



Keshher Zion Synagogue



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BAR AND BAT MITZVAH HANDBOOK



[Approved by Board of Directors](#)

[September 27, 2004](#)

[Refreshed,](#)

[June, 2008](#)

[November 2009](#)

[February 2012](#)

[August 2012](#)

[January 10, 2019](#)

Dear Friends,

You are about to begin an exciting and rewarding period in the life of your family. We at Keshar Zion are here to assist you in making your child's bar/bat mitzvah as enjoyable, satisfying, and meaningful as possible.

Bar/Bat mitzvah is a time-honored religious rite of passage, whose purposes are halachic, symbolic and celebratory. Essentially, this is a time for the young person to celebrate his or her adult membership in the Jewish community by demonstrating proficiency in Jewish studies, practice, and ritual.

The bar/bat mitzvah is an opportunity to showcase a young person's accumulated Jewish knowledge and skills. It is also a chance for a young person and his or her family to demonstrate their commitment to continued participation in the religious, spiritual, intellectual, and communal aspects of Jewish life.

The Shabbat service, as well as the celebration that follows the service, should be planned to highlight Jewish values and serve as a memorable Jewish rite of passage, not only to the initiate, but to his or her family and community as well.

The congregation and its leadership are here in order to help each bar/bat mitzvah family plan the most educationally effective and spiritually uplifting Simcha as possible.

Let us, all together, make the bar/ bat mitzvah experiences in our congregation memorable and significant events.

Mazel Tov,

Keshar Zion Synagogue

Approved by Board of Directors: September 27, 2004

Refreshed, June, 2008

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EXPECTATIONS:

We believe the following expectations will achieve the best results and most meaningful experience for your child. We require parents to follow these guidelines:

1. Your child should be enrolled in an appropriate Hebrew School for an appropriate period of time, as determined through consultation with the Rabbi.
2. Your child should complete Hebrew School studies for the balance of the school year during which the celebration takes place.
3. Your child should take tutorial lessons with the Rabbi or another tutor on a weekly or as-needed basis for individual instruction. For the Saturday morning service, the bar/bat mitzvah student will consult with the Rabbi concerning his or her involvement. On Saturday morning, the student will chant his or her haftorah and deliver a short sermon. The bar/bat mitzvah student may have considerably more involvement in the services as decided by the Rabbi and the family, and according to the student's abilities. This could include, but is not limited to, Saturday morning's Psuekay D'Zimrah, Shacharit, the Torah Service, and Musaf (for specific prayers, please consult with the Rabbi). Participation in a Saturday afternoon Havdallah service is available at the discretion of the Rabbi.

Note: Parents should make every effort to attend Shabbat and Holiday services with their children in order to become familiar with the service and its content. Family attendance demonstrates to your child how seriously you take the meaning of this important day.

Dress Code for Services: Since young people will be on the bimah on Shabbat morning, it is especially important that their dress be appropriate for synagogue.

INSTRUCTION AND PREPARATION:

A date for the bar/bat mitzvah will be assigned by the Rabbi. Preparation and instruction for the ceremony takes place with the Rabbi. This is in addition to regular Hebrew School studies and does not take place during regular classroom hours of instruction. Learning the Shabbat service is best accomplished by attending the service. Attendance in Hebrew School, individual tutoring sessions, and services are all critical.

The Curriculum:

Bar/Bat mitzvah training requires an investment of time, effort, and self-study. Written study material and recordings provide a review of materials gone over in private lessons and Hebrew School. In addition, each student will have a weekly private tutorial with the Rabbi beginning one year before the assigned date. Parents should take an active role in seeing that the assigned materials are studied.

Dress Rehearsal:

An integral part of the preparation for the ceremony is the dress rehearsal where the immediate family and the clergy walk through various aspects of the service. This insures that everyone is comfortable and familiar with the procedures. This rehearsal should be scheduled with the Rabbi and the office at least two weeks ahead of the bar/bat mitzvah. The rehearsal may be a good opportunity for staged photographs; or there may be another time to be scheduled at the Rabbi's convenience.

ADDITIONAL POINTS:

Please Note:

When printing your invitation, please indicate 9:30 a.m. for Shabbat morning services.

On Saturday, the following aliyot will be made available: a Kohen, a Levi, and five others, plus the bar/bat mitzvah student. The parents should submit to the Rabbi the complete Hebrew names including the father's name and status (Kohen, Levi, Israelite) of those to be honored. The blessings for being called to the Torah are available from the Rabbi. All individuals having an aliyah will be asked to move to the front row of the synagogue at the beginning of the Torah service.

Conduct for Family and Guests:

The congregation cannot legislate good taste, but people can contribute to the dignity of the ceremony by having family and friends follow these guidelines.

1. People are going to be overjoyed at seeing family and friends at this festive occasion. Kindly withhold greetings while in the sanctuary during the service.
2. It is most appropriate to invite all of your child's Hebrew School classmates, and any other school friends that they desire. Encourage them to attend the ceremony as well as the party or celebration. It is also inconsiderate to walk in and out of the Sanctuary during the service.
3. Cell phones or other hand-held electronic devices are not permitted in the sanctuary on Shabbat. Please inform your guests (especially the teenagers) to leave their devices at home or in the car.

Shabbat Bulletin:

The synagogue prepares a weekly Shabbat Bulletin. On the occasion of a bar/bat mitzvah, the family may develop their own personalized version.

Bulletin Article and Photo:

Your child's photograph along with a brief article will be featured in the Keshet Zion Bulletin the month of his or her event. Please submit these items to the synagogue office at least one month in advance of the event.

Future:

It is important not to view the bar/bat mitzvah as the end-goal of your child's Jewish education. Despite the elation at passing this step and the phrase, "Today I am an adult," a twelve- or thirteen-year-old is little prepared to accept or understand all adult Jewish responsibilities. The ceremony is only a public statement that indicates a willingness to be counted as a Jew. It is a stepping stone and transitional point in your child's emerging Jewishness.

Your child should continue to attend Hebrew School, completing the year. Following that, he or she should enroll in one of the available teenage programs in our area. The Rabbi will be happy to advise.

Please accept the very best wishes of the entire congregation on this happy occasion. We are delighted to celebrate with you. May the beautiful memories of this joyous Simcha enrich your lives for many years to come!

BAR AND BAT MITZVAH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**Reservations:**

1. Reservations for functions will be accepted only from members in good financial standing. **All tuitions, dues and fees, etc. must be current.** If you have difficulty in fulfilling the above, contact the Dues Committee at least two months in advance.
2. The family is required to sponsor and attend the Kiddush to be held in the Social Hall following Saturday services. Kiddush can be supplied by hiring a kosher caterer.

Arrangements:

1. All arrangements need to be made through the office. Since KZ and RCOS must coordinate their use of the Sanctuary and the Social Hall, a date should be set at least 18 months in advance.
2. A security deposit of \$350 should be paid to RCOS at the time of the reservation.
3. An event's fee of \$200 should be paid to KZ two weeks before the service.
4. There may be insurance costs for renting the Social Hall. Please consult with RCOS.

5. The Keshet Zion custodian is available to set up tables and chairs or to assist your caterer during his normal working hours. All diagrams of table arrangements must be submitted at least two weeks in advance.
6. The synagogue is closed on Fridays after 3:00 p.m. Therefore, all food and flowers and decorations must be delivered by 1:00 p.m. Two weeks notice is required if the synagogue has to be opened for your caterer on Friday afternoon and/or if the custodian has to remain in the synagogue Friday evening beyond his normal working hours. In either case, you will be billed at the current rate per hour for the custodian's service.
7. Saturday morning the synagogue opens at 9:00 a.m. Two weeks notice is required if your caterer must arrive earlier. For a Saturday luncheon, there will be an hourly charge for our custodian's services beyond his normal working hours (1:30 p.m.).
8. Arrangements to use the Social Hall for any Saturday evening or Sunday reception must be made in advance with RCOS, ideally when the date of the bar/bat mitzvah is reserved. The synagogue requires that the custodian be present during all the time a caterer is in the building. Saturday evenings and all day Sundays are not our custodian's normal working hours and there will be a charge for this service. See the attached fee schedule for using the Social Hall at these additional times and for the payment for the custodian.

Catering:

1. All caterers must be approved by the Rabbi before they will be permitted to enter the kitchen for preparation or service of food.
2. Since the bar/bat mitzvah is also a regular Shabbat service, open to the community, please add 20-30 additional people to your head count for Kiddush.
3. The kitchen must be left in an orderly condition as assessed by the synagogue staff.

Alcoholic Beverages:

1. All alcoholic liquids brought into the synagogue building shall be covered by the Pennsylvania Liquor Tax Stamp. All wines must be labeled Kosher. Keshet Zion does provide a wine store. Contact the office if you would like to buy wine directly from KZ.

Cooked Food and Baked Goods:

1. No cooked food or baked goods from private homes is permitted into the synagogue under any circumstances.

SABBATH AND KASHRUT RULES

It is necessary that all persons using the facilities of our synagogue follow these important rules:

1. Nothing is to be cooked in the synagogue kitchens on the Sabbath, i.e. from Friday sundown until Saturday sundown.
2. Nothing is to be brought into the synagogue or taken out of the synagogue from Friday at 4 p.m. until after sundown on Saturday evening.
3. All food and beverages brought into the synagogue must fulfill the requirements of being kosher.
4. Menus are to be checked in advance by the Rabbi to ascertain that everything complies with the kosher laws.
5. No prepared food—cooked food or baked goods—is to be brought into the synagogue from private homes under any circumstances.
6. No photography or audio recording equipment will be permitted on the Sabbath.
7. Proper decorum of the children at services should be observed.
8. It is expected that family and guests will arrive promptly for the 9:30 a.m. Saturday morning service.
9. The synagogue is a non-smoking facility.
10. The use of cell phones and other electronic handheld devices is not permitted on Shabbat. Please leave all such devices at home or in the car. Please be sure your family and guests are aware of this practice.

ANY EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES MUST BE APPROVED BY THE RABBI.

RESERVATION FORM

NAME _____ PHONE # _____

ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

DATE OF FUNCTION _____ TIME _____

DATE OF REHEARSAL _____ TIME _____

TYPE OF FUNCTION (Check all that apply):

- BAR/BAT MITZVAH
- WEDDING
- OTHER: _____
- SATURDAY LUNCHEON
- SATURDAY EVENING PARTY
- DANCE
- PRIVATE PARTY
- SUNDAY PARTY

ARRANGEMENTS:

- FOOD: _____ NO FOOD REQUIRED
- CATERER - _____ TABLECLOTHS
- NAME _____ Renting from Boscov's or other
- ADDRESS _____
- PHONE # _____

- FLORIST - _____ PHOTOGRAPHER
- NAME _____ NAME _____
- ADDRESS _____ ADDRESS _____
- PHONE # _____ PHONE # _____

- DECORATOR - _____ YARMULKAS
- NAME _____ Yes___ No___
- ADDRESS _____
- PHONE # _____ PERSONALIZED SHABBAT BULLETIN
- Yes___ No___

FACILITIES REQUIRED:

- MAIN SANCTUARY
- CHAPEL
- KITCHEN: DAIRY _____ MEAT _____
- SOCIAL HALL
- TABLES: # _____
- CHAIRS: # _____
- SKETCH ATTACHED FOR APPROVAL
- OTHER REQUIREMENTS: _____

****Please note: The office closes at 3 p.m. on Fridays. Please have all deliveries arranged no later than 1 p.m. Please return this form to the office 2 weeks prior to the event along with table set-up diagram.**

The applicant certifies that he/she has read and understands the rules and regulations governing the rental and use of the facilities, agrees to comply with all of its provisions, and agrees to pay all charges specified therein. A signed copy will be returned to the client.

Signature of Applicant Date