

TEMPLE SINAI



Informational Handbook on B'nai Mitzvah 2011 - 2012

Revised by the Spiritual and Religious School
Committees
June, 2011

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome! This handbook is intended to provide families with an upcoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah with important information regarding the process of reaching this important milestone in a Jewish family's life. While it includes much "operational" data, it also explains some of the important philosophical underpinnings of Temple Sinai policies and attitudes towards B'nai Mitzvot. Throughout, we hope that you will keep the following three items in mind:

- The **message** that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is neither a performance nor a competition. Rather, it is a celebration and an accomplishment for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student.
- The **goal** that the student comes away from the process in possession with the tools to become a Jewish adult. A Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a beginning, not an end.
- The **need** for sustained and committed parental involvement.

Throughout the handbook we will return to these concepts and expand upon them.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF B'NAI MITZVOT

All societies determine an age that separates childhood from adulthood – the age when an individual assumes his or her religious and communal responsibilities in his or her society. Like most traditions, the ceremonies connected with becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at age 13 evolved over time. It has always been viewed as one moment in the process of spiritual growth and commitment to the Jewish people. Historical information is provided in an Appendix.

KEEPING THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH IN PERSPECTIVE

The months leading up to a Bar/Bat Mitzvah are full of many emotions and organizational challenges. The following may be helpful in keeping the experience in perspective.

- As stated above, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony is not a performance. The synagogue is not a theater; the Bimah is not a stage; the congregation is not an audience. All Students should feel a sense of accomplishment; **none should be made to feel inadequate**. Accomplishment can occur with a broad range of contribution and participation of the Student. Some children will be capable of reading several verses of Torah, while for others, completing one will be a meaningful and respected achievement. More to the point, the only mistake one can make at a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is to lose sight of this truth.

- Being a Bat or Bar Mitzvah is a lifetime experience—a state of being that remains with one throughout life. Indeed, the true measure of accomplishment comes not on the day one becomes a Bat or Bar Mitzvah but in the days that follow. In other words, becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah should be thought of as a Jewish “commencement.” **It is the beginning of a lifetime of mitzvot, a beginning of a lifetime of learning.** As such, it is our congregation’s firm belief and hope that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration is validated and enhanced by a commitment to continue religious education towards Confirmation and to participate in our Temple Youth Group.
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a community observance. It is not by coincidence that we choose to hold this initiation ceremony in public. To be a Jew means to live within a covenantal relationship—not only with God but with other Jews as well. Bar/Bat Mitzvah marks the entry of the child as a full-fledged member of the community. The awarding of an Aliyah, (“being called to the Torah”), is a gift of the Jewish people. For this reason, the marking of the child’s coming of age takes place in the synagogue—the communal home. **The parents of the student form this core of this community, and must be actively engaged in nurturing the connection between the student, his or her family, and the community.**

REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

We have structured this section in roughly chronological order, but families beginning the process of planning for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah should review the entire section, preferably more than once, rather than focusing on each item one at a time as it becomes relevant.

OVERVIEW TABLE OF EVENTS:

Time Frame	Bar/Bat Mitzvah Milestone	Whom to Contact
5 th Grade	Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date assigned by January	Rabbi
6 th Grade	Date Finalized by October 1	Rabbi
	Class with Rabbi, 80% attendance (all year)	Rabbi
	Torah Chanting Class, 80% attendance (all year)	Rel. School Director
	Service attendance requirement, 16 services, with parent (at least 4 Saturday a.m. B’nai Mitzvot at Temple Sinai , High Holidays not	Rel. School Director

	counted)	
	Parent and Child Informational Session, Student signs Contract by November 1. Torah portions to be distributed for Fall B'nai Mitzvah	Rabbi
	Student and Parent Retreat, Torah portion books distributed for Spring B'nai Mitzvah (June)	Rel. School Director
	Tutoring of Torah portion 6 months before Bar/Bat Mitzvah	Rel. School Director
7th Grade	Mitzvah Project, 10 hours	Rel. School Director
	Learning Torah portion	Rel. School Director
	Learning prayers, how to conduct service	Rabbi
	Meeting with Rabbi two weeks ahead of Bar/Bat Mitzvah to plan service	Rabbi

BEFORE THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH CEREMONY

Setting a Date

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony typically takes place on the available Shabbat closest to the student's 13th birthday. In order to schedule B'nai Mitzvot evenly throughout the liturgical year, all B'nai Mitzvah ceremonies at Temple Sinai must be celebrated within 70 days of a 13th birthday, provided that all other criteria have been met. B'nai Mitzvot will not be scheduled during the months of July and August, nor on Labor Day or Memorial Day weekend to facilitate community worship. The Spiritual Committee will consider exceptions to this under reasonable, yet compelling grounds.

B'nai Mitzvah dates will be assigned and communicated to families and temple personnel by the Rabbi no later than the end of January in the student's 5th grade year. Dates for B'nai Mitzvah will be finalized by the 1st of October of the student's 6th grade year by the family and the Spiritual Committee. Changes to this date after October 1 will only be considered under reasonable and compelling circumstances by the Spiritual Committee. Issues of student readiness may also result in changes to an assigned B'nai Mitzvah date. Please see section under student preparations.

Informational Session and The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Contract

When dates are originally assigned, an electronic copy of the B'nai Mitzvah Informational booklet and Contract will be sent to families.

The B'nai Mitzvah Informational Session will take place early November of the 6th grade year. Parents and students will be expected to have reviewed the B'nai Mitzvah contract and be prepared to sign.

During the Informational Session, specific information about the morning service including which prayers the students will be responsible for leading will be provided. The Religious School Director will provide written and electronic materials i.e. MP3 files of individual prayers. Students with B'nai Mitzvah before December 31 will receive a booklet of their Torah portion.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Informational Retreat

Each year in June at the end of 6th grade, a retreat is held overnight from a Saturday evening to Sunday morning. Information will be distributed, including a booklet of each student's individual Torah portion for students with B'nai Mitzvah after January. This is an opportunity to get to know other students and parents better and have questions answered.

Student Preparations

Students have several responsibilities in the two years prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. These are spelled out in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Contract, which should be completed by the student and their parents during the 6th grade year. A copy of the contract may be found in the Appendices. The responsibilities are:

Attendance at Religious School and Satisfactory Completion of Academic Requirements

- Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates are required to achieve 80 percent attendance at religious school in each of the two academic years prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

Shabbat Service Attendances

- Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates are required to attend at least 16 Shabbat services in the 12 months preceding his or her Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. A minimum of 4 must be Saturday morning B'nai Mitzvah services at Temple Sinai. Attendance at High Holiday services DOES NOT count.
- **At least one parent should be in attendance with the student at services.** Again, the process of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a communal and family responsibility. **It is the student's responsibility to record services attendance in the loose-leaf notebook in the Temple lobby.** Both Friday evening and Saturday morning services count towards this requirement.
- While not required, **students are encouraged to attend the B'nai Mitzvot of all of their classmates.**

Torah Chanting Class

- During the student's 6th Grade year, it is recommended s/he attend Torah Chanting class from October-April. During this class the students learn the notes used in Torah cantillation, work on the prayers they will need to know for their Bnai Mitzvot, go over Bimah choreography, the proper way to do an aliyah, and the proper use of ritual objects as Tallit. Students in 7th grade who have a late Bnai Mitzvah may repeat all or part of the class. Parents are also invited to attend if they would like to learn to chant Torah.

Mitzvah Project

- Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates are required to complete a Mitzvah Project of at least 10 hours. A suggested project list is available from the Religious School Director. Project should be discussed with and approved by the Religious School Director prior to beginning.

Preparations for Bar/Bat Mitzvah include both tutorial in prayers, Torah portion, and Haftarah and meetings with the Rabbi to focus on the conduct of the service.

Tutorial

Once the Torah and Haftarah portions have been assigned, students and family will meet with the Religious School Director. The Religious School Director, or other tutor, is responsible for creating and posting the MP3 files for the chanted assigned verses.

Past experience indicates that many students require additional, private tutoring at additional costs. Tutorial fees are negotiated between the family and the tutor. A list of approved tutors is available through the temple administrator. Students should begin training with their tutor beginning five to six months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. The tutorial is strongly encouraged for several reasons:

- Each student must learn his or her specific Torah portion(s). This can be done, depending on the student's proficiency, by him/herself, with a recording, or with the help of a tutor or qualified family member.
- Once-a-week attendance at Religious School, while providing a solid foundation for Jewish learning, may not be sufficient to develop proficiency with all of the prayers and practices for a Shabbat morning service for many students.
- On average, students read 20 verses of Torah and 10 verses of Haftarah. The actual number of verses will be determined on an individual basis. The Tutorial is the means to prepare an appropriate amount of verses for the ceremony. Ultimately, we wish for each student to prepare to the extent they are able, without fear that they are inadequate or lacking in ability.

Usually, following Torah mastery, Haftarah will be taught.

Rabbinic Meetings

Individual meetings with the Rabbi begin approximately six weeks prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The Rabbi will focus on oral presentation and pulpit positioning.

Parent Preparations

The parent's most important job is to support their child in all of their preparations: help them attend religious school, attend Tutorial sessions, and Shabbat services by making these a priority throughout their years prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah. In addition:

- Ensure that a date is selected and approved (see above).
- Ensure the Bar/Bat Mitzvah contract is completed.
- Approximately 7 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, schedule weekly tutorial sessions if needed.
- Be a member in good standing of Temple Sinai.
- Meet with the Rabbi approximately two weeks prior to the event to discuss final preparations. At this time, the Rabbi will need all participants' names and pronunciations. Families should also provide Hebrew names for those having an Aliyah, as well as those persons' father's and mother's Hebrew names, if available.
- Parents of B'nai Mitzvah students are responsible for making sure all people called to the Torah practice in advance and be well prepared.
- If families choose to have a handout for the service, at least one week in advance parents should have a prepared copy for review by the Rabbi or Religious School Director.

Issue Resolution

Any issues related to B'nai Mitzvah policies should be brought directly to the Spiritual Committee for resolution. Please contact the Temple office for information.

THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH CEREMONY

Sanctuary and Building Usage

There is a fee for use of the building for a ceremony and associated rules and procedures. Please refer to the appendix on this topic for more information. The family

is encouraged to beautify the Bimah. Such as: flowers, herbal arrangements, perennials etc.

Only the Rabbi or his/her designee will be allowed to remove the Torah from the ark for any B'nai Mitzvah related activities.

Families should coordinate with the Rabbi to identify appropriate times for picture-taking either before or after worship on Friday and Saturday. Photography and videography are NOT permitted in the sanctuary during worship. All picture-taking must conclude 30 minutes before worship. The congregation has a fixed-perspective video camera system that may be rented for use. If interested, families should contact the Temple Administrator (refer to B'nai Mitzvah contract).

While candy-throwing at B'nai Mitzvot is a popular modern tradition in many synagogues, it is **STRICTLY FORBIDDEN** at Temple Sinai. This policy is based on safety considerations. Families should inform all non-member guests of this policy.

Friday Night Worship

Friday evening worship begins either at 5:30 PM (first Friday of the month) or 7:30 PM (other Fridays), with the exception of Fridays in June, which begin at 6:00 PM. The entire family is expected to be in attendance at least 30 minutes before the start of worship. Please be sure of worship times when coordinating the date of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah and in your planning. Worship times will not be changed to accommodate individual preferences. It is also possible a guest speaker may be presenting on a Friday evening. Please refer to the congregational calendar.

Opportunities for family involvement at Friday evening services include blessing the Sabbath candles (typically performed by the Bat Mitzvah, or Bar Mitzvah's mother) and the Kiddush over wine (typically performed by Bar Mitzvah, or Bat Mitzvah's father). The B'nai Mitzvah candidate sits on the Bimah and leads one prayer.

While the Oneg on Friday evening is NOT the sole responsibility of the family of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, many families want to ensure that the Oneg will be covered and to provide refreshments that accommodate their expected guests, friend, and family. On those Friday nights in which there is an additional scheduled activity the congregation will help supplement the serving of Oneg. The family should be given first priority in sponsoring the Oneg. Families with B'nai Mitzvot students in the same class may wish to trade responsibility for the Oneg before their ceremonies with one another, to lessen the planning and coordination effort required.

As the observation of B'nai Mitzvah is a community responsibility and celebration, all who are in attendance at Friday night services are invited to attend the Oneg, whether congregants, guests of the family, or un-affiliated members of the public simply attending services.

Saturday Morning Worship

Saturday morning worship begins at 10:00 a.m.. Worship time will not be changed to accommodate individual preferences. The entire family is expected to be in attendance at least 30 minutes before the start of worship.

Sabbath morning worship shall be NO LONGER than two hours in length. This is the maximum length. Please note Sabbath worship may and often times should be less than two hours in length. There shall be no liturgical or musical changes to the service or the introduction of any new ritualistic practices (e.g., kissing of *tzitzit*) without prior Rabbinic approval.

During Sabbath morning worship there are several opportunities for family and friends to participate. Jews and non-Jews may participate, although, Torah rituals are awarded only to Jews (refer to Appendix A). Appropriate readings for non-Jewish family members and guests are at the discretion of the Rabbi. Below is a list of some of the ways family and friends can participate. Families should consult with the Rabbi to coordinate these aspects of the ceremony.

- Presenting a Tallit at the beginning of worship
- Read opening Psalms
- Opening the Ark
- Holding the Torah
- Dressing the Torah
- Closing the Ark
- Blessing Wine
- Blessing Bread
- Parental Blessing or Remarks (Parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah)

Aliyot

The minimum number of Aliyot for a Sabbath morning worship service is three; the maximum is seven. Exceptions will not be made for this policy. Again, only Jews are permitted an Aliyah.

Those being honored with an Aliyah should be able to properly read or chant the Torah blessings in Hebrew. A transliteration sheet will be available on the Bimah, but this does not substitute for advance preparation if the honoree is unfamiliar with the blessings.

Torah and Haftarah Portion

Students shall read an average of 20 verses of Torah. Additionally, keeping with service length protocol, an average maximum of 10 Torah verses may be read by other

members of the congregation or members of the student's family. NOTE: The fluidity and coherence of the assigned portion will be taken into consideration.

The Haftarah reading shall not be assigned until the Rabbi has had the opportunity to hear the candidate read his/her assigned Torah portion during preparation meetings. The Rabbi will determine the number of Haftarah verses read during the Sabbath worship, determined in part by the length of time required for other components of the service.

D'var Torah

Students will deliver a D'var Torah/Speech based on their Torah portion. This must also be submitted to the Shofar immediately following the completion of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah in addition to a photograph and an article about their Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience, as per their Bar/Bat Mitzvah contract. The D'var Torah should be approximately five to eight minutes in length.

Kiddush

Families are expected to have a Kiddush following Saturday morning worship, and should again expect that all in attendance at the worship service are invited to participate in this important congregational and community event, and should plan accordingly.

Additional Celebrations

Additional celebrations beyond the Kiddush are at the family's discretion. The synagogue social hall is available for these celebrations, as per established guidelines for use of the building.

The Rabbi, the Board, and the Spiritual and Education Committees strongly recommend that ALL Religious School classmates of the student be explicitly invited to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, the Kiddush following, and any additional celebrations, whether held at the synagogue or elsewhere.

AFTER THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH CEREMONY

Try to think of the reception that follows not as a separate event but as a continuation of the celebration. In fact, Judaism has a formal name for the meal after a Bar/Bat Mitzvah: s'udat mitzvah. This meal is in honor of the performance of a mitzvah. It, too, is a sacred gathering. This is not to say that it must be solemn; it is to say, however, that the spirit of the morning's celebration should be perpetuated through the performance of mitzvot. The recitation of the blessings and the setting aside of a portion of one's bounty for the poor demonstrate that the morning's celebration was not an isolated event but a standard from which to follow.

It is strongly suggested that all Religious School classmates be invited to the service, the Kiddush, and celebration. (A special invitation is recommended.) A Bar or Bat Mitzvah should be a time of inclusion not isolation.

APPENDICES

Policies for Participation of Non-Jews in the Ritual Life of Temple Sinai

Introduction:

We believe that for Temple Sinai to fulfill its stated mission, its Jewish identity must be preserved and protected. At the same time, and as a part of fulfilling our mission, we strive to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for all of its congregants and their families, and for all guests. This is a house of worship for all people. All people must be made welcome.

It is our foremost desire to maintain the integrity and dignity of: our congregation; the covenant of Torah; our worship services and activities; and our Jewish and non-Jewish participants. This desire for dignity is couched in terms of both respect for humanity and the need for *Shalom Bayit* (peace in our home) in our synagogue and our own homes. To this end, we encourage the ongoing participation of both the Jewish and non-Jewish spouse (or companion) in all synagogue functions so that the whole family has a deeper knowledge and understanding of Judaism. The purpose of this policy statement is to outline and delineate those matters in which non-Jewish participation can be welcomed without compromising the tenets of our unique covenant with God.

Mission Statement:

“The primary purpose of Temple Sinai shall be to perpetuate the enhancement and fulfillment of God’s covenant with Israel, and to enhance and substantiate its congregant’s identities as Jews and *Avdei Adonai* (servants of God) by serving as:

- **A HOUSE OF WORSHIP**-providing an atmosphere of prayer and sanctity for individuals and families committed to Jewish religious observance in the synagogue and home, and a spiritual haven for all others who wish to join in our worship services and related activities.
- **A HOUSE FOR JEWISH LIFE-CYCLE EVENTS**-covenantal ceremonies (namings, brit milot, conversions, affirmations), weddings, *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, Confirmation, funerals, or related ceremonies.
- **A HOUSE OF STUDY AND LEARNING**-representing a resource for formal and informal Jewish education and experiences, for all ages; for congregant and non-congregant – Jew and non-Jew alike.
- **A HOUSE OF MITZVOT**-providing an opportunity for inspiring and performing ritual and ethical *Mitzvot*, as prescribed by our Jewish heritage, in the synagogue, home, community, and broader society.
- **A HOUSE OF MISHPACHA AND SHALOM**-allowing for those in need to find warmth, amity, and fulfillment within the walls of our synagogue and homes of its members.”

Worship and Life Cycle at Temple Sinai

The prophet Isaiah's assertion that "My house shall be a house of prayer for all people," Temple Sinai welcomes all who wish to attend our worship services. We also welcome those who are invited to participate in Jewish "life cycle" events. We specifically choose not to address the issue of the use of Hebrew or a vernacular language. While we recognize that Hebrew is our *lashon hakodesh* (our sacred language), since the adoption of Hebrew as the language of the political state of Israel, it would be disingenuous to portray it as a language only for Jews. The issue is thus not language as much as it is content and commitment. In being strongly committed to maintaining the integrity of our Jewish identity, our worship service, our congregants and families, and knowing that all people in attendance are encouraged to participate in prayer, we establish the following policies regarding who may lead the congregation in the various stages of worship:

SHABBAT

- a. Candle Lighting – We affirm that any mitzvah grounded in Torah should be reserved for those who have accepted the yoke of Torah – for those who are Jewish. The *bracha* for the Shabbat candle lighting includes language which would lead one to believe that it is grounded in Torah. The words "*asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'tzivanu*" are reserved for *mitzvot d'orietah* (precept found specifically in Torah). However, nowhere in Torah is there a command to kindle lights. The Rabbis of antiquity, not the Torah itself, proposed that kindling a light should be a ritual for the Sabbath. Reform Judaism is based in a mandate to return to the original sources of Jewish life and ritual, requiring us to re-examine the merit or reason of accepting Mitzvot. The Rabbis attached supreme importance to symbols. The lighting of candles is a symbolic of a commitment which rivals any other commitment sign which exists in Torah. We find that lighting Shabbat candles, the same as lighting Chanukkah candles is not grounded in Torah, and thus not a mitzvah to be guarded and reserved solely for Jews.
- b. *Kiddush* – The answer to the grounding of *Kiddush* is more difficult to discern. *Kiddush* itself is a celebration of Torah. Therefore, it is rightly reserved for one who has accepted the yoke of Torah. What is commonly called *Kiddush*, though is not really so. The first part of the liturgical passage is nothing more than a prayer thanking God for creation of the fruit of the vine. The part that follows is actually the *Kiddush*. According to the Talmud, *Kiddush* may be recited over wine, candles, challah, or even by itself if none of the above is available. As such, it is not the wine which is specifically grounded in Torah, only the last paragraph of this liturgy. We therefore make policy that the words, "*Baruch Ata Adonai, Eloheinu Melech HaOlam Borei P'ri Hagafen*" may be led by Jew or non-Jew, though the second part of this liturgy, the actual *Kiddush* may be led only by a Jew.
- c. Torah Honors – In as much the *bracha* for being called to Torah specifically affirms the reader's commitment to the covenant between God and Israel, this honor is

reserved for Jews. This holds true for all honors or rituals involving handling the Torah itself, though opening and closing the ark or walking in processional with a Jewish family member as the Torah is carried shall be allowed to the non-Jew.

- d. Haftarah Honors – In as much the *bracha* for being called to recite from the Haftarah specifically affirms the reader's commitment to the covenant between God and Israel, this honor is reserved for Jews.
- e. *HaMotzi*, *She-he-cheyani*, and related *Brachot* – In as much as these brachot celebrate and thank God for sustenance and strength, they are appropriate for all people to recite, even when leading a group.

LIFE CYCLE

Patrilineal and Matrilineal Descent

- a. We recognize that it has been the accepted tradition amongst Jews to accept as a Jew, any child of a Jewish mother. Certainly this is the suggestion of *Halacha*. Even within the realm of *Halachic* decisions, though, there are an abundance of cases where lineage and status are determined solely by the father. In fact, the lineages of all persons in the Bible are determined by the father. In the Book of Numbers (1:2) we find "the household is according to the father." Deuteronomy 17:11 reads, "You shall act in accordance with the instructions given you and the rulings handed down to you; you must not deviate from the verdict...to the right or the left." Quite clearly, the author of Torah intended there to be patrilineal descent. Further, we find in the Talmud (Baba Batra 109b and Yevamot 54b) "the lineage of the father takes precedence over the mother's."
- b. Where there have been stance taken in *Halacha* which are contrary to the biblical texts, they have been based only in exigent circumstances, or on specific customs prevailing in the community which authored the deviation. As such, the same authority allows for a return to the original law, or for further adaptation to further comply with new exigencies or firm customs.
- c. In as much as we have embraced the mandate that man and woman are equal in the eyes of God and thus in the performance of ritual, it is important to apply the same standard to the issue of lineage. Neither father nor mother should have superior rights to determine or undermine a child's lineage. The Israeli Supreme Court has made the same determination in answering the "Who is a Jew" issue for the purposes of the "Law of Return."
- d. The Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) passed a resolution on the subject of Patrilineal descent in October 1983. In pertinent part, it provided: "...the child of one Jewish parent is under the presumption of Jewish Decent. This presumption of the Jewish status of the offspring of any mixed marriage is to be established through appropriate and timely public and formal acts of identification with the Jewish faith and people. The performance of these *mitzvot* serves to commit those who participate in them, both parent and child, to Jewish life."...It is up to the child and/or his/her parents to validate this claim through subsequent and meaningful acts of identification (emphasis added)."

We affirm this ruling and determine that the Jewishness of a child of intermarriage is not a matter for the synagogue nor its membership to adjudicate. So long as the decision is made within the above framework, this is a matter for the family to decide. Any

ambiguities must be left to the presiding Rabbi for conclusion. Having so decided, it is the policy that all Jewish children shall have equal access to participation in all relevant Jewish Life Cycle celebrations and commemorations, to include, but not be limited to covenantal naming ceremonies, Consecration, Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and Confirmation.

NON-JEWISH FAMILY ROLES IN LIFE CYCLE EVENTS OF CHILDREN

We recognize the value of strong family support. We also recognize that the need to maintain the strength of the family unit transcends many needs even in religion. Where a family has committed to (and followed through in) raising a Jewish child, it is as much due to the involvement and support of the non-Jewish family members as the Jewish ones. Therefore, as a Jewish child ascends through the various levels of life cycle honors, all family members should be allowed to participate in the event. The same guidelines which apply to a normal Shabbat worship service will apply here, with the additional note that a non-Jewish parent or grandparent will be allowed on the *bimah* for the purposes of asking a blessing for the Jewish child, so long as the content of such a blessing is appropriate to a Jewish service.

Weddings

It is the policy of this congregation to allow the presiding Rabbi the discretion as to the use of the sanctuary for intermarriages. It is further up to the Rabbi's discretion to determine whether he/she will participate in an intermarriage and the degree to which non-Jewish participation is to be allowed.

Funerals

- a. According to *Halacha*, everyone is obligated to mourn for the four classes of people closest to them; parents, children, siblings, and spouses. We are sensitive to the needs of mourners, regardless of their religious background. At Temple Sinai, we recognize the following death and mourning customs, though the Rabbi may facilitate further observance:
- b. We recall the *Shiva* (7 day), *Sh'loshim* (30 day), and the annual *Yahrtzeit* of those who have passed away, who are related to any member of the synagogue, regardless of religious background.
- c. We follow Jewish custom permitting a non-Jewish person to be a pallbearer and offer a eulogy at a funeral of a Jewish person.
- d. When requested, our Rabbi will conduct the funeral of any Synagogue member, regardless of his/her religious background. This is in accord with the Jewish precepts of honoring the dead and comforting the mourner. The service would be a Jewishly grounded service whether inside the Jewish cemetery or other location.
- e. It is the policy of Temple Sinai to allow for burial of a non-Jewish spouse, parent, or child, with Jewish family members, so long as the liturgy of the service is appropriate to a Jewish setting, and so long as the headstone meets the same criteria.

ALL OTHER MATTERS

For all other matters, the Rabbi of this congregation shall have the right to final say, as to the appropriateness of interfaith involvement in the synagogue. Such authority is, however, to be used in consideration and furtherance of the aims and goals delineated in this larger policy statement.

BAR/BAT MITZVAH CONTRACT

Name _____

Date of Bar/Bat Mitzvah _____

1. Attendance in Religious School

Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates are required to complete two years of eighty percent attendance prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

Signature

2. Shabbat Attendance

Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates are required to attend at least 16 services from the beginning of the religious school year until their Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. At least one parent should be in attendance with the student. It is the student's responsibility to mark down all services attended in the loose-leaf notebook in the Temple lobby.

Signature

3. Completion of Religious School Academic Requirements

Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates are expected to be in good academic standing at Religious School, as attested to by the 7th grade teachers.

Signature

4. Mitzvah Project

Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidates are required to complete at least 10 hours of mitzvah service. A suggested project list is available.

Signature

TEMPLE SINAI REQUISITION FOR FACILITIES

Fees for Bar/Bat Mitzvah Life Cycle Event

BAR __BAT __MITZVAH -- Name of Student:

Address:

Phone Number: (Home) _____ (Business)

Event Date: _____ Time: _____ to: _____

Number of Persons: _____

Event Coordinator: _____ Phone

Number: _____

Caterer? ___ Name: _____ Phone

Number: _____

(Your must submit a completed Caterer's form and his/her certificate of insurance with this form)

Cars expected: _____

FEES FOR BAR/BAT MITZVAH LIFE CYCLE EVENT

A. BAR/BAT MITZVAH FEE:

_____ **\$ 820.00**

Covers cantor, organist; set up/clean up for Friday night and Saturday morning through Saturday kiddush until 2:00 p.m.

B. SECURITY DEPOSIT:

_____ **\$200.00**

This is a refundable deposit required of all events. It covers damage and repairs to the facilities and equipment. Any repairs and/or damage which exceeds the deposit will be billed at actual cost.

C. ADDITIONAL EVENT (DINNER, ETC.):

\$50.00/hr

\$200/minimum

Includes opening and closing the building, clean up/set up, and use of kitchen equipment.

**SUBTOTAL (Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fee + Security Deposit
REQUIRED) \$820.00**

ADDITIONAL EVENT (OPTIONAL)

\$ _____

TOTAL ALL

\$ _____

Please make checks payable to Temple Sinai.

(Mazon: 3% of total food bill is due following the event payable to Mazon)

WAIVER OF RESPONSIBILITY

_____ agree(s) to indemnify and hold harmless, the Congregation of Temple Sinai, South Burlington, Vermont, from any liability for damage to person or property resulting from our use of the building and premises; and to pay for any property damage to Temple Sinai resulting from such use.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

HC Jun 2000

HOUSE RULES AND REGULATIONS

AS APPROVED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

JANUARY 14, 1986

AS AMENDED ON JUNE 30, 1998

It is the function of the House Committee to maintain Temple Sinai for the use of its congregation and auxiliary organizations. These rules are formulated to provide maximum efficiency and use of the building.

1. The congregation shall keep a calendar on which all activities of the congregation and its committees, both inside and outside of the building, are recorded. The calendar shall be outside of the secretary's office. Only the administrative secretary is authorized to enter dates. In the event of conflicting dates, preference shall be in the order of congregation, committees, members and other organization. The secretary shall contact the Rabbi, President of House Committee Chair to resolve any conflicts.

2. All requests for the use of Temple facilities must be made in writing to the House Committee. Any request for use of the Sanctuary or Social Hall shall be on an approved form a minimum of 3 months prior to the event. Approval or denial of such request shall be made, in writing, within 30 days of the request. Any approval shall be accompanied by a bill for the services requested. The bill is payable 6 weeks prior to event date or the reservation is considered canceled. It is reserved, to the Board of Trustees, the right to deny the use of premises and to cancel or change any commitment made by the House Committee. All additional arrangements (i.e.: kitchen, caterer, decorations, seating arrangements, etc.) shall be made in writing, in consultation, with the House Committee. Any request for use of the classroom space must additionally be approved by the Religious School Education Director as well as the House Committee.

3. No function shall be permitted in the Social Hall between the High Holidays

4. There shall be no use of the Social Hall without the partition to the Sanctuary in place unless approved by the House Committee and the Spiritual Committee.

5. All organizations or individuals who use the Temple facilities shall be responsible for all damages to the personal and real property of the congregation. The Temple is not responsible for any personal property brought onto the premises of Temple or used by the congregation. Use of the Temple facilities shall have a designated Temple member (in good standing) listed as host on the written request for facilities. The host, in consultation with the custodian, shall be responsible for the opening, operation and closing of the building. The host shall further be responsible for ensuring the kitchen and all other rented cost of returning the facilities to a clean and undamaged condition or the cost of returning the facilities to clean and undamaged condition.

6. Food, other than in Religious School, will not be permitted outside of the Social Hall or outdoors without prior written permission of the House Committee. All food brought onto the premises and/or prepared on site shall be kosher style foods. Kosher style foods shall be defined as food not containing pork or shellfish and dishes that do not contain a mixture of meat with dairy products.

7. Use of Temple facilities for all activities shall entail any fee or fees as set by the House Committee and approved by the Board of Trustees. Any change of the fee schedule shall be published in *The Shofar* prior to the effective date of the change. Any waiver of fees require the approval of the House Committee. All users of Temple facilities must sign an agreement to indemnify and hold harmless Temple Sinai from liability to anyone for injury or personal property damage sustained through the negligence of the User, its agents, servants or employees.

8. Caterers must apply in writing and be pre-approved by the House Committee. The Caterer must submit documentary proof that s/he is insured, as a Caterer, for personal injury and property damage liability. The Caterer must further agree to indemnify and hold harmless Temple Sinai from and liability to anyone for injuries or personal property damage sustained through the negligence of the Caterer, its agents, servants or employees.

9. No decorations that require pasting on the walls or ceiling, any stickers, tacks, tape or anything that might mar the surfaces of the Social Hall and Sanctuary, may be used without prior written permission of the House Committee. Such request should be made at the time of the written request for use of the Social Hall or Sanctuary. All decorations used in Temple Sinai shall be

fire-resistant. All decorations in the school area are the responsibility of the Education Vice President and the Religious School Committee.

10. Lighted candles (other than Shabbat candles), change in lighting, sound equipment, or stage equipment, etc. are not permitted in the Sanctuary without permission of the Rabbi and/or Spiritual Committee. Any such change should be notified to the House Committee.

11. All scheduled activities must end prior to the latest time listed on their written approval. Any afternoon approval for space will end at 4:00 p.m. to allow for cleanup and rental of the space for an evening event.

12. At the time for request for facilities, the House Committee shall be notified of any request for special services such as other space, organist, checking attendant, public address system, dishes, etc. The House Committee shall determine the cost of the service and charge an appropriate fee to insure coverage of that cost.

13. Any Life Cycle Events (i.e., Bar/Bat Mitzvahs, Weddings, Funerals, etc.) for non-members of the congregation conducted using Temple Sinai facilities shall additionally require the written permission of the Rabbi, Spiritual Committee. The House Committee shall set an additional fee for such services.

14. Alcoholic beverages may only be used in accordance with the rules of the Spiritual Committee, which states: "It shall be the policy of Temple Sinai not to allow any consumption of alcoholic beverages prior to a Jewish Life Cycle event within the Temple facilities. It is also the policy of Temple Sinai to conform to all Vermont liquor statutes, especially in regard to serving of minors. As a Reform congregation, we encourage a responsible attitude with the consumption of alcohol and sobriety on the road". Proof of license for the serving alcoholic beverages at Temple Sinai shall be submitted to the House Committee prior to the event.

15. Only members whose dues are current at the time of any function shall be considered "Members in good standing". Any other members who wish to use Temple facilities for any reason including Life Cycle Events, shall be treated as a non-member within the requirements of section 13.

16. All circular, posters or notices pertaining to Temple functions shall only be posted on Temple bulletin boards, sent home with Religious School

students or published in *The Shofar*. The House Committee must clear any additional advertising requests.

17. All Religious School traffic, including all adults, shall enter the facility through the Religious School entrance. This includes extended night traffic as coats and papers have to be picked up from the classrooms.

18. The Social Hall and Kitchen shall be locked except for approved events. A key for each facility will be maintained in the secretary's office for use rental. A \$20.00 refundable deposit will be required for each key.

19. The secretary's office shall be locked when the secretary is not present. Access to the secretary's office will be limited to the secretary, Rabbi, President, Religious School Director and custodian (mailboxes moved to the hall wall). Anyone other than the secretary who opens this office is responsible for all activity in, and contents of, while it is unlocked.

20. The Library and Shul Study shall be open for intended use unless specifically scheduled for a specific use.

21. Classrooms shall be locked when not in use for Religious School. Specific classrooms will, upon approval, be made available for approved activities.

22. The House Committee shall maintain a calendar book of all facility requests approved and given to the secretary. It shall include the date, time and location of each activity. It will further show the type of activity, the name of the host members, and any request for tables, chairs, or special requests. This book will be maintained in such a way that the date will be available to the custodian.

23. Keys to the entrances and locked areas of Temple Sinai shall be limited to the President, Rabbi, administrative secretary, Religious School Director and custodian. An additional set shall be kept by the administrative secretary for space rental needs. Keys for different areas need to be separately keyed or master keyed so that separate use areas can be established as needed.

SOME EXTRAS

Please attach a Set-up Map (for Friday Oneg and Saturday morning) of the Social Hall for tables and chairs so that the Custodian can setup for the event.

Plas indicate what time you wish to come into the building on Saturday morning (not before 9 a.m., please), and/or if you would like a building key, so that the custodian can arrange to come in and un-arm security alarm.

Please indicate what time you will be finishing your events (Friday evening and Saturday afternoon) so that we may schedule cleaning, closing of building, etc.

Please note condition of the kitchen: Dishes used must be put away. If this cannot be done then special arrangements must be coordinated with custodian through Temple office or Temple House Committee. Paper goods should not be used unless special arrangements are made.

Please check building security - all doors must be locked before your departure.

HISTORY OF B'NAI MITZVOT

The establishment of becoming a Bar Mitzvah at thirteen years plus one day for boys and a Bat Mitzvah at twelve years plus one day for girls has several origins. The Talmud records that during the time of the Second Temple (520 B.C.E.–70 C.E.), it was traditional for Sages to bless a child who had completed his first fast day at the age of twelve or thirteen. In Pirkei Avot (“Ethics of the Fathers,” second century C.E.) it is written, “At thirteen one is ready to do mitzvot.” By the time the Talmud was completed in the sixth century C.E., boys of thirteen years plus one day had assumed full responsibility for performing the mitzvot, hence the term Bar Mitzvah, “son of the commandment.” This also had legal ramifications: These boys were now counted in a minyan and could act as witnesses. There was no formal rite, only a public blessing by the father that he was no longer responsible for the sins of the son. At Temple Sinai a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is scheduled seventy days before or after a thirteenth birthday for both boys and girls.

The earliest Bar Mitzvah ceremony consisted of blessing and reading the last section of the weekly portion of the Torah (the maftir, or “extra reading”) and reading the Haftarah portion. The most important part of the rite was a d’rashah or D’var Torah, a sermonette on the Torah or Haftarah portion. Since the Bar Mitzvah was assuming adult religious responsibilities, he was expected to show his understanding of those responsibilities to his family and, more importantly, to the community. Structurally, the Bar Mitzvah ceremony is essentially the same as it originally was, although it was not until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that we find records of a Bar Mitzvah being invited to lead part of the worship service.

A public ceremony in celebration of a girl becoming a Bat Mitzvah, “daughter of the commandment,” did not come into formal being in North America until 1922. Dr. Judith Kaplan-Eisenstein, the daughter of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, blessed and read the Torah portion from a book “at a respectable distance” from the Torah scroll. The regular celebration of girls becoming B’not Mitzvah came into prominence in Reform congregations particularly in the second half of the 20th century and is generally identical in form to the celebration of a Bar Mitzvah.

The rite of Confirmation originated in the Reform Movement in Germany in 1810 and included girls in 1817. Since it was felt that a thirteen-year-old was too young to understand the precepts of Judaism, the celebration of a boy becoming a Bar Mitzvah was dropped in favor of Confirmation, which was held at age sixteen or seventeen because that was deemed a more mature age to assume the responsibilities of Judaism. Today, most congregations hold both ceremonies.

Historically, all joyous occasions were celebrated in some manner, and becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah was no exception. However, unlike weddings at which we are

commanded to rejoice with bride and groom, the Bar Mitzvah has no such mandate. In early years the celebrations varied from a simple Kiddush of wine, brandy, and cake following the service to more elaborate meals for the family and friends. The Rabbis urged families not to have elaborate celebrations and always to provide for the poor in order to fulfill the mitzvah. The Bar Mitzvah delivered the d'rashah some time during the celebration in order to emphasize its religious aspects. Gifts were generally limited to books, or religious items, or "sermon gifts," which were small amounts of money given as thanks for the sermonette. Among Moroccan Jews, this money was given to the boy's teacher.

Historically, Bar/Bat Mitzvah has been viewed as a first step in a young person's acceptance of the obligations to family and community as a responsible Jew. It was and should continue to be the beginning of a lifetime of the performance of mitzvot, study, prayer, and a commitment to share the destiny of the Jewish people.