



B'nei Mitzvah Handbook 2023-2024

Dear Families,

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

The day when your child comes of age as a Jew is a day they will likely remember forever. We want that day, and the preparation leading up to it, to be filled with meaning, excitement, joy, and pride. When they receive the Torah in their arms, when they chant from that Torah in front of the community, when they take their place as a teacher among our people by interpreting our ancient text and applying it to our day, the ritual should engender a feeling of both accomplishment and sacred obligation.

In our Jewish community, children become B'nei Mitzvah at the age of 13. Our tradition teaches that until this age, families bear the responsibility for teaching Jewish children how to live according to our values. When they turn 13, your 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 in-depth information on the B'nei Mitzvah ritual and ceremony, the path children at Congregation Beth Elohim take in their studies before and after their ceremony, and the logistics and procedures for preparing for and planning your event. We hope that it will serve to answer many of your questions. Please reach out to our B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator, Sebastian Kern, with any additional questions: skern@cbebk.org.

Also, please encourage your children to participate in our teen programs at CBE for 8th-12th graders. The teen years at CBE are full of great opportunities for leadership and learning, including exciting trips. Past trips have included: Israel, a civil rights journey to the southern United States, a lobbying trip to Washington D.C., and a trip to Berlin and Poland. 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 helpers) 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
Rabbi Stephanie Kolin
Rabbi Molly Kane

Cantor Josh Breitzer
Rabbi Matt Green

Introduction

PAGE 2

Family Requirements

PAGE 3

Student's Role in Preparation

PAGE 4

2023-24 Calendar

PAGE 5

The Parent's Role in Preparation

PAGE 6

Day-Of Schedule and Logistics

PAGE 7

The B'nei Mitzvah Ritual & Honors

PAGE 8

Inclusive Practices

PAGE 9

Customs of the Congregation

PAGE 10

Incorporating Non-Jewish Family & Setting the Date

PAGE 11

Photography and Flowers

PAGE 12

B'nei Mitzvah Preparation Fee

PAGE 13

Reception Planning & Recommended Vendors

PAGES 14-15

Timeline of Preparation

PAGE 16

Staff Directory

PAGE 17

Glossary

PAGE 18

CBE B'nei Mitzvah Handbook

CONTENTS

Introduction

The B'nei Mitzvah ceremony is an important event in the life of a Jewish child. 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 spiritual maturity, it reflects emerging moral responsibility.

The 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 hope that all of our students will 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.

Our 9th through 12th grade students attend our CBE High School program, which is held one evening a week, 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, 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 and 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. We know that it's tempting to drop out after one's B'nei Mitzvah is over, but in support and solidarity with classmates, we urge families to require your students to attend through the 8th grade year. We often find that once students complete 8th grade, especially if they go to Israel with their class, they form strong bonds and cultivate friendships with their CBE classmates for years to come.
- 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.
- Your child will be leading the Shabbat morning prayers from the front of the sanctuary on their B'nei Mitzvah day. In order to learn the prayers and prepare, we strongly advise that all 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students attend Saturday morning Shabbat services and attend all the B'nei Mitzvah ceremonies of their classmates. Of course, there will be dates in the year when conflicts arise and students are unable to attend, but we expect your children to participate in the CBE Shabbat community most Shabbat mornings throughout the academic year. 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

SIGNED BRIT (AGREEMENT)

We send a *brit* (agreement) for families to sign when students are assigned their B'nei Mitzvah ceremony date. This agreement outlines mutual expectations between the student, parents, and CBE throughout the process.

ATTENDANCE THROUGH 8TH GRADE

Through tefillah (worship) attendance from Kindergarten–8th grade, students will learn the prayers of our worship service and develop facility with leading these prayers. 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.

D'VAR TORAH

Four to six months before the B'nei Mitzvah date, students begin meeting with a writing tutor (a select group of CBE member writers who work with CBE's clergy to support B'nei Mitzvah with their *divrei Torah*). In general, students create the *d'var Torah* on their own with guidance from their writing tutor. However, sometimes families or other trusted adults need to assist in the process.

FINAL MEETING AND REHEARSAL

On the Thursday evening before the B'nei Mitzvah date, the student and their parents meet with one of CBE's rabbis in the sanctuary to discuss any final questions or concerns. There is a dress rehearsal immediately following this meeting with Cantor Breitzer and the other family sharing the service.

RETREAT AND FAMILY MEETINGS

In 6th grade, families take part in a Shabbat retreat with the clergy team, followed up with two to three more meetings later in the year. 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.

TUTORING

Roughly one year prior to the ceremony, we will reach out to schedule an initial intake meeting with Cantor Breitzer for an introduction of materials and a discussion of mutual goals and expectations. At least one parent should join their child for this meeting.

After this initial intake meeting, Cantor Breitzer will continue to check in with your child every 6–8 weeks and we will assign a tutor to work with your child as they learn pertinent prayers and blessings as well as Torah and Haftarah verses. Most students learn between 10–15 verses of Torah and 3–5 verses of Haftarah.

Tutoring sessions take place weekly and are 30 minutes long. Students are expected to miss no more than five scheduled sessions over the course of their B'nei Mitzvah tutoring. **Should your child surpass five missed sessions, you will be charged a fee of \$75 for each additional absence.**

We expect all students to practice for 25 minutes every day. Daily practice is crucial to ensure that students will not fall behind in their preparation and tutoring time. Should your student require additional support or a more individualized learning plan, please be in touch with us and we will do our best to accommodate.

2023-2024 Calendar

*The list below includes dates when CBE is **CLOSED** or Yachad classes are **CANCELED**. PLEASE NOTE that tutoring can still be held on these dates, provided they fall into the allotted amount of allowed sessions. If your child needs to cancel a session, please notify their tutor as soon as possible. Students are expected to miss no more than five (5) scheduled sessions over the course of their B'nei Mitzvah tutoring. Should your child surpass five missed sessions, you will be charged a fee of \$75 for each additional absence. Please reach out to Sebastian Kern at skern@cbebk.org with any questions.*

September 4	Labor Day (CBE Closed)
September 9	First Day of Yachad
September 15	Erev Rosh Hashanah (CBE Offices Close at 12pm)
September 25	Yom Kippur (CBE and Yachad Closed)
November 23-24	Thanksgiving Break (CBE and Yachad Closed)
December 25-January 1	Winter Break (CBE and Yachad Closed)
January 15	MLK Day (CBE Closed)
February 19	President's Day (CBE Closed)
February 19-23	February Break (Yachad Closed)
April 23	Passover, Day 1 (CBE and Yachad Closed)
April 29	Passover, Day 7 (CBE Closed)
April 30	Passover, Day 8 (Yachad Closed)
May 18	Last Day of Yachad
May 27	Memorial Day (CBE Closed)
June 12	Shavuot, Day 1 (CBE Closed)
June 19	Juneteenth (CBE Closed)

The Parent's Role in Preparation

ATTEND SHABBAT MORNING SERVICES

During this time of intense preparation we strongly urge you to make a special effort to support your child and invest in this year as a rite of passage for the entire family. 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. Saturday morning services take place at 9:30 AM in the sanctuary.

USHER THREE B'NEI MITZVAH SERVICES

It is a CBE custom that parents usher at least three Shabbat morning services leading up to your child's date. This is an opportunity for your family to get a sense of what to expect for your own child's B'nei Mitzvah ceremony, and 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 life. We will send a link for families to sign up, as well as clear instructions for ushering.

SIGNED BRIT (AGREEMENT)

We send a *brit* (agreement) for families to sign when students are assigned their B'nei Mitzvah ceremony date. This agreement outlines mutual expectations between the student, parents, and CBE throughout the process.

ATTEND RETREAT AND FAMILY MEETINGS

In 6th grade, families take part in a Shabbat retreat with the clergy team, followed up with four more meetings later in the year. 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.

Day-Of Schedule and Logistics: what you and your guests should know

All B'nei Mitzvah ceremonies take place during Shabbat morning services and are almost always shared by two students. The B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator will connect families who are sharing a service so they can support each other throughout the process.

SHABBAT MORNING SCHEDULE

8:30-9:15 AM: Space available for photographs

8:45-9:15 AM: Pre-service bagels and coffee available for all attendees

9:30 AM: Services begin

Approximately 11:30-11:45 AM:
Services conclude. Community kiddush takes place immediately following services.

Please be sure to let your guests know that we start on time at 9:30 AM. Many families encourage guests to arrive by 9:15 AM to allow ample time for street parking. The sanctuary address is 271 Garfield Place, the domed building on the NE corner of 8th Ave. Please also encourage your guests to review our current COVID safety guidelines, which can be found on our website at: <https://cbebk.org/cbe-covid-19-policy>.

All CBE services are livestreamed at these links for out-of-town guests:

- The livestream page on our website: cbebk.org/live
- Our Facebook page: [facebook.com/cbebk](https://www.facebook.com/cbebk)
- Our YouTube channel: [youtube.com/user/cbebk](https://www.youtube.com/user/cbebk)

The B'nei Mitzvah Ritual and Honors

Below is an abridged "run-of-show" of a typical CBE B'nei Mitzvah ceremony, including descriptions of bimah honors. You may assign anyone you wish to each honor and/or assign multiple honors to the same person. At a congregation like ours, every family's composition is unique, and it is important for every family member to feel welcome and included in the service. Please see page 11 for some examples of ways to incorporate non-Jewish family members into the ceremony.

- **Tallit Presentation:** Present a tallit (prayer shawl) to the B'nei Mitzvah, who then recites the tallit blessing. Typically assigned to grandparents.
- **Opening the Ark:** Open the ark doors for clergy to remove the Torah. Typically assigned to siblings and cousins. *No Jewish knowledge or experience is necessary for this role.*
- **Torah Processional:** Accompany the B'nei Mitzvah as they process around the Sanctuary holding the Torah. Typically assigned to siblings, cousins, and friends. *No Jewish knowledge or experience is necessary for this role.*
- **Aliyot:** Chant blessings before and after the B'nei Mitzvah reads verses of Torah. Each family has three aliyot total. The first aliyah is typically assigned to grandparents, aunts, and uncles. The second is typically assigned to parents and siblings. The third is always reserved for the B'nei Mitzvah child. Aliyot must be assigned to Jews over the age of 13; however, we welcome non-Jewish family to stand alongside family members who are chanting. Most CBE students read a total of 10-15 verses of Torah.
- **G'lilah:** "Dressing" or preparing the Torah to be returned to the ark. Typically assigned to siblings, aunts, and uncles. *No Jewish knowledge or experience is necessary for this role.*
- **Haftarah:** The B'nei Mitzvah chants blessings and about 3-5 verses of Haftarah.
- **Candy:** During g'lilah, ushers will pass out individually-wrapped soft candy to each guest in the sanctuary. After Haftarah, everyone gently throws the candy to shower the B'nei Mitzvah in sweetness!
- **D'var Torah:** The B'nei Mitzvah presents their teaching of Torah, either as an original address or interactive presentation. Afterwards, the B'nei Mitzvah receives a private, unmiked blessing from the officiating Rabbi.

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 deaf, not reading or who are nonspeaking
- 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 bimah, 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 focusing on just practicing 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 talk with us about 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. Yachad's Learning Specialist is happy to be part of these meetings as well to help make appropriate suggestions.

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. 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.

Incorporating Non-Jewish Family into the Ceremony

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. Below are some examples of ways to incorporate non-Jewish family in the ceremony. We invite you to discuss any concerns regarding family participation in the ceremony with our clergy.

- Non-Jewish family remain seated, offering love and support from the pews
- Non-Jewish family stand with their Jewish family members and participate with their presence but not the words of the blessing
- Non-Jewish family 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
- Non-Jews can join their Jewish family members in chanting the blessing in Hebrew.

Setting the Date and Postponement

All B'nei Mitzvah ceremonies at CBE are held during regularly scheduled congregational services. Dates before, but reasonably close to the child's 13th birthday, are appropriate. Any date after the 13th birthday is also possible.

In 5th grade, families are given a B'nei Mitzvah date request form that allows them to select five Saturday morning dates for their child's ceremony. The B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator will match each family with one of their choices, and you will be notified when your child's date is assigned.

The majority of CBE B'nei Mitzvah ceremonies are shared by two families. You should expect to share your date, and then we will connect you with the other family as soon as possible. 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.

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.

CBE Clergy reserve 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. We also reserve the right to postpone in the event of a community health or weather emergency.

Photography & Videography

No photography is allowed during the service. Please be sure that your guests understand that they may take photos before or after the service, but only professional photography or videography is allowed during the service itself.

During the service, your professional photographer or videographer must be stationed in the balcony, using only available light. Flash and loud shutter sounds are prohibited during the service. The sanctuary will be open by 8:30 AM for photography setup. The clergy will be glad to take pictures with you and your child either between 9:00 - 9:15 AM, or after services have concluded.

All CBE services are livestreamed and out-of-town guests can join us in real time via the following links.

- The livestream page on our website: cbebk.org/live
- Our Facebook page: facebook.com/cbebk
- Our YouTube channel: youtube.com/user/cbebk

Recordings of past services are archived on our YouTube channel. We will send you the link the week after the ceremony.

Bimah Flowers

You are welcome to order floral displays for the bimah for the morning of your child's service, but are by no means expected or required to do so.

You can either order one arrangement to be placed on the floor in front of the lectern or two on either side of the central bimah stairs; the latter is more common but the choice is yours. Because most ceremonies are shared by two families, many choose to order two arrangements of bimah flowers, split the cost, and each family can take home an arrangement after the service.

Any specific flowers or arrangements you'd like to include are completely up to you. However, please note that all arrangements on the bimah **MUST BE** low-pollen and low-scent.

If your floral arrangements are being delivered directly to CBE, please schedule delivery for Friday afternoon, the day before the ceremony. Please also inform us of any scheduled deliveries so we can properly notify our facilities team.

B'nei Mitzvah Preparation Fee

The B'nei Mitzvah Preparation Fee will be automatically assessed to your membership statement at the beginning of the tutoring process, about 10-12 months out from the date of the ceremony. The fee will be \$1,800.

The B'nei Mitzvah Preparation Fee covers:

- Weekly sessions with one of our CBE tutors (see tutoring details on page 4). Please note that extra tutoring sessions are not covered.
- Check-in sessions, meetings, and rehearsals with clergy
- D'var torah sessions with clergy
- Your child's binder with necessary learning materials and a workbook specific to their parashah
- Family programs and meetings

Any outstanding balances including this fee, Yachad tuition, and membership dues are expected to be paid in full no later than three months out from the date of the ceremony. Please reach out to [Maribeth Batcha](#), Director of Member Services, with any questions regarding your membership statement or payments: mbatcha@cbebk.org.

There is a longstanding Jewish tradition of giving *tzedakah* in honor of a life-cycle event or *simcha*. Families often choose to make a donation in honor of the B'nei Mitzvah to the officiating clergy's discretionary fund*. There is no specific amount expected; our tradition understands that each gift from the heart matters.

**Each clergy person at CBE has a separate discretionary fund from which they donate to different charitable causes and organizations of their choosing. Please reach out to our clergy if you'd like to learn more about the organizations they support.*

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. Caterers and third-party vendors are expected to set up and break down any items not owned by CBE. We expect the room and kitchen to be left free of garbage, cleaned, and swept after the event.

If you are interested in using a CBE space for your celebration, please reach out to Kimberly Lisi as soon as possible: klisi@cbebk.org. Members are able to rent space at a discounted rate and the lifecycle celebrations of our members are always given priority. However, demand for our spaces is strong, and is available on a first come first serve basis, so we encourage members to book their space as soon as possible to ensure accommodation.

There are usually other events scheduled during the same weekend as your child's B'nei Mitzvah. Please be aware that you will not have access to the ballroom, social hall, lobby, or kitchen until the morning of the ceremony. Caterers must be made aware that they too may not have access to the kitchen until Saturday morning. If you'd like to deliver or drop off anything ahead of time, please coordinate with Kimberly Lisi: klisi@cbebk.org.

CBE does not provide party planning, same day event management, or tech support. Our membership team will work with you and your party planners to make sure that you have the information and walkthroughs you need to ensure that your event is a success.

CBE staff will do a basic one-time set up of any CBE tables and chairs that are being used before the event and will remove any CBE tables and chairs that are used after the event is complete.

Rentals include security at the main entrance at 274 Garfield Place during normal business hours. There is an additional \$500 security fee for events on Saturday and Sunday evenings or any other time outside of CBE's normal operating hours.

CBE's large kitchen allows for warming and plating of food, but does not have an operating oven or stove. No pork or shellfish is allowed on the premises.

SUGGESTED VENDORS

Highly recommended vendors who are familiar with CBE and our spaces:

Kerry Muldoon

Party Planning and Staffing
(732) 257-8580

kerryanmuldoon@gmail.com

Carol Román

Party Planning and Staffing
(646) 491-0797

ms.carolynroman@gmail.com

Simply Divine (Contact: Judy Marlow)

Kosher Catering and Event Planning
(917) 553-7510

jmarlow@simplydivine.com

Julie Markes

Photographer
(631) 767-3008

juliemarkesphotography.com

Florie Huppert Design

Event Planning and Production
(646) 256-7555

florie@floriehuppertdesign.com

Shelsky's (Contact: Adrian Concha)

Catering and Event Support
(917) 672-4634

adrian@shelskys.com

Zuzu's Petals

Florist
(718) 638-0918

zuzusbrooklyn@gmail.com

Marc Goldberg

Photographer
(917) 746-5348

marcgoldbergphotography.com

Celebrating Elsewhere

Of course, you may choose to celebrate elsewhere: at home, a local restaurant, special venue, or catering hall. Below is a list of some of local venues our families have used in the past. Please feel free to reach out to previous CBE B'nei Mitzvah families for additional suggestions.

Stone Park Cafe: stoneparkcafe.com

Deity: deitynyc.com

Slate NYC: slate-ny.com

Baku Palace: bakupalace.com

Da Nonna Rosa: danonnarosas.com

R&D Foods: rdfoodsbklyn.com

Dumbo Loft: thedumboloft.com

Prospect Park Picnic House: prospectpark.org

The Invisible Dog: theinvisibledog.org

Nitehawk Prospect Park: nitehawkcinema.com

Pig Beach: pigbeachnyc.com

Brooklyn Bowl: brooklynbowl.com

Ascent Lounge: ascentloungenyc.com

Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture: bsec.org

Timeline of Preparation



3 YEARS PRIOR

- Date selection process.
- Commit to remaining in Yachad through 8th grade.
- Read and sign the brit committing to your child's assigned date.



1-2 YEARS PRIOR

- Attend Shabbat morning services as a regular worshiper.
- Attend all B'nei Mitzvah Family Programs.



9-12 MONTHS PRIOR

- Support your community by attending ceremonies of other B'nei Mitzvah.
- Decide how and where you want to celebrate after the ceremony.
- Student begins weekly tutoring sessions.
- B'nei Mitzvah Preparation Fee is assessed to membership statement.



6 MONTHS PRIOR

- Student starts working on their D'var Torah with their writing tutor.
- Notify Cantor Breitzer if anybody else in the family would like to chant verses of Torah.
- Parent ushers at least three Shabbat morning services.



2-3 MONTHS PRIOR

- Pay any outstanding fees, Yachad tuition, and membership dues in full.
- Student starts working on their d'var torah with one of our clergy.



4 WEEKS PRIOR

- Assign honors to family members and friends.
- Fill out the [honors form](#).
- If you'd like to sponsor kiddush or pre-service bagels for the morning of your child's service, fill out [this form](#).



WEEK OF THE CEREMONY

- Family meeting with Officiating Rabbi.
- Final dress rehearsal with Cantor Breitzer.
- Arrive by 9:00AM on the morning of the ceremony.

Who do I reach out to regarding...

... renting space at CBE?

Kimberly Lisi
Executive Administrative Assistant
e: klisi@cbebk.org
p: (718) 768-3814 x235

... B'nei Mitzvah planning and logistics?

Sebastian Kern
B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator
e: skern@cbebk.org
p: (718) 768-3814 x226

... finances (dues, tuition, fees)?

Maribeth Batcha
Director of Member Services/Engagement
e: mbatcha@cbebk.org
p: (718) 768-3814 x214

... Yachad?

Rabbi Molly Kane
Director, Youth and Family Programs
e: mkane@cbebk.org
p: (718) 768-3814 x205

... sponsoring a kiddush?

Karen Gerwin
Director, Advancement
e: kgerwin@cbebk.org
p: (718) 768-3814 x276

Zach Rolf

Director, Yachad
e: zrolf@cbebk.org
p: (718) 768-3814 x112

Rabbi Andrue (Andy) Kahn

Associate Director, Yachad and Adult Ed.
e: akahn@cbebk.org
p: (718) 768-3814 x108

... B'nei Mitzvah ritual and preparation?

Cantor Josh Breitzer
Cantor and Music Director
e: jbreitzer@cbebk.org
p: (718) 768-3814 x270

Adva Zingher

Yachad Coordinator
e: azingher@cbebk.org
p: (718) 768-3814 x100

Rabbi Rachel Timoner

Senior Rabbi
e: rtimoner@cbebk.org
p: (718) 768-3814 x206

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.

Brit: “Sacred covenant”. For our purposes, the brit is an agreement setting expectations for both parties out of mutual respect.

D’var Torah (pl. divrei Torah): “Word of Torah.” A 5-7 minute teaching that b’nei mitzvah present to the community which includes 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.

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

Kiddush: Celebratory spread of food and drink served at the conclusion of Saturday morning Shabbat services.

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

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.

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.