

Beth Hillel Bnai Emunah

B-Mitzvah Guide

2022-2023



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Dear B-Mitzvah Families,

Mazel Tov on your upcoming celebration! Becoming a B-Mitzvah is one of the greatest events in the life cycle of a Jewish family, and we are honored to share this special milestone with you. We are available to be of help in any way we can and look forward to working with you and your child(ren) over the coming months or years.

The information included in this manual is designed to help make preparing for a B-Mitzvah as smooth and meaningful as possible, and we hope you will read it carefully. Please call any time with questions or concerns.

Again, Mazel Tov and all our best wishes at this exciting time.

The BHBE B-Mitzvah Team

Introduction and Who's Who in the BHBE B-Mitzvah Program.

B-Mitzvah planning at BHBE is truly a collaborative effort between our clergy, the Director of Education, the synagogue's administrative staff, and our B-Mitzvah families working together to ensure preparations are smooth, effective, and tailored to the individual needs of each student. Below are key members of the BMP team:

- **Cantor Pavel Roytman** assigns the B-Mitzvah dates and the Torah and Haftarah portions. He also tutors the students for their ceremonies, and coordinates family participation in the chanting of additional Torah portions. Cantor Roytman manages the overall B-Mitzvah calendar, in consultation with Rabbi Crane and the chair of the Ritual Committee. Cantor Roytman can be reached at cantor@bhbe.org.
- **Rabbi Nate Crane** works with the family on issues of ritual decision making and content, and directly with the students on the meaning of their Torah and Haftarah portions. He also works with the student to prepare a speech that will be given on the day of the B-Mitzvah ceremony. Rabbi Crane can be reached at rabbi@bhbe.org.
- **Aaron Frankel, Director of Education and Young Family Programming** works to incorporate content and skills that will be used for the B-Mitzvah into both Academy and family programming, and is responsible for working with students on their mitzvah projects. Aaron works closely with the rabbi and cantor to help guide the B-Mitzvah experience. He can be reached at aaron.frankel@bhbe.org or by phone at

847-256-0755.

- **Michael Kahn, Executive Director** manages the financial arrangements and logistics and is available to discuss any other issues that may arise. Michael can be reached by phone at 847-256-6494 or at michael.kahn@bhbe.org. Please see the documents that accompany this handbook for specifics regarding fees and catering.
- **Sharon Fine, Event Planner** supports the B-Mitzvah families in the post-ceremony reception and in making preparations for their celebrations. Sharon can be reached at sharon.fine@bhbe.org.
- **Cynthia Lerner, Ritual Director** is in charge of the honors and many of the logistics during the ceremony, including making certain that those participating are in the right place at the right time.

Policies and Suggestions for the B-Mitzvah Preparation Process

Advance Preparation

A) Setting Date and Time

The date of the B-Mitzvah is set by the Cantor in coordination with the synagogue calendar and the B-Mitzvah families.

B) Religious/Educational Requirements

Content and skills that will be required for the B-Ceremony are incorporated into the Academy program starting in grade three, if not before. If a student joins the Academy less than 5 years before their B-Mitzvah date, additional outside tutoring might be required.

C) Tutoring

During the year before the B-Mitzvah, your child will meet individually with Cantor Roytman or a designated tutor. The number and timing of lessons will be determined based on the child's individual skills, family goals, and circumstances. The Cantor is looking forward to getting to know your family and working with you to help create a fully meaningful and memorable B-Mitzvah experience.

D) Aliyot and Other Honors

We look forward to having your family members and friends participate in your celebration. You can expect the Ritual Chair, Cynthia Lerner, to contact your family about a month in advance of the B-Mitzvah to help you assign honors. Please see the Ritual Committee insert for more information about honors during the ceremony, and for contact info and other details. Feel free to reach out earlier if you would like.

Those relatives and guests designated to read Torah or to lead T'filah on the day of the B-Mitzvah are required to contact Cantor Roytman in advance. He will provide guidance to those in need of help in preparing for the event, and will also make sure the appropriate reading is adequately prepared.

E) Derech Eretz (Considerate Behavior)

Beth Hillel Bnai Emunah nurtures a sense of caring, kindness and sensitivity. We encourage families to invite all students in their child's Academy class to their celebrations. When this is not possible, we strongly urge you to consider the following guidelines: if fifty percent or more of the class is invited to the celebration, the rest of the class is to be invited as well.

Mitzvah Component

One of the most profound ways of growing is through helping change the lives of others. We believe that by taking the "Mitzvah" part of "B-Mitzvah" seriously, we give our participants the chance to better experience what it really means to be a full member of the Jewish community. The Jewish people have a long history of being generous with their time and resources to make the world a better place and we would like your child to take his or her place in that long-standing noble tradition.

The concept of Mitzvah is embedded in our Academy programming. As students approach their B-Mitzvah, we try to personalize that experience to make it individually relevant and reflective of Biblical texts the students will encounter. Giving back to the community is a core value of Judaism, and one that should occupy a solid place in the growth of a young Jewish person and have a role in the process of becoming a Jewish adult.

Therefore, we guide each child to choose a "Mitzvah" that is both personally meaningful and helpful to the community. It is always good to encourage the child to come up with their own ideas for Mitzvot they can perform as part of this experience, but our staff and the child's family have a strong role in guiding and

supporting that process.

Aaron Frankel, Director of Education and Young Family Programming, will guide you and your child through this aspect of the experience, in consultation with the Cantor and the Rabbi. If you have additional questions about this aspect, please contact Aaron at 847 256-0755, aaron.frankel@bhbe.org.

We look forward to partnering with you and your child in putting the “Mitzvah” back in B-Mitzvah!

Here are some great resources to help your child and family in the process of choosing a meaningful and appropriate project!

- [JUF B-Mitzvah Project Guide](#)
- <https://mitzvahquest.org/mitzvah-project-ideas/>

Model B-Mitzvah Preparation Timeline

3 Years

- Attending the “three -year out” meeting where the initial introductions are made and the B-Mitzvah Packet is received
- Setting up/finalizing B-Mitzvah Date with Cantor Roytman.

2 Years

- Attending the “two- year out” meeting for additional info and details.

1 Year

- Begin making arrangements for the logistics of the day, by getting in touch with executive director Michael Kahn (Michael.Kahn@bhbe.org) and event planner Sharon Fine (Sharon.Fine@bhbe.org).
- At this time, Cantor Roytman and Rabbi Crane should be reaching out to you to set up initial appointments. If you do not hear from them, please do not hesitate to initiate the process. cantor@bhbe.org; rabbi@bhbe.org

7 Months

- Keep an eye on logistics – invitations, catering, photographer, etc.
- (Please note: Certain components of the B-Mitzvah ceremonies that will take place in the winter and spring of 2022 may vary from slightly from those described in the

manual. Please reach out to synagogue staff for the most current information.)

3 Months

- Email picture of your child to jackie.ernest@bhbe.org for the Bulletin.
- Consider ordering Kippot, and tallit and tefillin through the BHBE Sisterhood. When ordering, Kippot should be shipped to the synagogue.

1 Month

- Schedule a B-Mitzvah rehearsal day with Cantor Roytman.
- Connect with the Ritual Chairperson regarding assigning honors (aliyot, ark openings, etc...).
- Finalize catering and logistics.

The Week Before

- The Saturday one week before the ceremony, each B-Mitzvah family is invited to serve as greeters at Shabbat morning services.
- If the child is preparing the first three readings of the Torah, they are encouraged to read those during Saturday night (Mincha) and Monday and Thursday morning (Shacharit) services of the week leading up to the B-Mitzvah. The family is encouraged to attend as well. It is a good time to take pictures or videos during the actual service.

The Day Of

The day of the B-Mitzvah is a very exciting but an understandably stressful one for all those involved. So, here are some guidelines and tips for the celebrant on how to go through it successfully.

- Get a good night's sleep
- Before leaving the house, check and make sure to bring all B-Mitzvah materials (D'var Torah, copies of the blessings, etc.) with you
- Be at the synagogue at the beginning of services at 9:30 AM
- Sit on the right (cantor) side of the Bimah
- Participate in the service to the best of your ability
- If unsure, feel free to ask questions. Everyone is there to help you and to cheer you on
- Relax and enjoy!

Honors

There are a number of honors during the service which you can assign to family and friends.

Aliyot

*Generally, the family is allowed 4 aliyot (blessings before and after a specific Torah reading). One of the four aliyot will be for your child and there will be three more for family and/or friends.

Ark Openings

*There are generally two Ark openings and closings available to honor friends and family (between one and four people for each.)

Gelilah

*The Gelilah helps to bind and dress the Torah with its cover and ornaments after the completion of the entire Torah reading.

Readings

1. Prayer for Our Country, English
2. *Prayer for Israel, Hebrew
3. *Prayer for Israel, English
4. Prayer for Peace, English.

Ashrei

Often done by a younger sibling, cousin or a close friend. This honor is optional.

*(*Participants for above honors with an asterisk are required to be Jewish.)*

BHBE Sisterhood wishes you a mazel tov on your child's Simcha.

It is a very special time in the life of your family and we want to make the "other" details easy for you. Sisterhood offers you one stop shopping for your B-Mitzvah needs.

You can purchase personalized invitations for 25% off the retail price. The invitation books are in the office and can be taken home to browse. Contact: Marsha Lyons, roarmbl@gmail.com.

The Judaica Shop sells B-Mitzvah Tallitot, and they can order one if you find something you like elsewhere. Contact Joan Meyers @ 847-602-2257 or Robin Smulson @ 847-982-1233.

Personalized kippot can also be purchased through Sisterhood.

These are knowledgeable women who can help you navigate through the process.

Please support Sisterhood on your Simcha as Sisterhood always supports Beth Hillel Bnai Emunah!

Mazel Tov

From all of us at BHBE!

