

**Beth Hillel  
Bnai Emunah  
B-Mitzvah Program**



## Beth Hillel Bnai Emunah B-Mitzvah Program

Welcome to the BHBE B-Mitzvah Program.....	2
What Is a B-Mitzvah?.....	2
When Is a B-Mitzvah?.....	2
We Are an Inclusive Community.....	2
B-Mitzvah Date Assignment and Cohorts.....	3
Meetings and Seminars.....	3
Elements of B-Mitzvah Preparation.....	3
B-Mitzvah Preparation Timeline.....	4
Service Attendance and Familiarity.....	5
Honors and Participation.....	5
Ritual Items: Kippot, Tallit, and Tefillin.....	5
Attire for Shabbat Observance.....	6
Candy and Decorations.....	6
Photo and Video Policy.....	6
Young Children at Services.....	6
Printed Programs.....	6
Financial Obligations.....	6
Kiddush.....	7
Catering Menu.....	8

## Welcome to the BHBE B-Mitzvah Program

Becoming a b-mitzvah is one of the most impactful milestones in the life of a Jewish individual. It marks a step toward becoming a full member of the Jewish community through meaningful participation in prayer, ritual, and Jewish life.

It also marks the transition into Jewish adulthood, with the acceptance of personal and communal responsibilities—such as participating in prayer services, reading from the Torah, observing mitzvot (commandments), and helping support the community—all guided by the enduring principle of tikkun olam, the repair of the world through acts of kindness and mitzvot.

At BHBE, we approach the b-mitzvah preparation process with both reverence and joy. We value and appreciate Jewish tradition and customs and care deeply for each b-mitzvah student. We also hope to infuse every Jewish experience with joy, including the b-mitzvah process—especially as the sense of accomplishment, the mazel tovs, and the excitement of what comes next begin to unfold.

Each student is given the opportunity to engage in the process in a way that is personal, meaningful, and rewarding both in time and effort. Rabbi Crane, Cantor Roytman, Academy Principal Hedva Yitzhak, and our dedicated professional and lay leaders are partners in this journey and are present every step of the way to support our students and their families.

There is no pass or fail—only the embracing of a centuries-old tradition within a caring Jewish community rooted in kindness, warmth, and joy.

## What Is a B-Mitzvah?

A b-mitzvah is a public ceremony that celebrates the transition from childhood to Jewish adulthood, including the embrace of new obligations such as participating in religious services, assuming leadership roles, and taking responsibility for one's actions within the Jewish community and beyond.

Becoming a b-mitzvah represents a symbolic gateway to deeper learning in the adult Jewish community. It is the beginning of a new stage in one's Jewish life. Throughout history, this ceremony has always been intended to celebrate the start of the adult Jewish journey.

There are many ways to be involved and to take on new leadership opportunities.

## When Is a B-Mitzvah?

B-mitzvah age is generally 12 for girls and 13 for boys. This is based on the date of birth according to the Jewish calendar. There are exceptions, so it is best to consult with clergy to ensure proper scheduling.

## We Are an Inclusive Community

BHBE is an inclusive and welcoming community in which every student and family is supported throughout the process. Rather than designating students as a bar or bat mitzvah, we use the term “b-mitzvah” to emphasize inclusivity, placing focus not on gender or identity but on the shared experience of Jewish coming of age.

Becoming a b-mitzvah means embracing the responsibilities of Jewish adulthood and stepping into a lifelong journey of learning, participation, and community engagement. We believe that each child is capable of and deserving of meaningful Jewish involvement in their own unique way.

We hope that both the b-mitzvah process and continued engagement in the BHBE community will create meaningful and enriching experiences for b-mitzvah students and their families.

## B-Mitzvah Date Assignment and Cohorts

Dates are assigned three years in advance, based on the child's Hebrew birthday. This usually takes place when the students are in 4th grade. B-mitzvah dates are placed during the academic year, from Labor Day through July 1.

Before being assigned a date, families will receive a list of available dates. You should submit three preferred dates, ranked in order of preference. The cantor will work individually with each family to finalize a date, coordinating with other families and the synagogue calendar.

The dates will be confirmed at the spring b-mitzvah seminar.

## Meetings and Seminars

Families are invited to and expected to attend at least one update meeting each year as well as one or more seminars during the three years leading up to the b-mitzvah. Final-year seminars and workshops take place during the year of the b-mitzvah.

## Elements of B-Mitzvah Preparation

### Tutoring

The main objective is to engage each student in a positive and productive learning experience. While the actual "performance" at the end of the process is an important milestone, it is the skills that our students learn that will enable them, each at their own level, to participate in the life of the Jewish community at BHBE and beyond.

- Students will learn to chant their Torah and Haftarah portions using trope.
- Students are expected to learn Torah and Haftarah blessings.
- Students are expected to learn the Maftir and one or more Torah portions available on the Shabbat of their b-mitzvah.
- Students are expected to learn the entire Haftarah for that Shabbat.

Students are also expected to prepare the following core prayers:

- Shema / Ve'ahavta
- V'shamru
- Ashrei
- Kiddush

Students may choose to learn additional prayers or learn to lead portions of or the entire Shabbat morning service.

In addition to one-on-one learning with the cantor, the students will be given a recording either made by the cantor or provided by specialized Torah/Haftarah training websites like [troptrainer.com](http://troptrainer.com).

### Shabbat and B-Mitzvah Reflection

The Shabbat and b-mitzvah reflection is a speech that a b-mitzvah prepares and delivers during the service. The speech can focus on the Torah or the Haftarah portion plus reflect on personal experiences. The mitzvah project is often mentioned as well.

The process of writing the Shabbat and b-mitzvah reflection is supervised by the rabbi, who will help brainstorm, organize, and encourage the thought and writing processes by meeting individually with each child at least five times via Zoom. The rabbi usually reaches out to schedule d'var Torah appointments two to three months in advance. Families are also encouraged to contact the rabbi on their own if needed.

## **Mitzvah Project (Engagement with Mitzvot and Tikkun Olam)**

An important part of becoming b-mitzvah is engaging with Judaism through acts of loving-kindness, known as gemilut chasadim. There are many opportunities for mitzvah projects both within the synagogue and in the broader community.

A meaningful mitzvah project reflects both what inspires you personally and how you can make a difference for others. Whether your interests lie in sports, music, caring for the elderly, or supporting children or adults with different abilities, your involvement is valued and appreciated.

The rabbi, cantor, and Academy principal are available to guide you and help you develop a mitzvah project that is meaningful and impactful. We look forward to supporting you on this important part of your Jewish journey.

Some ideas for the mitzvah project can be found at [jufwebfiles.org/pdf/teens/Bnai-Mitzvah-Project-Guide.pdf?v=1.0](http://jufwebfiles.org/pdf/teens/Bnai-Mitzvah-Project-Guide.pdf?v=1.0).

## **B-Mitzvah Preparation Timeline**

### **Eight to nine months before**

- Begin weekly tutoring with the cantor ([cantor@bhbe.org](mailto:cantor@bhbe.org)).
- Begin to consider logistics: invitations, catering, photographer, etc.
- Begin making Kiddush arrangements with Marsha Lyons ([marsha.lyons@bhbe.org](mailto:marsha.lyons@bhbe.org)).

### **Three months before**

- Reach out to the rabbi ([rabbi@bhbe.org](mailto:rabbi@bhbe.org)) to schedule d'var Torah meetings.
- Consider ordering kippot, tallit, and tefillin through the Sisterhood Gift Shop by contacting Robin Smulson ([rsmulson@yahoo.com](mailto:rsmulson@yahoo.com)).

### **One month before**

- Schedule rehearsals with the cantor.
- Coordinate honors with the BHBE Vice President of Ritual.
- Finalize catering and logistics.

### **One week before**

- Designate greeters at Shabbat service.
- Attend b-mitzvah rehearsal facilitated by the cantor. The family is invited to bring a photographer and include family members and friends for pictures and the dress rehearsal.
- Consider attending Monday and/or Thursday morning services to practice chanting your Torah portion in public and to lay tefillin.

## Day of

- This day is exciting and understandably emotional!
- Get a good night's sleep and make sure you are well rested.
- Feel free to bring a bottle of water or your favorite fidget to feel comfortable.
- Bring your printed d'var Torah, tallit, Haftarah materials, and parental blessing.
- Arrive by 9:30 am and sit on the cantor's side of the bimah.
- Participate fully and confidently and—most importantly—enjoy and celebrate this meaningful milestone!

## Service Attendance and Familiarity

Each family is encouraged to attend at least three Saturday morning services to get familiar with the flow of the service. Doing so will make both the student and the family more comfortable in the sanctuary. You will also meet our regulars, a wonderful group of people who will be welcoming and helpful both on the day of your attendance and on your b-mitzvah day (and beyond!).

Each b-mitzvah is also encouraged to usher on the week prior to their b-mitzvah.

## Honors and Participation

Honors are coordinated with the BHBE Vice President of Ritual in partnership with family and clergy. Torah reading assignments for family members and friends are coordinated with the cantor. Families typically begin planning to assign honors several months in advance.

Family members are welcome to:

- Read Torah
- Lead tefillah
- Recite prayers for our country, Israel, and peace
- Attend the opening and closing of the Ark
- Lift and dress the Torah scroll (hagbah and g'lila)
- Participate in other meaningful ways

Parental prayers are recited by the parents/guardians of the b-mitzvah after the reading of the Torah. The rabbi will provide the list of prayers to choose from a few weeks before the ceremony.

Welcoming guests is a mitzvah, and we encourage all b-mitzvah students to invite their classmates to the service.

## Ritual Items: Kippot, Tallit, and Tefillin

Kippot and tallit are encouraged on the bimah for each b-mitzvah. There is a part of the service during which the tallit is presented to the b-mitzvah by family members (parents, grandparents, etc.). This is a meaningful part of the service and an opportunity to add a personal touch to your ceremony.

Tefillin are not worn on Shabbat; they are worn on weekdays during morning services. Should the family choose to have the b-mitzvah read Torah during the week leading up to the ceremony, the laying of tefillin will be facilitated by clergy on those days.

Kippot and tallit can be ordered through the Sisterhood Judaica Shop with a significant discount.

## Attire for Shabbat Observance

To determine the style of Shabbat attire, families are encouraged to follow the concepts of dignity and service decorum. We welcome all styles and colors, as long as they are worn in a respectful manner and reflect the nature of a religious morning service.

Suggested attire for the morning service is a suit, dress, skirt, or dressy pants with a button-down or nice top. No jeans, sweats, low-cut tops, or revealing clothing, please. Sneakers are totally okay!

## Candy and Decorations

Please contact catering coordinator Marsha Lyons ([marsha.lyons@bhbe.org](mailto:marsha.lyons@bhbe.org)) to coordinate candy and decorations for the event.

## Photo and Video Policy

Photography and video during services are not allowed in observance of Shabbat. Cell phone usage is also prohibited.

Families are welcome to take photos and videos during weekday services leading up to the b-mitzvah, at which time the student may be invited to read Torah.

We currently stream our Shabbat services. The link is in the weekly BHBE News newsletter which is emailed each Thursday. Our stream is a “static” stream, meaning the view is stationary and does not include zooming in and out of the bimah. If you prefer a more interactive stream, contact our office to be put in touch with our streaming provider. They do charge an additional fee for interactive streaming.

## Young Children at Services

Young children are welcome to attend services when supervised. At 10:45 am there are junior congregation services offered in the chapel and tot Shabbat services in the lobby next to the chapel. All kids are called up for Ein Keloheinu and Aleinu at the end of the service.

## Printed Programs

Families are welcome to create and print programs to make the services more accessible to family members and guests. While the synagogue will not be responsible for the costs associated with the pamphlet making, we are happy to advise on the content. Both the rabbi and the cantor are happy to discuss this with you in advance.

## Financial Obligations

You must be a member in good standing of BHBE. As of 2026, our membership fees are \$3,950 for a family membership and \$1,975 for an individual membership. As with any financial commitment to BHBE, we are always willing to meet families where they are. Our executive director, Michael Kahn ([michael.kahn@bhbe.org](mailto:michael.kahn@bhbe.org)), is happy to meet with you privately if needed.

If your child does **not** attend the BHBE Academy program, there is an additional \$1,000 b-mitzvah preparation fee.

We provide all the training your child will need to have a wonderful b-mitzvah experience. If, however, you choose to supplement BHBE's program with private tutoring, you may be responsible for that cost. We require a deposit of \$1,000 due two months before the event. Final payment is due the week of the b-mitzvah or when all billing has been processed.

## Kiddush

Kiddush is very important to our community, and we love to celebrate together! It is expected that families will cover the cost for the typical attendance plus their guests.

Our catering coordinator, Marsha Lyons ([marsha.lyons@bhbe.org](mailto:marsha.lyons@bhbe.org)) loves to work with families on preparing for a wonderful, memorable event. Please see our catering menu on the next page and contact Marsha for details.

We look forward to sharing this journey with you and can't wait to welcome you to the BHBE community as a Jewish adult! Mazel tov!

# BHBE CATERING MENU

KIDDUSH  
BNAI MITZVAH  
SIMCHAS



## OPTION 1

### COMFORT FOOD

Grilled cheese  
Tomato soup  
Ceasar salad  
Vegetable crudite  
*with hummus or  
ranch dressing*  
Cut-fruit trays  
Assorted desserts

\$10 per person



## OPTION 2

### MEDITERRANEAN

Falafel  
Israeli salad  
Chickpea salad  
Pita bread  
Hummus  
Olive dip  
Tahini  
Cut-fruit trays  
Assorted desserts

\$13 per person



## OPTION 3

### SALADS AND SHMEAR

Assorted sliced bagels  
Cream cheese  
Lox spread  
Tuna salad  
Egg salad  
Sweet noodle kugel  
Cut-fruit trays  
Assorted desserts

\$13 per person

*lox platters additional  
\$6 per person*

*All prices subject to change.*



## SIDE NOTES

- Kiddush typical attendance is 125 people.
- Coffee service is included.
- Add-ons and custom requests subject to approval.
- For special requests, dietary needs, or custom menu options, please contact Marsha Lyons at [marsha.lyons@bhbe.org](mailto:marsha.lyons@bhbe.org).