

Bar Mitzvah/Bat Mitzvah Guidelines

The Library Minyan is an ongoing participatory community and welcomes the celebrations of B'nai Mitzvah by its members as the beginning of their own adult participation in the Library Minyan community. These celebrations, while having unique meaning for the celebrants and their family, take place within the Library Minyan's ongoing *tefillot*, and thus incorporate the Minyan's traditions and practices. These guidelines are meant to help Library Minyan families in planning B'nai Mitzvah, so that it is meaningful and enjoyable both for the family and the community.

Becoming Involved

If your family have not been members of the Library Minyan before you request that a Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration be scheduled at the Library Minyan, we are pleased that you are choosing to join our community. Being a member of the Library Minyan involves 3 easy steps: **Pay** (be a dues-paying member of Temple Beth Am, and consider making an additional contribution to the Library Minyan itself); **Come** (daven with us twice a month or more for an extended period); and **Serve** (volunteer to help make the Library Minyan work). As we noted above, Bar/Bat Mitzvah marks the beginning of your child's own participation as an adult in the Minyan community – it cannot be either the beginning or the end of your family's involvement with the Library Minyan.

We want each child celebrating becoming Bat/Bar Mitzvah with the Library Minyan to be a familiar face to the Minyan long before the day of the simcha. This helps us to *kvell* (not as much as you will, we know!) in your child's growth and accomplishments. To help make this happen, we expect that your child will have been a regular presence at TBA with you before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date is scheduled. Also, we will schedule each child who is celebrating becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah to participate in the Minyan on three or more Shabbatot during the year before her or his *simcha* – holding the *Sefer Torah*, leading *Ashrei* and leading *Eyn K'elohenu*, or even reading Torah (starting at age 9) if s/he is able. We will also expect all parents and Bar/Bat Mitzvah children to attend Library Minyan services monthly for the full year before the simcha, and twice monthly for the 3-4 months before the simcha. Also, we ask that your child schedule a date 1-2 months after her/his Bat/Bar Mitzvah celebration on which s/he will return to the Library Minyan and again lead a portion of the services.

If your individual family circumstances pose unique difficulties in meeting these requirements, please contact either the Senior Rabbi of Temple Beth Am or the Library Minyan chairperson to discuss them.

Scheduling B'nai Mitzvah at the Library Minyan

Dates for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah celebration are reserved only through the regular Temple Beth Am Bar/Bat Mitzvah signup process; contact TBA Bar/Bat Mitzvah Coordinator Hillary Wolf, ext. 225, who will confirm eligibility and coordinate scheduling with the Library Minyan's chairperson and Simcha Coordinator. The Simcha Coordinator will contact the family to review the service and coordinate the distribution of honors, and also facilitate the family's contact with the Library Minyan coordinators responsible for distributing the D'var Torah, Haftarah, and Torah reading, as well as with the assigned Gabbai for the week of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration.

Starting Time for Morning Service

The Library Minyan service begins at 9:45 am, on regular Shabbatot and at 9:30 on days when Hallel is recited. The Minyan also begins at 9:30 when there is a full Torah reading (see paragraph below). Please confirm your start time with the Simcha Coordinator before preparing your invitations.

The Gabbai

Each Library Minyan service is arranged and coordinated by one of the Gabbaim of the Library Minyan. The Gabbai is responsible for selecting those who will be *sh'lichei tzibbur* (representatives of the

community) by leading the *tefillot*, and for assigning all the honors during the service. The Gabbai will be your primary contact in planning and coordinating everything that will happen during the service the day of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration, and is responsible for addressing any unforeseen situations that arise during the service. The list of Gabbaim, and their assignments during the current year, is online at www.libraryminyan.org/GabbaiSchedule.html.

Greeters

The Library Minyan has a “greeter” at the Chapel door to welcome newcomers who may not be familiar with our minyan, and help guests find *kippot* and *tallitot*, *Siddurim* and *Chumashim*, and seating. If many of your guests may be unfamiliar with the Minyan and its customs, please alert the Simcha Coordinator and suggest a friend of yours from the Minyan community to help the assigned “greeter” that week.

Prayer Leaders

Bar/Bat Mitzvah is, for most young people, the first time they take on roles of leading the adult community.

At the Library Minyan, we expect that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will read the *Maftir aliyah*, chant the *Haftarah* and deliver a *d’var Torah*.

In fact, however, most children becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah in the Library Minyan compliment the above requirements with additional Torah readings, leading one or more of *Shacharit*, the Torah Service and/or *Musaf*. We recognize, though, that some young people may not be able to acquire sufficient proficiency with all of these skills; if your child’s particular situation necessitates an adjustment in the role of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, please contact the Library Minyan chairperson or the Senior Rabbi of Temple Beth Am.

It can make a simcha more meaningful to have close relatives or friends participate in leading services. Any guest who is given the honor of leading a part of the service should be proficient in the correct *nusach* (prayer melody), and the Minyan’s ritual procedures (*e.g.*, what is said out loud and/or silently, and whether the *Amidah* is a short version or full repetition; at least one *Amidah* should be said with a full repetition). The requested prayer leader should discuss this with the Simcha Coordinator at least 4-6 weeks in advance of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration.

Torah Reading

In the Library Minyan we read the Torah according to the Conservative movement’s approved triennial schedule. The appropriate readings for your child’s bar or bat mitzvah are available from the Simcha Coordinator or the Torah Coordinator .

Anyone reading Torah must know how to read with correct *trope* (melody) and pronunciation, and must be adequately prepared; each Torah reader (other than the Bar/Bat Mitzvah) will be required to demonstrate this preparation (either in person or by telephone) at least two (2) weeks before the *simcha*.

It is not our usual tradition to read the full traditional weekly reading, (the full “kriyah”) yet at the family’s request we will allow the full “kriyah” with the following provisos: the family must provide the readers for at least 5 of the 7 *Aliyot*, at least 3 of which are to be read by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Experienced Torah readers are essential, particularly for a full reading.

Ritual Apparel and Attire

Attire: Although the Library Minyan does not have a formal dress code, we expect that all persons attending our services will dress with awareness of and respect for the congregation, the prayer service and (most importantly) the One to whom our prayers are directed. Please share this with your guests.

Headcovering and Tallit – For those receiving Honors: Anyone who comes before the congregation to lead any part of the service (prayer leaders, Torah readers, and those having aliyot) or receive an honor that includes carrying or holding the Torah must wear a head covering and tallit. This applies to both men and women. Please share this information with those who you would like to honor, since no exceptions will be made on the day of your *simcha*.

Tallit: The Library Minyan welcomes all Jewish adults to wear a *tallit* if it is their personal practice to do so; as noted, we require all those leading the service or taking an honor to do so. A limited number of *tallitot* are provided by Temple Beth Am.

Roles for Children Leading Services

Children aged nine and above are permitted to read from the Torah. Optionally, a child (or two) may lead the *Ashrei* (before the Torah is returned to the Ark), *Ein K'eloheinu* or *Aleinu*. *Anim Z'mirot*, which is optional, may be led by up to two children. In addition, *Adon Olam* may be led by a group of children. A child may be given the honor of sitting and holding the Torah, after *Hagbah* and *Gelilah*, while the *Haftarah* is read.

Flowers

The Minyan does not customarily decorate its davening space with flowers on Shabbat, so that we can allow as much room as possible for the people who join us at our services. Should you wish to provide a small floral piece, please coordinate it with the Simcha Coordinator and the TBA Facility Coordinator (Amy Rabin, ext. 213). In order to accommodate those who have allergies and asthma caused by pollen-bearing and strongly-scented flowers, all floral arrangements should be non-allergenic.

Microphone

The chapel may be enlarged to accommodate additional guests. When the partition is opened, it can be quite difficult to hear a child's voice in the back half of the room. A microphone is available as an option for use at the family's discretion, and the family must communicate with the TBA Facility Coordinator if they would like the microphone to be available.

Decorum

Each community has its own customs and standards as to what constitutes appropriate synagogue behavior. We hope that you will share this information on the Library Minyan's customs and expectations with your guests.

Standing and Sitting: We stand as a congregation several times during the service. Often, the Gabbai will make a public announcement asking the congregation to stand; we always stand for the *Birkhot ha Shachar* (the morning prayers, recited at the start of the service), for *Baruch She'amar* (the prayer that begins the *Pesukei d'Zimrah* section of psalm and song), for *Bar'chu* (the communal call to prayer), for our personal recitation of the *Amidah* (the silent prayer that is the core of the prayer service) and for the *Kedushah* (during both the *Shacharit* and *Musaf Amidah*), whenever the Ark is open, and whenever a *Sefer Torah* is being held, lifted or carried. Some people stand at other times as well, including for some or all of the recitations of *Kaddish* during the service.

Talking: We hope that all who attend services with us will respect the service and the leaders of the service through their attentive participation, and limit conversation to occasional quiet whispers.

Coming and Going: Traditionally, it is not appropriate to enter or leave the room during certain parts of the service: any time when the congregation is standing; any time when the Torah is being carried or read; during the recitation of *Kaddish*; and during the *d'var Torah*. We appreciate your cooperation.

Photography, Videography & Other Electronics: The Library Minyan does not allow the use of any sound or video recording devices, or any electronic devices other than the microphone system, on Shabbat or Chagim – either before or during services, or at a Kiddush/lunch afterwards. Guests who are not on-call medical professionals should silence cell phones, etc., before entering Temple Beth Am.

Kiddush

As part of celebrating with the Library Minyan community, it is our expectation that a Bar/Bat Mitzvah family share their *simcha* with the Library Minyan congregation by hosting the festive congregational kiddush following the service, either as part of your celebratory meal or as a separate kiddush. Please contact the Simcha Coordinator or Library Minyan Chairperson with questions about this.

Honors during the Shabbat Morning Service

Depending on what other events are taking place at the Minyan on any particular week, some or all of the following honors are available to allow your family and guests to participate in the Shabbat Morning Service at your *simcha*. Since we try to make roles in the service available to all members marking *s'machot* and other events, the Library Minyan cannot guarantee that all these honors will be available on any given week; the Simcha Coordinator, in conjunction with the Library Minyan Chairperson, reserves the right to make final decisions on allocation of synagogue honors. Please provide the Gabbai and Simcha Coordinator with the English names of those who are being honored, as well as the Hebrew names (in Hebrew or English transliteration) for those receiving Aliyot to the Torah (including if the individual is the son or daughter of a *Kohen* or *Levi*), by the Wednesday before your *simcha*.

Except as noted below, **each person receiving one of these honors must be Jewish** in accordance with the standards of Conservative Judaism, as interpreted by the Senior Rabbi of Temple Beth Am.

Ark Openings (two people for each): The *Aron Kodesh* is opened to take out the Torah for reading, and to return the Torah after it is read. (Also, certain prayers are customarily said before an open *Aron Kodesh*, including *Anim Z'mirot* (which may be said on any Shabbat or Chag) and certain special holiday prayers.) The honor of *P'tikha* (opening and closing the *Aron Kodesh*) does not require prior skill or physical strength, other than the ability to stand in front of the congregation for 3-5 minutes. If there are people who you wish to honor who have little or no experience in traditional synagogue participation, this honor would be most appropriate.

Carrying the Torah: The Sefer Torah is heavy. If a Bar or Bat Mitzvah may have difficulty carrying the Torah through the chapel, you may wish to give a guest this honor.

Aliyot: Bar/Bat Mitzvah families that have met the pre-*simcha* involvement guidelines will have up to four (4) *Aliyot* on Shabbat morning, in addition to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah *Maftir Aliyah*. This will reserve at least three (3) *Aliyot* for congregational use, or for other *s'machot*. The parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah are usually given the final *Aliyah* so they may be present at the reader's table when their child is called to the Torah for the *Maftir*; if individual family circumstances require other arrangements for the parents, please discuss this in advance with the Gabbai. A maximum of two adults can be called up to the Torah for each *Aliyah*. It is very important that those honored are able properly to recite the blessings in Hebrew and know correct Torah etiquette. We are happy to help you in this regard.

Hagbah and Gelilah: The person honored with Hagbah must be able to lift the Torah from its position on the reader's table to a position above his or her head, in order to display the open scroll to the congregation. Out of respect to the Torah and the congregation, we cannot allow someone who has no previous experience doing Hagbah to take this honor. The person honored with Gelilah will help roll, tie and dress the Torah, but does not lift the scroll.

Leading Congregational Prayers: Several prayers read at the conclusion of the Torah Service may be led separately from the surrounding parts of the *tefillot*. They are:

Prayer for our Country (may be led by a non-Jew)

Prayer for the State of Israel (in Hebrew)

Prayer for Peace (may be led by a non-Jew)

The people honored by leading the congregational recitation of these prayers must be able to speak clearly and with presence before a large group. The person reading the Prayer for the State of Israel must be fluent in reading Hebrew. All of these may be led by 1 or 2 people. The texts of these prayers are in the *Siddur Sim Shalom* Shabbat/Festival edition, at pages 148-149.

Parents' Remarks

The Library Minyan recognizes that celebrating becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah is – literally – a once-in-a-lifetime occasion. The parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah may (but are not required to) speak *briefly* (no more than 1 to 2 minutes) from the *bimah* at the end of services; please have your remarks prepared in advance, and use a guideline of 1 typed page (12 point font) equaling 2 ½ minutes of speaking (thus, typed remarks should be no just over a half-page in length. Longer remarks should be reserved for a private family celebration.

Clergy Remarks

As part of preparing to celebrate becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah, one of the Temple Beth Am rabbis will work closely with each Bar/Bat Mitzvah (as outlined more fully in the TBA Bar/Bat Mitzvah materials). It is customary that this Rabbi will speak to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah at some point during the service. Please let the Simcha Coordinator know with which Rabbi your child is studying, so that we can coordinate the timing of Rabbi's remarks with the Rabbi's other obligations at TBA that Shabbat.