

# B'nai Mitzvah Guide Class of 5772

Volume 5  
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## 2009 Award Recipient of the "Best Place for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah"

6800 35th Ave NE  
Seattle, WA 98115  
v: (206) 524-0075  
f: (206) 595-5095

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### Mazal Tov!

The time of a child's coming of age is one of the most meaningful experiences in a family's Jewish life.

THE BETH SHALOM COMMUNITY has structured our bar/bat mitzvah preparation to engage adults and children in a spirited, meaningful learning environment. To that end, there are several critical elements of our program in which your child will participate in preparation toward becoming a bar/bat mitzvah. In addition to continuing his or her learning at Religious School or a day school, your child will attend Prozdor, receive one-on-one tutoring, supervision by our Bar/Bat Mitzvah Coordinator, and work directly with Rabbi Borodin. As a family, you will participate in the 6th Grade Minyan. In this packet you

will find explanations of these program components, along with associated costs and guidance for different questions in celebrating this simcha.

IN ORDER TO PROCEED with a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, your child must be in good educational standing and your household must be current on all synagogue financial responsibilities, including membership dues, sustaining fund or other financial obligations, Religious School and/or Prozdor tuition, and Bar/Bat Mitzvah fees. All financial questions should be directed to our executive director, Tzachi Litov and for all educational questions contact our director of education, Irit Eliav. This requirement safeguards the sustainability of our



program and we thank you in advance for honoring it.

We look forward to taking this journey with you. Please do not hesitate to ask questions and request our help as you prepare for this exciting milestone.

### The B'nai Mitzvah Coordinating Team

There are numerous key players who are here to help in planning your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah ~

**Michele Stern**  
Bnai Mitzvah Coordinator will work with you in preparation for all aspects of service including setting up a tutor and regularly checking progress. Michele teaches the Trope class in Prozdor.

**Kris Klippel**  
Rabbi's Assistant & Life Cycle Coordinator will

work with you on planning your Kiddush, establishing your payment plan, finalizing your honors and many other event logistics. He also keeps Rabbi Borodin's calendar. Please contact him to set and reschedule any appointments with the rabbi.

**Rabbi Borodin** will work with your child on his or her D'var Torah, will co-teach the 6th Grade Family Minyan, run a Torah workshop for parents, and meet individually with each family.

**Nance Adler** will co-lead the 6th Grade Minyan. This will give your family an opportunity to learn different parts of the service and become acquainted with others in the class.

**Beth Huppin** will teach a D'var Torah class in Prozdor.

A trained tutor (either an adult or teen) will coach your child in trope, the blessings, and leading services.

## Educational Prerequisites

Students are expected to be enrolled in an approved Jewish educational program from 3<sup>rd</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> Grade.

To observe a Bar or Bat Mitzvah under the auspices of the synagogue, a child must be enrolled in the CBS Religious School or a Jewish day school by the third grade and maintain enrollment in one of these programs through the eighth grade.

Beth Shalom recognizes that individual children may have special needs, which necessitate developing a special program of study. All alternative arrangements need to be worked out in advance with the Director of Education. In some cases educational delays and inability to fulfill requirements may require the congregation to delay the Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony of a child.



### RELIGIOUS SCHOOL STUDENTS

#### Sixth and Seventh Grade Religious School Requirement

Sixth & Seventh grade Religious School students are required to attend classes at Beth Shalom on **Tuesdays and Thursdays**. Approximately eleven months prior to your child's bar/bat mitzvah, he/she will begin **individual skill tutoring**, focusing on their chosen service format and assigned Torah and Haftarah readings.

#### Eighth Grade Prozdor Commitment 2008/2009

During the eighth grade year, students are expected to honor their commitment to completing the Prozdor program on Thursdays.

### FORMER DAY SCHOOL STUDENTS

#### Sixth Grade Religious School Requirement

Incoming sixth graders who completed 5<sup>th</sup> grade at a day school and enrolled in a public or independent secular school for 6<sup>th</sup> grade **have the same educational obligations** as Religious School students.

Former day school students are required to attend **Tuesday and Thursday** sixth-grade classes.

### CONTINUING DAY SCHOOL STUDENTS

In the sixth, seventh and eighth grades, day school students are required to attend the Prozdor Middle School program on Thursday afternoons.

Refusal to continue Jewish Studies after Bar/Bat Mitzvah is grounds for not scheduling a communal Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration at Beth Shalom.

*Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutoring is NOT a replacement for participation in any Religious School class and should **not** be scheduled during Religious School or Prozdor hours.*

It is recommended that each family purchase the *Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary* from the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism published by the Jewish Publication Society.

## Information about Tutoring

At the first B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator meeting, your child's Hebrew level will be assessed, goals for training will be determined and a list of several tutors will be provided. Most of the tutors are 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders who have been trained in our junior tutor program. The B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator will also have names of adult tutors if you want to take advantage of the skills of a trained adult.

You may interview tutors and choose the tutor that best suits your child's schedule and needs. Please schedule an initial meeting and establish a regular weekly schedule with your tutor right away (tutoring must begin no later than 8 months before the ceremony, otherwise the ceremony will be rescheduled).

The duration of tutoring varies, although we have found that most students need about 25-35 hours (or 25-30 one-hour sessions) to learn the set

of skills needed for the service.

Tutoring costs vary depending on the experience of the tutor. Junior tutors submit a timesheet to the office for payroll. The tutor will ask you to sign the timesheet. The hours submitted by the tutor are covered by the B'nai Mitzvah program fee. Adult tutors are paid directly by the family at the rate you negotiate. The B'nai Mitzvah fee is discounted when an adult tutor is used.

## General Expectations

- Regular Attendance at the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Minyan. — All students are expected to master the Mitzvot of Tallit and Tefillin. These are taught in the 6<sup>th</sup> Grade minyan in addition to leading *Birchat Hamazon* and Shabbat Kiddush.
- Every B'nai Mitzvah child also participates in a daily minyan where he/she leads part of the service and performs the Mitzvah of Tallit and Tefillin as a Jewish adult. This is usually the Thursday morning before being called to the Torah on Shabbat.
- During the 7<sup>th</sup> grade year students and parents are expected to attend services on a regular basis.
- Families are expected to extend a Bar/Bat Mitzvah invitation to ALL Prozdor classmates in their grade.
- Families host a *Seudat Mitzvah* (festive meal) for the congregation immediately following the ceremony at the synagogue.
- All private parties should be Shabbat friendly and kosher (or vegetarian). Ask the rabbi's assistant for a list of Beth Shalom approved caterers.
- Continuing Jewish education in Prozdor through the end of 8<sup>th</sup> grade and into high school.
- Learning with a Bar/Bat Mitzvah Tutor.
- Group and Individual meetings with the Rabbi and B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator.



## Distributing Honors, Assigning Torah Readers

We are delighted to honor your guests during the service. You will discuss the selection of honors with the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator at the 5-month check in. The B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator has a checklist of honors for you to complete and return to Kris in the office one month prior to the ceremony. Below is a summary of honors available:

### Shabbat Morning:

**Aliyot you can assign:** Maftir (for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah), Cohen, Levi, and three Yisrael aliyot. Two Yisrael aliyot are always left to be assigned to worshippers from the congregation.

**Service leading honors:** Torah readings.

**Other honors:** Opening and Closing the Ark, Congregation or Hebrew communal readings, page-turner, Haggadah, Gelilah, Gabbai Sheni (often the tutor or you will need to inform Kris to be sure that the person chosen has the necessary qualifications), Ashrei, Ein Keloheinu prayer.

### Assigning Torah Readers and Service Leaders at a Shabbat Morning Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service:

Beth Shalom's services are led by lay volunteers who participate on a rotating basis. Because our celebration of B'nai Mitzvah ceremonies are an integral part of our regular communal worship, several members of the congregation not connected to the family will have roles in the service. Any service or readings not done by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah are assigned to our volunteers.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family may invite skilled\* family members and friends to serve as Torah readers in place of the lay volunteer with sufficient notice. The names of those who you wish to assign Torah readings should be submitted to the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator no later than six months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date so we have enough time to inform our volunteers slated to read on that day.

Shacharit and Musaf are reserved for a member of the CBS Shatz rotation (unless led by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah or by special permission of the rabbi). If you request a specific member on the Shatz rotation four months in advance, we will try to honor your request.

### Extending Honors to Non-Jewish Family or Friends:

Non-Jews may be invited to read a prayer for the country or a prayer for peace in English from the Bimah. Please arrange this honor with the Rabbi in your meetings with her.

\* A skilled Torah reader is defined by the CBS Religious Practices Committee as someone who:

- Reads Hebrew clearly and correctly, and understands what is being read.

- Does not rely on a tape to memorize the reading, but rather knows how to chant the cantillation notes and can perform them without error for the Torah service.

- Reads directly from the Torah scroll and not from a Chumash or copy.

- A leynner should conduct him/herself in such a way to honor the Torah and the congregation. This includes wearing modest clothing, Kippah and Tallit when reading from the Torah.



## Paying for your child's B'nai Mitzvah



The Beth Shalom board has a strict pre-payment policy for all events at Beth Shalom. All events require a 50% deposit to hold the date and the remaining 50% must be paid 60 days prior to the event. Events not meeting deadlines are subject to cancellation— even if the invitations have already gone out! This is not something we ever want to have happen, so please, let's work together on this. Please speak to us about any potential problems far in advance.

### How much does it cost?

We have developed an average, aggregate deposit that covers most B'nai Mitzvah expenses. This average deposit is \$1,300.

### What Payment Plans does Beth Shalom offer?

Beth Shalom offers you a choice of 3 payment plans:

- 1) pay the entire deposit at the one year meeting, prior to the B'nai Mitzvah,
- 2) pay \$118 per month for the 11 months leading up to the event, so that the full deposit is paid 30 days prior to the event,
- 3) pay 50% at the one year meeting and the additional 50% 60 days prior to the event.

### How will it appear on my Beth Shalom account?

Your pre-paid deposit will sit on your account and appear as a pre-payment. All fees are entered as they accrue and will sit on your account – do not be surprised if you see charges and credits. Once the event is complete, we will apply your payments to the actual charges to see your account status.

In order to guarantee your child's date, a deposit and pre-payment plan are required.

### What does my deposit cover?

- B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator Fee
- 6th Grade Family Minyan
- Copy of *Siddur Sim Shalom & Higher and Higher*
- 35 hours of peer tutoring
- Rehearsals
- Kiddush Sponsorship Deposit (not including food)
- Rental of 20 white table clothes for Kiddush

### What is not included?

- Adult tutors (If you are using an adult tutor, please contact the Lifecycle Coordinator)
- Overages for tutoring (over 35 hours)
- Food or catering
- Paper plates, napkins, forks
- Extra childcare during Service and Kiddush
- Kitchen use time
- Private parties
- Flowers and decorations
- Thursday morning Seudah

*Your fee will be adjusted after your simcha.*

### What would cause me to spend more than average?

- Using an adult tutor
- Tutoring exceeding 35 hours
- Cancelling tutoring session without 24 hours notice
- Using extra table-clothes
- Requesting a custom designed floor-plan

If you have any questions about whether or not something is included, please do not hesitate to call the Lifecycle Coordinator.

Also keep in mind that Beth Shalom never discriminates against families for true inability to pay; scholarships are always available to guarantee equal access to all children. Scholarships must be arranged upon securing your child's B'nai Mitzvah date by contacting Executive Director, Tzachi Litov.

### What is the B'nai Mitzvah Fee?

The B'nai Mitzvah Fee covers the costs of the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator, administrative support for the B'nai Mitzvah program, the 6th Grade Minyan, teen tutors, basic Kiddush fees, and other costs incurred by the synagogue for your child's preparation.

### What is the Kiddush Sponsorship Fee?

This underwrites—but does not cover in entirety—the Shul's basic costs for providing a Kiddush, including set up and take down, custodial time, logistics planning with the family, tea and coffee service.

### My child missed a tutoring session, what happens?

Tutors will be paid for all scheduled lessons not cancelled at least 24 hours in advance. In the case where the cost of tutoring is covered by the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, the family will pay the cost of missed sessions out of pocket.

### I am behind on dues and other synagogue financial obligations. Will this impact my child's ability to have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

Unfortunately, yes. Members must be up to date on their obligations to have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please call the synagogue bookkeeper, Emma Shusterman, to develop a payment plan, (206) 524-0075.



## Standards for Meals and Private Celebrations

### Seudat Mitzvah: The Kiddush

Following Shabbat morning services in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the family hosts a Seudat Mitzvah (a festive meal) at the synagogue for the congregation, and their guests. The meal is concluded with Birkat Hamazon led by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This meal can be prepared by one of our approved caterers or by the family in the Shul kitchen - speak with Kris for more details. Kiddush arrangements need to be finalized with Kris at least one month before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

In some cases, families with financial difficulties are unable to afford a Seudat Mitzvah. In such cases, we urge parents to speak to the Rabbi or the Executive Director who will help the family to celebrate their simchah with dignity and joy.

### **Optional: Kippot & Benchers**

It is a custom in Jewish communities for families to enhance the holiness and joy of the Seudah and other celebratory feasts with purchase of personalized Kippot or benchers. Kippot can be personalized with your child's name imprinted in English and Hebrew, along with the Hebrew date. These make a wonderful keepsake for guests.

Families keep multiple copies of the benchers for their home celebrations and give them to guests as a reminder of the simchah. The covers of the benchers are embossed with the name of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the He-

brew date, and a verse from Scripture. Benchers can be ordered through the USCJ Book service.

### Private Bar/Bat Mitzvah Parties and Respect for Shabbat and Kashrut

Please consider the following recommendations when planning your private party:

#### Consider Using the Synagogue

We encourage you to consider using the synagogue for your private party. It is easier to incorporate respect for the mitzvot of Shabbat and Kashrut by having the party at the synagogue. When a Bar/Bat Mitzvah service takes place on Shabbat we want to combine our reverence with Shabbat with the joy of marking the Bar/Bat Mitzvah of your child. The Shabbat service will obviously be the highpoint of the Shabbat experience for your child and your family. We recommend making the rest of Shabbat a restful and relaxing day in keeping with our tradition. Sabbath feasts with family and friends, time for rest and conversation will make the day less stressful and more spiritual for everyone.

#### Considerations in Scheduling the Private Party

Please plan the private party after Shabbat or on Sunday during the spring and summer months. Or to be Shabbat friendly, a Friday night dinner or Saturday evening in the synagogue that would include Seudah Shlishit (third Shabbat meal) and

Havdallah. You can follow this with the non-Shabbat oriented part of the party beginning at the end of Shabbat.

Making Your Private Party Kosher  
Celebrating the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with a kosher meal makes the celebration a statement that it is more than just a party; it gives it Jewish significance.

#### Respecting the Religious Observance of Other Members

Keep in mind that at a Conservative synagogue there is a broad spectrum of observance. We ask our less observant members to respect the observance of our more traditional members and create celebrations comfortable for the whole community. We urge everyone to plan a kosher or vegetarian party that respects Shabbat. Our staff can help you plan an appropriate celebration which honors Jewish practice and standards.

#### Respect for Shabbat

Please remind guests of Shabbat practices and restrictions. Concerning deliveries and removals, all foods, flowers and other supplies must be delivered no later than 2:00PM on Friday. No deliveries of any kind can occur on Shabbat and nothing can be removed until after the end of Shabbat. The kitchen closes on Fridays at 2:00PM—all cooking must be completed by that time as there is no cooking on Shabbat.

## “Greening” Your Shabbat Kiddush

We recognize the events at Beth Shalom have a direct impact on the local and regional environment. We are committed to reducing waste and making our events more eco-friendly.

**YOU CAN DO YOUR PART!** To make your kiddush eco-friendly please speak with the rabbi's assistant. We are happy to work with you and your caterer to create a zero-waste event. There are various options available.

For example, the “Green Option”: For a fee, Beth Shalom will purchase compostable supplies—i.e., plates, cups, utensils, etc.—and provide them for your use making the event zero-waste.

Please speak with the rabbi's assistant for more details.

[KrisKlippel@BethShalomSeattle.org](mailto:KrisKlippel@BethShalomSeattle.org)



## New This Year!

- ◆ We are adding a D'var Torah writing workshop for parents!
- ◆ We are urging 6th Grade families to do a group *Gemilut Hasidim Torim* project!
- ◆ To build socialization opportunities, we will have a Shabbat Dinner for 6th Grade families!

## Considerations Concerning Guests

Our services are participatory and joyful, and we invite guests to take part in this spirit. Prayer in the synagogue is a holy experience. Respect for the synagogue and our worship service is expected from all who enter Beth Shalom. Therefore, we request that guests be informed about, and respectful of, the worship traditions and practices in addition to the Shabbat observance of our congregation.

Please be sensitive to the impact that large numbers of guests, unfamiliar with traditional Jewish worship practices, has on those who regularly attend our services. We seek to maintain the highly participatory nature of our services even when many guests join us for simchahs.

*For those with Shabbat morning Bar/Bat Mitzvah services:* Please inform your guests, particularly those who are unfamiliar with the Hebrew service, that while our doors open at 9:30 am, it is also permissible to come later. We recommend they come no later than 10:15 AM. Please let the Lifecycle Coordinator know how many guests you expect at least a month in advance to enable us to have the appropriate number of seats available.

Please remind your guests that they are part of a regular religious service. We encourage families to include a guide for guests with their invitations that will acquaint them with the traditions and customs of Beth Shalom. The congrega-

tion has available a few prayer books with transliteration and explanation. Ask the Ushers for copies.

In respect for Shabbat, we kindly ask that cell-phones and cameras not be used in the building.

All materials intended for guests such as Kippot and programs, must be brought to the synagogue by Friday at 2:00PM.

Guests with young children need to be informed that they are responsible for their children during services. Babysitting is available on Shabbat morning downstairs for our members by parent co-op. Please let us know if you expect to have children requiring babysitting, and we will hire additional sitters at your expense.

### Multiple Simchot — Sharing your Bar/Bat Mitzvah

In honor of your child's becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the child, family, and friends have important roles in leading the service or receiving an aliyah. At the same time, other members of the congregation may also celebrate a simchah (joyous occasion) such as a baby naming, Aufruf, or significant anniversary.

On Shabbat morning two Yisrael aliyot are always reserved for the congregation. If, in fact, there is another simchah to take place on the Shabbat of your child's bar/ bat mitzvah, the office will inform you of the simchah as soon as we know.

## Ways for Parents to Honor their Child at the Bar or Bat Mitzvah

All parents will give their child a blessing during the service and usually will have an Aliyah to the Torah. The following are additional ways to honor your child at the ceremony:

- **Teach Torah** —share words of Torah in the form of a brief D'var Torah (3-5 minutes) at the meal or at Kabbalat Shabbat service. It is also a lovely tradition to invite family members and friends to deliver Divrei Torah in honor of the child at the private party during the weekend.
- **Read Torah** — Learning to read the Torah is a lovely way to honor the child and to honor the Torah. This is recommended for parents who already know or have the time and Hebraic knowledge to commit to learning the cantillation skills.
- **Lead Services** — Learning to lead a service is a way to honor the child and to honor the congregation.

Please speak to the Rabbi if you wish to do this. Service leaders must meet congregational standards of strong Hebraic and Judaic knowledge and vocal musical skill.

- **Give Tzedaka** — Gifts of Tzedaka in honor of your child are a very special way to honor his or her milestone.



## 6th Grade Minyan

Dear Sixth Grade Families,

*The 6th Grade Minyan* is a special teaching and participatory service for families with children preparing for Bar and Bat Mitzvah at Beth Shalom. Families will have an opportunity to learn about services, wrestle with theological questions, read Torah, and lead part of the service. Focus is also placed on building community. Our hope is that all participants will become more comfort-

able and knowledgeable about the unique approach to worship at Beth Shalom and will form closer relationships with other families whose children are preparing for a bar or bat mitzvah.

*The 6th Grade Minyan* is designed for all 6<sup>th</sup> grade pre-B'nai Mitzvah students (both day school and religious school) and their parents and is a prerequisite for having a bar or bat

mitzvah ceremony at Beth Shalom.

The 6th Grade Minyan is coled by Nance Adler and Rabbi Borodin. Because this is an interactive teaching service, it is imperative families come on time and stay for the whole service. Each minyan covers different material; we encourage you to attend all sessions.

The 6th Grade Minyan will meet three Sunday morn-

ings, three Saturday mornings, and one Friday evening. Please bring Tallis and Tefillin for the Sunday morning minyans.

Feel free to contact me at home with any questions or suggestions. You can reach me on most evenings.

B'shalom,  
Nance M. Adler  
6th Grade Minyan Coordinator

### *Important Meetings and Deadlines*

The two years of preparation for your family are marked by the following meetings and milestones

**5th Grade Parent Orientation with Rabbi & B'nai Mitzvah Coordinators**

**6th Grade Family Minyan & Shabbat Dinner — Dates to be determined**

**Learning for Students & Parents**

Torah Trope + D'var Torah classes in Prozdor  
Parent D'var Torah writing workshop

**One Year Meeting with B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator**

Assess Hebrew reading skills + give Torah and Haftorah readings  
Determine what the student will lead  
Arrange for Tutor

**Five Month Meeting with B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator**

Evaluate progress  
Hand out Honors form and discuss honors

**Four Month Meeting with Rabbi**

Preparation for Writing the D'var Torah

**Two Month Meeting with the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator**

Last evaluation of skills  
Answer questions about ceremony/rehearsals/etc  
Set dates for rehearsals

**Final Family Meeting with the Rabbi within a month of the Ceremony**

Family shares written reflections with each other  
Submit D'var Torah

**Rehearsals with the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator**

**Thursday morning prior to bar/bat mitzvah, 7:00AM**

Attend weekday minyan with Tallit and Tefillin  
Have an Aliyah + Deliver D'var Torah  
Host breakfast



#### **POINTS OF INTEREST:**

~ 6 Months prior ~

- Reserve space for your simcha
- Notify Kris of your caterer
- Reserve Kitchen time

~ 4 Months prior ~

- Attend 4 month meeting with Rabbi: bring D'var Torah and Reflections

~ 1-2 Months prior ~

- Submit Ruach announcement with photograph to Kris
- Submit number of attendees
- Submit Social Hall floor plan

~ 2 Weeks prior ~

- Submit Honors Distribution Sheet
- Finalize D'var Torah & Reflections

## Guidelines for Writing a D'var Torah

We encourage all of our B'nai Mitzvah students to write and deliver a dvar Torah. The dvar Torah is delivered after the Torah service and should be approximately five minutes in length. Its purpose is to teach Torah. Most commonly it is on the weekly Torah portion, but it may also be on the Haftorah, an upcoming holiday, a specific prayer or a theological question. The dvar Torah should introduce the community to some rabbinic teaching on the subject as well as the student's own insights on this topic.

To facilitate the dvar Torah process, our 6th grade students in Prozdor take a dvar Torah class taught by Beth Huppin. Prior to the four month meeting with Rabbi Borodin, students should have read their Torah and Haftorah portions and come with a list of questions and subjects from their Torah and Haftorah portions which in-

terest them and about which they might want to write a dvar Torah. Following this meeting, Rabbi Borodin will research different rabbinic insights into the student's questions and will meet with the family again to introduce this material and help create an outline for their dvar Torah. Most of this material is written for adult readers. We recommend our teenagers read through the material and prepare their dvar Torah in partnership with an adult. For some families it works well for the helping adult to be a parent; for other families it works well to have a relative, friend or a tutor help prepare their dvar Torah. Rabbi Borodin is happy to provide you with names of community members who enjoy working with students on their divrei Torah. As the dvar Torah progresses, Rabbi Borodin will be involved in the edit-

ing of the dvar Torah. All divrei Torah need to be approved by the Rabbi at least two weeks before the bar/bat mitzvah. For students who are not prepared for a full dvar Torah, there is also the possibility of them giving a 2-3 minute introduction to the Torah or Haftorah before they are read on Shabbat morning.

Suggested Dvar Torah Outline:

- 1) Introduction to the subject and question to be explored
- 2) Sharing of 1-3 Rabbinic Commentaries on the subject
- 3) Own Personal Insights and answers to the question being explored
- 4) What does this mean for you and/or our lives today?

## Tzedakah and the B'nai Mitzvah Celebration

It is a Jewish tradition to give Tzedakah in honor of the milestone of a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Here are some of our favorite organizations to support:

- A Contribution to the Campership or Youth Fund of Congregation Beth Shalom. Each year Beth Shalom provides scholarships for students to attend Camp Solomon Schechter, Camp Ramah or other Jewish camps during the summer and to attend regional and national USY events during the year. Contributions to either of these funds help build financial resources to meet real needs of our students each year.
- Jewish Family Service: Beth Shalom is a strong supporter of Jewish Family Service in Seattle. JFS provides various means for B'nai Mitzvah families to support the invaluable social services it provides to needy Jews in our community. Please contact the food basket project coordinator at JFS at 206-461-3240 to learn how your gift of Tzedakah can help

feed the poor.

- Mazon, the Jewish Response to Hunger offers grants to nonprofit organizations working to ease the suffering of hungry people in the United States, Israel, and countries around the globe. Beth Shalom is a long time and strong supporter of Mazon. Families might consider donating 3% of their catering costs to Mazon or make an outright contribution. Please contact their office at 12401 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 303; Los Angeles, CA 90025-1015; 310-442-0020; Email: [mazonmail@aol.com](mailto:mazonmail@aol.com).
- The Masorti Foundation for Conservative Judaism in Israel is the best way to support efforts to bring about the advancement of our movement and the spread of religious pluralism in Israel. Contact Masorti for a longer list of potential tzedakah and volunteer opportunities. Contributions should be sent to 475 Riverside Drive, Suite 832; New York, NY

10115-0122; (212) 870-2216 or 1-877-287-7414; Email [Masorti@Masorti.org](mailto:Masorti@Masorti.org); website: [www.masort.org](http://www.masort.org).

- American Jewish World Service - a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing nonsectarian humanitarian assistance and emergency relief to people in the developing world. Website: [www.ajws.org](http://www.ajws.org)
- The Mitzvah Heroes Fund, Inc. administers efficient and direct tzedakah work to further philanthropy and tzedakah education. You can contact them at 12300 Carroll Ave, Upper Level, Rockville, MD 20852; (301) 335-8646; [www.mitzvahheroesfund.org](http://www.mitzvahheroesfund.org).
- We also encourage you do a project of *Gemilut-Hasadim Torim*, act of loving kindness, in honor of the bar/bat mitzvah. The rabbi is happy to help you explore possible projects.

## ~ Frequently Asked Questions ~

**My child has a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date set. What now?** The synagogue B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator, Michele Stern, is here to help you navigate the steps toward successful training and the upcoming B'nai Mitzvah. Michele will call you to set up 1 year, 5 and 2 month meetings, and rehearsals during the month prior to the bar/bat mitzvah. She can be reached at 206-367-5565.

**Whom do I call to change the date?** Call Kris in the office at 206-524-0075.

**Is there one person in the Beth Shalom office whom I can call with all B'nai Mitzvah related questions?** Yes, call Kris Klippel at 206-524-0075 and he will happily answer any questions you have or point you in the right direction. Kris works closely with the Rabbi, Michele Stern and all service coordinators.

**I missed the group meeting. How do I get the information?** Call Kris at 206-524-0075.

**How do we get a tutor?** Talk to Michele Stern. She will recommend an appropriate match.

**Who will be the Gabbai Rishon and what does that person do?** The Gabbai Rishon maintains the integrity of the Torah reading, calls people to the Bimah for Aliyot and says the Mi She'berach. Beth Shalom has a Gabbai Rishon rotation, which is organized by volunteer, Nance Adler. Should you have questions regarding the Gabbai Rishon, call Kris.

**What if I want someone other than Rabbi to give the charge?** Rabbi Borodin looks forward to speaking to your children personally during the charge from the bimah. Please arrange with her individually if you want to make alternative arrangements for the charge.

**Who will coach my child on their D'var Torah?** Each student will

write and present a 5 minute D'var Torah. Rabbi Borodin will meet with the bar/bat mitzvah family approximately 4 months prior to the bar/bat mitzvah to work on the D'var Torah. Some families also opt to hire a Jewish educator to help with the D'var Torah.

**Who will be the Shatz (service leader)? The Torah Leyner?** The synagogue has a regular Shatz rotation, organized by volunteer, John Schochet. It also has a regular Torah Leyning rotation, organized by Brenda Kurland. These trained members will serve as Shatzim and Torah Leyner(s) on your Bar/Bat Mitzvah Day. For the Shatz and Leyning schedule, please call the office at 206-524-0075. For other questions please contact Michele Stern at 206-522-6578. Special requests for Shatz need to be made 6 months in advance to John Schochet, [johnschochet@gmail.com](mailto:johnschochet@gmail.com)

**I have a skilled friend/family member who I'd like to read Torah. Is this ok?** The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family may invite skilled family members and friends to serve as Torah readers. Their names should be submitted to the B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator, Michele Stern, no later than five months prior to the event.

**What will the Bar/Bat Mitzvah be able to do during services?** We encourage our students to learn as much as possible in coordination with their tutors and the B'nai Mitzvah coordinator. Bar/Bat Mitzvah students begin with learning the Haftorah, Torah Reading, Kiddush and Torah Service. After mastering these skills, we welcome them to learn Shacharit (including P'sukei D'zimra), Kabbalat Shabbat and Musaf (after having already mastered Shacharit).

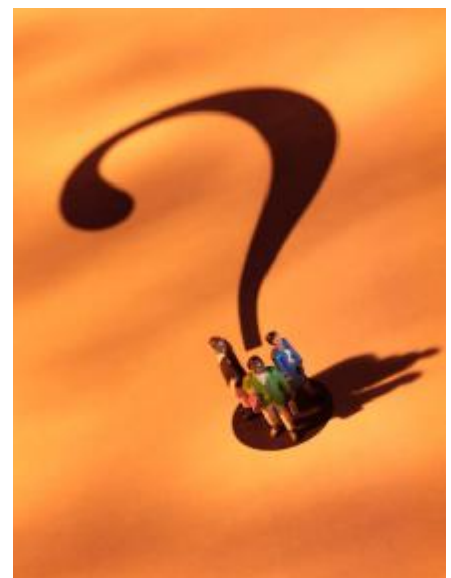
**Who should I contact regarding honors for our family and friends? What are they?** Michele Stern has a checklist of honors. The selection of honors is discussed at the five month meeting with Michele Stern.

**Who and when do I call to plan the kiddush?** We recommend you begin planning the kiddush at least six

months prior to the event. All planning for the kiddush must be completed at least one month prior to the bar/bat mitzvah, with Kris.

**Which Dates Are Generally Not Available for B'nai Mitzvah?** Shabbat Hazon (Shabbat prior to Tisha B'Av), Rosh Hashanah, Shabbat Shuvah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret, Pesach, Shavuot, Shabbat which is followed immediately by Purim. Children whose Bar or Bat Mitzvah dates fall on these occasions are moved to the next available Shabbat.

**What Happens if the Rabbi Is Away?** The rabbi considers her participation in the bar/bat mitzvah of primary importance. However, the rabbi has conferences, vacations, and camp duty during the year which involves her being away. She will try to inform affected families of these dates as soon as possible to enable you to consider the option of re-scheduling at a time when the rabbi can be present. However, you may opt to keep your date. In this case, the rabbi will arrange, in consultation with you, able replacements to be present at your child's bar/bat mitzvah service.



# PARENTAL REFLECTIONS ON THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Please answer the questions below in order for Rabbi to prepare a more personal charge. Feel free to discuss these with your child. These questions are offered as an opportunity for you to reflect on the spiritual significance of your child's *simchah*. Stories and anecdotes are extremely helpful in preparing an inspiring charge. Please feel free to add additional material if you feel it helpful.

Please bring a copy of your answers to the final family meeting with Rabbi Borodin prior to the bar/t mitzvah.

Bar/t Mitzvah of \_\_\_\_\_ Bar/t Mitzvah Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parents Names: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) Does your child have a favorite or beloved Mitzvah — i.e., Shabbat, Torah Study, *Tzedakah*, a Jewish Festival?
- 2) Does your child have a moral/spiritual hero or figure of Jewish history that s/he admires?
- 3) Is there a Biblical or Rabbinic story or text that is special to your child?
- 4) Is there a *tzedakah* or *Gemilut Hasadim* (act of loving kindness) to which your child is particularly committed — i.e., helping the homeless, raising money for charity, helping the elderly, et cetera?
- 5) Please share your child's most distinctive *midah* (personal attribute) - i.e., diligence, patience, kindness, generosity, sense of justice, piety, et cetera.
- 6) Please share your child's greatest *etgar* (challenge) that s/he faces in life.
- 7) How would you characterize your child's relationship with his or her peers? How has your child grown and what challenges does s/he face in this area? What Jewish values does your child bring to his or her relationships with others?
- 8) Please share your own aspirations for your child with an emphasis on his or her moral-spiritual-educational development.
- 9) For whom is your child named? What qualities do they share with that person?
- 10) Please share an example of leadership or helpfulness your child demonstrates.

# REFLECTIONS OF THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Please have your child thoughtfully respond to the following questions. Please bring the responses to the final family meeting with Rabbi Borodin.

Bar/t Mitzvah of \_\_\_\_\_ Bar/t Mitzvah Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- 1) How would you describe yourself? What are your distinct characteristics, interests and concerns?
- 2) What is the most memorable event or story in your life up to this point?
- 3) What Jewish values or Mitzvot guide your relationships with other people your age?
- 4) What do you think is your best quality that you bring to your relationship with others? In what ways can you improve your relationships with others?
- 5) What events in Jewish history have affected you the most? Who are the people in your life and in Jewish history that you most admire?
- 6) Please share some of your thoughts on God. What role does God play in your life? If God does not play a role in your life, please explain why? (Your honesty is appreciated—This is not a test.)
- 7) What Jewish communities do you plan to keep after your bar/t mitzvah? (Be specific.)
- 8) Please conclude on a separate sheet of paper with a short letter to your parents (not more than one page). Your letter may include the following: What are you most thankful for in the way you have been raised? How do you feel you have grown and changed over the past few years? In what ways would you like your parents to regard you as a Jewish adult as you become Bar/t Mitzvah? What are your hopes for your life in the coming years? What are your hopes for your Jewish life in the coming years?

## How to get a hold of us!

**Michele Stern:** B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator

v: 206-522-6576

e: [mihalwa@aol.com](mailto:mihalwa@aol.com)

**Nance Adler:** 6th Grade Minyan Leader

v: 206-328-7313

e: [nance@nanceandsteve.com](mailto:nance@nanceandsteve.com)

**Kris Klippel:** Rabbi's Assistant & Lifecycle Coordinator

v: 206-524-0075 x8

e: [krisklippel@bethshalomseattle.org](mailto:krisklippel@bethshalomseattle.org)

**Rabbi Jill Borodin**

v: 206-524-0075 x1

e: [rabbiborodin@bethshalomseattle.org](mailto:rabbiborodin@bethshalomseattle.org)

**Emma Shusterman:** CBS Bookkeeper

v: 206-524-0075 x5

e: [emmashusterman@bethshalomseattle.org](mailto:emmashusterman@bethshalomseattle.org)

**Tzachi Litov:** Executive Director

v: 206-524-0075 x2

e: [tzachilitov@bethshalomseattle.org](mailto:tzachilitov@bethshalomseattle.org)

**Irit Eliav:** Director of Education

v: 206-524-0075 x3

e: [iriteliav@bethshalomseattle.org](mailto:iriteliav@bethshalomseattle.org)

**6th Grade Family Minyan**

Contact all the families in your cohort by e-mail:

e: [Minyan5772@bethshalomseattle.org](mailto:Minyan5772@bethshalomseattle.org)

~ Notes ~



**Congregation Beth Shalom is a participatory egalitarian congregation affiliated with the United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism. We provide a warm gathering place and a caring community for our members where we come together to nourish our spirituality through worship, to increase our understanding through study, to educate our young and to better our world through acts of loving kindness**