



B'nei Mitzvah Handbook 2021

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Letter to Families

Dear Families,

Mazel Tov on your children soon becoming B'nei Mitzvah!

In our Jewish community, children become B'nei Mitzvah at the age of 13. Until this age, families bear the responsibility for teaching Jewish children how to live according to our values. When they turn 13, your B'nei Mitzvah child becomes increasingly responsible for carrying out the commitments of Jewish life. To mark this occasion, it is customary for B'nei Mitzvah to demonstrate their acceptance of these responsibilities and privileges by engaging with and teaching Torah, leading the community in prayer, and undertaking a mitzvah project as a symbol of commitment to Jewish values. This is an important moment to mark this transition in your child's Jewish education, which stretches from birth through old age.

This handbook offers you in-depth information on the ritual and ceremony of B'nei Mitzvah, the path children at Congregation Beth Elohim take in their studies before and after their B'nei Mitzvah, and the logistics and procedures for preparing for and planning your event. We hope that it will serve to answer many of your questions. **Our B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator, Beth Mirahver (bmirahver@cbebk.org), will also be happy to answer any questions that you may have.**

****Please note that during the pandemic, many of our typical practices are different. For example, at the time of this publication, CBE is not hosting events, and for those wishing to celebrate in person, services are limited to 25 participants in the sanctuary or chapel, and clergy will be present via Zoom. For information regarding honors and other modifications to the service, please consult with Beth Mirahver and/or our clergy.***

Also, please encourage your children to participate in our teen programs at CBE for 8th-12th graders. Although during the pandemic, our usual trips are being postponed, the teen years at CBE are full of great opportunities for leadership and learning. Yachad classes feature electives, social justice projects, and learning with our clergy. BESTY is our teen youth group, and is a wonderful way to meet other Jewish teens from CBE and from around the area. Our *madrichim* (student helper) program enables teens to help out in our Yachad classes, providing much needed classroom assistance and role modeling for our younger students, as well as paid work experience. We look forward to working with and celebrating with your family on your special day, and we also can't wait to continue the journey together afterwards.

Mazel Tov,
Rabbi Rachel Timoner
Cantor Josh Breitzer
Rabbi Rebecca Epstein

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Introduction

The B'nei Mitzvah ceremony is an important event in the life of a Jewish child and family. It is a religious ceremony that celebrates a child's passage into adulthood in the eyes of the Jewish community. At this time, children are expected to accept the same responsibilities of the spiritual life of the community as other adult members. Beyond ritual maturity, it reflects emerging moral responsibility.

The B'nei Mitzvah ceremony can be traced back to the twelfth century, when boys who reached age thirteen were considered ready to begin adult life. At Congregation Beth Elohim, every child celebrates their B'nei Mitzvah upon reaching their thirteenth birthday. Of course, in today's society we recognize that secular education is not complete when grade school is completed, and most adult responsibilities are postponed at least until the end of the teen years. Therefore, the B'nei Mitzvah is viewed not as an end, but as a significant milestone after which students engage even more fully and actively in their Jewish education.

We expect all of our students to make Jewish education a lifelong journey, which includes continuing their Jewish education through 12th grade. Our 8th grade students continue their Yachad education one evening a week and typically participate in an Israel trip in the late winter of their 8th grade year. Teens who visit Israel invariably return with a strengthened commitment to the Jewish people and a better understanding of the political, cultural, and religious issues that face us as Jews in the contemporary world. Although this trip is postponed this year due to the pandemic, as soon as we are able to travel we will plan a trip and get our students to the Holy Land.

Our 9th through 12th grade students attend our CBE High School program, which is held on weekday evenings, and participate in our informal youth programming and youth group. In high school, students have the opportunity to study in adult-level seminar-style learning, engage in community service and service-learning, build community through programs and projects, and share dinner together. Each year, our students participate in a trip together focused on social justice and Jewish life, while bonding and having fun.

Family Requirements to become B'nei Mitzvah at CBE

Families must be CBE members during their B'nei Mitzvah process. All B'nei Mitzvah students must register for and attend the Yachad Program at Congregation Beth Elohim. We require all students to attend at least three consecutive years of the Yachad program before becoming B'nei Mitzvah. The 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade curricula include learning that is complementary to and essential for the B'nei Mitzvah experience. All B'nei Mitzvah candidates must be enrolled in Yachad for the entire year of their ceremony and we expect all students to participate through their 8th grade year. Once they complete 8th grade, especially if they go to Israel with the class, students' personal motivation to continue soars.

A reading knowledge of Hebrew is essential for the standard B'nei Mitzvah ceremony. That said, we are committed to making the B'nei Mitzvah experience accessible to each student according to their developmental or learning abilities. Please do not hesitate to discuss any needs or concerns with our clergy.

All students are expected to attend Shabbat services at Congregation Beth Elohim Saturday mornings regularly during their 6th, 7th, and 8th grade years, and to attend the B'nei Mitzvah ceremonies of all their classmates that take place during the Yachad service on Shabbat morning. Of course, there will be dates in the year when conflicts arise and students are unable to attend, but we expect your children to be participating in the CBE Shabbat community most Shabbat mornings during the academic year. Service attendance will be monitored by our faculty. We strongly urge families to attend with their children so that the whole family is familiar with the service and there to support other classmates in their *simchas* (joyous occasions).

The Student's Role in Preparation

Attendance Through 8th Grade

Through Yachad curriculum and *tefillah* (worship) attendance from Kindergarten-8th grade, students will learn the prayers of our worship service and develop facility with leading these prayers, although they are not required to lead the prayers by themselves during the service. Additionally, they will form bonds with their peers, teachers, and clergy, a critical part of solidifying Jewish identity. Yachad teachers track each student's interests, learning styles, and needs in preparation for their b'nei mitzvah tutoring process.

Retreat and Family Meetings

In 6th grade, families take part in a Shabbat retreat with the clergy team, followed up with two more meetings later in the year held at CBE. These meetings help all our B'nei Mitzvah families build bonds, establish community goals, and begin the process of studying Torah together. By the final meeting, families will have completed a close reading of their *parshiyot* and “presented” them to each other. We are especially eager to facilitate relationships between families celebrating b'nei mitzvah on the same date.

Tutoring

Ten months prior, students meet individually with Cantor Breitzer to review Torah blessings and cantillation. Cantor Breitzer provides a Dropbox link to recordings of pertinent prayers and blessings. This is the first of several individual meetings with Cantor Breitzer to be held every 4-6 weeks. In between meetings with Cantor Breitzer, students meet individually every week for 20 minutes with one of our *melamdin* (tutors) to learn and record their Torah and haftarah verses. Most students learn between 10-15 verses of Torah and 3-5 verses of Haftarah. **We will allow each student to miss one session, but after that we will need to charge the family for a make-up session with their *melamed*. The cost of each make-up session with the *melamdin* is \$75.00 per hour.**

We expect all students to practice 25 minutes every day. It is very important that the children practice at home so they do not fall behind in their preparation and tutoring time. Should your student require additional tutoring support or a more individualized learning plan, please be in touch with **our B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator (Beth Mirahver, bmirahver@cbebk.org)**.

Divrei Torah

Three to four months before the B'nei Mitzvah date, students begin meeting regularly with CBE teachers and clergy to research and write the d'var Torah. There are approximately 6-8 meetings. In general, students write the d'var Torah on their own, however, sometimes families or other trusted adults need to assist in the process.

Sweet Meet and Greet with Rabbi Timoner

Each month, Rabbi Timoner meets via zoom for a special hang out with all the b'nei mitzvah students who are celebrating in the following month.

Final Meeting and Rehearsal

On the Thursday evening before the B'nei Mitzvah date, families meet with Rabbi Timoner via Zoom, and then the whole family (both families in the case of a double)

meet in the Sanctuary for a final rehearsal with Cantor Breitzer.

The Family's Role in Preparation

During this time of intense preparation we strongly urge you to make a special effort to support your child and demonstrate awareness of this year as a rite of passage for the entire family. Therefore, we encourage your attendance at Shabbat Morning Services as a family, so that you will become thoroughly familiar with our worship practices. The more familiar you are with the service the more comfortable you will be at your child's ceremony. Services in the Sanctuary begin at 9:30 AM and the link can be found in our CBE weekly emails.

Mandatory Family Participation

As you guide your child toward demonstrating that they are a fully responsible member of our community, we ask you to take responsibility in a few ways during the course of your child's B'nei Mitzvah year. These are the requirements of the B'nei Mitzvah families as a part of our B'nei Mitzvah Program:

1. Usher at three B'nei Mitzvah Services

Your child will already be attending Shabbat morning services regularly in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grade years. Within the 2 years prior to your child's B'nei Mitzvah we ask that you usher at least three services (greet worshippers and distribute prayer books and pamphlets). This is an excellent way to meet other congregants, participate in the community, and to show your child the importance of your own regular participation in Jewish worship. When signing up to usher please note that you will need to be at the service 30-45 minutes prior to the start to help hand out books and pamphlets, and get everyone seated. The Clergy Administrator will share a link with you to the volunteer sign-up list, so you can select your 3+ dates to usher.

2. Attend the family education events during the 6th, 7th and 8th grade years We

hold several family education events throughout the year, which families attend with their children. The dates for these programs will be announced during the school year.

Mitzvah and Tzedakah Projects

Throughout their years at CBE, our young people will have many opportunities to engage in service projects through Yachad and with their families. As children get older our hope is that they will get more and more deeply involved in projects that enable

them to encounter and relate to people across lines of neighborhood, race, and class, and through which they are confronting deep questions of social justice and sustainability in our society and world. In the teen years, students will learn community organizing and will engage their peers in a change campaign on an issue of their choosing. They will travel to the South to learn about the history of Jews in the Civil Rights movement and to Washington, DC, where they will learn about the legislative process and lobby on Capitol Hill.

In their B'nei Mitzvah year, we ask that our students participate in a service opportunity that requires some significant effort on behalf of the child and their family. Our recommendation is that the B'nei Mitzvah and one adult family member spend one night in the CBE Homeless Shelter. CBE hosts a homeless shelter for 12-14 men for five to six weeks each spring. The men are in a strict, closely supervised, and rigorous program to prepare them for housing and jobs. They are respectful and deeply grateful for the ability to spend the night at CBE. They come in, eat dinner, talk with their hosts, and go to bed. CBE provides two or more volunteers each night who spend the night in the shelter. Anyone B'nei Mitzvah age or older is eligible.

We encourage you to consider this opportunity as an experience that your child will always remember in connection to their B'nei Mitzvah. If you or your child feel that this is too much of a stretch, we encourage you to cook dinner for the men and eat with them. If neither of these opportunities sounds possible for your family, we invite you to choose your own mitzvah project that is meaningful to you.

During the 7th Grade in Yachad, the students will choose a Tikkun Olam class. Last year, we offered six different courses each focusing on a different social justice theme: Dismantle White Supremacy, Gun Control Now, End Hunger, Combat Climate Change, Stand Up for People Who Are Differently Abled, and Defend Refugee and Immigrant Rights. (The specific courses offered each year will depend on the expertise of the Yachad staff members available to teach them.) In these courses, students will learn about the specific theme they have chosen as well as how to be leaders for these causes. The students will complete a number of policy and awareness projects revolving around their specific cause during their time at Yachad. This will be a significant focus of the 7th grade year, and we will be guiding families to discuss this project together, especially as it relates to the gifts they will receive for their B'nei Mitzvah, and the opportunity to give back that is afforded at this moment in the young person's life.

Schedule and Logistics: What You and Your Guests Should Know

At CBE we are a community and it is a tradition that B'nei Mitzvah students are called to the Torah in front of the community. Did you know the sefer Torah at CBE is the first fully kosher sefer Torah scribed by a woman, Linda Coppelson, on the East coast?

All B'nei Mitzvah Ceremonies take place on Saturday mornings during the scheduled Shabbat morning service.

Shabbat Morning Schedule for Yachad Service:

8:15-9:10 AM: Space available for photographs (optional)

9:15-9:30 AM: Community Bagels and B'rachot in the Rotunda

9:30-11:45 AM: Shabbat Morning Service in the Sanctuary

11:45 AM (Approximately): Conclusion of service

Be sure to let your guests know that we do start on time. Accordingly, many congregants tell their guests to arrive at 9:15 AM. Driving instructions to Congregation Beth Elohim are available ([on our website](#)) for you to include in your invitations. Please make sure your guests understand that they will need ample time for finding on-street parking and walking to CBE. Also, let your guests know that your service will take place in the Sanctuary (271 Garfield Place, the domed building on the NE corner of 8th Avenue).

The B'nei Mitzvah Ritual

On the Shabbat Evening, at Friday night services, all the members of the family are invited to bless the Shabbat candles. If you are not familiar with this blessing, please contact Cantor Breitzer who will be glad to help you prepare, you can also consider using [this Shabbat blessing guide](#).

At Shabbat Morning Service, the following customs are followed:

- Depending on the size of the Torah portion we will hand out *Aliyot* (the honor of being called for a Torah blessing). The B'nei Mitzvah will be given one of these *aliyot* and the families of the B'nei Mitzvah may also have an *Aliyah* if they wish. When the student is called to the Torah, they will read the Torah blessings in Hebrew (the *Aliyah*). Students will generally chant 10-15 verses from the Torah. Other members of the family or of the CBE community often chant Torah before the B'nei Mitzvah do.

- The B'nei Mitzvah will chant the *Haftarah* blessings in Hebrew and chant a short excerpt of *Haftarah* (3-5 verses) followed by a *D'var Torah* (a teaching of Torah) either as an original address or interactive presentation on the Torah portion.
- If there is a special *tallit* (prayer shawl) that you wish to present to the B'nei Mitzvah at the start of the ceremony, please speak with the Clergy Administrator. Please also note this on your honors sheet.
- Silent honors may be conferred on other participants such as the opening of the Ark, walking with the Torah, and dressing the Torah. Please provide names of all participants in a timely fashion for inclusion in the pamphlet. Jewish and non-Jewish people are all welcome to have these honors in our services.
- During the service, Yachad students are dismissed to their classes.

At a congregation like ours, every family's composition is unique, and it is important that every family feel welcome and included in the service. We invite you to talk with our Clergy about your family's needs and concerns regarding participation in the B'nei Mitzvah ceremony.

Inclusive B'nei Mitzvah Practices

CBE has a history of working with families to create customized B'nei Mitzvah for children who need a little something different. Here are some examples of B'nei Mitzvah modifications:

- Learning prayers through pictures, videos, and ASL for B'nei Mitzvah who are not reading or who are nonverbal
- Pre-recorded videos of the B'nei Mitzvah doing their parts of the ceremony to play in place of B'nei Mitzvah getting up on bima, or as a backup
- Moving ceremony to chapel, which is smaller and less sensory-stimulating
- Choosing the prayers the B'nei Mitzvah is comfortable with and practicing just those
- Reading just Torah or just Haftarah

- Creating a custom service pamphlet, including B'nei Mitzvah's drawings and/or visual aids

Based on the B'nei Mitzvah's needs, please consider the following:

- Deciding if sanctuary or chapel is a more appropriate setting
 - Sanctuary is large, has bright lights, seats 1,300, and the sound is amplified with speakers
 - Chapel is small, has dimmer lights, seats 200, and the sound is not amplified
- Looking at the list of prayers and deciding how many, in English and/or Hebrew, your child can learn in the given time frame (also consider if the prayers in visual, audio, or video format would be more appropriate, or in ASL)
 - Tallit blessing
 - Sh'ma while holding the Torah
 - Torah blessings
 - Haftarah blessings
 - Haftarah verses
 - Torah verses

In your initial meeting with Cantor Breitzer, talk about your child's developmental levels and learning needs. Kade Friedman, the Yachad Learning Specialist, is happy to be part of these meetings to help make appropriate suggestions. kfriedman@cbebk.org

Read more about inclusive B'nei Mitzvah practices at:

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/planning-a-special-needs-barbat-mitzvah/>

<https://jewishweek.timesofisrael.com/8-lessons-from-a-spectacular-special-needs-bar-mitzvah/>

Customs of the Congregation

The day of becoming B'nei Mitzvah is a sacred, holy day. As such, we recommend that families discuss together the clothing the B'nei Mitzvah will wear for this special occasion. We encourage children to wear what will feel comfortable, which may or may not be gendered clothing. This could look like a child choosing to wear a top hat, sparkly shoes, a bow tie, a dress, pants, or any other clothing that feels both comfortable and special to the child. It is important that children have a say in how they present

themselves on this special day.

It is the custom of this congregation to leave the choice of wearing a *kippah* (traditional head covering) or *tallit* to each individual. The B'nei Mitzvah may choose to wear *kippot* and/or *tallitot*. Guests and participants may also wear *kippot* or *tallitot* as they choose. If you wish your guests to have *kippot* as mementos of the service, please bring them on the day of the ceremony. There is a supply of *kippot and tallitot* available to those who may want to borrow one during the service.

Everyone who attends is encouraged to participate fully in the service. Our *siddur* (prayer book) is fully transliterated to enable everyone to do so. The Clergy will strive to explain many of the prayers and to give page numbers so that everyone can find their place and understand the meaning of the prayers.

The Torah will be carried down the aisle before it is read. It is the custom for many in this congregation to touch the Torah dressings with the *tallit* or *siddur* and to kiss the *talit* or *siddur* as a sign of love and reverence for the Torah. This is not an obligation. Guests to whom the Torah is a holy book are welcome to join in this custom at Congregation Beth Elohim.

A recent custom at CBE is for 7th grade families to organize a collection among all 7th grade families so that people do not feel pressured to give gifts for each B'nei Mitzvah. The funds collected are used to purchase an engraved Kiddush cup for every 7th grader and also to make charitable donations on behalf of the class to nonprofit organizations that the students choose in their Yachad Tikkun Olam class.

You may consider writing a short personalized introduction and welcome for distribution with invitations. This is a friendly way to tell your guests about our congregation's customs.

Adding Meaning to the Ritual

CBE is proud to celebrate B'nei Mitzvah with families of all different backgrounds, including those of multiple faiths. When considering who in your family will have an *aliyah* (the honor of chanting the Torah blessings), know that the CBE clergy have twin goals of maximum inclusion and maximum authenticity — that no one should feel excluded, but that also no one should feel that they are saying words that make them pretend to be something they're not. We offer families four options:

- 1) Non-Jewish family remain seated, offering love and support from the pews;
- 2) Non-Jewish family stand with their Jewish family members and participate with their presence but not the words of the blessing;
- 3) Non-Jews read the English blessing in *Mishkan Tefilah* opposite the Hebrew blessings on that page. The language does not assume the reader is Jewish and it can be followed by the chanting of the Hebrew blessings by the Jews in the group;
- 4) Non-Jews can join their Jewish family members in chanting the blessing in Hebrew.

Setting the Date

All B'nei Mitzvah ceremonies at Congregation Beth Elohim are held during regularly scheduled congregational services. Any date reasonably close to the child's 13th birthday is appropriate; dates any time after the 13th birthday are also possible. In 5th grade, families will be given a B'nei Mitzvah date request form that allows them to select 5 (five) Saturday morning dates for their child's ceremony. The B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator will work on the calendaring, and will let you know which of the 5 requested dates your child was given.

As our community continues to grow, two families will often be assigned the same date. Date changes are unusual and requests for date changes must be made through the B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator, who will then consult with our clergy and event planning staff.

Scheduling will not proceed if there are outstanding financial obligations to CBE. You must remain current in your financial obligations during the B'nei Mitzvah process.

Postponement

The Clergy reserves the right to postpone the date of the ceremony for any student who is not progressing adequately in their studies, for failing to maintain regular attendance at Yachad, or for failing to meet the Shabbat service requirements.

Photography/Video Recording

The photographer should arrange to speak to the B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator (Beth Mirahver, bmirahver@cbebk.org) prior to the event to discuss Temple procedures. No flash photography is allowed during the service. Please be sure that your guests understand that photos may only be taken before or after the service, not during the service itself. All professional photography and videography must take place from the balcony using only available light with a stationary camera. The Sanctuary will be open by 8:00 AM for photography set up. The Clergy will be glad to take pictures with the family and student on the morning of the ceremony, between 9:00 - 9:10 AM.

Flowers

Families may choose to order and purchase floral displays for the bimah in consultation with the Events Manager.

Oneg Shabbat/Bagels and B'rachot

It is customary for the B'nei Mitzvah family to join in sponsoring the Oneg Shabbat enjoyed after Shabbat Evening Services on the eve of the B'nei Mitzvah, and the Bagels provided before the start of the Shabbat Morning Service. Please contact the Events Manager to make this sponsorship.

The Friday night *Oneg* will feature platters of cookies and fruit, challah, wine, and grape juice. Before Shabbat morning services begin there is an assortment of bagels, cream cheese, butter, juice, milk, coffee, and tea. All families with *simchas* on Shabbat are invited to sponsor the community breakfast and invite their guests to join our community in public celebration of the simcha. This event is also referred to as a *Seudat Mitzvah* which means a celebration meal connected with a mitzvah. Many CBE families want to share the celebration of the event with other family members such as grandparents, aunts, uncles etc. who wish to sponsor the *Oneg*, or "Bagels and B'rachot."

These suggested donations change in response to needs and costs, but as of May 2016, the suggested donations are:

Friday evening *Oneg*: \$250.00

Saturday morning "Bagels and B'rachot" breakfast: \$150.00

Should you wish to sponsor a community Kiddush following Saturday morning services, please speak with the events manager.

B'nei Mitzvah Fees

The B'nei Mitzvah Training Fee of \$1,600 will be added to your Congregational bill and is will be assessed at the beginning of the tutoring process. The fee covers:

- Extensive tutoring in preparation for the B'nei Mitzvah provided by the Clergy, clergy interns, and other *melamdin* (tutors). This does not include extra tutoring.
- The services of the Events Manager and B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator.
- Family Education programs during the B'nei Mitzvah year.

Please know that the B'nei Mitzvah fees do not cover the rental of any rooms or spaces at CBE for your reception after the *Kiddush*. You are under no obligation to use CBE facilities for your celebration or reception, but the facilities are available to CBE members at a discount (see “Celebrating at CBE” below).

There is a longstanding Jewish tradition of giving tzedakah in honor of a life-cycle event or simcha. Usually, families choose to make a donation in honor of the B'nei Mitzvah to the officiating rabbi and/or cantor’s discretionary fund. This discretionary fund is used for charitable giving at the discretion of the clergy member. There is no specific amount expected; our tradition understands that each gift from the heart matters.

Celebrating at CBE

CBE has several spaces that are available for celebrations following services. You may choose to have a luncheon at CBE immediately following the service or an evening event. You may use any caterer you choose, but please make sure they can present a Certificate of Liability and Worker’s Compensation to our office. The charges for use of specific spaces are set by the Board of Trustees. Please speak with the Events Manager for current charges and to reserve your space(s).

CBE’s rental inventory includes the setup and breakdown of 6 foot, 8 foot and 60” round tables, blond wooden folding chairs with cream cushions, dinner and dessert plates, coffee cups and utensils, as well as wine and water glassware. Caterers and third-party vendors, however, are expected to set-up and breakdown any items not owned by CBE. We expect the room and kitchen to be left free of garbage and swept with a broom. All details are outlined in the room rental forms.

If you are interested in using CBE facilities for your celebration, please speak to our

Events Manager as soon as possible. The life cycle celebrations of our congregants are always given priority; however, demand for CBE space is strong and early reservations are often a good idea.

Due to our busy CBE calendar, there are usually other events scheduled during the same weekend as your child's B'nei Mitzvah. It is possible that you will not have access to the Ballroom, Social Hall, Lobby, or kitchen until the morning of the ceremony. Please make clear to your caterers that they too may not have access to the kitchen until Saturday morning. This can be critical information if you plan to use a kosher caterer.

Celebrating Elsewhere

Of course, you may choose to celebrate elsewhere: at a local restaurant, at home or at a catering hall. If you are thinking about these options and want to know how other people have done it, check with the Events Manager who can provide you with a vendor and venue list — we also encourage you to contact other B'nei Mitzvah families who have already experienced this wonderful life cycle moment.

Glossary

Aliyah (pl. *Aliyot*): The honor of being “called up” to recite the blessings for reading the Torah before and after an assigned passage from the Torah at Shabbat morning services. Also refers to the passage of Torah chanted in between the blessings.

D’var Torah (pl. *divrei Torah*): “Word of Torah.” A 5-7 minute teaching that B’nei mitzvah present to the community which may include verses of *Haftarah*, traditional Jewish sources, and ultimately their own thoughts on the *parashah*. The *d’var Torah* should be delivered in a way consistent with each student’s skills and interests. Former b’nei mitzvah at CBE have used art, drama, music, poetry, and technology to give their *divrei Torah*.

Haftarah: “Departure” selection from the Biblical prophets thematically relating to the week’s *parashah*. On some Shabbatot, the *haftarah* relates to a holiday or the particular time of year. B’nei mitzvah at CBE choose part of the *haftarah* to chant as part of their d’var Torah.

Kippah (pl. *Kippot*; Yiddish *yarmulke*): Skullcap/head covering

Kiddush: Blessing over the wine

Maftir: “One who departs,” i.e. B’nei Mitzvah who chant the *haftarah*.

Mitzvah: A commandment, a Jewish action, colloquially, a good deed

Motzi: Also know as Hamotzi, is the blessing over bread, on Shabbat said over challah.

Parashah (pl. *parshiyot*): Torah portion; one of 54 Jews read on an annual cycle every week. During holidays, we read special *parshiyot* relating to those holidays.

Seudat Mitzvah: a celebratory meal with the community as a part of the sanctification of a life-cycle event.

Tallit (Tallis in Yiddish, *Talitot/Talleisim* for plural in Hebrew/Yiddish): a prayer shawl with fringes, worn for morning prayers by someone over the age of B’nei Mitzvah.

CBE B'nei Mitzvah Preparation Timeline [rev. 2021]

3 years prior

_____ Submit date request form. Commit to remaining in Yachad through the academic year of the ceremony

2 years-1 year prior

_____ Read B'nei Mitzvah manual

_____ Learn about the ceremony

_____ Attend all B'nei Mitzvah Family Programs (including retreat)

_____ Sign up to usher at least three Shabbat services

12-9 months prior

_____ Check in with B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator about tutoring (Cantor Breitzer will initiate the introduction)

_____ Attend Shabbat services as a regular worshiper in the school year of the event

_____ Decide how and where you want to celebrate after the ceremony and notify our B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator

_____ Begin weekly tutoring process. Student starts learning essential blessings and Haftarah verses.

_____ Begin d'var torah process; meeting with clergy or clergy interns 6-8 times

_____ B'nei Mitzvah Fee is assessed to membership statement

6 months prior

_____ Student starts learning verses of Torah. Decide if anybody else in the family would like to chant verses of Torah as well and notify Cantor.

_____ Order or create invitations, send copy to B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator

3 months Prior

_____ Pay all fees at least four weeks before the ceremony

_____ *Speak with B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator about special concerns for Oneg, Kiddush or Bagels and Brachot sponsorship*

_____ Communicate with Rabbi Timoner regarding family honors

2 months prior

_____ Mail invitations at least eight weeks in advance of date, check with the B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator if you're unsure of what time to put on the invitations

4 weeks prior

_____ Provide correct Hebrew and English names of all the people who will participate in the ceremony to the B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator

_____ Send your honors list to the B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator

_____ Be sure everyone participating in the service knows their role and is prepared

_____ B'nei mitzvah student "date" with Rabbi Timoner (small group meetings based on month of ceremony)

Week of the B'nei Mitzvah

_____ Family meets with Rabbi Timoner

_____ Thursday evening final rehearsal in the sanctuary with Cantor Breitzer

_____ Arrive by 8:45AM on the morning of the ceremony

Following B'nei Mitzvah

_____ Continue attendance at Yachad through 8th grade, and beyond. It gets even better and more interesting!

_____ Support your community by attending ceremonies of other b'nei mitzvah throughout 7th and 8th grade