

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Informational Guide

Invitations:

- Please email me a copy of the invitation before it is printed – it always helps to have two pair of eyes looking at it.

Flowers: *(optional)*

Morning Glory Florist: Barb (847.256.2575)

- Tell the florist if there is a certain color, price range or flower type that you would like . . . they are easy to work with and know just what needs to be done.
- Call 6-8 weeks prior to your date and give them a “heads-up.”

Program:

- We print a program for each family which consists of a cover page, your child's Torah portion both in Hebrew and English, and a letter written by you that welcomes your guests and talks about the meaning of this day to you, to your child, etc. [sample letters follow].
- You will need to have the letter to me, via email, 2 weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- You will need to let me know how many programs you would like to have printed.

Space Usage:

- If you are interested in having your celebration at the temple, please see the Facility Guide and/or call the Executive Director.

Other:

- You will also need to make sure that there is a challah for the service. Do not have it sliced, just bring it whole. It will be used at the end of the service.

Costs:

- Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fee - \$1,250
- Custodial charges - based on hours worked and billed after the event

I am always available to answer any and all questions whenever and wherever you think of them! I will coordinate with the caterer should you be using one.

Sample Letters

① Dear Family and Friends,

We welcome and thank you for joining us as we honor our son Jeremy. Yesterday, at 13, Jeremy became a Bar Mitzvah in the eyes of God. Today, we celebrate as Jeremy joins the adult Jewish community by reading from the Torah. He will read from Genesis - chapter 48. We are proud that three generations sit among us and will take part in this tradition.

As Jeremy begins his forward journey into adulthood and we remember with our spirit his first moments of childhood, we are confident that he will be able to navigate through the challenges that lie ahead. He has demonstrated time and again the warmth and compassion for another's joy, and more importantly, for another's hurting. His friendship is cherished; his sense of fairness is just. His dreams are expansive and always in Technicolor. The goodness that Jeremy exhibits is matched only by his generous heart and joyous personality.

In keeping with Jeremy's generous soul we have asked you to participate in his Tzedakah project by bringing art supplies. All supplies will be donated to The Jewish Children's Bureau's Friend to Friend program. The program was developed so one child could make a difference in the life and well-being of another, less fortunate child. Your donation today will go to children of all faiths and we want to thank you for your donation.

First and foremost, we would like to thank Rabbi Sam Gordon for his vision and energetic leadership in creating Congregation Sukkat Shalom. We also want to thank Cantorial Soloist Adam Davis for his beautiful voice, patience and warm, caring manner. Also thanks to Judy Buckman, who is more than an executive director to us and to Sukkat Shalom. She has been generous with her time, guidance, patience and advice. Thank you to all of Jeremy's family school teachers for helping make this a special day for our family.

② Dear Family and Friends,

Shabbat Shalom and Welcome. We are delighted that you are here to share this very special day in Claire's life. It touches our hearts to know that many of you came a great distance, some from warm climates, to celebrate with us.

The Bat Mitzvah ceremony, a time honored tradition of Judaism, symbolizes Claire's transition from childhood to Jewish adulthood. As a Bat Mitzvah, Claire begins to assume greater responsibility for the many challenges that Jewish adulthood presents. This ceremony marks Claire's place in the world as the next link to our future and the builders of our world. Today, Claire will follow her mother, brother, cousins, friends and young Jews around the world to become part of another generation who has received the Torah and its teachings and will be responsible for its continued passage to the next generation.

Each Sabbath, a consecutive portion of the Torah is read aloud taking a full year to complete all Five Books of Moses. Exodus is the second book. Claire will chant and comment on her Torah portion. Today's Torah portion is titled Bo, which tells the story of the last three plagues prior to the Exodus and describes the rituals of Passover.

Claire continues to bless us every day as a loving sister, child, grandchild, cousin, niece and friend. She impresses us every day with her strong moral character and diverse accomplishments.

As an adult in the Jewish community, she can now accept responsibility for using these gifts wisely and commit to a lifetime of learning.

We want to especially thank Rabbi Sam Gordon for creating Sukkat Shalom—a welcoming, comfortable place for our family to learn and grow and for helping Claire with her D'Var Torah. We are also very grateful to Cantorial Soloist Adam Davis for teaching, motivating and preparing Claire for today. Of course, we are thankful for our Executive Director, Judy Buckman, who is a truly caring person and keeps Sukkat Shalom moving and organized.

Most of all, we would like to thank everyone for joining us today and helping make this a special occasion for Claire and our entire family.

③ Dear Family and Friends,

Welcome to Michael's Bar Mitzvah and to Congregation Sukkat Shalom. We are honored that you are here to celebrate this most special day in his life.

Congregation Sukkat Shalom originated eight years ago, the vision of Rabbi Sam Gordon. "Sukkat Shalom" literally means House of Peace. A sukkah, or shelter, is open to the sky, and is a place where all are welcome. Sukkat Shalom originated with the premise of being a spiritual place of worship, being open and welcoming to all. We were one of a small group of families who met in the home of one of our congregants. Family education, activities for our children, and stimulating discussions with the adults occurred and were the beginning of "Family School." It was the perfect place for our interfaith family, providing us with an open minded philosophy that has allowed us to explore our shared backgrounds and values. Today, Sukkat Shalom has grown to become a full fledged synagogue with over 150 families.

Several years ago, Michael expressed the desire to have a Bar Mitzvah. With the help of some wonderful teachers, he has learned to read Hebrew, and chant and interpret his Torah readings. His hard work and dedication have helped him achieve his goal tonight.

This day would not have been possible without the support of many. Special thanks to Rabbi Gordon for providing us with a place to worship, as well as for his guidance, assistance and friendship. Thank you to Cantorial Soloist Adam Davis, whose warm, and always positive manner has been an inspiration to Michael as he helped him prepare his Torah portion. And thank you to Judy Buckman, our Executive Director, who has guided us through the Bar Mitzvah process and was always there "just to talk."

There's nothing like the warmth of family and friends during a celebration. We thank you all for joining us tonight.