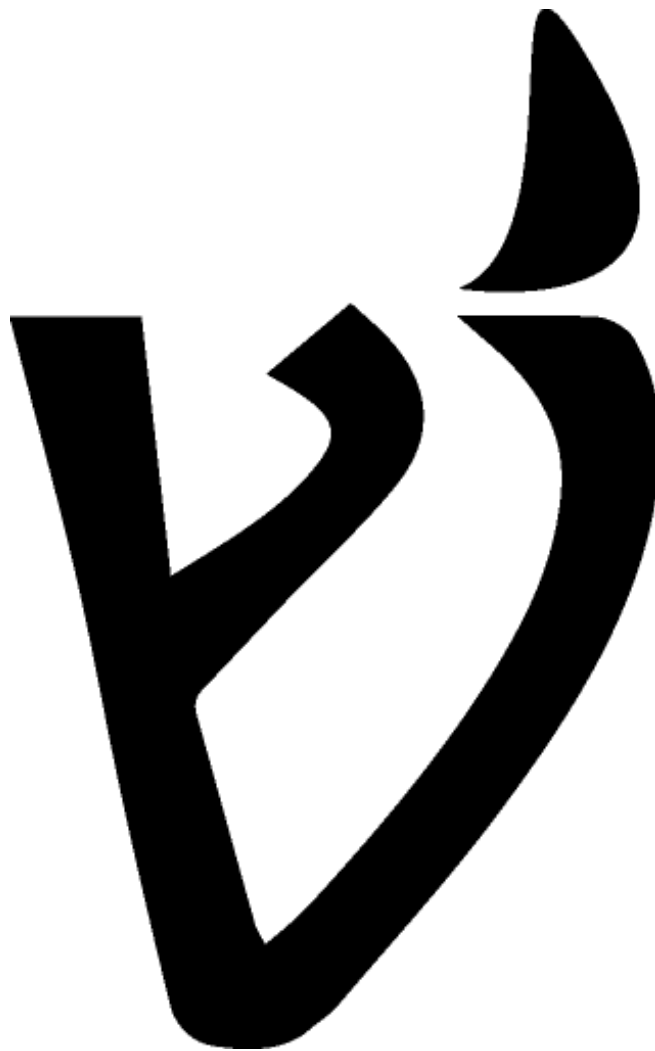


Congregation Shaarei Shamayim
B'nei Mitzvah Handbook



Updated Summer 2018

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Introduction

About the Manual

Shaarei Shamayim is delighted that so many families are joining our community and choosing to celebrate a Bar/Bat Mitzvah with us. These ceremonies are integral to the ritual and communal life of the congregation, and the community is proud of its young members who go through this important rite of passage. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a spiritual journey for the entire family, and we hope this manual helps to guide you through this process.

While each Bar/Bat Mitzvah is personalized to meet the needs of the student and his/her family, the community has developed a set of policies, procedures, and customs to create a structure for our B'nei Mitzvah program. The intention of this manual is to continue to create space to make this process personal, unique, and fulfilling for the student and his/her family. If you are concerned about a particular policy, please do not hesitate to speak with the Rabbi or member of the Coordinating Committee.

Any Jewish child who desires to participate in the B'nei Mitzvah program, regardless of ability, age, or special circumstances, is encouraged to explore this process. Modifications and accommodations to the B'nei Mitzvah policies and procedures are both understandable and respected. Please consult the Rabbi to discuss special arrangements should they be necessary.

This handbook was created over time with contributions from many members of the community. Several families who have gone through the B'nei Mitzvah process provided their input by sharing experiences, reviewing materials, and providing worthwhile feedback.

Contact Information

Shaarei Shamayim's Location for Services

First Unitarian Society
900 University Bay Drive, Madison

Shaarei Shamayim's Mailing Address

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Madison, WI 53705

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Shaarei Shamayim's Web Site

www.shamayim.org

Shaarei Shamayim Vision

Shaarei Shamayim is a growing, open, pluralistic congregation of 150 households. We believe that Judaism is a means for bringing justice, holiness, and joy to our world, and we are building Jewish community rooted in creativity and authenticity. We are reimagining the possibilities for Jewish life, identity, and community.

We invite people of varied Jewish backgrounds to join us. We value the participation of singles, families, twenty- and thirty-somethings, and empty-nesters. We are LGBTQ and interfaith inclusive, strive to accommodate people with disabilities, and welcome Jews-by-choice and Jews of color.

We embrace community. We create space for our members and friends to deepen their Jewish lives, reconnect to their Judaism, or encounter it for the first time. We do this through our monthly *havurot* (fellowship groups), Shabbat potlucks, learning opportunities, social justice work, and congregational committees. We do it by dropping off a lasagna when there's a new baby or by driving a fellow member to chemo. We find going through life with others is preferable to going it alone.

We know there are many ways to encounter holiness and deep purpose in our lives. We are secular, spiritual, religious, and none of the above. We try to create a meaningful ritual life through Shabbat gatherings, meditation, Torah study, prayer, storytelling, life cycle ceremonies, and holiday celebrations.

Celebrating young people is one of our core values. Our educational programs for children and teens foster critical thinking, self-reflection, and curiosity, helping students explore the wisdom of Jewish tradition and finding relevance in it today. We attend our community's bar and bat mitzvah ceremonies so we can support our young people as they journey into adulthood.

Working for social justice is another core value of ours. We are inspired by Jewish tradition to fight for a sustainable world, care for the vulnerable, and create racial and economic justice. We invite speakers to share their knowledge on current issues, partner with community organizations to amplify our voices, and get involved in local efforts to make our city, region, and world a better place for everyone.

We believe that having difficult conversations, grounded in deep listening and respect for others, is essential to creating a vibrant community. Rather than pushing controversial issues away, we study, debate, and share ideas so that we can all grow wiser.

We hope you will challenge us, inspire us, and add your unique voice to our community.

Reconstructionism and Jewish Renewal

Shaarei Shamayim is affiliated with both the Reconstructionist and Jewish Renewal movements.

What is Reconstructionism?

Reconstructionist Judaism is a progressive, contemporary approach to Jewish life, which integrates a deep respect for traditional Judaism with the insights and ideas of contemporary social, intellectual, and spiritual life. Reconstructionists understand that Judaism is more than religion; it is the entire cultural legacy of the Jewish people. We express our Jewish identities through art, music, and drama, languages and literature, and a relationship with the land of Israel, as well as through Jewish spiritual practice.

Reconstructionist Judaism is respectful of traditional Jewish observances but also open to new interpretations and forms of religious expression. As Rabbi Mordecai M. Kaplan (1881-1983), the founder of Reconstructionism, taught, tradition has "a vote, but not a veto."

Reconstructionists share a commitment to making Judaism their own by finding in it joy, meaning, and ideas they can believe.

Reconstructionist communities are characterized by their respect for such core values as democratic process, pluralism, and accessibility. In this way, they create participatory, inclusive, egalitarian communities committed to exploring Jewish life with dedication, warmth, and enthusiasm. These communities emphasize acts of social justice alongside prayer and study, viewing all three as integral to the perpetuation of a vibrant, dynamic Judaism.

For more information please visit www.reconstructingjudaism.org.

What is Jewish Renewal?

Jewish Renewal is a movement of contemporary Jewish life grounded in Judaism's prophetic and mystical traditions. Dedicated to reclaiming the Jewish people's sacred purpose of partnership with the Divine in the inseparable tasks of healing our hearts (*tikkun halev*) and healing the world (*tikkun olam*), it seeks to bring creativity, relevance, joy, and an all embracing awareness to spiritual practice. The movement promotes justice, freedom, responsibility, and caring for all life.

Jewish Renewal draws heavily from the mystical teachings of Kabbalah and Hasidism, and it emphasizes direct spiritual experience. Jewish Renewal communities foster egalitarian, meaningful Jewish practice and seek to experiment with new kinds of prayer. They also promote social and environmental justice as integral to Jewish practice.

Jewish Renewal traces its roots primarily to the work of Rabbis Shlomo Carlebach and Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, who came from Lubavitch Hassidic communities. It was also heavily influenced by the Haverah movement, feminism, and other late twentieth century phenomena.

Jewish Renewal is trans-denominational, meaning that it seeks to influence the other denominations and does not view itself as a separate denomination. The movement reaches out particularly to those who have been disconnected from their Jewish roots and is inclusive of many different kinds of people.

For more information please visit www.aleph.org.

A Word on B'nei Mitzvah

Most of the children in our congregation who reach the age of 13 celebrate a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This is a deeply meaningful and spiritually rich experience for the student, family, and community because it signifies the community's welcoming of the student into Jewish life as an adult. We encourage our students to engage in serious study and community work in order to experience this rite of passage to its fullest and to feel a sense of accomplishment from their hard work.

What is Bar/Bat Mitzvah? Traditionally, the term does not refer to a ceremony but a time of life: upon reaching the age of 13, a young Jew becomes obligated to take on the *mitzvot* ("commandments") of Jewish observance. Among the privileges of this new status are being counted in a *minyan* (the quorum for communal prayer) and being eligible to be called up to the Torah for an *aliyah*, to recite the Torah blessings. Although Reconstructionist Judaism is not centered around the observance of *halachah* (Jewish law), and so does not conceive of Bar/Bat Mitzvah as a literal entry into a life of traditional observance of the *mitzvot*, Bar/Bat Mitzvah remains an important rite of passage, both for the young person and his/her family. What, then, is the significance of a Reconstructionist Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is an acknowledgment of a commitment to Jewish life and Jewish values. If we understand *mitzvot* as ritual and ethical pathways to meaningful connection with Jewish traditions, Jewish values, and Jewish community, then becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah signifies a young person's commitment to understanding and exploring these pathways. In addition, the ceremony and preparation leading up to it are opportunities for family education as well as family celebration, and a chance for parents to reflect on what it means to pass on Jewish values and practices to the next generation.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an affirmation of Jewish learning. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is an opportunity for a young person to share the results of his/her study of Hebrew, Jewish prayer, Torah, and Jewish civilization.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a celebration of community. As we welcome the young person into Shaarei Shamayim as a Jewish adult—to be counted in our *minyan* for prayer, and to be called upon to read Torah and take on other responsibilities, we hope that this ceremony becomes a gateway to the young person's involvement in the life of the congregation in new ways.

(adapted from Dorshei Tzedek's Bar/Bat Mitzvah Manual, www.dorsheitzedek.org)

A Note on Hebrew Grammar

The term “Bar Mitzvah” is used to describe the ceremony or stage of life for a boy and the term “Bat Mitzvah” is used to describe the ceremony or stage of life for a girl. So what is “B’nei Mitzvah”? This is the term used for more than one Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

In Hebrew, there is a grammatical construction called *smichut* (smee-CHOOT)—two nouns put together to form one word, which creates a compound noun. “Bar” and “Bat” mean “son” and “daughter” respectively. “Mitzvah” means commandment. Therefore, “Bar Mitzvah” or “Bat Mitzvah” literally translates as “son/daughter of the commandment” and is an example of a *smichut*.

When making a *smichut* plural, the second noun always stays the same, i.e. “mitzvah” never changes. It is the first word, the “Bar” or “Bat” that changes. “Bar” becomes “B’nei” (b’NAY) and “Bat” becomes “B’not” (b’NOTE). So, when referring to two boys, one says “B’nei Mitzvah.” When referring to two girls, one would say “B’not Mitzvah.” For a boy and a girl, or to refer to these events in general, one would say “B’nei Mitzvah.”

Please note: There is no such word as “B’nei Mitzvot” in Hebrew (only the first word of the *smichut* changes!).

Other nouns follow different patterns when becoming *smichut*.

B'nei Mitzvah Program Overview

Requirements for Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Membership in the community

B'nei Mitzvah represents becoming a full member of the community. Therefore, membership in the community is a requirement. The family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student must be members of the congregation for 15 months or longer prior to the ceremony in order to assure that the student demonstrates sufficient knowledge and preparation based on the discretion of the rabbi.

Sometimes a family may be relatively new to the community and/or may not be very involved. The year before the ceremony is an ideal time to get more involved, and the community strongly encourages the entire family to attend as many congregational events as possible. This will make the family feel more comfortable in the community and it will allow community members to get to know the family.

Attending Bet Sefer (Hebrew School)

Prior to preparing for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the student must study Jewish culture, prayer, spirituality, history, traditions, texts and practices, as well as Hebrew language, so that s/he has enough background to make the ceremony a meaningful experience. Therefore, the student is required to complete the last year of Shaarei Shamayim's Bet Sefer program or an equivalent program.

Commitment to Jewish tradition

Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah signifies that the student is becoming an adult Jewish member of the community and has adult responsibilities in the Jewish tradition. As the student actively prepares and participates in becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, it is necessary for the student to be fully committed to Jewish tradition.

Attending services

Upon celebrating a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the student becomes a full member of the congregation. In order for students to develop an understanding of and appreciation for the customs and practices of the congregation's services, they are required to attend at least 12 Shabbat services in the 15 months prior to the B'nei Mitzvah ceremony. It is best for the student to attend a combination of Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies and smaller Shabbat morning services. At least six of the services the student attends should be the smaller Shabbat morning services. Often the Rabbi will ask the student to lead parts of the service on a regular Shabbat morning.

While parents are not required to attend services with their children, we strongly recommend that they do. They will feel more a part of the community and the people who attend Shabbat services regularly will get to know them. This is extremely important in building community throughout the congregation.

In the month prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the Rabbi will ask the student to sign up to lead part of a service, chant Torah, or give a dvar Torah in the three to six months following the ceremony. This demonstrates an ongoing commitment to the congregation and helps to keep the student involved.

Leading the main prayers of the service

On the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the student will lead several parts of the Shabbat morning service. The Rabbi will assist in helping the tutor and student prioritize the student's learning.

Preparing a Torah and Haftarah portion

It is customary that a student chants a section of Torah and a Haftarah in Hebrew. The student may opt out of chanting the Haftarah in Hebrew or shortening the amount of Hebrew chanted and instead more time working on the d'var Torah.

Writing a d'var Torah

Towards the end of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony, the student shares with the community their own insights on the Torah portion. The Rabbi meets with the student three times prior to the ceremony in order to discuss the portion with the student and to assist in writing the d'var Torah (lit. "words of Torah").

Completing tikkun olam/gemilut chasadim and Shaarei Shamayim community projects

In addition to studying for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, students are asked to prepare for their B'nei Mitzvah by completing two service projects—one within the larger Madison community and one within the congregation. Students should spend a minimum of 18 hours on both projects combined.

Tikkun Olam/Gemilut Chasadim Project

A fundamental principle of Judaism is making the world a better place, both through social justice (tikkun olam) and helping others in need (gemilut chasadim). When a student becomes Bar/Bat Mitzvah, that student is making a commitment to engaging in their community. The student is therefore expected to do a tikkun olam/gemilut chasadim project. This should be thoughtfully planned and implemented prior to the actual ceremony and briefly described as part of the d'var Torah. Please discuss the particular project with the Rabbi prior to initiating it.

Shaarei Shamayim Community Project

Students who become B'nei Mitzvah assume adult responsibilities in the congregation and are asked to donate their time, energy, and service to the community. As part of the preparation for B'nei Mitzvah, students are expected to do a project that contributes in a concrete way to the congregation. Again, the project should be thoughtfully planned and implemented prior to the actual ceremony and described as part of the d'var Torah. Please discuss the particular project with the Rabbi prior to initiating it.

Accommodations for different learners

Students of all abilities are encouraged to celebrate a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. If a student has a learning disability or is particularly struggling with a part of the process, please consult the Rabbi in order to make accommodations.

Planning and Preparation

Assisting other parents and receiving support from other community members

Planning a Bar/Bat Mitzvah can take a great deal of time and energy. In order to provide support to the family, the community has developed a custom whereby the parents whose children will become Bar/Bat Mitzvah in the following year help the parents whose children are becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah in the current year. Parents in the same Bar/Bat Mitzvah cohort also assist each other. This not only builds community, but parents tend to feel more comfortable planning their own child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah if they have already been helping with other celebrations. Please observe this custom and offer to assist other parents at their B'nei Mitzvah celebrations.

At every Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration another parent offers to be a volunteer coordinator. This person finds and organizes all the volunteers needed for setting up and cleaning up the service and lunch. The office administrator works with parents to ensure that a volunteer is available to coordinate community support for the celebration.

As always, if you are feeling overwhelmed or you are not sure how to do something, please ask for help!

Choosing a date

Choosing a date for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah can be challenging because many different schedules need to be taken into account. Twenty months before a student's thirteenth birthday the office manager will reach out to the parents and discuss possibilities for choosing a date. These dates can only be scheduled 18 months in advance of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Priority is given to parents whose children are enrolled in Bet Sefer in sixth grade. Shaarei Shamayim strongly encourages all B'nei Mitzvah ceremonies to be held on the second or fourth Saturday of the month. The First Unitarian Society charges several hundred dollars more for the first, third, or when it occurs fifth Saturday of the month, and Shaarei Shamayim passes those fees onto parents.

Hiring a tutor

Parents typically hire a tutor to work with their child for 9-12 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The student and tutor develop a special relationship, and the student is able to learn a great deal from one-on-one instruction. The Rabbi must approve the tutor before the parent hires him/her. The Rabbi has a list of potential tutors if the family needs guidance. Parents may want to call and/or meet with a couple different tutors so that they can find the right person to study with their child.

Working with the Rabbi

The Rabbi works closely with the family to ensure that the B'nei Mitzvah process is meaningful and that the student is progressing according to schedule. The Rabbi usually meets with each student three times to work on writing the d'var Torah. Parents are asked to attend the beginning of the meetings to discuss any logistical issues. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, parents then leave or wait in a nearby room so that the student and Rabbi can

discuss the d'var Torah on their own. A week and a half before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the Rabbi, parent(s), and student meet to do a run-through of the service.

Because the Rabbi has many different responsibilities in the congregation and often does not have time to review items on short notice. Please make sure that all preparations are finished by the final run-through and bring a draft of the family's pamphlet to the run-through. Lastly, it is a congregational policy not to discuss synagogue "business" on Shabbat. In that vein, please do not call the Rabbi on Shabbat or discuss logistical issues with the Rabbi unless there is an emergency.

Location of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

In Shaarei Shamayim's earlier years parents sometimes chose to hold the ceremony at a location different from the congregation's worship space. Now that Shaarei Shamayim is located at the First Unitarian Society, all celebrations are held there.

Hosting a lunch following the service

It is Shaarei Shamayim's custom that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family hosts a lunch following the service at the First Unitarian Society. Because B'nei Mitzvah are community celebrations, everyone in the congregation is welcome to attend. We strongly request that at least part of the meal be a potluck to defray the cost to the family and that the lunch not be extravagant. This helps to ensure that no one feels judged by the amount of money that they are spending. All food must be vegetarian, though kosher fish (salmon, lox, etc.) is permitted. If it is not obvious that the dish contains fish, please label it as such.

Invitations to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Ceremony and Party

In the spirit of inclusivity, families are asked to invite all the kids in the Bet Sefer class/B'nei Mitzvah cohort to the service and party (if there is one). The Rabbi usually stays for lunch following the service but does not attend the party.

Choosing a lay cantor

A lay cantor usually leads some of the singing at a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, as it can be difficult for the student to lead a large group in singing unfamiliar prayers. It is the family's responsibility to choose a lay cantor. Some request to be paid while others do not. If the lay cantor has never led a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Shaarei Shamayim, the Rabbi must give approval for this person to lead the service. The lay cantor often meets with the family the week before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to go over the service.

Buying a siddur (prayer book) and chumash (Bible)

Families are asked to buy a siddur so that the student can insert notes in it when learning the service and keep it after the ceremony. Siddurim can be purchased from the Reconstructionist Press. Please visit <http://stores.jewishreconbooks.org/kol-haneshamah-series>; the siddur is called "Shabbat Vehagim."

While buying a chumash is not a requirement, some families like to do so. This can be a special gift to the student. One good chumash is called Etz Hayim and is published by the Conservative movement. Please consult the Rabbi if you have questions.

Preparing a pamphlet for the service

B'nei Mitzvah families create a short pamphlet that lists the honors and contains the Torah and Haftarah portions. Please use the template sent to you by the Rabbi and bring a draft of the pamphlet to the final run-through in order to verify that there are no errors.

Guidelines for Respectful Worship

We strive to create a spiritually moving, comfortable, and inclusive atmosphere at our services. Everyone, young and old, is welcome. All are free to come and go as they wish during the service while respecting others' desire to create holy space and time by moving quietly and conversing quietly when necessary. We have books and quiet toys for children who would like to be in the room during services.

Taking photos and video-taping the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Shaarei Shamayim permits the use of cameras and video recorders at B'nei Mitzvah celebrations. However, there should be only one person designated as the photographer, and that person should not use flash or do anything that is obtrusive so as not to disrupt the service. If someone is photographing or videotaping the ceremony, s/he must stand at a respectful distance, not move around the sanctuary, and only photograph towards the bimah. Walking up and down the aisles during the service is not permitted.

Cell Phones and Other Electronic Communication Devices

Cell phones and other electronic communication devices should be off or on silent mode during services and should not be used in the building while services are in progress. After services, they should not be used in the same room where services were held or at the lunch.

An Explanation of the Service

Components of the service

Because B'nei Mitzvah are community events, the student's particular service should be consistent with the values and practices of the community. Included in this manual is a basic outline of the prayers. Within the basic structure of the service, families are encouraged to be creative and should feel free to add readings or introduce new songs or prayers. Please consult the Rabbi with any changes to the service.

Hebrew names

The Rabbi will call the student up to the Torah by his/her Hebrew name. This is the Hebrew name that s/he was given at birth combined with the Hebrew name of his/her parents. If s/he does not have a Hebrew name, please tell the Rabbi and she will help the family choose a Hebrew name. If a Jewish parent does not know his/her Hebrew name, please ask other family members if they know it. If no name is known or it was never given, please discuss this with the Rabbi, and she can help the parent choose a Hebrew name for him/herself. If a parent is not Jewish, it is the congregation's custom to include the parent in the student's Hebrew name by simply using the parent's English name.

Aliyot

An aliyah is a blessing that is recited before the Torah. Shaarei Shamayim has between three and seven aliyot in B'nei Mitzvah services. The first aliyah is reserved for members of the community and is based on a theme from the Torah portion. The last aliyah is for the student. Please discuss the number of desired aliyot early on in the process with the Rabbi because it will affect which verses of Torah gets assigned.

The Reconstructionist blessing is slightly different from the traditional blessing in that it has dropped all reference to the Jews being God's chosen people. If there will be family coming up for an aliyah who might know the traditional blessing, please tell them in advance that our blessings are slightly different. The Reconstructionist blessings can be found on our website.

Torah readers

Families are responsible for choosing the Torah readers. Please make sure that the readers are able to chant the portion competently and are well-prepared. It is important to check in with them two weeks in advance to make sure that they have begun to learn their portions.

Families often ask the student's tutor to be one of the readers as an honor and acknowledgment of the tutor's hard work. Other family members, friends, or community member can also be asked.

Sometimes parents decide to chant Torah. It can be meaningful for the child to watch his/her parent work hard learning the Torah portion and for the parent to read from the Torah at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah (sometimes for the first time). However, if the parent is going to be so nervous that s/he will not be able to focus properly on the child, it might be best not to do so.

Torah Readings

Shaarei Shamayim follows the Triennial Torah Reading Cycle, which means that each Torah portion is divided into three sections, and a different section (or part of a section) is read each year on a three-year cycle. Rabbi Laurie will assign the particular readings chanted at each Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.

Parents' words to the child

Parents customarily speak to their children towards the end of the service. This can be a special moment for the family. Sometimes families also like to invite a grandparent or someone who is particularly close to the family to say some words. Please be mindful that the service can be long, and even though parents or others may want to say a great deal to their children, they should limit their words to a few minutes, especially if more than two people are speaking.

Some parents who are not accustomed to speaking in front of large groups of people may be anxious about this custom. If this is an issue, please consult the Rabbi.

Different honors in the service

There are several opportunities in the service to honor close family members or friends.

Different options include:

English readings: Sometimes families like to include a few English readings in the service. There are many choices in the siddur; the family can also choose a reading from another source.

Tallit (prayer shawl) presentation: Usually the parents or grandparents present the student's tallit to him/her at the beginning of the service. They can say a few words, read a poem, or simply hand it to him/her.

Opening and closing the ark: During the Torah service the ark is opened and closed. This is an especially nice honor for children, as it is a simple task.

Passing the Torah from generation to generation: A custom has evolved whereby the Torah is passed from the grandparents to the parents to the student. This symbolizes the passing of Jewish tradition from one generation to the next. Non-Jewish parents and grandparents are welcome to participate.

Walking with the Torah: After the student recites the Shema while holding the Torah, s/he walks around the congregation with it. Parents, grandparents, and the Rabbi often accompany the child.

Unwrapping the Torah: After the Torah procession, the Torah is laid down on the table. Anyone can have the honor of unwrapping the Torah.

Hagba (lifting the Torah): This honor must be given to someone who has the strength to carefully lift the open Torah so that the congregation can see what was read. If this person has never done it before, s/he should arrive early on the morning of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah so that the Rabbi or a ritual committee member can explain what to do.

Glilah (wrapping the Torah): After the Torah is lifted it is wrapped again. Anyone can do this.

Fees and Donations

Congregational B'nei Mitzvah fee

Because working with a student and family studying for Bar/Bat Mitzvah requires a significant amount of time for our Rabbi, the congregation requests that the family pay a \$250 fee, which honors the extra time and effort that the family requires from the Rabbi and congregation. However, the congregation does not want money to be an obstacle to a child having a Bar/Bat Mitzvah in the community, so if this fee is too high, please talk to the Rabbi.

Lay cantor fee or donation

The lay cantor sometimes requests a fee for assistance and support with the ceremony. At other times the lay cantor suggests that the family make an additional donation to the congregation in their honor. Again, if this presents a problem, please talk to the Rabbi.

Guests' donations to the congregation

Families often suggest to their guests that donations be made to the congregation in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. A particularly appropriate fund is the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, which is used to help members of the community when financial assistance is needed.

Donation of siddurim (prayer books) or chumashim (Bibles)

Another way of supporting the community is by donating siddurim or chumashim in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please consult with the Rabbi for further information.

Tzedakah in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Some families also choose to give tzedakah (monetary contribution) to a social justice or social service organization of their choice in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Parents may wish to donate a percentage (5-10 percent) of the cost of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to the organization.

Students are strongly encouraged to give their own tzedakah by giving a portion of the money that they receive to an organization of their choice. Parents may wish to create this expectation for their children in order to reinforce the principles of tzedakah and create a lifetime of giving generously.

First Unitarian Society fee

The First Unitarian Society charges our members the following rates (which are subsidized by Shaarei Shamayim) to use the space for our B'nei Mitzvah celebrations.

B'nei Mitzvah on a 2 nd or 4 th Saturday with lunch only in the Landmark	\$116
B'nei Mitzvah on a 2 nd or 4 th Saturday with lunch in the Landmark, Loggia, and Gaebler	\$233
B'nei Mitzvah on a 1 st or 3 rd Saturday with lunch in the Landmark, Loggia and Gaebler	\$870

Diversity in Shaarei Shamayim

Shaarei Shamayim recognizes that there are many different kinds of families in the congregation, and the community is committed to making everyone feel welcome.

Families with a non-Jewish parent

The community strongly encourages non-Jewish parents to be involved in planning and preparations for the B'nei Mitzvah. A Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a major event in a child's life, and it is important that the child has support from all the significant people in his/her life. Non-Jewish parents (as well as Jewish parents) are encouraged to ask the Rabbi questions about anything that is unfamiliar and to voice concerns about anything that does not feel comfortable.

The community also strongly encourages non-Jewish parents to participate in the service. They are invited to present the tallit to their child, pass the Torah from generation to generation, come up to the Torah for a family aliyah (blessing), or do a special reading. All parents are encouraged to say a few words to their child in front of the congregation.

Non-Jewish parents are welcome to wear a kippah if they are comfortable doing so. It is not customary for them to wear a tallit except during the family aliyah.

On all other ritual issues, please consult with the Rabbi for more information.

Families with divorced parents

Planning a Bar/Bat Mitzvah can be a complex process for parents who are divorced. Even though a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a joyous occasion, it can bring up painful memories or heighten family tensions. Please speak with the Rabbi if you would like to discuss these issues further.

Families with gay/lesbian parents

Shaarei Shamayim is a welcoming congregation, and as such we are inclusive of parents in same-sex relationships. Please feel free to talk with the Rabbi if there are particular issues that you would like to discuss.

Transgender students

Shaarei Shamayim welcomes all students regardless of their gender identity. Please consult the Rabbi to discuss the child's Hebrew name, the name for the ceremony, and other issues.

The Tutoring Process

Tutoring is one of the most special parts of the B'nei Mitzvah process, as the student and tutor often form a special relationship during the months that they study together. The tutor helps the student grow spiritually, and while much attention is given to learning Hebrew, the larger objective of fostering spiritual development and connection to the Jewish community is continually reinforced.

The student, parents, tutor, and Rabbi are all partners in the B'nei Mitzvah process and work together in the months of study before the service. The tutor and Rabbi will create a schedule to ensure that the student is well prepared. Please notify the Rabbi if there are changes in the schedule or if the student is having particular challenges.

Responsibility of the student

The student is expected to participate fully in the process through regular meetings with the tutor and daily study of the prayers and Torah/Haftarah. The student should take this process seriously and devote a significant amount of time and energy to his/her studies. The student is also expected to attend 12 Shabbat services, write a d'var Torah, and do two community projects.

Responsibility of the parents

Parents are expected to work with their child to ensure that s/he meets regularly with the tutor and studies on a daily basis. They should be in frequent contact with the tutor in order to make sure that the student is progressing as planned and is adhering to the schedule.

Responsibility of the tutor

The tutor is the student's primary teacher and knows best how the student is progressing. The tutor will be in frequent contact with the parent and Rabbi about the student's progress.

Responsibility of the Rabbi

The Rabbi sets the tone for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah being a spiritual and meaningful rite of passage for the student and his/her family. The Rabbi also coordinates the communal and religious aspects of the process: monitoring the student's progress on the two projects, planning the service, helping the student write the d'var Torah, and dealing with any issues that may arise. If a problem emerges that the Rabbi cannot address sufficiently, s/he will seek the guidance of the Coordinating Committee. The Rabbi is also a resource for the student, tutor, and parent and should be called upon with questions.

Sample B'nei Mitzvah Outline

Kol Haneshamah, Shabbat Vehagim

Mah Tovu, p. 141 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Tallit blessing, p. 143 (Student)

Shehechyanu (Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Birchot Hashachar, pp. 153-161 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)
[All in Hebrew OR part Hebrew, part English]

Elohai Neshamah, p. 165 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Baruch She'amar, pp. 177-179 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Orech Yamim (Psalm 90), p. 199 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Esa Eynay (Psalm 121), p. 215 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Halleluyah (Psalm 150), p. 231 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Nishmat Kol Chai, p. 235 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Shochan Ad, p. 241 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor) [Optional]

Chatzi Kaddish, p. 245 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Barechu, p. 247 (Student)

Yotzer, p. 247 (song not in siddur) (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)
[Optional: Or chadash, p. 269]

Ahavah Rabah, pp. 273-275 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)
[Student can read English as congregation chants Hebrew.]

Shema/Ve'ahavta, p. 277 (Student)
[Optional: Read silently Biblical selection I or II, end on p. 285 with Adonai eloheychem emet.]

Mi Chamocha and Tsur Yisrael, p. 291 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Amidah, pp. 295-323 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)
[The first three blessings are chanted in Hebrew, and the rest is silent.]

Oseh Shalom pp. 322-323

Kaddish Titkabal, p. 381 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Ein Kamocha, p. 383 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Vayhi Binso'a OR Pitchu li, p. 385 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Shema, p. 393 (Student)

[Families can pass the Torah from generation to generation before the student chants the Shema responsively.]

And they will come (song not in siddur) (Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Introduction to Torah portion and aliyot (Rabbi)

Aliyot

[For B'nei Mitzvah ceremonies, there is usually a combination of communal and individual aliyot for the community, family and student.]

Torah reading (Student and Family, Friends, Tutor, etc.) [Blessings on separate sheets or p. 399]

Misheberach for people who come up for aliyah, pp. 402-403 (Rabbi)

Misheberach for healing (song not in siddur) (Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Prayer for Peace, p. 422 (Family member or Friend)

VeZot haTorah, p. 407 (Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

[Hagba (lifting Torah) and Glilah (wrapping Torah)]

[Can sing Lo Yisa Goy or Ain't Gonna Study War No More during Glilah.]

Haftarah reading (Student) [Blessings p. 409]

Student's D'var Torah

Other words to the student

[Rabbi, Family, President]

Yehalelu, p. 433 (Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Eitz chayim hi, p. 441 (Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Ein Keyloheynu, p. 443 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

[Candy can be thrown on student after this song.]

Aleynu, p. 445 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Mourner's Kaddish, p. 451 (Rabbi)

Announcements

Adon Olam, p. 459 (B'nei Mitzvah students)

Kiddush and Motzi, p. 465 (Student or Rabbi/Lay Cantor)

Writing a D'var Torah:

Student's Worksheet for Bar/Bat Mitzvah Preparation

You're about to write a *d'var Torah*—literally, words of Torah. This is your opportunity to share with the community your ideas, not just about your Torah or Haftarah portions, but also about what you think or believe in general. This is a unique opportunity that I hope you will find meaningful. Writing and giving a *d'var Torah* can be a scary task, so I have prepared this worksheet to help guide you as you write it. (My intention is not to give you extra homework!) I strongly suggest that you read through this sheet and get started on it early. You may only be able to do part of it on your own, but fill in what you can, and I, your tutor, or your parent(s) can help with the rest.

B'hatzlachah! (Good Luck!) Rabbi Laurie

Torah portion

The name of my Torah portion is _____.

My Torah portion is found in the Book of _____ in the Torah.
(Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)

The Hebrew name for this book of the Torah is _____.
(Bereishit, Shemot, Vayikra, Bamidbar, Devarim)

My Torah portion goes from _____ (chapter: verse) to _____ (chapter: verse).

Haftarah portion

My Haftarah portion is found in the Book of _____ in the Tanach, or Hebrew Bible. (TaNaCH stands for Torah (Torah), Nevi'im (Prophets), Ketuvim (Writings).)

My Haftarah portion goes from _____ (chapter: verse) to _____ (chapter: verse).

Explaining my Torah and Haftarah portions

My Torah portion contains many different ideas, but the three main points are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Using these three main points, the summary of my Torah portion is:

My Haftarah portion talks about:

Bringing in other people's ideas:

I will use the following rabbinic or medieval texts to help me explain my Torah portion:

I will also focus on the contemporary writer _____ to help me support my ideas. This person writes:

Making connections and making a point:

My Bar/Bat Mitzvah falls closest to the following Jewish holiday or any other Jewish time of the year _____. I could make the following connection between my Torah and Haftarah portion and this holiday or time: _____.

The secular holiday or current event that is happening near it is _____
_____. I could make the following connection between my Torah and Haftarah portion and this holiday or current event: _____.

The biblical story or idea of _____
reminded me of the modern issue or idea of _____. (Use more room if you need to explain.)

After the community listens to my d'var Torah, I want them to remember just one idea, which is my message. This is:

Setting a Schedule

The date of my Bar/Bat Mitzvah is _____. I will have the first draft of my *d'var Torah* written by: _____. I will have my second draft written by _____. I will have all my final revisions done by _____.

Sample Outline of *D'var Torah*

There are many ways to write a *d'var Torah*. What is important is that it has a structure to it so that the community understands what you're saying. Remember, this is probably the first time they have heard your ideas, and they do not have your *d'var Torah* written out in front of them. Therefore, you have to give a lot of explanation for every idea you share. You also have to SPEAK SLOWLY AND CLEARLY. (We'll all bug you about this more as the time gets close!)

Here is one way to structure your *d'var Torah*, but there are many different options. This is only to give you ideas.

1. Welcome the community, family, friends
2. Introduce and summarize Torah portion (and possibly Haftarah portion—optional)
3. Share with the community ONE main idea you want to focus on.
 - a. Explain the idea.
 - b. Why is this interesting or important to you?
 - c. What do others say? (Bring in rabbinic or medieval texts and a contemporary writer or two)
 - d. Can you connect it to a Jewish holiday or current event?
 - e. What is your message? (the main point you want to get across)
4. Talk about your Bar/Bat mitzvah
 - a. Why is becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah important to you? What does it mean to you? What was it like to prepare for it?
 - b. What is important about becoming an adult member of Shaarei Shamayim? Why is this community important to you?
 - c. Talk about your Shaarei Shamayim project.
 - d. Talk about your larger *tikkun olam* (social justice) or *gemilut chasadim* (acts of caring) project.
 - e. If possible, connect some or all of these ideas to your Torah portion.
5. Thank you's
 - a. It's nice to thank people who have helped you...but remember, this is not the Grammy Awards. This should be a small piece of your *d'var Torah* and not the main part!
 - b. Wish everyone a Shabbat shalom.

Additional Logistics

Using the First Unitarian Society

No more than 18 months in advance, coordinate your date with the Rabbi and the office manager. Your final date must be confirmed in writing over email.

Shaarei Shamayim has a standard set up plan with FUS for Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies (see below). It provides for services in the Landmark with a luncheon following the ceremony in the Gaebler, Loggia, and Landmark. This option carries an extra charge, paid to FUS, beyond the \$250 already paid to Shaarei Shamayim.

If you choose to have your luncheon in the Landmark only, the seating capacity will be 48, and there will be no extra charge. Please see page 16 for the First Unitarian Society fee schedule.

Set Up

Your resource time for the Gaebler, Loggia, and Landmark will be 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. Resource times means when you will first have access to the rooms to the time you must be out of the rooms. FUS will have the furniture set up by 8:00 am for your arrival. ***You must be out of the rooms no later than 3:00 pm.***

Landmark: Services and Luncheon

The main floor bench seating in the Landmark seats 128. The riser benches seat 82. You have two options with the Hearth Room (the back open area of the Landmark):

Option 1: 50 folding chairs for additional service seating at the back of the room. After the service volunteers will need to bring in the 4 rectangular tables for luncheon seating of 48. These FUS tables are located in a nook just outside the Landmark door to the hallway (to the left). Two rectangular tables will be set up in the Loggia for buffet food/drink. ***FUS will assume this option unless we have told them otherwise.***

Option 2: If you don't feel you need the additional seating for the service, you may set up the tables prior to the service for your luncheon. FUS has only six tables total for the buffet tables in the Loggia and seating tables in the Landmark. You may bring in a couple of additional tables of your own. However, you must keep walking pathways open—keep in mind fire codes!

Loggia

The Loggia (the hallway between the Gaebler and Landmark) will have 2 rectangular tables set up for your buffet.

Gaebler

The Gaebler will be set up with triangle and bench seating for 42.

Parking

There is no reserved parking at FUS. It is strictly on a first-come, first-served basis. Should the lot fill up, there are nearby options. On Saturdays, there is no 2 hour limit on parking at the Marshall Court parking lot (between FUS and University Avenue). In addition, the Weisman Lot is on a first-come, first served basis on the weekend. That is located just down the hill towards the lake. See diagram on p. 28.

Landmark/Gaebler Kitchens

FUS and CSS make no guarantees on the space available in the Landmark or Gaebler refrigerators. CSS cupboards in the Landmark are marked with a label. CSS dishes are limited (for example, there about 70 plates, 7 water pitchers, limited silverware). All items used in the kitchens must be cleaned and put back where they came from. Please do not leave left-over food in the refrigerators when you depart. The kitchens must be back in the order in which you found them.

Facility Care

FUS is responsible for setting up the furniture prior to your event and taking it down after your event. You are only responsible for moving in the tables to the Landmark after your service for the luncheon and putting them back after the luncheon. And, of course, removing any additional tables you brought. You may not move items such as chairs from the other side of the building. You may not affix anything to the walls or doors except with tape that leaves no marks. Nails, screws, hooks, tacks and the like are prohibited.

The kitchens should be back in clean, neat order with all dishes and other items used put back in their proper place. Tables should be cleaned if needed. Floor should be swept if needed. All garbage should be taken to the dumpsters located behind the playground.

Volunteers

You should designate a Volunteer coordinator for your event (and let the office manager know who that person is). Volunteers you will need include:

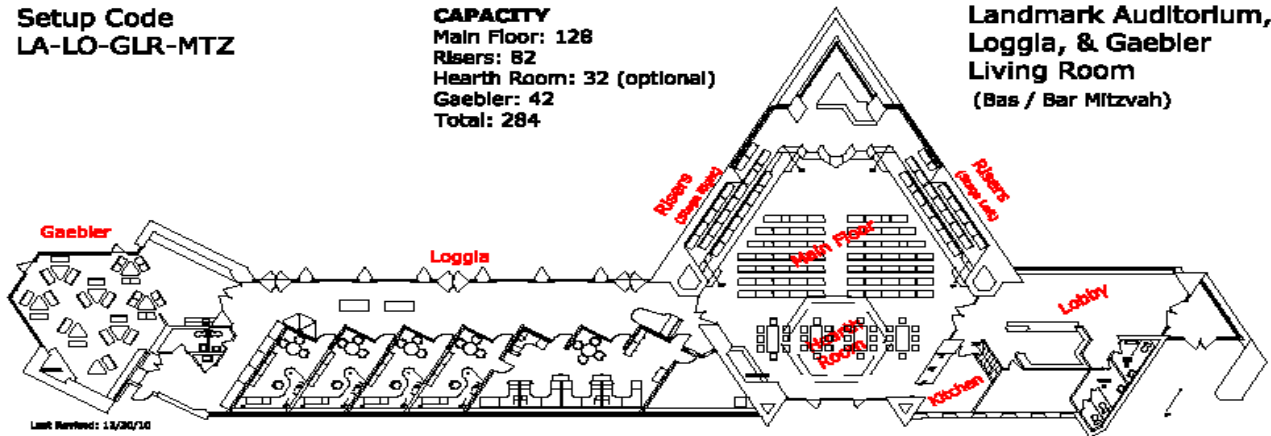
- Service Set Up: setting out prayer books, kippot and programs
- Greeters
- Kiddush Servers
- Luncheon Set Up (including adding tables to back of Landmark)
- Kitchen/Facility/Service Clean Up (be sure you have plenty of people for this)
- Sound system support

Seating at the First Unitarian Society

Setup Code
LA-LO-GLR-MTZ

CAPACITY
Main Floor: 128
Risers: 82
Hearth Room: 32 (optional)
Gaebler: 42
Total: 284

**Landmark Auditorium,
Loggia, & Gaebler
Living Room**
(Bas / Bar Mitzvah)



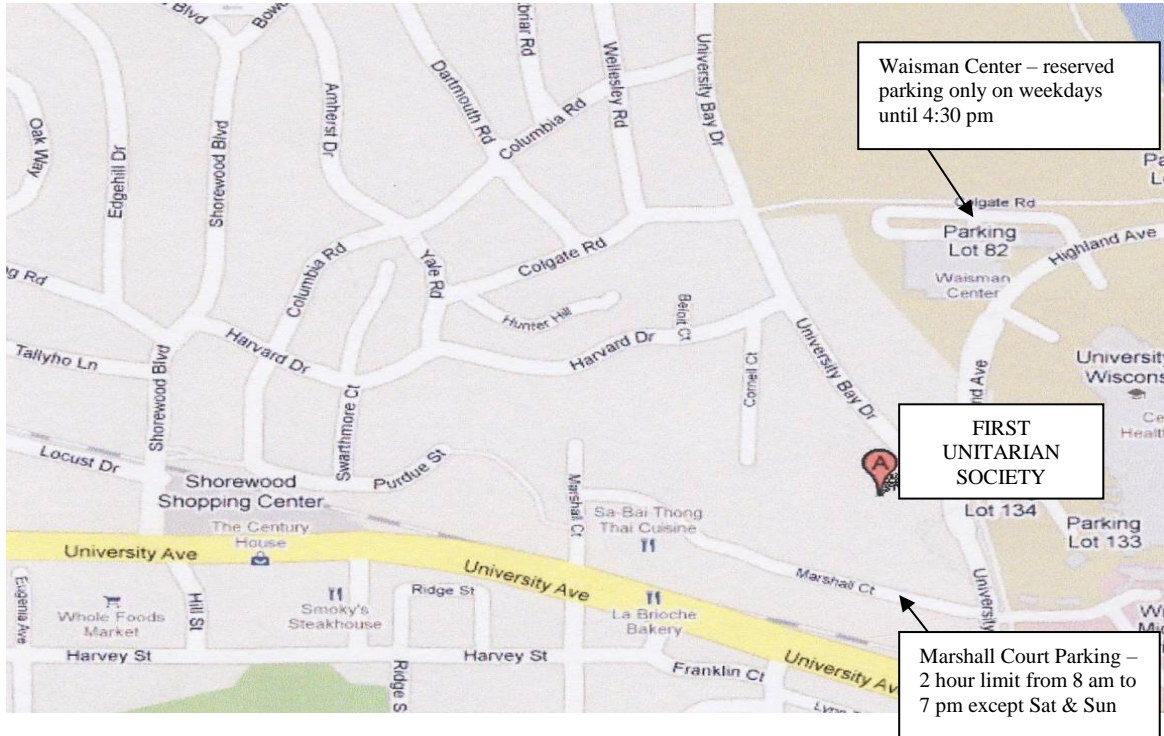
Last Revised: 11/30/10

Parking Near the First Unitarian Society

FUS lot – on a first come, first served basis

Marshall Court – 2 hour limit until 7:00 p.m. weekdays, no limit on Saturdays

Waisman Lot -- first come, first served basis after 4:30 p.m. weekdays and all day Saturday



B'nei Mitzvah Checklist

This checklist provides suggestions that families have found useful during the B'nei Mitzvah process. Recognizing that every family's needs are different, this checklist may be too specific for some and too general for others. Regardless, the hope is that it provides a template from which to work as you plan the various aspects of this spiritual journey and family/community event.

12 – 18 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Meet with the Rabbi about your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- Think about tutoring needs, identify a tutor, and have an initial conversation
- Choose and confirm a date for the ceremony

8 – 12 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Begin tutoring 9-12 months before the ceremony
- Choose location(s) for accompanying activities during the Bar/Bat Mitzvah weekend
- If the lunch will be catered, make arrangements with a caterer
- Make arrangements for rabbinic and possibly lay cantorial support
- Decide upon two service projects (for the larger community and for the congregation)

3 – 6 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Student begins thinking about and writing the d'var Torah
- Order *kippot* (head coverings), if desired
- Order/Prepare invitations, if desired

1 – 3 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Confirm with the office manager that a volunteer will coordinate logistical support from the community
- Confirm arrangements for the lunch following the service (potluck or catered or both)
- Make arrangements for childcare during the service, if desired
- Buy challah, wine, and grape juice
- Buy flowers or other decorative items, if desired
- Create a draft pamphlet for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- Tell the office manager any specific information for the congregation's newsletter
- Send invitations, if desired
- Confirm set-up at First Unitarian Society with our office manager

Details that can only happen just prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Make a financial contribution to the congregation and to the lay cantor (if requested)
- Give tzedakah in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah (if desired)
- Make corrections to the pamphlet and have it printed

Service/Luncheon Checklist

What follows is advice from other B'nei Mitzvah parents who would like to help you not reinvent the wheel!

Family Responsibilities

- Arrive at FUS around 8:00-8:15 a.m. to make sure everything is set up correctly by 9:00 a.m. when guests start to arrive. 3-4 volunteers needed for setup (including ritual)
- Bring everything the day before if possible (work with the office manager to get approval to do this with FUS 1-2 weeks in advance)
- Bring containers for leftover food
- Family should decide at least two months out whether they will use disposables or plates/silverware (**If you use the plates/utensils that belong to CSS, be sure to count these prior to the service, wash if necessary, plan on EXTRA volunteers to wash these; use the silver carts to transport plates, plan for additional time AND make sure that someone knows how to use the Hobart (Zaccai Lewis, Sharon Lezberg, or Mitch Cooper) or train someone else)
- Provide the volunteer coordinator (VC) with names of non-Congregation guests well in advance
- Go through the kitchen in advance to make sure that the kitchen is clean
- Go through the kitchen in advance to make sure that there are enough serving containers, platters for wine/challah, ritual items (wine glass, challah plate)
- Get everything ready prior to the bar/bat mitzvah
- Get all items to FUS (if prior to bar/bat mitzvah date, must get approval by contacting the CSS office to arrange with FUS)
- Family member(s) should volunteer at several Bnei Mitzvah two years prior to the child's to see how things work
- Decorations
- Flowers
- Guest Book/Card Box/Gift Box
- Clean the tablecloths when done (white ones belonging to CSS need to be dry-cleaned; tablecloths are stored in the Isom House office and you must contact the office manager to arrange pick up and drop off. There is a \$100 returnable deposit if you want to use the CSS tablecloths (Note: these cloths stain easily)
- Please note that any questions regarding FUS space, setup, or access to facilities prior to B'nei Mitzvah must be directed to the office manager who will work with FUS. *Do not contact or meet with FUS staff directly.*

Volunteer Coordinator Responsibilities

Prior to the service/luncheon:

- Meet with the family in advance to get an idea of what is needed for the event, how they would like the luncheon set up, if they have any special requests, etc.

- Check in with the office manager regarding the sign up list (the office manager creates the signup list in Signup Genius and is not responsible for the list, but includes an announcement in the weekly email). ** Note: Signup Genius is sent to individual email accounts and may get lost in junk mail. It is the Volunteer Coordinator's job to monitor sign up and recruit people if necessary. The VC may contact the entire membership if needed by viewing the paper or online directory. The office manager will provide a list of contact names and email addresses for the VC to solicit volunteers.
- Know where items are located in the kitchen and in the Gaebler living room
- Check in with the family to see whether food may go home with guests
- Check in with the ritual committee to make sure that there is a member who will be at the service to set up
- If the family expects more than 160 people at the service/luncheon, remind them that they will need to hire additional help to set up/clean up and work in the kitchen
- If the family expects extra people from outside the congregation (e.g. family, friends), remind them to plan on bringing extra food

When you arrive at 8:00 a.m...

- Introduce yourself to FUS staff.

When you leave...

- Be the last person to leave after the family leaves
- Check in with FUS staff to make sure everything looks okay.

Service Preparation

Before the Service:

- Volunteer coordinator has contacted ritual committee and arranged for one of the members to be present at the service and prepare ark, table, etc.
- Volunteers put out siddurim by entrance to Landmark (siddurim are kept in the cabinets in the Gaebler living room)
- Volunteers place kippot and tallitot at front entrance AND a small portion of each in the pews near the ark (kippot and siddurim are kept in the cabinets in the Gaebler living room)
- Tablecloths (if being used) are placed on tables - including table for Kiddush by the windows in the Landmark
- Put gift basket on entry table
- Challah platter, challah cover(s), Kiddush cup all placed on table by windows at the back of the Landmark (challah plates and covers are kept in the cabinets in the Gaebler living room; the Kiddush cup for CSS is kept in the tall cabinet behind the sinks in the Landmark kitchen)
- Programs are placed in basket by main entrance to Landmark along with additional program in cardboard box
- Sound and microphone check (Ed Angelina, Jeff Spitzer-Resnick, Mitch Cooper, or Bruce Wasserstrom are among those who can do it)

- Find the silver carts in Landmark kitchen to move items (**these will be used to move many items - e.g. siddurim, food, dishes)
- Put tablecloths on tables in the main sanctuary
- Table signs about coffee and dessert being in the Gaebler
- Decorations on tables - flowers, scattered candy, candles
- Flowers and/or candles on the stonework behind the Torah table/podium
- Glass of water for B'nei Mitzvah student and Rabbi

Luncheon Checklist:

Count invited guests less 20% and add 30-40 for CSS members (e.g. if 80 invited guests, expect 64 plus 30 CSS members = 94-100 guests total). Please remember that CSS has vegetarian luncheons with the exception of lox and other kosher fish (e.g. tuna salad). Depending on whether you have your event catered, partially catered, or potluck, you may want to add luncheon items (e.g. kugel, dessert) to the volunteer signup sheet.

Ordering Food and Supplies:

- Bagels sliced (100 bagels per 120 guests - estimate 20% below your guest attendance)
- Cream cheese (one tub per dozen bagels or 2-3 oz. per guest)
- Lox (2-3 oz. per guest; people take more when they see a larger platter and less if it is served in smaller portions)
- Capers (1 16 oz. jar per 2 dozen bagels)
- Fruit Salads (1 lb. mixed fruit for every 5 guests invited)
- Mixed salads (e.g. tuna salad, tabbouleh salad)
- Desserts (1-2 pieces per guest; these may often be items placed on volunteer signups)
- Bring platters for re-plating
- Coffee = percolator ground (1 lb. per 100 guests)
- Cream for coffee (one pint is sufficient)
- Plates, napkins, flatware (if using disposable)
- Water/Juice/Lemonade dispensers (*CSS has two glass dispensers to use - they are in the Landmark kitchen)
- Lemons for water (1 dozen lemons is sufficient)
- Challah (one challah per 20 people)
- SOFT candy (gummy candies can be ordered online or in bulk at Woodman's - Must be individually packed and soft. No Starbursts. Do not let kids convince you to buy hard candy - we do not want anyone to get hurt.)

Food Setup:

- Plates at beginning of buffet
- Napkins and utensils at end of buffet (assuming that works)
 - Extra supplies on shelves under tables
 - Napkins under stuff when possible
- Bagels and cream cheese at end of table
- Cream cheese should be in 2 ceramic bowls with several knives
- Pitchers on tables with ice water and cups (1-2/table), put out at beginning of lunch

- Scatter candy on tables
- Challahs on back table, cover with white napkins
- Water, lemonade and cups on triangle table past buffet table
 - Cover with table clothes if there are enough
 - Make lemonade
 - Refill with extra pitcher
- Desserts in Gaebler and main sanctuary
- Re-plate as necessary, re-platter desserts if needed. It's nice to not have stuff in store-bought containers
- Put some desserts on the challah table (after challah has been cleared away)
- Napkins to the right and left of desserts
- Coffee in Gaebler on counter to the left of desserts - turn on coffee maker at 11:00 a.m.
 - Sugar and Splenda in baskets
 - Stir sticks (in mason jar)
 - ½ and ½ in blue pitcher
- Store refills of food dishes/bagels/etc. under tables if possible - best when using tablecloths

Kiddush

- Grape juice and Manischewitz (there may be some Manischewitz in the Landmark refrigerator from preceding B'nei Mitzvah)
- Mini cups
- Use mini table tents for identification of type on platters

Throwing Candy

- Start distributing candy at Eytz Hayim Hi
- Designate a person who will hand it out
- Put in baskets

Nonfood Items for Luncheon:

- Plates/Dessert Plates (**There are 100 dinner plates that belong to CSS in the Landmark kitchen that are available for use for the luncheon - remember that if you use these you will need additional volunteers to wash them and that you will need to plan on additional time)
- Coffee cups
- Cups for water/juice/lemonade
- Silverware
- Napkins
- Serving Utensils (*there are a number of serving utensils in the Landmark kitchen)
- Serving Bowls/Platters (*there are a number of bowls/platters in the Landmark kitchen that belong to CSS)
- Additional bowls/baskets for bagels (there are some baskets available for bagels in the Landmark kitchen)

- Plastic shot glasses for wine and juice (estimate a 50/50 split between wine and juice - either buy two different colors or serve wine and juice on two different colored trays (e.g. silver = wine; black = juice)
- To-go containers for distributing food with other people
- Decorations/table toppers/flowers
- Tablecloths (round, plastic cloths work better than rectangular for triangle tables in the Gaebler; CSS has cloth tablecloths (white), as does Suzanne Swift (purple), Anna McKittrick (brown)
- Sponge
- Milk pitcher for creamer
- Pitchers for tables in main sanctuary
- Ice
- Programs
- Blankets for outdoor seating on the grass if weather permits
- Large plastic pitcher for refilling lemonade dispenser

Set-up/Clean-up of Tables, Food, Etc.:

- Make sure there are a sufficient number of kitchen towels and cleaning supplies.
- Put used FUS sponges/dishtowels in laundry basket.
- FUS cleans the floors.
- Take out the trash and recycling. Go through the Gaebler doors, walk through the playground to wooden enclosure with dumpsters – you may need to have someone to open the Gaebler door to get back in.
- Stack the chairs.
- Coffee: percolator belongs to CSS and is housed in the Landmark kitchen (check to make sure that it has all of its parts); put the percolator on the dessert table by the outlet; make coffee early (by 11:00 a.m. - it takes about an hour to brew) and strong; instructions are on the side of the percolator - Elise, Mitch Cooper, and Zaccai Lewis all know how to make it correctly).
- Give away food to guests or extra food can be dropped off at Port St. Vincent (221 S. Baldwin Street).
- Bring home all of the items you brought – do not leave items in the Landmark, Gaebler, or kitchen to pick up another day.
- Put away everything that was taken out of Gaebler cabinets, etc.
- Check with FUS staff if you have questions.

Set-up Considerations

- Open doors to outside after the service if weather permits
- Put picnic blankets on the lawn for outdoor seating if weather permits

Caterers

There are three options for catering:

1. Do your own
2. Rely on the community to contribute to the luncheon
3. Hire a professional caterer

If you choose to rely on the community to contribute to the luncheon, the norm at CSS is for the family to provide the following:

- Bagels
- Lox
- Cream cheese
- Other toppings (e.g. sliced tomatoes, sliced onion, capers, sliced cucumbers - **all items MUST be pre-cut)
- Coffee (percolator ground)
- Cream (1 pint)
- Sugar
- Kugels
- Challah (3)
- Containers for leftover food
- SOFT candy
- Wine/juice

If you choose to rely on the community to contribute to the luncheon, the norm at CSS is that it is reasonable to ask the community to provide the following:

- Kugels
- Salads
- Cookies/bars

Caterers that Bnei Mitzvah families have used in the past:

- Sarah Ben Ami (B'Tayavon/Fit to Eat – can do a kosher meal)
- Adamah Neighborhood Table (kosher caterer through Hillel)
- Manna
- Banzo
- Metcalfe's Market
- Willy Street Coop
- Whole Foods
- Cannella Culinary (Gene Gowan)

Suggestions for purchasing lox:

- Costco
- Whole Foods
- Bagels Forever

Suggestions for purchasing bagels (**order bagels SLICED)

- Bagels Forever
- Gotham

Suggestions for purchasing/making challah (one challah per 20 people - **Be sure to PRE-ORDER or defrost prior to the service)

- Sarah Ben Ami
- Batch Bakehouse
- Whole Foods
- Manna
- Trader Joes
- Metcalfes
- Hy-Vee

Parent to Parent: Some Other Logistical Items to Consider

- 1) It may be helpful to talk to your child in advance about what to do with any gift money received. One idea is to have 10% go to tzedakah (charitable donation), 50% be used by your child for whatever s/he would like, and the remainder be put aside for your child's savings.
- 2) It may also be helpful to make a plan with your child about writing thank you notes promptly so that they do not drag out.
- 3) Before choosing a date for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah, be forewarned that hotels fill up rapidly on certain dates. Check event calendars early if you will be having many out of town guests, so that you can reserve rooms early, if necessary.
- 4) No, you do not have to have a loud, wild kids' party Saturday night. In fact, if you have a lot of family in town, it might be a more sane idea to have a more intimate gathering with family and close friends.

Last Thoughts from the Rabbi...

Life cycle events can be stressful, as there are many logistics to deal with and guests to tend to. In spite of this, try to keep in mind that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a religious ritual that is honoring your child and welcoming him/her into the Jewish community. It is also an important life cycle event for your family and an important rite of passage for your child. It is easy for the spiritual component of the ceremony to get lost in the shuffle. So just remember to keep the logistics in perspective and to focus on what is important.

Also, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is taking place on Shabbat. While members of the community have different Shabbat observances, please remember that Shabbat is a day of rest and reflection. Please try to minimize errands on the morning of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and take care of as much as possible ahead of time.

Suggested Reading

You may want to read one or two of these books in order to give you a broader understanding of Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Putting God on the Guest List, 2nd Edition: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah, by Rabbi Jeffrey Salkin, Jewish Lights Publishing

This widely-read book helps parents and teenagers understand the meaning of Bar/Bat Mitzvah by focusing on the core spiritual values of the ceremony.

For Kids – Putting God on the Guest List: How to Claim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah, by Rabbi Jeffrey Salkin, Jewish Lights Publishing

This is a companion to *Putting God on the Guest List* written specifically for kids to help them understand the importance of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process and ceremony.

Whose Bar/Bat Mitzvah Is This, Anyway? A Guide for Parents Through a Family Rite of Passage, by Judith Davis, St. Martin's Griffin

Written by a family therapist, this book explores the psychological and developmental issues of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year.

The JGirl's Guide: The Young Jewish Woman's Handbook for Coming of Age, by Penina Adelman, Ali Feldman and Shulamit Reinharz, Jewish Lights Publishing

This book gives teenage girls advice, based on the teachings of Jewish tradition, for their journey through adolescence.

Ritualwell.org

This Web site is “the source for innovative, contemporary Jewish ritual” sponsored by Kolot: Center for Jewish Women's & Gender Studies of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. There are many rituals and readings for Bar/Bat Mitzvah on the Web site.