

# B'NAI MITZVAH HANDBOOK



TEMPLE BETH AM

*Embracing Jewish Life*

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**DEAR BETH AM FAMILIES,**

The B'nai Mitzvah process is a wonderful, yet very intense, process for the entire family. We often highlight that we expect our students to view the process as a stage in their Jewish learning, not as a culmination.

However, it is likewise important to note that during the B'nai Mitzvah process, parents also become more active in Temple life. Just as we encourage our students to remain involved and tuned in to the life of the Temple, we believe the same commitment should manifest from the parents.

The best way to teach our students that Judaism is part and parcel of who we are is for them to see their parents engaged in meaningful Jewish experiences at the Temple. We hope that even after the B'nai Mitzvah process concludes, parents will continue their consistent presence at the Temple.

  
Rabbi Jeremy Barras

**PHILOSOPHY  
AND SERVICE OPTIONS**

One key aspect that sets the B’nai Mitzvah experience at Temple Beth Am apart is our commitment to crafting a service tailored specifically to your family. We take into account your child’s learning abilities, your musical preferences, and your family’s heritage. This customization also extends to the prayers and music included in the service. If your family prefers a more intimate gathering, your child has the opportunity to chant at our Minyan service, held in our Chapel.

At Temple Beth Am, we are extremely proud of the sensitivity and care that we take with each individual child. The service we hand-craft to fit each child’s needs. There is not a specific number of Alliyot required; we care only that your child flourishes and reaches the goals that he or she is capable of reaching.



**B’NAI MITZVAH AND CONFIRMATION**

B’nai Mitzvah and Confirmation are two rites of passage that are completely intertwined at Temple Beth Am.

*B’nai Mitzvah* is a time when the child begins the process of moving toward adulthood. For the first time, a significant responsibility is placed upon the child. The preparation for the B’nai Mitzvah ceremony places several clear obligations on the child, and the acceptance of this responsibility is, for many children, their first step in mastering the challenges of the teen years and adulthood. For families, the B’nai Mitzvah ceremony calls all the values of the household into focus. For many, it is the first opportunity to demonstrate to friends and family (both near and far) who they are and what they have achieved thus far. In sum, B’nai Mitzvah is a very important personal ceremony for the child and for the family.

**JEWISH JOURNEY CONTINUED**

The Jewish Journey doesn’t end with B’nai Mitzvah. The most important gift you can give your child is by incorporating our religious school program into their teenage year.

Intellectually, the 13th, 14th and 15th years are periods of dramatically expanding horizons. Teenagers are encouraged to ask questions, evaluate their own beliefs and begin thinking about a Judaism that meets their needs as thinking and caring adults. The Confirmation grades emphasize Jewish values for young people living in a world constantly confronted with numerous challenges. In the Confirmation years, we seek to give our children roots in Judaism that will stand firm throughout college and adulthood.



**CHOOSING THE RIGHT DATE AND TIME FOR YOU!**

WE OFFER 3 DIFFERENT OPTIONS FOR B’NAI MITZVAHS AT TBAM:

**10:30 AM**

Sanctuary (private)

\*You may be scheduled as a double

**5:30 PM**

Sanctuary (private Havdalah)

\*With the Havdalah service, you are required to have a full service party at the Temple Beth Am, and use one of our panel of four caterers. To reserve a Havdalah B’nai Mitzvah, you will be required to pay the \$1350.00 room reservation and cleaning fee upfront.

**10:30 AM**

Chapel (with the community)\*

\*Good for smaller gatherings, or kids with special needs. Please note the chapel service with the community will be broadcasted on our public TBAM livestream.



## EXPLANATION OF TERMS

### THE READING OF THE TORAH AND THE HAFTARAH

The reading of the Torah in the synagogue is known in Hebrew as Keri'at ha-Torah. This ancient tradition goes back to the time of Moses. It was established by Ezra upon the Jews' return to Palestine in 457 B C E. Over time, the Torah has come to be read in the synagogue on every Sabbath, on the Festivals and on Monday and Thursday mornings.

The reading of the Haftarah in the synagogue is known as Haftarah b'navi or "concluding with the Prophets." This tradition is believed to have begun in Palestine during the second century B C E when the Greeks had forbidden the reading of the Torah Jews, therefore, substituted the reading of the Torah with selections from the Prophets. Over time, the reading of the Haftarah became a regular part of the Sabbath and Festival Services. Generally, the theme of the Haftarah is related to some idea discussed in the Torah reading.

### CANTILLATION

When the Jews' return to Israel from Babylonia in 457 B C E, Ezra and the Israelites established the public reading of the Torah with a special melody system. This is known as the cantillation system consisting of approximately 25 signs that appear above or below the words of the Bible text. They are usually referred to as the trope signs, from Greek, meaning "the turn;" with each of these signs, the melody takes a certain turn or interpretation. The trope signs are the same for Torah and Haftarah, but the melody for each sign is different.

### THE ALLIYOT

Each Shabbat Sidrah is divided into smaller portions. For each portion, a person or group of people are called up to the Torah to recite the Benedictions, in which thanks are expressed for the gift of the Torah to Israel.



## PARENT BLESSING

### PARENTS

You will be able to present your child with their Tallit. We ask that you follow the below guidelines. We can also send you some examples should you feel that they would be helpful.

1. Both parents should say a few words. Each of us brings a slightly different perspective to our children. Please try to each have a unique story and/or message.
2. Keep your presentation to less than three minutes. Parents may divide these precious moments any way they like, but remember that anything beyond three minutes will challenge the attention span of the congregation and lengthen an already full service.
3. As you prepare your words, try to keep in mind that humor is great, but some things may be misinterpreted. Additionally, the place to highlight all the attributes and talents of your

child is not during the service, but at the reception. Please keep your talk centered on the meaning of this day. This is a wonderful time to speak of how proud you are of your child with a focus on their Jewishness.

4. Just as we recommend to the B'nai Mitzvah students, type your words legibly and bring the papers with you. We suggest 14 point type, double spaced.

5. Remember you are offering a blessing to your child and not a speech.

6. Please direct any further questions to the Cantor, Rabbi or your B'nai Mitzvah liaison.

# WELCOME TO THE B'NAI MITZVAH PROGRAM

You are about to enter a learning program that will be a personally rewarding experience for you and your family. After all your years of studying liturgy and Hebrew, you will make it all come together for yourself at your B'nai Mitzvah.

A Jew who learns Hebrew deepens the roots of their Jewishness. Hebrew is the language that connects and unites the Jewish people in many ways, as it transcends time and space. Through your participation in this B'nai Mitzvah program, you will strengthen your link in the chain of Jewish continuity. Your B'nai Mitzvah is an act of commitment to God, Torah and the Jewish people. We will help you prepare, so you can make this one of your most memorable life experiences.

## EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1. Securing a Date

After attending the B'nai Mitzvah meeting, families will have the opportunity to choose their date. Families will be notified of what date the online form will go live. Once the form is completely filled out and submitted with your top 3 date choices, plus additional information, we will inform you of which date you have been assigned. We will do our best to give you one of your top choices, and pick a date close to your child's birthday.

### 2. Mentor

You will be assigned a mentor, who will help you learn and polish all the blessings and prayers for the service, which include the chanting of your Torah and Haftarah portions.

### 3. Preparation Time

Approximately six to eight months prior to your B'nai Mitzvah, you will receive a call from your mentor to set up an appointment to start lessons. Scheduling will depend on vacations and summer months.

### 4. Appointment Time

You will be expected to come once a week on your scheduled day and time for a 30-minute appointment. You will be provided with 22 mentoring lessons, and you should bring all your materials to each lesson. We understand there may be a time you need to cancel your appointment with your mentor; if you must cancel a lesson, you will have been given the mentor's phone number to contact them directly. Our policy asks that you

notify the mentor at least eight (8) hours prior to your lesson in order to reschedule it.

### 5. Appointment with the Clergy

- Approximately two months prior to your B'nai Mitzvah, you will receive a schedule of appointments to meet with your Rabbi and the Cantor.
- The Rabbi will help you to prepare a D'var Torah, your commentary on the Torah, by studying with you.
- You will begin writing your D'var Torah after meeting with the Rabbi.
- The Cantor will be meeting with you to put together your personalized service. The Cantor will also prepare you to feel extremely confident in leading services by having you practice chanting from the Torah, as well as reading and chanting from the Siddur in the Sanctuary. If the Cantor feels that certain areas of the prayer service require further tutorial, she will address this with your parents during her first meeting with them.

### 6. Fees

- B'nai Mitzvah fees are an important part of helping to cover the experience. One year out from your child's B'nai Mitzvah date, you will be billed **\$1,850.00**. This fee covers your 22 mentor sessions, bima flowers, musical accompaniment for your service, and more.
- If you are having a Havdalah service/party, you will be billed in addition to your B'nai Mitzvah fees, a **\$1,350.00** fee that reserves the room, as well as covering your maintenance fee.

# B'NAI MITZVAH TIMELINE



## QUESTIONS? WHO TO ASK!

**D'VAR TORAH/HONORS**  
Senior Rabbi Jeremy Barras  
Rabbi Rachel G. Greengrass  
Rabbi Jaime Aklepi

**LOGISTICS/PARTY / SCHEDULING YOUR DATE**  
Phylcia Cook, *B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator*

# B'NAI MITZVAH SERVICE OUTLINE

## FRIDAY NIGHT SHABBAT SERVICES

- Parents join in lighting candles.
- B'nai Mitzvah recites Kiddush.

## SHABBAT MORNING OR EVENING

- Cantor begins service.
- B'nai Mitzvah walks in with Rabbi, parents and siblings.
- Rabbi welcomes congregation.
- Parents give charge (giving of Tallit with blessing recited by B'nai Mitzvah).
- Parents are seated in the congregation.
- B'nai Mitzvah leads service.
- Cantor blesses B'nai Mitzvah after silent meditation.
- Torah is removed from the Ark, followed by the Torah processional (hakafah).
- B'nai Mitzvah chants Torah (alliyot).
- B'nai Mitzvah gives D'var Torah.
- Torah is lifted (hagbah) and dressed (galilah).
- B'nai Mitzvah chants Haftarah blessings, Haftarah portion and closing blessings.
- Torah is returned to Ark.
- Candy throwing (optional).
- Rabbi blesses B'nai Mitzvah.
- B'nai Mitzvah leads closing prayers (Aleinu and Mourners' Kaddish).
- Board of Directors' representative presents gifts.

**Morning: 10:30 AM (Kiddush and Hamotzi recited from Bima).**

**Evening: 5:30 PM (Havdalah to conclude service).**



# QUICK REFERENCE & CELEBRATION LOGISTICS FAQ'S

A signed contract and the following payments are needed to reserve a room for your celebration. **This is required for Havdalah B'nai Mitzvahs, and is optional for a Shabbat Morning service.**

**Room Fees for B'nai Mitzvahs:** A \$1,350.00 cleanup fee is required to confirm your party date. Additionally, should any damages exceed \$1,000.00, you shall be held responsible for such repairs. Room Fees and Signed Contract are due at the time your party date is confirmed.

**Clean-Up Fee/Charges:** The cleanup fee of \$1350.00 (included in your contract fee above) per celebration is required. This fee covers the cost of clean-up after your party and one bathroom attendant for each event. Payment is due at time of booking party. Kiddush lunch/Shabbat Dinner clean up fee is \$500.00.

**Custom Fees:** All custom fees must be paid in advance of your celebration date. Temple Beth Am has a semi-permanent setup for the dance floor and stage. Should you desire to relocate or remove the dance floor and stage for your event, there is a \$350.00 charge for changing the location and placing it back in its original position after the event.

**Chapel setup as party room** - \$500.00.  
Lift Rental: \$350 for the weekend of the celebration billed directly to family.

**Early Setup** - vendors may have access to the Social Hall and/or Extended Social Hall on the Friday after 4:00 PM prior to the celebration, if the room is available, ONLY WITH PRIOR authorization from Phylicia Cook, Campus Activities Director. There is a \$50 per hour fee, for each hour that you are on campus loading in décor.

## MONTAGE/ VIDEO CHECK

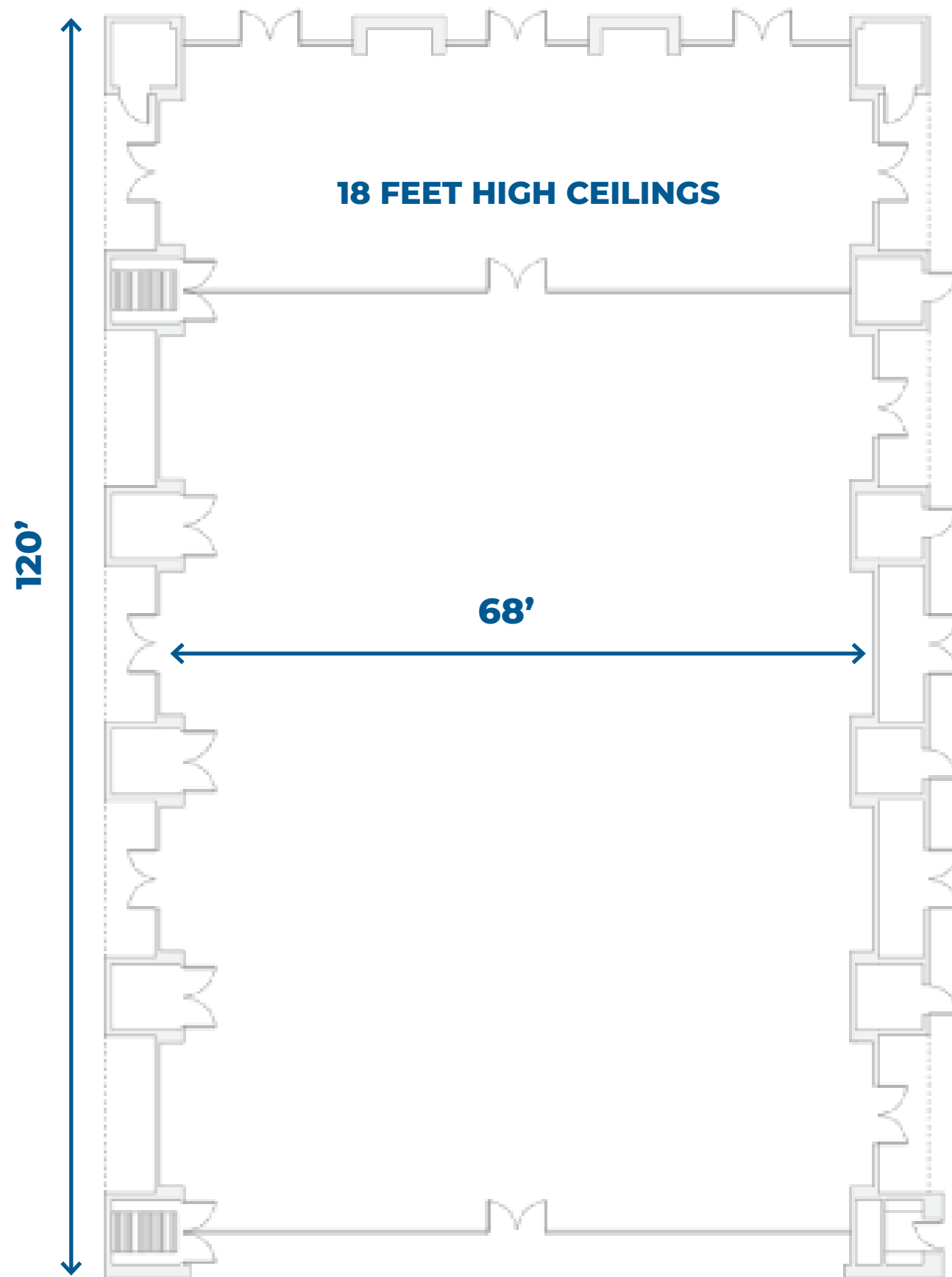
If you plan to run a video through our equipment (not a hired vendor), you must come to Temple Beth Am and test it by the Thursday before your celebration at the latest. Appointment is required. Live streaming is also available in the Sanctuary, and you must request this at least 24 hours before your service.

## VENDORS & PARTY PLANNERS

Party planners and other vendors must coordinate all vendor logistics with Phylicia Cook.



## TEMPLE BETH AM SOCIAL HALL



## SECURITY

B'nai Mitzvah fee includes supervision of unaccompanied children in the Sanctuary during the B'nai Mitzvah service.

### SECURITY FOR CELEBRATION FOLLOWING SERVICE

Temple Beth Am requires security for participants ages 16 and under for all B'nai Mitzvah services, Kiddush lunches, and daytime/evening parties.

The Temple requires a minimum of two (2) guards at all times. Security arrangements are the responsibility of the congregant.\*

In addition, the following is the child/teen to security guard ratio that is required:

- One (1) to forty-nine (49) children/teens = two (2) guards
- Fifty (50) to seventy-five (75) children/teens = three (3) guards
- Seventy-six (76) to one hundred (100) children/teens = four (4) guards
- One-hundred and one (101) to one-hundred and twenty-five (125) children/teens = five (5) guards
- One-hundred and twenty-six (126) to one-hundred and fifty (150) = Six (6) guards

\*Cost of security is based on the ratio listed and is charged \$50 per guard/per hour

To reserve your security, and for any questions, please contact **Sebastian Romero** at 305.667.6667 ext. 190; or email: [sromero@tbam.org](mailto:sromero@tbam.org)

B'nai Mitzvah Security will be handled in house. Payment will need to be made to Temple Beth Am-B'nai Mitzvah Security.



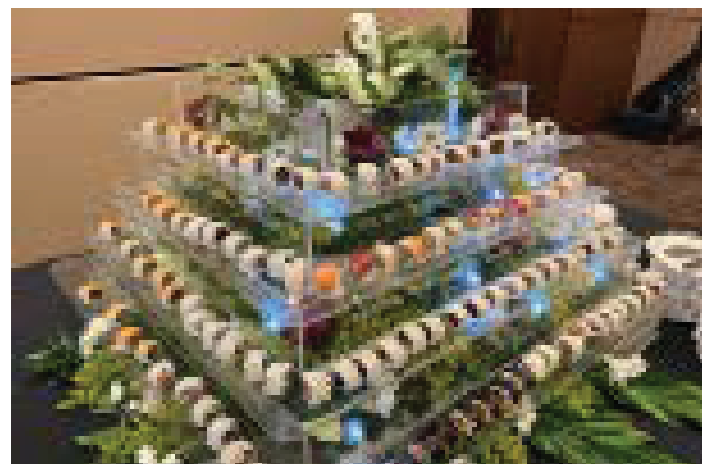
# OUR CATERERS

We have 6 incredible caterers as part of our panel!

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(MICHAEL MELTZER)



**CATERING BY LES**  
(LES OPPENHEIM)



**VIP CATERERS**  
(JACK HERMAN)



**STYLE CATERING INC**  
(SHANEIL SIBBLES)



**ANOTHER FARE TO REMEMBER**  
(SARAH DAVIDOFF)



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# TEMPLE BETH AM CELEBRATION POLICIES CONTINUED

- Congregants and/or video/still photographers cannot remove the Torah(s) without a clergy member present. Please arrange this through the clergy offices.
- All photographers (still or video) must remain stationary and no flash photography is permitted in the Sanctuary.
- Dress code for all vendors must be “Synagogue Appropriate” i.e. No sneakers, t-shirts, flip flops, etc.
- Congregant host assumes responsibility for cost of repairing any damages done to Temple Beth Am’s building and/or contents.
- Individuals, organizations and vendors utilizing Temple facilities will not be permitted to remove or displace any furniture or equipment without prior consent. No action which may in any way damage the synagogue’s property shall be permitted.
- All vendors must provide a certificate of insurance naming Temple Beth Am as the additionally insured with a minimum liability of \$1,000,000.00 within thirty (30) days of the event.
- No live animals are permitted on the Temple grounds or in the buildings.
- Congregant, B’nai Mitzvah Coordinator, and Catering Manager must meet and/or speak within 2 weeks of the date of event.



# TEMPLE BETH AM CELEBRATIONS CONTINUED

If you plan to have your party at Temple Beth Am, most items below are available to use at no additional cost. Please make sure you or your party planner discuss a set up in advance with Phylicia.

ITEM	HOW MANY
<b>TABLES</b> (Please note we do not provide linens)	
Rectangular 8 ft	38
Rectangular 6 ft	2
Study 8 in	16
Study 6 in	NA
Round 72 in	20
Round 66 in	7
Round 60 in	4
Round 48 in	4
Round 30 in	10
Round height 30 in	10
Kids tables/chairs	Please inquire with Phylicia
<b>CHAIRS</b>	
Brown	359
White (3.25 per chair)	268
<b>DANCE FLOOR</b>	
4x4 square pieces	63
<b>STAGES</b>	
6x8 units	6



## BRIDAL ROOM POLICIES

- If a B’nai Mitzvah family would like the use of the bridal room for changing their clothes etc. they must request it with Phylicia Cook, 786.364.9432.
- There will be NO food or storage of candy tables allowed in the bridal room during B’nai Mitzvah Celebrations.
- The bridal room will remain locked at all times. The B’nai Mitzvah family will need to ask Sharone Levi, or one of the maintenance staff to open the room, but it will then be immediately locked.
- If other guests or teens are seen in the space they will be asked to leave.
- The \$1350 cleanup fee that we receive from our families who request the bridal room will also be held accountable for damage in that space as well.

## A PARENT’S GUIDE FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### QUESTIONS THE HANDBOOK HAS NOT ANSWERED YET:

**Q: Is it customary to provide the mentor, Rabbi and Cantor with a gift of appreciation?**

A: Yes, you may elect to make a contribution to the Rabbi’s and Cantor’s discretionary funds and provide the mentor with a token of your appreciation.

**Q: Is it appropriate to invite members of the clergy to share our family’s celebration?**

A: You certainly may invite them, but please understand that the clergy frequently have B’nai Mitzvahs twice each Shabbat plus other life cycle events or other professional obligations and may not attend.

**Q: What is a mitzvah project and is my child required to do one?**

A: When a child is celebrating the milestone of becoming a B. Mitzvah, they perform many ritual mitzvot such as reading from the Torah, wearing a tallit, leading a service, lighting candles, etc. At Temple Beth Am we challenge our students to also take on an ethical mitzvah in the form of a “Mitzvah Project” as part of the B. Mitzvah process. It is a social action or community service project for the B. Mitzvah student to put their Jewish values and identity into practice. Becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah symbolizes becoming an adult within the Jewish community, and taking on responsibilities to that community. A Mitzvah Project is a way for B. Mitzvah student to express a unique way that they are actively helping to improve their community. Your child does not have to participate in a mitzvah project, but we encourage it because it will contribute to the overall significance of the B’nai Mitzvah and the true meaning of tzedakah.

**Q: Should we give alliyot only to relatives/friends who read Hebrew?**

A: No, guests chanting alliyot do not have to read Hebrew. We can provide transliterations, so those involved can be well prepared. However, those involved should still practice. It is important to note that the guest reciting the blessing must be Jewish. Non-Jews are permitted to stand with the person chanting the alliyah blessing.

**Q: Are family/friends involved in the service in any way besides alliyot during the Torah service?**

A: Other honors for family/friends can include opening and closing the Ark and carrying, holding or dressing the Torah.

**Q: How do we arrange to videotape the service?**

A: You are free to contact a professional videographer for your service, or live streaming is available.

**Q: How should the B’nai Mitzvah child be dressed? How should the parents and siblings be dressed?**

A: B’nai Mitzvah families should be dressed appropriately for being on the Bimah. All photos in this handbook include examples of appropriate dress for the Bimah

*For further questions please refer to the timeline on page 9, or contact Phylicia.*

# IMPORTANT CONTACT INFORMATION

## **DIRECT NUMBER: (305) 665-6228**

THE JANET Z" L AND RICHARD YULMAN CAMPUS  
5950 North Kendall Drive, Pinecrest, Florida 33156

## **CLERGY**

To contact Rabbis Barras, Greengrass, and Aklepi: Ext. 131

## **ADMINISTRATION**

**Phylicia Cook**, *B'nai Mitzvah and Auxiliary Groups Coordinator*

Pcook@tbam.org

Ext. 149

Direct Number: 786.364.9432

**Sharon Levi**, *Executive Director*

Ext. 127

786.364.9425

**Sebastian Romero**, *Facilities and Security Coordinator*

Ext. 190

786.364.9438

**John Wenzel**, *Finance Director (Billing Questions)*

Ext. 103

786.364.9428

**Rita Diaz**, *Membership Director*

Ext. 107

786.364.9434

**Tamara Donnenfeld**, *Director of Lifelong Learning*

Ext. 123

786.364.9416



TEMPLE BETH AM

*Embracing Jewish Life*

THE JANET Z" L AND RICHARD YULMAN CAMPUS  
5950 N. Kendall Drive, Pinecrest, FL 33156-2068 | 305 667 6667 | tbam.org