

HAVURAH SHALOM

*HANDBOOK FOR
BAR/BAT MITZVAH*

January 2010

HANDBOOK FOR BAR / BAT MITZVAH
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Section I. Background and Philosophy for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

A. Introduction

The bar/bat mitzvah marks the time when a Jewish child attains adult religious status within the congregation. As such, it is an occasion for community pride and celebration. A Jewish 13-year-old is considered a bar or bat mitzvah; tradition implies that by that age, a child has obtained sufficient knowledge and skills to participate in congregational life.

Bar/bat mitzvah preparation involves a lot of time and energy devoted to study. Although the ritual usually takes place at age 13, many families choose to postpone the bar or bat mitzvah until their child is emotionally ready. Many members of the Havurah community who did not have a bar or bat mitzvah as a youth, have chosen to celebrate this ritual as adults.

Havurah is growing richer in our variety of bar mitzvah and bat mitzvah experiences; still, most families choose a Saturday morning service. If that is your choice, please remember as you prepare that the ritual is part of the regular weekly Shabbat services in our community. The ceremony should be a comfortable, familiar experience for the congregation, the family, and guests.

Havurah Shalom wants families to participate in their Judaism in positive ways, following the spirit of tradition while keeping Judaism accessible. Thus, we recognize the validity of a wide range of practices. People celebrate b'nai mitzvot at Havurah within this context.

B. Membership Requirement

Having a bar or bat mitzvah is an experience in community. It is a statement that one is now ready to participate in the Jewish community as an adult. Havurah Shalom is a community that thrives only through the active participation of all its members. As adults in the community we believe in passing on Jewish tradition to our children while learning ourselves.

In order to be true to these beliefs, the congregation requires membership for at least 36 months prior to having a bar or bat mitzvah. This period of membership provides the opportunity for new members to become part of the Havurah community. However, special consideration is given to families who moved to Portland within the last 36 months that were members of a congregation where they lived previously.

C. Perspective

The fabric of your family's bat mitzvah or bar mitzvah day is woven from many strands. The core of the ceremony is when the youngster is first given the adult honor of being called to the Torah (the aliyah), to which they respond by saying the blessings before and after the portion. It has become traditional for the honoree to also chant some of the Torah portions (in Hebrew), give a personal reflection on the Torah portion (drash), and to lead some of the prayers during the service. Havurah families may celebrate the young person and his or her heritage with specially chosen songs, prayers, poems, readings, or other ritual elements. Many families

turn the after-service Kiddush into a luncheon, and/or have a party on Saturday evening. Some families include out of town relatives in Havurah's Friday night services. But beyond the core of the aliyah, the other elements are optional—please include only those that make sense for your family. Remember: this is something done *with* your child, not *to* your child. For information, perspective, and inspiration, it is highly recommended that parents read [Putting God on the Guest List](#) (see Appendix).

Consider the years leading up to the bat/bar mitzvah to be a Jewish learning time for the whole family. Each person can learn at least one new Jewish skill, and parents especially can expand their Jewish reading.

D. Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah Diversity

Our congregation is a community of individuals with many levels of Jewish observance and learning, and a wealth of unique gifts and experiences. Our families vary in the amount of energy they choose to devote to the bar/bat mitzvah experience, and in their comfort and motivation to lead services. No single model adequately represents the variety of experiences our families create during this important life passage.

AS YOU READ THE EXAMPLES BELOW, DON'T WORRY IF YOU DON'T FIND A DESCRIPTION OF YOUR "IDEAL" BAR OR BAT MITZVAH. These examples are intended to broaden your horizons, not limit your options. While we are inspired by thousands of years of Jewish tradition, and we deeply respect the forms of worship and Torah study practiced by our congregation, we are all enriched by the variety of approaches families have taken over the years to mark the arrival of our youth at the gates of adulthood.

These examples show some of the choices different families make:

[1] This style appeals to those who recall that in previous centuries, the bar mitzvah consisted of a young man having his first aliyah on the Shabbat after he turned thirteen. Of course, the community would congratulate the family, but any party would be more on the scale of a child's birthday celebration than a royal wedding. This style might feature:

- The youngster leading the Torah service and giving the drash, but having little or no role in the preceding portions of the Shabbat Morning service.
- Invitations to only 20 or 30 people who are truly important in the honoree's life.
- Most of those attending this Shabbat service are "regulars" so the youngster is truly being welcomed into an ongoing community.

[2] Some families may prefer a very low-key approach, with the young person coming up during a regular Minyan service on a Saturday morning, reading the Aliyah blessing, and then sitting down again. The family could work with the Minyan organizers on the extent of a child's participation in a particular Saturday morning service.

[3] In rare circumstances a family can request a Havdallah bar/bat mitzvah that can take place on a Saturday afternoon in winter. Due to our many scheduling

requirements Havurah rarely holds Havdallah b'nai mitzvot. However, if you would like to take this conversation forward please discuss this option with a member of the B'nai mitzvah committee.

[4] The Torah may also be read on Rosh *Hodesh* (the start of a new month on the Hebrew calendar), and on Mondays and Thursdays, for those who wish to have a quieter, more intimate service.

[5] Some families wish to share the event with a substantial circle of loved ones This style might feature:

- The youngster leading much (or most) of the Shabbat morning service/Torah Service, as well as chanting several Torah portions and delivering the drash.
- Invitations to several dozen friends and relatives (though remember that our sanctuary/social hall only holds about 350).
- A few carefully chosen acknowledgments during the service that the youngster's special gifts and experiences are blessings to the family and the community—without unduly disrupting the usual order of the Shabbat service.

While no one wants to go overboard and create an unhealthy “adoration of the child”, this style lets some youngsters find their voice as accepted and admired members of our community. Some members think of this as the “Classic Havurah” style of bar and bat mitzvah, since it has been the most frequent style over the years.

[6] Many youngsters have best-friends, twin siblings, or compatible acquaintances with whom they want to share their special day. While the style may resemble any of the examples above, it generally will include:

- Fewer aliyot for each family, fewer Torah portions chanted by each youth, and two shorter drashes taking the place of the usual single drash.
- Pay close attention to the guest lists, since the total number of seats for both families plus the general congregation may not exceed 350 in our building.

Remember, bar/bat mitzvah is another chance for parents and their children to discover the rewards of resisting peer pressure—please choose the style that is spiritually and emotionally best for you, which may not be the same one other families choose. Rabbi Joey is encouraging us to be creative. Some form of Torah mastery will always be involved. Non-family adult members of the congregation are also key to welcoming the young person at this milestone—Rabbi Joey sometimes refers to these adults as “elders” or as “aunts” and “uncles”. Perhaps some bar and bat mitzvahs will involve gathering together a cluster of thirteen-year-olds in a quiet natural setting, along with their close biological and spiritual families, to celebrate the milestone of maturity which these youngsters are achieving. Or maybe your family has the glimmer of an idea that will spark the evolution of new options, rooted in our tradition, but looking toward a future which we can only imagine but which our children will shape.

E. A Note about this Handbook

Many of the pages that follow are most applicable to the “Classic Havurah” ceremonies described in [5] above. This is because the handbook and its authors

are largely products of our congregation's recent history. Please accept these sincere invitations:

- If you know certain passages don't apply to the type of event you are planning, disregard them.
- If you are not sure, please ask. We have a helpful rabbi, responsive adult education and liturgy enthusiasts, an attentive office staff, and an involved bar/bat mitzvah Committee.
- If you feel that sections of the handbook are obsolete, please let us know! The Committee members are listed on the final page, and we always welcome constructive criticism.
- This Handbook can be downloaded from the Havurah website

F. Preparation

The next section presents a timeline to help you prepare your student for their bat mitzvah or bar mitzvah, and for a lifetime of participation in Judaism. The specific skills needed are:

- Hebrew: begin with the alphabet as early as possible; if your son or daughter does not attend a Jewish day school; begin formal tutoring by 3rd or 4th Grade.
- Trope (cantillation): this is the system of chanting used to read from the Bible during services. There are distinct trope systems for Torah and Haftarah. Most students in Havurah do not read the Haftarah. Ideally, Trope tutoring should begin about a year before the bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah.
- Services: many students help lead part of the Shabbat morning service on the day of their bat mitzvah or bar mitzvah. While the trope tutor can often help with specific prayers, and the musician may assist in preparing certain songs, the best preparation is frequent attendance at others' bat mitzvahs and bar mitzvahs, and at other Shabbat morning services.
- Drash: students present a "teaching" (a short speech) based on the Torah reading. There will be 3 meetings with the Rabbi or another elder of the congregation to help, but the student will need to spend at least 10 to 20 hours studying and writing. **The B'nai mitzvah committee will send out materials specifically focused on the particular Torah portion, to each student, approximately 8 – 10 weeks before the date of their meeting with Rabbi Joey.**

G. Workshops.

Havurah holds the following workshops over the year to help families prepare for bar and bat mitzvot:

- (i) **B'nai Mitzvah Orientation Workshop.** This workshop takes place in January. During the workshop you'll receive an introduction to the b'nai mitzvah process at Havurah and learn the date selection process.
- (ii) **Navigating the Saturday Morning Service.** This workshop is held in late January or early February. During the workshop you'll hear an explanation of the structure and meaning of the Saturday morning service, including music for the service, how to choose elements of your service, a review of how to do an Aliyah and an opportunity to practice holding the Torah.
- (iii) **Getting Down To Tachlis (the Nitty Gritty) about B'nai Mitzvah Logistics.** This workshop is held twice a year in fall and in late spring. It is designed to answer questions for those people concerned with the nuts and bolts of planning, setting up, food, invitations etc.
- (iv) **Writing your Drash.** This workshop takes place in late spring. Its purpose is to familiarize you and your child with the process of preparing a Drash.

H. Attending Services

All Saturday morning services, including bat mitzvahs and bar mitzvahs, are open to the entire community. Occasionally, families worry that they would be intruding on someone else's special day if they went to a bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah to which they were not specifically invited. This is not the case; you are welcome. Please attend, share the joy of Shabbat and of your neighbor's *simcha* (blessed event), and learn from the rich traditions of our community.

Section II. When to do What - a Bat / Bar Mitzvah Timeline

A. Early Years

1st – 4th graders

- Participate in Shabbat School if possible.
- Begin attending Shabbat services and bar/bat mitzvahs as a family, and discuss the events and the process with student.
- Begin Hebrew classes or Hebrew tutoring.

B. Fifth Grade

Date Selection

Families of 5th graders are expected to attend the "B'nai mitzvah Orientation", arranged by the B'nai mitzvah Committee in January or February of each year. At this class, families will receive 2 things:

1. A calendar of dates available for b'nai mitzvah from September 1 to August 31 of the year their child will be a 7th grader.
2. A date selection form.

When requesting dates, factors to consider might include (1) the child's thirteenth birthday, on the Hebrew calendar; (2) the appropriateness of the weekly portion for the child; and (3) scheduling convenience for guests.

Requests must be made using the date selection form which requires you to select four dates, one of which will be assigned by the b'nai mitzvah committee (see below).

The form should be turned in by the deadline.

- All forms received by the deadline will be assigned a date, in accordance with the Committee's procedures (see below).
- Late forms will be scheduled after dates for on-time forms have been assigned.
- Members of the Committee do not participate in the selection process if their family is having a bar or bat mitzvah in the year being scheduled.
- In the event that two or more requests received by the deadline specify the same date, the following procedure will be followed:
 - (a) the date will be given to the family with the earliest membership date
 - (b) if this does not resolve the conflict, a member of the B'nai mitzvah Committee will call all of the families involved to see if they are open to a different date.

Once dates are scheduled, the family is notified and they are published in the Havurah newsletter.

Availability of date for B'nai mitzvot.

The dates available for B'nai mitzvot take into account the following:

- The need to ensure one community Minyan per month
- The need to have "Family Shabbat" dates available
- Rabbi Joey's availability
- Avoidance of Shabbat School days, Jewish holidays and other Havurah events

The committee does its best to ensure no conflicts. Occasionally, the Rabbi may have a late schedule change that is unavoidable. In that event, he will notify the family. There is always a congregation member available to help lead services.

C. Sixth Grade

Students

- Start one-to-one tutoring in Torah "trope" and prayer, at least 12 months before the bat/bar mitzvah.

Families

- The office will invite all families to attend classes and events concerned with bar and bat mitzvah.
- We have a b'nai mitzvah mentor program. Soon after date selection a mentor will contact you to provide advice and support for b'nai mitzvah planning. The mentor will be someone whose family has recently celebrated a bat mitzvah or bar mitzvah. If no one has contacted you and you want to talk with someone, contact the Havurah Office.

- Family Education programs are offered annually to help answer the questions that come up as the big day approaches.
- In the spring, families may wish to organize into small support groups by seasons, to help each other with set-up, baking, etc. in the busy year to come.
- Check out videos of previous bar/bat mitzvahs from the Havurah library.

D. Month-by-month countdown

One year before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- The family should re-read this Handbook which can be downloaded any time from the website.
- The family should double-check (with Education Director, bar/bat mitzvah Committee, or tutor) that their student is working on the correct portion.
- The B'nai mitzvah committee will schedule support meetings as needed.
- Talk with a mentor.
- Many students do a *tzedakah* project as part of their bar/bat mitzvah. It is good to begin thinking about it a year in advance. Some ideas include focusing on: the environment, human/animal rights, hunger, housing, education, social services, etc. Contact the Havurah Social Action Committee to talk about specific ideas. The basic principle is *Tikkun Olam* - making the world a better place.

6 - 12 months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Student must begin practicing the Torah portion.
- Student should know that they'll be expected to give a *drash* (see page 4)
- The family will receive dates for their child to meet with the Rabbi to prepare his/her *drash* (see Page 4).
- Select and order invitations, thank you notes and caterers, make hotel arrangements for out-of-town guests, reserve a restaurant or party room.

3 - 6 months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Continue to practice Torah portion
- Contact b'nai mitzvah committee for a musician if desired (see Appendix for list of musicians)
- Plan your family's participation in the service, in conjunction with a knowledgeable Havurah member such as your child's tutor, a music leader, or someone else knowledgeable about liturgy and Havurah's customs
- Send in your payment of the \$280 b'nai mitzvah fee to the office. Make sure your membership dues are up-to-date.
- Check dates of *drash* meetings with Rabbi and keep them open on your calendar. The Rabbi is busy and is not keen to make last minute changes.
- Finalize Tzedakah project
- Write out invitations, plan flowers, plan and buy supplies, make lists, think about personal needs (clothing, shoes, ties, haircuts),
- Delegate, delegate, and delegate!

If at any time you need to cancel or change a date, be sure to call the Havurah office and the b'nai mitzvah committee. Reschedule through the b'nai mitzvah committee, NOT through the Rabbi.

8-10 weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- The Committee will supply materials to help the student with their *drash*. Have the student read these materials before their meeting with the Rabbi.

- *After the bar or bat mitzvah please send a copy of your child's drash to the office for other students to see.*
- Organize the *Aliyot* (see page 16), get confirmation from the student's tutor on which he/she is going to chant then contact Susan Brenner (see Havurah directory) about 3 months ahead of time who will find others to cover those Torah portions not being read by the student, family members and friends. Send the prayers and/or the portion to each person doing an aliyah. (A tape of the Aliyah blessings is available in the Havurah Office and can be found online. If you borrow a tape from the office **remember to return it when done!**).
- Find out the Hebrew names of anyone to be honored with an Aliyah.
- Invite family and/or friends to be *Hagbah* and *Glilah* (see page 14)

6 weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Find/confirm a service leader to lead those portions of the service not being conducted by the student. Contact the office for names of service leaders.
- Invite someone from the congregation to make the Congregational presentation of the Bible. If you don't have anyone special you would like to choose, notify the office and they will make arrangements. The wrapped Bible will be in the cupboard underneath the basket of tallitot and kippot as you enter the Bet Kneset. Tell the Havurah office who will be presenting the bible so they can notify that individual of its location.
- If a substantial number of out-of-town guests will be attending Friday Night services contact the Oneg coordinator for that week so they are prepared. The list of coordinators is available from the Havurah office. You could also contribute some or all of the Oneg refreshments in honor of the bar/bat mitzvah.
- Some families like to lead the Kiddush at the conclusion of services using a kiddush cup of some sentimental value. If this would mean someone from out of town would have to bring the cup, ask them now.
- Mail invitations (see "Invitations & Thank You Notes" in the Appendix)
- Identify someone to be your "Cookie Coordinator." You will receive suggestions on how you might organize this in the packet you will receive from Havurah about 3 months before your date.

4 weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Go over order of service with the trope tutor or a congregant knowledgeable about Havurah liturgy.
- Complete bar/bat mitzvah program or other handouts.
- Ensure that anyone being honored with an Aliyah is comfortable saying the blessings. Encourage everyone to practice. Reminder: tapes are available from the Havurah Office or you can search online for a recording.
- Order challah, wine and juice for kiddush. One challah serves about 30 people; 1 liter of wine/juiced serves 40 x 1oz cups. The wine **must** be kosher. **Remember to ensure you have enough challah and wine for the 20-30 members of Havurah who routinely attend Saturday morning services.**
- Havurah Shalom provides one childcare worker on Saturday morning who can care for up to 6 children. If you know that more children than this will be

attending services contact the Havurah Office to make arrangements for additional childcare worker(s) as needed. The family will be responsible for the additional cost. See page 17 for details. At this time Havurah Shalom does not regularly provide childcare at Friday night services so if you will have young children attending services on Friday and need childcare, please contact the Havurah office.

- Arrange for 2 ushers who should be responsible for directing visitors to the sanctuary and for ensuring security during the service. You will receive a letter with more details about security about 1 month before the event.
- Ask one or two friends to arrange cookie bakers (and any other food not being catered).
- Arrange for a friend or member of the community to be responsible to beginning Kiddish after the service as you will likely be busy
- Establish transportation for flowers, people, food, baskets, paper goods, etc,
- Buy everything you can ahead of time to avoid the last-minute crunch.
- Organize a notebook to keep track of gifts

2 weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Anyone who is being honored with an Aliyah, but who may not be totally comfortable saying the blessings, should be reminded again to practice. Check you have the Hebrew names of anyone being honored with an Aliyah.
- Many parents make a few short remarks after the student's drash. If you are going to do this, write them now. And please keep them brief.
- Arrange for a rehearsal in the sanctuary. Read from the actual Torah while wearing a tallit. Taking time to practice the entire service (or as much of it as the student will participate in). Ask your service leader to help with this or contact the office who will suggest someone you can call on for this.
- Finalize your clean-up crew (see page 18)

1 week before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Make sure someone is assigned to do each of the following:
 - Pick up and bring to Havurah: challah, kiddish wine/juice and all other refreshments not being catered
 - Pour wine for kiddish
 - Supervise set up and clean up
 - Supervise room change-over between service and luncheon
 - Uncover and/or serve food
 - Bring containers (and labels) for leftover food. Shlep gifts back home: (a) baskets, bags, or other containers can help (b) the volunteer in charge of this should bring extra tape to securely fasten cards to presents before transporting them
 - Kippot if you're supplying any special ones to augment the congregation's supply

The day before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- The sanctuary is available throughout the day on Friday. Families have been setting up in the morning to allow for a more restful afternoon and evening.
- Make sure the copies of the *Aliyah* prayers are on the *bimah*.
- Consider bringing a comfortable change of clothes/shoes for clean up.

The day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- On the morning of the service (no sooner) give Rabbi the list of people for aliyot, lifting and wrapping the Torah. The list should include English names, Hebrew names, and the relationship to the youngster (see page 16).
- DON'T FORGET SPEECH, TORAH PORTION, TALLIT (and extras for aliyot).
- Copies of order of service with each person's parts marked for child, rabbi, parents and musicians.
- Any photo sessions you wish to have before the service should be concluded by 9:45 a.m.
- Take time to enjoy the experience.

Section III. Shabbat Morning Services

1. Attend 12 or more Saturday morning services prior to your bat/bar mitzvah date, so that you will have a real familiarity with the service. Take this outline with you for reference.
2. The following outline is based on one prepared by Michele Goldschmidt of the Spiritual Life Committee. Items in parentheses are optional. Please be thoughtful about substitutions for these and other prayers. You may wish to use one of your sessions with Rabbi Joey (see page 4) to review the service outline you wish to use. Also be sure to run through it with your music person ahead of time.
3. Add welcome, explanations, transitions, music, and a few special readings as you wish—but keep it simple! One or two special songs and two or three special readings are plenty—but NOTHING special is necessary. Part of the beauty of the service is its familiarity. Your family's participation is all that's needed to make the service warm, moving, and expressive of yourselves.
4. Page numbers refer to where selected prayers **begin** in Kol Haneshama.
5. Remember that Shabbat morning services belong to the entire community. Other congregational activities such as a baby-naming, Kids Shabbat, or Tot Shabbat may coincide with your event. In most cases you will have advance notice.

The musician who will play on the day of the bar/bat mitzvah will be very helpful in suggesting special music and/or songs.

SOURCES FOR READINGS: Other prayer books, especially creative ones; back issues of Reconstructionist Magazine (in PSU library); Havurah library; the files and libraries of Havurah members; PJA library, Neveh Shalom library.

See page 16 for important suggestions about aliyot.

Saturday Morning Service

Siddur Page #	Preliminary Service
535	(Hinei Ma Tov or other Nigun)
141	(Ma Tovu)
142-3	Tallit Blessing
	Welcome – orientation – childcare annmct.
153-161	(Birchot Hashachar - Morning Blessings)
164-7	(Elohai)
P'seukei d'Zimrah	
176-81	(Baruch Sheamar)
183-207	(You may select 1-3 additional psalms)
209-211	(Psalm 92)
212-3	(Psalm 93)
429-31	Ashrei
230-1	Psalm 150
232-9	(Nishmat)
Shacharit Service – Led by: _____	
240-3	Shochan Ad
243	Yishtabach
245	Hatzi Kaddish
Shema and its Blessings	
246-7	Barchu, Yotzer Or
248-51	(Let all beings)
251	(Ayn k'er'k'cha - None like You exists)
252-5	Eil Adon
260-1, 265-71	Yotzer, Or Chadash (continues)
272-5	Ahavah Rabah, V'ha-er ay-nay-nu (Love & Torah)
276-277	Shema, V'ahavta
282-5	Biblical Selection II: 2 nd , 3 rd Paragraphs of Shema
286-91	Emet Vayetziv
	Introduce Amidah
290-1	Mi Chamocha
292-321	Amidah – followed by nigun/song/poem or special reading
381	Kaddish Titkabal
Torah Service – Led by: _____	
383	Eyn Kamocha, Av harachamim
385	Vayhi binso'a, Ki mitziyon

Ark Opening	
393	Shema, Echad, Gadelu
393	Lecha Adonai (Sung during Torah procession)
841	Eleh Chamedah Libi, and other selections
	Birchot Hatorah*
399	*Reconstructionist Torah blessings are slightly different.
1 st aliyah	
2 nd aliyah	
3 rd aliyah	
4 th aliyah	
5 th aliyah	Reserved for Congregant (honoring a special day)
6 th aliyah	
7 th aliyah	Student's Parents
405	Hatzi Kaddish
Maftir	Student
400-3, 416, 684-693	Mi Shebeyrach (Blessings for deliverance, Healing, Thanksgiving)
	Release Blessing for Parents and Mazel Tov!
Hagbah	
G'lilah	
407	V'zot Hatorah
	Student's drash, Parents brief words, presentation, Rabbi's blessing, Shehecheyanu, (special song)
Return Torah	
433	Y'hallelu
434-5	Psalm 29 - Hodo al eretz
Ark opening	
441	Etz chayim hi
Closing Prayers	
445-9	Aleynu
450-1	Mourners' Kaddish
	Thank you's and announcements
	Closing Song (Choose from: Adon Olam – p.458, Kol haneshamah – p.231, or Yigdal – p.460)
464-5	Kiddush for Shabbat Mornings

THE TORAH PORTION

The Torah portion each week has a name. The entire portion is read aloud in the congregation over the course of three years, on a triennial cycle. When checking your child's Torah portion, make sure you know which third we are reading that year. The office can help with this.

The weekly "third" that we read is further divided into seven sections, with one section being read after each of the seven *aliyot* (Torah Blessings). Most b'nai mitzvah students will have one aliyah and will chant one or more of those biblical sections, some may just do an aliyah (Torah Blessing) before a section is chanted in Hebrew. For an explanation of "an Aliyah" see the bottom of page 14.

If you have questions about how to divide up your child's Torah portion into the seven sections, contact your Torah tutor. If the tutor does not know, contact the B'nai mitzvah committee who will get you the assistance you need. A chart of the triennial divisions appears in the siddur Kol Haneshema on pages 710-724.

Section IV. Havdallah Services

Havdallah services begin in the afternoon on Saturday. They are only scheduled in months that are not on daylight savings time. We do not schedule a Havdallah service and a morning bar or bat mitzvah on the same Saturday.

Torah portion: The bar/bat mitzvah for Havdallah only includes 3 aliyot, the readings are from the portion of the following week, not the portion read the morning of that Shabbat.

Details that are different from Saturday morning:

- There is no kiddush or blessing over challah afterwards.
- You need to make sure there is wine and the havdallah candle and spice box for the end of the service.
- If you want to turn off the lights at the end of the service, appoint someone to do so.
- There is a special Havdallah prayer book, make sure you know where they are before your service. (We don't use Kol Haneshama for Havdallah).
- The only people that wear a tallit during the Havdallah service are those who are doing an aliyah blessing, reading from the Torah, or lifting or wrapping the Torah.
- Havurah Shalom does not provide a Havdallah set for bar/bat mitzvahs so the family should bring one with them. A set consists of a braided candle, a spice box, a kiddish cup and a tray.

A suggested framework for your service follows: (be sure to check with your music person, your Torah tutor and with the Rabbi to make sure you have everything in the service you need.)

Section V. Logistics

A. Location

Shabbat morning services are held at our building, which currently has a seating capacity for up to 350 in "auditorium style seating" in the sanctuary and social hall.

There is table seating for approximately 150 in the sanctuary/social hall for lunch. If you are having a large kiddush luncheon it is best to provide a mixture of table seating, chairs along the walls, and standing/mingling near the serving tables.

Note: when estimating guests remember to include those 20 to 30 people who regularly attend Saturday morning services.

B. Invitations

Invitations can be composed on a home computer and copied at a local shop. (A few suggestions are in the Appendix.)

Send out invitations 6 weeks ahead for out-of-towners, 4 weeks locally.

You might include information about the Tzedakah project, about local accommodations and childcare availability during the service (See page 16).

Announcement of bat/bar mitzvah services are automatically included in the Newsletter; the congregation is invited. If you have made non-standard arrangements (change of time or place), please send the information to the office at least 6 weeks before the date.

C. Organizing the service

An outline of the service can be found on page 11 or page 13. Some aspects to which to give special attention include the following.

Aliyot, Hagbah, Glilah, and Ark Openers

An *aliyah* is the honor of reciting the Hebrew blessings before and after each Torah portion is read. On a regular Saturday morning service there are seven of these honors. Six of these aliyot may be assigned to family or friends you wish to honor. One aliyah is left unassigned. It will be given to a congregant during the service.

NOTE: If you are asking someone to do an aliyah who is not familiar with the honor, you should send them following: a copy of the Torah blessings in Hebrew, transliteration and English, an audio file of the blessings and directions for "how to have an aliyah" (see page 20). All of this is available from the office. You honor the Torah, the congregation, and the honoree by helping them prepare.

The *Hagbah* is the honor of lifting the Torah, after it is read, for the congregation to see. Pick someone strong. The *Glilah* is the honor of dressing the Torah as the *Hagbah* holds it.

Jewish tradition reserves Torah honors of *Aliyot*, *Hagbah*, and *Glilah* for Jews of age 13 or over. In Havurah, a non-Jew who is in a committed relationship (married or same-sex/married) with a Jew may come up to Torah with their spouse/partner, as they are considered adjunct and "sustaining" the Jewish life of the household. Non-Jewish and non-adult relatives are welcome to do readings and lead songs.

For each aliyah the rabbi will “call up” individuals by their Hebrew name (which includes the Hebrew names of the person’s parents), so ask each honoree to provide these. All honorees must wear *tallit* (prayer shawls) so you should make sure to have extra *tallitot* available (*Aliyot, Hagbah, and Glilah*). Havurah does own a few tallitot.

Jewish children are frequently honored by being asked to open and/or close the doors to the ark. This is a less formal honor, and Hebrew names are not announced.

Everyone should practice his or her honors, preferably while wearing *tallit* at a rehearsal.

Personal touches

Some families have found great value in personalizing the service by involving relatives and special friends. Parts can be assigned, special poems, songs, etc. can be included. The Havurah office has some alternative readings for bar/bat mitzvah.

Other families find it is much more meaningful for the service to be the same as any other Shabbat morning service, to focus on the joy of our tradition and the spark the child brings to the *drash* and the Torah reading.

Handing the Torah down through the generations is a lovely custom, especially if any grandparents or great-grandparents are able to join the student on the bimah.

Prayer books

For Saturday mornings we have approximately 300 copies of Kol Haneshamah. For Saturday afternoon Havdallah, we use the special blue Havdallah prayer books. Havurah owns 100 Tanakhim (Hebrew/English Bibles). As a sign of respect, prayer books and Bibles should not be placed on the floor.

Handouts

Most families prepare a ‘program’ for the service which includes a section explaining the significance of the day (see example on page 22), an order of the service, along with songs, extra readings, etc. As you attend other Bar and Bat Mitzvah services at Havurah you might want to save examples of what other families have compiled to gather different ideas. These handouts can be inserted in the prayer books, stacked alongside them, or handed out by ushers. (Please be mindful of how much paper you are generating.) Before you leave please be sure that the handouts are collected and either take them home with you, or please them in one of the recycling bins.

D. Using our building

The simplest of bar mitzvahs and bat mitzvahs might be indistinguishable from any other Shabbat morning service. Most families invite friends and family to share the joy of their child’s coming of age. This results in some special considerations. You will receive a packet from the Havurah office 3 months before the event providing information regarding building access and set-up information, security, janitorial/building fees, organizing the cookie table, childcare, and how you want the

chairs and tables set up etc. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact a member of the bar/bat mitzvah Committee.

Set Up

The Custodian cleans and sets for the Shabbat morning service on Thursday using the diagram given to the office. The sanctuary is available throughout the day on Friday. Families have been setting up Friday morning to allow for a more restful afternoon and evening.

Many families decorate the Bima with flowers. Two large arrangements can be accommodated. Holders that conceal 3-5 gallon buckets may be available; check with the office.

Please be sure not to interfere with other uses of the building, including meetings and Friday Night Services. The Oneg families from Friday Night are responsible to clean up before they leave however, it is prudent to have a couple of friends arrive early on Saturday to make sure that tables, chairs, flowers, etc. are properly arranged. Trays of cookies can be stacked in the food warmer but they should be out of the way for the Friday evening Oneg setup.

Havurah's building includes a permanent sound system, which the family will need to know how to turn on Saturday morning (usually your music person will do this).

Ushers

Arrange for 2 people to act as ushers who will be responsible for directing visitors to the sanctuary and for ensuring security during the service.

Childcare

Havurah Shalom provides one adult Childcare provider on Saturday morning to care for up to 6 children. If more will be needed during a bar or bat mitzvah, additional people can be hired, typically these are teenage members of the congregation. The family is asked to cover this cost by paying the additional assistant directly. If you know that there will be children requiring childcare on Friday evening, please let the Havurah Community Organizer know so arrangements can be made since there is not childcare at every Friday evening services. Childcare takes place in the Pardes room. Juice and crackers (or other finger food) should be provided by the bar/bat mitzvah family.

Because of limited childcare space, we request that children over 8 (including teenagers) remain in services with their parents. Please make this announcement at the beginning of the service. The suggested text of this announcement will be mailed to you.

Fees

Havurah Shalom requires a one-time fee of \$280 for bar/bat mitzvah that is payable to the office prior to the event. Membership dues should be in good standing.

Please note that Havurah has set aside a small amount of money for families who need financial assistance with building usage fees or the Kiddush following the bar mitzvah. Contact the bar/bat mitzvah Chairperson for information on this.

E. Friends

Let friends help, and don't feel shy about approaching others for help.

Some examples of help you could request are:

Ask friends to bake cookies for the kiddush luncheon, have them pour wine for the kiddish (if the caterer is not going to do this) and have them pass out the challah during kiddish, set up, move furniture between services and luncheon, help with clean up, package gifts (tape cards to corresponding gifts), transport items as needed and provide out-of-town guests with rides.

Keep a list of chores handy for offers of help and accept **all** offers of help.

F. The Home Front

- Do as much as you can in advance (e.g. shop for family clothes, bake and freeze, buy non-perishable supplies).
- Makes notes along the way of: guests, jobs to be done, menus, supplies and sources, necessary rentals, items to buy, items to borrow, plane and hotel reservations for out-of-town guests, and volunteer drivers and assignments.
- Make sure the bar/bat mitzvah child has downtime the day before the event.

G. Photographing and Videotaping

Remembering the bat or bar mitzvah with photographs, or on video, is important to many families. However, the community wants to make sure that these activities do not detract from the service. Therefore, we have the following guidelines to prevent any obtrusiveness:

- Finish all family portraits 15 minutes prior to the service (by 9:45am).
- Do not let any photographers disturb the service. Make sure the photographer has a good position where she or he can remain during the service. If using a tripod it should be set up in the back of the sanctuary and not moved during the service.
- Use a quiet camera.
- No flash photography is permitted during the service.
- A permanently affixed camera is available for videotaping your ceremony. Arrangements must be made in advance with the office. For specific directions, see "other resources" at the back of this handbook.

Thank you for your careful attention to these matters. Please share this information with any volunteer or professional photographers. If you have any questions, please contact the bar/bat mitzvah Committee.

H. Kiddush Luncheon

Most families host a luncheon after the bar mitzvah. Some use a caterer (See Appendix for information), others have a potluck or have friends cater. Havurah policy requires "kosher style dairy" food.

As part of our concern for environmental *tikkun olam*, families are required to use the congregation's ceramic dishes and metal knives, forks, and spoons. If caterers

are used, they must take everything with them that they brought, and must clean the dishes, wipe-down the kitchen, and empty the garbage.

Acceptable music after the lunch includes Hebrew, Jewish, or Klezmer type music. A DJ or Top 40 is not appropriate for the luncheon.

I. Clean-up

It is suggested you organize a clean-up crew to be responsible for picking up papers, reuniting lost items with their owners, and tidying up our building. If there is no caterer, your clean-up crew must also be responsible for thoroughly pre-washing dishes, sanitizing them in our dishwasher, and putting them away.

After the service, the bar/bat mitzvah families are asked to take home everything that they have brought to the building. Flowers should be taken with you. If you would like to leave them for other weekend events, please take responsibility for removing them within a week.

The custodians clean the bathrooms, tables, floors, and take down the tables and chairs. They also inspect the kitchen when the caterers leave.

Note: there are often leftovers from the kiddush luncheon. There is information posted on the wall in the kitchen about organizations that accept food donations in the downtown area. If you plan to bring leftovers home with you, remember to bring containers to pack it into.

Note for Shabbat School Days:

On Saturdays when Shabbat School is in session, families are responsible for taking down luncheon tables in Moadon **by 1:30 pm**, and having all food and dishes removed from the entire Beit Knesset and the Social Hall by **2:30 pm**. Quiet kitchen cleanup may continue beyond 2:30 pm if necessary, but be respectful of classes in the foyer. The custodians can be hired for an additional \$80 fee to take care of moving tables and chairs. Contact the office if you are interested in arranging this.

J. Afterwards

On Saturday night, many families host a party to continue the celebration. There is more variety here than in any other aspect of bat mitzvah and bar mitzvah—and of course you can do what you like—this is not a Havurah event! Still, fellow congregants who have been through this have used or suggested the following ideas that you may wish to consider:

- Rent Havurah for an evening party. For details about cost and procedures, contact the Havurah Office Manager.
- Rent hall for dancing, or gym/community center for both dancing & basketball or swimming, have an “Out-of-towners-only party”, or have a combined event with another family whose bat/bar mitzvah date is near your own

Opening of gifts should occur at a calm time with someone to record names and gifts.

Closure will come when your student has sent the last of their thank-you notes. (It is up to you to decide whether to send another thank you note if the gift was a donation to a charity, as the charity will generally send a thank-you directly to the donor.)

Tributes

Many families give tributes of "thank yous" after their event to those who were of special help. These tributes are listed in the Hakol. Each tribute requires a donation (amount discretionary) and can be designated to one or more of the following funds: Adult Education, B'nai Mitzvah Fund, Building Fund, Educator's Discretionary Fund, General Fund, Green Fund, Hebrew Literacy Fund, High School Education Fund, Library Fund, Middle School Education Fund, Post B'nai Mitzvah Fund, Prayer Book Fund, Rabbi Discretionary Fund, Shabbat School Fund, Tzedakah/Social Action fund, Youth Activities/Scholarship Fund.

Section VI: Appendix

A. Sample Letter to Aliyah honorees

E-mail Havurah office to receive an electronic version

Dear _____

Havurah Shalom is pleased to honor you with the _____ Aliyah.

Please sit near the front of the sanctuary, so you will be ready to come up when the service leader calls your name.

Please bring your tallit. (If you don't have one, there will be an extra one available on the bimah.)

When called, please approach the side of the bimah that is on your left as you walk toward it. Turn and face the congregation with the Torah on your left. _____ (Torah reader), will point to the first word of the Torah portion with the yad. It is traditional to touch the Torah scroll with the fringes of your tallit, kiss the fringes of your tallit, and then begin the prayers. (Please touch the scroll in the white space between columns, so as not to rub the ink from the scroll.) Enjoy being close to the Torah, and watch while it is being chanted!

When _____ is finished chanting the portion, s/he will point to the last word of the reading so you can again touch the scroll with the tallit and kiss it.

Then move to your left, so that the Torah is now on your right. Please remain on the bimah for the next aliyah, and then return to your seat after the blessing following that portion is completed.

Thank you for helping _____ celebrate his/her bar/bat mitzvah!

Please fill out the following information and return it to me as soon as possible:

_____ Aliyah Name: _____

Hebrew Name: _____

Father's Hebrew Name: _____

Mother's Hebrew Name: _____

Torah Blessings

Before a section of the Torah has been read, the following blessing is said

בָּרְכוּ אֶת יְהוָה הַמְּבָרָךְ. Barchu et Adonai ha-m'vorach.

The congregation responds

בָּרוּךְ יְהוָה הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד. Baruch Adonai ha-m'vorach l'olam va-ed.

The person called to the Torah repeats the response and continues

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר-בָּנוּ מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים,
וְנָתַן-לָנוּ אֶת-תּוֹרָתוֹ.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.
Baruch atah, Adonai,
Elo-hay-nu melech ha-olam,
Asher ba-char ba-nu mikol ha-a-mim
v'na-tan lanu et tora-to.
Baruch ata, Adonai no-tayn ha-torah.

Bless the Holy One of Blessing

Blessed is the Holy One who is forever blessed

Holy One of Blessing, Your Presence fills creation.

You called us from all the peoples and gave us Your Torah.

Holy One of Blessing, You give us Torah.

After a section of the Torah has been read, the following blessing is said

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר נָתַן-לָנוּ תּוֹרַת-אֱמֶת
וַחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נִטְעַ בְּתוֹכֵנוּ.
בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.
Baruch atah, Adonai,
Elo-hay-nu melech ha-olam,
Asher natan lanu torat emet,
v'chai-yay olam na-ta b'to-che-nu
Baruch ata, Adonai no-tayn ha-torah.

Holy One of Blessing, Your Presence fills creation.

You gave us the Torah of truth and planted within us eternal life.

Holy One of Blessing, You give us Torah.

B. Sample Welcome Letter

to be passed out at the service. E-mail Havurah office to receive an electronic version.

(Date)

Dear Family and Friends,

Welcome to Havurah Shalom. This morning, you are participating in a Shabbat morning service. This service is a special one, where (student) will be called up to the Torah for the first time. This signifies her/his being accepted by the congregation as an adult.

Our service has five parts. The first part is the introductory morning prayers and Psalms. Many of these prayers are done as songs. These are followed by the Barchu ("call to prayer") and the Sh'ma. The Sh'ma begins with the most fundamental statement of Judaism: "Listen, all of Israel. Adonai is our God, Adonai is One." The third part of the service is the prayer called the Amidah. This is the "standing prayer", a collection of blessings which praise and thank God for gifts given to us. This is a very individual, personal prayer.

The Torah service follows. The Torah consists of the five Books of Moses, written in Hebrew by hand on a parchment scroll. We view the Torah as a "tree of life". It is the heart of our history, theology, and code of moral conduct. Every week, a portion of the Torah is read, so that by the end of the year the entire Torah is completed. Then we begin again.

The weekly portion of the Torah reading is divided into seven parts. _____ and other members of the congregation will be honored by chanting these portions. Family and friends will also be honored by doing an Aliyah ("going up") - reciting the blessings before and after the chanting of each Torah portion.

The fifth and final part of the service is the closing prayers, including the Mourner's Kaddish and the Alenu.

Please stay after the service for the Kiddush - the prayers over wine and bread.

Please refrain from applause and flash photography during the services. As a sign of respect, prayer books and Bibles should not be placed on the floor.

Occasionally, those who attend bat mitzvah and bar mitzvah services ask how to help the youth of this congregation to continue with activities reinforcing Jewish scholarship and identifying with the Jewish people. Havurah Shalom does have a B'nai mitzvah Alumni Scholarship Fund for this purpose, and of course we welcome contributions as tributes to individual bat mitzvahs and bar mitzvahs.

We are honored and blessed that you have joined us on this special day.

Shalom,

C. Tutors

Most tutors have a limited number of openings. Please be respectful of their schedules and specialties. Fees are negotiated between the families and the tutors. Some tutors are open to teaching several students at a time, which can reduce the cost per student, if this is compatible with your child's learning style. Because the list changes often, it is not included in this handbook. Contact the Havurah office for a current list. If you are planning to work with a tutor that is not on the list he/she should speak with Rabbi Joey before lessons begin to familiarize him/her with Havurah customs.

Most tutors can be present during the actual bar/bat mitzvah and will assist during the Torah service. If your tutor cannot be present make additional arrangements as necessary.

D. Musicians

Music has always played an important role at Havurah. Prayers are often led by the many wonderful and talented musicians who are members of our congregation. Each of these musicians brings their own unique sensitivity and spirit to the service. As their gift to the community, a number of these musicians have agreed to be available during bar and bat mitzvahs. It is strongly recommended you attend a number of "regular" Saturday morning services and bar/bat mitzvah services 6-9 months before your child's event, and pay special attention to the music. This will help you make a decision about the music at your child's bat or bar mitzvah.

In planning your bat or bar mitzvah, you have two options with regard to the music during the ceremony; you can choose your own musician, or you can let the B'nai mitzvah committee make the choice for you. In the interest of encouraging diversity, please consider letting the committee make the assignment. If you let the committee choose your musician (*shaliach tsibur*), you can trust that he or she will be someone who knows the Havurah service intimately and will bring added beauty to your *simcha*. If you want the B'nai mitzvah committee to arrange for your musician, please contact David Newman (503-282-1240), at least 4 months prior to your bar and bat mitzvah, with your request.

If you choose to arrange for your own musician please let the committee know at least 3 months prior to your bar/bat mitzvah who you have chosen. Please contact David Newman with your choice. The following is a partial list of musicians who may be available for your service.

Musicians

Roger Brewer **503-297-9247**

Families may contact Roger directly 2 months prior to the bat/bar mitzvah date. He does not charge for preparation time, and is limited to 3 bat/bar mitzvah per year. Roger is not available for families who require extensive preparation time (more than 1-2 hours of phone conversations and 1 meeting.)

Rachael Duke **503-234-2507**

Please contact Rachael directly to make arrangements. She does not charge for preparation time.

Emily Gottfried **503-246-8916**

Emily may be contacted up to 6 months in advance, either directly or through the B'nai Mitzvah Committee. She does not charge for preparation time. No limit to the number of events per year.

Ken Lerner **503-231-8203**

Ken can be contacted either directly or through the B'nai Mitzvah Committee. He does not charge for preparation time.

Margie Rosenthal **503-635-6502**

Margie will fill in at the last minute but is not available routinely.

Ilene Safyan **503-221-1848**

Feel free to contact Ilene directly either by phone or email. She is happy to fill in at the last minute, or to plan ahead.

Barbara Slader **503-281-0403**

Please contact Barbara directly, 3 to 12 months in advance. She charges for preparation time and rehearsal. She can schedule up to 3 events per year.

***If you know of a name to add to, or remove from, these lists,
please contact the Havurah office.***

E. SOURCES OF INFORMATION, ITEMS AND VENDORS

- **PORTION OF THE WEEK (TORAH):** Contact B'nai Mitzvah committee or the tutor
- **CHILDCARE:** Contact the Havurah Office
- **KITCHEN & DECORATIVE ITEMS:** Havurah has lots of serving trays, doilies and little kiddush cups available for use. Havurah also owns round and rectangular tablecloths. It is your responsibility to check they are clean before your event, and then to launder and return them within 5 days after your event. Havurah also has large flower baskets, vases, cookie trays, a set of metal "silver" ware, etc. Any questions? Call the office.
- **TABLE SETTINGS & ROOM DECORATIONS:** Balloons, flowers and plants are popular options. If the Havurah table linens are insufficient your caterer may provide them or you may rent them.
- **CHALLAH:** Challah can be purchased at numerous local bakeries and grocery stores.
- **CATERERS:** Havurah maintains a "kosher style" vegetarian/dairy kitchen; kosher fish is OK. Caterer must meet in advance with the Office Manager to become familiar with the facility and to provide a certificate of insurance. Check with the office for details. Caterers must carry workers' compensation insurance on its employees and workers and provide Havurah Shalom with proof of coverage. Make sure that the proper paperwork is in the office well ahead of your event.
- If you use family, friends, or other non-professional help in the kitchen and/or to serve food, you must provide a certificate of liability insurance as an extension of your homeowner's policy, as an off-site event. Liability limit should be a minimum of \$300,000. Contact your agent to obtain this.
- **PHOTOGRAPHY:** See guidelines on page 17.
- **VIDEOTAPING:**
The good news: Videotaping your bar/bat mitzvah can now be done automatically and without disruption to the service.
The bad news: The office needs to know in advance that you want to tape your event.
A video camera is mounted in the sanctuary on one of the overhead beams towards the west end of the room, and in conjunction with the sound system, is wired directly to a VCR that is inside a cabinet underneath the sound system.

The VCR can be programmed in advance to go on just before the service begins. It is capable of running for as long as 8 hours, however, we have never had a bar/bat mitzvah last quite that long. Havurah member Jeff McKie can arrange to program the VCR upon request, but 2 weeks advance warning is needed.

Please provide a VHS tape, any standard VHS tape will work. A T-120 videotape will record up to two hours at standard speed and up to six hours at the slowest speed. A T-160 videotape will record up to two hours forty minutes at standard speed and up to eight hours at the slowest speed. The quality is best at the standard speed, but the time can be a problem.

If you have any difficulties or questions, feel free to call Jeff McKie at 503-641-5561.

- **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR OUT OF TOWN GUESTS:** Call several hotels and/or motels to get comparative rates, you might be able to get a senior, wedding or bar mitzvah rates, check into hotels that offer family suites or family deals in which kids stay free.
- **LITURGY:** Please contact Rabbi Joey or your music person for specific questions.
- **BOOKS:** An excellent book that is available at libraries and at books stores is: Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's bar or bat mitzvah by Rabbi Jeffrey Salkin (Jewish Lights Publishing)
The Havurah library has several good books about bar and bat mitzvahs plus a notebook of service outline and a few videos of past B'nai mitzvot
You can also check out Neveh Shalom's extensive library (for a joining fee), or the Portland Jewish Academy library.
- **BAR/BAT MITZVAH COMMITTEE**
Shelley Sobel, Chair
David Newman
Betsy Richter
Wendy Rudman
Gaby Saunders