

Technical Requirements for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Congregation Beth Shalom has specific requirements for the calling of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to the Torah, including Hebrew school preparation and attendance at Shabbat services. In addition, the following are requirements that should be met by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah in order to participate in, and lead parts of the service acknowledging the occasion (respecting the individual abilities of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah):

1. knowledge of the obligations of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Examples: participating in minyanim, fasting on Yom Kippur, etc.

2. acceptance of the mitzvot, specifically the wearing of tefillin and tallit

It is expected that every Bar Mitzvah will own a set of tefillin, and it is an obligation to wear tefillin. A Bat Mitzvah is encouraged, but not required to do the same.

3. ability to recite - with understanding - the following:

Blessings of the Haftarah, before and after
Part or all of a Haftarah portion
Blessings of the Torah, before and after
Prayers over the wine, bread, candles, reaching this day (Shehechiyanu)

4. It is optional, but preferred, to include the following requirements:

Part or all of a Torah portion
Short d'rash relating to the Torah portion

5. participation in the morning minyan (either Monday or Thursday) on the week of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and participation in the Friday night service on day of the occasion.
6. Currently, Congregation Beth Shalom would like your child to learn as much Torah as possible. However, the ability to lead the following parts of the Shabbat services (leading indicates the ability to read, chant or sing the prayers alone or with the congregation as a whole, from the Bimah) is important and should be undertaken if time permits.

Suggested Sections to Learn:

Friday Night:

Kabbalat Shabbat (Yedid Nefesh through L'cha Dodi)
Vay'chulu through the Kiddush (complete),

Saturday:

Blessing on the Putting on the Tallit
Birkot haShachar (Morning Prayers)
K'riat Sh'ma (just Sh'ma and V'ahavta)
Torah Service
Musaf for Shabbat (complete)
 Hatzi Kaddish
 Amidah (Avot, Kedusha, R'tsei, Modim, Sim Shalom)
 Kaddish Shalem
 Ein Keloheinu
 Aleinu
 Adon Olam

Additional prayers:

Psalm 92 (Tov l'hodot)
Ahavat Olam
V'shamru
Baruch She'amar
Eil Adon
L'eil asher shavat
Ahavah rabah
BirkatHaMazon

Instruction by Congregation Beth Shalom

The ultimate responsibility for the requirements of the bar/bat mitzvah rests with the bar or bat mitzvah themselves. We can aid in their process of learning their blessings, haftarah and Torah portions, divrei Torah, and service leadership in the following ways:

1. Prepared materials. There are written materials and CD's that we provide at the first or second meeting.
2. Trope/Torah class. B'nei Mitzvah instruction begins with a 10 week class on the basics of chanting Torah and Haftarah, navigating the siddur and Chumash, and leading services.
3. Tutoring. Each student is assigned a tutor between 8 and 10 months prior to their bar/bat mitzvah.
4. Individual sessions with the Hazzan. Approximately 2 months before their bar/bat mitzvah the student will meet with the Hazzan to polish their portions and discussion the significance of the occasion.
5. Individual sessions with the Rabbi. The Rabbi will meet with the student to enable an understanding of the parasha and to help the student write their d'var Torah.

6. Telephone calls. Telephone calls are used both for instruction and testing. Telephone calls are rarely longer than 20 minutes, and, if the assignment has not been prepared, can be as short as 5 minutes.

Assignments are given at each session of the trope classes and tutoring. Your child is expected to bring all materials (except the CD), a pencil, and paper to all lessons.

We strongly suggest that you purchase a siddur (Siddur Sim Shalom) and chumash (Etz Chaim or Hertz). A tikkun is also recommended (see the list at the end of this document).

In general, you are invited to sit in on the lessons. I would be very pleased to provide lessons for you as well, as long as we can schedule them appropriately.

You will be receiving a packet with a CD and written information.

CD (or tape) with
Haftarah trope
Haftarah blessings
Haftarah portion
Torah trope
Torah blessings
Torah portion
Torah service nusach
Shabbat Musaf service nusach

Copy of the Haftarah portion
Copy of the Torah portion, with Torah (Stam) print

Recommended Books:

Tikkun I'Korim, Kestenbaum Edition, Artscroll

This is not the best translation of the Chumash, but this contains the Chumash, the Haftarot, the Megillot, and laws and customs specifically useful for the Bar Mitzvah (including information on tefillin). It is a tikkun, and therefore contains both the vocalized (w/ vowels) and unvocalized Hebrew. Anyone interested in continuing to read from the Torah must have a tikkun, but there are many available. This is the only one I've found that has the English translation in it.

If you want to buy one book for the Bar Mitzvah, this is it.

Haftarot, The JPS Bible Commentary. JPS. 2002.

Useful, additional information for all of the Haftarot. Not particularly simple.

Tefillin - G-d, Man, and Tefillin. Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan. NCSY. 1975.

This is a simple yet complete description of tefillin, including how they are made and how the knots are tied. Available in paperback.

Pentateuch and Haftorahs. J.H. Hertz. Soncino Press. 1968.
The Hertz Chumash is the one used in the synagogue.

Etz Chayim, Torah and Commentary. Lieber (ed). USCJ. 2000.
This is the current standard text and commentary of the Torah by the Conservative movement.

Biblical Chant. A.W. Binder. Sacred Music Press.
For the musically inclined only. This contains a full system of tropes for all of the holidays as well as Shabbat. Contains notation as well as specific rules for chanting.

Or Hadash: A Commentary on Siddur Sim Shalom. R. Hammer. USCJ. 2003.

Other useful books:

For more details on observance:

The Complete Book of Jewish Observance. L. Trepp Behrman House. 1980.

A Guide to Jewish Religious Practice. I. Klein. JTS. 1992.

How to Run a Traditional Jewish Household. B. Greenberg. Simon and Schuster. 1983.

Mitzvah Chic – A new approach to hosting a Bar or Bat Mitzvah that is meaningful, hip, relevant, fun and drop-dead gorgeous. G. A. Greenberg. MitzvahChic, LLC. Elkins Park, PA. 2003.

Becoming a Bat Mitzvah. A. C. Weiss. Univ. of Scranton Press. Scranton. 2004.

Thirteen and a Day – the Bar and Bat Mitzvah Across America. M. Oppenheimer. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. NY. 2005.

Putting God on the Guest List. J.K. Salkin. Jewish Lights. Woodstock, VT. 1992.

The Girl's Guide. P. Adelman, A. Feldman, S. Reinharz. Jewish Lights. Woodstock, VT. 2005.

Make Your Own Bar/Bat Mitzvah. G. Milgram. Jossey-Bass. San Francisco. 2004.

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