

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE B'NAI MITZVAH PROCESS

How can I help my child prepare?

As with any large endeavor your child takes on, parents can be supportive partners, helping your child to manage their time, being interested listeners and helping him/her to see through the preoccupations of the celebration to the essence of this milestone. We ask each family to attend at least six Shabbat evening and six Shabbat morning services prior to your celebration.

Attending services often as a family helps everyone to feel comfortable with the service and the prayers and to have an idea of how your family's Bar/Bat Mitzvah service will be. Additionally, it is nice to support the other students in your child's class as they become Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

How will we participate Friday night?

- Your family will be called up to light the Shabbat candles
- Your child will lead the service from Bar'chu through V'ahavta
- The B'nai Mitzvah family sponsors the Shabbat Nosh preceding the service
- Sponsor the Bimah flowers in memory of a loved one or in honor of your child

Is it possible to have a Shabbat Dinner at the Temple?

Of course! Many families choose to have a Shabbat dinner at the Temple for their guests either before or after the Shabbat Evening service. The rental fee for use of the Temple facilities is dependent on the location of the dinner, and includes set up of tables and chairs for the dinner. All other aspects of the dinner including clean-up are the responsibility of the family and/or caterer. Please contact Dollie (210-733-9135 x126 or dollie@beth-elsa.org) as soon as possible to reserve a space for a dinner.

What does it mean to sponsor the Shabbat Nosh?

The B'nai Mitzvah family generally hosts the Nosh preceding the Friday evening service in honor of their child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The cost of sponsoring the Nosh is \$150 and includes challah, wine and grape juice. If you would like to bring additional food to enhance please let Dollie know at least one month prior. Additional food items need to be at the Temple by 4:00 pm, trayed and ready to serve. Additional details with ideas on what to provide and how much, can be found on the Temple website.

What happens on Saturday Morning?

- At 10:15 am you will meet the Rabbis and Cantor in the President's Room for a brief ceremony to prepare for this sacred moment.
- The Bar/Bat Mitzvah will lead the majority of the service including reading from the Torah and offering a D'var Torah.
- Parents will offer words of blessing to their child after the D'var Torah.

I've never written a blessing before. How do I write one for my child on this special day?

This is a unique opportunity to add to this sacred moment by sharing a blessing with your child. There are guidelines available on the Temple website (www.beth-elsa.org) and the clergy are available to help as well.

How can our family and friends participate in the service?

About three months before the service you will receive an email from Edith with a link to fill out a Family Honors form. When filling out this form there are also guidelines on who should participate in each honor. Please don't hesitate to contact Cantor Berlin with questions.

How do we schedule family photos for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

Some people choose to take photos during the optional Family rehearsal on Friday morning. Others prefer to take pictures on Saturday morning before the service. Whatever you decide, be sure to schedule this with Edith so that it is on the Temple calendar to ensure that the space is available and the appropriate people are notified. If you choose to take pictures on Saturday morning, you may come early to take family photos and one of the clergy will arrive by 9:30 am to take out the Torah for any pictures you would like with the Torah.

Are we allowed to take photos or video during the service?

You may have a photographer or videographer during the service ONLY in the organ loft. Additionally, the services are live streamed. If you would like a copy of the service, contact Edith at edith@beth-elsa.org and she will give you downloading instructions. Keep in mind that technology is not always reliable and there is always a chance, for any service, that there may be a problem with the streaming.