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# Bar & Bat Mitzvah HANDBOOK



## Herzl-Ner Tamid Conservative Congregation Bar/Bat Mitzvah Clergy and Staff

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## B'ruchim HaBa-im / Welcome!

Shalom Parents and Guardians,

We are so excited to partner with you on this sacred journey through the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience. You are about to embark on one of the most exciting and rewarding experiences in your family's Jewish life, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah of your child. This handbook includes suggestions for ways in which you can enhance and enrich the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience for your entire family, as well as information regarding the entire Bar/Bat Mitzvah process. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a ceremony with so many levels of meaning. For your child, it represents a coming of age, an opportunity to recognize potential, develop leadership skills, connect to the larger community and shine in the presence of family and friends. For you, it is a time of reflection on thirteen years of parenthood, and an opportunity to anticipate new adventures in your child's future.

All of us at Herzl-Ner Tamid want to help you to make this occasion everything you want it to be. Please feel free to call upon our staff for advice, support and counsel. Special components of our program include:

- A "Becoming a Leader" Trip based on experiential education and developing leadership capabilities.
- Students donning tefillin and tallit at the Sunday morning minyan prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience.

- Torah reading date 3 months after becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- Putting the "mitzvah" into the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience with sustained social action projects.
- Interview a Holocaust survivor, Ethiopian Jew, or IDF soldier and present to the 7th Grade your findings. Work with the Director of Education and classroom teacher in this process.
- The Twinning Program: This program twins Bar and Bat Mitzvah students with victims of the Shoah who perished before they had an opportunity to celebrate their bar or bat mitzvah in order to carry on their memory.

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us at your earliest convenience. The Director of Education is your first contact regarding anything related to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process at HNT. All our best to you for a simcha full of great meaning and joy!



## Roles

The following section tells you more about the role of our clergy and staff, and details as to what happens when you and your child meet with them.

### The Director of Education's Role

The Director of Education is there to be the first point of contact for you throughout the Bar/ Bat Mitzvah experience at HNT. The Director of Education is your go-to person at HNT for anything related to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience.

### The Rabbi's Role

The Rabbi will meet with parents to craft a meaningful Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience for your child. Over the months to follow, the Rabbi will work with each student several times to help develop the student's D'var Torah, or words of wisdom related to the specific Torah or Haftarah portion of each student. The Rabbi is available to meet with parents and students throughout the process for counseling and special assistance.

### Cantor-Kurland's Role

Cantor Kurland teaches students on several different levels. First, Cantor teaches the mechanics of tefillah (prayer): how to chant the Torah and Haftarah portions, the blessings and the tefillot (prayers). Second, Cantor attempts to convey a love for the text by making the letters of the prophets and prayers dance and come alive for the student. As a by-product of these efforts, the student often develops an enthusiasm for the holy words, a deepened self-confidence, and sense of pride and accomplishment. Working with our educational team, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will absorb and learn the underlying principles and religious perspectives to continue on their Jewish journey.

### The Administrative Assistant to the Clergy

The Administrative Assistant to the Clergy sends out all important mailings and forms and does the scheduling for the Rabbi. If a change is needed to the Cantor's schedule once set up by the Director of Education, please contact the Administrative Assistant to the Clergy to reschedule those appointments. Thank you for sending all Hakol and participant information to this person as well in a timely manner.

### Operations Director

The Operations Director is staff member at HNT who helps families organize the Kiddush luncheon, or other celebration arrangements at the synagogue, after the Bar/ Bat Mitzvah service. Please coordinate all building logistics and details with this staff person.



## The Bar and Bat Mitzvah Timeline

Please Note: All times are approximate two or more years out, generally starting with the 5th grade.

### During the 5th Grade Year at FRS

- Group parent meeting with the Director of Education and the B'nai Mitzvah Scheduler.
- Parents complete online Bar/Bat Mitzvah Shul Cloud form after meeting with the Director of Education and the B'nai Mitzvah Scheduler and submit the necessary information.
- Spring of 5th Grade Year: Distribution of B'nai Mitzvah list with assigned dates.
- Student attends classes and synagogue for 5th grade, or is enrolled in a Jewish day school, or family makes arrangements with the Director of Education.

### 12 Months Prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Parents and student meet with the Director of Education for a general orientation to discuss the B'nai Mitzvah process, begin to develop and discuss the mitzvah project, answer questions and distribute Torah portion booklet. The booklet contains a copy of the full Torah reading, a copy of the appropriate Haftarah (with translation), Torah and Haftarah blessings, and other useful information about the sedra which may serve a resource for the student's D'var Torah. The Director of Education will also provide any special maftir or Haftarah copies.

- Student maintains classroom attendance of at least 70%
- Family and student participate in Friday evening and Saturday morning services as often as possible

### 10 Months Prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- The Administrative Assistant to the Clergy will contact family to schedule assessment with Cantor and Rabbi meetings.

- Student meets with Cantor for Hebrew and prayer assessment, where he will assess the student's reading ability by asking the child to read a familiar prayer and a Hebrew passage that may not be familiar. The Cantor will indicate if additional tutoring would be required at this time. He will also assign the Torah and Haftarah readings.
- Student begins series of approximately 12 half-hour Torah Tutoring sessions.
- Continue with Mitzvah project, family preparations, synagogue attendance, and classroom attendance.

### 9 Months Prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- The Administrative Assistant to the Clergy will contact family to schedule the parent meeting with the Rabbi, as well as student meetings with the Rabbi to work on the D'var Torah.
- Parents and students have a conversation with the Director of Education about the direction and progress of the mitzvah project.
- Torah Tutor sessions continue.



### 6-7 Months Prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- After meeting with the Director of Education, the Director of Education will contact you to schedule lessons with Cantor: Total 22 lessons consisting of 19 sessions of 30 minutes in Cantor's office and 3 sessions of 45 minutes in the Sanctuary. The last three appointments are an opportunity for hands-on training and getting accustomed to being on the bimah (the pulpit). At this point, we concentrate on the skills of projecting, focusing, fine-tuning skills and getting ready for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah day. This is an excellent time for parents to come and watch.
- Student has first meeting with Rabbi to study the student's Torah portion and generate ideas for the D'var Torah (learning insight) that the student will prepare and share at the Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

### 6 Months Prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Weekly sessions with Cantor.
- 2nd D'var Torah meeting with Rabbi.
- Connect with Operations Coordinator to begin planning synagogue celebration and options.



### 4 Months Prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- 3rd D'var Torah meeting with Rabbi.
- Schedule a Torah reading or alternative prayer leadership role with the Director of Education for three months after the B'nai Mitzvah ceremony.

### 2-3 Months Prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Letter from HNT office with:
  - Hakol Form
  - Family Participation Form
- Submit to the Clergy Assistant the article and photo of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student by the first day of the month prior to the month of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- Example: for a March Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the profile and photo must be submitted by February 1.
- Finalize celebratory details and forms.
- Bring HNT account up to date.

### 1 Month Prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Optional: Submit Parent Insert for the Shabbat brochure to the Rabbi for approval. Comments must be limited to 1 half-page (8.5x 5.5).
- Any Torah readers (example: family) need to call the Administrative Assistant to the Clergy to schedule a time with the Cantor to review their Torah portion either in person or over the phone.

- Continue with Mitzvah project, family preparations, synagogue attendance, and classroom attendance.
- Finalize catering details with the Operations and Facilities Manager.

### 2 Weeks Prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Parents submit their remarks/speech of blessing to the child (300 word limit) to the Rabbi by email.
- Parents submit Family Participation Form to the clergy assistant.
- Before the Monday prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, all Torah readers must meet with or call Cantor to review their Torah portion chanting.
- Havdalah at home with your family (see the Director of Education for assistance)

### 1 Week Prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- Sunday: Attend Sunday morning 9:00 am minyan and don Tefillin.
- Monday: Prior to this day, all Torah readers must have met with or had a phone conversation with Cantor regarding their Torah portion.
- Tuesday: Copies of the approved Shabbat brochure insert (optional) and family-ordered Kippot (also optional, see page 9) due to the Administrative Assistant to the Clergy. Final meeting and practice with the Rabbi and Cantor for a walk-through of the service and review of any last-minute items. Bar/Bat Mitzvah child needs to be accompanied by at least one parent / guardian and bring copy of their D'var Torah to practice from the bimah. The rehearsal is typically scheduled from 4:00-5:00 that day. From 3:00-4:00, families can schedule pictures at HNT with the Operations Coordinator.



## The Jewish Journey Preparing Two or more Years Out

The Jewish journey begins long before a Bar/Bat Mitzvah and continues for a lifetime! Everything you do as Jewish parents helps prepare your child to mark the first 13 years of his/her Jewish journey by demonstrating leadership and celebrating with confidence.

Please contact the Director of Education with any questions about the following information or how we can help your family during this special time. Regular Shabbat attendance supports a student's preparation for a leadership role as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The goal is for students to become familiar and comfortable with the flow and content of both the Friday evening and Shabbat morning services. Students in the Middle School B'Yachad programs will have experiences leading the congregation in selected prayers and the order of the service that will compliment and supplement the classroom curriculum. Additionally, students will become comfortable speaking in front of others. Regular classroom and B'Yachad attendance will support and enhance a student's Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience.

### 6th Grade

The 6th Grade class centers on prayer leadership, not only learning the prayers, but mastering them so students feel comfortable walking into any Jewish service. The entire 6th grade year is spent focusing on the students' responsibilities on the day of the Bar or Bat mitzvah ceremony while also preparing them to participate in Shabbat services throughout their lives. Students learn what the prayers mean and how they might be relevant to their lives during this class.

### 7th Grade

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony marks the beginning of our lives as a member of the Jewish community, and our 7th Grade class on Tuesdays focuses on "middot" (Jewish values) as well as participation in Jewish life cycle events. This part of our curriculum attempts to provide students with the necessary tools to fulfill the mitzvot, our

most sacred obligations. We also extend the focus to other aspects of Jewish life with this component of our program. Many of the students will become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah during the year, and by focusing this aspect of the class on life after the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year, we are aiming to make the learning relevant and meaningful so that students will continue to attend class after their ceremony.

On Shabbat mornings, we focus on prayer leadership and an in-depth study of the weekly Torah portion. Our class leads the Torah service each week and learns what the prayers are about and how they apply directly to our own lives. Developing a personalized relationship with the liturgy is a central goal of the class. The students also lead the full Kiddush in class, and we spend time dissecting and learning the prayers they will be responsible for when they become B'nai Mitzvah at HNT.

### Family Membership

1. The family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah need to be members in good standing at Herzl-Ner Tamid.
2. All synagogue financial responsibilities must be current. This includes membership dues, building fund obligations, Frankel Religious School tuition and Bar/Bat Mitzvah fees. It is mandatory that all students who have a Bar or Bat Mitzvah scheduled at HNT be enrolled in the Frankel Religious School, a Jewish Day School, or an equivalent program. In addition to FRS enrollment, there is a one-time B'nai Mitzvah fee of \$1000 that is charged to all B'nai Mitzvah families (two years in advance) that covers meetings with the clergy and staff as well as usage of the Social Hall for the celebratory meal. Families must be up to date in their account to begin lessons or alternative financial arrangements need to be made with our Executive Director to continue in our B'nai Mitzvah program.

## Leadership Responsibilities

When a Bar/Bat Mitzvah leads the congregation in prayer, they are serving as “Shaliach Tzibbur”, one who represents the community before God. This is an honored responsibility requiring respect, competence and commitment. The skills and values which our B’nai Mitzvah gain as each becomes a Shaliach Tzibbur stay with them long after the day of the Bar/ Bat Mitzvah celebration.

## Expectations

### On Friday Night

- Selected prayers from Kabbalat Shabbat
- Ma’ariv service for Friday Night: we encourage all our students to participate in some way in the Friday night service before their Bar or Bat Mitzvah. If a B’nai Mitzvah service occurs on Saturday morning or afternoon, then the student is encouraged to lead the Friday before the service.
- If the Bar or Bat Mitzvah service occurs on a weekday, we encourage Friday night participation following the Monday, Thursday, or Rosh Hodesh service instead of before to make it more convenient for out-of-town relatives to attend.

### On Saturday Morning

- Blessings for the wearing of tallit
- Selected prayers during the Shacharit (Morning)
- Hoza’at HaTorah (prayers for taking out the Torah)
- Torah Brachot (blessings before & after the Torah reading)
- Torah portions: either the maftir or acharon (the last few verses of the weekly Torah reading or earlier verses recited just prior to the last portion) and at least one additional reading. B’nai Mitzvah are encouraged to master as many Torah readings as possible.

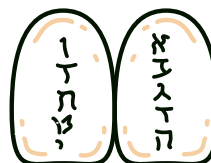
- Haftarah Brachot (blessings before & after the Prophetic reading)
- Haftarah (portion from the Prophets)
- Hachnasat HaTorah (prayers for returning the Torah)
- D’var Torah

The Cantor may assign additional responsibilities when these prayers and biblical portions have been mastered. In addition to leading prayers and chanting from Torah, each Bar/Bat Mitzvah prepares and presents a D’var Torah (literally, “word of Torah”) – sharing with the congregation something significant s/he has learned from the Biblical portion(s) and from the process of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

With all of the details of planning, coordinating, transporting, entertaining and making sure your children and other family members are prepared, it can be easy to lose sight of the real significance of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony. This is a time to celebrate your child’s Jewish growth -- his or her readiness, ability, and commitment to take on Jewish responsibilities. By modeling important Jewish values for your children, you truly give the most lasting gift of all.

## Attendance at Shabbat Services

Attendance at Shabbat services prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration must become a family priority. Beginning in the 6th grade year and continuing up to the date of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, parents should plan to attend a minimum of 18 Shabbat services, either Friday evening or Shabbat morning. Use this opportunity to familiarize yourselves with the Shabbat service, forge bonds with fellow parents and congregants, and become comfortable in the synagogue setting.





## Bimah Honors / Aliyot

Being called to the Torah is a significant honor in Judaism. The profound spiritual importance of this honor is reflected in the name of the ritual, "aliyah," which means "ascending" or "going up."

There are a number of Bimah and Torah honors in the service. Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family has the privilege of selecting people for some of these honors.

A form to complete, listing those receiving honors (Family Participation Form) will be sent to you by mail from the Administrative Assistant to the Clergy 3-4 months prior to your event. This form must be completed and returned to the Administrative Assistant to the Clergy, no later than the Monday of the week prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah week (at least 12 days in advance).

For those who have scheduled a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony on Shabbat, family members may have the opportunity to chant a portion from the Torah reading. These readers must demonstrate proficiency and competency in reading the Torah. Please contact Cantor for more information.

Note: B'nai Mitzvah celebrations take place in the context of community and congregational worship. While family and friends have important roles in leading the service, or may receive aliyot in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, frequently the congregation will be celebrating another simchah (joyous occasion) such as a baby naming, an upcoming wedding, or anniversary.

Occasions such as these are important aspects of congregational life. Therefore, not all bimah honors can be pre-assigned to family members or friends of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah; some honors are reserved for unexpected needs and general congregational participation.

## Parents' Charge

On the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, parents are invited to share words of blessing with their children. The words should be modest, brief (300 words per family) and dignified. The focus should be on your child's character and the Jewish values you wish to see carried on. It is always nice to link your words in some way to the parasha. The Rabbi and the Director of Education are both available to guide you if you would like ideas or would like to see examples of what other parents have done. Please submit your remarks to the Rabbi by email two weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

## Celebrate (Subject to Change)

Often times when celebrating a significant occasion in the lives of our loved ones, we eat! These meals of celebration, or seudat mitzvah, include Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies. Please connect with the Facility Manager to discuss the details of facility use for your B'nai Mitzvah.

Please see information below regarding ways to extend the celebration beyond the service.

### "Pre-Neg" (Snack before services)

Although it is not required, families are encouraged to sponsor a "pre-neg" prior to the 6:00 pm Friday evening service on the weekend of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration. See page 10 for pricing.

### Synagogue Kiddush

It is traditional to provide a light lunch for your guests and the members of the congregation.

### Meals

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a religious event. Two of the central tenants of Conservative Judaism are the observance of Shabbat and kashrut. Because social events connected to Bar/Bat Mitzvah are part of the religious experience, we urge you to observe Shabbat and kashrut in all aspects of your celebration and to include the appropriate blessings both before and after eating.



The Rabbi, Cantor and the Director of Education of Herzl- Ner Tamid will be happy to attend events at which Shabbat and kashrut are honored. Your meal must only include items prepared and served by a certified kosher caterer. We encourage you to begin your celebration at the conclusion of Shabbat for a Saturday night affair. You might consider beginning with Havdalah. Check with the Director of Education and the Rabbi if you are unsure about acceptable kashrut standards.

**Note:** Make your celebratory meals "Mazon Events" by donating a percentage of what you've spent on the meal to Mazon (3% is recommended). This wonderful organization feeds the hungry all over the world, including those in need in our own community.

## Catering and Kitchen Use

Please note that we respect the halachic interpretation of Shabbat in that all food must be cooked before Shabbat.

ONLY A SYNAGOGUE APPROVED CATERER MAY BE USED. Our list of synagogue approved caterers know our kitchen, our policies, and comply with Shabbat and Kashrut guidelines. Food prepared in any home or other outside source may not be brought into the synagogue.

It is the responsibility of each family and caterer to coordinate the disposal or removal of all leftover food after Shabbat.

## Deliveries

All deliveries for weekend events at Herzl-Ner Tamid, must be within regular office hours: Monday -Thursday 9am - 5pm, Friday 9am - 2pm. This includes flowers, food, decorations, equipment, utensils, and supplies. No deliveries can come in or out while Shabbat is celebrated.



## Enhancements

### Tallit, Tefillin, and Kippot

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah student will need his/her own tallit (prayer shawl) and kippah. Tallit, Tefillin and Kippot may be purchased at the Herzl-Ner Tamid Gift Shop (please allow time for delivery) or other vendors you find suitable. In order for a student to learn how to put on a tallit and to become comfortable using Tefillin, we suggest the student attend the Sunday morning minyan prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

- Many families choose to order kippot embossed with their children's names and the date of their simchah. Kippot can be ordered through the HNT Judaica Shop or online. This is optional. HNT always has a supply of generic kippot for your guests to use.
- The HNT Judaica Shop has a beautiful selection of tallitot (prayer shawls) suitable for B'nai Mitzvah students and members of the family.

### Invitations

- For invitations to B'nai Mitzvah parties: If a substantial part of the class are invited to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah party, then the entire FRS class should be invited to the party as well.
- Make certain that those guests who will need to be picked up after Kiddush know the appropriate time to tell their rides to arrive. Except for true emergencies cell phones and other electronic devices are not used on Shabbat.
- Please note the correct spelling of our congregation's name: Herzl-Ner Tamid Conservative Congregation.

Use wording that reinforces the significance of the occasion, such as:

- Join us for (OR in) worship and celebration... when our son/ daughter is called to the Torah as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. . .
- Please worship with us and share our joy when our son/ daughter (name) is called to the Torah as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah on (date).
- With great joy we invite you to share a special time in our lives as we celebrate (students name) becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

### Decorations

Fresh floral arrangements are beautiful but temporary. Although decorations are optional, please consider the following as alternatives or supplements:

- Mitzvah baskets (containing kosher food to be donated, toys for the needy, personal need items or books) are a nice alternative to fresh flowers.
- Table centerpieces or place cards can be printed with the name of the tzedakah agency receiving donations from your child.
- Please note: No photos or likeness of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah are permitted at the Kiddush, on the brochure, or in the Sanctuary. The focus of the ritual of Bar/Bat Mitzvah is on your child entering the community and not solely on the Bar/ Bat Mitzvah as an individual.



## SUMMARY OF FEES (Subject to change)

### Basic Bar/Bat Mitzvah/Seudah Mitzvah\* Fee \$1000 (Not Tax Deductible)

This required fee helps to defray the costs of training and materials.

This fee will be charged to your synagogue account when your child is in the sixth grade. This might be as little as nine months or as much as eighteen months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. This fee can be paid over time, but must be paid in full prior to the Bar/Bat mitzvah date. All costs associated with invited guests or catering options are in addition to the Basic Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee.

### Pre-Shabbat Oneg (Optional Sponsorship):

Fruit, sweets, punch. \$200 (\$100 if co-sponsoring)

### ADDITIONAL USE OPTIONS

#### Friday Evening Facility Usage (until 9pm\*\*)

Friday Evening Dinner

-Skolnick Board Room \$200

-Feinberg Social Hall \$350

Saturday night or Sunday party facility usage \$400

### ADDITIONAL FEES

Kitchen use (includes mashgiach). \$45/hour

Table and chairs including disposable tablecloth. \$15/per table

#### Non-Member Facility Use is subject to a different fee schedule

*For questions about facility or kitchen use, including arrangements for Pre-Neg, Shabbat Dinner at HNT and Kiddush luncheon, please consult with the Operations Coordinator.*

### Special Arrangements or Accommodations:

In a situation where participating in a Shabbat morning service poses specific learning challenges or obstacles for the student, families can request the option of a Mincha/ Havdalah service or weekday service. Please discuss these options thoroughly with the Director of Education before settling on a specific day or time of day, in order to meet all the learning needs of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student. Leadership responsibilities vary depending on the day and time of the service.

\*The Seudah Mitzvah is the celebratory meal

\*\*Extra Facility Fees Apply after 9pm



## Saturday Afternoon Mincha/Havdalah

There are three essential ingredients to this service which include:

1. The Mincha Service which typically begins at 4:00 PM during the Saturday Afternoon Mincha/Havdalah in the Winter months.
2. Seudah Shlishit (Third Meal): The third meal is typically light but nourishing (for example tuna and egg salad). The third meal typically begins at 5:00 PM.
3. Havdalah: If the service itself began at 4:00 PM, Havdalah will occur from 5:45 PM-6:00 PM.

HNT will typically be available for your celebration but is dependent upon the time Shabbat ends on Saturday night.

## Weekday, Sunday, or Rosh Hodesh Service

- These services typically begin at 10:00 AM and run for two hours.
- Students will put on Tefillin and wear throughout the service. It is expected that all people having an Aliyah will also don Tefillin as well.
- The only difference a Rosh Hodesh service has when compared to a weekday or Sunday service is that on Rosh Hodesh, Hallel is recited. The B'nai Mitzvah student may or may not participate in the recitation of Hallel depending upon the discretion of the Cantor and Rabbi.

In cases where children have special learning needs, or if there are gaps in their Hebrew skills, the Director of Education, along with the child's teachers, may recommend private tutoring to supplement the child's ongoing educational program. Some families choose to engage a private tutor because they find the extra support helpful, even though tutoring would not necessarily be required. Any tutor must be approved by the Cantor so that consistency and on-going communication will be maintained throughout the course of the

Bar/Bat Mitzvah training period. Payment arrangements are made directly between the parents and the tutor.

## How will I know if my child will be ready?

Most children who have fully participated with regular attendance in the Frankel Religious School program or a Jewish day school program through the 6th grade year will not require additional tutoring prior to or during their training with the Teen Tutors and the Cantor.

Students participating in our 6th Grade program are evaluated frequently to assess their skill development in Hebrew reading and in mastery of key prayers. You will be notified if there are any concerns. When the Cantor initially meets with the family, he will assess the student's reading ability by asking the child to read a familiar prayer and a Hebrew passage that may not be familiar. The Cantor will indicate if additional tutoring would be required at this time.

## How is the Torah portion determined?

On any given Shabbat, every Jewish congregation around the world reads the same portion from the Torah. This portion is often referred to by the Hebrew word *parasha* or the Aramaic term *sidrah*. There are 54 *parshiot* in the Torah, so occasionally two are combined. Herzl-Ner Tamid follows the practice of reading one third of the weekly Torah portion each Shabbat in a triennial cycle established by the Jewish Theological Seminary.

The Torah portion each week is divided into seven readings, followed by a concluding *maftir* reading from the last three or four verses of the *parasha*. Most of our B'nai Mitzvah students chant one or more of these readings, while family members, friends, and congregants recite the Torah blessings.

On certain Shabbatot, a special *maftir* is chanted from a second Torah scroll. The Shabbat may fall on the first day of the new month (Rosh Chodesh), the day before a Rosh Chodesh, or one of the special weeks prior to Purim or Passover. If the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is scheduled on a Rosh Chodesh (first day of a Hebrew month), four portions are read from the Torah.

### What is the difference between the Torah reading and the Haftarah reading? What are the Acharon and Maftir readings?

The Torah Readings on Shabbat and Festivals is followed by a selection from one of the books of the Prophets, (the second section of the Hebrew Bible.) The reading from the Prophets is the "Haftarah," which means "concluding portion." Generally there is a thematic connection between the Torah portion and the Haftarah. One who chants the Haftarah is first called to the Torah for the "Maftir" (literally, "one who concludes") aliyah. This aliyah is given to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. In cases where B'nai Mitzvah are sharing responsibilities for leading the Shabbat morning service, an extra aliyah (the "Acharon") is added just prior to the "Maftir" aliyah. In addition to chanting the Torah portion, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah recites the blessings before and after the reading of the Torah for the first time as an adult member of the congregation.

### How will my child learn to chant their Torah portions?

Portions of text from the Torah and Prophets are each chanted according to an ancient system of codes known as "trope." Once a child has mastered the systems of trope, he or she can chant any Torah or Haftarah portion, and therefore has a lifelong skill.

Students are taught Torah trope basics as part of their religious school curriculum in the 6th Grade. JDS students learn Torah trope as part of the mandatory Shabbat morning program. Students will be given opportunities to master and chant short portions from the Torah during 6th grade Open House, Shabbat Shir Chadash, and the Shabbat Minyan.

### How will my child learn to chant their Haftarah portion?

Students will be taught the blessings before and after the Haftarah as part of the 7th grade Shabbat curriculum.

The blessing before the Haftarah is chanted according to Haftarah trope; once a person has mastered the blessings, he or she can then apply the trope with relative ease to a particular Haftarah.

Students will have the opportunity to practice chanting sample passages so that they can transfer their skills to their own particular Haftarah. The Cantor will oversee the mastery of the Haftarah portion during his lessons with the student.



### What is a D'var Torah?

A D'var Torah (literally, a "word of Torah") is an original teaching highlighting an important Jewish issue or concept that is generally found in that week's Torah portion. This is the opportunity for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah to share a unique personal insight into the text.

Frequently a D'var Torah will include references to the ways in which great Jewish scholars and thinkers have understood and applied this idea.

The D'var Torah not only clarifies the issue or concept but also relates that concept to something in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child's personal experience.

- At the beginning of the *D'var Torah*, the Bar or Bat Mitzvah may include modest and brief "thanks" (two or three sentences).
- Set introduction: a question, story, or something to introduce the subject
- A review: briefly summarize the Parsha and identify the specific part that will be the focus of attention
- Exploration of the deeper issue or concept: what is the lesson that can be learned?
- Personal reflections: how does this relate to me?
- Conclusion.

### Who helps my child with their D'var Torah?

You will receive a special booklet relating to your child's Torah portion during your family meeting with the Director of Education. We encourage you to read this booklet with your child, discuss interesting issues, raise questions, and see if you can make any connections between the texts and current events or concerns in today's world. Encourage your child to jot down notes and thoughts that will serve as the opening points of discussion when your child meets with the Rabbi. The Rabbi will utilize his meetings with your child to develop concepts of the D'var Torah and to help the student prepare an outline.

One of our congregants, Richard Panick, who is a professional speech coach, is available to work with students on preparing the presentation part of their speeches. Please contact the Director of Education if you would like your Bar or Bat Mitzvah student to meet with Mr. Panick to practice the speech.

## Appendix Alef: Mitzvah Projects

### The “Mitzvah” in B’nai Mitzvah: Mitzvah Projects

Below are suggestions for how to make your Mitzvah Project special and meaningful. The Director of Education will work closely with students to help them identify potential projects.

- In addition to donating money, each Bar/Bat Mitzvah is strongly encouraged to make a positive difference through “hands-on” personal action. Students will be asked to identify an issue that they care about, and to find ways to utilize their personal skills, talents, and connections to address that issue. Children may organize a collection of items (stuffed animals, blankets, used sneakers, school supplies, used books, pet supplies, etc.); spend time volunteering; design or participate in a fund-raiser for health care; organize an awareness campaign; help preserve memories and stories by recording oral histories or taking photographs. Make it creative and meaningful.
- The Bar/Bat Mitzvah may choose to create a display illustrating their Mitzvah Project, which can be viewed following the ceremony.
- Find a place that you would like to support with donations of funds or items. Ask for permission to publicize your collection at your school, synagogue and to other outlets. Be specific as to needed items and the days on which people can drop items off. Be certain to be a good collector and remove items from public places as soon as they are dropped off!
- We encourage Mitzvah projects which build relationships and connections. In the past, students have fostered relationships with residents at Kline Galland by making music for the residents, hearing their stories, or by just listening and being a supportive listening ear to someone who would like to build a relationship.

The Director of Education will meet with the student to assess his/ her learning progress and to develop the Mitzvah Project, in an effort to create a sustained and meaningful difference in the life of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student, as well as within the greater community. The Mitzvah Project should fit the interests of each student. [www.jchoice.org](http://www.jchoice.org) as a resource of ideas and organizations to think about when developing the concept or idea of the Mitzvah Project. The list will be updated as the school year progresses.

## Appendix Bet: Glossary of Important Hebrew Terms:

Many people are sometimes confused by the nomenclature of a Bar/ Bat Mitzvah and feel left behind. See the glossary below and please ask the Director of Education for further explanations!

### Parashat Ha-Shavu’a

The literal meaning of this term is “portion of the week.” On a normal Saturday morning in Synagogue, this portion will consist of one or more chapters from the Torah, divided into seven individual units, one each for those who are called forward to recite the blessings that accompany an aliyah. Each of these parshi’ot ha-shavu’a bears a name, taken from the first significant word in the portion itself.

In a normal year (as opposed to a leap year), there are more Torah portions than there are weeks on which to chant them. In such a year, two portions will be linked to form a double portion and, together, they will constitute the parashat ha-shavu’a. It is most accurate to refer to every individual Torah portion as a sedra. A parashat ha-shavu’a usually consists of one sedra.

At the Synagogue, it is our current practice to read Torah according to the so-called “triennial cycle.” In any given year, we will read a third of the stipulated parashat ha-shavu’a. This practice allows the congregation to concentrate on a manageable amount of text within the Shabbat morning service.

### Maftir

This term has two different, but related meanings. The end part of every weekly Torah portion is referred to as a maftir, and consists of the last several lines of the seventh, regular aliyah on a Saturday morning. Sometimes there will be a special maftir, taken from another book of the Torah.

In this case, it will usually be read from a second (or third) scroll. It is important to note that the maftir stands apart from the body of the Torah reading and from the group of regular readings that constitutes the weekly Torah portion.

In almost every instance, this maftir is separated from the main reading by the recitation of Chatzi Kaddish.

The other meaning of maftir is the person who is called forward to recite the blessings before and after the maftir reading. On the morning of a bar/bat mitzvah celebration, this is almost always the child him/herself. He or she invariably chants the Haftarah as well.



Both words, maftir and haftarah, are based on a root having to do with the idea of “conclusion” or “finale.”

It is thus possible to say that “the maftir (person) was called forward to chant the blessings before and after the maftir (portion).”

## Acharon

In cases where B’nai Mitzvah are sharing responsibilities for leading the Shabbat morning service, an extra Aliyah (the Acharon) is added just prior to the Maftir Aliyah.

## Haftarah

This text is always drawn from the section of the Bible called Prophets. It might be an excerpt from Judges, Samuel, or Jeremiah, or one of the other books that have been gathered into this major division of the Hebrew Bible.

The Haftarah follows the reading of the weekly Torah portion and it is usually at the center of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah’s responsibilities. The Haftarah is chanted in a minor mode and its sound is quite beautiful, plaintive, and restrained.

## Chumash

This term is used to describe the printed version of the first five books of the Bible, also called the Torah. It’s a name derived from the Hebrew word for “five,” chamaysh. The version of the Chumash we use at HNT is called the *Etz Hayim*.

Each Torah portion in this version of the Chumash is followed by the proper accompanying Haftarah. Sometimes there are two Haftarat versions, one for Ashkenazim, one for Sepharadim.

Haftarot for special occasions are printed in the back of the book. In the case of the special Haftarat, the special maftir portion intended to be read on the holiday is indicated beneath the name of the Haftarah.

## Ta’amim (Trobe)

This is the technical Hebrew term for the special system of notation which controls the chanting of all Biblical texts that are recited publicly.

They are also known as ta’amay ha-k’riah. The essential difference between this system of notation and others is that one symbol usually stands for two or more notes.

Most of these notes are chanted in a consistent way, regardless of where they appear in a line or a text. Some notes, however, take their personalities from the notes they precede. You may often hear this system referred to by other names as well.

Some call the task of mastering these notes “learning trope.” Some call these notes “tropes.” They are the invention of the Masoretes, those sages who, in the first centuries of this era, fixed the text of the Bible, punctuated and vocalized it. Trope are variations in melodies that derive from countries of origin and from different Jewish movements.









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### Notes