

Bar✧Bat Mitzvah Handbook



Congregation Neveh Shalom
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Portland, Oregon 97239
503-246-8831

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A. WELCOME FROM YOUR STAFF

1. Letter to Parents

Mazal Tov! It is indeed a great joy in the life of the family to prepare for a young person's becoming a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*. It is the first significant milestone in the life of the young person for which he or she is primarily responsible. Through the experience of preparing for and the achievement of becoming a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*, the young person celebrates his or her physical maturity, intellectual growth, moral responsibilities and the capacity to sanctify life and time.

Like all Jewish life cycle events, the *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* brings a moment of personal and family change to our community. The young person stands before a community of Jewish adults who have gathered for prayer and learning, and will do what only adult Jews are permitted to do—lead the community in prayer and teach the community from the *Torah*. The best preparation for this special moment is to join that community by participating as a family regularly at *Shabbat* morning, Friday evening, or daily morning *minyan* services. Come to the synagogue for prayer, for learning, and for community—you need not have any background. Your participation in religious services says something very powerful to your children about the importance of community, of tradition, and of God in your own life.

The *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* ceremony is not the culminating celebration of Jewish education, but a new threshold for the person. He or she is now prepared with the background, the language, and the synagogue skills to attain mature and lasting insights into Jewish life values. The *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* is capable of assuming a responsible role in the religious activities of our people. He or she has gained proficiency in skills that took years to develop. Without continued support and reinforcement, these skills will lapse into a remote, intangible memory of an experience. We know you will encourage your young adult to internalize this event through continued experiences with Jewish life in the synagogue and the community.

Our desire at Congregation Neveh Shalom is to make the *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* ceremony and celebration a dignified and meaningful event for your family. Please feel free to contact the staff at any time for assistance.

Rabbi Daniel Isaak
Extension 115

Rabbi Bradley Greenstein
Extension 136

Susan Bernstein
Extension 128
503.293.7306

Marci Atkins, Event Coordinator
Extension 129
503.293.7308

2. Introduction

The institution of *Bar Mitzvah* historically recognized that a thirteen-year-old boy was eligible to assume the religious duties within the Congregation of Israel. The thirteenth birthday was a point of educational achievement; a point at which the practices of Jewish religious life had been learned. This, coupled with the facets of Judaism nurtured within the family—the practice of *mitzvot*, a sense of justice, compassion for fellow human beings and a feeling of nearness to God—meant that the youth was well-prepared to become *Bar Mitzvah*, a man of duty.

According to Jewish Law (*halakah*), a youth was considered *Bar Mitzvah*, with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities of an adult in the community upon reaching the age of thirteen, whether or not he confirmed his status by participating in the synagogue service. In most instances, however, boys gave communal meaning to their newly acquired status by participating in services and by presenting an original *d'var Torah*, or teaching, to the congregation.

The *Bat Mitzvah* ceremony for girls is a religious innovation of the twentieth century. According to Jewish law, a girl became obligated to observe the *mitzvot* at the age of twelve. In the Conservative Movement, girls and boys take on the same obligations and responsibilities when they become *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*.

At Congregation Neveh Shalom, an egalitarian Conservative synagogue, all young people, both boys and girls, celebrate becoming *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* after their thirteenth Hebrew birthday. We invite each young person to participate in religious services in a way that demonstrates his or her skills and abilities to function as an adult member of the Jewish community.

The *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* observance of a young person is not to be regarded as a graduation after which Jewish education ceases. Rather, it marks a smooth transition from the primary phase of Jewish instruction to the beginning of an adult-oriented education program. Students are strongly encouraged to continue their education by participating in Neveh Shalom's Hebrew High School and Wednesday Night School, by becoming regular *Torah* readers for the congregation, and by helping younger students as peer tutors.

The *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* is an important milestone not only in the life of a young person and his or her family, but also for the community. We celebrate when a young person steps before the congregation to lead the community in prayer and to teach *Torah*. The event is not a private family affair, but a rite of passage observed amidst the regular ritualized worship tradition of our community. As such, there will be times when other life cycle events will be acknowledged and celebrated during the worship service, such as *aufrufs* (when a bride and groom receive an *aliyah*), baby namings, and the recognition of birthdays and anniversaries.

3. Staff Responsibilities

Rabbi Daniel Isaak
503-246-8831 ext.115

and

Rabbi Bradley Greenstein
503-246-8831 ext.136

Is the final authority on date assignment
Is the final authority on modifications to the ceremony

Meets with families and students in the fall of the 6th grade year to address issues of community, inclusion and cohesiveness

Meets with families and students for a series of classes

Meets twice with parents and student for speech preparation

Assesses accommodations needed for special circumstances.

Schedules post *B'nai Mitzvah* for High Holy Day participation

Susan Bernstein
Education Director
503-246-8831, x 128
OR 293-7306

Oversees Hebrew and Religious School curriculum; prepares and administers Hebrew program

Checks Hebrew progress for all students enrolled in Hebrew and Religious School program

Schedules and coordinates 6th grade retreat

Checks 13 *Mitzvot* requirements

Assigns Adult tutors for Hebrew School and Trope Class students

Marci Atkins, ext. 129
Events Coordinator
Clergy Assistant
OR 293-7308

Provides informational material, including parent handbook, for all meetings and classes; updates material on a regular basis

Assists Rabbis in assigning the Bar/t Mitzvah date (the assigned date must be after the 13th birthday)

Assists families in assigning honors, extra additions to service, *aliyot*, and future torah readings

Gathers and records Hebrew names of those receiving Torah Aliyot

Reminds families of ritual requirements for service

Meets with families 6 months prior to the event to coordinate their event at CNS. Please call to schedule an appointment

Explains catering/food options

Assigns peer tutors/parent buddies when requested

Schedules Rabbi's meetings with student and parents to discuss speech. Please call at least two months prior to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date

Assists and proofs Friday and Saturday Orders of Service

Is available before the event for any last minute questions, and facilitates room setup with custodial and catering staff

Oversees music for *Kiddush* luncheon if part of celebration

Prepares final billing or adjustments

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Adult Tutor

For students enrolled in 3-day Hebrew School or Haftarah Trope Class: Adult tutor will be assigned by Education Director.

For students not enrolled in 3-day Hebrew School: Tutor is hired by family to provide training

Tutorial Staff

Teaches Haftarah *trope* to students not enrolled in Neveh Shalom 3 day Hebrew School if needed

Meets with every student at least weekly beginning 6 weeks before the Bar/t Mitzvah

Peer Tutor

Meets with assigned student on a regular basis, usually every other week for 45 minute sessions, to reinforce instruction given by adult tutor. This is by request only. Contact Marci Atkins at least 9 months in advance

Office Staff
503-246-8831

Edits material provided by family for inclusion in Chronicle; a form will be mailed to you a few weeks before the Chronicle deadline

Provides technical support in producing Orders of Services for Friday and Saturday program

In-House Caterer
Allen Levin, 503.849.2605

Works with family to provide menu suitable for event and family budget

If outside caterer is used, in-house caterer oversees their work to ensure that *kashrut* is maintained. This choice requires separate agreement form with the synagogue and private contract with the caterer. Contact Marci Atkins for paperwork and details

Wendy Hetzler, volunteer

Assigns Torah readers for Shabbat morning. Makes recordings and text copies for families. Assigns all future Torah readers for Shabbat mornings. Contact Marci Atkins for contact information

B. EDUCATIONAL EXPECTATIONS

Preparation for an upcoming *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is a very exciting and busy time for every family. The following pages provide you with an explanation of the programs that all *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* students are expected to attend, as well as programs that are optional but very helpful to the learning process. Some classes are intended for parents and students to learn together, and parents are strongly encouraged to be present for those experiences. Additionally, we encourage families to begin attending worship services regularly together in the two years before the *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*, if it has not been their habit to do so. This demonstrates not only that Judaism is a religion for adults, but also allows the parents to gain familiarity and comfort with the customs and traditions of the Neveh Shalom service. At Neveh Shalom we have regularly scheduled worship services on weekday mornings (Monday-Friday at 7:15 AM (7:00 AM on Rosh Hodesh), and Sunday at 9:00 AM); Friday evenings at 6:15pm and Shabbat mornings at 9:00am. It is our hope that the preparation for this important event in your family's life will permanently enrich your family's knowledge of Judaism, and motivate each family member to pursue Jewish studies and practice enthusiastically, whereby you may be drawn closer to God, to *Torah*, and to the people of Israel.

1-Please refer to 3rd thru 7th grade Timeline in Appendix

2- Description of Required Programs

Religious School Attendance

All 6th and 7th grade students must attend Neveh Shalom Religious School a minimum of 75% of all sessions. Sixth grade students attend half a year on Sunday and half a year on Saturday. Seventh grade students attend on Wednesday evenings.

Synagogue Attendance

Students in 6th grade are expected to attend ten (10) *Shabbat* services, either Friday night or Saturday morning. *Shabbat* school attendance can be credited to meet this requirement. Seventh grade students are expected to attend twenty (20) *Shabbat* services, at least half of which (10) need to be on *Shabbat* (Saturday) morning.

Shabbat School for Sixth Grade Students

This program is designed to give students an opportunity to become familiar with the Saturday morning service, with special emphasis placed on the *Torah* service and the *Torah* portion of the week. Students will learn torah tropes and have the opportunity to lead the *Torah* service and other prayers usually assigned a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Students will be visiting services in the main sanctuary and the chapel, as well as engage in classroom work; therefore, students are asked to dress appropriately and respectfully for attendance at these services. Students will be assigned to either fall or spring *Shabbat* school; classes are held from 9:30 AM to 12:00 noon.

Tefillin Class for 6th Grade Students

One important skill that *B'nai Mitzvah* need to learn is how to put on *t'filleen*. These classes will not only give the students practice putting on and taking off *t'filleen*, but will also cover the significance of *t'filleen*, when they are worn, how they are made and the blessings connected with them. This instruction is held four times during Sunday Religious School. Students and parents will be informed of the dates for *t'filleen* instruction via letter. If students continue to come to a daily service at least once a week and wear *t'filleen* after the *t'filleen* class is over, then the synagogue, through the A.E. and Sylvia Rosenberg *T'filleen* Fund, will present the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* with his/her own set of *t'filleen* at the time of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.

Parent Orientation Meeting with Rabbis, Susan Bernstein and Marci Atkins

Many questions about the significance, training and logistics of the actual service for your child's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* ceremony arise as you begin your planning. You may also have concerns regarding the associated celebrations and family involvement. A special meeting is held during the fall of each year on a Sunday morning during Religious School hours to address some of these topics. Rabbi Isaak, Rabbi Greenstein and staff members will talk about the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* preparation and service. Families will be notified of the date and time of the meeting.

Torah and Haftarah Trope Training

TORAH Trope training is part of our Shabbat School curriculum which every student will receive during the 6th grade year. Students not enrolled in the 3 day Hebrew School will receive *HAFTARAH trope* training taught by our adult tutorial staff beginning approximately one year before the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date. Students learn the blessings and *tropes* (melodies) for the *Torah* and *Haftarah*, and begin working on their own portion and additional service parts. One-on-one classes are held at a time mutually agreed upon by the student and adult tutor. Alternatively, students who have a private tutor and wish to continue to study with him/her will need to inform staff of your training. These students are still required to meet weekly with the Staff at CNS during the last six weeks prior to their *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date unless other arrangements have been made in advance.

Class for Parents and Students with the Rabbis

During the 7th grade year, or late spring for our 6th graders with Fall Bar/t Mitzvah dates, the Rabbis will meet with parents and students for a series of four classes. The purpose of these classes is for the Rabbis to begin to get to know each family in a smaller group setting. Students and parents will meet for this class according to classroom assignment; a letter of specific dates, for a targeted group of students based on their Bar/t Mitzvah date, will be mailed to you in advance.

3- Highly Encouraged Programs

The 6th Grade Retreat

The 6th Grade Retreat is usually held in the fall for all 6th graders and their families. The weekend emphasizes the Bar/Bat Mitzvah as a religious experience. Families and 6th graders celebrate Shabbat together and get to know each other in an informal camp atmosphere, setting the stage for the coming year filled with Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations

13 Mitzvot

This voluntary two-year program is designed to place additional emphasis on *mitzvot* (commandments) during the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* year. Students are expected to perform a minimum of thirteen *mitzvot* in the areas of *Torah* (study), *Avodah* (religious practice) and *G'milut Hasidim* (community service). Students meet once a month on Sundays for one hour. Upon completion of the program, the student will receive a special presentation at his/her *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. An informational meeting for parents and students who are interested in learning more about this program is scheduled early in the fall on a Sunday directly following Religious School.

Peer Tutors

Students enrolled in our 3-day Hebrew School program or Trope Training Class are eligible to be assigned a peer tutor approximately one year prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. The program is designed to provide *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* students with extra practice sessions prior to the ceremony, in a casual and non-stressful atmosphere. The tutors are our own qualified post-Bar/t Mitzvah students. Peer tutors meet with their students for about 45 minutes every other week at a mutually convenient time and location. There is no additional cost to the family for peer tutoring; the tutors are paid by Neveh Shalom. Typically the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* will honor their tutor with the reading of a *Torah* portion or *aliyah* on the occasion of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Contact Marci Atkins for more information.

C. THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH

1- The Ceremony

The date for the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* at CNS is scheduled as close to the 13th Hebrew birthday as possible. It is not permissible to schedule the ceremony before the 13th Hebrew birthday. Families will be notified by letter approximately 2 years before the 13th birthday that a date is to be assigned. Requests for specific dates should be made at that time. A confirmation letter with your assigned date will follow. If you do not have a letter, you do not have a date.

While the *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* is a status that occurs automatically when a Jewish individual passes the age of 13, it is an age-old custom to celebrate this occasion by the individual demonstrating his or her proficiency in the ritual skills cherished by the community, and welcoming the individual as an adult member into the community.

The occasion of the *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* is not a competition, test or performance. It should be a meaningful religious experience for your family and the congregation. Students are encouraged to do the best they can without comparing themselves to other students—the individual should do as much as his or her own motivation and capabilities permit. At Congregation Neveh Shalom the acknowledgement of the *Bar* and *Bat Mitzvah* occurs during the regularly scheduled Saturday morning worship services.

Occasionally there may be circumstances which would indicate that an alternative service be selected for the occasion, such as a Monday or Thursday morning *minyan*, *Rosh Hodesh* or Festival service, or a *Shabbat Maariv/Havdalah* service. If you feel that one of these other service options might be more appropriate for your child, please contact Rabbi Isaak or Rabbi Greenstein. These requests are reviewed carefully by clergy and must be pre-scheduled.

Friday Evening Service

The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is a participant in the Friday evening service, which begins at 6:15 PM. Please keep in mind that other events and celebrations may coincide with your *simcha* such as baby namings, special synagogue celebrations, *auf-ruf's*, etc., and may include honors during the service. Marci Atkins will inform you in advance if these should occur.

An Erev Shabbat Order of Service is printed every Friday night. As the *Bar/t Mitzvah* family for the weekend, you are entitled to honor your family, guests, or friends by including them as participants in our service. Please refer to the **colored worksheet** in the Appendix. This should be completed and returned to our office staff 2 weeks prior to your *simcha*.

Many families choose to present their child with a *tallit* during the Friday evening service. At this time, a short presentation may be given by one or both parents about the significance of the event. (See Parents' Speech and Blessings in Appendix) While this is an opportunity for parents to express their pride and love, it is not an occasion to review every detail of the child's life. Your remarks should be no more than three minutes in length.

Saturday Morning Honors

We have several opportunities for your relatives and guests to participate in our Shabbat morning service. What a wonderful way to honor special people in your child's life. Please ask those friends and family members who have been honored with an *aliyah* to arrive at services no later than 9:30 AM, and to sit in the front section so they can be easily identified. The *gabbai* may need your assistance to help identify those individuals receiving honors. If honorees are not in the sanctuary by 9:45 AM the *aliyah* may be reassigned to someone else. If any of your honorees are in need of rehearsal or assistance **before Shabbat morning**, we will be happy to practice the appropriate blessings or review directions for opening the Ark or raising and dressing the *Torah* with them. Please let your tutor, a Rabbi, or the Clergy Assistant know of your desire. You may contact the office if you would like copies of the transliteration of the *Torah* blessings or candle blessings in either English or Russian.

Families may wish, but are not obligated to, distribute an explanation of our Saturday morning service to friends and congregants in attendance. The **template we use** is shown as a sample in the Appendix and is modified for each Bar/t Mitzvah by one of our Office Staff once you have provided her with the necessary information. You should plan an appointment with her approximately 4-6 weeks in advance to confirm what she needs of you and the timeframe you will work with. Again, as with the Friday night Order of Service, please refer to the **colored worksheet** at the end of this booklet for the honors you may assign to family and friends during the Saturday morning service.

Marci Atkins will review all the forms and *aliyot/honors* with you when you meet with her. It is extremely important to address the information needed for both the Orders of Services in a timely fashion. Our office staff prepares these Orders week after week and must meet their timelines for drafts, proofreading (by several individuals including your family), and printing. Thank you for being mindful and respectful of this. A **sample of an email** and the information requested of you is in the Appendix.

Torah Readers

You may ask a Jewish member of your family, guest, tutor, or a friend of your child to read a portion of the *Torah* on Saturday morning. This is not essential, but it is a special way of honoring a close friend or relative. *Torah* readers chant a portion directly from the *Torah* using special melodies and no vowels. This is a difficult task not to be confused with the much easier task of having an *aliyah*—being called up to recite the blessing before and after the *Torah* reading. The names of *Torah* readers should be arranged no later than two months prior to your event. Please contact Wendy Hetzler if the reader is in need of the text and CD. All *Torah* readers must be prepared to recite their portion for the Rabbi or assigned staff by Wednesday preceding the Bar/t Mitzvah. Out-of-towners may call the Rabbi and leave a recording of their portion on their voicemail.

Proper Attire

It is customary to dress respectfully and modestly when in a sanctuary. Please remember that everyone, *especially* the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, should dress in an appropriate and modest manner when participating in a religious service. No bare shoulders or midriffs please and short, tight or suggestive clothing is inappropriate. High heels, jeans and tennis shoes are not encouraged.

Kippot and Tallitot

All men must wear a *kipah* when entering the sanctuary. These are available in the foyer. Should you choose to purchase personalized *kippot* these may be ordered through the Women's League Gift Shop or several sites on-line. Allow six weeks for printing and delivery. Additionally, a *tallit* must be worn by both men and women reading from the *Torah* or leading parts of the service. Women are encouraged to wear a head covering if they are going to the *bima*.

Synagogue Decorum

When you step into the sanctuary on Shabbat, you are stepping out of everyday activities and into a sacred space. It is a time to enjoy the holiness of Shabbat as well as to show respect for the Rabbis, the Bar/t families, and the congregation. You will probably be inviting many adults and children who are unfamiliar with our customs and facility. In order to ensure security, decorum and enjoyment for all who come to worship and celebrate, we request that children be supervised at all times. Smoking is prohibited on synagogue premises at all times. Cell phones and other electronic devices should be turned off. Writing is prohibited on *Shabbat* and Festivals. Applause is not appropriate at any time during the service. Business attire is appropriate for all worshippers and guests. You may be held responsible for any damage occurring to the building during your function.

Participation of non-Jews in Bar/Bat Mitzvah Ceremonies

We welcome with open arms the inclusion and participation of non-Jews in our congregational life. There are several ways in which a non-Jewish parent, grandparent, other relative, or friend can participate in the service. These include the *tallit* presentation, sitting on the *bima* with the child, leading the Prayer for Peace (p. 149 of the *Sim Shalom* prayer book), and joining the Jewish spouse at the *bima* AFTER the blessings have been recited.. Any honor related to the Ark or *Torah* (*aliyah*, reading, lifting and dressing) is only available to Jewish people. A Rabbi can answer any further questions.

2- Additional Information Related to the Ceremony

Ushers

While Neveh Shalom plans for a greeter in the foyer, friends of the family may also be asked to usher Friday night and Saturday morning; however, they must be members of Congregation Neveh Shalom and must be above the age of Bar/Bat Mitzvah. On Saturday morning, ushers should be aware of and remind all worshippers and guests that:

- All male worshippers are required to wear a *kippah* or other head covering.
- All Jewish men must wear a *kippah* and *tallit* if they have an *aliyah* on Saturday morning. Women are strongly encouraged to wear a *kippah* and *tallit* if they are honored with an *aliyah*.
- Prayer books and Bibles should be handed out Saturday morning with the request that they be returned to the foyer at the conclusion of the service. Worshippers and guests should be reminded that prayer books and Bibles should never be put on the floor but in the bookracks when not in use.
- In warm weather when the air conditioning is on, the sanctuary doors should remain closed.
- If guests arrive while the Rabbi is speaking, please ask them to wait in the foyer until the Rabbi is finished. They may enter when the Rabbi is done speaking.

Photography

Flash photography is prohibited on *Shabbat* (both Friday night and Saturday) and Festivals. For videotape options, please contact the Event Coordinator. If you plan to use a professional photographer for family photos before *Shabbat*, please inform the Event Coordinator so that time in the sanctuary can be scheduled. During the spring and summer months, please let us know if you plan to use the outside courtyard for photographs so that we can shut off the sprinkler system.

Babysitting

Babysitting for Saturday morning services is available between 9:30AM and 12 noon by reservation. Reservations must be phoned in to the office (503-246-8831x100) by Thursday at noon. If extra sitters are necessary due to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* family guests, the family will be charged for the extra care giver at the rate paid by the synagogue.

Throwing Candy

The tradition of throwing candy after the reading of the *Haftarah* is an option you may consider. The synagogue will provide you with a limited amount of soft, gummy-like candy wrapped individually, in consideration of hygiene and safety. Please do not provide candy of your own at the service. These can be thrown ONLY from the front few rows. The Rabbi will see that the baskets are distributed to the family in advance.

Gifts to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*

During the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* ceremony, your child will receive a certificate of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* and a copy of the *Tanach* presented by the congregation. Your child will also receive a *Kiddush* cup, given jointly by the Men's Club and Women's League. If your child has completed the 13 *Mizvot* program, s/he will also be awarded a *tzedakah* box. It is appropriate for your child to acknowledge the presentation of these gifts with thank you notes.

3- The Celebration

A number of tasks need to be accomplished before the celebration to ensure the dignity, order, and joy of the event. We will do all we can to make certain your *simcha* runs as smoothly from our perspective and invite you to be our partners in meeting deadlines and communicating with the Staff throughout your planning process. Please refer to the Ceremony and Celebration Timelines in the Appendix for tracking these important tasks.

Invitations

It is a courtesy when sending invitations to include Rabbi and Carol Isaak and Rabbi Bradley and Sarah Greenstein, Addresses can be obtained from the synagogue directory. All invitations should indicate when your service begins on Friday at either 6:15 and 9:00 AM on Saturday. Family should be seated in the sanctuary when services begin. A sample informational letter which may be helpful for your non-Jewish guests is included at the end of this handbook. Feel free to personalize and edit as needed for your family's celebration.

Article for the Chronicle

A form will be mailed to you a few months before the Chronicle deadline by our Office Staff so that you may include information about your child in our synagogue publication. You may include a photo (either black and white or color, any size—no glamour shots, please); names of parents, siblings, grandparents and great-grand parents; school name and grade; hobbies and interests.

The Kiddush Luncheon

Another major component of the celebration of a young person arriving at *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is the festive meal following the religious service. It is strongly recommended that luncheon festivities be kept at the synagogue, as the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is a religious event. This aspect of the occasion is emphasized by celebrating together at the synagogue. A *Kiddush* on Saturday after services is the traditional way of sharing your *simcha* with the congregation. Families are asked to host this celebration as a tribute to your child. On Saturday, you may choose to sponsor a simple "Basic" *Kiddush* (see description of the Basic *Kiddush* in the Appendix) or provide a complete luncheon menu of your choice. Each are in good taste and appropriate. All events, whether at the synagogue or at another location, should respect Jewish dietary restrictions. A *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is a *simcha* for regular worshippers as well. It is they who are the core group for weekly worship and will be included in the *Kiddush* that your family hosts. We suggest you plan on 50 extra regular congregants.

Food and Catering

Our kitchen is strictly kosher. No food, other than cookies, may be brought in from the outside. If you have any doubts planning your menu, check with our in-house caterer, Allen Levin at 503-849-2605 or centurycatering@msn.com. If you are interested in using an outside caterer, please contact the Event Coordinator for more information. There is a separate contract and additional fees for this privilege. Additional guidelines and facilities fees are included at the end of this handbook.

Cookies!!

Typically, the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* family, friends, and relatives bake sweets at home in advance, and on Friday morning put the sweets on the trays provided by the synagogue. Alternatively, or as a supplement to the home-baked items, your caterer, Albertsons, or any commercially baked sweets with a *hechsher* or proper kosher indicator on the package can also provide sweets. Be sure to follow the Neveh Shalom Baking Guidelines located in the Appendix. Because most sweets are dairy, Neveh Shalom will provide a tray of *parve* items at no additional cost to the family.

Challah for Saturday Morning

Challah will be provided by our caterer each week. It can also be baked by family or friends. The *Challah* is only needed on Saturday afternoon at the conclusion of services before the *Kiddush* luncheon.

Flowers for the Bima

Flowers for the *bima* in the Main Sanctuary may be provided by the family and must be delivered on Friday prior to 4:00 PM. We can provide large containers which are 15" in diameter and 14½" from the floor to the top for fresh flowers. There are also silk floral sprays available for your use. If you choose to use these arrangements, please notify the Event Coordinator. You may not in any way alter the arrangements provided by the synagogue.

Our Stampfer Chapel does not have the same space allowance for large floral sprays so most families opt out.

Decorations and Centerpieces for the Kiddush

Decorations and centerpieces for *Shabbat* and Festival *Bar/Bat Mitzvahs* should be in keeping with the spirit of the day. Items that are inappropriate for use on *Shabbat* and Festivals (cameras, writing implements, money, candles) should be avoided in your theme or décor. When in doubt, check with the Event Coordinator. Mylar confetti may **not** be used as part of your decorations, upstairs and / or downstairs. Jewish books make beautiful centerpieces for your *simcha*. After your event, the donated books will get a nameplate honoring your child. This is a lasting way to commemorate a special milestone in your family's life. If you would like more information about this option, please contact the Feldstein Library at 503-246-8831x118. Fresh cut flowers and candy are also popular choices.

Music at the Kiddush

If the family wishes to have music at the *Kiddush* luncheon, the music must be Jewish in nature and appropriate to the occasion, such as klezmer or Israeli. Please be in touch with the Event Coordinator before finalizing these arrangements.

MAZON

The MAZON program is dedicated to feeding the hungry. You are encouraged to donate to MAZON an amount equal to 3% of the food cost of your event. The Event Coordinator can help you with these arrangements.

4. After the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Ceremony and Celebration

Ba'al Torah

At Neveh Shalom we encourage our post *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* students to continue strong involvement in synagogue life. One way in which they can do this is to chant Torah at a future Shabbat Service. They may also be invited to read their *Haftarah* portion a year later when it comes up again. The first time that your child chants a portion following their own *simcha*, the Rabbi will recognize the event, praise your child before the congregation, and lead everyone in a congratulatory song.

To encourage our teens to continue occasionally chanting additional portions, we have started a *Ba'al Korei* (practiced *Torah* reader) incentive. They will be provided with a copy of the portion with and without vowels (plus a CD or tape recording if requested) and are also able to request a tutorial session. *Torah* readers can also receive community service hours for their efforts.

Additional Opportunities

In addition to serving as *Shabbat Torah* readers, our post *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* students are encouraged to remain active in the synagogue through a variety of programs and activities. Our teens are invited to lead parts of the service during the High Holy Days each year. They are encouraged to continue their formal Jewish education through enrollment in Neveh Shalom's Hebrew High or Wednesday Night Religious High School program. Several serve each year as Assistants in the Religious School. Some participate in the Congregation's Adult Choir and the Peer Tutor Program which are other opportunities to earn community service hours. Finally, large numbers of post *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* teens join Neveh Shalom's Kadima and USY Youth Groups, cementing lifelong friendships and relationships.

Bar/t Mitzvah "Buddies"

If this is your first time through the Bar/t Mitzvah process, you may find the planning and organization to be overwhelming. While making certain your child is on the right track with their studies is clearly the most important aspect of the weekend; there are still so many details to be concerned about both within and outside of the synagogue. Who will get an aliyah? Who will help me setup cookies? What shall I do for centerpieces? Where shall we go for our evening party? Where will the out-of-towners stay? The list goes on and on. If you feel you need some assistance and want to be paired with someone who has "walking in these shoes before", please be in touch with Marci Atkins. She will "buddy" you up!

Yossi's Suit Closet

We have set up a lending service to help those members who have growing boys and do not want to purchase a new suit for their upcoming Bar Mitzvah. Our suit closet is ready to help those families for this special occasion. If you have the need for a suit that is in fairly new condition for your *simcha*, please contact Stephanie Arnheim at (503) 539-2602. Conversely, if you have a gently used suit after your event that needs a new home, please consider donating it to *Yossi's Suit Closet* so you may continue to help others. Please contact Stephanie Arnheim at (503) 539-2602 with any questions or donations.