

INTRODUCTION

You are about to embark upon one of the most exciting stages in your family's Jewish life - your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

In order to help you, the Woodbury Jewish Center has compiled this handbook to answer many of the questions you may have regarding certain policies and procedures. A time line of events has been included at the end of this handbook to assist you in understanding the requirements and activities involved in Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Committee at the synagogue.

Our basic premise is that your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah training is a family affair. Parents participate and share in the learning process with their child. Positive reinforcement and the sense of importance created by parental involvement will enhance both the family relationship and the religious experience - a true cause for celebration!

The Woodbury Jewish Center family rejoices in the opportunity to share this Simcha with you. We hope that you will make the most of every aspect of this wonderful period in your life.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

The term Bar or Bat Mitzvah means “Son or Daughter of Commandment.” It represents the time when our children are deemed old enough to formally accept responsibility for the ethical and religious traditions of Judaism.

Until recently, it was believed that the Bar Mitzvah dated from only the 15th century. However, modern studies have shown that the institution of the Bar Mitzvah dates back to Rabbinic and Gaonic times (200 - 800 C.E.). The Bat Mitzvah ceremony, on the other hand, finds its roots in the early 1900’s.

For the last six centuries, it has been the custom for boys to be called to the Torah on Shabbat upon attaining the age of thirteen. While the Torah refers to the age of maturity as twenty, the Mishna fixes maturity at thirteen for a boy and twelve for a girl. Recognizing the current-day expectations of equality for both our sons and daughters, the Conservative Movement has adopted equivalent standards for both sexes with regard to age, education and religious requirements.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a monumental event in our lives and in the lives of our children. It is a culmination of the enormous effort made by a child along with his/her parents. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony, however, marks the achievement of only one of the goals of a complete Jewish education. It is therefore crucial that your child understand that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not the end of religious training, but the beginning of the child’s religious education and observance as an adult.

The focal point of this educational process and every aspect of our Jewish life is the synagogue. The Woodbury Jewish Center is not just a house of worship or a religious school - it is a true center for our community. It is a special place where our members can:

- Learn about the richness of our Jewish heritage;
- Pray in an atmosphere of warmth and security;
- Participate in Jewish ritual; and
- Celebrate all of our special occasions ... like the Bar/Bat Mitzvah of our children.

SETTING THE DATE FOR YOUR CHILD'S BAR/BAT MITZVAH

As one of its most basic and fundamental principles, the Woodbury Jewish Center is firmly committed to equal participation by men and women within the religious and social framework of the synagogue. Being counted in a minyan, receiving an aliyah and carrying a Sefer Torah on Shabbat and Simchat Torah are some of the significant religious rituals and privileges enjoyed by both men and women. In keeping with our belief of gender-equality, the educational and religious requirements for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah discussed in this handbook are identical for both young men and women.

The scheduling of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date is intended to coincide with the date that a child attains the age of thirteen years, as measured by his/her Jewish birthdate. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah date will be scheduled by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Committee roughly four (4) years in advance, and will be confirmed in writing by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Committee.

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a joyous and momentous occasion, in which each member of the congregation takes a certain measure of pride and joy in the achievements of every child. Just as it is a special event for the family and friends of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, it also constitutes a customary ritual of synagogue life for all of our members, and is a public acknowledgment that each child will thereafter be responsible for carrying out the commandments of Jewish life. For this reason, the Woodbury Jewish Center believes it vital to have our children celebrate their becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah during the weekly Saturday morning service of our congregation. An essential element of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service is being called to the Torah.

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah at the Woodbury Jewish Center is an exclusive privilege of membership in the synagogue. Bar/Bat Mitzvah will be scheduled for Saturday morning services. Once a family has been assigned a Shabbat morning date, consideration will be given to a request for an alternative service. This request **must** ONLY be made to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Committee, as is more fully set forth in the first letter that is forwarded providing notification of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Dates are reassigned entirely at the discretion of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah committee and the Clergy. At no time will a request for a change be entertained for a date less than 13 months before a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

Considerations in Requesting An Alternative Service

When considering whether to request any of the alternative services listed below, please bear in mind the following:

- for any Bar or Bat Mitzvah service other than on a Shabbat (Saturday) morning, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee is doubled; AND
- for any Bar or Bat Mitzvah service OTHER than on a Shabbat morning, you are required to utilize the services of the caterer to host your party and/or celebration which will follow the service; AND
- a Haftarah (reading from the Book of Prophets that is traditionally associated with a Bar/Bat Mitzvah) is chanted only on Shabbat morning, and not at any other time; AND
- virtually all "alternative" services are different from the Shabbat morning service with which you may be familiar.

In considering whether or not an alternate service is suitable for your family, it is important to understand some of the differences between Shabbat morning services and other services. During the Shabbat morning service, a Haftarah portion is chanted by the Bar or Bat Mitzvah candidate. On Sunday morning or

Saturday evening, no Haftarah is chanted. Instead, the Bar or Bat Mitzvah candidate is called upon to read from the Torah. A Haftarah is read from a printed Hebrew text containing vowels and the musical notations. Reading from the Torah is a far more complex task and requires a higher level of Hebrew reading skills because the child is asked to read directly from the Torah. Please consider your child's abilities when making your request in that if it is determined that a child is not sufficiently proficient in Hebrew reading skills, that child may not be permitted to read from the Torah. Of course, the child would be called for an aliyah.

A description of the "alternative services" is as follows:

Mincha Ma'ariv Service:

This service is held on Saturday evening, as Shabbat is ending. As there is no chanting of the Haftarah, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate is required to chant all three portions from the Torah. Instead of the four aliyot available for each family during a Shabbat morning service, only two aliyot are available. The starting and ending time of the service varies depending on the season and length of the day, since the service must start just prior to sunset.

Sunday Rosh Chodesh:

Rosh Chodesh means, quite simply, a "new month." As with the Gregorian calendar, the first day of a new month in the Hebrew calendar falls on different days, and involves a special service. Some individuals have expressed interest in celebrating a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at this service because the Torah is read, and because observant family members and/or friends who do not travel on Shabbat would be more likely to attend the service. A Sunday Rosh Chodesh may occur once or twice in a given year. It is important to note that at the Rosh Chodesh service, the

father of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the Bar Mitzvah candidate, as well as any males who receive an aliyah at such a service, must wear T'fillin in accordance with ritual practice. Three aliyot are available to a family during a Rosh Chodesh service.

“Celebratory” service - for BAT Mitzvah only:

This service may be conducted on a Friday evening (when the Torah is NOT read) or any Sunday morning (when the Torah is NOT read.) However, because the Torah is not read at these services, all Bat Mitzvah candidates electing to participate in this type of a program will be **required** to participate in a Shacharit (morning) worship service, to be conducted on the Thursday morning immediately preceding the celebratory service. The Thursday morning Shacharit service, which is run by the Ritual Committee of the Woodbury Jewish Center, begins at 6:15 a.m. and is conducted as is described above. It will be the responsibility of the Bat Mitzvah family to provide no less than ten adults so that this early morning service can take place. The father of the Bat Mitzvah, as well as any males who receive an aliyah at such a service, must wear T'fillin in accordance with ritual practice. The Bat Mitzvah candidate will be required to read all three aliyot from the Torah, each consisting of approximately three lines of Hebrew.

Since the vast majority of the general congregation would ordinarily not be present during any of the aforementioned “alternative” services, the scheduling of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah at such alternate times must be recognized as a private service. The family will be required to use the caterer affiliated with the Woodbury Jewish Center if the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is held at any time other than Shabbat morning.

Regardless of the time that is selected for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, our children are all held to the same standards and requirements that have been set forth in this

handbook. We are proud of our children, and firmly believe that when high, yet realistic goals are established, our children will feel intense pride in their achievements.

EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS AND BAR/BAT MITZVAH TRAINING

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah represents the achievement of one of the first goals in attaining a complete Jewish education. In order for this goal to be met, the Woodbury Jewish Center has established certain requirements for its Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah student is required to complete five (5) consecutive years of religious school at the Woodbury Jewish Center (or the equivalent, discussed later), beginning in the year corresponding with the third grade of secular school. Our Rabbi, Cantor and Educational Director have designed an innovative and meaningful educational program for our children. Religious education at the Woodbury Jewish Center is offered beginning with kindergarten and we urge all children to start their formal religious training as early as possible, so that they may benefit from a complete and well-rounded experience.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah will take place during the fifth year of religious school (Hey class) and all children are required to complete that year of school and graduate with their class. Each child will be required to attend group and private Bar/Bat Mitzvah instruction, which will be provided by the synagogue, in conjunction with the child's religious school education. In addition, the entire Daled class will spend a portion of the fourth year working on a special Mitzvah project, which is also a requirement for Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The theme of the project, involving some aspect of Jewish life, history or culture, will be determined by the students in conjunction with their teacher, the Rabbi, the Cantor and the Director of Education. During the Hey year, the children will receive instruction in the rituals, prayers and meaning behind the Tallit and T'fillin. Boys are required to have their

own Tallit and T'fillin no later than one (1) month prior to Bar Mitzvah and must attend services on a Sunday morning prior to Bar Mitzvah. At that time, they will put on T'fillin and participate in the service. Your family is encouraged to join your child in that service. Girls may elect to wear Tallit and T'fillin as well, and may attend the Sunday service.

Students who enter the Woodbury Jewish Center after the Aleph grade will be individually evaluated regarding the training they received in other religious schools in order to determine the extent of any equivalency credit. This determination will be made by the Clergy and the Director of Education. Any student who begins his or her Jewish education after the Aleph grade will be able to satisfy the educational requirements for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah by attending religious school classes, all programs described above, and additionally by the completion of a course of supplemental private instruction (cost to be incurred by the family.)

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Training and Minimum Hebrew Proficiency Requirements

Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons will begin approximately six (6) to nine (9) months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, such that each child receives six (6) months of actual training, exclusive of the summer vacation period. The training program begins with a series of six (6) consecutive Thursday evening group lessons, during which the children are taught “trop”, or musical notations. All children attend the first group lesson together. The group lessons for alternative services may be held on a date and time subject to the teacher’s availability. Parents are asked to attend the first group lesson session with their children, and there is a specific program for parents at that time. Private lessons follow the group lessons, and each child will be scheduled for an appropriate lesson time. Every effort will be made to schedule the private lessons at a time that is convenient for all. Parents are required to arrive

on time and remain with the child during his/her private lessons. Children are expected to study during the week, and be properly prepared for all of their lessons.

Every child must meet minimum literacy requirements, and it is imperative to note that Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons will not begin until that child's Hebrew literacy skills have been approved. No child will begin Bar/Bat Mitzvah instruction until he/she has been cleared by the education staff, who will confirm that all requirements have been met or will have been met by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Committee will confirm that the necessary Religious School attendance requirements have been met. Any student who fails to register and regularly attend religious school classes will risk forfeiture of his or her Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Only children who regularly attend religious school are eligible for Bar or Bat Mitzvah, unless the child is enrolled in a full-time Jewish day school such as Solomon Schechter. Parents are therefore urged to be particularly attentive to their child's progress in religious school. Children are expected to maintain good standing in religious school, as defined by the school's standards. For an additional fee, supplemental lessons are available in increments of two months, at the request of a parent.

Special Needs Students

The Woodbury Jewish Center is proud to offer a Religious School program for special needs students, who may not be able to conform to all of the educational requirements, and may require specialized training. To qualify, the family is required to provide an updated I.E.P. (Individualized Education Plan) from the child's secular school. We work with all special needs students and their families to tailor a course of education that meets the needs of that child. Ten months of training, instead of the usual six months, are available to any child with an updated I.E.P. We will also make special arrangements with any family whose child is too

severely handicapped to attend this program, so that no child is excluded from pursuing a religious education.

SYNAGOGUE ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS FOR CHILDREN AND PARENTS

Children and their parents are encouraged to attend weekly Shabbat services on a regular basis so they can learn to read and chant the prayers that are part of the services. Starting in Aleph and continuing through Daled, all children are required to attend a minimum of one junior congregation service per month during the academic year.

Children's Requirements

All children shall attend eighteen (18) services within the eighteen (18) month period prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and must be completed not later than one month prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah. These requirements may be fulfilled by attending all eighteen (18) services at the Woodbury Jewish Center on Shabbat morning. Alternatively, other services may be substituted, provided they are selected from the following options.

1. Your child may attend no more than a total of six (6) of the following services:
 - a) no more than two (2) Friday evening services at the Woodbury Jewish Center; OR
 - b) no more than two (2) mincha ma'ariv (Saturday evening) services at the Woodbury Jewish Center; OR
 - c) no more than two (2) Sunday morning services at the Woodbury Jewish Center. If this alternative is selected, it is absolutely imperative that at least one parent attend with the child; OR

d) no more than two (2) Shacharit services at the regular Monday and/or Thursday morning worship service at the Woodbury Jewish Center. If this service is selected, it is absolutely imperative that at least one parent attend with the child.

2. In addition to the above, we will credit up to a total of four (4) Shabbat morning services at other synagogues; AND

3. The remainder, which should consist of a minimum of eight (8) services, must be fulfilled at Shabbat morning services at the Woodbury Jewish Center.

Please also bear in mind that full credit is given for attendance at services during the summer months and other vacation periods, despite the fact that religious school is not then in session.

A child in Dalet within the eighteen months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will receive credit for attendance on Shabbat morning services at the Woodbury Jewish Center by attending either the adult services, or Junior Congregation. However, as the children approach Bar/Bat Mitzvah, it is certainly far more important that they join in with the adult services, as this is where the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service will take place. Familiarity with the routine of the services will help the child to become comfortable and self-assured. Therefore, once the children are in the Hey class (or the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year), they are required to attend the adult service. During the Hey year, attendance at junior congregation will not be counted towards the mandatory attendance requirements. Please permit us to point out the obvious: coming into services for five or ten minutes does not qualify as “attendance.” Children are expected to remain for the entire service.

In order to properly schedule your child’s attendance at Shabbat services, it is imperative to note the following:

- Each child must have attended and been credited with TEN (10) services prior to the commencement of private Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons. Please note that lessons generally commence within six to eight months in advance of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

- In the event the requirement of ten services is not met, Bar/Bat Mitzvah training and lessons will not begin. Private lessons will be delayed until the child has attended ten services. Delay in the commencement of lessons may require that the child have additional private tutoring in order to be properly prepared. The additional cost of such private tutoring must be borne by the family.

- The child must have attended and be credited with a minimum of FIFTEEN (15) services no later than three (3) months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

- In the event the requirement of fifteen services is not met, Bar/Bat Mitzvah training and lessons will be discontinued and will not resume until the child has attended the necessary fifteen services. As indicated above, such delays in Bar/Bat Mitzvah training may result in the need for private tutoring, at the family's expense, or, in extreme cases, could result in the postponement of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

Our children should take pride in their achievements and accomplishments, and be prepared for this important event in their lives. The synagogue attendance requirements will assist our children to develop not only their skills, but will foster feelings of self-confidence that will help to make the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience a joyful and meaningful one to every member of the family.

Parental Requirements

Parents of Bar/Bat Mitzvah children should accompany their children to services, as it presents a unique opportunity to share special time with their

children, and to familiarize themselves with the nature and order of the religious service.

In order to familiarize parents with services, meet the need to maintain decorum in the sanctuary and earn aliyot to assign for their Simcha, they are required to serve as ushers two (2) times prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. A sign-up sheet will be provided at the Orientation program that is held approximately one year in advance of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. The Orientation Program and specific ushering requirements are discussed more fully below. Two parents/adults must usher at each service. Ushering will earn your family the ability to designate one aliyah on the day of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah. A second day of two parents/adults ushering will earn your family the remainder of aliyot available to your family for your Simcha.

Attendance Check-in Procedure

Each child's attendance at services is monitored and recorded. Children must obtain a special card from the Clergy at the conclusion of all services at the Woodbury Jewish Center. To obtain credit for attendance, the child must arrive at the start of services and remain until the conclusion. Only one card will be handed out to each child, and thus, a child may not request a card on behalf of a friend or other individual. After Shabbat, the child must sign his/her name on the card, and indicate the date of attendance. (Please note that if the child returns the card without indicating his or her name, it is not possible to credit the child with the attendance.) In order to receive proper credit, the child or a parent should return the card to the religious school office and place it in the appropriately designated hanging envelope. The cards are retrieved weekly, and attendance is recorded. If the child should lose the card, no credit will be given for the service. Parents are

urged and encouraged to keep records of their child's synagogue attendance on the cards that are provided to each family for that purpose.

To obtain credit for limited services attended outside of Woodbury Jewish Center (as indicated above), parents are asked to provide a note for their child, setting forth the child's name, the date of the service attended, type of service, and the name of the synagogue. Please note that as the synagogue attendance is an important component of each child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah training, we urge accuracy in reporting attendance at such outside services so that the child's education will not be compromised. The note can be deposited in the hanging envelope in the religious school office along with the attendance cards.

Once you are within the eighteen month period prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah, you are responsible for keeping track of and communicating to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah committee the number and types of services attended by your child and the amount remaining. A duplicate Record of Synagogue Attendance can be found at the back of this Handbook.

THE ROLE OF THE PARENTS

The parents' involvement in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process is as important as the child's. Family participation enhances the meaningfulness of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience.

A child who participates in services with his/her parents will learn by example.

Synagogue Attendance Requirements for Parents

As mentioned previously, all parents of Bar/Bat Mitzvah children are expected and encouraged to accompany their children to services, as it presents a unique opportunity to share special time with their children, and to familiarize themselves with the nature and order of the religious service. Should parents feel uncomfortable about participating in a service, or be interested in furthering their education, adult classes are available. Parents are encouraged to enroll in courses that will enable them to participate meaningfully in services and on the occasion of their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Orientation Program

To help prepare for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and to encourage the spirit of sharing and cooperation between our families and children, parents are required to attend a general orientation session to be held approximately one year before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. This orientation offers parents the chance to meet with one another, with the members of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Committee and with the Rabbi and Cantor in a small group setting, to share their common concerns and questions, have questions answered and to discuss freely those issues that arise with the planning and preparation of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. At that session, parents are

required to sign up for two (2) ushering assignments. Please note that in the event of a parent's failure to attend the orientation meeting, ushering dates will be assigned. You will receive advance notice by mail as to the date of the session.

Ushering

All parents are required to serve as ushers two times prior to the date of their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. If your child is scheduled to have a mincha ma'ariv (Saturday evening) service, then you must usher at least one such service for another family. Similarly, if your child is scheduled for a Sunday Rosh Chodesh, all efforts must be made to usher such a service for another family. If your simcha is scheduled to take place on a holiday weekend, you will be obliged to usher on a holiday weekend.

It is important to note that TWO adults are required to fulfill EACH of the ushering assignments given to each family and to arrive fifteen (15) minutes prior to the commencement of services. If one adult member of the family is unavailable for any reason, the requirement may be fulfilled by another adult provided by the family who has the ushering obligation. Ushering assignments are given out during the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Orientation Program, which is described above and generally held approximately one year prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Each family is then sent a complete ushering assignment list as a follow-up and reminder of this commitment. In the event you are unable to meet your commitment for any reason, it is necessary that you assume the responsibility to contact other parents listed on the sign-up sheet, to arrange for a trade of assignments. It is imperative that the family who requests the change communicate immediately with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Committee regarding any problems or changes in the schedule.

Ushering is a vital component of parental responsibilities. Every parent and family desires that their child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah proceed in a smooth and orderly

fashion, with minimum disruptions. Ushering will earn your family the ability to designate one aliyah on the day of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah. A second day of two parents/adults ushering will earn your family the remainder of aliyot available to your family for your Simcha.

Honors and Aliyot

Men and women are treated equally in our congregation, and thus, no honor that might be given to a man is withheld from a woman. Those called up to the Torah for an aliyah (aliyot is plural) will be called by their Hebrew names. It is imperative that the individual who is to receive such an aliyah be completely familiar with the blessing, so as to be able to recite it with ease. Giving such an honor to one not familiar with the blessings can create enormous embarrassment. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Committee is happy to provide information and assistance so that the blessings can be learned well in advance. The prayers that are recited before and after being called to the Torah appear at the back of this Handbook, both in Hebrew and in the English transliteration.

Honors of all types are reserved only for those who are Jewish. Each family will be provided with a sheet, listing the various honors and aliyot, so that you may determine which guests and family members are to participate.

No one individual, not even the parents of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah, may receive more than one honor. This would apply to all honors, including the opening of the ark, and being called to the Torah. If a guest scheduled for a particular honor does not arrive on time, you may advise the Rabbi and the Ritual Committee of an alternate guest to receive that honor. Otherwise, the honor will revert to the congregation.

No later than two months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, the parents will meet with the Rabbi, to discuss the service procedure, including aliyot and honors.

The Rabbi will contact each family to schedule a meeting to discuss the child's D'var Torah, to be delivered on the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

It is imperative that a list of those being honored be submitted by the deadline established by the Ritual Committee. Such list must include the Hebrew names of all guests being honored by a Torah aliyah, together with their parent's Hebrew names.

A full Hebrew name requires the name of the individual, as well as both of their parents, such as Yosef ben (son of) Abraham and Rivka, or Sarah bat (daughter of) Moshe and Rachel. All those being honored in any way must be present in Temple at the commencement of services. Should they fail to appear, the honor that they would have received will revert to the congregation.

THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH SERVICE

At the Shabbat morning Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, the child will:

- a) Be called to the Torah to chant the blessings for an aliyah;
- b) Chant the Haftarah, including the blessings before and after the Haftarah;
- c) Prepare and deliver a D'var Torah, a brief introduction to the week's Torah or Haftarah portions; and
- d) Lead the congregation in prayer during the service.

Please note that the requirements for alternative services, such as a mincha ma'ariv, are somewhat different, as the service does not involve chanting a Haftarah. Instead, the child chants from the Torah.

In addition, all children, regardless of when their Bar/Bat Mitzvah service is held, will be required to attend and participate in the Friday night service immediately prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

The foregoing requirements are not intended to place a limitation on a child's role in the service. Increased participation by the child may include leading the congregation in additional prayers or chanting the Maftir or other portions of the Torah. Children who desire to expand their involvement are certainly encouraged to do so, and should speak with the Cantor concerning their interests.

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah may be joined with a synagogue event or another family's life-cycle event, such as a baby-naming. Such a shared experience serves to enhance our commitment to one another and is embraced as an opportunity to celebrate multiple simchas as a united Jewish community.

Aliyot and Honors

Members of the family and friends may be called upon for various honors during the service, including the opening of the Ark, or, for those who can read Hebrew, for an aliyah, which means being called up to the Torah to recite the blessings. Please bear in mind however, that to receive any honor, whether speaking or non-speaking, the individual must be Jewish. If a couple is to be called for a speaking aliyah (at the Torah), they must be married to one another. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah is generally the Maftir (the last) aliyah. For a more detailed discussion on aliyot, please see the appropriate section under “Role of the Parents.” Parents and older siblings are encouraged to participate in the Bar Mitzvah service by chanting a prayer or reading a portion from the Torah. The Cantor will provide necessary guidance and assistance and will provide cassette tapes as learning tools.

Younger siblings should not be excluded. Those who are old enough and willing may be given a reading part in the service, or may be called to participate in some other way.

Services

Saturday morning services begin promptly at 9:00 a.m. whether your family is present or not. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family must arrive fifteen (15) minutes before the service begins. Please urge all of your guests to arrive on time and remain throughout the service. You must also be present fifteen (15) minutes prior to the commencement of the Friday evening service. The entrance doors to the sanctuary are closed during parts of the service, so as not to disturb worship, or detract from the sanctity of the prayers.

Appropriate Dress and Head Coverings

Appropriate dress is required of all congregants, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family and their guests. Men should wear a suit or sport jacket and tie. Women should wear a skirt or dress, modest enough to be in good taste. Women's shoulders must be covered. **Head coverings must be worn by all adults (male and female) entering the sanctuary and by all persons called to the bimah, including the Bar or Bat Mitzvah.** All men must wear a kippah. All Jewish male guests are required to wear a Tallit.

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family is required to provide kippot for men and head coverings for women, and should provide a basket to hold these items. The kippot and head coverings may be purchased at the Sisterhood gift shop, which offers competitive prices. The kippot, head coverings and the child's Mitzvah Project must be delivered to the synagogue office on the Friday just prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, not later than Noon. The staff then arranges for the placement of the basket at the services. Please note that while the baskets may be simple or elaborate, the child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah invitation may not be included as part of the decoration. If it is included, it will be removed.

In keeping with the spirit of Shabbat, women may not bring their pocketbooks up to the bimah. Please note it is inappropriate to bring packages or gifts to the services.

Photography and Cell Phones

Photography, still or video, is not permitted in the sanctuary or anywhere on the temple grounds on Shabbat. We insist that family and friends not bring personal cameras for use on Shabbat. The use of all electronic devices, including tape recorders and cell phones, is forbidden in and around the building on Shabbat.

Should you wish to gain access to the sanctuary for photographs, please contact the synagogue office well in advance to make arrangements during the week preceding your Shabbat celebration. These arrangements must be made by appointment ONLY. Note that we do NOT permit the ark to be opened, and the Torah from the ark may NOT be removed for the purpose of taking photographs. We do have a non-kosher Torah that may be used for photographs.

Flowers

The Sisterhood arranges for the flowers for the bimah on the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The cost of this item is included in the flat fee assessed to each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family.

Congregational Kiddush And Oneg Shabbat

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah family is required to host a Kiddush for the congregation following the Shabbat morning services, regardless of whether your Bar/Bat Mitzvah will be held on a Shabbat morning, or at an alternative service, and regardless of whether you or your guests attend the Kiddush.

The Congregational Fee provides for the flowers on the Bimah on the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah as stated above, the Oneg Shabbat following services on the preceding Friday night and defrays the costs of the Kiddush lunch for the WJC congregation on the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and/or other non-Bar/Bat Mitzvah weekends.

If you would like to provide a Kiddush lunch for your guests, you will have to arrange for this with our Kiddush Chairperson. You have the option of including the regular congregants together with your invited guests.

Pamphlet/Handout

The WJC Ritual Committee has prepared a pamphlet explaining our religious service. Personalized pamphlets may not be prepared or distributed on the day of your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

Invitations, Candy

While some families were desirous of observing the tradition of throwing candy at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, this practice is not permitted at the Woodbury Jewish Center.

Please also take note that invitations to your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah may NOT be posted in the lobby on the day of your service, whether the service is on Shabbat morning, or at any other time. Any invitations that are displayed, whether on the basket for the kippot or elsewhere, will be removed.

Smoking

All smoking is prohibited on Shabbat anywhere in the synagogue building and on synagogue grounds.

COMPLIANCE WITH EDUCATIONAL AND SYNAGOGUE REQUIREMENTS

Careful attention has been paid to the structuring of the educational and religious goals for our children. The **Bar/Bat Mitzvah Committee, in conjunction with the Rabbi, Cantor and Educational Director of the religious school, reserves the right to postpone or cancel any Bar/Bat Mitzvah if all requirements are not met.**

If postponement is required, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will be rescheduled subject to the child's attainment of such goals. The Committee will take special care to monitor each child's progress and will advise the child and his/her family if any child is delinquent in fulfilling the Bar/Bat Mitzvah requirements. With the encouragement, support and guidance of parents and teachers, our children will achieve the goals that have been set for them.

BEYOND THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH

During the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year, the Rabbi, Cantor and your child's teachers will encourage him/her to continue their education in the Hebrew High School sponsored by the Woodbury Jewish Center. This additional education will equip your child with a deeper knowledge and understanding of Jewish history, practices and traditions, and will provide a more mature appreciation of our heritage.

You should encourage participation in Jewish youth organizations, such as Kadima and United Synagogue Youth. As a part of your child's learning experience, consider Camp Ramah, which offers your child a chance to incorporate Jewish prayer and ritual in daily life, to use the Hebrew language in prayer, conversation and song, and to enjoy a well-rounded program of athletics.

A trip to Israel is always an inspiring experience for your entire family, or you may wish to consider sending your child alone to one of the many available summer programs.

You will serve your children well if you impress upon them that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a religious ceremony that marks the first stage of their Jewish education. Teach them that in Judaism, learning never ceases.

FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS

The Woodbury Jewish Center requires that each family pay a fee for Bar/Bat Mitzvah instruction. Parents will be apprised of the fee in advance of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. Please note that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee is doubled for any Bar/Bat Mitzvah service that is not on a Shabbat morning

The program of instruction offered by the synagogue, along with proper study and reinforcement by the parents at home, is sufficient to prepare your child for Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Children who require or desire extra tutoring can arrange for individual instruction through the Woodbury Jewish Center. The cost of additional private instruction is not included in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee.

All financial obligations to the Woodbury Jewish Center, including but not limited to dues, building fund contributions, religious school tuition and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee must be met at least (90) days prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. **Failing to do so will result in the suspension of Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons until payment is satisfied, and may cause the cancellation of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.**

TZEDAKAH

One of the obligations of a Jewish adult is to fulfill the mitzvah of Tzedakah. Throughout the ages, the ancient concept of Tzedakah has meant the act of sharing what we have with those less fortunate.

As part of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration, we want our children to acknowledge their responsibility to others by personally undertaking the mitzvah of Tzedakah. We suggest that each child be encouraged to set aside a small portion of the gifts that he/she receives for charitable purposes.

Examples of appropriate charitable organizations include:

- UJA Federation
- World Hunger Projects - Mazon or Oxfam America
- Medical Research and Care - Hadassah Hospital
- Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai Brith
- Environmental Programs - Jewish National Fund/Greenpeace
- WJC Brick
- WJC Leaf on the Tree of Life

Adults are also encouraged to make a gift of thanksgiving on the occasion of a child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The following is a list of the Woodbury Jewish Center funds that you may wish to consider, among other options:

- Memorial and Tribute Dedication Opportunities
- Founders Wall
- Prayer Book Fund

- Chai Fund

- General Fund
- Library Fund

THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH CELEBRATION AND CATERING FACILITIES

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration should emphasize the mitzvah and the achievements of your child. Primary attention should be given to the religious aspects of the occasion.

In addition to the Kiddush that follows the Shabbat morning service, some families also host a separate party for their guests. The party that you may be preparing, which follows the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Celebration, may consist of anything from a simple luncheon to a more elaborate event. In the event you are sharing your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date with another family, and desire to utilize the catering facilities at the Woodbury Jewish Center, please note that you are required to contact the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Committee prior to making any arrangements with the caterer, as they are not permitted to accept contracts from one family over another until the written approval of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Committee is received. Should both families express the desire to use the catering facilities at the same time, the matter will be resolved by the use of a “lottery” so that both families have an equal opportunity. This will apply to both afternoon and evening functions.

Woodbury Jewish Center members enjoy a limited priority in reserving our catering facilities on the weekend of their child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Contact the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Committee for details.

For those who choose to host this celebration elsewhere, you are encouraged to use a Kosher caterer as a reflection of your commitment to Jewish principles. Paying attention to the dignity of the occasion permits you to retain the focus on the religious aspects of the celebration.

CONCLUSION

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience should be an opportunity to enhance your dedication to Jewish ideals. You can begin to accomplish this by your active participation in your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah training.

As the excitement of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration becomes a fond memory, we urge you to continue pursuing cultural enrichment, by your ongoing involvement in Jewish activities such as:

- continuing education programs for parents and children;
- social events for adults, and youth group programs for children; and
- Shabbat and festival services.

The Woodbury Jewish Center is the center for all of these activities. Take advantage of the broad spectrum of programs and opportunities that are offered to you as a member of our synagogue family, and reap the benefits of rich and rewarding experiences.

We wish you and your family a hearty Mazal Tov!

TIME LINE OF EVENTS

Aleph Class Child begins religious school
Hebrew reading proficiency is assessed each year

Bet Class Child is assigned Bar/Bat Mitzvah date; letter is sent to family along with copy of Handbook.

Gimel Class The curriculum for this grade prepares each child to lead the Friday night service.

Daled Class Each child develops and completes a Mitzvah Project.
Eighteen months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, letter is sent to family advising of the synagogue attendance requirements; child must attend 18 services within 18 months and completed ONE MONTH prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Between **12-18 months prior** to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, parents will attend a group Orientation, and sign up for 2 ushering assignments.

Twelve months prior: Child with special needs and an updated I.E.P. must have completed an appropriate number of services in order for Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons to commence.

Hey Class Child must attend adult services at Woodbury Jewish Center

Eight months prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah: child must have attended 10 services in order for Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons to commence.

Six to eight months prior: group and private Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons commence.

Child must have attended a minimum of 10 services for Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons to commence

Three months prior: child must have attended 15 services for lessons to continue; all financial obligations to Woodbury Jewish Center must be met.

At Least two months prior: Child meets with Rabbi to prepare Bar/Bat Mitzvah D'var Torah.

One month prior: All synagogue attendance requirements must be satisfied. Return aliyah sheets to the office by the deadline established by the Ritual Committee.

BLESSINGS TO BE RECITED FOR TORAH ALIYAH

Each person honored with an Aliyah recites the following blessings:

Blessings before the Torah Reading

Honoree:

Barkhu et Adonai ha-m'vorakh.

בָּרַכּוּ אֶת־יְיָ הַמְּבָרֵךְ.

Congregation responds:

Barukh Adonai ha-m'vorakh l'olam va-ed.

בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבָרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Honoree repeats:

Barukh Adonai ha-m'vorakh l'olam va-ed.

בָּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבָרֵךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Honoree continues:

Barukh attah Adonai, eloheinu melek ha-olam,
asher bakhar banu mi-kol ha-amim,
v'natan lanu et torato.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים
וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת־תּוֹרָתוֹ.

Barukh attah Adonai, noten ha-torah.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

Blessing after the Torah Reading

Honoree:

Barukh attah Adonai,
eloheinu melek ha-olam,
asher natan lanu torat emet,
v'khayei olam nata b'tokhenu.
Barukh attah Adonai, noten ha-torah.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת וְחַיֵּי
עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכֵנוּ. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

RECORD OF SYNAGOGUE ATTENDANCE

Record all dates :

WJC Shabbat Services :

| | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | | |

Shabbat Services outside WJC (4)

Your child may attend no more than six (6) of the following services:

Mincha Ma'ariv Services (2)

Sunday Morning Services (2)

Mon/Thurs Morning Services (2)

Friday Night Services (2)

Total Requirements 18

Should the 18 months begin during Daled year, Junior Congregations are accepted.