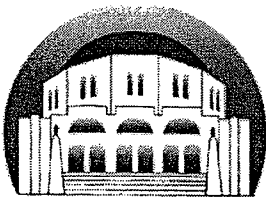


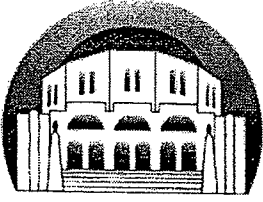
Bar & Bat Mitzvah Program Manual



Congregation Beth Israel
Ritual Committee

701 Farmington Avenue ♦ West Hartford, CT 06119 ♦ 860-233-8215 ♦ www.cbict.org

March 13, 2011



Congregation Beth Israel

701 Farmington Avenue ♦ West Hartford, CT 06119 ♦ 860-233-8215 ♦ www.cbict.org

March 2011

Welcome to Congregation Beth Israel's B'Nai Mitzvah Program!

We are very pleased that your family has chosen to share this joyous event with us! We look forward to working with your family as your child *becomes* a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This manual explains our B'Nai Mitzvah Program.

A bar or bat mitzvah is not simply a ceremony. Rather, it is a process by which your child prepares to participate in the Jewish community as a Jewish adult and the life cycle event that marks your child's entry into the Congregation Beth Israel Community as an adult. It is our hope, desire and goal that as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, your child will continue on the path to becoming a Jewish adult and life long learner about Judaism. Opportunities to continue on that path at Congregation Beth Israel include the *Journey Onward* program for 8th and 9th graders, Confirmation for 10th graders, and programs for our 11th and 12th graders and their families that focus in part on the transition from high school to college.

As a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, your child becomes a responsible member of a more than 3,000 year old partnership between God and the Jewish people reflected in a covenant. In that covenant, God agreed to make the Jewish people a light unto the nations of the world and an enduring people, and the Jewish people agreed to honor God by living a Jewish life and practicing Jewish values. Our clergy, lay leadership and teachers take seriously their responsibility to work with your family and your child to assure that you find meaning in that covenant and in its practice as part of your family's daily life.

Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Beth Israel requires commitment and preparation involving:

1. Attending Shabbat services at Congregation Beth Israel.
2. Completing Religious School curriculum and attendance expectations.
3. Completing a "*mitzvah project*" - a social justice, community service or other project that fulfills the Jewish value of working to make our world a better place.
4. Learning Torah and Haftarah portions and teaching them to our community at your ceremony
5. Satisfying financial obligations as a member of the Temple.

A covenant is a form of an agreement and we have created the Family Bar/Bat Mitzvah Agreement for your child, the adults in your child's life and the clergy to sign to confirm our collective commitment to work together to achieve these goals in a meaningful way. Shortly before the end of the 5th grade, we will have a signing ceremony in which your family will sign a form of this Agreement that has been personalized, marking the formal start of our journey together in your family's bar/bat mitzvah process.

Our clergy, lay leaders and staff are ready to work with your family to complete all of the necessary preparation - including Shabbat service and Religious School expectations – so that your family's ceremony can take place as scheduled. We rely on your family's commitment to work with us to achieve that goal and look forward to this exciting time for you all! *Mazel tov!*



Stephen Fuchs
Senior Rabbi



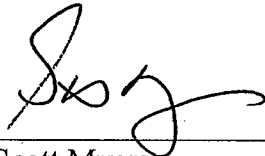
Michael Pincus
Rabbi



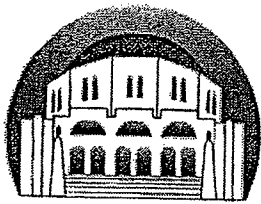
Pamela Siskin
Cantor & Director Lifelong Learning



April Haskell
President



Scott Myers
Co-Chair, Ritual Committee



Congregation Beth Israel

B'Nai Mitzvah Program Entry Packet

701 Farmington Avenue ♦ West Hartford, CT 06119 ♦ 860-233-8215 ♦ www.cbict.org

Welcome to Congregation Beth Israel's B'Nai Mitzvah Program! Our lay leadership, clergy and staff look forward to working with your family as your child becomes a Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

Please complete and return your Entry Packet to Congregation Beth Israel, care of Cheryl Goldberg, by or before 5:00 p.m. on February 17, 2011. A ceremony date will not be assigned to a family in response to an oral request or until a completed Entry Packet is received. Ceremony dates will be assigned first to those families whose completed Entry Packets are received by the February 17th deadline. We strongly suggest that you return your Entry Packet as soon as possible so we can determine if it is complete.

The B'Nai Mitzvah Program is administered by the Ritual Committee. If you have any questions about completing the Entry Packet or any aspect of the B'Nai Mitzvah Program, please contact Scott Myers, the Ritual Committee Co-Chair (860-586-8060; ssajmyers@comcast.net).

STEP 1 – Tell Us Who You Are

Child's Full Name:

Child's Hebrew Name:

Child Will be 13 on:

Month: _____ Day: _____ Year: _____

Public School Grade Child Will Be In
on 13th Birthday:

Religious School Grade Child Will Be
In on 13th Birthday:

Parent 1: Name:

Parent 1: E-Mail:

Parent 1: Phone Numbers:

Parent 2: Name:

Parent 2: E-Mail:

Parent 2: Phone Numbers:

STEP 2 – Tell Us If You May Have Your Ceremony Elsewhere

Please mark this box if you have decided to have, or are considering having, your family's ceremony at a location other than Congregation Beth Israel (for example, Israel): Even if you have decided to have or are considering having your family's ceremony elsewhere, we strongly suggest that you submit a completed Entry Packet now so that we may assign your family a ceremony date in the event that circumstances change such that your ceremony will be at Congregation Beth Israel.

STEP 3 – Agreement to Satisfy Program Expectations

Each family and child having a Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony at Congregation Beth Israel is asked to:

1. Complete the 5th, 6th and 7th grade Shabbat Service attendance expectations.
2. Complete the 5th, 6th and 7th grade Religious School attendance and curricular requirements.
3. Complete a *mitzvah* project.
4. Study and prepare to read a Torah and haftarah portion and teach them to our Congregation and your guests during the ceremony.
5. Be a member in good standing with respect to its financial obligations to the Temple during your child's 5th, 6th and 7th grade years (and 8th grade year as applicable).

Before a ceremony date will be assigned to your family, each parent must indicate his/her understanding of these expectations and agreement to work to satisfy them by signing below. We understand and agree to work to satisfy these expectations:

STEP 4 – Agreement Regarding Delay of Scheduled Ceremony Date

We recognize that there may be circumstances unique to your family that exist now or may arise in the future which would interfere with your family's ability to satisfy our B'Nai Mitzvah Program expectations. As to expectations 1-4 above, our Rabbis, Religious School Principal and Ritual Committee stand ready to work with your family to complete either the standard program expectations or an agreed-upon alternative reflecting circumstances unique to your family. The Ritual Committee has defined a process by which a scheduled ceremony date may be delayed for failure to satisfy one or more of Program expectations 1-4 above (whether standard or alternative). Information regarding that process will be included in the Program manual you will receive at the Mach 13th family meeting.

Your family's scheduled ceremony date may also be delayed if your family has not satisfied its financial obligations to Congregation Beth Israel and has no agreed-upon arrangements with Congregation to resolve that issue. Our policy and goal is to assure that each member family be able to celebrate this lifecycle event at Congregation Beth Israel regardless of financial situation, but it is critical that a family in that circumstance work proactively with us to address the issue.

If your family's scheduled ceremony date is delayed by action of the Ritual Committee or because of failure to satisfy financial obligations, any and all monetary or other damages and losses associated with the delay of the scheduled ceremony date shall be the responsibility of your family, and Congregation Beth Israel, its clergy, lay leadership, staff and/or agents shall have no responsibility or liability whatsoever for any monetary or other damages and losses your family may incur or sustain as a result of or arising from the delay in the scheduled date.

Before a ceremony date will be assigned to your family, we ask that each parent indicate his/her understanding of and agreement to these terms by signing below. **We understand and agree to these terms:**

STEP 5 – Select Your Preferred Ceremony Dates

Please select three potential dates for your child's ceremony. Every effort will be made to assign the date that reflects your first or second choice. Here is how to select your ceremony date:

1. B'Nai Mitzvah ceremonies are communal events celebrated at our regularly scheduled Saturday morning service (11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.)
2. There are certain Saturdays on which Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies are not scheduled. We have included a 2013 calendar indicating those dates, and other dates on the secular calendar you may wish to consider in scheduling your family's ceremony.
3. It is our practice that a child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony take place within 2 months after the child's 13th birthday. Please select dates that are within the 8 week period that starts on the first Saturday after your child turns age 13.
4. Please try to avoid selecting dates in July or August.
5. If due to a special circumstance you need to or would prefer to have your child's ceremony outside of the 8 week window, please check this box: and select your preferred dates.

1st Choice: Month: _____ Date: _____

2nd Choice: Month: _____ Date: _____

3rd Choice: Month: _____ Date: _____

STEP 6 – Return This Form To Congregation Beth Israel, c/o Cheryl Goldberg By or Before 5:00 pm February 17, 2011

2013

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DATES THAT ARE NOT AVAILABLE FOR B'NAI MITZVAH CEREMONIES HAVE BEEN
CROSSED OFF.

Here are some secular holiday dates in 2013 for reference:

- Presidents Day is Monday, February 18
- Easter is Sunday, March 31
- Mother's Day is Sunday, May 12
- Memorial Day is Monday, May 27
- Father's Day is Sunday, June 16
- Independence Day is Thursday, July 4
- Labor Day is Monday, September 2
- Columbus Day is Monday, October 14
- Veterans Day is Monday, November 11
- Thanksgiving is Thursday, November 28
- Christmas Day is Wednesday, December 25

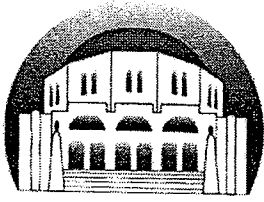
We have also provided these calendars for convenience. Please note that dates in 2012 on which B'Nai Mitzvah ceremonies for students in the classes ahead of your child's class have been marked off.

2012

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Congregation Beth Israel

Bar & Bat Mitzvah Program Manual

701 Farmington Avenue ♦ West Hartford, CT 06119 ♦ 860-233-8215 ♦ www.cbict.org

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- VI. **Statement of Religious School Expectations and Liturgy**
- VII. **Our Family's Bar/Bat Mitzvah Agreement (sample attached)**
- VII. **Our Torah and HafTarah Portion (to be provided)**
- IX. **Our *Mitzvah Project* (developed by each family)**

TIMELINE OF MAJOR EVENTS IN THE PREPARATION PROCESS

This timeline illustrates the general process, assuming a ceremony when the child is in the 7th grade.

5th Grade Year

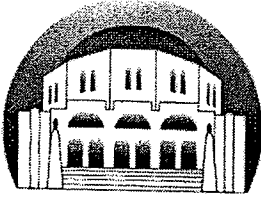
- Group meeting(s) of families with clergy and lay leadership
- The date of your family's ceremony will be determined
- Complete 5th Grade Shabbat Service and Religious School expectations

6th Grade Year

- Periodic individual and/or group check-in meetings
- Complete 6th grade Shabbat Service and Religious School expectations

7th Grade Year & the 12-14 Calendar Month Period Before Your Ceremony

- Complete 7th grade Religious School expectations and Shabbat Service expectations
- **@ 13 months before the ceremony**
 - Look back period begins.
- **10 months before the ceremony**
 - Your family will meet individually with the Rabbi
 - One-to-one tutoring and practice to learn to chant or read the Torah and Haftarah portions begins
 - Identify and discuss a *mitzvah project* with your Rabbi
- **10-14 weeks before the ceremony**
 - Your child will meet with the Rabbi (typically once weekly) to learn the meaning of the Torah and Haftarah portions and to prepare to teach those portions to the Congregation and lead the service
- **6 weeks before the ceremony**
 - Look back period Shabbat service expectations must be completed
- **4-6 weeks before the ceremony**
 - Begin rehearsals with the Cantor
- **4 weeks before the ceremony**
 - Notify Rabbi if your child will wear a *tallit* (prayer shawl)
 - Review and finalize ceremony booklet with the Rabbi (if your family desires to prepare one)
 - Finalize with Staff arrangements for *bimah* (pulpit) decoration (flowers, food basket)
 - Finalize with Rabbi arrangements for participation in our service by family members and friends
 - Finalize with Staff videotaping, audiotaping and photography arrangements
 - Finalize with Staff arrangements for sponsoring the Friday evening *oneg*
- **The day before your ceremony**
 - Rehearsal in the Sanctuary (typically in the morning) for your entire family
 - Your family will have the honor of lighting the Shabbat candles at our Friday evening service
 - Your child will lead the Congregation in the Kiddush



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PROGRAM MANUAL - Frequently Asked Questions

This manual summarizes Congregation Beth Israel's B'nai Mitzvah preparation program for families celebrating their child's ceremony at Congregation Beth Israel. We recognize that a family in our community may choose an alternative path – for example, a ceremony in Israel. If your family is interested in pursuing such an alternative path, please contact our Rabbis to discuss how we may be able to support your family in that process.

WHO DO WE CONTACT IF WE HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED ASSISTANCE?

Congregation Beth Israel's B'Nai Mitzvah Program is developed and administered by the Ritual Committee of the Board of Trustees. The Ritual Committee Chair is the lay leadership point of contact for any questions, issues, compliments and suggestions regarding our B'Nai Mitzvah program.

For assistance with respect to the Program you may contact any of the following. Any one of us would be happy to assist you. Please contact:

- The Rabbi assigned to work with your family for questions regarding your family's ceremony and other spiritual issues.
- Cantor Pamela Siskin for questions the participation of the Cantor in your preparation and ceremony, and tutoring support. 860-233-8215 x x234, prsiskin@aol.com
- The Principal of the Religious School (currently Cantor Pamela Siskin) for questions regarding Religious School expectations.
- Scott Myers, Ritual Committee Co-Chair for general questions regarding the Program and its implementation, including the Shabbat Service and Religious School expectations, mitzvah projects, coordination of the 7th grade Religious School curriculum with the B'Nai Mitzvah program, and for general support or issues with or questions about the process. (h) 860-586-8060; ssajmyers@comcast.net
- Cheryl Goldberg, Rabbinical Administrator for general questions and scheduling of appointments with the Rabbi. 860-233-8215 x 224; cgoldberg@cbict.org

WHAT ARE THE EXPECTATIONS WE ARE ASKED TO COMPLETE?

Shabbat Service Expectation. - B'Nai Mitzvah students and their families are encouraged to attend Shabbat services at Congregation Beth Israel on a regular basis. Our clergy and lay leaders

have defined expectations for Shabbat service attendance *at Congregation Beth Israel* for our 5th, 6th and 7th graders, as explained in this Manual.

Religious School Expectation - Each Bar and Bat Mitzvah is expected to complete the curricular and attendance requirements of the 5th, 6th and 7th grades of our Religious School. If your family joined Congregation Beth Israel after the 5th grade, we will work with your family to assure that your child masters the curriculum content. A bar or bat mitzvah is expected to complete the 7th grade requirements of Religious School even if his/her ceremony occurs before the end of the 7th grade school year.

Mitzvah Project - With our support and the support of his/her family, your child will define and complete a *mitzvah project* of interest to him/her.

Preparing for the Ceremony - Meeting with the Rabbis and Cantor - In the 6th grade, your family and/or your child will meet with the Rabbi from time to time to discuss progress in preparing for your family's ceremony. The frequency of these meetings will increase as your child approaches his/her ceremony date (typically the 7th grade year) and will expand to include meetings with the Cantor. These meetings are critical to assure that your child is prepared to read from the Torah and Haftarah, to conduct the service, and to teach the Congregation about his/her Torah and Haftarah portions, and that your family is able to fully support your child in that process.

Maintaining membership in good standing – Each family preparing for a bar or bat mitzvah should be a member in good standing throughout the period of preparation and the date of the ceremony. If your family has concerns or difficulty in this area, please contact the Temple Administrator who will connect your family with the Dues Committee so that a satisfactory arrangement can be reached. The Temple Administrator is Toni Robinson, 860-233-8215 x 225; trobinson@cbict.org

WHAT IF OUR FAMILY HAS CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH WOULD INTERFERE WITH OUR ABILITY TO SATISFY ONE OR MORE OF THESE EXPECTATIONS?

Our clergy and lay leadership take seriously their responsibility under the covenant between God and the Jewish people to assure the future of our people by assuring that each student who becomes a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Beth Israel has been prepared to participate meaningfully in our community as a Jewish adult. Our clergy and lay leadership stand ready to work with your family to achieve the desired outcome – a meaningful ceremony for your child that takes place as planned and scheduled.

We rely on the commitment of your child and your family to reach that goal.

It is critically important that you are aware that the lay leadership and clergy, acting through the Ritual Committee, have put into place a protocol which would provide for delay of a scheduled ceremony date if:

- (1) a family is not satisfying Program expectations, particularly the Shabbat Service and Religious School expectations, and
- (2) the family or child does not respond to efforts to address those concerns.

For more information on this protocol, please contact the Ritual Committee Co-Chair.

We understand that there may be other things that compete for your child's or family's time – such as sports or the performing arts. We ask and expect that in considering the activities and commitments that may draw on your child's or family's attention or time, particularly in the 12 month period before the scheduled ceremony date, that you place an appropriate emphasis on the importance preparing meaningfully to become a Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

We recognize that for any particular family circumstances may exist or arise that would make it very difficult for the family to satisfy one or more Program expectation. Should your family have or encounter such a circumstance, please contact either our clergy or the Ritual Committee Co-Chair. We will work with your family to develop alternative Religious School and/or Shabbat Service expectations as necessary and appropriate which, if satisfied, will accommodate your family's circumstance and achieve the goal of meaningful preparation for becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

If circumstances are such that your family is having difficulty meeting its financial obligations to the Temple, we stand ready to assist you in reaching a mutually acceptable arrangement for satisfying this expectation. Please contact the Temple Administrator, Toni Robinson at 860-233-8215, x 225; trobinson@cbict.org

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO ATTEND SHABBAT SERVICES AT CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL?

Regular attendance at Shabbat services at Congregation Beth Israel, particularly for our 5th, 6th and 7th graders, is an excellent way to become familiar and comfortable with our service and to prepare for your family's ceremony. Attending Shabbat services provides opportunities to learn more about our Congregation's liturgy, service, songs, prayers, traditions and history and compliments what your child learns at Religious School. Regular attendance at our Shabbat services provides opportunities for spiritual growth and to experience the fellowship of peers and our community more generally, as well as opportunities for your child to participate in the service and experience the service from the *bimah* as he or she will do during the ceremony.

Our Shabbat services are on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings. On some Saturdays we also have a *Havdallah* (evening) service. All Shabbat services are open to our community, including services at which a bar or bat mitzvah ceremony occurs. We encourage you to attend Saturday morning Shabbat services on which there is a bar or bat mitzvah. We encourage your family to attend the bar or bat mitzvah service of a family who shares your child's Torah and Haftarah portions. Ask your Rabbi to help you identify that service in the year before your family's ceremony. We also hope that your children will attend the bar/bat mitzvah ceremonies of their classmates at Congregation Beth Israel to promote a spirit of community and support.

We have included with this package a document entitled "Our Liturgy" which provides detail about the prayers and order of service at bar and bat mitzvah ceremonies at Congregation Beth Israel.

WHAT ARE THE SHABBAT SERVICE EXPECTATIONS FOR B'NAI MITZVAH STUDENTS?

We explain below the Shabbat Service Expectation and how it works. Before we explain this aspect of the Program we want you to know that we will be glad to help you keep track of your progress in satisfying the Shabbat Service Expectation.

We have included in this packet a one page statement (suitable for hanging on the refrigerator door) of the Shabbat Service Expectations your child is asked to complete based on his/her scheduled ceremony date.

The Ritual Committee monitors each child's progress in meeting the Shabbat Service Expectation on a monthly basis from the start of the 5th grade until the end of your child's *look back period*. We will send your family a report of your child's progress in meeting these expectations, and a statement of the remaining expectations your child needs to complete. We will send those reports at:

- the end of 5th grade;
- the middle of 6th grade;
- the end of 6th grade;
- the start of the *look back period*;
- the midpoint of the *look back period*; and
- one month before the end of the *look back period*

We will also contact you if your child/family appears to be at risk for not completing the Shabbat service expectation, which can result in a delay of a scheduled ceremony date.

Finally, you can check your progress in meeting the Shabbat service expectation at any time by:

- Reviewing your child's Shabbat service sign-in sheet in the notebooks in the Sanctuary foyer; or
- Contacting the Ritual Committee Chair.

The Shabbat Service Expectations stated below are minimums. We strongly encourage students and their families to attend Shabbat services beyond these minimums.

If your child is currently in grade	Your child should attend at <i>Congregation Beth Israel</i> at least	What types of Shabbat Services satisfy the Shabbat Service Expectation during this grade or period?
5	5 Shabbat Services during 5 th grade	Any Shabbat service other than a <i>Young Family Service</i>
6	6 Shabbat Services during 6 th grade	Any Shabbat service other than a <i>Young Family Service</i> . At least 3 of the Shabbat services must be <i>regular Shabbat services</i> .
7 and his/her ceremony will occur <i>after</i> 7 th grade	7 Shabbat services during 7 th grade	Any Shabbat service other than a <i>Young Family Service</i> . At least 4 of the Shabbat services must be <i>regular Shabbat services</i> .
7 or 8 and his/her ceremony occurs <i>during</i> 7 th or 8 th grade	10 Shabbat services during a <i>look back period</i>	Any Shabbat service other than a <i>Young Family Service</i> . At least 6 of the Shabbat services must be <i>regular Shabbat services</i> .

What is a *regular Shabbat service*?

A *regular Shabbat service* is any Friday night (including Kabbalat Shabbat), Saturday morning or Saturday night service *at Congregation Beth Israel* that is:

- Not a **Young Family Service** or **Monthly Family Service**; and is
- Not a Shabbat Service that is also a Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur service.

Young Family Service – This is a monthly Friday night dinner/service for families with younger children that takes place before our Shabbat service

Monthly Family Service – The Shabbat service on the first Friday of each month

What is a “grade” for purposes of the program?

A grade is the period July 1 Year 1 to June 30 Year 2.

Example: Your child enters 6th grade in the 2011/2012 school year. For purposes of the Shabbat service expectation, your child becomes a 6th grader on July 1, 2011 and remains a 6th grader until June 30, 2012.

What is the “*look back period*” and how does it work?

The “*look back period*” is the 12 calendar month period that ends on the Shabbat that is six weeks before your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.

Here is how the “*look back period*” works.

- Assume: (1) that your child’s ceremony will occur on December 15, 2010 when he/she is a 7th grader and that your child is a 7th grader in the 2010/2011 school year; (2) that October 1, 2009 and October 1, 2010 are Saturdays.
- Given those assumptions:
 - Your child’s *look back period* ends October 1, 2010 (the Shabbat that is six weeks before the ceremony) and starts October 1, 2009 (the Shabbat that is 12 months earlier than the end date).
 - Because your child’s *look back period* begins while he/she is in the 6th grade and before he/she enters 7th grade:
 - Your child will be expected to complete the 6th grade Shabbat service expectation.
 - During the period of time that your child is a 6th grader and is in the *look back period*, any eligible Shabbat service that your child attends will be credited toward both the 6th grade Shabbat service expectation

and the *look back period* expectation.

- On July 1, 2010, your child enters the 7th grade for Program purposes. Because his/her *look back period* started before he/she became a 7th grader, he/she must only complete the remaining *look back period* requirements and is not required to satisfy the 7th grade expectation.
- Example:
 - Between October 1, 2009 (start of the *look back period*) and May 1, 2009, your 6th grader attended 3 Monthly Family Services and 2 Regular Shabbat Services.
 - On May 2, 2009, your 6th grader attends a Regular Shabbat Service.
 - The May 2, 2009 service is eligible for credit and is credited to both the 6th grade Shabbat service expectation and the *look back period* expectation.
 - Your child has now completed the 6th grade expectation (6 services, no more than 3 of which can be the Monthly Family Service).
 - Your child has also completed 6 of the 10 services required for the *look back period*. Any eligible Shabbat service your child attends between May 3, 2010 and October 1, 2010 (end of the *look back period*) are credited to the *look back period*.
 - On July 1, 2010, your child enters the 7th grade for Program purposes. Because his/her *look back period* started before he/she became a 7th grader, he/she must only complete the remaining *look back period* requirements and is not required to satisfy the 7th grade expectation.

Are there any other ways my child can receive a credit toward the Shabbat Service Expectation?

Your child can receive 1 *regular Shabbat service* credit for attending the 6th/7th grade conclave.

Your 7th or 8th grader can receive 1 *regular Shabbat service* credit for attending a Saturday morning torah study at Congregation Beth Israel (9:30-10:30). Your 7th or 8th grader can substitute up to three torah studies for Shabbat service attendance.

What do we have to do to receive credit for attending a Shabbat service?

To receive credit for attending a Shabbat service or torah study, students should sign in on the day of the service. A sign-in notebook is located in the foyer to the Sanctuary.

WHAT IF WE ATTEND SHABBAT SERVICES AT ANOTHER SYNAGOGUE?

Only Shabbat services attended at Congregation Beth Israel will be credited toward completing the Program Shabbat service expectation. We recognize that your family may have extended family

members and friends who belong to other synagogues who will have bar or bat mitzvah ceremonies that your family will attend. However, we believe it is important and will benefit our students and their families by having them become as familiar as they can with the particular customs and traditions of our liturgy and of the bar/bat mitzvah service at Congregation Beth Israel your child will be leading.

WHAT ARE THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS WE ARE ASKED TO SATISFY?

Your child is expected to complete the 5th, 6th and 7th grade of our Religious School. Your child is expected to complete the 7th grade of Religious School even if your child's ceremony occurs before the end of the 7th grade. Successful completion of Religious School in a year means that your child has completed and demonstrated mastery of the curriculum requirements (by earning passing grades) and complied with published attendance requirements. The Religious School attendance and curriculum requirements for a year are published prior to the start of the Religious School year. The current statement of Religious School attendance and curriculum policy is attached to this Manual.

The 5th, 6th and 7th grade Religious School curricula are important components of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation. We expect students to attend Religious School classes regularly, just as they are expected to attend secular school classes regularly, and to work diligently to master curricular requirements, just as they are expected to do so in secular school classes.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO COMPLETE RELIGIOUS SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS?

Our Religious School program is designed to teach your child the Hebrew needed to read and understand the meaning of the prayers which are a part of the Shabbat service, and to teach your child about the Jewish holidays, lifestyle, values, history and traditions. Regular attendance provides a shared experience of community with peers for your child and your family. Organized communal learning is the foundation of our people and participating in Religious School also provides important social and communal benefits for all. The Program's Religious School expectation is intended to prepare your child to take his/her place as a responsible Jewish adult in our community and world, and to permit the members of his/her family to support him/her.

WHAT IS THE MITZVAH PROJECT AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Each bar or bat mitzvah, with the support of his/her family and in consultation with your Rabbi, is expected to identify a *mitzvah project* of interest to the student. A *mitzvah project* usually takes the form of a social justice or community service project. The student may work on a project individually or may join together with one or more other students to work on a group project.

Completion of a *mitzvah project* reflects many Jewish values and teachings and allows the bar or bat mitzvah to become aware of the world around him/her, the needs of the community in which he/she lives and how he/she can make a difference and work to the betterment of our world and community. The clergy, Religious School Director and Ritual Committee will be happy to help you with developing a project. The *mitzvah project* needs to be identified by no later than 10 months before the ceremony and discussed with the Rabbi.

WHAT DO WE STUDY WITH OUR TUTOR?

The Torah and Haftarah portions your child will be asked to read at the ceremony have no vowels, and are either chanted in a particular trope (cadence) or read with expression. Accordingly, to prepare your child, your child will work individually with a tutor to learn how to read and chant his/her Torah and Haftarah portions. That preparation typically begins approximately 10 months before the ceremony and typically involves a once weekly lesson with your assigned tutor for about 25 lessons. Each child is unique and these arrangements can be adjusted to reflect the specific circumstances of your child. Sessions are usually ½ hour in length and the cost in 2011 is \$ _____ per session, which is paid directly to the tutor. The cost may vary from year to year. If cost is an issue please discuss this with the Rabbi or our Staff. Please talk to your Rabbi if your family circumstances may warrant a different approach or longer preparation time.

WHICH RABBI WILL WE WORK WITH?

A student will be assigned to a particular Rabbi based in part on the Rabbi's availability and commitments.

WHAT DO WE STUDY WITH OUR RABBI?

A unique and important feature of the Congregation Beth Israel B'Nai Mitzvah program is the dedication of our Rabbis to provide significant time working on an individual basis with your child and your family. In the 6th grade your family will meet periodically with your Rabbi to discuss progress toward satisfying our Shabbat service and Religious School expectations prior to the ceremony, the *mitzvah project* and any questions or concerns your family has about the process and the ceremony. Approximately 10 months before the ceremony, your family and child will begin the formal study of your family's Torah and Haftarah portions with the Rabbi, and work with the Rabbi to prepare your child to teach the lesson to the Congregation at the ceremony. That study usually involves one meeting per week with the Rabbi, typically on a weekday afternoon and typically for 30 minutes depending on each child's circumstances.

DO WE REHEARSE WITH THE CANTOR?

Yes. Starting approximately 4-6 weeks before your ceremony, your child will work with the Cantor rehearsing in the Sanctuary. This will permit your child to become more comfortable on the *bimah* (pulpit) and give him/her the opportunity to read from the scroll of the Torah.

WHEN IS THE PRE-CEREMONY REHEARSAL?

Shortly before your ceremony, your family and child will participate in a full rehearsal of the ceremony in the sanctuary with your Rabbi. The time will be scheduled with your Rabbi, but is typically in the morning of the Friday before the ceremony.

WHAT HAPPENS THE FRIDAY NIGHT BEFORE OUR CEREMONY?

On the Friday night before your family's ceremony, your child and his/her immediate family will have the honor of lighting the Shabbat candles and participating on the *bimah*. Your family is also encouraged to host the Oneg Shabbat on that Friday evening. The Oneg Shabbat occurs after the Friday evening service and provides the Congregants with light refreshments in the social hall. A member of the Congregation Beth Israel Staff will contact you a few weeks before your ceremony to make arrangements with you for sponsorship of the Oneg Shabbat if you desire.

On occasion, two b'nai mitzvah may occur on a given Saturday. If that is the case, your family will share the Friday night service activities with the other family who is celebrating that weekend.

WHAT HAPPENS THE DAY OF OUR FAMILY'S CEREMONY?

Approximately 45 minutes before the start of the ceremony your child will meet with the Rabbi and approximately 30 minutes before the start of the ceremony, your family and those individuals participating in the ceremony will meet with your Rabbi to go over final details.

DOES YOUR CHILD WISH TO WEAR A TALLIT DURING THE CEREMONY?

Please advise your Rabbi no later than one month before the ceremony if your child would like to wear a *tallit* (prayer shawl) during the ceremony. This will allow time to teach the prayer associated with wearing a *tallit*.

WHAT ABOUT DECORATIONS ON THE BIMAH?

Families may, if they choose, provide flowers for the *bimah* or may use an existing floral arrangement if one is available at the Temple for the day of your ceremony. In lieu of flowers, a wonderful *mitzvah* can be for the family to provide a basket of non-perishable food items on the *bimah*. That basket can then be donated to a local food pantry. Please contact Temple staff to make arrangements regarding these matters.

WHAT ABOUT A BOOKLET FOR THE SERVICE?

If your family would like to do so, you may create a booklet explaining the service and providing other information for your guests. However, any such materials must be reviewed by your Rabbi. Please discuss this further with your Rabbi as soon as you have made a decision about preparing such a booklet and in any event by no later than one month prior to the ceremony.

IS PHOTOGRAPHY PERMITTED?

Family pictures may be taken either before or after the service or at another scheduled time. Please contact the temple no later than one week before your ceremony to finalize these arrangements so that we can avoid any scheduling conflicts. All equipment must be removed from the sanctuary and all photographs prior to the event completed by no later than ½ hour before the start of the ceremony. No photography is allowed during the service itself.

IS VIDEOTAPING OR AUDIOTAPING PERMITTED?

Yes, subject to the following conditions for videotaping: Only one camera may be used and it must be in the back of the Sanctuary. No external or additional lighting may be used during the service. Temple staff can provide additional information. All families and their videographers must confirm their arrangements with Temple staff by no later than four weeks before the ceremony.

Audiotaping is available through the Temple. Please contact Temple staff by no later than four weeks before the ceremony to make audiotaping arrangements.

PRESENTATION OF THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH CERTIFICATE AND KIDDUSH CUP.

To celebrate your family's *simcha*, Congregation Beth Israel is pleased to present your child with a Certificate which will be presented by a member of the Board of Trustees. A Kiddush Cup – a gift from our Brotherhood and Sisterhood – can be presented by a member of the Brotherhood or Sisterhood. If you would like to request that a specific individual, including the Rabbi or the Cantor, make either or both presentations please contact the Temple office at least one month prior to the date of the ceremony.

WE WOULD LIKE TO HONOR A FAMILY MEMBER OR A FRIEND WITH AN ALIYAH OR PARTICIPATION IN THE CEREMONY.

Congregation Beth Israel welcomes your community of family and friends into our service as your family celebrates your child's *simcha*. Should your family wish to honor someone by calling him/her to the Torah for an *aliyah* (the honor of being called to the *bimah* to bless the Torah) please consult with your Rabbi as soon as possible and in any event by no later than 4 weeks before your ceremony. We typically allow for two *aliyot* in addition to the *aliyah* assigned to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah and more than one person can participate in each *aliyah*. Your Rabbi can also identify other honors that might be available (such as dressing and undressing the Torah), and can identify readings that might also be available.

WHAT ABOUT FAMILY MEMBERS WHO ARE NOT JEWISH?

In the contemporary world, family life often has expanded to include those who are not Jewish or those who may be Jewish but who are not familiar with certain Jewish life-cycle events or practices. The Shabbat service in which your child is called to the Torah to become a Bar or Bat Mitzvah marks a significant accomplishment and commitment. Family who are not Jewish or who are not familiar with our customs, traditions and liturgy often feel torn – wanting to witness, honor and participate but feeling apprehensive about their lack of knowledge, familiarity or understanding and worried about making some inadvertent error and offending or disrupting in some way.

If your family wishes to include non-Jewish members in the service, please discuss this issue with your Rabbi as soon as you can so that the clergy can work with your family to ensure that such participation fits comfortably and is compatible with Reform Jewish practice and the customs of Congregation Beth Israel. There are many ways of including any family member who wishes to participate. If you are uncertain about how to begin a discussion about the meaning, practice and traditions associated with the bar or bat mitzvah ceremony with non-Jewish family members or family members who may otherwise not have knowledge or experience with these practices, please ask the clergy for guidance and suggestions. Questions about Judaism and its traditions, customs and practices are respected and encouraged. Teaching about Judaism and its traditions, customs and practices will enhance family communication and goodwill.

DECORUM AND DRESS CODE

At Congregation Beth Israel, Bar and Bat Mitzvah ceremonies are community celebrations taking place during our Saturday Shabbat service. That service is attended by Congregants seeking spiritual renewal or who may be in mourning. We ask that all persons attending services maintain the dignity of our Shabbat service and respect both our Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrant and our

Congregants. A set of guidelines is included at the end of this manual. We encourage you to copy that page and include it with your invitation.

CELEBRATING YOUR FAMILY'S *SIMCHA* AT CONGREGATION BETH ISRAEL

If your family chooses to have a celebration after the ceremony, please consider Feldman and Haas Halls. Proceeding into Feldman or Haas Halls right after the ceremony keeps the mood and spirit of this special event moving right into the celebration. Convenience and the opportunity to personalize your affair are additional advantages to using our facilities. If you are planning a celebration after the ceremony and are interested in a venue at Congregation Beth Israel, please contact the Temple as soon as possible so that we can assure availability and provide you with information about the services we can make available and the cost of having your celebration at Congregation Beth Israel.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

EXPECTATIONS APPLICABLE TO B'NAI MITZVAH STUDENTS

All Bar/Bat mitzvah students are expected to successfully complete Religious School at Congregation Beth Israel for (at least) the 5th, 6th and 7th grades. Students who become Bar or Bat mitzvahs during or after the 7th grade are expected to complete the 7th grade year of Religious School. Families who transfer into the Religious School after the start of 5th grade should consult with the clergy to discuss their situation to assure they can meet curricular requirements.

Successful completion of Religious School means:

1. Mastery of curricular objectives for the grade, as indicated by teacher reports on report cards issued twice each year. If a student is struggling with the curriculum, his/her family is encouraged to contact the teachers and clergy for extra help or alternative arrangements.

2. Satisfactory attendance, which is defined as no more than three absences per semester. Families that are having difficulty with attendance requirements should contact the director of the Religious School to discuss the issue. Attendance will be monitored and students that are not meeting the attendance requirements will be contacted by the director of the Religious School.

LITURGY (Order of Service)

FRIDAY NIGHT BEFORE THE DAY OF YOUR CEREMONY

Our family will have the honor of blessing the Shabbat candles

Our child will recite the Kiddush

LITURGY FOR A SATURDAY MORNING CEREMONY

Barchu

Shema

V'ahavtah

Avot v'Imahot

Gevurot

Torah Blessings

Haftarah Blessings

Bat Mitzvah Agreement

ברית של בת מצוה

As I prepare for my Bat Mitzvah, I prepare to take personal responsibility for participating in Jewish life. Over the next two years I pledge to work together to better understand what this shall mean to me. As I embark on this journey I commit myself to:

Learn with my classmates the history, law, traditions, language, and values, of Judaism as I satisfy the requirements of Religious School.

Participate in the spiritual life of Congregation Beth Israel on a regular basis striving to be a full and committed member of this community.

Help in the repair of our world, *Tikun Olam*, by designing and completing a "Mitzvah Project" social justice/community service project.

Study and prepare a torah and haftarah portion with the Rabbis, Cantor and teachers, and then teach that portion to our community at my ceremony.

Continue my Jewish studies after I am called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah.

Student's English Name

Student's Hebrew Name

As parents, we commit to supporting our daughter during her preparation for becoming a Bat Mitzvah. We understand that this is a life cycle event that involves the whole family and accept our responsibility to actively encourage, support and participate with our child to help make a rich and meaningful experience.

Parent Name

Parent Name

As your teachers and community leaders we commit ourselves to working with you and your family to provide you with opportunities for learning and growth, our best guidance and support, and our passion and love of Judaism to help make your Bat Mitzvah a personal and spiritually rich experience. We challenge ourselves to ensure that you will know that you will only be called to the Torah when we are confident that you understand and are prepared for the responsibilities that face you.

Lay Leader

Rabbi

The world is sustained by three things: By Torah, by prayer, and by loving deeds.

Bar Mitzvah Agreement

ברית של בר מצוה

As I prepare for my Bar Mitzvah, I prepare to take personal responsibility for participating in Jewish life. Over the next two years I pledge to work together to better understand what this shall mean to me. As I embark on this journey I commit myself to:

Learn with my classmates the history, law, traditions, language, and values, of Judaism as I satisfy the requirements of Religious School.

Participate in the spiritual life of Congregation Beth Israel on a regular basis striving to be a full and committed member of this community.

Help in the repair of our world, *Tikun Olam*, by designing and completing a "Mitzvah Project" social justice/community service project.

Study and prepare a torah and haftarah portion with the Rabbis, Cantor and teachers, and then teach that portion to our community at my ceremony.

Continue my Jewish studies after I am called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah.

Student's English Name

Student's Hebrew Name

As parents, we commit to supporting our son during his preparation for becoming a Bar Mitzvah. We understand that this is a life cycle event that involves the whole family and accept our responsibility to actively encourage, support and participate with our child to help make a rich and meaningful experience.

Parent Name

Parent Name

As your teachers and community leaders we commit ourselves to working with you and your family to provide you with opportunities for learning and growth, our best guidance and support, and our passion and love of Judaism to help make your Bar Mitzvah a personal and spiritually rich experience. We challenge ourselves to ensure that you will know that you will only be called to the Torah when we are confident that you understand and are prepared for the responsibilities that face you.

Lay Leader

Rabbi

The world is sustained by three things: By Torah, by prayer, and by loving deeds.