

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Information Guide

Prepare for your upcoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Temple Israel with this simple guide.



Congregation Temple Israel

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The B'nai Mitzvah Program at Congregation Temple Israel (TI)

Becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a milestone on the road of a child's spiritual, intellectual, and emotional journey to adulthood. It is truly the beginning of a child's ability to think more deeply about God, Torah, and his/her role in making the world a better place.

Being an adolescent is often difficult, awkward, and challenging. Working towards the goal of becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah provides a beautiful opportunity to recognize each child and acknowledge this milestone. At Congregation Temple Israel, we work individually with each family to create a unique and meaningful lifecycle journey that will not only result in a once in a lifetime sacred occasion, but will also provide moments of pride, knowledge, and comfort in themselves and their faith.

The journey begins with participation in our Religious School and in the TI community.

The teachers of Congregation Temple Israel's Religious School and Hebrew School have welcomed your child into a vibrant Jewish community and have shared the essential concepts of Jewish life including Torah, modern Jewish issues, holidays, reading Hebrew and exploring the meaning of the prayers recited in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service.

Beginning in 6th grade, your children will work closely with the Rabbis to develop a sense of comfort and connection that will carry them through the excitement of Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience.

This year is also a perfect opportunity for families to attend Shabbat services regularly. This will enable the whole family to become familiar with the service, feel comfortable in services, and to develop a comfort level as your child prepares to lead a Shabbat morning service.

The journey never ends.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah is intended to be the beginning of your child's personal engagement with Judaism. We will continue to provide excellent, engaging, and out-of-the-box learning, social, and social action experiences for students throughout their middle and high school years and into adulthood. If at any point along this journey you or your child feel confused or have any questions or concerns, call us! We are here to make your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah memorable and meaningful.

Rabbi Amy Feder and Rabbi Michael Alper

We are here to serve you in varying capacities to ensure this significant milestone is special and memorable. We pride ourselves on providing a professional, courteous, and responsive staff.



Rabbi Michael Alper malper@ti-stl.org

- Study the worship service and its deeper meaning.
- Study the Torah and Haftarah text and classic commentaries.
- Find the personal meaning in the Torah and Haftarah text to apply to writing the d'var Torah.
- Practice reading from the Torah scroll.



Rabbi Amy Feder afeder@ti-stl.org

- Ensure the family and the student feel comfortable with their roles during the Friday evening and Shabbat morning services.
- Ensure the d'var Torah, Shabbat morning service speech, is completed, and your child is fully prepared.
- Determine the music you will be using for your service.



Martina Stern, Special Events Manager mstern@ti-stl.org

- Primary point person for event coordination. Martina will contact the family one year in advance of Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. If you would like to discuss options prior to one year, please contact her at any time.
- Sends out reminders to families about important dates.



Debbie Jennings, Kitchen Manager djennings@ti-stl.org

- Point person for food options and set up details.
- Contact person for outside vendors.



Sari Levy, Director of Religious School slevy@ti-stl.org

- Schedules your Bar/Bat Mitzvah Shabbat morning service date.



Rachel Wallis Andreasson, Executive Director randreasson@ti-stl.org

- Oversight to ensure Temple Israel's staff and facilities exceed your expectations.

B'nai Mitzvah Timeline

How do I know when my child is ready to begin Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation?

When you can check off all 4 items below, your child is ready to begin!

- Child has completed at least 3 years of both Religious School and Hebrew School.

Learning Hebrew typically begins in 3rd grade and continues through 6th grade until a tutor is secured.

Grade Level	Learning Goals
3 rd Grade	Hebrew: Letters and vowels
4 th Grade	Hebrew: Fluency in reading and recognizing letters, vowel sounds and certain site words Prayers: Shema, Barechu, Yotzer Or
5 th Grade	Prayers: Avot, G'vurot, V'ahavta
6 th Grade	Prayers: K'dushah, Torah Blessings, Haftarah blessings

- Child is currently enrolled in and attending Congregation Temple Israel Religious School.
- Selected and confirmed a date for the ceremony with the Temple.
 - *Bar/Bat Mitzvah date is typically issued in 4th grade.*
- Family is in good financial standing (*dues either paid in full or current on agreed upon payment plan*).

ONE YEAR TO GO...

12 Months Prior

- Attend at least 7 Friday night services and usher on one of those nights. Attend at least 3 Shabbat morning services at TI and usher one of those mornings. Sign up for ushering is available via the website <https://tinyurl.com/yagee5tr>.
- TI's Special Events Manager will contact you to review B'nai Mitzvah policies, options, pricing and Commitment Form (page 8) which will secure any additional event space.
- Schedule an initial meeting with Rabbi Michael, and he will help you select the best tutor for your child's learning needs. **PLEASE DO NOT START WORKING WITH A TUTOR BEFORE MEETING WITH RABBI MICHAEL.** Tutors have to be approved by the Rabbis before your child starts working with them. Families should plan on 18-20 tutoring sessions. Our tutors are members of the TI community who also serve as teachers in our school programs, ensuring that the additional Hebrew preparation students receive is consistent with the tunes, customs and expectations of our worship services. Almost all tutoring happens on site at TI, ensuring that students continue to build relationships and comfort within the synagogue as they prepare to become bar/bat mitzvah. The tutor's role is to work with the student exclusively on service prayers and Torah and Haftarah portions. Families pay tutors directly.

6 Months Prior

- Begin meeting twice a month with Rabbi Michael.
- Student begins working on d'var Torah, Shabbat morning service speech.
- Event Commitment Form is due.
- Choose musical accompaniment for services. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family may choose from three options for the musical accompaniment of the service: solo piano, solo guitar, or the musical group HaShemesh. The cost for music is \$250.

2 Months Prior

- Schedule at least 2 rehearsals with Rabbi Amy.
- Finalize d'var Torah with Rabbi Amy & Rabbi Michael.
- Arrange for bimah food baskets or flowers with Special Events Manager.
- Submit child's photograph for Dateline newsletter.

1 Month Prior

- Submit paragraph for weekly Shabbat leaflet.

2 Weeks Prior

- Finalize service participants. Family members are invited to lead the candle lighting and Kiddush on Friday night. Parents are invited to offer a brief blessing following the child's d'var Torah. On Shabbat morning, family members can participate in the Torah passing, dressing the Torah, lifting the Torah, and leading the blessings over wine and bread.
- Finalize total number of guests, if hosting a luncheon or evening event at TI.
- Finalize details with the Rabbis for the service.
- Optional final walk through with Special Events Manager and Kitchen Manager, if applicable.

Week Of

- Attend Friday evening services.

Commitment Form EXAMPLE – 6 Months Prior to Event

This example Commitment Form can be completed when you are ready to finalize your plans and sent in no later than 6 months prior to your Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Signing this Form locks in your event space and ensures we have sufficient time to help you plan this special event.

I choose to have the following events at Congregation Temple Israel:

- Sponsored Oneg on Friday evening
- Kiddush luncheon following Saturday's Shabbat morning services
- Evening event

A copy of the House Rules will accompany the actual Commitment Form and will outline all current pricing.

Frequently Asked Questions About Commitment Form:

Will I have to send in any payment when I sign the Commitment Form 6 months prior to my event?

Yes. The House Rules will outline the necessary facility deposit. This is a refundable deposit that ensures you have the event space secured. The amount will be credited to your final bill as long as there is no damage from the event. Rental fees will be due upon receipt of TI's invoice. Cancellation policies are outlined in the House Rules.

When will the final payment be due?

After your event, a final invoice will be mailed to you and will be due upon receipt. We will also enclose a feedback form to find out if there are any areas of improvement for future events.

Event Decision Form EXAMPLE – 60 Days Prior to Event

If you are hosting a Kiddush luncheon and/or an evening event, this example Event Decision Form needs to be completed 60 days prior to your event date.

Your signature below confirms the following:

- ✓ You have read the House Rules and agree to comply with its contents.
- ✓ You understand that your deposit will be refunded if there is no damage to the property after the event. If there is damage, you will be contacted and photos will be supplied.
- ✓ You agree to the attached costs for event selections.

Sample Event Decisions

- Who will be sponsoring the following? *Bimah baskets, Oneg, Kiddush luncheon*
- Will TI be catering your food or an outside vendor?
- Will you be hosting a Kiddush luncheon and an evening event?
- What is the estimated number of guests for each event?*
- Will you be dropping off any items for the event?
- Will you be using TI's china or bringing in paper goods?
- Did you complete an event set up form?

**The final number of guests expected will be due two weeks prior to your event.*

If you select a sponsored Oneg, Kiddush luncheon, and/or evening event, our Special Events Manager will set up a meeting to review options with our Kitchen Manager. If the family requests it, a final walk through can be arranged.

Friday Night Oneg

It is traditional for family members or friends to sponsor the Friday night Oneg for all guests and congregants attending services. The Oneg takes place prior to services and consists of various hors d'oeuvres and beverages. Dessert is offered after the service. Upgraded options are available for the Oneg and dessert.

Families typically invite immediate family members and out of town guests.

Costs are outlined in the House Rules.

SAMPLE MENUS:

Selections: Choice of Two Appetizers
 Assorted Vegetable Tray with Dip
 Upgraded Cheese & Crackers
 Assorted Cookies

Hot Appetizers: Mozzarella Cheese Sticks
 Spanakopita
 Beef Meatballs in Sauce
 Beef Toasted Ravioli w/ Marinara
 Cheese Toasted Ravioli w/ Marinara
 Beef Smokies Wrapped in Crescent Rolls
 Asparagus Wrapped in Phyllo Dough
 Breaded Zucchini Circles with Sour Cream

Cold Appetizers: Bruschetta
 Caprice Salad on Toothpicks
 Dollar Roll Sandwiches, Turkey or Roast Beef

A Friday Shabbat evening private dinner option is available before or after services. Event must be catered. If security is required after 8:30 pm, there will be an additional fee.

Shabbat Morning Service

The Shabbat morning service is open to your guests and the Congregation. You are welcome to create a special insert for the Shabbat leaflets.

Families typically sponsor bimah flowers and/or baskets that are used for Friday night and Saturday morning.

Shabbat Kiddush Options

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family sponsors the Shabbat morning Kiddush that immediately follows services. Prayers over the bread and wine will be offered at the end of the Shabbat morning service.

There are four choices for the Kiddush:

- Option A: Standard Kiddush, Kriegshaber Foyer
All worshippers, guests, and congregants are invited to partake in the standard Kiddush of challah and grape juice at no charge.
- Option B: Extended Kiddush, Kriegshaber Foyer
An extended Kiddush includes challah, grape juice, and other options. Check with Special Events Manager to review selection choices.
- Option C: Standard Kiddush Luncheon, *room options listed below*
If a family is hosting a Kiddush luncheon, they can choose to include all worshippers OR following the standard Kiddush (*outlined in option A*), they can hold a separate luncheon or party for family and guests only.

A sample of standard buffet options are listed below. Teen menu options are available. All options will be priced individually.

<i>Bagels & Cream Cheese</i>	<i>Decorated Cream Cheese</i>	<i>Sliced Lox</i>
<i>Chicken Salad</i>	<i>Egg Salad</i>	<i>Tuna Salad</i>
<i>House Salad</i>	<i>Caesar Salad</i>	<i>Italian Salad</i>
<i>Seasonal Fruit Salad</i>	<i>Seasonal Fruit Display</i>	<i>Cheese Blintzes</i>

- Option D: Extended Kiddush Luncheon, additional items can be reviewed with the Special Events Manager.

Room options for Kiddush luncheon:

The Kriegshaber Foyer accommodates up to 100 people (standing only).

The Edison Bridge accommodates up to 100 people.

The Shoenberg Foyer accommodates up to 150 people.

The Isserman Auditorium accommodates up to 425 people.

Saturday Evening Event

Many families also utilize TI's facilities to hold their Shabbat evening dinner and/or Bar/Bat Mitzvah party. We are happy to work with you to help facilitate these events. Please contact our Special Events Manager for more information. Rental fees are included in the House Rules.

We encourage you to invite all students from your son or daughter's Religious School class to his or her Bar/Bat Mitzvah.



Frequently Asked Questions

Should I attend sessions with the Rabbis and my child?

Absolutely! Sharing in your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah journey will make it more meaningful for your family.

We are an Interfaith family and not everyone in my family is Jewish. Does that matter?

We believe strongly that every family member who supports your child on his or her Jewish journey has the right to participate in this joyous occasion. The Rabbis will help find comfortable and appropriate roles for anyone who wishes to participate. For those of you who wish to learn more about the meaning and traditions around a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, we invite you and interested family members to attend any given Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service. We are always happy to answer questions after services.

How often should my child be practicing?

Every single day, even if it's just a little. Seriously!

How else can I make sure everything runs smoothly at the service?

The best way to prepare for your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah is to become familiar with our Shabbat services at Congregation Temple Israel. The more you are able to attend, the more comfortable you will be on your child's big day.

What time are Shabbat evening services?

Shabbat evening services begin Friday night at 6:30 pm with a pre-Oneg at 6:00 pm.

What time are Shabbat morning services?

Shabbat morning services are on Saturday and begin promptly at 11:00 am. Families may enter the building at 9:00 am prior to services for pictures. The immediate family is asked to meet in the Rabbi's Study at 10:45 am.

How do we choose a Mitzvah Project?

We encourage our B'nai Mitzvah students to organize or participate in a social action project as part of their preparations. Many students select a project based on their hobbies or even personal experiences. There are, however, many ways to do social action in and around other organizations including Congregation Temple Israel. Please speak to the Rabbis for inspiration and direction.

Are there any photography restrictions?

You may photograph and videotape the service. Photographers must shoot from the back of the sanctuary and are not permitted to move furniture, open the Ark, or handle a Torah. No camera flash or flood lamps are allowed.

Can we wear a kippah and/or tallit?

The decision to wear or not wear a kippah and tallit rests with each Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Families who wish to make kippot available for their guests may do so.

How do I recognize the Rabbis?

It is customary to make a contribution to the Rabbis' Discretionary Fund. All tributes will be recognized in the Dateline bulletin.

How can I recognize this special event?

Families traditionally choose to honor their Bar/Bat Mitzvah by inscribing a leaf on our Celebration Tree. Leaves may be inscribed for a tax-deductible donation of \$200.

Our Promise to You

Our friendly and knowledgeable staff is committed to ensuring a memorable event for your family. We are uniquely positioned to provide you with great service at a very affordable price. We would be honored to have the opportunity to work with you.

Benefits of having Congregation Temple Israel cater your event:

- ✓ Very competitive pricing
- ✓ No sales tax
- ✓ Most convenient location for your guests
- ✓ You can take home leftovers
- ✓ You are supporting your congregation