

NANUET HEBREW CENTER

BAR/BAT MITZVAH INFORMATION BOOKLET



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INTRODUCTION

Mazel Tov! You are about to embark upon one of the most exciting stages in your Jewish life - your child's becoming a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. For those who are experiencing this event for the first time, it can also be a stressful period, filled with anxiety. To help minimize the stress and allow you to focus on the joy of the occasion, we have compiled this handbook to demystify the process for you, and clarify both the general activities involved in the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* process and NHC's specific policies and procedures.

The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* celebration is a time of pride not only for you, but also for everyone involved in your child's Jewish upbringing. This includes the teachers in our Religious School, tutors, the Rabbi, Cantor, and the entire Nanuet Hebrew Center community. We celebrate together, in the synagogue, as our children reach this important milestone: becoming "adult" members of the Jewish Community, the age of Jewish responsibility. Because it is a celebration for the entire community, we will be working together as partners, making the most of every aspect of this wonderful period in your life. As in any partnership, your family and the broader synagogue community have distinct roles and responsibilities.

The purpose of this manual is to clarify the responsibilities and expectations, so you will know what you can expect from the broader NHC community and vice versa. Our basic philosophy is that your child's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* experience and training must be a family affair. Parents participate and share in the learning process with the child. Positive reinforcement and the sense of importance created by parental involvement enhance both the family relationship and the religious experience and insure a true cause for celebration!

If you have any questions or concerns please contact the Ritual Committee, the Education Committee or any of our professional staff at the synagogue. They want to help.

OVERVIEW

What is *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*? In Judaism, a child becomes a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* upon reaching the age of 13. This means that the child is now considered an adult member of the Jewish community, assuming the responsibilities and privileges of being an adult Jew. For example, he or she is old enough to be counted as part of a *minyan*, be called to the *Torah*, or lead all parts of the service. He or she is obligated to accept the *mitzvot* – the commandments of Judaism. Jewish law requires *B'nai Mitzvah* to pray, fast on *Yom Kippur*, and observe *Kashrut* (the Jewish dietary laws). Interestingly, no particular ritual is required to mark the event. A Jew becomes a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* simply by reaching the appropriate age. This is why the correct phrase is "become a *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah*" rather than being "Bar or Bat Mitzvahed." At the NHC, we mark the occasion at a *Shabbat* morning service by extending to the child the honor of an *aliyah* – being called to the *Torah*. The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* may read from the *Torah* and usually chants the *Haftarah* (an additional reading from the Prophets, connected with the *Torah* portion). Additionally, he or she will give a *D'var Torah* – a lecture through which the child shares with the congregation some lessons gleaned from the *Torah* reading. The youngster may lead parts of the service.

Because it is such a joyous occasion, this service has additional celebratory features. The synagogue extends additional honors to the family and friends of the child, including some of the *aliyot*, readings, and ark openings. The Rabbi addresses the child directly after his sermon. A representative of the synagogue presents gifts on behalf of the arms of the synagogue. The entire NHC community has the opportunity to share in your joy. However, none of these are requirements of becoming *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* – that happens simply when the child comes of age. Our synagogue chooses to extend these honors to our *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* families. It is part of what makes us a community.

As is often the case in Judaism, we enjoy marking such events with a *se'udah* (festive meal), and celebration with singing and dancing – the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* party. A *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* has many components, requiring planning and coordination between you and the NHC. This manual will focus on the timeline for planning these events, what you can expect the various people and organizations within the NHC to ensure that your *simcha* is joyous and memorable, and that you and your child are well-prepared members in good standing in our community, eligible for all of the honors outlined above.

IN THE BEGINNING

Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation really begins at home, instilling the importance of synagogue and Judaism. The best way for a family to enjoy and appreciate all of the facets of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is to be actively engaged in synagogue life. No policy or procedure that the NHC can institute can prepare you for the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* as well as regular synagogue participation. That said, there is a “formal” process for planning a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, which is kicked off at a meeting approximately 3 years in advance of the date. A complete timeline appears in the appendix of this manual; it is a broad outline, to familiarize you with the basic process.

At the ‘kick off’ meeting, the Rabbi, will introduce you to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* process. A copy of this manual will be made available.

A WORD ABOUT DATES

The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date is intended to coincide, as closely as possible, with the child’s thirteenth birthday, based upon the Jewish calendar. The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date will be scheduled by the Rabbi approximately three (3) years in advance and will be confirmed in writing. The central component is the child being called to the *Torah*, at a time and place where our entire community can celebrate. Therefore, the NHC policy is that we usually celebrate *B’nai Mitzvah* at a regularly scheduled *Shabbat* service.

Approximately two years before the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, there will be a second meeting to address the logistics of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* process.

During the following year, there will be educational evaluations in religious school, to ensure that your child is making appropriate progress. Our synagogue attendance requirements kick in, to ensure that our students are familiar with and comfortable in synagogue, and to help them become comfortable as members of the NHC community. Students also begin their *mitzvah* projects.

Specific *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* training will begin with an assigned tutor, approximately 6-9 months in advance of the assigned date. Parents must set up a meeting with the Rabbi to review the service, honors, etc. – and the student begins to work with the Rabbi on the *d’var Torah*. Parents should also contact our catering department regarding the *kiddush* luncheon. In the “home stretch”, parents work with the Rabbi to finalize the honors for the family and address other details of the service. You will work with the synagogue office to ensure that all financial obligations have been met. You also will finalize your plans with our catering liaison for the *kiddush* luncheon. Your child’s tutor will familiarize you with the service. Any last minute questions may be addressed with the Rabbi.

THE BNAI MITZVAH PARTNERSHIP

Your child becoming a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is a partnership between your family and the broader synagogue community. As in any partnership, each party has specific responsibilities. This section outlines them.

The synagogue's responsibilities: a summary

Teach your child the necessary skills for participating in the service. This includes specific prayers as well as the appropriate *Torah* and *Haftarah* readings.

- Ensure that we have a service that is conducive to celebrating your family's *simcha*. This includes:
- Provide someone to conduct the service, usually the Rabbi, although others, including capable members of the congregation, may take this role.
- Provide someone to lead those portions of the service that the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* will not be leading, generally, the Rabbi and/or Cantor, although others, including capable members of the congregation, may take this role.
- Provide members of the congregation to serve as *gabbaim*, individuals to ensure that the *Torah* reading proceeds properly.
- Provide members of the congregation to serve as *shamashim*, individuals to greet your guests, distribute honors, and ensure that the service runs smoothly and with appropriate decorum.
- Ensure that an official representative of the synagogue is present on the *bimah* to address your child and present the synagogue's gifts

Your and your child's responsibilities: a summary

- Achieve the educational goals set forth in this manual. This includes satisfactory completion of coursework, and religious school attendance.
- Meeting the synagogue attendance requirements for both students and parents
- Learn the appropriate portions of the service, the *Haftarah* and possibly also *Torah* readings.
- Engage in a *mitzvah* project
- Sponsor a *kiddush* for the congregation
- Satisfy all financial obligations to the synagogue, including pledge, the religious school tuition, the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* fee, and catering charges.

A liaison for helpful support

The Ritual Committee is the group to which you can direct your questions and concerns or seek an explanation of the service and various rituals. The Ritual Committee is an excellent resource and we encourage you to consult with them frequently throughout this process. If requested, the Ritual Committee will assign a synagogue member as a liaison, knowledgeable about the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* policies and procedures.

SYNAGOGUE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: AN EXPLANATION

Teach your children

Our religious school is the primary place where we educate our students. Our curriculum includes basic Hebrew reading and prayer skills. However, there are a limited number of classroom hours. Therefore our educational program is augmented with Junior Congregation and opportunities to experience other aspects of Judaism. A special emphasis is placed on preparing your child for his or her *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. To achieve this important goal we also provide tutors to teach the individual *Haftarah* and *Torah* readings your child will chant. The tutor will determine, the number of hours needed to provide the necessary preparation. If your child requires remedial assistance to be ready for *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* tutoring, the school will be in contact with you so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

Conduct the service

We will assign at least two ushers to greet congregants and guests, providing them with prayer books and seats in the event that the sanctuary is crowded. There will be two *gabbaim* to call people to the *Torah* for their honors, assist them with the rituals and ensure that the *Torah* reading is done correctly. It is important to keep in mind that the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is called to the *Torah* in celebration of reaching the age of religious responsibility. This takes place during a **regularly scheduled service of the congregation**, at a time when the *Torah* is traditionally read, primarily on Saturday morning. The child and family are given the opportunity and privilege of participating in the synagogue's service. **It is not, and should not be thought of, as a separate, private ceremony for the family. Other congregational events may occur at our regular *Shabbat* service.**

The Nanuet Hebrew Center has published an informative booklet about our synagogue, our services and many Jewish practices. It is titled "Welcome to Sabbath Services at Nanuet Hebrew Center: A Guide with Commentary." It may be helpful for parents and guests in answering many questions about our services and practices. This guide will be available at the door of the sanctuary. It also is published online at the synagogue web site: nanuethc.org

Family honors/*aliyot*

It is traditional for a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* and his or her parents to be honored by being called to the *Torah*. The custom has evolved to extend this and other honors to family members and friends of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. However, your *simcha* is taking place at a regularly scheduled synagogue service where other congregants also will be receiving honors for a variety of reasons. To help make this a joyous event for the family, while preserving sufficient honors for the congregation, at NHC we usually offer the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* family:

1. 3 of the 5 *aliyot* (after the *Kohen* and *Levi aliyot*) and also the *Maftir aliyah* for the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* student. If there is a *Kohen* or *Levi* among your family or friends you may also be given these *aliyot*.
2. *G'lilah* which is wrapping the *Torah* after it is read.
3. 2 to 4 people to open the ark when the *Torah* is taken out and 2 to 4 people to open the ark upon the return of the *Torah* to the ark.
4. 1 or 2 children to hold the *Torah* when it is not being read.
5. 1 or 2 people to lead the congregation in the Prayer for Our Country and certain other readings.

Approximately two months prior to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date, during a meeting with the Rabbi, you and he will discuss the service procedure, family involvement, *aliyot* and honors. Some parents choose to meet six months to a year in advance to maximize the potential involvement of family members, especially regarding *Torah* reading. At this meeting, you will be asked to prepare the names of all those being honored, including their Hebrew names, and the names of their parents. The Rabbi will also review with you our practice regarding the distribution of *aliyot*, for example, we follow the practice of not allowing parents, children, or siblings to follow each other for an *aliyah* to the *Torah*.

Please note: All persons who are to receive these honors are expected to dress modestly and to be familiar with the requirements of the honor bestowed. Men must wear a *kippah* and *tallit*. Married women must wear a head covering.

A worksheet is included in the appendix of this manual that will help you with your *aliyah* assignments.

Participation by family and friends who wish to lead the congregation in chanting parts of the service or, especially, by taking a *Torah* reading, is always welcome, provided they have learned and practiced chanting the prayer or *Torah* reading beforehand to the satisfaction of the Rabbi and/or Cantor.

The participation of non-Jewish family members and guests presents a challenging situation which we are committed to treating with dignity and respect. We must follow Jewish Law, and there are guidelines of the Committee on Law and Standards of the Rabbinical Assembly. A non-Jewish parent may join the Jewish parent in reading a prayer for the child. A non-Jewish parent or guest may read the Prayer for Peace, and certain other prayers that do not contain specific Jewish blessings. All such decisions require the approval of the Rabbi.

Traditional synagogue representation and gifts

Our synagogue takes pride in the achievements of all of our *B'nai Mitzvah* children. Therefore, we ensure that an official representative of the synagogue, generally the President or someone from the Executive Committee or Board of Directors, is present on the *bimah*. At the appropriate time, this official will address your child and present him or her with gifts from the congregation. If there is someone on the board with whom your family has a personal relationship, you may request that he or she represent the congregation at your *simcha*.

FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES: AN EXPLANATION

Educational requirements

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 Nanuet Hebrew Center has established certain requirements for its *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* candidates.

In order to become a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* at Nanuet Hebrew Center, a child must satisfactorily complete course work in a synagogue religious school or its equivalent for five consecutive years prior to and including the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* year. **Children who become a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* during the 7th grade year are required to fulfill their requirements and remain in religious school for the entire school year.**

The student must have a satisfactory record of academic achievement, behavior and attendance in school and synagogue services.

He/she must also fulfill all the necessary requirements of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* program.

It is our hope that your child will continue his/her education in Hebrew High School after becoming a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.

Compliance with educational and synagogue requirements

We cannot emphasize enough the importance of attending services as a family on a regular basis. This ensures that you and your family develop a comfort and better understanding for the flow of the service. Families report their involvement helped to make the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* day much more meaningful. We do not wish any family to be "strangers" to the synagogue and congregation at their own *simcha*.

Towards this end, the Education Committee, in consultation with the Ritual Committee, the Rabbi, and the Board of Directors have adopted a compulsory synagogue attendance requirement.

Special requirements begin sixteen months before your child's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, as outlined in the chart

below.

Parents should submit their records to the office on a monthly basis. With the encouragement, support and guidance of parents and teachers, our children will achieve the goals that have been set for them.

The Rabbi and synagogue leadership will take special care to monitor each child's progress. The Rabbi will advise the child and his/her family if he/she is in jeopardy of not fulfilling the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* requirements. If there is no significant progress towards meeting the requirements, the child will be placed on probation. During the probationary period the child and his/her family will be further encouraged and helped to

GRADE	TOTAL NUMBER OF SERVICES	SHABBAT	EVENING MINYAN	HONORS	HIGH HONORS
3 RD Grade	10	4 must be Junior Congregation		14 Services	
4 th Grade	12	5 must be Junior Congregation		16 Services	
5 th Grade	14	7 must be Junior Congregation		20 Services	
6 th & 7 th Grade (non <i>Bar/Bat Mitzvah</i>)	20	8 must be Junior Congregation	4 must be weekday evening <i>minyans</i>	28 Services (max of 6 weekday evening <i>minyans</i>)	
<i>BAR/BAT MITZVAH</i> (starting 16 months prior)	28	16 – Saturday morning services (4 of which may be at another synagogue) 6 - Friday Evening services (Junior Congregation no longer counts at this point; services must be in the main sanctuary.)	6 must be weekday evening <i>minyans</i>	42 Services	70 Services

overcome the deficiencies so that the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* can proceed as planned.

Synagogue attendance requirements for parents

All parents of *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* children are strongly encouraged 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. As mentioned before, we don't want any family to be "strangers" at their own *simcha*.

Parents who feel uncomfortable when attending services, and/or who are interested in furthering their education may enroll in some NHC Adult Education classes, or contact the Rabbi or Ritual Committee for assistance. Many have expressed their gratitude that the classes or personal assistance enabled them to participate more meaningfully in all services and on the occasion of their child's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah simcha*.

Assignment to serve as an usher at another Bar/Bat Mitzvah

The father or mother of each *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, is expected to serve as an usher at another *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, usually the one preceding their own *simcha*. It is important for the family to understand that the friends of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* child often become restless, noisy and playful. **For this reason it is advisable to have the friends of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* arrive at services no earlier than 10:15 AM. The Ritual Committee ensures that ushers (*shamashim*) are at your event**, but your additional help is needed to maintain a respectful decorum. Your assignment will be to help monitor the children, just as someone will be assigned to this role at your event. Families may switch dates among themselves.

Service requirements

At the NHC, we are proud of the achievements of our *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* students. Therefore, students are expected to take an active role in leading the service. At their *simcha*, all *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* students are expected to:

- 1) Recite the Friday night *kiddush* the night before the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.
- 2) Recite the blessings for the *Torah*
- 3) Chant the *Maftir Torah* reading when possible
- 4) Chant the appropriate *Haftarah* and accompanying blessings
- 5) Deliver a “*d’var Torah*” – a teaching based on the *Torah* reading
- 6) Lead the *Ashrei* prayer

Your motivation as a parent plays a strong role in encouraging your child to master more than the minimum. We are proud of every child but we hope that they will reach for the highest level they are capable of mastering.

We strongly encourage students who are able to chant additional *Torah* readings, and lead more of the service. We recommend consultation with the Rabbi about additional ways that you and your family can participate.

D’var Torah (Teaching)

Students are required to prepare a *d’var Torah* under the guidance of the Rabbi, based on a theme found in the *Torah* portion. Parents must call the office **at least two months** before the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date to schedule the student’s discussion of his/her topic with the Rabbi. The Rabbi must approve the finished *d’var Torah* three weeks prior to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date.

Mitzvah Project

Our tradition teaches that "there is no true joy without giving." We learn from our sages that every member of the community is obligated to perform the *mitzvot* of giving *tzedakah* (charity) and performing acts of *chesed* (loving kindness).

We teach these values in our education programs and encourage parents to discuss them with their children. While we currently have no formal guidelines for the *mitzvah* project, our hope is that students will find a charitable activity that has meaning to them, and dedicate a significant amount of time towards that activity. The goal is for the student to begin to participate in this manner as they become adult members of the community, and turn their becoming a son/daughter of the Commandments into meaningful action. In the past, students have worked with special education children, worked at food pantries, or have run book or food drives. Some students have raised community awareness of specific charities, and encouraged

donations for that cause. A *mitzvah* project that has been helpful for the NHC itself is assuming the responsibility for rearranging the *siddurim* (prayer books), *chumashim* (bibles) and in an orderly way each week. There are numerous ways of fulfilling this requirement and the Rabbi will help determine the one that is right for your child. There are many resources available on line, for example, http://ziv.org/bar_bat_mitzvah.html and <http://areyvut.org> are worth exploring.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fees

When your child enters the 3rd grade at our school, a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* fee will be added onto your account. This fee may be paid over the five years leading up to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* or in one lump sum at least six months prior to your child's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date. In the event Nanuet Hebrew Center initiates a change in the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* fee, families who opt to pay in one lump sum will be charged the amount in effect at the time payment is made. Though subject to change, the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* fee in effect at the time of this printing is \$1,000.

The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* fee covers the additional maintenance costs on the day of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* along with other administrative fees. They also support the salaries and administration costs of the tutoring. As a result, every family will be charged the full *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* fee, whether they elect to be tutored by a member of our staff or be tutored outside our program. Tutoring at Nanuet Hebrew Center consists of twenty-eight 30-minute lessons. In consultation with your tutor, the Rabbi or the Educational Director, you may elect to pay for additional lessons. Though subject to change, our current rate is \$40 per 30-minute lesson for *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* tutoring.

Oneg Shabbat

The families are required to attend the Friday evening service before the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, at which time the child will lead the congregation in the *kiddush* as well as other prayers that are appropriate for this service. In keeping with tradition, when the Friday evening service is held at 7:30pm at the request of the family, the family is expected to provide an *oneg* for their invited guests and congregants.

At other Friday 7:30 pm services, such as the Family Services, while there is no obligation to sponsor the *oneg* many *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* families make a donation to the *oneg/kiddush* fund in their child's honor.

Kiddush

It is our sincere hope that you, your family, and your guests will remain after services for a *kiddush* with the entire congregation. Our synagogue community has devoted a significant portion of its morning service to honoring your child, and would like to have the opportunity to further celebrate with your family.

Regardless of whether or not you choose to stay, in keeping with tradition, and to enable our synagogue family to celebrate the joy of this event, you are responsible for sponsoring a Saturday or holiday *kiddush* in honor of your *simcha*. This includes families whose *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is observed at a time other than *Shabbat* morning.

This *kiddush* will consist of the usual *Shabbat* morning offerings, and any additions the family wishes to make. The *kiddush* is held either in the ballroom behind the sanctuary or in the foyer.

Families may elect to pick up leftover food on Sunday morning or may donate it to a local shelter. In either case, arrangements should be made in advance with a Catering representative responsible for handling the *kiddush/oneg*.

There are three options available to the families sponsoring the Friday night *oneg*, *Shabbat* morning *kiddush* or the *kiddush* for a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* on another day.

1. The family may have the Catering Committee handle all of the food preparations for both the *oneg* and the *kiddush*, or
2. The family may engage one of the *kosher* caterers from our list of approved caterers, which is available from our Catering Committee.
3. The family may prepare the *kiddush* themselves in the NHC under the supervision of the Rabbi.
Food prepared at home may not be brought into the NHC.

If you are planning on having a catered *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* party, please consider our synagogue. Our ballroom is a wonderful venue for such an event. If you are interested, please contact our Catering Committee through the office.

SUMMARY

We hope this manual has clarified the responsibilities of both the synagogue and your family. Open communication between the synagogue and the family is the key to a successful event. The requirements are not onerous, and when fulfilled, help create a sense of comfort and community which should be the cornerstone of any *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* celebration.

However, in the unlikely event that the educational, synagogue attendance requirements and financial obligations are not met, the Rabbi, Ritual Committee and Education Director of the religious school, reserves the right to limit the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* to a single *aliyah* for the child. The additional synagogue celebration will be postponed to an available date after the requirements have been met. We never deny a child the right to recognition as a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*; receiving an *aliyah* to mark the occasion is an ageless and timeless tradition. Many families want and expect more, and as a synagogue we enjoy giving more. Our goal is to ensure that the celebration which has evolved around the event is meaningful and enjoyable to your family and the synagogue community, and that is the purpose of these requirements.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

Services at NHC

The *Shabbat* celebration begins with the Friday evening *Kabbalat Shabbat* and *Ma'ariv* services. It continues on Saturday Morning with the *Shacharit*, *Torah* and *Musaf* services. Please ask your friends and relatives to join us.

Friday evening

The Nanuet Hebrew Center's schedule of Friday night services is as follows:

1 st Friday night of the month – family Service	7:30 pm (there are no family services in the summer)
All other Friday night services	6:00 pm * (6:30 pm during July & August)

* The NHC allows families and arms of the congregation to request a change of the regularly scheduled Friday evening for a planned event, with the provision that the request must be presented to the Rabbi and the Ritual Committee no less than **four** months in advance of the planned event. Other changes to the Friday night service time, particularly to schedule the start time of services closer to the actual start time of *Shabbat* because there are Sabbath observant family members, will also be considered if there is sufficient notice.

Approval of all requests for a change in the Friday evening service time will be considered on an individual basis.

Shabbat morning

NHC *Shabbat* morning services begin promptly at 9:30 am. Services that include a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* usually end at approximately 12:20 pm. The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* family should arrive no later than 9:15 am. The starting and ending times of the *Shabbat* morning services cannot be changed.

The Nanuet Hebrew Center has published an informative booklet about our synagogue, our services and many Jewish practices. It is titled “*Welcome to Sabbath Services at Nanuet Hebrew Center: A Guide with Commentary.*” It may be helpful for parents and guests in answering many questions about our services and practices. This guide will be available at the door of the sanctuary. It also is published online at the synagogue web site: nanuethc.org

Many sections of our Friday evening and *Shabbat* morning services are online, chanted by our Cantor. Listening to them is a wonderful way to familiarize yourselves with the services. They may be heard at: nanuethc.org | From the *Bimah* | Cantor | Music and Prayer Page.

Torah blessings

There is a card on the *Torah* reader’s desk with the blessings printed in large letters in Hebrew and in transliteration. If any of your guests honored with an *aliyah* cannot read Hebrew or are unfamiliar with the ritual, please send them a copy of the instructions and transliteration of the blessings which are in the appendix of this booklet. They also are available in Hebrew and transliteration online in our guide, “*Welcome to Sabbath Services at Nanuet Hebrew Center: A Guide with Commentary,*” in the section, “What to Do When Receiving an *Aliyah* to the *Torah.*” Most helpful may be of the voice of our Cantor chanting the blessings, which may be found at our website: nanuethc.org | From the *Bimah* | Cantor | Music and Prayer Page.

During the service your guest can practice with the Hebrew and transliteration of the *Torah* blessings on page 142 of our prayer book, *Siddur Sim Shalom*, or the above mentioned Guide.

Family participation

The second and third rows on the left side of the sanctuary are generally reserved for the immediate family.

During the *Torah* service, the parents:

1. Will recite the *Shehechyanu* prayer from their seats and
2. (*optional*) If they wish (from their seats or from the *bimah*), offer an additional prayer from a selection prepared or approved by the Rabbi.
3. (*optional*) If they wish, they may read from the *Torah*.

If they wish, parents may offer comments or a very brief speech about the child or the event. **The parents’ speech must be limited to an absolute maximum of five (5) minutes.** It is preferred that the parents speak at the *kiddush* or reception.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah child's participation

At the end of the *Shabbat* service, at the time of the announcements from the *bimah*

1. If he or she wishes, thank the tutors, teachers and Rabbi
2. If he or she wishes, offer additional thank you comments
3. If he or she wishes, offer a comment about the meaning of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*
4. If he or she wishes, offer comments about the *mitzvah* project

Multiple simchas on the same day

In order to establish a fair process for the sharing of a *kiddush*, we have developed the following guidelines:

- 1) The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* family, having committed to the date of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* well in advance, will be able to select the type of *kiddush* they wish to offer.
- 2) If the second family wishes to offer the same level of *kiddush*, then the cost of the *kiddush* shall be apportioned on a price per guest basis; each family shall equally share the cost of food for the congregation. The *kiddush* shall be held in the ballroom behind the sanctuary or in the foyer.
- 3) If one of the families decides to offer a minimal *kiddush* for its guests, and the other family wishes to offer a more elaborate *kiddush*, then a minimal *kiddush* for everyone, priced on a cost per person basis for their guests and congregants and shared between the two families, will be offered in the small room off the side of the lobby. After the *kiddush*, any congregants and guests who are staying for the extended *kiddush* will gather in the social area behind the sanctuary to continue with the celebration.

Important reminder: All payments for catering & facilities must be fully paid two weeks prior to the event.

Reception

As mentioned in the introduction, the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is a religious ceremony and a rite of passage. The celebration that follows is an extension of the observance. As members of a Conservative synagogue, our congregants are asked to consider the following: keeping *kosher* is one of the basic tenets of Conservative Judaism. You are, therefore, strongly encouraged to employ a *kosher* caterer.

Shabbat observance is another basic tenet of Conservative Judaism. Therefore, please plan your party to begin after *Shabbat* (Saturday night or on Sunday).

Please consider using the synagogue facilities to provide a full *kiddush* as a way of making a strong connection between the *Shabbat* morning service and the celebration. It is a way to relax and take in the joy and beauty of the religious component of the day without needing to rush away.

Often the family inserts the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* invitation on the basket holding the *kippot*. If the reception is to be held elsewhere, away from the NHC, immediately after the morning service, the details of the reception, including driving directions, must be removed. They may not be distributed at services.

Decorum and demeanor: 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. Women should wear a skirt or dress, modest enough to be in good taste. Shoulders should be covered.

All men, Jewish and non-Jewish, must wear a *kippah* while in the synagogue; Jewish men must also wear a *tallit* at morning services. We request that married Jewish women wear head coverings, and they must do so if called to the *bimah*.

Each *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* family is required to provide *kippot* for men and head coverings for women, and should provide baskets to hold these items. The *kippot* and head coverings may be purchased at reasonable prices through the synagogue gift shop. The baskets, *kippot* and head coverings must be delivered to the synagogue no later than noon on the Friday prior to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. The baskets will be placed near the sanctuary entrance on *Shabbat* morning. In keeping with the spirit of *Shabbat*, women may not bring their handbags up to the *bimah*. Please note it is inappropriate to bring packages or gifts to the services.

These cautionary words of advice are not meant to compromise the sense of joy, but rather to enhance the observance of *Shabbat*.

Photography

No photography, videotaping or recording of any sort is permitted in the building or on the synagogue grounds on *Shabbat* or on Jewish holidays. Any family wishing to photograph or videotape a dress rehearsal of the service may arrange to do so by contacting the synagogue office to reserve the sanctuary for a specific date and time.

Please note – the photographer you choose must have a certificate of insurance on file with the synagogue office at least four weeks prior to the date of the photography.

Smoking / cell phones / electronic devices

All families and guests must remember that smoking is prohibited on *Shabbat* and is not permitted anywhere in the synagogue building or outside on the synagogue grounds.

Cell phones and all electronic devices must be turned off when on synagogue property on *Shabbat*.

Service booklets

Families wishing to provide their guests with a booklet describing the various components of the service and their significance may do so, subject to the Rabbi's approval. All drafts of such books must be given to the Rabbi for review at least two weeks before the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Once approved, the families are responsible for making photocopies of these booklets at their own expense and for delivering these booklets to the shul no later than noon on Friday.

Delivery times

All deliveries must be scheduled before 12:00 pm on Friday afternoons or the afternoon before the start of a holiday. Under no circumstances may any deliveries be made after 12:00 pm on Friday or an afternoon before the start of a holiday, until the conclusion of *Shabbat* on Saturday evening or until the conclusion of the holiday.

Floral decorations

Our catering representative can order a floral arrangement to be placed in the center of the *bimah*. The cost of the floral arrangement is approximately \$100.00. Should you wish to have additional floral decorations on the *bimah* please make arrangements with our catering representative or you may work with Schweizer & Dykstra Florist (845-735-4079) directly. Delivery must be made before 12:00 pm on Friday. No flowers may be delivered or removed from the building on *Shabbat*.

Directions to the synagogue

We have printed cards with the directions to the synagogue, suitable for insertion in invitation envelopes. They are available from the synagogue office. The reverse side of the card has a summary of our practices about decorum and demeanor, which have been already noted above.

Tallit and Tefillin

All Bar Mitzvah boys should own a tallit and tefillin. It is not a requirement for a Bat Mitzvah girl to have her own tallit and/or tefillin, it is an optional, personal choice. Tefillin will be worn during Sunday morning minyan. The Rabbi and religious school teachers will teach each student how to use the tallit and tefillin. Contact the Rabbi with any questions you might have prior to your purchase. It is a wonderful opportunity for parent and child to learn these skills together.

Please consider sponsoring/arranging for a special snack for your child's class for the Sunday morning your child first puts on *tefillin*. Boys and girls may begin putting on tefillin one month prior to their Hebrew 13th birthday.

What to look for when purchasing a *tallit*:

A *tallit* must be wide enough to cover the greater part of the body. Try to determine from the vendor that the *tallit* has been made in accordance with Jewish law.

What to look for when purchasing *tefillin*:

The *tefillin* should be purchased from a reliable source, ensuring that they are kosher.

If the child or parent is left-handed, ask the dealer to be sure that your *tefillin* are properly made and adjusted for your right arm.

Tefillin may be purchased at excellent prices from The Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs @ <http://www.fjmc.org/StoreTefillin.html>. NHC participates in their annual World Wide Wrap every year.

The **NHC Judaic Gift Shop** can help you with the purchase of the *tallit*, *tefillin* and their bags, *tallit* clips, *kippot*, women's head coverings, *kiddush* cups and *Havdalah* sets. Contact the office at 845-708-9181 for further information.

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 all aspects of your child's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* training.

After the excitement of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* celebration is past, we urge you to continue pursuing meaningful involvement in Jewish life. This may be accomplished by

- enrolling your child in Hebrew high school.
- continuing your personal spiritual growth through our adult education programs
- attending social events for adults and/or families, such as our coffee houses and *Shabbat* dinners
- attending *Shabbat*, Festival and daily *minyan* services
- participating in *Kadima* and U.S.Y. youth group programs

WE WISH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A HEARTY MAZAL TOV!

APPENDIX

CALENDAR: A parents' reminder timeline for planning a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*

Approximately 3 years before the child's 13th birthday (at the end of 4th grade): The Rabbi will hold a rabbinic orientation meeting for all parents. The process of receiving a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date will be discussed. Shortly thereafter a date will be assigned.

18 months before: A mandatory informational administrative meeting is held for parents with the President, Ritual Committee, Education Committee and catering representatives during the 6th grade year in order to learn about the NHC *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* process. At this meeting the following topics are covered: financial requirements, tutor assignments, catering and schedules. Bring your extra questions.

18 months before: The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* child's progress is evaluated by the Religious School. If a child has special needs and an educational I.E.P., both the Educational Director and parents should contact the Rabbi and/or the Cantor at this time so that the tutoring can be arranged according to the child's educational needs.

16 months before: The earning of service attendance begins. Attend on regular basis and become more familiar with the *Shabbat* morning service.

Parents should review the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* requirements in detail and call the rabbi with any questions they may have regarding this or any other *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* issue.

6-9 months before: One-on-one tutoring begins. Tutoring may begin earlier if the summer falls during this period. Throughout this time, the child's progress will be monitored by the tutor as well as by the parents. We encourage parents' involvement by asking your child to chant for you several times a week as a means of reinforcing what he/she has learned.

6 months (2 months the latest): Parents call the office to set a date to meet with the Rabbi. At that meeting, the Rabbi will discuss the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* service, the *aliyot*, honors & other questions. You will be reminded to make sure all of those who are honored with *aliyot* know what to do.

Discuss any family members who may wish to read *Torah*.

Parents may also set up an appointment for the child to meet with the Rabbi to begin the *d'var Torah* process. The child will be expected to prepare the draft of his/her *d'var Torah* and submit it to the Rabbi for review by at least 6 weeks before the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date.

Parents should also arrange for the purchase of *tallit* and *tefillin* and other accessory items, such as *kippot*. Floral arrangements for the *bimah* (optional) should be selected in conjunction with the family with whom you might be sharing this *simcha*

6-8 weeks before: Child submits *d'var Torah* draft and meets with Rabbi to review and make modifications. The child then finalizes the draft of his/her *d'var Torah* and begins practicing the delivery of his/her *d'var Torah*.

Parents should call the NHC office to talk to a representative of the catering committee to discuss final arrangements for their sponsorship of the *Shabbat* morning *kiddush*, and the Friday evening *oneg* if there is to be one.

Contact the Catering Committee to coordinate a photo session in the sanctuary.

Final preparation: 1-2 weeks before: Be sure all financial obligations to the synagogue and for the catering are paid in full. Discuss and decide upon a meaningful contribution to *tzedakah* with your child.

Meet with the Rabbi if necessary to answer any outstanding questions and/or concerns. Parents schedule any meeting with the Rabbi through the office.

HONORS

This form should be completed with the Rabbi.

Honors for the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* of _____ Date: _____

Honor: open the Ark (2-4 people)	English name
1	
2	
3	
4	

Assign <i>Kohen</i> and <i>Levi aliyot</i> (if applicable) and 4 of the 6 remaining <i>aliyot</i> List Hebrew and English names (and their relationship to the <i>Bar/Bat Mitzvah</i> child)		
<i>Aliyot</i> to the <i>Torah</i>	English name	Hebrew name (with parent's Hebrew name)
1. <i>Kohen</i>		
2. <i>Levi</i>		
3. <i>Sheleeshee</i>		
4. <i>Revee-ee</i>		
5. <i>Chameeshee</i>		
6. <i>Sheeshee</i>		
7. <i>Shevee'ee</i>		
8. <i>Maftir</i> –B/B Mitzvah Child		

Honor	English name
G'lilah (Dress Torah)	
1	
2	
Prayer for Our Country	
Open the Ark: (2-4 people)	
1	
2	
3	
4	
<i>The following honors are optional:</i> Open the Ark for Anim Zemirot	
1	
2	
Chant Anim Zemirot	

WHAT TO DO WHEN RECEIVING AN ALIYAH TO THE TORAH

Transliteration and translation are from
Siddur Sim Shalom for Shabbat and Festivals, Page 142

1. In order to properly call you to the *Torah*, we will want to know your Hebrew name, which consists of your Hebrew name and your father's Hebrew name, and optionally your mother's Hebrew name. When you are approached for an *aliyah*, please indicate if your ancestry is *Kohen* or *Levi*.

2. After going up to the *bimah*, stand at the right of the *Torah* reader.

3. With the silver pointer the reader will show you the first word of the *Torah* portion about to be read. Take either one of the *tzitzit* (fringes with knots) of your *tallit* or the *Torah* belt, touch the place in the *Torah* pointed to by the reader, and then kiss the *tzitzit* or belt.

4. Grasp both handles of the *Torah* and recite in Hebrew the following:

Bar'khu et Adonai ha-m'vorakh.

Praise *Adonai*, the Exalted One.

5. The congregation will respond and then you repeat the response, thus:

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

Praised be *Adonai*, the Exalted One, throughout all time.

6. Then add:

**Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
asher bahar banu mi-kol ha-amim,
v'natan lanu et torato.
Barukh atah Adonai, noten ha-Torah.**

7. The *Torah* left handle of the *Torah*, holding the right handle. read.

Praised are you *Adonai* our God, who rules the universe, choosing us from among all peoples by giving us the *Torah*.

reader will now take the but you will continue The portion will be

8. At the end of the reading, the *Torah* reader will point with the silver pointer to the last word he has just read. Let go of the right handle of the *Torah*, touch the word pointed to with the *tzitzit* or *Torah* belt as before, and kiss once again.

9. Recite the second blessing, again grasping both handles:
**Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu melekh ha-olam,
asher natan lanu torat ehmet,
v'hayei olam nata b'tokhenu
Barukh atah Adonai, noten ha-Torah.**

Praised are you *Adonai* our God, who rules the universe,
giving us the *Torah* of truth, planting within us life eternal.

10. Then move further to the right of the reading desk so that the person following you may take his or her place immediately to the right of the *Torah* reader. Remain in place at the reading table until the person who followed you has completed the same full procedure.

11. As you leave, you may wish to shake hands with everyone at the reading desk and on the *bimah*. If a second or third *Torah* has been removed from the Ark, it is customary to kiss them with your *tallit* or a prayer book before leaving the *bimah*. Some individuals descend the *bimah* backwards so as not to turn their backs on the Ark.

