

**TOURO SYNAGOGUE
B'NEI MITZVAH HANDBOOK
2019-2020**



**RABBI KATIE BAUMAN
CANTOR KEVIN MARGOLIUS
RABBI TODD SILVERMAN, DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING
KERRY TAPIA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

B'NEI MITZVAH TIMELINE & CHECKLIST

3rd Grade

- Register for Touro Uptown Hebrew Program.

4th grade (Spring)

- Attend B'nei Mitzvah Orientation Meeting, selecting top choices for Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.
- Submit deposit of B'nei Mitzvah fee to confirm date on synagogue calendar.

15 months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Student meets with Cantor for Hebrew assessment. Reading proficiency is required before tutoring can begin.

14 months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Student and parents meet with Cantor for a preliminary meeting to go over details of the B'nei Mitzvah preparation process.

11 months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Weekly tutoring begins with Cantor & Dr. Jaffe, preparing Torah, Haftarah, and prayers from the Siddur.

9 months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah (no later than 7 months)

- Submit remaining balance of B'nei Mitzvah fee.
- Parents meet with Annahi Tapia (info@tourosynagogue.com) to discuss plans for Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration (e.g., dinner, luncheon, and/or other use of facilities).

8 months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Student and parents meet with Rabbi Silverman to begin the Mitzvah Project. Follow-up meetings happen 4 and 6 months before bar/bat mitzvah.

4 months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Parents turn in Facility Use Agreement to Annahi Tapia (info@tourosynagogue.com) with all details for synagogue reception/use of facilities with a 50% deposit.

3 months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Student begins six weekly meetings with Rabbi Bauman to prepare their D'var Torah.

2 months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Parents turn in Order of Service, photo of student and bulletin information forms to the synagogue office. **(Bulletin is published every other month. A member of our team will reach out with the deadline for submission.)**

Week of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Final run-through for student and parents with clergy in the Sanctuary: Thursday, 4:00-5:30pm.

INTRODUCTION

What Does It Mean to Become Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

Our tradition teaches that at age 13, each of us reaches the age of Bar or Bat Mitzvah (son or daughter of the commandments), marking the time when we take responsibility for our Jewish lives and identities, becoming fully engaged members of the Jewish community. Indeed, one does not *have* a Bar or Bat Mitzvah – one *becomes* Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

Becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a profound experience for the entire family. What a blessing it is to stand with a young Jewish man or woman as they open the Torah for the first time! Central to the experience of becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Touro Synagogue is a serious and spirited engagement with Torah and the richness of Jewish tradition; a questioning of theology and personal religious commitment; and the privilege and responsibility of leading and teaching the congregation on Shabbat.

Anticipating the Sacred Work Ahead

In anticipation of this time of transition, students embark on several months of preparation, in which they build on the foundation of their Jewish education by engaging in the study of Torah, emerging as leaders in our prayer community, and discovering that they have the ability to create meaningful change in the world. This process culminates as the students are invited to lead a Shabbat morning service and read and teach from the Torah, taking part in the sacred ritual that sustains the Jewish community each and every week.

B'nei Mitzvah, as the old saying goes, is a journey not a destination, and the process of this journey is as sacred as the ceremony itself. In the midst of academic and extracurricular commitments, it is vital that space and time be created for this process to take place. For some, this may mean not being on a certain sports team this year. For others, it may mean not being in the school play this year. We hope that during this year, you will make room for this process to be a priority (perhaps among many other priorities) in the life of your child and your family.

PREPARING TO BECOME BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Touro Religious School and Uptown Hebrew Programs

The curricula of the Touro Synagogue Religious School and Uptown Hebrew programs are designed so that each student matriculating through them has the skills that will enable them to succeed in preparation for Bar or Bat Mitzvah and in an active life as a Jewish adult. Many of these skills are integrated in the 6th grade year. In Uptown Hebrew and Religious School, our students learn about the structure and prayers of the Shabbat service, as well as Torah Trope, the crucial skill that will enable them to chant the Torah independently.

Because of this, regular attendance at Religious School and Uptown Hebrew is the biggest factor in setting our students up for success as they prepare for Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

Hebrew Assessment

Before formal preparation for becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah begins, each student will meet with the Cantor for a Hebrew reading assessment. This is an opportunity for the Cantor to gauge the student's comfort with Hebrew decoding and their familiarity with the prayers of the Shabbat service. Students who have difficulty reading Hebrew will need to meet with a private Hebrew tutor to master that skill before Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation can begin.

Tutoring

For eleven months prior to becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah, each student will have weekly tutoring with Cantor Margolius and Dr. Bernie Jaffe. Normally, students meet in pods of three for an hour to practice Torah, Haftarah, and prayers, to explore the content of the service, and to discuss the "big questions" about Jewish life.

These weekly sessions are meant to reinforce all the learning and preparation that each student is doing at home. To that end, it is crucial that they practice at least 5 days a week. Online resources can be found at www.cantorkam.com/bnei-mitzvah.html.

Mitzvah Project

One of the components to becoming B'nei Mitzvah at Touro Synagogue is planning and executing a social justice-oriented *mitzvah project*. Over the course of eight months leading up to their ceremony, each student will work with Rabbi Silverman to devise a plan for addressing an issue, cause, or societal ill that they feel passionately about. At the first meeting, students *and* parents will meet with Rabbi Silverman to begin mapping out the necessary steps, and then each family will follow up twice with Rabbi Silverman to share and reflect on the progress being made. Examples of past projects include organizing book drives, engaging in full-day service opportunities, and building on-going relationships with residents of assisted-living facilities.

D'var Torah

Using what they glean from their Torah study, each student is asked to offer a *D'var Torah*: an interpretation and teaching about their Torah portion that they will share with the community. The *D'var Torah* consists of four sections: commentary on the portion, an explanation of their mitzvah project, the student's reflections on his or her Jewish experiences, and statements of gratitude towards their teachers and family. Rabbi Bauman works closely with each student in preparing their *D'var Torah* prior to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

The Ways We Learn

The book of Proverbs teaches: "*Educate each child according to their own way; then when they grow old, they will not depart [from what they have learned].*" Indeed, each one of us has a different learning style. Given that everyone learns best in different ways, one of the greatest benefits of the learning that takes place in preparation for Bar and Bat Mitzvah is that the entire process can be specialized for the student. For this reason, there will be an opportunity in your first session with Cantor (that both the student and at least one parent attend) to discuss how your child learns best and how both the parents and our clergy can work together in supporting them.

Going beyond learning styles, we know that there are some in our community with special needs. In these cases, having a specialized learning program is even more beneficial. Our clergy are eager to have an open, loving, and confidential dialogue with you throughout this process. If your child has an Individualized Education Program in their secular school, we encourage you to share that with our clergy to whatever extent you are comfortable, so that we may create a learning program for your child that meets their needs and helps them to achieve the important goals of becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The more you can enlighten us about your child, the more we can accommodate the unique gifts of each student.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION IN THE SHABBAT SERVICE

While each Bar or Bat Mitzvah student leads the Shabbat morning service, there are a number of ways that members of your family can actively participate in the service themselves.

Friday Night

Members of the family are invited to light candles, lead a reading, and join us for Kiddush. Later in the service, the Bar or Bat Mitzvah student is invited to lead the congregation in chanting *v'ahavta*.

Saturday Morning

Parents are invited to offer a blessing to their child, following the opening song. This is a wonderful opportunity to frame the moment in the context of your family's heritage and journey. It has been our experience that the most poignant and beautiful words are offered when parents write them down beforehand and limit themselves to a few minutes. Parents are encouraged to view this as a moment of blessing, rather than a speech to their child.

This is also the moment when the student is presented with a *tallit* (prayer shawl) for the first time. Sometimes families choose to use a special *tallit* that has been in the family for generations. Other families buy their son or daughter a new *tallit* for this tradition.

Honors

There are several points in the service where honors may be handed out to family members and friends:

Aliyot and Torah Blessings – There are typically three *aliyot* (recitations of the Torah blessings) in the Torah Service. While the third *aliyah* is typically reserved for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah student and the second one for the parents, the first blessing may be given out as a way to honor loved ones. These blessings can be found online and in the Forms & Documents section.

Torah passing – We symbolically mark the passing down of Jewish heritage with the physical passing of the Torah from generation to generation. It is common for the family to invite up grandparents, aunts and uncles, and other family members to participate in the powerful moment of passing down the Torah scroll.

Dressing the Torah (*G'lilah*)– After the Torah reading is completed, the Torah is dressed before the congregation before it is returned to the ark. This is a wonderful honor for a younger family member.

Ushers – In order to ensure that all guests are adequately welcomed, the family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is expected to designate two adult members of the Touro community to serve as ushers for the morning service. The simple duties include welcoming guests from the St. Charles Avenue doors, helping distribute prayer books, and reserving the forward rows of the sanctuary for family members. The ushers will be asked to introduce him/herself to Annahi at least 25 minutes prior to the beginning of the service (10:05 a.m.) near the St. Charles Avenue entrance. They will be asked to remain in the rear of the sanctuary until fifteen minutes after the service has begun.

Some may have questions about the participation of non-Jewish family members in various elements of Shabbat services. Please know that Touro Synagogue is 100% committed to the inclusion of all family members, regardless of faith background. We are eager to speak with you about ways that your entire family may participate in and receive meaningful honors on this special day.

LOGISTICAL PLANNING

Choosing a Date

During the spring of the 4th grade year, families are invited to a B'nei Mitzvah orientation meeting. During the course of that meeting, they will have the chance to submit preferences for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah date. These dates are then assigned on a first come first served basis, once the deposit of the B'nei Mitzvah fee is submitted. Families are encouraged to select a Shabbat morning during the academic year, following your child's 13th birthday. This allows for your celebration to be included in the same year as their Religious School classmates.

Please note that dates selected far in advance will be guaranteed by Touro Synagogue; the clergy team may rotate leadership in cases of conflicting commitments.

Fees

Touro Synagogue will assess your membership account \$675 (subject to change) at the beginning of the fiscal year prior to your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This fee covers all materials, lessons and books that you and your child will need throughout the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process. Half of this fee is due in order to reserve your Bar or Bat Mitzvah date on the synagogue calendar. The balance of this fee is due before sessions with Cantor may begin.

Should you desire to host a luncheon or evening reception in honor your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah, additional facility fees will apply. For information on these fees, please refer to the Documents and Forms Supplement.

It is customary to make a donation to the rabbis' or cantor's discretionary funds at the time of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. These funds go towards charitable causes and help support programming at the synagogue.

An inability to pay does not disqualify your son or daughter from celebrating this important milestone. Our Executive Director, Kerry Tapia, is available to discuss any and all special arrangements with you.

The Invite List

During the process of determining your guest list, it can be challenging to remember all the various social circles and micro-communities to which you and your child are connected. When putting together your guest list, be sure to consider your child's Religious School and Uptown Hebrew class, their secular school class and the Touro Synagogue religious school faculty and clergy.

Please keep in mind that the Touro community is invited to every Shabbat service. In turn, the congregation is also invited to join in any family-sponsored luncheon celebration that may follow the service.

Vendors

Photographers/Videographers

For those who wish to take posed photographs before the Shabbat morning service, doing so must begin at 9:30 a.m. and be completed no later than 10:15 a.m. Any photographers and/or videographers are asked to position themselves in the choir loft during the service and to refrain from using a flash. Photographers are not permitted in the aisles of the sanctuary during the service.

Engaging a videographer is a wonderful way to capture the entirety of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. While our prayer services are livestreamed and archived through the Touro Synagogue website, this feature is managed remotely by a livestream provider. We therefore still recommend engaging a videographer if having a video memory is a priority for your family.

Flowers

Families are encouraged to arrange for flowers for Friday night and Saturday morning. Many families purchase one arrangement that is used for both services. This is completely appropriate. As Touro Synagogue has a wonderful tradition of flower sponsorships in honor of yahrtzeits and other occasions, please note that other donors to the Touro Synagogue Flower Fund may also be named as flower sponsors on the Shabbat of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Flowers should be delivered no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday. The total height from the base of the container to the top of the tallest flower can be no greater than 30 inches.

Additional Vendors

Some families choose to engage additional vendors such as musical entertainment, or custom-made invitations or *kippot*. Should you choose to do so, we recommend planning in advance, making arrangements no later than six months prior to your celebration.

Food

Caterers

Each caterer is different and therefore each may require different lead times. It is recommended that families be in touch with caterers one year before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date to ensure availability. (Some holiday periods and/or convention weekends may require more lead time, do not hesitate to call your caterer when you schedule your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date to get your name on their calendar.) You may use any caterer that meets our insurance and kitchen requirements. For a list of caterers who are familiar with our requirements and facilities, contact Annahi Tapia.

Friday Evening Community Shabbat Dinner

Immediately following Friday evening services, the congregation gathers in the Garden Pavilion for a community Shabbat Dinner. It is a custom to sponsor this dinner in honor of your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The Friday night menu is determined and prepared by Touro staff. Should you have particular dietary needs (vegetarian, vegan, dairy-free), we are happy to speak with you about accommodating those needs. If you would like something more elaborate for a Shabbat dinner, you are welcome to use a caterer. Please see the Forms and Documents

supplement for more information about coordinating a caterer for Shabbat dinner. Any questions should be directed to Annahi Tapia.

Shabbat Dinner Sponsorship* Opportunities:

In order for us to plan appropriately for the evening in terms of place settings and amount of food, we need an accurate count of invited guests. Wine may be added to the dinner at \$10 per bottle, or you may supply your own.

A. 10 guests or less, or not attending	\$250
B. 11–29 guests	\$350
C. 30–50 guests	\$550
D. Over 50 guests	Must provide caterer and staff
E. No sponsorship, attending dinner, over 10 guests	\$15 per person

** Please note that there is no limit to the number of sponsors for the Friday night Shabbat dinner. Only fully catered dinners have exclusive sponsorship acknowledgement.*

Saturday Morning Kiddush Luncheon

Many families choose to host a *kiddush* luncheon in honor of their child in the Grant Meyer Garden Pavilion and/or Jacobs Social Hall. It is our practice to invite the members of the congregation who attend the Shabbat service to the luncheon. The decoration/preparation of the Garden Pavilion and Social Hall can begin on Saturday morning. All decorations must conform to guidelines that protect wallpaper and paint. Exits cannot be blocked under any circumstances. Questions about these guidelines can be answered by Annahi Tapia.

Touro Synagogue does NOT allow any catfish, shellfish, or pork products on the premises for any function. Please make sure your caterer is aware of our practices. Please review Touro Synagogue's Caterer Guidelines for more information.

PLEASE DO NOT PLAN TO THROW CANDY DURING THE SERVICE.

FORMS & DOCUMENTS

Parents and those called up for *Aliyot* are asked to chant the blessings before and after the Torah Reading. If you need any assistance preparing these blessings, your child will know them very well and will be a wonderful resource. Of course, the clergy are available, as well. In addition, recordings of these blessings can be found at www.cantorkam.com/bnei-mitzvah.html.

BLESSING BEFORE THE READING OF THE TORAH

BAR'CHU et Adonai ham'vorach.

(Congregation) Baruch Adonai ham'vorach l'olam va-ed.

Baruch Adonai ham'vorach l'olam va-ed.

Baruch atah, Adonai

Eloheinu, Melech haolam,

asher bachar banu mikol haamim,

v'natan lanu et Torato.

Baruch atah, Adonai, notein haTorah.

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ.
(Congregation) בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
— You resume
בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים,
וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

BLESS ADONAI who is blessed.

Blessed is Adonai who is blessed now and forever.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who has chosen us from among the peoples, and given us the Torah. Blessed are You, Adonai, who gives the Torah.

BLESSING AFTER THE READING OF THE TORAH

BARUCH atah, Adonai

Eloheinu, Melech haolam,

asher natan lanu Torat emet,

v'chayei olam nata b'tocheinu.

Baruch atah, Adonai, notein haTorah.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ
אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת,
וַחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכֵנוּ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

BLESSED ARE YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who has given us a Torah of truth, implanting within us eternal life.

Blessed are You, Adonai, who gives the Torah.

PARENTS' BLESSING FOR BAR OR BAT MITZVAH

Our hearts are one on this joyous day
as you commit yourself to a life of Torah:
a life, we pray, filled with
wisdom, caring and right action.

We pray that you will grow each day
in compassion for the needy,
in concern for the stranger,
in love of all people.

May the One who blessed our ancestors,
Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca,
Jacob and Rachel and Leah,
bless you on your becoming a Bar/t Mitzvah.

May you grow with strength and courage,
with vision and sensitivity.
And may you always be certain of our love.
Amen.

On the following pages you will find:

- **BAR/BAT MITZVAH INFORMATION & ORDER OF SERVICE INFORMATION FORMS**

This form provides our staff with various pieces of logistical information so that we may make all the necessary arrangements for your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah. In completing these forms, you'll want to give some thought to who you would like to include for special honors in the service. This form will be e-mailed to you 3 months before the Bar or Bat Mitzvah, but is included here so that you can give some thought to these choices.

- **SCHEDULE OF FACILITY CHARGES FORM**

The fees associated with the luncheon and evening reception will be assessed to your family's congregational account, with a 50% deposit due four months prior to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The remaining balance is due two weeks prior.

Please contact Annahi Tapia with any questions about these materials.

BULLETIN INFORMATION

Please complete the following information and email or return a hard copy to the Synagogue office 2-3 months prior to your bar/bat mitzvah month for publication in the Synagogue Bulletin.

Date of Bar/Bat Mitzvah: _____

Torah Portion: _____

Full Name of Student: _____

Hebrew Name: _____

Parent Names: _____

Parent Hebrew Names: _____

Names of Siblings: _____

Grandparents' Names: *(living and deceased - please notate those deceased as "the late")*

Enrolled in the Gift of Israel Program: ☐ YES ☐ NO

PERSONAL STATEMENT -- Please write a 200-250 word personal statement about what it means to become a Bat/Bar Mitzvah. You might want to include which parts you found most fun or challenging or rewarding, and give a reason or two why.

PHOTO -- Please submit a hi-res photo with this form.

BASIC INFORMATION FOR SYNAGOGUE OFFICE

Please complete the following information and email or return a hard copy to the Synagogue office 2-3 months prior to your bar/bat mitzvah month.

Full Name of Student: _____

Sponsor Shabbat Dinner on Friday Night? ☐ YES ☐ NO

If yes, please circle sponsorship level (contact office for more information).

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| A. Under 10 guests or less, or not attending | \$250 |
| B. 11-29 Under 30 guests | \$350 |
| C. 30-Under 50 guests | \$550 |
| D. Over 50 guests | Must provide caterer and staff |
| E. No sponsorship, attending dinner, over 10 guests | \$15 per person |

** Please note that there is no limit to the number of sponsors for the Friday night Shabbat dinner. Only fully catered dinners have exclusive sponsorship acknowledgement.*

How shall we list the sponsors? _____

Caterer? If so, who? _____

Saturday Luncheon: ☐ YES ☐ NO

How shall we list the sponsors? _____

Caterer: _____

Flowers for Event: ☐ YES ☐ NO

How shall we list the sponsors? _____

Florist: _____ Phone # _____

Evening Reception: ☐ YES ☐ NO

At Touro Synagogue? ☐ YES ☐ NO

Vendors: _____

ORDER OF SERVICE INFORMATION

Please complete the following information and email or return a hard copy to the Synagogue office 2-3 months prior to your bar/bat mitzvah month.

Full Name of Student: _____

Friday Night Candle Lighting: _____

Pulpit Guests: _____

Aliyot (*This is an opportunity to honor parents and grandparents, or extended family and friends.*)

#1 _____

#2 _____

#3 (STUDENT) Hebrew Name _____ (child of) _____

Additional Honors available:

Dressing the Torah: _____

Our custom is to include younger family members for *Kiddush* and *Motzi*.

Ushers: (adult members of the Touro community)

#1 _____

#2 _____

PLEASE SEND A SHORT PARAGRAPH DESCRIBING YOUR MITZVAH PROJECT

Consider including:

- Why you became interested in this mitzvah and what the project means to you personally
- Your favorite experience in fulfilling this mitzvah
- What the impact of your mitzvah has been on those who've benefited
- How the community might be able to participate with you in keeping this mitzvah going (is there a website? a collection? an opportunity to collaborate with you?)
- Gratitude to anyone who helped you complete your project

FACILITY CHARGES:

		MEMBER PRICING	
ROOM	SQ. FT	After Hours	Open Hours
Jacobs Social Hall	2643	500.00	235.00
Grant Meyer Garden Pavilion	1926	375.00	180.00
Shushan Assembly	1300	235.00	130.00
All other rooms incl. Mautner *	each	50.00	25.00
Social Hall/Grant Meyer Garden Pavilion	4569	700.00	350.00
Grant Meyer Garden Pavilion/Shushan Assembly	3226	500.00	240.00
Social Hall/Garden Pavilion/Shushan Assembly	5869	925.00	410.00
Bowsky Garden		150.00	
Main Sanctuary/Bowsky Garden		375.00/2 hours	(\$100 each add. Hr)
Forgotson Chapel/Bowsky Garden		250.00/2 hours	(\$75 each add. Hr)

OPEN HOURS is during normal service times or office hours which the building would already be open and staffed. Requesting use of the facility at any other time would be considered as AFTER HOURS.

Custodial Support Fee is \$45 per hour

Security Fee* is \$50 per hour (4 hr. min)

- * 1 officer is required at any event with more than 50 people
- * 2 officers are required for events with more than 150 people
- * Security is required at all evening events

Manager Fee \$50 per hour (after hours event only)

Fees are subject to change.

For any questions regarding the facility fees, please consult with Annahi Tapia at 504.895.4843 or info@touro synagogue.com.