



A Guide for Your B. Mitzvah
at Peninsula Sinai Congregation

Religious Practices Committee

Revision 4.0

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Since the 14th century, young Jews have celebrated the transition into Jewish adulthood through participating as an adult in the synagogue service. This demonstrates commitment to adult roles and the community. When most of us think of a “Bar” or “Bat” Mitzvah, it is this special day we think of. However, the richness of that day is born out of a much wider context.

Peninsula Sinai Congregation strives to include all. As such we will use the non-gendered language of “B. Mitzvah” to refer to all children becoming adults within the Jewish community. People who prefer non-gendered language may also use “B’nei Mitzvah” as the singular.

B. Mitzvah denotes mature legal status in the Jewish community and our covenant with God. The words “B. Mitzvah” might be best translated as “commanded person.” Judaism teaches us that we only fully enter into the covenant with God when we reach maturity. At that time, we become B. Mitzvah.

Every Jew above the age of majority is a B. Mitzvah. Historically, boys automatically became Bar Mitzvah on their 13th Hebrew birthday, while girls became Bat Mitzvah on their 12th Hebrew birthday. These ages roughly reflect the onset of physiological adulthood. The Hebrew calendar is key because this is an important Jewish event, and Jewish events follow the Jewish calendar.

Ultimately, becoming a B. Mitzvah is a process of education and maturation with respect to Mitzvot, God’s commandments, which guide our lives. This guide is intended to help you prepare for your day of celebration, by pointing out the Mitzvot and traditions which inform each step of the way. Only through these Mitzvot does “B. Mitzvah” gain its full meaning.

This guide explains many of our standards and customs and provides expectation setting that will help you to create a meaningful and memorable *simcha* (celebration) within the expectations of our community. This guide does not address every detail and case. We are fully cognizant that every child and family is different. There are many more resources to assist you, and you should always feel free to consult with clergy when specific issues arise.

Education – חינוך

The knowledge and skills expected of a B. Mitzvah require years of formal and informal education. Nominally, preparation begins in third grade, with regular attendance at PSC’s Religious School or at Jewish Day School. Through this schooling, students learn the basics of the Hebrew language and the history and teachings of Judaism.

All B. Mitzvah students attend the PSC Wednesday afternoon class typically during seventh grade. The class prepares the students for becoming B. Mitzvah by exploring the meaning and significance of that transition, and by teaching them practical skills, such as leading Shabbat services and chanting Torah and Haftarah.

These are taught as life skills for responsible Jewish adults, reflecting our belief that B. Mitzvah is not merely a moment, but the transition to the permanent status as a Jewish adult.

All B. Mitzvah students are expected to participate and assist in the leadership of PSC Youth Service, a monthly youth service (junior congregation) and family education for Grades 3-7, guided by our Cantor and Education Director. PSC Youth Service offers students and families a journey in Jewish life as a family unit and inspires bringing Judaism into the home.

Monthly during the 6th or 7th grade year, families will join together for B. Mitzvah family sessions. These meetings aim to educate, initiate discussions on potential group projects, and create a cohesive group. As part of the cohesion of the B. Mitzvah class, it is expected that all B. Mitzvah families will complete the course.

Approximately 9-12 months prior to your child's B. Mitzvah celebration, your child will begin weekly tutoring sessions and periodic meetings with clergy. Parents will be asked to attend certain meetings during this year to plan for this special occasion. These meetings are perfect opportunities for asking questions, expressing concerns, and family reflection.

Synagogue Skills

The essential ritual for marking the transition into Jewish adulthood is "having an Aliyah" – being called to the Torah. Each child is called up to the Torah by his or her Hebrew name, and recites the blessings before and after the Torah reading.

Each child is expected to chant at least: the blessings before and after their aliyah (Torah reading), the corresponding maftir (final reading from the Torah) from the Torah scroll, and the entire haftarah (corresponding selection from the Prophets) with accompanying blessings. To enhance the child's understanding of their parasha (portion), each child is expected to deliver a D'var Torah (interpretation/explanation) of their parasha, drawing on commentaries from the Chumash and other sources as well as giving their own interpretation. The D'var Torah includes thanking the parents, siblings, B. Mitzvah teacher and the clergy.

B. Mitzvah generally lead the congregation in the Torah and Musaf services. Students are encouraged to lead additional parts of the service. Families will work with the clergy to create a meaningful service for the B. Mitzvah.

The Future – הכנה לעתיד

In choosing to embrace and celebrate this transition to Jewish adulthood, a child is committing to a life of Jewish living and learning. The elementary experiences that have prepared him for adulthood can now be used as building blocks in meeting these commitments. Our community's goal is for each of our B. Mitzvah to continue formal Jewish education, at first through PSC's Kabbalat Torah program (post-B. Mitzvah program) or ongoing day school studies, and subsequently through other appropriate venues throughout their adult lives. When invited to lead services or

read Torah at PSC or elsewhere, each student should accept that responsibility, remembering the commitment made to embrace B. Mitzvah. Parents should model these commitments for their children.

Expectations:

Setting the Date

Peninsula Sinai Congregation generally celebrates B. Mitzvah on Saturday mornings. We do this for several reasons:

- That is when most of the community is present.
- That service affords the most opportunities for the child, family and friends to participate.
- That is when the community is most able to support the child through participation.
- That is the service which all of our children are taught.

If a family would like to request a non-Saturday morning service, they should explain their special circumstances to Clergy. Exceptions are decided on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with Clergy, the education director, and Religious Practices Committee.

It is traditional to celebrate B. Mitzvah at the first opportunity following the age of adulthood. We are happy to honor this tradition and requests for later dates with the following caveats:

We believe that every chapter of Torah is invaluable and filled with meaning.

Certain weeks and seasons are not conducive for B. Mitzvah celebrations. It is in everyone's interests to avoid scheduling B. Mitzvah in close proximity to the High Holidays and Passover. We encourage a collaborative approach to scheduling to best account for clergy constraints and the family's needs and wishes. In deference to clergy, we discourage scheduling B. Mitzvah on Thanksgiving weekend and during the month of July.

In our community, B. Mitzvah children are taught together as a class as well as one-on-one tutoring sessions with our Cantor Doron Shapira. To simplify this process we ask that all children wait until their 13th Hebrew birthday to celebrate their B. Mitzvah. If a family would like to request an earlier date for their daughter, they should explain their special circumstances to our Clergy. Exceptions are decided on a case-by-case basis, in consultation with the Clergy, Education Director, and Religious Practices Committee.

Not every child feels ready for the commitments of B. Mitzvah at age thirteen: neither the short term commitments to regular Shabbat service attendance and

study for that special day, nor the longer term commitments to Jewish living and community involvement. Certainly both of these aspects demand time and effort and will compete for commitment from students engaged in other demanding extracurricular activities. It is likely that compromises will be required in order to engage adequately in study, service attendance, and preparation for those students, but we encourage their full participation in reaching Jewish adulthood.

When your child enters 5th grade, clergy will contact all 5th grade families to set dates for B. Mitzvah. They will verify children's Jewish birthdates and, on that basis, help you find a suitable date for the celebration. After the initial contact, scheduling available dates is on a first-come, first-served basis. As of recently, we have started contacting families as early as 4th grade in order to schedule dates at the same time as other North Peninsula Synagogues and the Wornick Jewish Day School.

Attendance at weekly Shabbat services – 'עבודת ה'

During the year of tutoring for B. Mitzvah, families shall attend two Saturday morning Shabbat Services per month and one additional service per month (e.g. Tuesday night, Thursday morning, Friday night, Saturday morning). This serves several purposes:

- The student becomes familiar with the commitments of living a Jewish life.
- The student and parents become familiar with the synagogue service, its procedures, content, and tunes in preparation for the celebration.
- The family and community get to know each other better, making the celebration more meaningful for each.
- The student and family can observe other B. Mitzvah and consider how to create a meaningful service.

When attending services leading up to the B. Mitzvah date, we encourage you to arrive early, even at the start of the service. Similarly, families should stay through the end of services. This will make the entire service familiar to the family on the day of their celebration.

Participation and leadership in PSC Services is expected as part of Shabbat attendance.

Chesed Project - תדן

Chesed (compassion) is a fundamental Jewish value. In preparation for becoming B. Mitzvah, all students shall perform some sort of *Chesed* project. This project can take a variety of forms, according to the child's interests. The project should demand a dedication of time and effort on the part of the B. Mitzvah student and ought to involve active parental participation. Completion of the project will require reflective writing and a presentation. Projects will be discussed with families and will be approved in advance by clergy. While clergy is available to suggest

appropriate organizations and facilitate connections, the B. Mitzvah families are responsible for coordinating the details of the project.

Students involved in similar work as part of a Jewish day school or some other group or institution may request that that work be considered their *Chesed* Project.

Some possible ideas for *Chesed* projects include, but are not limited to:

- Raising awareness and money for Jewish or Israel assistance efforts:
 - Mazon, the Jewish Hunger Relief Organization
 - Friends of the Israeli Defense Forces
 - Yad Sarah (assists Israeli medical responders)
- Seeking opportunity to volunteer with local Jewish organizations:
 - Jewish Family & Children's Services (San Mateo Office)
 - Jewish Coalition for Literacy (Los Altos Office)
 - American Jewish World Services (San Francisco Office)
 - Bechol Lashon (San Francisco Office)
 - JIMENA (San Francisco Office)
 - Galilee Circus (<http://eng.makom-bagalil.org.il/galileecircus/>)
 - Jewish National Fund (Palo Alto Office)
- Working at a food bank
- Assisting at a second hand clothing shop
- Visiting nursing home residents
- Volunteering for regular park or community cleanup efforts
- Tutoring other students at school
- Going shopping for homebound elderly or disabled individuals and spending time with them or yard work for homebound individuals
- Collecting toys or books for children in the hospital and spending time playing with them or reading to them
- Providing free babysitting for a family that can't afford to pay
- Volunteering at an animal shelter
- Volunteering at the synagogue

It is expected that the B. Mitzvah will spend at least three hours a month on a *Chesed* project over the course of the year leading up to and following the B. Mitzvah celebration. Projects should be selected no later than the start of the family education class, roughly 1.5 years before the B. Mitzvah.

Planning for Your Celebration

Honors – לכבד את הבריות

When celebrating a B. Mitzvah, we customarily honor individuals who play important roles in that child's life. Given the intrinsic Jewish nature of the day, it is especially appropriate to honor Jewish teachers and those who have been strong Jewish influences in the child's life.

The service provides opportunities to honor these individuals, such as Aliyot and Torah Reading. For a complete list of these honors, see the appendix. Remembering that these are sacred rites of Jewish worship and not merely honors, we expect that you will be mindful of the following:

1. Ordinarily, all ritual honors are reserved for Jews. If you have a non-Jew that you'd like to honor, please let clergy know.
2. To avoid sensitive changes and extra work, please share a proposed list of honors to clergy for consultation and approval before you contact the honorees.
3. Your list of honors must be submitted to clergy for final approval at least 2 weeks before the B. Mitzvah.
4. Adults or children can be called up for each Ark opening. If you have more than two honorees, please check with clergy.
5. Adults or children, who can capably lead prayers or handle the Torah, can be called up for other honors. No more than 1 adult or 2 children should be called at one time. Honors for children are more limited, but minors may serve as gelilah or lead the following prayers: peace, our country, Israel, or Ashrei. The prayer for Israel should be chanted in Hebrew. For other ways to involve adults or children in your simcha, please consult with clergy.
6. Guests may also participate by leading the service or reading Torah. If you have someone who can participate in this way, please give clergy their contact information at least 3 months in advance of the B. Mitzvah. Clergy will contact them to make the arrangements.
7. Up to five Aliyot may be distributed by the B. Mitzvah family. Modesty and honoring the congregation call for leaving at least two Aliyot unassigned for distribution to community members. This sensitivity allows the congregation to honor those with concurrent lifecycle occasions.
8. In keeping with Jewish law, we encourage you to call one individual per Aliyah. We allow a maximum of two individuals per Aliyah.
9. The first Aliyah must go to someone whose father was a Cohen. The second Aliyah must go to someone whose father was a Levi. The third Aliyah must go to someone who is Israel (neither Cohen nor Levi). For special arrangements, please consult with clergy.
10. Everyone reading from the Torah, coming up for an Aliyah, and lifting the Torah must wear a Tallit and head covering.
11. Should special circumstances of the service (e.g. a holiday or special Shabbat) mandate additional honors, please consult with clergy.

Many individuals prefer not to receive those honors because of discomfort with Hebrew reading, religious rites, or public appearances. We do have blessings transliterated into English and Russian for convenience. It is good to recall that the party also provides rich and creative opportunities for honoring special people. A good example is the modern custom of a post-havdallah candle lighting ceremony.

The only person who requires an honor is the bar/bat mitzvah child. You should feel no obligation to assign every available honor to your family and guests. Members of our congregation, who are used to participating in our weekly Shabbat services, will gladly take any open slots.

Inviting Guests – הכנסת אורחים

Few things are more hurtful to a child at this sensitive age than to be excluded. Etiquette and Jewish ethics call for inviting all B. Mitzvah classmates to your child's celebration, regardless of whether your child is a Day School or Religious School student. We strive to be as inclusive a congregation as possible, and we firmly believe in the Mitzvah of hospitality in the tradition of Avraham.

If your child attends a Day School, PSC expects that you will honor both our policy, and the policy of that institution.

Tallit/Tefillin/Kippot – טלית תפילין וכיפה

B. Mitzvah and their Jewish fathers must wear a Tallit and head covering during the service. Mothers and older siblings are encouraged to do so as well.

Much like food, a Tallit can be kosher or not. To avoid any unfortunate or embarrassing cases, we ask you to show your child's Tallit to Clergy well in advance of the celebration. This is particularly important if the Tallit is handmade.

All people who identify as men must wear a head covering in the sanctuary. For others it is optional. Everyone reading from the Torah, coming up for an Aliyah, and lifting of the Torah must wear a Tallit and head covering.

Tefillin, which are the central obligation of becoming a B. Mitzvah, are worn at Thursday minyan. All B. Mitzvah are strongly encouraged to have and learn to wear Tefillin.

Please see "Optional Preparations" for information on personalized Kippot.

Kiddush Luncheon – סעודת מצוה והכנסת אורחים

Like many other special Jewish occasions, B. Mitzvah are followed by a "Seudat-Mitzvah Meal" for all present. The Kiddush luncheon is a great time to connect with old and new friends in a relaxing, friendly setting. Even community members who are not our personal guests join with us to celebrate this wonderful moment.

Following services, we move out of the sanctuary and congregate by the tables where the blessings are recited over wine/grape juice, ritual hand washing, and

Challah. The meal does not begin until these blessings are completed, and we want to be sure that the B. Mitzvah and parents are front and center. Therefore, we ask that when the service ends, the host family promptly proceed to the Kiddush.

Whether using a caterer or not, all Kiddush preparation, set up and clean up must comply with the synagogue's Kashrut, Kitchen, and Kiddush guidance. In order to avoid unnecessary and embarrassing circumstances, be sure to familiarize yourself with these documents and bring all questions about these matters to Clergy well in advance.

Observant Relatives

We aim to accommodate guests from different backgrounds by providing guidance to our service, accommodations within walking distance, and a list of kosher restaurants under the supervision of the Northern California Vaad, and stowage for items at the sanctuary on Shabbat.

We have a traditional egalitarian Conservative service. Examples of similarity and difference are as follows: we exclude music on Shabbat, but we use a microphone for the service and allow two people to be called for an aliyah. We offer Shabbat stowage of items in the sanctuary closet (unlocked, but typically undisturbed). Items can be left prior to Shabbat and collected after Shabbat. Please consult with our clergy for times when the building will be open to allow for stowage and collection.

Typically, the Kiddush luncheon of heckshered¹ foods is prepared in our PSC kosher kitchen supervised by our clergy or mashgiach². A Vaad supervised caterer can be selected to accommodate your observant relatives. Please refer to the synagogue's Kashrut, Kitchen, and Kiddush guidance document for lists of caterers and supervision.

Three hotels are within walking distance and one kosher restaurant is available on the Peninsula:

- Crowne Plaza Hotel - Foster City (www.crowneplaza.com), 1221 Chess Drive, Foster City, (650) 570-5700, 1.8 miles
- Courtyard Marriott – Foster City (www.marriott.com), 550 Shell Boulevard, Foster City, (650) 377-0600, 1.7 miles
- Residence Inn – San Mateo (www.residenceinnsanmateo.com), 2000 Winward Way, San Mateo, (650) 574-4700, 1.5 miles

¹ Hecksher: rabbinical approval of meats and other foods that comply with the ritual requirements of Jewish dietary laws, issued in the form of an endorsing mark or stamp on the products so approved.

² Mashgiach: inspector(s) appointed to guard against any violation of the Jewish dietary laws in food processing facilities, where food presumed to be kosher is prepared or served for public consumption.

- Izzy's Brooklyn Bagels – Palo Alto (www.izzysbrooklynbagels.com), 477 S. California Avenue, Palo Alto, (650) 329-0700

Optional Participation – הידורי מצוה

There are many additional participatory opportunities you might choose to enhance your celebration. We provide guidance here for optional common practices.

Donations (optional) – צדקה

Donations to the community are a time-honored way to recognize the support the synagogue and its members have played in the life of an individual experiencing any simcha. We encourage you and your family and friends to make donations to specific PSC funds as one element of celebrating your child's achievement.

As we celebrate B. Mitzvah, it is appropriate to remember those who are less fortunate. Parents: please consider making a commitment to donate a portion of your overall spending to a hunger relief organization or another worthy charity. B. Mitzvah: please consider making a commitment to donate a portion of your gift income to a hunger relief organization or another worthy charity.

B. Mitzvah Family Group Donation/Tzedakah (optional)

Each year we encourage the camaraderie of the B. Mitzvah classes in building our community. One way to build community is to complete a project together. The project may be a fundraiser for a needed improvement within our community or the physical work to fix or better something within our building. With agreement from the class, donations to the project can be given in lieu of individual gift exchanges between class members. Please consult clergy before finalizing your plans.

The Week and Day of the Celebration

Thursday Morning Minyan and Tefillin (optional) – מנין והנחת תפילין

There is a beautiful tradition to bring B. Mitzvah students to weekday morning services shortly before becoming B. Mitzvah. This provides an intimate welcoming into the community, a parent-child bonding experience, and an opportunity to wrap Tefillin for the first time, since they are not worn on Shabbat.

As an egalitarian Conservative congregation, PSC encourages all B. Mitzvah children to participate in these practices at our Thursday morning service. We can also arrange for your child to lead a familiar part of the service. If you wish to participate in this special opportunity, please make arrangements with clergy at least two weeks in advance. All B. Mitzvah are strongly encouraged to have and learn to wear Tefillin.

Attendance at Friday evening service of B. Mitzvah

B. Mitzvah families are encouraged to attend Friday night services on the weekend of their celebration. Family members are invited to lead parts of the service. To

accommodate your celebration and Shabbat dinner, we are happy to hold an “early” service. You may host the Oneg Shabbat following services if you wish.

If you desire to exercise any of these options, please make arrangements with clergy at least one month in advance.

Parents Speaking and Parental Blessing (optional) – ברוך שפטרני

If they wish, parents share words with their children at the service. This can be done at the beginning of the service, to send their child on their way. They may also present a Tallit at this point in the service. Alternatively, parents may speak after the Maftir, at the time they recite the blessing. Comments from parents should be brief and directed toward the child. Parents should refrain from teaching lessons from the Torah at this moment, focusing instead on their child.

Parents are also encouraged to read the traditional blessing, which marks this transition in their life. This blessing can be read by one or both parents, in Hebrew, English, or both, clergy will show you the text in advance. This brief blessing is recited after the Maftir Aliyah. If you wish, you can come up to the Torah to recite it by your child’s side.

Showering of Sweetness (optional) – שמחה שבמצוה

It is a custom at PSC to shower the new B. Mitzvah and friends with soft candy, following the blessings at the conclusion of chanting the Haftarah. This is a moment of relief and celebration, when your child has completed the longest part of your child’s duties for the day. Candy (3 lbs.) is furnished by the congregation for each family. Please inform your guests that the idea is to gently “shower like rain.” Once the candy is thrown, all children in the congregation are invited to join in the celebration by taking some “souvenirs” with them!

If you would like to have additional candy (3lbs.) for your service, a second portion can be coordinated through the PSC Office.

Conduct (some guidance)

No two people are alike, and what brings one person close to God may distract another. We appreciate these differences, and seek to find standards which are fitting for our community. In doing so, we recognize that some decorum is necessary, while too much decorum leaves many feeling cold and detached. It is expected that your family and your guests will include practices, which are helpful and comfortable, so long as they do not distract others. Here are a few points to keep in mind for your family and guests while in our sanctuary and synagogue: (note: **Bold text** indicates applicability on all parts of the synagogue grounds on Friday nights and Saturdays)

- **Make sure that any cameras, mobile phones, tablets, and other electronic devices are turned OFF while in the sanctuary and everywhere else on the synagogue grounds. If your communication device is absolutely necessary, please ensure that it is silenced. Please**

also refrain from *texting* while in the sanctuary and everywhere else on the synagogue grounds.

- **Smoking is not permitted.**
- **Please make sure that all who identify as males keep their heads covered with a Kippah at all times while in the synagogue building. Others are welcome to do so, if they would like. Extra kippot can be found in the basket on the wall opposite the entrance to the sanctuary.**
- Please feel free to express yourself through song and prayer. Please refrain from unnecessary conversations.
- Please stand when the congregation stands if you are able. Please feel free to stand when others are sitting, if you are at a different part in the service.
- Please avoid applauding in the sanctuary.
- If you or your guests would like to follow along with the service, please feel free to ask a sanctuary neighbor for help to find the page. But please also feel free to explore the siddur or Chumash at your own pace.
- Please know that children are welcomed and appreciated. Please help guide them by sitting together with your children. Please feel free to make use of the tot room and stay with your child there. If you are expecting many extra young children, please let the PSC Office know earlier that week.

Expected Timeline for Preparation:

Beginning (Fall) of 5th grade School Year

Dates are set for upcoming B. Mitzvah. Going forward, dates may be set as early as the spring of the fourth grade year.

1.5 years before

- B. Mitzvah Family Experience Program Begins
- Schedule a family meeting with clergy to discuss the vision for your simcha.
- Begin taking the 7th grade class taught by Cantor Shapira
- Participate in Family B. Mitzvah Class

12 months before

- Attend services regularly (see page 7)

10 months before

- Start meeting with clergy on a regular basis.

- Reserve party venue and vendors. (optional)

6 months before

- Arrange for Kiddush with PSC Office (and Caterer, when applicable).
- Select and order invitations. (optional)
- Select party theme and plan for decorations. (optional)
- Begin preparing guest list.

3 months before

- Schedule 5-6 half hour sessions with clergy to work on d'var Torah.
- Schedule one hour-long family meeting (parents, student, siblings) with Clergy.
- Purchase, make or borrow a kosher Tallit.
- Purchase or borrow kosher Tefillin (highly encouraged).
- Order personalized kippot (optional).
- Identify and inform clergy of potential Torah reading honors. Once Torah readings are agreed upon, distribute Torah portions to Torah readers.
- Discuss PSC room setups with PSC office and clergy.
- Finalize guest list and mail invitations. (optional)
- Reserve hotel rooms for out-of-town guests. (optional)
- Order flowers or plan festive display. (optional)
- Prepare biography and photo for Bulletin. (optional)

6 weeks before

- Child will have completed studying all service portions and Haftarah
- Child will have ideas/draft of D'var Torah

4 weeks before

- If you choose to create your own program (optional), please send to clergy for review.
- Finalize Kiddush/party plans with the PSC office.

2 weeks before

- All learning will have been completed by the child.
- Strong draft of the child's D'var Torah will be ready.

- Identify and inform clergy of desired honors. Once honors are agreed upon, distribute honors and provide expectations.
- Confirm final count for Kiddush for preparer and servers.
- Order challah for kiddush.
- Confirm all vendors. (optional)

1 week before

- Family meeting with Clergy. (as needed)
- Photography with Clergy (scheduled prior). (optional)
- Finalize Kiddush preparations.

1 day before

- Deliver kippot, challah, flowers/festive display, Kiddush foods, and any decorations to PSC.
- Embrace the peace of Shabbat.

Optional Preparations – הידור מצוה

There are many additional opportunities to enhance your celebration through “beautifying the Mitzvah.” Many of these are laid out below.

Invitations (optional)

Many families choose to prepare formal invitations for family members and special guests. Typically, the invitation notes the starting time of the service, the location of PSC (499 Boothbay Ave., Foster City CA), and informs guests that a Kiddush will be served immediately following the service.

Formal invitations can be purchased from many vendors. Invitations can also be prepared or crafted inexpensively with a computer printer, word processing software, and purchase of specialty papers.

Announcements (optional)

The PSC Office will submit an announcement on your child’s behalf, you may choose to upgrade that announcement directly to the local Jewish news, the “J.” If you would prefer not to have the announcement in the J, please contact the PSC office.

Shabbat Service Program Handout (optional)

Each Shabbat, the PSC office produces a handout with information about the Torah portion and upcoming events. On your special day, the handout can also include details on participating family members, and information about the Kiddush

sponsorship. The handout can be printed on different colored or textured paper. Please speak with the PSC Office about these options.

Personalized Kippot (optional)

In honor of the celebration, many families choose to provide personalized kippot as a memento for guests. Typically, kippot are personalized to include the child's name, Hebrew name, and date of service.

If you choose to provide personalized kippot, a recommended number is 1/3 of the number of expected guests. Thus, if you are expecting 180 Kiddush guests, you would want to purchase 60 personalized kippot.

Flowers/Festive Displays (optional)

Many families choose to provide floral bouquets or a festive display on the Bimah to beautify the sanctuary. These can rest on the two small tables to the sides of the ark. The bouquets or festive displays can be small or large, but must fit within the space by the ark (surfaces are 1'x1', the spray can not exceed a 2-foot diameter). These bouquets or festive displays can be moved to the Social Hall to beautify your Kiddush as well.

Flowers/festive displays must be delivered and set in place before noon on Friday. Please coordinate delivery with the PSC Office.

Pictures (optional)

Many families choose to have formal photographs taken of their child with family, clergy, and the Torah in the PSC sanctuary. ***As no photography is allowed on Shabbat***, these photographs must be taken before or after Shabbat. Pictures are often scheduled for Friday afternoon after the delivery of flowers or festive displays.

It is wise to prepare a list of photo poses that you wish, to facilitate the photographic session.

Scheduling of photography must be done in advance with clergy.

Video (optional)

Approximately one week after the B. Mitzvah service, we will email you a link to download the video of your service. The video is shot from a mounted video camera in the sanctuary through the use of programmable timers. It will be available for 2 months before being deleted.

Greening your Simcha – בל תשחית

There are many ways to green your B. Mitzvah event. Some things to consider as you make selections:

- All Kiddush utensils, cups, plates, and other disposable goods are compostable and provided by PSC. Reusable microfiber tablecloths are available for your use, but must be laundered and returned before the

following Shabbat. Otherwise, your caterer can provide washable or environmentally friendly linens. Please make sure your caterer is aware.

- o Green = Compost
- o Blue = Recycle
- o Black = Landfill
- Create unique centerpieces that can be donated to various non-profits (i.e. non-perishable food items, children's books, school supplies). (optional)
- Consider plants instead of cut flowers. (optional)

Offset the carbon footprint of travel. Arrange for carpools to your event(s).

Party (optional)

Many families choose to host a party to continue the celebration. These parties run the range of an at-home gathering of family and friends to festive catered affairs in the evening at local venues, hotels, or in the PSC Social Hall.

We expect that all children in the class will be invited to these celebrations (see above "Inviting Guests").

In order to be most inclusive and to retain a spirit of holiness and Mitzvah in the celebration, we strongly encourage the following practices:

- Choose kosher food
- Avoid non-Shabbat activities until Shabbat is over
- Include Havdallah in a Saturday night party (contact clergy for assistance)
- To support your community, use the PSC Social Hall as your venue
- Prioritize modesty and tzedakah over luxury

PSC Social Hall (optional)

Selection of the PSC Social Hall as a venue for your post-Shabbat party provides a warm community atmosphere for your simcha. It can be reserved through the PSC Office for a fee, which includes room set-up (chairs and tables) and janitorial service.

Whether using a caterer or not, all simcha food preparations, set up and clean up must comply with the synagogue's Kashrut, Kitchen, and Kiddush guidance.

The Social Hall can be festively decorated on a modest budget using homemade or commercial thematic decorations (*e.g.* www.shindigz.com) following Shabbat. Pre-prepared banners or cardboard thematic skylines can be quickly and readily hung on the north and south walls of the social hall from the railings used to support our movable walls (please discuss with PSC Office in advance) to facilitate thematic

parties. Helium balloons can fill the ceiling (100 – 200) to increase the festiveness. Pre-filled balloons can be commercially purchased locally (e.g. www.say-it-with-balloons.net) and delivered directly to PSC. The following source may also be of benefit: www.uscj.org and www.myjewishlearning.com or www.ritualwell.org.

To maintain the sanctity of Shabbat, all decorations and foods must be brought into the synagogue either before the start of Shabbat or following Shabbat (possible in winter months). During summer months, perishable decorations (e.g. helium balloons) and rented equipment (e.g. DJ sound equipment) may be brought into the synagogue one hour prior to the start of the simcha so long as monetary transactions are not done on Shabbat and no devices are actively powered on Shabbat. During the summer months, consider a dessert/DJ party that starts with Havdallah in the sanctuary so that your DJ can power-up and equipment check while party-goers are all in the sanctuary.

We encourage all post-Shabbat simchas to begin with Havdallah. To make any of these arrangements, please contact Clergy.

Resources

PSC has many people available to answer your questions and address your concerns. For your convenience, here is a list:

Cantor-Doron Shapira, 650.349.2816, cantor@peninsulasinai.org

Office Manager: Cat Bernard, 650.349.2816, info@peninsulasinai.org

Religious Practices Chairman: Linda Oberstein, loberstein@gmail.com, 650.678.1489.

Appendix 1: Shabbat Honors – לכבוד את הבריות

English Name of B. Mitzvah:

Date of B. Mitzvah:

Hebrew Name:

English Name of Parents:

Honors:

Aliyot (blessings before and after the Torah reading, Notes #1,2,3):

English Name:

Hebrew Name:

1 Cohen (Note #4)

2 Levi (Note #4)

3 Israel (Note #4)

4

5

6

7

Maftir (Note #5)

Other Honors:

Opening & Closing Ark, pg. 168 (Note #6)

Opening & Closing Ark, pg. 183 (Note #6)

Prayer for Inclusion, inside back cover of siddur



Hagbah (Lift & Show Torah, Notes #2,8)		☒
Gelilah (Tying the Torah, Notes #7,9)		☒
Prayer for Our Country, pg. 177 (Note #7)		☒
Prayer for Israel (In Hebrew), pg. 178 (Note #7)		☒
Prayer for Peace, pg. 178 (Note #7)		☒



Notes:

1. Up to five Aliyot may be distributed by the B. Mitzvah family. Modesty and honoring the congregation call for leaving two Aliyot unassigned for distribution to community members. This sensitivity allows the congregation to honor those with concurrent lifecycle occasions, *e.g.*, baby naming, yahrzeit, and to allow the entire community to celebrate with the family in this wonderful simcha.
2. Everyone reading from the Torah, coming up for an Aliyah, and lifting the Torah **must** wear a Tallit and head covering.
3. We allow a maximum of two individuals per Aliyah.
4. The first Aliyah must go to someone whose father was a Cohen. The second Aliyah must go to someone whose father was a Levi. The third Aliyah must go to someone who is Israel (neither Cohen nor Levi). For special circumstances, please discuss with clergy.
5. The maftir Aliyah is usually reserved for the honoree chanting the Haftarah, usually the B. Mitzvah.
6. Adults or children can be called up for each Ark opening. No more than 2 adults should be called at one time.
7. Adults or children, who can capably lead prayers or handle the Torah, can be called up for other honors. No more than 1 adult or 2 children should be called at one time. The Prayer for Israel should be chanted in Hebrew.
8. The honoree lifting the Torah is expected to be able to lift the Torah and show a minimum of three (3) columns of text. Please request skill development if unsure how to safely lift Torah – this can be provided in 5 minutes.
9. The honoree tying the Torah is expected to wrap and dress the Torah.
10. To avoid sensitive changes and extra work, please share a proposed list of honors with clergy for consultation and approval before you contact the honorees.
11. Your list of honors must be submitted to clergy for final approval at least two weeks before the B. Mitzvah.
12. Guests may also participate by leading the service or reading Torah. If you have someone who can participate in this way, please give clergy their contact information at least 3 months in advance of the B. Mitzvah. Clergy will contact them to make the arrangements.
13. There are many ways to honor non-Jewish family and friends. Please speak to the clergy for more details and special arrangements.
14. Should special circumstances of the service (*e.g.* a holiday or special Shabbat) mandate additional honors, please consult with clergy.