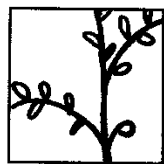


Bolton Street Synagogue

Bar and Bat Mitzvah Handbook



B O L T O N
S T R E E T
S Y N A G O G U E

Dear Parents and Students,

Mazel Tov as you embark on the process of becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at Bolton Street Synagogue and participate in this life cycle event! This is a very exciting time for you, but also one that may be filled with apprehension and questions about the process ahead of you. This booklet has been prepared to help you through the process so that your Bar or Bat Mitzvah will be meaningful, enjoyable, and as stress free as possible.

Please read through this booklet and let us know if you have any questions or need clarification about something that you've read.

If you have questions about the components of the service or the religious aspects of the process, please contact the Rabbi at 410-235-5354.

If you have questions about the celebration or general questions about the process, please feel free to contact one of the parent mentors listed below. All of these parents have had children who have had B'nai Mitzvah at Bolton Street in the past and will be able to help you with your concerns.

Barbara Krupnick	410-823-7733
Phaye Poliakoff-Chen	410-377-6367
Nancy Savage	410-433-6037
Karen Brown	410-466-1904

Best wishes for a successful Bar or Bat Mitzvah experience!

CHOOSING A DATE

If you do not yet have a date for your Bar or Bat Mitzvah, please contact the synagogue administrator at 410-235-5354 to choose an available date that will be convenient for your family. This should be done 24 months prior to the ceremony.

CHOOSING A SERVICE TIME

You will have the option of a Shabbat morning or Havdalah service. Morning services begin at 10:00 a.m. Havdalah services begin in the late afternoon; the exact time is based on sundown which varies throughout the year. If you choose a Havdalah service, the start time will be determined between you and the rabbi.

The two services vary in several ways. Different prayers are recited at the two services. Generally, the morning service is a full service with morning blessings, introductory songs, etc., while the afternoon/evening Havdalah service is abbreviated. In the morning, the week's Torah portion and the Haftarah are read. The Haftarah is an excerpt from one of the prophetic books which is paired with the particular Torah portion. In a Havdalah service, the Torah portion for the coming week is chanted and there is not a Haftarah. At a Havdalah service, it concludes with the actual Havdalah ceremony which marks the end of Shabbat.

If you are unsure about which service you prefer, you may want to attend both a morning and a Havdalah Bar or Bat Mitzvah at Bolton Street as well as speak with other families who have had both types of services. At each service, it is up to the family, student, and Rabbi to decide how much of the service will be led by the student. Although the student always chants from the Torah, some students lead more prayers than others. Some families choose a Havdalah service because there is less involved. Other families choose a Havdalah service because they would like an evening celebration and prefer that the service leads directly to the celebration. This is a personal decision that is up to you. Please feel free to consult with the Rabbi about this.

FINDING A TUTOR

All bar and bat mitzvah students are expected to develop a rudimentary and passing ability to read Hebrew so that the chanting of the Torah reading, the Haftarah reading and any prayers will be in Hebrew. The use of transliterations for Torah, Haftarah and prayers is not an acceptable alternative. Some bar or bat mitzvah students may require extra tutoring to enable him or her to read from the actual texts, the Torah, or the prayer book. Please speak with Mike Green, our principal, regarding extra tutorial work.

At Bolton Street Synagogue, it is the responsibility of the family to find a tutor to help each child prepare for his/her individual parashah (portion). Tutoring should begin six to nine months prior to the ceremony. The following is a list of tutors who are familiar with Bolton Street's services and who have tutored many of our students in the past:

1. Norman Ament
(H) 410-356-3784
(W) 410-767-8301
2. Ann Sacks
(H) 410-466-4312
3. Debby Wilcox
410-935-1243 (She is in Howard County)
4. Steven Land
phone: 410-655-1509 (h)/410-486-1500 (w)
email: smland@verizon.net
5. Nancy Seibert
410-523-6523

The above is not intended as an endorsement by Bolton Street Synagogue of those listed. It is provided in the hope that this information will prove helpful to you.

You may want to talk with other families who have had Bar/Bat Mitzvah to hear their opinions about the tutors that they used. Many families then call one or more of the tutors and speak with them or meet with them, with the student, to make sure that the tutor is the "right fit" for your family.

MEETING WITH THE RABBI

About five months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, you will begin a series of family meetings with the Rabbi. The agenda will include: anticipations, objectives, understandings of what Bar or Bat Mitzvah is, “coming of age”, what does “mitzvah” mean, Jewish values, mitzvah project, D’var Torah, and specific service choices. Please call the Rabbi to schedule the first of these meetings.

PRAYERBOOK

At Bolton Street, we use Siddur Eit Ratzon.

MITZVAH PROJECT

An important part of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah process is the Mitzvah project. This will be also discussed in the Zayin class and in meetings with the Rabbi. Each student will pick a project that emphasizes the values that are important to him/her and then carry out the project. In the past, our students have done a variety of things. Listed below are just a few of them:

- Collected supplies for the animals at the SPCA
- Tutored in an elementary school
- Assisted in an afterschool program for young children
- Collected books for a school library in need of books
- Volunteered in a nursing home with the elderly
- Raised awareness of the genocide in Darfur

FEES

There is a \$350 B’nai Mitzvah fee that is billed during the year that the student is in the Zayin class. If you choose to have a reception at Bolton Street, there will be additional fees. This will be discussed later in this booklet. Some members choose to give the Rabbi and/or Cantor a gift directly, or to their discretionary funds. This is entirely optional and there is no standard gift.

ALIYOT

During the service, the student will chant from the Torah. In a morning service, there are between three and seven short sections chanted. In a Havdalah service, there are three. Sometimes the student reads all of them, and sometimes others may read (e.g., a family member or close friend). There are specific blessings read before and after

each and these are recited by Jewish individuals age 13 and older who are generally close to the student (parents, siblings, extended family, close friends). In consultation with the Rabbi and tutor, you will decide how many will be read, and then you will choose people to have the honor of the Aliyah (plural: Aliyot). Please make sure that whoever is reciting these prayers is familiar with them prior to the service. They are in transliteration and in Hebrew on the Torah stand on the bimah.

PRAYERS AND READINGS (HONORS)

There are a number of ways to include people in the service. There are many prayers and psalms recited in Hebrew and English as well as possible creative readings in English. In your meetings with the Rabbi, you will jointly decide which ones will be used in the service and whom you will honor with such participation. You may wish to honor relatives and friends by asking them to read some of these. Many of them can be read by Jews or non-Jews.

D'VAR TORAH

One of the components of the service is the D'var Torah. This is the time when the student presents a speech or mini-sermon that refers to his or her Torah portion and relates it to his or her life or something that is happening presently in the community, country, or world. The Rabbi will work with the student to choose a topic, outline the relevant points, as well as assist in the final editing. This is the opportunity for the young adult to demonstrate some Torah knowledge, and the exercise at the heart of this rite of passage.

TALLIT and KIPPOT

Near the start of the service, the student is presented with his or her own Tallit. The Tallit is a fringed prayer shawl made according to certain prescribed rules. Usually, the parents or grandparents or a close relative or friend will present the Tallit to the student during the service. These can be purchased at a store that carries Judaica such as Central Hebrew Bookstore on Reisterstown Road, over the Internet, at some crafts fairs, or brought back from Israel by someone you know who may be visiting there.

It is traditional for men to wear a small cap called a Kippah (plural: Kippot) or yarmulke in the sanctuary. It is customary though not strictly required at Bolton Street. Often, women also choose to wear one. Some families decide to give out Kippot to all in attendance, oftentimes with the name of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student and the date printed inside. These are often ordered online or can be ordered from many stores that carry Judaica.

REHEARSAL

In the week prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, a rehearsal will be scheduled at the synagogue with your family and the Rabbi to do a dry run of the service. This is also a time when the student will be able to read his/her portion from the Torah that will be used in the service. This is very important so that he/she is comfortable with reading from our Torah prior to the day of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. It is also an opportunity to practice delivering the D'var Torah from the podium. In addition, some tutors like to have one or more sessions at the synagogue with our Torah. If your tutor would like to do this, arrangements to use the building and the Torah can be made with the administrator.

ACCESS TO THE BUILDING

If you need to get into the building to meet with the tutor, photographer, or for any other reason, please contact the administrator to find a time that is convenient for you when the building will be open.

If you are having things delivered to the synagogue (flowers, centerpieces, etc.), the synagogue is generally open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. However, before scheduling a delivery, please call the administrator to make sure someone will be there to let the delivery person in. Also, the synagogue is open one hour prior to the start of the service, so deliveries can be also made then.

PARKING

Because there is limited parking in front of the synagogue, you may want to inform your guests that if that lot is full, they can park in our lower parking lot at 210 W. Coldspring Lane. Street parking is also available on Cold Spring Lane. On the Bolton Street web site, www.boltonstreet.org, information on directions and parking is found by clicking the link on the homepage.

PHOTOGRAPHY

The policy at Bolton Street is to not allow photography or videotaping during the service. At times, a family may request this for a special reason. If this is something you would like to have, please consult with the Rabbi.

Photographers are permitted in the sanctuary before or after the service or on a different day in order to take pictures of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah and family. If you plan to have a photographer meet with you on a different day, please consult with the administrator to make sure that the building will be open. Photographs showing the Torah are allowed.

SUPPLEMENT

Oftentimes at Bolton Street, families will prepare a supplement to hand out to those who attend the service. This is by no means mandatory, and is at the discretion of each individual family. Each supplement is different, but they all share similar elements. Generally, there is information about Bolton Street Synagogue and the service itself. Some families choose to put in some of the readings that will be read during the service, while others put in the Torah and Haftarah portions. These can also be found in books in the sanctuary, and although there are not enough for each guest, there are enough to share so that anyone who would like to follow in Hebrew or read the English translation or commentaries will be able to do so. Some families choose to print their student's D'var Torah in the supplement.

At the end of this booklet, you will find a sample of some of the information included in one supplement. This is not meant to be a definitive text, but is meant to give you some idea of what one family chose to do. Please note that the administrator has copies of many different supplements and will be glad to give you copies to read and use as you see fit. Also, many families who have made similar supplements may still have the text on their computers and would probably be happy to share that with you so that you do not have to retype the complete text.

PLANTS ON THE BIMAH

Some families like to have flowers or plants on the bimah for the service. If you choose to have them, please make sure that they are in containers that will not leak on the wood floor, and please remove all plants on the day of the service.

INVITATIONS

There are many places from where you can order invitations for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah, both in Baltimore and online. Additionally, some families choose to make their own invitations.

KIDDUSH

Since all synagogue members are welcome at all services, Bar and Bat Mitzvah families should provide a small Kiddush after the service for those who are present at

the service, regardless of whether your celebration is at Bolton Street or not. This need not be elaborate, but consist of wine, juice, challah, and light snacks.

THE RECEPTION

There are a myriad of options available to you when choosing a way to celebrate the accomplishments of your Bar or Bat Mitzvah. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but below are some types of celebrations:

- Catered luncheon in the social hall with a Klezmer band following the service
- Kiddush lunch in the social hall with an evening party with DJ at another location
- Luncheon following the service in a restaurant with an evening kids' bowling or laser tag party
- Luncheon in the social hall with food provided by you
- Catered evening reception with a band at a restaurant or rented location such as the Museum of Industry

Each family needs to decide for themselves what type of celebration would best suit them, taking into account many factors, not limited to financial, time of day, location, family values, etc.

RENTING THE SOCIAL HALL

If you decide that you would like all or part of your reception to be in the social hall at Bolton Street, this option is available to you. Although we schedule a maximum of one Bar or Bat Mitzvah each Shabbat, the social hall gets used for other events so it is best to reserve the date with the administrator as soon as you know that you would like to have your reception there.

The cost to rent the social hall for a short Kiddush luncheon (up to two hours) is \$350. To rent it for a reception that will last up to five hours, the cost is \$700 with each additional hour costing \$150. The fee includes the use of the kitchen, janitorial setup, and whatever tables and chairs are on the premises available for use. Linens, place settings, additional tables and chairs, etc. are at the discretion and cost of the renter. Please let the administrator know at least one week before the service how you would like the social hall arranged.

At the time that you notify the administrator that you would like to rent the space, a \$100 non-refundable deposit is due. The balance is due two months prior to the event. In addition, a \$300 security deposit is due two months before the event. If there is no damage, the money will be refunded. If there is damage, the money will be used for repairs and if there is any money left over, it will be refunded.

CATERERS

If you have your reception at Bolton Street and do not cook or purchase the food yourself, you will need a caterer. There are many caterers in the Baltimore area from which to choose. Talk with others who have used caterers to get suggestions, call caterers and request their menus to look at, meet with them, and then decide who will best meet your needs. Please note the Kashrut policy at Bolton Street:

If you are planning to serve meat (beef, lamb, veal, poultry), you must use a Kosher caterer. If you plan to serve only dairy foods, you may use any caterer of your choice. Under no circumstances are pork or shellfish allowed.

As you consult with different caterers, you may want to ask about what they provide. Some caterers will supply not only the food, but also the plates, glasses, linens, beverages (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic) and servers. Others only provide some of these items, and you then provide the rest. This is helpful to know, both in comparing costs (it's not always "apples to apples") and also in deciding how much or how little you will need to do with other providers.

MUSIC

There are a number of options for music at the reception. Some families choose to have no music. Others bring CDs or tapes which can be played through the speakers in the social hall. Bands and DJs are other options. All of these choices are acceptable at Bolton Street. If you are having a reception elsewhere, consult with the staff there as to what is acceptable.

OTHER ENTERTAINMENT

Some families choose to have other types of entertainment at their reception. These may include magicians, caricaturists, etc.

DECORATIONS

Again, what you choose is decided by your family. Please note that in the social hall, you cannot put nails, tape, etc. on the walls or ceiling. You can bring balloons, flowers, etc. and put them around the social hall on the floor or on the tables. As in the sanctuary, please make sure that any flowers or plants are in containers that do not leak.

SAMPLE SUPPLEMENT

Bolton Street Synagogue was founded in 1986 and remains an independent congregation in that we are not affiliated with any of the major branches of Judaism (Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Orthodox), although we share many traditions and practices with those branches. Our mission is to be “an open Jewish community rooted in tradition. Jonathan Panitz has been our rabbi since 2006, following a many year career as a Navy chaplain. Our cantor, Alan Rubinstein has been at Bolton Street for 16 years.

Our congregation moved to its current home in December of 2003. The red brick portion of the building was constructed in 1954 as a sub-station for Baltimore Gas and Electric but was never used once it was built. The current building, designed by the architecture firm of Charles Alexander and Associates, underwent an 18 month renovation to create the sanctuary, social hall, nine classrooms, three offices, and a library.

The stained glass window in the lobby was designed by Walter Schwarz, one of our founding members. At the beginning of the Nazi era, Mr. Schwarz lived through Kristallnacht or “The Night of Broken Glass.” It was on this night in November 1938 that the glass windows in almost every German synagogue and in most Jewish owned businesses were shattered. Following this experience, Mr. Schwarz swore that if he should escape Nazi German, he would one day learn to create and build with glass. The yellow star serves as a memorial to the six million Jews who perished in the flames of the Holocaust

ABOUT THE SANCTUARY

On the east wall of the sanctuary is the *Aron Ha Kodesh* or the Holy Ark. It faces Jerusalem and contains two hand-lettered parchment Torah scrolls. The Torah contains the Five Books of Moses, the most sacred of Jewish writings (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), and forms the basis of the Hebrew bible. The Torah scrolls are written in a special Hebrew script which contains no vowels or punctuation. It is composed in the ancient form of Hebrew lettering and must be chanted according to a traditional melody.

One of our two Torahs was the gift of a congregant and was written in Israel. The other Torah is on permanent loan from the Memorial Scrolls Trust of London. It was confiscated from a Czech

synagogue by Nazis and recovered after World War II. We treasure it as a memorial to those who died during the Holocaust.

The raised platform from which the Torah is read is called the *bimah*, meaning high place. According to tradition, we read the Torah from an elevated platform to signify our respect for its holiness.

Suspended over the Ark is our *Ner Tamid* or eternal light. You will find a *Ner Tamid* burning perpetually in front of every Ark in every synagogue throughout the world.

Local artist Wendy Jachman created the doors of the Ark, which depict the Tree of Life, with the uppermost branches creating a Menorah. The Hebrew letters running through the red band toward the bottom of the piece say “It (Torah) is a Tree of Life to those who hold fast to it and those who support it will be enriched.”

WHAT IS A BAT MITZVAH?

The Hebrew words bat mitzvah mean “daughter of the commandments.” The bat mitzvah ceremony is one of initiation, marking a young woman’s entrance into the adult Jewish community. The bat mitzvah ceremony is not a separate service, but an integral part of the regular service for Saturday morning, the morning of the Jewish Sabbath.

During the Middle Ages, a tradition developed in Europe of marking a boy’s rite of passage by calling him to the pulpit to read a section of the morning’s Torah portion, along with the appropriate blessings. The Bat Mitzvah ceremony for girls developed in the last century as Reconstructionist, Reform and Conservative congregations stressed the egalitarian nature of Judaism by calling women to the Torah.

JEWISH CUSTOMS

It is customary for Jews to cover their heads with a *kippah* while in synagogue as a way of acknowledging and respecting God. In our congregation, individuals may choose to wear one or not. While tradition is important, it is also important to feel at ease during prayer and reflection.

The fringed prayer shawls, known as *tallitot* are generally only worn by Jews who are over 13 years of age. The *tallit* is worn in

fulfillment of the Biblical commandment to place fringes on one's garment as a reminder of the commandments of our tradition.

A few requests: Please do not take photographs of any kind during the service. Also, please refrain from walking in and out of the sanctuary when the Ark is open.

THE SHABBAT MORNING SERVICE

Preliminary Service:

The first section of the service consists of songs, prayers and readings that help the congregation transition from every day concerns to the sacred space of worship.

The Shema and Her Blessings

The centerpiece of the next section of the service is the *Shema*, the Jewish credo of monotheism: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one." The *Shema* consists of three paragraphs from the Torah which instruct us to:

- 1) Commit ourselves to sacred Jewish tradition and teach it to our children;
- 2) Know the global implications of lessons from the Torah; and
- 3) Remember to do *mitzvot*, good deeds based on the values in this divine teaching.

The Amidah

The *Amidah* is a part of every Jewish worship service. It is a time for individual prayers and is usually read silently in Hebrew or English while standing. There are many facets to the *Amidah*. We link our own search for holiness with that of our ancestors, acknowledge God's sustaining powers, give praise for the holiness of the day, express our hope for fulfillment, thank God for the miracles that are daily with us and pray for peace. Everyone reads the *Amidah* at his or her own pace and sits down when finished.

The Torah Service

Every Jewish prayer service contains a study segment. For Jews, study is a form of worship. On *Shabbat* (Sabbath), our study takes the form of reading from the Torah, then reading the complementary *Haftarah* portion. The Torah is divided into weekly portions. Over a year's time, the entire Torah is read, and the cycle starts again after Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. The weekly portion is read aloud. Individuals are honored by being called to the *bimah* to say the blessing before and after a reading. *Haftarah* portions come from

the books of the Prophets or Writings and are thematically related to the weekly Torah portions.

Today's Torah portion is *Metzora* from Leviticus, chapter 14, verses 1-15 and will be chanted by the student and Cantor Rubinstein.

Following the Torah portion, the student will chant from the *Haftarah*. The *Haftarah* portion is II Kings, chapter 7, verses 3-20. To conclude the Torah service, she will give a *D'var Torah* which includes reflections on her Torah portion.

Concluding Service

The final section of the service includes *Aleinu*, a vision of a redeemed future and the Mourners' *Kaddish* is recited in memory of those whom we remember. The service concludes with *Kiddush* and *Ha Motzi*, the blessings over wine and bread, in anticipation of a celebratory festive meal.