

Dear B-Mitzvah Families,

Mazel Tov on your upcoming celebration! Becoming a B-Mitzvah is one of the greatest events in the life cycle of a Jewish family, and we are honored to share this special milestone with you. We are available to be of help in any way we can and look forward to working with you and your child(ren) over the coming months or years.

The information included in this handbook is designed to help make preparing for a B-Mitzvah as smooth and meaningful as possible, and we hope you will read it carefully. Please call any time with questions or concerns. Please watch for updates to this handbook as changes will occur from time to time.

Please note - BHBE refers to the B'nai Mitzvah program with the gender-neutral term "B-Mitzvah." Please inform us of your preferred title for your child's special day: "Bar," "Bat," "B'nai," "B," or another term to be suggested.

Again, mazal tov and all our best wishes at this exciting time!

The BHBE B-Mitzvah Team

Introduction and Who's Who in the BHBE B-Mitzvah Program

B-Mitzvah planning at BHBE is truly a collaborative effort between our clergy, the Director of Education, the synagogue's administrative staff, and our B-Mitzvah families working together to ensure preparations are smooth, effective, and tailored to the individual needs of each student. Below are key members of the B-Mitzvah planning team:

- **Rabbi Nate Crane** works with the family on issues of ritual decision making and content, and directly with the students on the meaning of their Torah and Haftarah portions. He also works with the student to prepare a speech that will be given on the day of the B-Mitzvah ceremony. Rabbi Crane can be reached at rabbi@bhbe.org.
- **Cantor Pavel Roytman** assigns the B-Mitzvah dates and the Torah and Haftarah portions. He also tutors the students for their ceremonies, and coordinates family participation in the chanting of additional Torah portions. Cantor Roytman manages the overall B-Mitzvah calendar, in consultation with Rabbi Crane and the chair of the Ritual Committee. Cantor oversees and offers guidance on the Mitzvah project. Cantor Roytman can be reached at cantor@bhbe.org.
- **Hedva Yitzhak, Academy Principal**, works to incorporate content and skills that will be used for the B-Mitzvah into Academy programming. Hedva can be reached at hedva.yitzhak@bhbe.org.
- **Harriet Robbins-Ost, Ritual Director** is in charge of the honors and many of the logistics during the ceremony, including making certain that those participating are in the right place at the right time. To reach Harriet, please call our office at 847-256-1213.
- **Marsha Lyons, Mitzvah and Event Coordinator**, supports the B-Mitzvah families in the post-ceremony reception and in making preparations for their celebrations. Marsha can be reached at marsha.lyons@bhbe.org.
- **Michael Kahn, Executive Director** is available to discuss financial obligations for the B-Mitzvah process. Michael can be reached at michael.kahn@bhbe.org.

Policies and Suggestions for the B-Mitzvah Preparation Process Advance Preparation

Setting Date and Time

The date of the B-Mitzvah is set by the Cantor in coordination with the synagogue calendar and the B-Mitzvah families.

Religious/Educational Requirements

B-Mitzvah students should be enrolled in a Jewish educational program, such as the BHBE Academy or a Jewish Day School. It is essential that all B-Mitzvah students attend Shabbat services on a regular basis for the year leading into the mitzvah day.

Tutoring

During the year before the B-Mitzvah, your child will meet individually with Cantor Roytman or a designated tutor. The number and timing of lessons will be determined based on the child's individual skills, family goals, and circumstances. The Cantor is looking forward to getting to know your family and working with you to help create a fully meaningful and memorable B-Mitzvah experience.

Aliyot and Other Honors

We look forward to having your family members and friends participate in your celebration. You can expect our Ritual Chair, Harriet Robbins-Ost, to contact your family about a month in advance of the B-Mitzvah to help you assign honors. Specific honors are listed later in this handbook. Feel free to reach out earlier if you would like.

Those relatives and guests designated to read Torah or to lead T'filah on the day of the B-Mitzvah are required to contact Cantor Roytman in advance. He will provide guidance to those in need of help in preparing for the event, and will also make sure the appropriate reading is adequately prepared.

Derech Eretz (Considerate Behavior)

Beth Hillel Bnai Emunah nurtures a sense of caring, kindness and sensitivity. If the B-Mitzvah student is enrolled in the Academy, we encourage families to invite all students in their child's Academy class to their celebrations. When this is not possible, we ask you to consider the following guidelines: if fifty percent or more of the class is invited to the celebration, please consider inviting the entire class.

Mitzvah Component

One of the most profound ways of growing is through helping change the lives of others. We believe that by taking the "Mitzvah" part of "B-Mitzvah" seriously, we give our participants the chance to experience better what it really means to be a full member of the Jewish community. The Jewish people have a long history of being generous with their time and resources to make the world a better place (Tikkun Olam), and we would like your child to take their place in that long-standing tradition. Giving back to the community is a core value of Judaism, and one that should occupy a solid place in the growth of a young Jewish person and have a role in the process of becoming a Jewish adult.

We guide each child to choose a "Mitzvah" that is both personally meaningful and helpful to the community. It is always good to encourage the child to come up with their own ideas for Mitzvot they can perform as part of this experience, but our staff and the child's family have a strong role in guiding and supporting that process.

We look forward to partnering with you and your child in putting the "Mitzvah" in the B-Mitzvah!

Here are some great resources to help your child and family in the process of choosing a meaningful and appropriate project!

JUF B-Mitzvah Project Guide

<https://www.juf.org/teens/BM-Projects.aspx>

Mitzvah Quest

<https://mitzvahquest.org/mitzvah-project-ideas/>

Model B-Mitzvah Preparation Timeline

3 Years

- Attending the “three -year out” meeting where the initial introductions are made and the B-Mitzvah Packet is received
- Setting up/finalizing B-Mitzvah Date with Cantor Roytman

2 Years

- Attending the “two- year out” meeting for additional info and details

1 Year

- Begin making arrangements for the logistics of the day, by getting in touch with Marsha Lyons, Mitzvah Coordinator, at roarmbl@gmail.com.

- At this time, Cantor Roytman and Rabbi Crane will be reaching out to you to set up initial appointments. If you do not hear from them, please do not hesitate to initiate the process. cantor@bhbe.org and rabbi@bhbe.org.

7 Months

- Keep an eye on logistics – invitations, catering, photographer, and anything else you are planning.

4 Months

- B-Mitzvah students begin working with Rabbi Crane on their B-Mitzvah reflections.

3 Months

- Email picture of your child to jackie.ernest@bhbe.org for the Bulletin.
- Consider ordering Kippot, and tallit and tefillin through the BHBE Sisterhood. When ordering, Kippot should be shipped to the synagogue.

1 Month

- Schedule a B-Mitzvah rehearsal with Cantor Roytman.
- Connect with Harriet Robbins-Ost, Ritual Chairperson, regarding assigning honors - see list below.
- Finalize catering and logistics.

The Week Before

- The Saturday one week before the ceremony, each B-Mitzvah family is invited to serve as greeters at Shabbat morning services.
- If the B-Mitzvah is preparing the first three readings of the Torah to be read on the following Shabbat, they are encouraged to read those during Monday and Thursday morning (Shacharit) services of the week leading up to the B-Mitzvah. The family is encouraged to attend as well. It is a good time to take pictures or videos.

The Day Of

The day of the B-Mitzvah is a very exciting but an understandably stressful one for all those involved. So, here are some guidelines and tips for the celebrant on how to go through it successfully.

- Get a good night's sleep
- Before leaving the house, check and make sure to bring all B-Mitzvah materials including:
 - Printed D'var Torah
 - Talit
 - Printed copies of the Haftarah blessings and reading
 - Printed parental blessing
- Be at the synagogue at the beginning of services at 9:30 AM
- Sit on the right (Cantor) side of the Bimah
- Participate in the service to the best of your ability
- If unsure, feel free to ask questions - everyone is there to help you and to cheer you on
- Relax and enjoy!

Honors

During the service, there are a number of honors that you can assign to family and friends. There are a total of 4 honors plus the B-Mitzvah. Cohens or Levites in the family get these honors as well.

Aliyot*

Typically, the family is provided with 4 aliyot (blessings before and after a specific Torah reading). One of the four aliyot will be for your child and there will be three more for family and/or friends.

Ark Openings*

There are generally two Ark openings and closings available to honor friends and family (between one and four people for each.)

Gelilah*

The Gelilah helps to bind and dress the Torah with its cover and ornaments after the completion of the entire Torah reading.

Readings

1. Prayer for Our Country, English*
2. Prayer for Israel, Hebrew*
3. Prayer for Israel, English*
4. Prayer for Peace, English.

Ashrei

Often done by a younger sibling, cousin or a close friend. This honor is optional.

**One of the Participants for the above honors with an asterisk is required to be Jewish.*

BHBE Sisterhood wishes you a mazel tov on your child's Simcha.

It is a very special time in the life of your family and Sisterhood wants to make the “other” details easy for you. Sisterhood offers you one stop shopping for your B-Mitzvah needs.

The Judaica Shop sells B-Mitzvah Tallitot, and they can order one if you find something you like elsewhere. Contact Joan Meyers at 847-602-2257 or Robin Smulson at 847-982-1233.

Personalized kippot can also be purchased through Sisterhood. Please contact Marsha Lyons at roarmbl@gmail.com.

These are knowledgeable people who can help you navigate through the process.

Please support Sisterhood on your Simcha as Sisterhood always supports Beth Hillel Bnai Emunah!