

A NOTE FROM THE RABBIS TO BAR AND BAT MITZVAH PARENTS

Mazal tov upon your child's becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Reaching this milestone in your lives has deep spiritual significance for your family. I would like to share with you some ideas, suggestions, and synagogue policies that help you to be a partner with God and the Jewish community in "growing your child's soul" during this time.

1. **REMEMBER THE MEANING OF THE DAY:** Though your child's and family's participation in services on your special day is important, that Shabbat day belongs ultimately to God. You are a special part of Shabbat morning services, but the focus is on worship, community, and Shabbat observance. Please remember that our policies and regulations concerning your participation are intended to balance your specific needs with the needs of the larger community and its pattern of ongoing worship. I urge you to familiarize yourself with these policies by reading the Bar and Bat Mitzvah handbook that follows carefully.

2. **RECOGNIZE YOUR ROLES:** These include your attendance at family education programming, your involvement in your child's religious training, your regular worship with the congregation, especially for the two years preceding Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and your decision with your child to engage in mitzvah projects and to give tzedakah. All of these things send your child the positive message that preparation for becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not just about getting ready for a ceremony, but for a full adult Jewish life. The more you do together as a family in a Jewish context, the more your child will understand the role that Judaism can play in his or her life.

3. **KOSHER IS KOOL:** Making your reception kosher and in conformity with the laws of Shabbat will add meaning to your child becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. On the day of the ceremony, you and your child will be declaring publicly the importance of Judaism and Jewish identity in your lives. A party which conforms to the dietary and Shabbat laws of our faith shows that you are extending this commitment to every aspect of your celebration. This is especially so since the party is a seudat mitzvah, a meal of religious celebration. Many people feel that doing this when they do not practice these aspects of Judaism regularly would be hypocritical. When you show allegiance to the best of Jewish practice in your public celebration of Jewish life you are not being hypocritical at all: you are showing deep respect for Jewish ideals and their connection to our lives. We are ready to help you to host a strictly kosher and Shabbat observant party. Please note that, while I respect the right of every family to make the choices which are best for them, I cannot attend any party which is not strictly kosher and in conformity with the rules of Shabbat.

4. **PROPER ATTIRE:** We all like to wear fashionable clothing, especially on special occasions. Judaism holds that the performance of all religious acts should be done in the most beautiful way possible. Yet what is appropriate for a party is not necessarily appropriate for a worship service. Please let family and friends know that miniskirts, sleeveless dresses, shorts, and low cut attire are not appropriate for services, especially not on the bimah (synagogue podium). Please understand that if you or your guests are

not properly attired, you or they may not be able to take any honors given out during the service.

5. OUR THANKS SHOULD LEAD US TO GIVING: Your special day marks a significant celebration of life and family. The Jewish tradition teaches us that the best way in which to celebrate is to remember others who are less fortunate than we are. I strongly suggest that you and your child research a number of worthy causes and make a significant donation to one or a number of them in order to place your simcha in its most Jewishly appropriate context.

6. LEARN, LEARN, LEARN! Ohav Shalom is a community of learners. We emphasize the importance of every person continuing to learn and teach throughout his or her life, no matter how old or young. It is incorrect to assume that Jewish education is for kids, or that continuing one's education after becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an option. Every Jewish person and family should always be learning throughout life. We have worked hard to build quality adult studies programming in our synagogue and to offer excellent post-Bar/Bat Mitzvah education within the congregation and the larger Jewish community. Take advantage of these programs by engaging in your own learning and by making it clear to your child that Jewish education after this important time is not an option: it is an obligation and a wonderful opportunity.

We are firmly committed to helping you make your ceremony as meaningful as possible as a way of starting your child on the right path toward Jewish adulthood. It is our hope that the above reminders will be helpful to you in preparing for that special day, and for the rest of life, with your family. Please call us if we can be of assistance to you.

Sincerely:

Rabbi Dan Ornstein.

Rabbi Rena Kieval

SAMPLE NOTE FOR GUESTS:

To guests at Congregation Ohav Shalom:

We are delighted to have you join us for Shabbat services and the celebration of a simcha, a joyous event. For your information and to make you more comfortable, please note the following religious practices of our congregation.

If you are participating in our service, please refrain from wearing jeans, tank tops, sleeveless and spaghetti strap dresses, shorts and miniskirts.

In keeping with the spirit and guidelines of Sabbath observance, our synagogue does not permit the use of cell phones and other electronic devices, cameras, or writing instruments in the building or on the grounds at any time during from sundown on Friday Saturday evening after dark. Use of a cell or synagogue phone for a medical emergency will always be accommodated. Smoking is forbidden at all times in and near the building, in accordance with Jewish and state regulations, and is prohibited on the grounds throughout Shabbat.

All gentlemen are required to wear a kippah, (skullcap), when in the synagogue building. Women are encouraged to do so. There is a supply of kippot on hand in the main lobby. When receiving an honor on the bimah, both men and women are required to wear a head covering.

If you have questions during your time at Ohav Shalom, please do not hesitate to ask. We welcome you and thank you for joining us for worship and celebration.

TIME LINE OF SIMCHA TASKS AT A GLANCE

- 18 Mos. STUDY SYNAGOGUE'S BAR/BAT MITZVAH HANDBOOK. Make list of concerns & questions, call appropriate people to discuss these issues.
- 1 year Begin studies with assigned B'nai Mitzvah tutor.
- 12 months Plan Kiddush and/or reception. Go over Synagogue Kiddush options with Caren Feinberg, Executive Director or Office Manager, Nancy Pandolfo. Make sure you receive a certificate of insurance from any caterers, activities or anything else that the Shul would be liable for. Please check with Caren Feinberg on insurance questions.
- 6-8 months Reserve block of rooms at a hotel if necessary.
- 6-8 months Discuss with Rabbi Kieval any learning needs for family or guests who want to participate in the service.
- 4 months Design and order invitations, kippot and printed items. Select and order tallit and tefillin.
- 4 months Schedule family sessions with Rabbis. (PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE IF YOU DO NOT HEAR FROM US WITHIN THREE MONTHS OF YOUR SIMCHA)
- 4 months Begin meeting with D'var Torah mentor. (Please inform Rabbi Kieval if you have not been assigned a mentor within three months of your simcha)
- 3 months Contact Rabbi Kieval to schedule a Shabbat morning (prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah day) for the student to lead the Torah service.
- Begin scheduled study sessions with Rabbi Ornstein and Rabbi Kieval.
- 2 months Send in Facility Rental Contract and deposits.
- 1 month Submit Shabbat Planner to Rabbi Kieval, finalize participation of guests in major parts of the service and inform her if anyone needs brief review of taking an aliyah, etc.
- 1 month Schedule photo session with the Rabbis, if desired, for the Friday prior to your simcha, usually at 10:30am.
- 1 week Submit floor plans for kiddush/reception to Caren Feinberg.
- 1 week Send in full payment for facility rental and Kiddush as well as maintenance fees.

PLEASE NOTE:

Friday of Bar/Bat Mitzvah week - by noon, bring in all programs, kippot and items for Shabbat.

CONTACTS:

Rabbi Dan Ornstein ohavrab@gmail.com or 489-4706 ext. 12

- General moral and spiritual guidance as family plans prior to the bar/bat mitzvah event
- Two study sessions within a few months of event.

Rabbi Rena Kieval ravrena@gmail.com or 489-4706 ext. 14

- Assist in planning family/guest honors, general moral and spiritual guidance as family plans prior to the bar/bat mitzvah event
- Oversee tutors and any special needs issues
- Adult participation in parts of the Shabbat service
- Schedule student leadership of Torah service and Friday night service
- One study session within a few months of the event

David Levine, Religious Life chairperson DLevineDDS@aol.com or 489-5018

- Address policy questions

Caren Feinberg care-admin@ohavshalom.com or 489-4706 ext. 13

- Facility rental arrangements
- Verify correct times (end of Shabbat) for invitations and evening celebrations

Marci Galinkin mgalinkin@jewishfedny.org 489-1059

- Arrange for D'var Torah tutors

Molly Getnick ohavmolly@aol.com or 489-4706 ext. 15

- Financial questions and arrangements

Nancy Pandolfo Nancy@ohavshalom.com or 489-4706 ext. 10

- Kiddush arrangements
- Schedule two meetings with Rabbi Ornstein (family should schedule meeting with Rabbi Kieval directly) two months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.

Saul Kattleman skattlem@nycap.rr.com or 439-5545

- Arrange Torah readers. Will call you 4-6 weeks prior to the bar/bat mitzvah for the Torah readers (bar/bat mitzvah children and/or guests).

BAR/BAT MITZVAH INSTRUCTION

Approximately one year before the Bar/Bat mitzvah, a tutor will be assigned to your child. The tutor will contact you to set up a schedule. Bar/Bat Mitzvah instruction is scheduled at a time which does not interfere with the student's regular Hebrew class. The student may meet with the tutor as part of a group. The parts of the service learned by the student and the level of participation will be based on the student's abilities as assessed by the tutor and the student's other educators, as well as the student's and family's wishes.

The extent of participation by the student in the Sabbath service depends upon his/her abilities and interests. The recitation of the *aliyah* blessings, a selection of chanting from the Torah and a D'var Torah (Torah commentary) are customary for each Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Upon completion of the prescribed Bar/Bat Mitzvah curriculum, based on the assessment of the tutor, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah may begin training to chant the Haftarah and/or to lead the Shacharit or Musaf service. Any child who is training to lead Shacharit or Musaf services must learn the entire service and be prepared to lead it the day of his or her ceremony.

The student meets individually with the tutor, who is compensated through the parents and the synagogue. It is anticipated that typical studies require 30 half-hour sessions. At the time of the writing of this book the cost to the synagogue for the tutor is \$1,050. To defray part of this expense, a fee will be assessed to each Bar/Bat Mitzvah child. Please note that these costs are subject to increase. The actual cost will be determined at the start of your child's tutoring sessions.

Levels of proficiency in foreign language acquisition vary from child to child. Some children acquire a foreign language easily, while other children experience difficulty in mastering basic skills. Remedial training is available to help students who are having difficulty with reading skills. In order to determine who needs supplementary help, an assessment will be made of all Hebrew Academy and Talmud Torah students at age 10 or in the fifth grade. Arrangements will be made for students who need additional reinforcement with Hebrew reading to receive this assistance prior to beginning Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation.

As part of the preparation process, your child will be encouraged to lead a Torah service prior to his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah, when the instructor thinks the child is ready. In addition, the instructor will make arrangements for your child to have a rehearsal in the sanctuary prior to the simcha.

THE D'VAR TORAH

The writing of the D'var Torah (Torah lesson / speech) is an important part of your child's Bar/ Bat Mitzvah preparation. Our congregation offers a wonderful learning experience for our students and families in which trained member volunteers study with Bar/Bat Mitzvah students and assist them in the preparation of a D'var Torah, a commentary on the Torah or Haftarah portion for the day. This is a chance for you and your child to study together and for your child to offer commentary about the *parshah* (Torah portion) for the week of his/her Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Typically, the D'var Torah is five to ten minutes in length, and is delivered before the Haftarah. In addition to your child's summary of the *parshah*, he/she will also offer his/ her own interpretation of one or more topics presented in that week's Torah/Haftarah reading. This is also the time that "thank you's" are usually given.

In order to effectively learn about the parshah and write a meaningful D'var Torah, three or more sessions are needed. The volunteer will meet you in a mutually convenient location to work on the D'var Torah and to ensure that it is ready to be presented the day of the simcha.

FAMILY & STUDENT AT SHABBAT SERVICES

This is an opportune time for a family to deepen an understanding of and an appreciation for Shabbat and for services. No amount of tutoring can replace the learning your child does when attending services. Familiarity with the service allows all family members to raise their level of participation in the service. For this reason we have formulated these guidelines for attendance:

For two years prior to becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah, students and families are encouraged to attend religious services twice a month. Each month, one of these services should be a Shabbat morning service in the main sanctuary. The other time each month can be fulfilled through Friday evening services, Shabbat family services, a family Havdalah service and program, weekday morning minyan, Shabbat afternoon services, holiday services, or attendance of services at another synagogue. This guideline applies to all students, including those in the Talmud Torah, Hebrew Academy, or other programs which have been approved by the Ohav professional staff. Beyond these minimum suggestions, each student is strongly encouraged to attend our many different services as often as possible.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah students are encouraged to attend morning *minyan* on the Thursday prior to the scheduled Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. The student will be offered an aliyah and may lead a brief portion of the service.

TALLIT AND TEFILLIN

Tallit and *tefillin* are the "sacred clothing" which a Jew wears as reminders of the importance of following God's commandments and as hallmarks of Jewish adulthood and commitment. *Tallit* and *tefillin* also serve as the uniform of a Jewish adult during worship, indicating that the person is part of the community of worshipers. A *tallit* is worn at all morning services. *Tefillin* are worn only at weekday morning services, excluding Yom Tov (festivals).

In our congregation, men and women participate equally in religious life. Therefore, we educate all our B'nai Mitzvah candidates, boys and girls, towards the ideal of wearing *tallit* and *tefillin*. In addition, we strongly encourage all adult Jewish women who participate in Shabbat services on the *bimah* to wear a *tallit*. If a woman leads Shacharit, Musaf, Mincha, or Maariv, she has reached a high enough level of religious commitment that she is obligated to wear a *tallit*.

Please note: All boys must own a *tallit* and have access to a pair of *tefillin*. Girls are strongly encouraged to do the same. Beautiful *tallitot* and *tefillin* sets are available through our Sisterhood Gift Shop. We recommend that you plan your purchase of these sacred objects several months prior to the *simcha* to allow time for special orders and shipping.

RABBIS' PARTICIPATION IN BAR/BAT MITZVAH TRAINING

The rabbis are your resource for religious and spiritual support and guidance throughout this process.

Rabbi Dan Ornstein will meet twice with each family to study Torah and to discuss the meaning and role of becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah. At least one parent/guardian **MUST** attend these sessions with the student so that the spiritual aspects of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah can be shared as a family. These meetings may also be used to review issues and other topics relevant to Jewish life. The synagogue secretary will call your family to arrange these meetings, but please call if you do not hear from us by three months before your *simcha*. In addition, Rabbi Ornstein works in conjunction with the Talmud Torah and the Hebrew Academy to create family education programs for Bar/Bat Mitzvah families. The three sixth grade and the seventh grade family education programs are mandatory for all Bat and Bar Mitzvah families, regardless of the school program in which the child is registered.

Rabbi Rena Kieval will meet with the student and your family once to study traditions related to becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah. She oversees and assists with adult participation in the service, by the student's family and guests. She will help you plan *aliyot* and other honors. Rabbi Kieval also leads a portion of the sixth and seventh grade family education programs. One month before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the family should return the Shabbat Planner to her and discuss any questions and plans with her. (see HONORS section for further details regarding honors at B'nai Mitzvah)

Rabbi Kieval will assess the ability of anyone (other than the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student) who wishes to lead parts of the service. The individual leading a service

represents the congregation before God. This person, known as a *shliach tzibbur* (m) OR *shlichat tzibbur* (f) should have skills and maturity to represent and express the *kavanah* (spiritual intensity) of all worshippers. If the family wishes to designate a qualified family member or friend to lead a part of the service, to chant from the Torah or to act as a *gabbai*, you must inform Rabbi Kieval **6 months** ahead of time. She will review the participant's skill level and appropriateness. This review may involve a simple phone call, or, in some instances, a "rehearsal" (by phone or in person) may be requested. Those individuals who chant Torah for the congregation are expected to read directly from the scroll and cannot use various "guides" while on the *bimah*. (The guidelines for serving as a *gabbai* are explained under "The Service" section.) Rabbi Kieval is also available to review the Hebrew and the procedures for taking an *aliyah* with you and with those to whom you would like to offer this honor. She can assist in preparation through coaching or by providing an audio tape and review sessions.

When the student's tutor feels that the student is ready, parents should inform Rabbi Kieval and schedule a date for the student to lead a Torah service or Friday night service. This is an extremely helpful "practice" experience.

David Levine, Chair of the Religious Life Committee, has overall responsibility for all the activities associated with a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. They and the Religious Life Committee, in conjunction with the Rabbi's, are responsible for addressing, formulating and implementing all B'nai Mitzvah policies and procedures, as well as all synagogue policies relating to religious life at Ohav Shalom.

Marci Galinkin, a member of our Religious Life Committee, serves as the **D'var Torah Coordinator**. (See The D'var Torah for further explanation.) Marci will contact you four months prior to your simcha. If you would like Dvar Torah study to begin sooner, or if you have someone specific with whom you would like your child to work, please inform Marci at any point.

Two volunteers, **Adam Edwards** and **Saul Kattleman**, are currently responsible for assigning prayer leaders, and Torah and Haftarah readers for each Shabbat and holiday morning, including those on which a Bar/Bat Mitzvah will take place. Saul Kattleman will contact you when he is planning Torah reading assignments to ascertain what arrangements have been made. Rabbi Kieval must be informed of any plans or requests your family may have for service leaders (shacharit or musaf), who are not among our regular service leaders. Please speak with her as early as possible if you have questions or need for training and review. All of these individuals will try to accommodate your requests while ensuring the respect due our Torah, our tradition and our congregation's established policies.

PLEASE DO NOT CALL ANY OF THE INDIVIDUALS ABOVE
BE CALLED ON SHABBAT OR JEWISH HOLIDAYS.

PROFESSIONAL STAFF SHOULD NOT BE CALLED AT HOME.

THE SERVICE

Families and guests of the B'nai Mitzvah are encouraged to participate fully in the Shabbat worship service. This participation may include accepting *aliyot* to the Torah, reading Torah, carrying the Torah, opening the Ark, leading portions of the Shabbat service, or reading prayers in English.

Each section of the Shabbat morning service is led by a qualified individual. There are four sections of the Shabbat morning service. These are:

**Shacharit (The Morning Service)

**Torah Service (Introductory and concluding prayers, chanting of the weekly portion from the

Torah scroll and chanting of the Haftarah portion)

**Musaf (Additional Service)

Guidelines for each service:

Shacharit and Musaf must be led by a qualified Jewish individual at or over the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

The Torah service is generally led by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Only trained Jewish individuals may read from the Torah or chant the Haftarah. The process of Torah reading assignments is described in the previous page.

During the Torah service, two *gabbaim* preside over the readings. One of the rabbis, or their appointee, serves as *Gabbai Rishon* (first *gabbai*). The individual serving as *Gabbai Sheni* (second *gabbai*) must be proficient in reading Hebrew.

PLEASE NOTE: It is natural to want to greet and talk with your guests when they arrive in the sanctuary. However, we ask that you refrain from doing so, and that you wait as much as possible, to greet your guests fully at the end of the morning worship. This promotes a more respectful atmosphere when the congregation is at prayer throughout the morning.

HONORS

Each family has the privilege of assigning honors to family and friends. Each of these honors carries with it an obligation to the sanctity of our tradition and to the congregation. Jewish parents of each bar and mitzvah student are invited to be present on the bimah (and to recite the parent's prayer) during the opening and closing of the Torah service, when their child receives his or her aliyah to the Torah and is blessed by the rabbi, and for any other part of the service in which they are prepared to participate. Non Jewish parents are invited to be present on the bimah and to recite the parent's prayer when their child receives his or her aliyah and is blessed by the rabbi. For all honors, individuals should be properly prepared for their particular responsibility and should be dressed respectfully and modestly. **Respectful dress excludes sleeveless or low cut dresses, jeans, short pants and mini skirts. Anyone dressed inappropriately may not be allowed to ascend the *bimah* for an honor.**

Please look carefully at the Shabbat Planner sheet in this packet.

It will assist you in planning the assignment of these honors. For your convenience we have included a working copy as well as a final copy. The final copy must be submitted to the Rabbi Kieval four weeks prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. She will be happy to help you complete the worksheet. **Remember that a fully completed Shabbat Planner will help avoid last minute misunderstandings and confusion.**

Honors available to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family include:

- **Five** *aliyot*. (Detailed information follows in the *aliyot* section)
- **Three** prayers in English. Prayers for our Country, and for Peace; in addition to the Prayer for Israel, which may only be read by a person of the Jewish faith. Whenever possible we encourage the reading of the Prayer for Israel in Hebrew.
- **Hagbah and Gelila** (Lifting and binding the Torah scroll): The individual assigned to lift the Torah scroll preferably has experience doing so, and **must** be capable of lifting a substantial weight.
- **Two opportunities to open and close the ark**: at the beginning and ending of the Torah service. In each case this may be shared by two individuals.
- **Two opportunities to carry the Torah** through the congregation, at the start and close of the Torah service.
- **Opportunities to lead individual prayers in Hebrew** (Ashrei, Ein K'Eiloheinu and Adon Olam). These are especially appropriate for younger family or friends who share the *simcha* with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- **Torah Reading** (as described earlier)

During the service, the *parnas* (floor *gabbai*) for that morning will inform each person when it is time for him or her to take the honor. These honored guests should make themselves known to the *parnas* and should arrive at the synagogue on time. Shabbat morning services begin at 9:00 am.

It is the synagogue's long standing tradition to mark other life cycle celebrations that might coincide with the day of your family's Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration. If this is the case, every effort will be made to inform you ahead of time, and to arrange this with minimal inconvenience to you family.

ALIYOT

During the reading of the Torah portion individuals are called to the Torah for *aliyot*. The honored individual reads aloud in Hebrew the blessings over the Torah. Five of the seven *aliyot* are reserved by the congregation for the family or guests of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. In addition to those five, either the last *aliyah* or maftir is reserved for the Bar/Bat/Mitzvah student (which *aliyah* will depend whether he/she is chanting haftarah.)

The family may assign their five *aliyot* to individuals of their choice, according to the following rules:

** *Aliyot* are reserved for Jewish individuals over the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. A non-Jewish parent of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is welcome to stand with his or her family on the *bimah* when the child takes the *maftir aliyah*, and when the Rabbis recite the special blessing for the child after the Torah reading.

** The first *aliyah* is assigned to a *kohen* or the daughter of a *kohen* (see below)

** The second *aliyah* is assigned to a *levi* or the daughter of a *levi* (see below)

** The daughter of a male *kohen* or male *levi* may take the *kohen aliyah* or *levi aliyah* if she accepts upon herself the status of *Bat Kohen* or *Bat Levi*; which is to say, she only accepts an *aliyah* as a *kohen* or *levi*.

** An *aliyah* is assigned to only one individual for each section. If two people are assigned to go to the *bimah* together, only one will be called by name and only that individual may recite the blessings.

** We must complete seven *aliyot* prior to a second *kohen* or second *levi* receiving an *aliyah*. It is important to check with those being honored with an *aliyah* to determine if anyone is a *kohen* or *levi* as this may affect the order of the Torah reading. If you or your guests are *Kohanim* or *Levi'im*, please be sure to inform Rabbi Kieval in advance of the *simcha* as this may require a different arrangement for the readings.

** All adults (Jewish or non-Jewish) must wear a head covering while on the *bimah*.

** Jewish men must wear a *tallit*. Jewish women are strongly encouraged to wear a *tallit*. The *parnas* can supply a *tallit* for anyone who comes to the *bimah* without his/her own *tallit*.

** All *aliyot* involve the recitation of a blessing before and after a Torah reading. Please be sure that those being honored are familiar with the text and procedure of the *aliyah* blessings. (See below for procedure.) Please be sure that you and/or your guests are familiar with the blessings and procedure. Rabbi Kieval is available to review these with you or with your guest. Please contact her well in advance of your *simcha* if a review is necessary or would be helpful.

** Those honored with an *aliyah* should know their Hebrew names and the Hebrew names of their parents. **Please provide English and Hebrew names of honorees in writing, on the Shabbat Planner.**

Family situations requiring special consideration should be raised early in the planning process with the Rabbis and/or David Levine. Every effort will be made to resolve your particular concerns and needs while preserving *halacha* (Jewish law) and our congregation's policies.

PROCEDURE FOR TAKING AN ALIYAH

A) The honoree approaches the *bimah* at the instruction of the *parnas* (floor *gabbai*) and provides his/her Hebrew name to the *gabbai* on the *bimah* supervising the Torah reading.

B) The *tallit*, or in the case of a woman not wearing a *tallit*, the special binding used to tie the Torah together, is used to touch the Torah on the line indicated by the reader, and is kissed, prior to reciting the blessings, both before and after the Torah reading.

C) Please remember to inform your guests that if two people come to the *bimah* for an *aliyah*, only one will be formally called and only one can chant the blessing.

D) After a section of the Torah has been read, and the second blessing recited, the honoree moves to the right and remains at the reading table until the next *aliyah* is completed.

SPECIAL NOTES

In recognition of their new adult status, we encourage our B'nai Mitzvah to continue their participation and learning by leading *davening* and reading Torah and Haftarah for our weekly cycle of Shabbat services. We are happy to welcome your Bar/Bat Mitzvah graduate as an active participant in our religious observance. We always need and encourage new leaders at every level of experience. For further information, speak with the Rabbis, or with the appropriate volunteers mentioned in this handbook.

The importance of remembering tzedakah (philanthropy) as part of this milestone cannot be over emphasized. Tzedakah can be giving food to the local food pantry or donating a portion of gifts to charity (such as Mazon), or a self tithing against the cost of the entire affair. It may be using books as table center pieces (to be donated to the Synagogue library.) Other approaches include a contribution to an Israel Scholarship Fund.

Putting God on the Guest List, a book by Rabbi Jeffrey Salkin, offers additional ways to introduce tzedakah into your simcha. It offers rich, spiritual guidance for families. This book is available from our Gift Shop and orders will be taken for the book at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Parents' Orientation meeting. Please purchase it, as we will be referring to it during parent education programs. Please discuss options for giving tzedakah with Rabbi Ornstein or Rabbi Kieval.

Please note that a child who will become bar or bat mitzvah in the eighth grade MUST be enrolled in the eighth grade program of B'Yachad, Hebrew Academy, or a comparable course of Jewish learning acceptable to the synagogue. Ending religious instruction at the end of the seventh grade when the bar/bat mitzvah date is in the eighth grade is not permitted. Further, students who become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah in the sixth grade are required to be enrolled for seventh grade Jewish studies.

LOTS MORE TO KNOW...

- ** Our synagogue clergy will give the charge to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah as well as present the designated gifts. It is our aim to use the Bar/Bat Mitzvah charge as a time for our spiritual leaders to offer each child meaningful religious insight on this important day.
- ** The parents' prayer will be given after the Rabbi's special blessing, after the student has taken his/her aliyah to the Torah. Parents may recite the Birkat Kohanim (Priestly Blessing) and the appropriate English selection. Copies of the parents' prayer are included in this handbook and should be reviewed by the parents in advance.
- ** Kippot, tallitot, and lace head coverings are provided at the entrance to the sanctuary. All males are required to wear a kippah. Anyone (male or female) going up to the bimah must wear a head covering. If desired, kippot for guests may be ordered through the synagogue Gift Shop.
- ** Young children of your guests are invited to join the regular service or to attend the Shorashim young children's services which will be announced at the appropriate time.
- ** Cameras, video equipment, tape recorders, cell phones and any electronics are not permitted to be used during the service or anywhere on the synagogue property on Shabbat. Pictures may be taken at a rehearsal which takes place on a weekday prior to your simcha. Pictures may also be taken at the synagogue after the conclusion of Shabbat on Saturday night.
- ** Generally the Rabbis are available to participate in photo sessions on the bimah at 10:30 a.m. on the Friday morning preceding the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please confirm a specific time with the office prior to arranging a photo session.
- ** Any items to be distributed to guests must be delivered to the synagogue by noon on Friday.
- ** No smoking or writing is permitted on synagogue premises at any time on Shabbat. Use of telephones is permitted only in the event of a medical emergency.
- ** **Nothing may be brought into or taken out of the synagogue on Shabbat.** Please be sure to inform bands / DJ's, florists and others involved with your reception of the hours they are permitted to bring items into the building and to set up their equipment. Please confirm in advance the timing of Shabbat with the Executive Director.
- ** The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family should be prompt in coming into the sanctuary on Shabbat morning, arriving no later than 8:50 a.m. Kabbalat Shabbat, Friday evening services are generally held at the Ohav Sholom apartments and begin at 6:30 p.m.
- ** The Bar/Bat Mitzvah and immediate family should be seated in the front rows of the sanctuary.

** During the return of the Torah to the Ark, all younger children are invited to join in the Torah procession. Parents are welcome to accompany all younger children in the procession.

** Tossing candy at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not permitted during services at Ohav Shalom. It may be done at the reception.

** The rabbis do not announce any kind of private luncheon or reception on the bimah at services. They will **only** announce the family that sponsors the Kiddush.

** If you have a bus picking up the children on Shabbat, the bus **MUST** be parked in the back of the building due to Shabbat regulations.

KIDDUSH

In keeping with the standards of Conservative Judaism, all meals must be prepared and served under strict guidelines of kashrut as outlined in our synagogue caterers' guide. As a rule, you should plan for approximately 250-300 guests including family, friends and congregants.

CELEBRATING YOUR SIMCHA WITH OHAV SHALOM!

Celebrating your Bar/Bat Mitzvah is recognition of a special moment in time for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student, family, friends and Ohav community. The administrative staff at Ohav will do everything possible to help make your occasion as special and personally meaningful as possible. Celebration after the Bar/bat Mitzvah service may take place in several options for families to chose:

1. A family hosted Kiddush – This is for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family as well as the entire Congregation. There are several ways to host your Kiddush with either Ohav Shalom Kiddushim options or with a community kosher caterer.

2. A Private Reception/ Luncheon - Following your sponsored Kiddush for the congregation, families may choose to host a private reception/luncheon for your family, friends and invited guests. If the family chooses to have a private luncheon in addition to the congregational Kiddush, that luncheon begins at least forty five minutes after the end of services. The family may not utilize both the large and small social halls; one social hall must be used for the congregational Kiddush.

3. Evening Reception - In addition to your sponsored Kiddush, for the Congregation, families may chose to host an evening reception in the Ohav Shalom social hall.

All simchas must first be discussed with the Executive Director before planning anything; otherwise we cannot confirm that Ohav space will be available accordingly.

Ohav Shalom offers four options for a sponsored Kiddush. These include:

Kiddush/Level 1
 Kiddush/Level 2
 Kiddush/ Level 3
 Kiddush/Level 4

(See attachments)

The level of Kiddush provided is at the discretion of the family. Everyone present at services is invited to enjoy the Kiddush, with the parents as identified hosts.

For more information and assistance with sponsoring your Kiddush, please contact Nancy Pandolfo, Office Manager or Caren Feinberg, Executive Director to arrange for an appointment to discuss all Kiddush options. You may reach Nancy at 489-4706, ext. 10 or Nancy@ohavshalom.com or Caren at 489-4706, ext. 13 or caren-admin@ohavshalom.com

NO HOME PREPARED FOODS MAY BE BROUGHT INTO THE SYNAGOGUE. ALL FOODS MUST BE APPROVED BY THE RABBIS OR MASHGIACH/MASHGICHAH. CATERING STAFF OR FAMILY MAY NOT ENTER THE KITCHENS WITHOUT THE MASHGICHAH/CHAN.

CATERED AFFAIRS

The following caterers are currently approved to work at Ohav Shalom. Since this list changes periodically, we strongly suggest that you contact the synagogue office for verification prior to contracting for your simcha:

Risa Carr 423-5369

Saati's Catering (Chris Sawtelle) 788-1436

CELEBRATION INFORMATION

INVITATIONS: The proper form is to invite guests to participate in the service of Shabbat worship at which the son/daughter will be called to the Torah as Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please note that the correct name of the synagogue is CONGREGATION OHAV SHALOM.

RECEPTION: The hour for a reception or dinner to be held at the conclusion of Shabbat varies with the season of the year and must be checked carefully with the Executive Director before printing any invitations.

Since the reception is part of the celebration of a religious milestone, it is a Seudat Mitzvah. We encourage all families to hold their reception in the Rosen Social Hall of the synagogue. If it is held in the home or elsewhere, kashrut should be observed. The reception given in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah culminates the simcha. A kosher meal, Jewish music, Jewish rituals (such as washing hands before making Motzei and Birkat

Hamazon) all help to make the celebration a real Seudat Mitzvah, and a positive Jewish experience. Please

remember that the Rabbis do not participate in non kosher functions.

PLEASE NOTE: All deliveries to the synagogue and any items related to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah reception must be completed prior to noon on Friday. Nothing may be delivered to or taken out of the synagogue on Shabbat. All remaining food, flowers, etc., belonging to the family must be removed by 6:00 p.m. on the following Monday. A donation to a local food pantry would be in keeping with the spirit of tzedakah. In addition to the items listed above, all linens, rented tables, etc., must be removed by 6:00 p.m. Monday.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family must confirm with the Executive Director the exact time on Saturday evening that items related to the reception party (decorations, musical instruments, photographic equipment, etc.) may be brought into the building.

Some families choose to begin their Saturday night reception with Mincha, then Seudah Shlishit (Hors d'oeuvres, for example), then a Havdalah service, and finally, a dinner party with dancing. Done tastefully, this arrangement can be very effective and can heighten the positive Jewish experience that we strive for in each Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration. It should always be clear that Shabbat is still Shabbat through Havdalah. Proper decorum should be observed (i.e., no food or beverages in the Sanctuary) and no music or photography is permitted. In the late spring and summer when Shabbat ends late, families might also consider scheduling their receptions on Sunday.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONSIDERATIONS

All synagogue financial responsibilities including dues, fees, tuition, b'nai mitzvah costs and facility usage cost must be current and/or paid in full one week prior to your simcha. Payment may be made by personal check or credit card with the office manager or business manager.

Additional fees to consider include:

- **General Custodial Fees (2 custodians)** - \$100 - \$200, depending upon size, which includes set up, break down and clean up of your Kiddush only.
- **Mashgiach (Kosher Supervisor) Fees:** \$18.00 per hour. Families will be provided with an estimate of hours need to supervise any food preparation in advance of their simcha.
- **Social Hall Facility Usage Fees:** (These fees apply to a Friday Night Dinner, a private luncheon following the congregational Kiddush, or a Saturday evening reception)
- **Kitchen Fees:** (This fee is to be billed to an outside cater in advance of the event and to be paid one week prior to the simcha) \$180.00 per day, per kitchen with a cap of \$500.00. This fee allows your caterer full access to either kitchen including all equipment and contents.

SOME WORDS OF CAUTION

It is with some reluctance that we refer to the consumption of alcoholic beverages at the various parties planned around the Bar/Bat Mitzvah simcha. The consumption of alcoholic beverages should be kept within reasonable limits. There is always the very real potential for adults to drink too much and for teens to gain access to drinks which they should not have. It is certainly not our goal to prohibit open bars or alcoholic beverages at your reception. It is our intention to emphasize the biblical commands to prevent people from unwittingly hurting themselves and to preserve life. Therefore these suggestions:

1. The bar tenders working at your reception should be instructed to refuse beverages to anyone who has clearly had too much to drink.
2. It is a good idea to stop serving alcoholic beverages prior to serving dessert.
3. The bar tenders should be reminded prior to the reception that alcoholic beverages must not be served to any minors. A non alcoholic beverage stand should be set up for younger guests.

Please keep in mind that Jewish tradition strongly encourages moderation, and New York State law and safety concerns demand it. Use good judgment and enjoy your Simcha.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT: This booklet is the result of many hours of work by many members of our Religious Life Committee, now and in previous years. We appreciate the help and guidance of Rabbi Daniel Ornstein, Rabbi Rena Kieval, Caren Feinberg and Nancy Pandolfo for the 2012 revision of this handbook.

In conclusion, the Religious Life Committee recognizes the importance of this special day to the families of the B'nai Mitzvah and wishes to help you celebrate within the framework of Jewish law and tradition on Shabbat and afterwards. We extend to your family a Mazal Tov on this joyous occasion.