

BAR/BAT MITZVAH HANDBOOK

TEMPLE MICAH

April, 2008

Dear Bar/Bat Mitzvah Student and Parents,

Enclosed you will find the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Handbook to help you prepare for our upcoming meeting. This meeting is designed to discuss all aspects of your upcoming *simcha* (celebration). This is the only full class meeting of this kind that we hold—hence its great importance for your family. We prepared this special handbook which we hope you will read prior to the meeting. At the meeting you will have plenty of opportunity to ask questions, meet all the B'nai Mitzvah parents and children in your class, learn about the educational process—as well as other details regarding onegs, etc. You will find it extremely helpful.

As with most things in life, those that we value most are the things we work hardest for and put a great deal of effort into. Such is Bar/Bat Mitzvah. When the rabbis stated "Shelosh esreh la mitzvah" -- "13 to perform mitzvot," they never envisioned Bar/Bat Mitzvah as it is today. Today we see it as a significant step in the Jewish life cycle as well as an opportunity to bring Judaism into our lives and our homes.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Micah is something special. I hope that each of you will gain all that you can from learning and preparing together.

Best wishes, good luck, and *mazal tov!*

Shalom,
Rabbi Daniel G. Zemel

Rabbi Toby H. Manewith

STUDY SCHEDULE

Each student will meet regularly with tutors and Rabbi Zemel or Rabbi Manewith. These sessions with the tutors will begin approximately six months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. The sessions with Rabbis Zemel and Manewith will begin approximately three months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

It is expected that students will make steady progress in preparation for their Bar/Bat Mitzvah as long as they follow the homework instruction of their tutors. **It is the student's responsibility to practice daily and complete the homework given to them.** It is the tutor's responsibility to keep the parents informed of the student's progress. If at the **three-month mark** the tutor deems that the student has not made appropriate progress, an assessment will be made, with one possibility being rescheduling the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to a later date.

REQUIREMENTS

I. TORAH

Each student will learn to chant and translate approximately 20 verses of the Torah portion.

II. HAFTARAH

Each student will learn to chant a portion of the corresponding Haftarah.

III. DRASHA (INTERPRETATION)

Each student will prepare an interpretation of the Torah and Haftarah portions. These interpretations will contain a brief summary of each and will elaborate the major themes of the portion, including contemporary meanings. What is emphasized in each drasha will vary from portion to portion and from student to student. We are seeking a serious engagement with the material being studied.

IV. MITZVAH PROGRAM

In order to create a complete sense of mitzvah in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration at Temple Micah, each student is required to undertake a mitzvah project.

Our goal is to have the student and family participate in a project that will be meaningful and that will give the student the sense that Bar/Bat mitzvah is symbolic of a lifetime of Jewish involvement. Students will inform the congregation of their mitzvah project in a mitzvah statement during the Saturday morning service and in the announcement of their upcoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah in the Vine.

V. MEDITATIONAL READING

Each student will be asked to select a poem, passage from a favorite book, or some other

selection to read prior to the silent prayer at the Friday evening service the night before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

VI. SERMON TOPIC

Each student will be asked to pose a question which will become the basis for the rabbi's sermon that will be delivered at either the Friday evening or Shabbat morning service. The rabbi will work on developing this topic with the student. Family discussion is strongly encouraged for help in developing an appropriate topic.

VII. CONTINUING JEWISH EDUCATION

An explicit requirement for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is that each Bar/Bat Mitzvah student will remain in the Temple Micah Religious School for at least **TWO FULL YEARS AFTER** the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year. Please be reminded that when you received the date on which your child would become or Bar/Bat Mitzvah, your family signed a covenant to honor this commitment.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH FEES

Each family will be charged a fee of \$1500 to cover tutoring expenses and facility usage. If the staff assesses that your child needs tutoring beyond the traditional six month preparation time, arrangements will be made on an individual basis and additional fees will apply.

The included facility usage fee partially reimburses the Temple for expenses associated with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration. Please see the Facilities Reservation Request Form, which is enclosed in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah packet, for additional fees which will be incurred if you choose to extend your celebration beyond the traditional kiddush.

These fees must be paid prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and are subject to change based on Board of Directors approval.

PREPARING FOR BAT/BAR MITZVAH

Reviewing the portion at home with your child daily will greatly assist in your child's success. Listening to them read and/or chant out loud (even if you do not know Hebrew) is part of the preparation process. Not only does this create a supportive environment which allows your child to see the importance of this event in the life of your family, but it also gives them the confidence-building experience of chanting in front of more than just their tutor.

Students and their families are asked to attend Shabbat worship on a regular basis during the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year. Becoming familiar with Shabbat worship is an essential part of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience.

Students will be asked occasionally to lead different parts of the worship on Shabbat morning. This will help you and your child become more familiar with Shabbat morning worship and will give your child an opportunity to become comfortable on the bima. Parents will also be given the opportunity to have an aliyah in the weeks or months prior to their child's bar/bat mitzvah. A schedule for this will be distributed during the summer months. At least one parent should accompany the student when it is his/her turn to lead part of the worship. It is expected that you will remain for the full Shabbat worship. **The more a family is familiar with our worship, the more meaningful and joyous the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience will be.**

WEARING OF TALLIT AND KIPPAH

The wearing of a tallit or kippah is not required for Shabbat morning worship at Temple Micah. Many students choose to wear a tallit and/or kippah when they become Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please note: in the case of kippah, if one decides to wear a kippah when they become Bar/Bat Mitzvah, they should begin now and continue for all worship services. The wearing of a kippah is not dependent on becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Should a student decide to wear a tallit when they become Bar/Bat Mitzvah, they are committing to wear a tallit after the Bar/Bat Mitzvah for all daytime worship. (The only exception is Kol Nidre when tallit is worn.) **Neither kippah nor a tallit is worn as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah accessory.**

BAR/BAT MITZVAH FINAL RUN-THROUGH

The final run-through with the rabbi will be held on the Thursday prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah at 4:00 p.m. unless the family is otherwise notified. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah student and parents must be there, other service participants do not need to attend.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH CELEBRATION

The Board of Directors has adopted policies delineating the responsibilities of the family and the congregation in connection with Bar/Bat Mitzvah services.

The following specific information and a set of appropriate forms are provided in these pages to assist in planning for this event:

Planning

Bar/Bat Mitzvah services are held on Shabbat mornings and include the participation of our choir. Services begin at 10:15 a.m. and last approximately 2 hours.

Invitations

At Temple Micah, **ALL** members of the B'nai Mitzvah class and their parents should receive an invitation to each others' Bar/Bat Mitzvah services, as well as to any celebration at Temple Micah held directly following the service.

For any celebration held away from Temple Micah, **if half of the B'nai Mitzvah class is invited, our policy is that the entire class is included.** The spirit of this policy is that no student at Temple Micah should feel left out.

Members of the choir should receive an invitation to the service, as well.

Please remember the invitation should reflect the dignity of the religious service for which it is intended. It is customary for the class and families to attend the Friday evening service prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

What About "Uninvited Guests?"

What makes our Bar/Bat Mitzvah service most impressive is the participation of the congregation. The beauty of our worship depends upon an ongoing Shabbat morning service that continues week after week, whether or not there is a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This atmosphere of prayer can be maintained only if there are a large number of congregants present who know our customs and participate in the worship. We are particularly proud that every service at Temple Micah is a community service and encourage congregational attendance.

Therefore, it is our custom to welcome the entire congregation to the kiddush following Shabbat morning services. Provisions should be made to include all community members. There may, in fact, be other, *s'machot* or life-cycle observances being celebrated within the community on the same weekend. These families may wish to participate in hosting the kiddush with you. Should that be the case, you will be contacted. Please speak with one of the rabbis if you have any financial concerns.

Story in the "Vine"

A short profile of your child will be printed in the "Vine" in the month that he or she becomes Bar/Bat Mitzvah. If you want this information to appear in the "Vine," please respond to the editor's requests in a timely manner. See enclosed form in the folder and return to the Temple office.

Kiddush Reception-Set-Up

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee covers the set-up of a stand-up Kiddush using Temple Micah furniture. Any reception that involves rental furniture carries additional fees (see Facilities Reservation Request Form in Bar/Bat mitzvah packet). Because of religious school on Sunday morning, all rental equipment must be removed by 5:00 p.m. Saturday.

Kiddush Reception-Food

The Kiddush Reception is your opportunity to share your celebration with the Temple Micah community as well as your invited guests. As the hosts, our hope is that every family will create a warm and welcoming atmosphere.

Any food served at Temple Micah may not serve pork products, or shellfish. All leftover food must be removed from the kitchen the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. We have no storage facilities. Please inform your caterer.

Other Rentals

For arranging receptions in the Temple building please contact the office to reserve the space. The forms in the back of this booklet should be filled out and returned to the Temple office as soon as possible. The family should notify the Temple office **at least six months in advance** of its intentions to use the building for any evening event (Friday Shabbat dinner or Saturday evening party) held in conjunction with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please see the fee schedule in the enclosed folder.

Oneg Shabbat

The B'nai Mitzvah class is responsible for the Friday evening Oneg Shabbat prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The class organizes its own schedule for hosting these.

Seating

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family should tell the Temple office how many guests are expected at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. We invite unaccompanied schoolmates of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to sit in the rows we have reserved for them in the center of the congregation.

Bimah Decoration

The family may want to have bimah flowers or potted plants. Delivery to the Temple must be between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. on Friday. NO heavily scented flowers like eucalyptus, lilies, freesia or forsythia. Please be sensitive to the allergies of the congregation and its leaders.

In lieu of flowers some families have chosen to use this an opportunity to further enrich their celebration with tzedakah, adorning the bima with baskets of non-perishable food or potted plants which are later donated to the charitable cause of their choice.

Ushers

The family should invite five people - three classmates and two parents of classmates - to act as ushers for the Shabbat morning service. The families hosting the Friday evening oneg will usher for that service. Please see usher instruction sheet.

Voice Recording

The Temple provides an audio cassette recording of the Shabbat morning service.

Photography and Video Recording

Both photography and video recording are absolutely forbidden during Shabbat worship. You may take photos of the blessings over wine and challah at the conclusion of the service. Some families choose to retain a photographer to take pictures in the sanctuary after services are concluded. Some make arrangements to have a photographer come to the building for a photo

session in the week prior to services. If you choose to do this, please make appropriate arrangements with the Temple office. **The Torah may not be used during photo sessions.**

Wine/Kiddush

The Shabbat Morning Bar/Bat Mitzvah service concludes with the blessings over wine and challah. **The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family is required to provide a 4-5 pound Challah (or two 2 pound challot etc).** The challah should be made available to the ushers at least a half hour before the start of the service.

Seating Arrangements

Seating at services is unassigned, with the exception of the choir which sits in the section to the left (Ark) side of the bimah. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family customarily sits in the front row on the right side facing the bimah.

To facilitate the flow of the services, it is suggested that the family inform persons who will be participating in the Service to sit near an aisle seat.

Please inform your guests that families with babies or small children may choose to sit near the quiet room.

Service Participation

In keeping with Temple Micah traditions, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family is invited to select who will receive the service honors for the Shabbat morning service. The following guidelines should help instruct the family in making its selections:

- 1) The Friday evening candle blessing and the Kiddush over the wine are led by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family. Other Temple events sometimes necessitate that the Friday honors be shared with others. You will be notified if this is the case.
- 2) The Bar/Bat Mitzvah parents are invited to the Bimah to read a special prayer followed by the “*Shehecheyanu*” blessing to celebrate the sacred occasion. This is in addition to an aliyah blessing. The special prayers can be found in this packet. Please select one.
- 3) The family chooses the Torah blessers for aliyah two, aliyah three, and aliyah four. These individuals must be Jewish and 13 years or older. The first aliyah is assigned by the Temple to a community member who is commemorating or celebrating an event. The fourth aliyah includes the parents of the bar/bat mitzvah student. The fifth aliyah is reserved for the bar/bat mitzvah student.
- 4A) Shabbat morning honors may be offered to any Jewish relative, guest, or friend.
- 4B) Participation of non-Jewish relatives in Bar/Bat Mitzvah services must be in accordance with the following guidelines:

Principles

A. It is the goal of Temple Micah to create a congregation that welcomes everyone, Jew and non-Jew, while at the same time preserving the integrity of Jewish ritual and tradition.

B. We distinguish between participation as a congregant and as a leader on behalf of the congregation.

1. There is no restriction on the participation of non-Jews in the midst of the congregation.

2. Ritual participation in a leadership role is limited to those situations or contexts where the words and /or actions of the non-Jewish participant do not compromise either that person's own beliefs or the integrity of the Jewish service.

Policies

A. Non-Jewish family members may not lead prayers whose words presuppose that the reader is Jewish (i.e., prayers, such as the Torah blessings, which contain such language as "who has commanded us..." or "who has chosen us..." or "who has sanctified us...") or where the ritual action implies that the doer of the action is Jewish (i.e. symbolically passing or carrying the Torah)

B. Non-Jewish family members can do the following:

Accompany the Jewish spouse to the bimah while the Jewish spouse blesses the Torah

Come to the bimah while the Torah is passed by the Jewish family members

Open the ark

Accompany the family for the blessings over the wine and candles

Read a meditational reading

Participate in the family Shehechyanu blessing

C. At Temple Micah, Shabbat morning services bring together our entire community. On the morning in which your child becomes Bar/Bat Mitzvah there may be other members of our community celebrating or commemorating milestones in their lives. It is the policy of the Temple to welcome all such observances.

Further questions in this area may be directed to the rabbis.

TEMPLE MICAH BAT/BAR MITZVAH CHECKLIST

I. Responsibilities of Bar/Bat Mitzvah student in connection with service	Schedule Guidelines
A. Chanting of Aliyah (Torah) blessings	4-8 weeks
B. Chanting of Torah portion from the scroll	4-8 weeks
C. Drasha - interpretation of Torah 1 st draft	6-8 weeks
2 nd draft	4-6 weeks
final	2-4 weeks
D. Translation of Torah Portion	2-4 weeks
E. Mitzvah Statement describing mitzvah project	3-4 weeks
F. Sermon Topic (Question for Rabbi)	3-4 weeks
G. Chanting of Haftarah blessings	2-4 weeks
H. Chanting of Haftarah portion	2-4 weeks
I. Introduction of Haftarah	2-3 weeks
J. Chooses a selection prior to silent meditation on Friday evening	1-2 weeks
II. Responsibilities of Family in connection with Services	
A. Lead candle and kiddush blessings on Friday evening	
B. Parental <i>Shechechyanu</i> blessing with a special reading on Saturday morning	
C. Participation (with grandparents) in Ceremony of the Generations with the Torah scroll.	
D. Selection of relatives and friends to perform honors during the Shabbat morning services (see order of service sheets for full listing of honors-pages 11).	
E. Select and notify three classmates and two adults to usher for both services.	
F. Submit pages 10 and 11 of this booklet to Temple office by Monday prior to Bar/Bat mitzvah	
G. Flowers or other arrangements for bimah, if desired.	
H. Tallit (and kippah) for Bat/Bar Mitzvah, if desired.	
I. Large challah for Shabbat morning	
J. Arrangements for Oneg Shabbat on Friday evening (traditionally done by families of classmates).	
K. Arrangements for Kiddush Reception following Shabbat morning service.	

ORDER OF SERVICE SATURDAY MORNING

THE FOLLOWING NAMES SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE SERVICE SHEET FOR
SATURDAY, (date) _____.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH OF _____

PETICHA I (NO MORE THAN 2 PEOPLE) _____
(Ark opening)

ALIYAH I Community Member (preassigned by Temple)

ALIYAH II _____

ALIYAH III _____

ALIYAH IV _____

(Typically aliyah IV includes parents)

ALIYAH V LAST ALIYAH BLESSING RECITED BY BAR/ BAT MITZVAH

HAGBAHAH (TORAH LIFTER) _____

TORAH HOLDER _____

PETICHA II (1-4 PEOPLE) _____

(Ark opening)

USHERS _____
