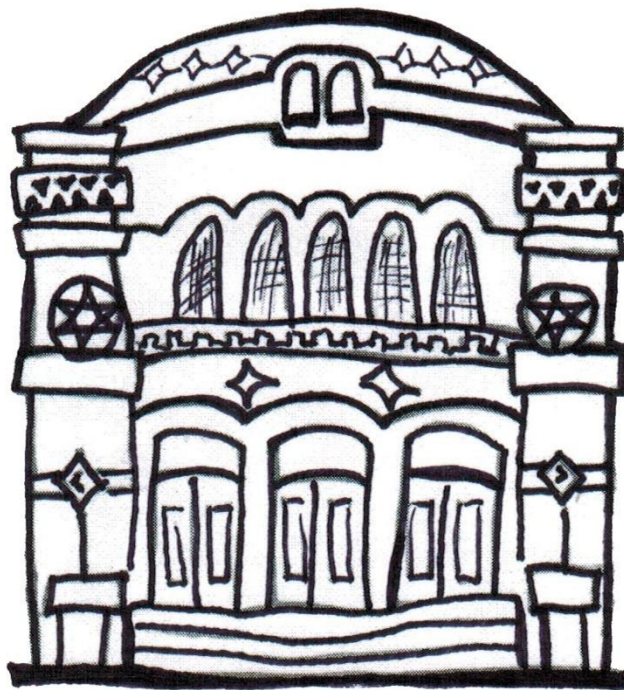


**TOURO SYNAGOGUE
B'NEI MITZVAH HANDBOOK
2022-2023**



**RABBI KATIE BAUMAN
CANTOR KEVIN MARGOLIUS
RABBI TODD SILVERMAN, DIRECTOR OF LIFELONG LEARNING
KURT JOSTES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

B'NEI MITZVAH TIMELINE & CHECKLIST

3rd Grade

- Register for Touro Uptown Hebrew Program.

5th grade (Fall)

- 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.

11-13 months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Student and parents meet with Cantor for 1-2 preliminary meetings to go over details of the B'nei Mitzvah preparation process.

10 months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah (no later than 8 months)

- Weekly tutoring begins with Cantor (& potentially Dr. Jaffe), preparing Torah, Haftarah, and prayers from the Siddur.
- 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 Bauman to begin the Tzedek Project. Follow-up meetings happen 4 and 6 months before bar/bat mitzvah.
- Order a tallit. **Beware: there are many vendors, especially on Amazon, that sell a tallit with Christian symbolism. We are happy to recommend vendors and/or take a look before you press order.

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.
- Send invitations. Make sure to invite the students in the religious school class, and don't forget to include the rabbis and cantor.

3 months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Student begins meeting with Rabbi Silverman to prepare their D'var Torah.

1 Month before Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Parents meet with Rabbi Bauman for the capstone meeting, finalize honors sheet.

Week of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Final run-through for student and parents with clergy in the Sanctuary: Tuesday or Wednesday, 4:00-5:30pm (check with office for which day).

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 Yamim Yafim and Uptown Hebrew Programs

The curricula of the Touro Synagogue Yamim Yafim (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. 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 who has not been a regular attendee at Uptown Hebrew 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 approximately ten months prior to becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah, each student will have weekly tutoring with Cantor Margolius (often joined by 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 assess progress, help correct Hebrew, and chart a course for the practice in the week ahead. **The vast majority of progress students make will be in the preparation they do 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.

Tzedek Project

One of the components to becoming B'nei Mitzvah at Touro Synagogue is planning and executing a social justice-oriented *tzedek project*. Over the course of eight months leading up to their ceremony, each student will work with Rabbi Bauman 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 Bauman to begin mapping out the necessary steps, and then each family will follow up twice with Rabbi Bauman 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 Silverman 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 insert the order of service and 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 fall of the 5th grade year, families are invited to a B'nei Mitzvah date selection 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 from those on the available date list that are no earlier than four months before their child's 13th birthday. Families may wish to inform secular schools when they choose a date if it may impact the scheduling of major class trips.

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. Dates are listed as available when the facility is accessible, services can be held, and at least two clergy can officiate.

Fees

Touro Synagogue will assess your membership account \$800 (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 of 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, Kurt Jostes, 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 Yamim Yafim 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 may also be 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 cost of sponsorship is \$360. To help us accommodate larger numbers for celebrations such as b'nei mitzvah, there is a charge of \$18 per person for Shabbat dinner after the first 10 attendees.

The Friday night menu is determined and prepared by Touro catering team. 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 facilities spaces. Any questions should be directed to Annahi Tapia.

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,
וְחַיֵּי 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.

HONORS FORM

Please complete the following information online **1 month prior to your bar/bat mitzvah.**

<https://touroynagogue.com/bnei-mitzvah-honors-form/>

Full Name of Student: (Required)

Torah Passing:

Date of Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service (Required)

mm/dd/yyyy



Who will be seated on the bimah?

Student Hebrew Name

Kaddish List Additions:

Parent Name(s) (Required)

Names of closest loved ones who can't attend in-person, but would like recognized as "joining us via livestream":

Parent Hebrew Name(s)

ALIYOT

This is an opportunity to honor parents and grandparents, or extended family and friends.

Will you be lighting the candles on Friday evening? (Required)

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Aliya #1

Will you be sponsoring pulpit flowers? (Required)

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Aliya #1 Hebrew

Aliya #2

Does the Tallit (or another ritual object) come with a story?

Aliya #2 Hebrew



ADDITIONAL HONORS

Lifting and/or Dressing of the Torah

Kiddush

Motzi

Ushers (Required)

TOURO COMMUNICATIONS

Student Photo (Required)

no file selected

Max. file size: 50 MB.

Please upload a hi-res photo

STUDENT: 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. (Required)

Facility Spaces Available

ROOM	SQ. FT
Jacobs Social Hall	2643
Grant Meyer Garden Pavilion	1926
Shushan Assembly	1300
All other rooms incl. Mautner *	each

Social Hall/Grant Meyer Garden Pavilion	4569
Grant Meyer Garden Pavilion/Shushan Assembly	3226
Social Hall/Garden Pavilion/Shushan Assembly	5869

Bowsky Garden
Main Sanctuary/Bowsky Garden
Forgotson Chapel/Bowsky Garden

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