

Temple House of Israel + Beth El Congregation

Guidelines for Bar and Bat Mitzvah

Prerequisites: Family

- The family must have been a member for at least 1 year in a Temple (here or elsewhere), including the year immediately prior to the year of B'nai Mitzvah.
- The family must hold a membership in good standing in Temple House of Israel or Temple Beth El during the entire year of the B'nai Mitzvah.
- The family must remain current on all financial obligations to the Temple and Religious School.

Prerequisites: Student

- The student shall have a minimum of 3 consecutive years of Religious instruction in the years leading up to the B'nai Mitzvah (or approval of the rabbi to substitute for or waive this requirement).
- The student must be Jewish (defined at the discretion of the rabbi).
- The student must have reached 13 years of age on or before the date of the ceremony, or receive approval of the rabbi to waive this requirement.
- The student must attend the Religious school for the full school year of the B'nai Mitzvah (through the end of classes for the school year, regardless of the date of the ceremony).

Preparation

- The family will meet with the rabbi to set a date for the ceremony, after which the rabbi will determine the Torah portion and Haftarah reading. This meeting must take place no later than six months before the date set, and generally should be a year or more in advance.
- Congregational ceremonies are communal congregational events - they are not private.
- Ceremonies will be scheduled at times when the congregation holds services. Generally, this includes Friday evenings, Saturday mornings, during each Rosh Chodesh, Shabbat Minchah services, on most Yom Tovim, and at certain other times, at the discretion of the rabbi, and depending on scheduled events on the official calendar.

Participation

- The family will attend all scheduled B'nai Mitzvah Family Education programs held during the course of the year before the ceremony. This will generally include four programs.
- The family will attend at least four rabbi-led Shabbat services in the six months prior to the ceremony.
- The family is also encouraged to attend as many Shabbat and holiday morning services as possible in this same period of time.
- The student will attend at least twelve rabbi-led Shabbat services in the year prior to the ceremony.
- The student will attend at least four rabbi-led Shabbat or Holiday morning services in the year prior to the ceremony.
- The student will attend all B'nai Mitzvah ceremony(ies) that fall during the year prior to the date of their own ceremony (including those conducted at Temple House of Israel and Beth El Congregation).

Mitzvah Project

In the year prior to the date of the ceremony, the student and family are to undertake a 'Mitzvah project.' This project must be approved in advance by the rabbi. It should be something of interest to the student, and express Jewish values in some way. The result of or a report about the project is to be presented by the student as part of the ceremony.

Scheduling

The family is responsible for reserving use of the facilities for the ceremony day and any functions and securing the date on the official calendar. The family should consult with the rabbi on dates available.

Recording and Photography

Photography and Audio/Video recording of religious ceremonies are at the discretion of the rabbi: the family is urged to discuss this with the rabbi at the earliest possible time.

Study & Learning

- The student will be taught Hebrew, prayers, and service skills in Religious school.
- In the event that the student requires additional instruction to master the necessary skills, the family shall engage a tutor approved by the rabbi. Such instruction will be the financial responsibility of the family.
- The student will undertake study with the rabbi for at least six months prior to the ceremony, on a schedule that is set by the rabbi. This study, among other things, may include reading the Torah and Haftarah portions, shaliach tzibbur skills, service choreography, structure of the liturgy, trope and nusach, the meaning of the liturgy, Jewish traditions and customs, and preparation of a Devar Torah.
- Studies must be completed no later than two weeks prior to the date of the ceremony.

Rehearsals

During the weeks leading up to the date of the ceremony, the student will attend at least two rehearsals (more at the discretion of the rabbi). This serves as a 'dress rehearsal' and final 'tune up' to assure that the student is fully prepared and that nothing needs additional work in preparation.

Participation

Family members may participate in the ceremony by presenting readings, displaying the family project, addressing the B'nai Mitzvah, or having an aliyah or other honor. Such participation will be coordinated by the rabbi, who will have discretion as to the specifics of participation.

Miscellaneous

For any other concerns or questions, please contact the rabbi.