

BAT/BAR MITZVAH

at

TEMPLE ANSHE

SHOLOM

2024-2025



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THE MEANING OF BAT/BAR MITZVAH

Bat/Bar Mitzvah literally means "daughter/son of the commandment." Traditionally, when a boy turned thirteen, he was considered responsible for personal religious obligations. It was, in a sense, religious adulthood. Becoming thirteen years of age made one a Bar Mitzvah. The community marked and affirmed the youngster's new status by calling him to the reading of the Torah or *Haftarah* at a public service.

While traditionally girls reached the age of maturity at twelve years, the notion of a Bat Mitzvah ritual is a modern innovation. In the Reform movement, where equality is stressed, it has all the same connotations and obligations as the Bar Mitzvah. Since we emphasize the equality of men and women, both ceremonies (Bat and Bar Mitzvah) will be scheduled soon after a youngster's 13th birthday.

The Hebrew language is gendered and we recognized that does not fit every person's gender identity. We use the term B'nai Mitzvah when we do not wish to specify gender.

Judaism does not actually believe that full religious maturity is fully attained at age 13. More education and experience are clearly needed for Judaism to have meaning as an adult. Thus, we ask families to make the commitment of continuing Jewish education for their children after B'nai Mitzvah through at least the end of *Kabbalat Torah* (in Grade 10) or Confirmation.

B'nai Mitzvah in our congregation shows that the child has learned sufficient Hebrew to prepare the reading of a Torah portion. It marks their entrance into adolescence and thus reasserts Jewish identity at a crucial point of passage. It makes a youngster feel good about themselves both as a Jew and in general.

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Whereas religious responsibility is automatically assumed at age 13 for any Jew, the special ceremony marking this passage allows the student to demonstrate an ability to accomplish long-term goals, to make a public statement of Jewish identity and to celebrate a growing independence. Reflecting the public nature of this ceremony, the Board of Temple Anshe Sholom has established the following educational requirements for those becoming B'nai Mitzvah in our congregation:

- (a) All students are encouraged to start at Temple Anshe Sholom in Pre-Kindergarten, which begins their familiarity with the Temple as their synagogue and with Reform Judaism. This helps them and their family feel a part of our congregational community in which they will celebrate this milestone.
- (b) Students should attend the full program – twice per week – beginning in *Grade 2* through the end of *Grade 7* or the end of the school year in which their B'nai Mitzvah occurs.

- (c) Students who attend a Hebrew Day School program are encouraged to begin the Temple Anshe Sholom Judaica program in *Kindergarten*. Minimally, students who attend a Hebrew Day School program must be enrolled in the Temple Anshe Sholom Judaica during their B'nai Mitzvah (grade 7) year of learning. If a student enrolls at a later date, a B'nai Mitzvah may not be scheduled until at least one full academic year has passed from the date of involvement in our school.
- (d) For children of new members, consideration will be given to equivalent Reform Jewish education at another school.
- (e) Special consideration will be given for students with special needs.
- (f) All special requests must be approved by our Cantor/B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator and the Rabbi.

GRADE 7 (SHA'AR) PROGRAM

In the *Sha'ar* or Gateway Program (which meets during Religious School hours) students learn the skills necessary to becoming a B'nai Mitzvah. Included in the class will be lessons on chanting Torah and *Haftarah*, how the *Tanakh* is organized, how to study a Torah portion, how to write a *D'var Torah* and much more. Students will make their own Torah *wimpel* (belt), learn how to tie the fringes on a *tallit* and work on the skills of living a Jewish life in our community. In addition, parents will be invited to participate in several ways throughout the year. This program is an opportunity for your young person to study and learn with our Rabbi and Cantor.

PUTTING IT IN PERSPECTIVE

It's important that these deeper meanings of B'nai Mitzvah stand out clearly. The student's family can help by remembering that the ceremony is not a performance. Don't overemphasize that aspect. Great dramatic skills or Bimah-presence are not really important. Some bright young people have little poise in public and vice-versa (like adults).

A person's B'nai Mitzvah accomplishment should stand on its own. Try not to make comparisons (much less worry about others making comparisons) between your youngster and others. Every youngster is unique and special to their loved ones and friends on their B'nai Mitzvah day and indeed, a valued member of our Temple family.

Remember that a B'nai Mitzvah party, of any kind, celebrates the accomplishment of youngster. The party is not the B'nai Mitzvah. Parents who keep this in mind themselves can help youngsters see the difference.

Gifts are exciting (to adults as well). Gifts and thank-you notes are naturally a topic of much-spirited peer and carpool conversation. If possible, help your child appreciate that the friendship

behind the gifts is what is most important, and that the personal accomplishment is the gift that keeps giving.

B'nai Mitzvah can be a wonderful family experience, which gives a youngster new maturity and brings them closer to family and heritage. Parents can find much joy in the youngster's accomplishments and in the new stage of life that the family enters. Still the stress of preparing for a Bat/Bar Mitzvah can arise as a family goes through the process. It is not unusual for youngsters to be anxious or for family problems to surface. Parents can find scheduling and arranging the festivities of a Bat/Bar Mitzvah weekend overwhelming, threatening to squeeze the joy out of the occasion. In these cases, book a time with your Rabbi or Cantor to discuss these issues and concerns. Talking with other parents who have been through it is also very helpful.

Please note that, while the student is celebrating becoming Bat/Bar Mitzvah by reading from the Torah and leading the congregation in worship, the service is *NOT* exclusively your child's Bat/Bar Mitzvah service. It is the congregation's Shabbat observance as well. Other events may also be included in the service, depending on the timing and other happenings within our community. Examples of other events may include a Baby-Naming, an *Aufruf* (blessing before a wedding), a holiday observance, a guest speaker or a special sermon. While some of these additions may be known at the time of the booking of the Bat/Bar Mitzvah date, others may not be added until shortly before the service. The Rabbi will inform you of any additions as soon as they are known.

THE PREPARATION FOR B'NAI MITZVAH

The student begins individualized preparation for Bat/Bar Mitzvah approximately 6-9 months before the event. (When this time period conflicts with summer camp dates and/or vacations, time is added to the student's scheduled study time to compensate.) All youngsters who become Bat/Bar Mitzvah at Temple Anshe Sholom must get private tutoring. Each student must have their own copy of the Reform *siddur* (prayerbook), Mishkan T'fillah for Bat/Bar Mitzvah preparation.

At the first individual meeting with the Cantor/B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator, students receive a folder which includes the following: a personalized schedule to monitor the student's progress on a weekly basis, the student's Torah and *Haftarah* portions (in Hebrew and English), information about class assignments, the Mitzvah project, and background information for the family. Regular practice on a daily basis is essential for the student to complete the weekly assignments and to attain fluency within the preparation period.

Parents can help by listening to the student practice out loud. Even if you do not know Hebrew, the very act of listening can be useful. In addition, it is important to listen to your child read their English passages, helping with pronunciation of difficult words and suggesting slow and clear

reading.

There will be two full rehearsals of the Bat/Bar Mitzvah with the Rabbi and/or the Cantor during the two weeks before the event. At that time the youngster will read from the *Sefer Torah* (Torah Scroll). Parents are encouraged to attend both rehearsals and prepare for their own role on the Bimah.

TROPE/CHANTING

The chanting of parts of the prayers, Torah and/or Haftarah can be quite beautiful. The term used for chanting is *trope*.

Chanting Torah and Haftarah demands a certain basic skill level. First, of course, the child must be willing to sing before others. It is nice to have someone be able to carry a tune, but we do not expect “opera stars.” The most important thing is for the Bat/Bar Mitzvah not to feel self-conscious about the singing. Secondly, the youngster must learn how to chant.

Since our program is designed to teach students skills they will use the rest of their lives, the emphasis is on teaching the method of chanting. The *trope* for Torah and *Haftarah* is taught in the *Sha’ar* class (see above for more information). In order to chant, the Bat/Bar Mitzvah must be enrolled in this class.

COSTS

TEMPLE DUES AND FEES

Temple policy states that a family's financial commitment to the congregation **must be current** regarding Temple commitment and school fees as well as the fees for tutoring, sponsorship of the *Oneg Shabbat*, and the use of any hall for a luncheon or dinner held at the Temple. We ask that all fees be paid *no later than* one month prior to the scheduled date of the Bat or Bar Mitzvah.

There are a number of costs associated with the preparation and celebration of Bat/Bar Mitzvah. Families are required to pay for private tutoring for the 6-9 month preparation period. It is also customary for the family to sponsor the *Oneg Shabbat* preceding the Friday service. For this event you can bake, ask friends and/or family to bake, or arrange for a caterer to provide food. In addition to the food for the *Oneg Shabbat*, families provide the wine and linens for the *Oneg Shabbat*. * Currently during the COVID 19 Pandemic all of our services are offered online using ZOOM. Families are asked, in lieu of sponsoring the *Oneg*, to sponsor the Online Service. The cost is \$150. Please remember that the congregation is welcome to attend both during the service and the *Oneg Shabbat*.

Families will be billed the following Bat/Bar Mitzvah fees. Please be in touch with the Temple Office to work out a payment plan that works for your family.

B'nai Mitzvah fees

Tutoring \$850.00
Administrative Fees \$150.00

This includes a copy of the prayer book for the student

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Total \$1000.00

Musical Accompaniment \$500.00 (optional)

Accompaniment will be provided for both Friday night and Saturday morning

Please note that no student is ever denied the opportunity to celebrate their Bat/Bar Mitzvah because of financial need. The Rabbi or Cantor can speak with you in complete confidentiality if you are interested in receiving assistance.

Please remember that the emphasis should not be on the most elaborate and/or extravagant party, but on the *mitzvah* (the commandment) of living as a Jew. In budgeting your funds, keep in mind that costly meals and parties are not required and, in addition, may give the wrong message about what is really important on this special day.

MITZVAH PROJECT

The Mitzvah Project is designed to bring deeper meaning and learning to the Bat/Bar Mitzvah experience. It is a great source of pride in our students by the end of their Bnai Mitzvah year. The project has four parts to consider, plan and prepare for:

- 1) **Talmud Torah** – studying, learning and understanding your Torah and *Haftarah*
- 2) **Avodah** – observing a new ceremonial or ritual mitzvah
- 3) **Tz'dakah** – the youngster chooses a cause to which to contribute, decides on the amount, and makes the contribution in honor of becoming a Bat/Bar Mitzvah
- 4) **G'milut Chasadim** – doing a good deed for someone who really needs it (for example: delivering food to the elderly or infirm, visiting a nursing home, volunteering at a food pantry)

When the student begins Bat/Bar Mitzvah class they are given a booklet explaining the Mitzvah Project, plus a report sheet to be filled out when the project is selected.

Choosing the ways to fulfill this Mitzvah Project can make for a wonderful family conversation. The final choice should be the student's. However parental help and guidance may be necessary depending on what options are chosen.

T'FILLOT

A full understanding and comfort with our congregation's *t'fillot* is important in two respects: first, creating a greater sense of community and second, giving the student confidence and ease with the customs of *t'fillot* at Temple Anshe Sholom.

Thus, Bat/Bar Mitzvah students are required to attend Erev Shabbat *t'fillot* (services) at Temple Anshe Sholom a minimum six (6) times during the 6 month period of Bat/Bar Mitzvah training (not including Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur).

WHAT HAPPENS ON THE BAT/BAR MITZVAH WEEKEND?

THE EREV SHABBAT (Friday night) OF THE BAT/BAR MITZVAH WEEKEND

The Kabbalat Shabbat service begins Friday at 7:00 PM. The Oneg Shabbat precedes the service at 6:15 PM.

The family and the youngster participate in the Friday evening service in these ways:

- 1) Blessing the Shabbat candles – parents and/or additional family members may join together in blessing the candles
- 2) *Kiddush* – the Bat/Bar Mitzvah student will be asked to join the Rabbi and Cantor in leading the community in *kiddush*
- 3) The Bat/Bar Mitzvah leads many parts of the service
- 4) A presentation is made to the Bat/Bar Mitzvah on behalf of the Deborah Sisterhood.

Erev Shabbat is also a nice occasion for significant members of the family and the extended family to share. Thus, you may wish to ask family and friends to join you at the service (and even have one or two people participate on the Bimah).

Families are invited to donate the *Bimah* flowers or special décor in addition to sponsoring the Friday *Oneg Shabbat* in honour of the Bat/Bar Mitzvah.

THE SHABBAT MORNING (Saturday morning) OF THE BAT/BAR MITZVAH

It is strongly recommended that the immediate family be at the Temple no later than half an hour prior to the beginning of the service, which commences at 10:30 AM.

During *t'fillot* it is our tradition to ceremonially pass the Torah scroll from the hands of grandparents to parents to the student to symbolize the transmission of the heritage. (Of course, great grandparents are included as well). This ceremony takes place on the *Bimah*, or if one of the participants cannot climb the *Bimah* stairs, at the congregation level. In special circumstances this may not take place; please speak to the Rabbi privately if you have particular concerns.

At the service every student:

- 1) Chants the Torah blessings and reads or chants a minimum of 9-12 verses of Torah
- 2) Reads the *Haftarah* portion in Hebrew, opening and closing with the *Haftarah* blessings in Hebrew
- 3) Delivers a *D'var Torah* (remarks relating to the Torah or Haftarah and its lessons for our time)
- 5) Leads sections of the Shabbat morning service in Hebrew and English

Following the *D'var Torah*, the Rabbi will speak personally to the child. The parents are then invited to the *Bimah* to share their own words and blessing for the occasion. Siblings are then invited to join the family on the *Bimah* as the Rabbi blesses the entire family.

The Bat or Bar Mitzvah student will receive a certificate, and a *Tanakh* (Bible) from the Temple.

IT IS RECOMMENDED that a family attend other B'nai Mitzvah ceremonies at Temple to become familiar with the service. Seeing things for the first time on the Shabbat of your Bat/Bar Mitzvah can make anyone nervous (kids and adults). Coming to any Shabbat service (evening or morning) at Temple and sharing in the Kiddush never requires an invitation. All services – whether there is a Bat or Bar Mitzvah or not – are open to all.

OTHER INFORMATION

KIPPAH AND TALLIT

Jewish people who come onto the *Bimah* are required to wear a *kippah* and *tallit* (someone who is not Jewish who reads is, however, asked to *not* wear a *tallit* but should wear a *kippah* to show respect). Both women and men are encouraged to follow this practice. Those in the congregation may choose to wear a *kippah* and/or *tallit* or neither. *Kippot* and *tallitot* are supplied by the Temple for your guests. You may, of course, order special *kippot* if you would like. Should you order special *kippot* and have extras left over, we hope that you will consider donating them to

the Temple for use in the future. They are a lovely memory of your child's *Simcha*.

KASHRUT

The Temple policy regarding *kashrut* (keeping kosher) requires that no food be served in the Temple facility that is specifically prohibited in the Torah. Therefore, no pork products and no shellfish may be served at any event (public or private) in our congregation. In addition, meals must adhere to a separation of dairy and meat products. This includes not serving dairy desserts following a meat meal. At public events at the Temple we serve only kosher meat. For a list of recommended caterers please contact the Temple office. *Once you select a caterer, we ask that you please inform the office who you will be using.*

PHOTOGRAPHY

A Bat/Bar Mitzvah is an event of *k'dusha* (holiness). Therefore in keeping with the mood of this occasion, Photography is not allowed during the service. You may, however, schedule a photo session during the week preceding or following the Bat/Bar Mitzvah. Photos are also permitted during the rehearsal. Please call the Temple office to make these arrangements. Videotaping is permitted only if the camera is kept stationary on a tripod, placed in the very back of the sanctuary, and no lights or flash is permitted).

MUSIC

In keeping with the spirit of Shabbat, our Temple policy is that there be no instrumental or recorded music during Bat/Bar Mitzvah luncheons. Music is permitted in the evenings *after* the conclusion of Shabbat (please speak with the Rabbi for more details).

ALCOHOL

Temple policy allows for wine at Bat/Bar Mitzvah luncheons, but no hard liquor.

CANDLES

We ask that you do not have candles lit during Shabbat luncheons.

JUDAICA SHOP

The Temple Judaica shop, run by our Deborah Sisterhood, carries a large selection of *tallitot*, *kippot* (including individualized, printed *kippot*), Judaica jewelry and gifts appropriate for B'nai Mitzvah. If you wish to make arrangements to see the items in the Judaica shop, please contact the Temple office.

Parking



PARKING

Parking at the Temple is limited, so please tell your guests to arrive early for the best parking spots. The Temple parking lot on the east side of the building is limited only to staff parking. Guests must refrain from using these spaces. Please inform your guests not to park on the opposite side of Cline Avenue (where there are “No Parking” signs) or in the TD Canada Trust parking lot, as they may receive a ticket and/or be towed. There is a large parking behind Cootes Paradise School, off of Glen Road, which may be used. *See the map at left for the location of this lot.*

Directions to the Temple can be found at www.anshesholom.ca.

PARKING FOR THE PHYSICALLY IMPAIRED

There is special parking for the physically impaired on the west side of the building (facing Churchill Park). Access from this lot is available into the sanctuary, although advance notice would be helpful so that the custodian can open the appropriate doors prior to you and/or your guests' arrival.

SERVICE TIMES

Erev Shabbat services begin at 7:00 PM, with the *Oneg Shabbat* starting at 6:15 PM. Once per month, on Family Shabbat, the *Erev Shabbat* service begins at 6:15 p.m., preceded by a 5:45 p.m. *Oneg Shabbat*. Check the Temple Calendar for dates of Shabbat LIVE. You are welcome to organize a private dinner for your family and/or out-of-town guests at the Temple if there is no congregational dinner scheduled for the date of your *Simcha*. Please call the office to make such arrangements.

Shabbat morning services begin at 10:30 AM and conclude shortly after noon.

SUPERVISION OF CHILDREN ATTENDING

For security reasons it is your responsibility to provide full adult supervision for children attending

your child's Bat/Bar Mitzvah luncheon and/or evening party. Coverage should include the downstairs school wing, the youth lounge and outside the front of the building.

FEEDING THE HUNGRY

Although we are blessed to live in a nation with a well-established social network, the problem of hunger has not disappeared. In fact, more people are turning to food banks today than in many years.

Hamilton Out of the Cold and Hamilton Jewish Family Services addresses this issue by accepting, collection and distributing food donations. We suggest a 3% voluntary donation on all catered Jewish affairs (including Bat/Bar Mitzvah parties). Thus, if your food costs come to \$6,000 you would give \$180 to either of these organizations, if \$10,000 you would give \$300.

All families having special occasions in our congregation are encouraged to give to help fulfil the mitzvah of Feeding the Hungry. When making your plans for your luncheon and/or dinner, please consider thinking of others who can benefit from the joy of this special time in your family.

CANDY

The custom of throwing candy at a *Simcha* was meant to shower the young person with sweetness. Unfortunately, as a result of many occasions on which candy has been thrown in an aggressive manner which resulted in injury, this practice is no longer allowed at any *Simcha* at the Temple, for safety and legal reasons.

THANK YOU NOTES

Following your child's Bat/Bar mitzvah it is entirely appropriate that students write thank you notes to those who have given gifts in honour of their *Simcha*. Such written thanks are a measure of how much this occasion means to your student and your family. Included in the thank you list should be handwritten notes to your child's tutor for all their hard work, letters to the Temple Board and Deborah Sisterhood thanking them for making this day possible and a letter to Dr. Michael and Mrs. Pam Taylor for the State of Israel Bond that your child will receive as a gift. Please contact the Temple Office for these very important addresses.

THE HONOUR OF THE ALIYAH

The word *Aliyah* means "ascending" and refers to the act of going up to the Torah (which is read from the *Bimah* on a level higher than that of the congregation, signifying its holiness) and reciting the blessing over the Torah. Any adult Jew may be honoured with an aliyah.

HOW DOES ONE HAVE AN ALIYAH?

The person honoured with the *Aliyah* comes forward when called. The reader will open the scroll and point to where s/he will begin reading. The person called to the Torah takes the *Tzitzit* of the *tallit* and touches them to the first word to be read and kisses the *Tzitzit*. The Torah will then be rolled closed. The person blessing the Torah holds the wooden rollers and recites the first blessing. After the reader completes reading the section, the reader will point out the last word read to the person who is blessing the Torah, who again takes the *Tzitzit*, touches the last word, and kisses the *Tzitzit*. The scroll is again rolled closed, and the person reciting the blessing holds the wooden rollers and recites the second blessing.

It is a great honour to be given an *Aliyah* when the Torah is read in the synagogue and it is important to fulfill this *Mitzvah* (commandment) with dignity, both out of respect for God and Torah, and out of respect for the congregation, on whose behalf you will be blessing the Torah. Hence it is important to be familiar with the ritual of the *Aliyah* and practice reciting the blessing aloud prior to the occasion, if the blessing is not familiar to you.

Please bear in mind that there are variations in custom in different congregations, and it is appropriate to follow *minhag ha-makom* (the custom of the place in which you are). Please also note that the term *Aliyah* refers not only to the honour of being called to bless the Torah, but to the section of text which is read between the blessings you will recite.

In our congregation, Jewish men and women are both asked to wear a *Tallit* when called to the Torah. Our synagogue has *Tallitot* (plural of *tallit*) in the front foyer for you to use.

1. YOU ARE CALLED TO THE TORAH

You should find out in advance (from a family member, the rabbi or cantor) what number your *Aliyah* is. Traditionally, at Temple Anshe Sholom, we usually have three *Aliyot*. Come forward to the Torah reading table as soon as you are called, using the shortest route possible.

2. FIND THE PLACE

The reader or rabbi will open the scroll and show you where they will begin reading. Take the *Tzitzit* (corner fringes of the tallit) and touch them to the word the reader and/or cantor points out and kiss the *tzitzit*. The reader will close the scroll and the *Gabbai* (person at the reading table who assists the reader) or Rabbi may or may not cover the scroll.

3. HOLD THE EITZ CHAYIM

When reciting the Torah, it is customary (and your privilege) to hold the bottom ends of the wooden rollers, one in each hand. This is done to make a physical connection with the item over which we say a blessing.

4. RECITE THE FIRST BLESSING

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְּבַרֵךְ:
בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבַרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים
וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה:

You say:

Bar-chu et A-do-nai Ha-me-vo-rach.

Congregation responds:

Ba-ruch A-do-nai Ha-me-vo-rach l'o-lam va-ed.

You say:

Ba-ruch A-do-nai Ha-me-vo-rach l'o-lam va-ed.

Ba-ruch A-ta A-do-nai, E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech ha-o-Lam, a-sher ba-char ba-nu mi-kol ha-a-mim, v'na-tan la-nu et To-ra-to. Ba-ruch A-ta A-do-nai no-tein ha-to-ra.

Praised be the Eternal, to whom our praise is due!

Praised be the Eternal, to whom our praise is due now and forever!

Praised be the Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, who has chosen us from all peoples by giving us the Torah. Blessed is the Eternal, Giver of the Torah.

5. THE READER READS

While the reader reads, you may be asked to hold one of the wooden rollers, to keep the scroll open. You are welcome to look into the scroll while the reader reads.

6. THE SECOND BLESSING

When the reader finishes reading the *Aliyah*, they will point out the last word with the *Yad* (pointer). Take the *Tzitzit* in your hand, touch them to this word, and kiss them. Then recite this blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת,
וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נִטַּע בְּתוֹכָנוּ:
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה:

Ba-ruch A-ta A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech ha-o-lam, a-sher nā-tan la-nu Tō-rat ĕ-mēt v'cha-yai o-lam na-ta b'to-chei-nu. Ba-ruch A-ta A-do-nai no-tein ha-to-ra.

Blessed is the Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, who has given us a Torah of truth,

implanting within us eternal life. Blessed is the Eternal, Giver of the Torah.

7. AFTER THE BLESSINGS

When you have completed the second blessing the rabbi will recite a blessing for you called a *Mi Shebeirach* ("The One Who Blessed..."). At the completion of this blessing you will move to the other side of the reader to make room for the next person called to the Torah.

When the next *Aliyah* is completed, you may return to your seat. It is customary to take a longer route back to your seat than that which you took to ascend to the *Bimah*, signifying your reluctance at leaving the Torah.



Bar Mitzvah

SOME FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THANK YOU NOTES

The writing of thank you notes is not difficult. Here is a template of a simple three sentence thank you note. While it is the thought that is important, it is also important to be personal, be neat, be prompt in writing your thank you notes. You should write them as soon as possible after your Bat/Bar Mitzvah.

Dear _____,

Thank you so much for the _____. (If they were at your event:) Thank you so much for being at my Bat/Bar Mitzvah. It meant so much to have you there. (If they were not able to be at your event:) I was sorry that you weren't able to be at my Bat/Bar Mitzvah. We missed you. (If they gave you an item:) I really like the _____ and I am looking forward to using it/playing with it/wearing it. (If they gave you money:) I plan on using the money towards _____ and I am planning on making a donation to _____ in honor of my becoming a Jewish adult. Thank you again for thinking of me at this time.

Sincerely,
(Your Name)

CLOTHING

A Bat or Bar Mitzvah is not a fashion show. You should dress in a manner that makes you feel like it is special occasion, but not a formal dance. Remember that you are going to be carrying the Torah and walking around with it. You may want to avoid extremely confining clothing or jewelry that can get caught on the Torah. Flat shoes are recommended for girls and dress shoes for boys. You are going to want to break them in a little. Walk around the house in them, and, if the soles are slippery, be sure to scuff them outside so you don't slip in them. Since you will be leading services for your congregation please keep modesty in mind when picking out your clothes. It is not appropriate to have bare shoulders on the *Bimah* or skirts that are very short.