B’ruchim Habai’im—Welcome!

Welcome to your journey toward B’nei Mitzvah here at Temple Ohabei Shalom!

We are a diverse community—we come to this journey from various places and with varied experiences. Some of you are continuing a tradition spanning generations in your family. Some of you have chosen to join the Jewish people, and we are inspired by your commitment to a community that you have chosen. Some of you are not Jewish but have partnered in raising your children as Jews, and we salute the love and devotion that brings you to celebrate a tradition that is not your own. Together, you weave the fabric of this diverse and beautiful community. Individually, you are navigating the road to a fulfilling, meaningful and joyous occasion. The entire staff of Temple Ohabei Shalom is eager to help you find your own way on that road. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to further enrich the B’nei Mitzvah process.

Mazal tov. Throughout this journey, may you and your family go from strength to strength.

Rabbi Audrey Marcus Berkman

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OUR VISION AND VALUES

BECOMING A JEWISH ADULT AT TEMPLE OHABEI SHALOM

The Hebrew word *mitzvah* means "commandment." A sacred obligation, something to which you are committed. And the word B’nei means “children of.” To become B’nei Mitzvah means becoming “a child of the commandment” - in other words, one who is obligated to fulfill a commandment. At TOS, we use B’nei Mitzvah, the plural, as a non-binary way to encompass all genders. (Traditionally, Bar Mitzvah is for those who are male-identified, and Bat Mitzvah is for those who are female-identified, and B’nei Mitzvah is for those who are non-binary.) At the age of 13, a Jewish child becomes a Jewish adult, responsible for a new kind of relationship to their Jewish identity. They become B’nei Mitzvah upon turning 13, whether or not they mark the occasion by leading parts of a service or chanting from the Torah. A B’nei Mitzvah is one who commits themselves to engagement with Judaism and the Jewish community as a Jewish adult. The B’nei Mitzvah service marks a new kind of connection between the emerging young adult, their Jewish heritage, and their relationship to the Jewish people.

At TOS, we are committed to helping every student meaningfully mark this important moment in their lives. Recognizing that each student is created *b’telem Elohim*, in the image of God, each with their own unique gifts and challenges, TOS strives to create a meaningful and supportive B’nei Mitzvah experience which meets each family and student where they are as they transition to Jewish adulthood.

Every family is unique. If your family has specific concerns related to the service, the reception, the role of parents or other family members, please consult with our clergy at one of your meetings, well in advance of the date of the event. Our goal is to ensure that the day of the B’nei Mitzvah service is as joyous, meaningful, and stress-free as possible for your child and your family.
**Guiding Principles for your B’nei Mitzvah Journey**

Marking this lifecycle moment in community reaches beyond the day of B’nei Mitzvah. At TOS, we provide educational and community-building programs designed to help your family learn and reflect together, connect to the Jewish community, and create meaningful moments of spirituality and connection.

As you begin to think about the B’nei Mitzvah process, we encourage you to reflect upon the following questions:

- What will make this experience meaningful to me and my family? What will make it spiritually relevant?
- How will this experience be personal, honoring my family structure and learning style?
- How might this experience help me connect to my family history?
- How might this experience connect me to the various communities of which I am a part? To the Jewish community? The TOS community? My community of friends and family? The greater Boston community?
- How will this experience root me in Jewish learning that I can take with me through my life?
- How will this experience prepare me to be a Jewish adult?

**What It’s All About**

*B’nei Mitzvah* students should put their whole selves into living Jewish lives: their heart, head, and hands.

**Tefilah (Prayer)**

When a worship service works, it touches the heart. In fact, worship is known in Hebrew as *avodat halev*, “service of the heart.” The B’nei Mitzvah student brings their whole heart to leading us in prayer. Part of that includes reading and chanting in Hebrew from the prayer book and the Torah scroll (containing the Five Books of Moses). Hebrew itself is an expression of the heart. We refer to it as *lashon kodesh*, the holy language, and it has a power to move us beyond the meaning of its words. It connects us with Jews throughout history and with Jews throughout the world.

Your comfort with the synagogue experience will both enhance your celebration of the day and show your child(ren) how important you consider this time in their lives. We encourage each family to attend Shabbat services both on Friday nights and Saturday mornings as much as possible, to familiarize yourself with Shabbat services and connect with the TOS community.
LIMMUD (LEARNING)

B’nei Mitzvah students reflect on the meaning of their Torah reading by sharing a teaching during the service. In Hebrew this is called a *d’var Torah*, which means “a word of Torah.” This is an opportunity for the student to bring their own values, experiences, and passions, into conversation with the richness of Jewish tradition. Out of this conversation, new and unique wisdom is created and then shared with the wider community.

TIKKUN OLAM (REPAIRING THE WORLD)

One can’t live as a Jew without “doing” as a Jew. We ask our B’nei Mitzvah students not just to feel and to think, but also to act. They do this through their Mitzvah Projects where they use their hands to assist others and to help repair the world (*tikkun olam*). Your Mitzvah Project should represent a substantial commitment of time and energy to a project of your choice.

KEHILAH (COMMUNITY)

B’nei Mitzvah is not just an individual or family celebration, but one for the entire community. As a community we welcome a new Jewish adult into our midst. We mark this lifecycle moment by having the B’nei Mitzvah lead parts of our regularly scheduled communal Shabbat service, so that the people who have been with your family at Shabbat B’yachad, who have rejoiced at your children’s consecration during Simchat Torah, and who have worked side-by-side with your family at Mitzvah Day can be with you as your child becomes a B’nei Mitzvah. As a caring community, the joy and responsibility of B’nei Mitzvah belong to all of us. We hope and expect that the ARS 7th grade class will be invited to each other’s B’nei Mitzvah celebration. We believe that this is an important component of being a synagogue family.

Because B’nei Mitzvah is the beginning of what we hope will be a lifetime of Jewish learning and living, B’nei Mitzvah are expected to continue to be involved in Jewish learning and community through opportunities for Jewish learning and engagement at Temple Ohabei Shalom and in the broader community.
**Special Temple Ohabei Shalom Traditions**

**The Dome**
Part of celebrating the milestone of B’nei Mitzvah is becoming part of a long-standing tradition. At Temple Ohabei Shalom, this involves an escorted trip up to the Dome, where new B’nei Mitzvah are given letters written by their parents many years before at the TOSTY Shul-in (parents who did not write a letter; please let us know as there is still an opportunity to do so). At this time, the new B’nei Mitzvah/new adult members of the community are also invited to sign their name on the wall of the Dome.

**Further Opportunities for Participation in Worship Services**
Students who have become B’nei Mitzvah have gained extremely valuable skills! Good Torah readers are always in high demand. Please speak with our clergy about opportunities to participate in synagogue worship such as chanting Torah or leading part of Shabbat services at Temple Ohabei Shalom.
EDUCATIONAL & COMMUNAL EXPECTATIONS

These expectations are designed to both challenge the student and set an attainable goal. Of course, each student is unique, and we do not believe in a one-size-fits-all model. We adapt and individualize the experience for each student, and we want each family to feel a sense of ownership over this ritual.

As a community, we have specific expectations for B’nei Mitzvah education. They include:

- Enrollment in the Ansin Religious School (or an approved equivalent)
  - 5th Grade curriculum @ ARS lays the Hebrew groundwork and biblical understanding for the B’nei Mitzvah service.
  - 6th Grade curriculum @ ARS includes Torah chanting skills (trope) and learning and reviewing all blessings and prayers that the B’nei Mitzvah will lead during the service.
  - 7th Grade curriculum @ ARS reviews Hebrew and Torah skills, explores Jewish identity and adulthood through the Jewish life cycle, and examines the Holocaust.
    - If your family joins TOS after fourth or fifth grade, an educational plan will be created with the ARS Director and clergy
- A commitment to complete Hebrew school during your B’nei Mitzvah year. There is more to learn, a shift in focus, and it is crucial to participate in the community for the entire experience.
- B’nei Mitzvah Experience family programming begins in 5th grade, and continues through the end of 7th grade. Attending these programs as a family is a requirement for B’nei Mitzvah at TOS.
- Monthly attendance at services (Saturday mornings or Friday evenings) for the year leading up to B’nei Mitzvah
- A commitment to continue with Religious School through Confirmation. B’nei Mitzvah is not the end of the journey; it is simply one significant moment along the way and the beginning of a lifetime of Jewish engagement!
- Creation of a Mitzvah Project and Service to the TOS community
- Inviting all of your ARS classmates to your B’nei Mitzvah celebration. As a caring community, the joy and responsibility of B’nei Mitzvah belongs to all of us. We believe that this is an important component of being a synagogue family.
Though each student is different and their service is unique to them - at TOS, B’nei Mitzvah students are usually responsible for the following service elements:

- Candle Blessings, Kiddush and Hamotzi on Friday night
- Kiddush and Hamotzi on Shabbat morning
- Leading part of the Shabbat morning service or chanting Haftarah
- Torah service prayers
- Blessings before and after the Torah reading (aliyah blessing)
- Chanting approximately 15 verses of Torah
- D’var Torah (sharing your wisdom about your Torah portion)

Our goal is that the service fits the student and family’s needs, so this can be adjusted through conversations between the family, educators, and clergy.
FAMILY PARTICIPATION

PREPARATION AND SUPPORT AT HOME

Good preparation is the key to a successful and fulfilling B’nei Mitzvah experience. It requires a significant commitment of time - about 2-3 hours a week. Parental support in this process is invaluable. Here are some guidelines.

1) **Schedule**: The last three to four months of B’nei Mitzvah preparation are a time to focus on the work and significance of becoming a Jewish adult. If there is a way to cut down on extracurricular activities during this period your child will be substantially more relaxed and more likely to enjoy the process and find it meaningful.

2) **Practice with your child**. If you know Hebrew and can help, that's great. If you don’t, please listen to your child practice and share in the experience. It makes a difference. (Ask your child to teach you!)

3) **D’var Torah**. We encourage parents to engage in discussion of the issues and lessons raised in the Torah portion. In the weeks before the B’nei Mitzvah, parents should listen to their child practice reading their d’var Torah out loud. It’s the same as any type of public speaking preparation – no specialized knowledge needed!

4) **Parental Blessings**. Rehearse Torah blessings in Hebrew and prepare a blessing in English to offer to your child. (See page 12 for details.)

PREPARATION AT ARS/TOS

Our religious school curriculum is designed to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to participate fully in Jewish life. The academic prerequisite for B’nei Mitzvah is your child’s completion of three years of religious education and continued enrollment in our religious school throughout the B’nei Mitzvah year. We hope that each student will continue to learn with our clergy and educators through Confirmation in high school. The school program provides the foundation on which preparation for B’nei Mitzvah is built.

Specific training for the B’nei Mitzvah service takes place both inside and outside of school hours. During religious school classes in grades five and six, students will learn key prayers of the Shabbat morning liturgy and Torah chanting skills. This provides a good foundation to assist them in learning to lead the service and to chant their individual Torah portions. Please consult the B’nei Mitzvah Timeline on page 17 for specific details.
**B’nei Mitzvah Experience**

Participation in our B’nei Mitzvah Experience family education programs will enrich your child’s experience—and your own—marking the B’nei Mitzvah as a lifecycle tradition into “becoming a teen” that leads to personal growth and positive communal connection. (We use a curriculum which connects Jewish wisdom to the interpersonal and social elements that go along with this coming-of-age ritual; sessions aim to help you and your pre-teen explore what it means to be a guest and a host; how to navigate peer pressure, social media, and the experience of being the center of attention; what B’nei Mitzvah is all about; and other social-emotional challenges and joys associated with B’nei Mitzvah.) Additionally, these programs will cover the basics of the Saturday morning service, of mitzvah projects, and what becoming B’nei Mitzvah is all about. These required programs help to create and to strengthen a community of B’nei Mitzvah families.

**Shabbat Attendance**

Understanding what the prayer service is all about and becoming part of the community at Temple Ohabei Shalom is an important part of the B’nei Mitzvah process. In addition to the required six TOS Shabbat morning services, B’nei Mitzvah students must attend three services at a synagogue other than Temple Ohabei Shalom; not every service is the same and your family will learn a lot from seeing different customs.

We highly recommend that parents attend with their child. This may include Friday night, Shabbat morning, Festival services or weekday worship. Regular attendance at services by the entire family remains the single most important factor in preparing for this day. Use the log at the back of this handbook to track your progress.

**Torah Chanting by Parents**

A very special way in which families can participate in the B’nei Mitzvah process is by reading Torah. This might be an opportunity to refresh your Torah chanting skills or the motivation you need to actually learn how to chant! Either way, you will be showing your child what it means to continue growing, learning and participating as an adult member of our community. We will be glad to make a recording of the Torah reading and to help you in this process.

**Ushering**

Families are required to serve as ushers for the B’nei Mitzvah service which directly precedes their own. By welcoming visitors, distributing prayer books and giving direction, ushers help to create a warm and participatory environment for our community worship experience. You will receive the ushering schedule via email, and if you have any questions, please contact Daria Cohen (dcohen@ohabei.org). Guidelines for ushering can be found on page 22.
**Friday Night**
Erev Shabbat services typically run one hour in length, and begin at 6 pm. Consult the synagogue office to verify the time of service for the weekend of your celebration. It is expected that the B'nei Mitzvah student and their family attend the Friday night service the evening before the B'nei Mitzvah. The B'nei Mitzvah student leads the candlelighting at the beginning of the service, and the Kiddush and Hamotzi at the conclusion of the service.

**Saturday Morning: B’nei Mitzvah Day!**
The immediate family will meet with the Rabbis at 10:00 am for a sound check to ensure our technology is ready, as well as a moment of meaning. At this point the family will present the B’nei Mitzvah with a *tallit* (a traditional Jewish prayer shawl, worn on Shabbat mornings). Families can either purchase or create a *tallit* for the occasion. Alternatively, the *tallit* might be passed down from a family member. A *tallit* is typically worn only by Jews who have become B’nei Mitzvah.

**Service Honors**
Temple Ohabei Shalom provides opportunities for the family and friends of the B’nei Mitzvah to participate in our weekly Shabbat service. After deciding which friends and family members you would like to include in the B’nei Mitzvah, complete the Honors Form (found on page 24) and return it to the clergy or Daria Cohen no later than the week before the B’nei Mitzvah. Bring a copy of the Honors Form to your rehearsal. Some of these honors may need to adapt due to the everchanging COVID-19 pandemic; the clergy will update you as to what is available as you approach your B’nei Mitzvah.

**The Service Itself**
- Shabbat morning services at Temple Ohabei Shalom begin at 10:30am and conclude at approximately 12:15 pm. Some families choose to list 10:15am as the starting time on their invitations to minimize disruption to the service due to late arrivals.
- Services are usually held in the Sanctuary but the Chapel is also an option for families.
- If desired, families may distribute customized programs explaining the service. We have templates that we are happy to share with you. Please allow the clergy to review your text at least two weeks before the ceremony.
- If you have questions or requests regarding music for the service, please let us know well in advance. We traditionally have piano accompaniment, but this is not required; some families choose to have no instrumental accompaniment.
GUIDELINES FOR PARENT BLESSING

Following the B’nei Mitzvah’s Aliyah blessing, parent(s) will be asked to offer a brief blessing. The blessing affords parent(s) the opportunity to express the love, pride and joy they feel in their child. Ideally, the blessing will itself teach and embody Torah.

The blessing should express the B’nei Mitzvah’s essence as a person and honor them for the wonderful, loving child that they are. The blessing can also include a Jewish text or teaching and a prayer oriented toward the future. Our clergy can assist you with this if you would like.

The blessing should be 1-2 paragraphs or 1-2 minutes in length, prepared in advance and put in writing. Please don’t hesitate to ask the clergy if you have any questions.
SERVICE PREPARATION

GRADE FIVE YEAR
- In the fall of 5th grade, B’nei Mitzvah dates are distributed at a family program
- Attendance at B’nei Mitzvah Experience family meetings (usually 4 annually)
- Grade Five curriculum includes Hebrew finesse, prayer skills, and Biblical stories and history

GRADE SIX YEAR
- Attendance at all B’nei Mitzvah Experience family meetings (usually 4 annually)
- Grade Six curriculum includes Torah chanting skills (trope) and learning and reviewing all blessings and prayers that the B’nei Mitzvah will lead during the service.
- Digital audio files of all Hebrew learning will be made available.

GRADE SEVEN YEAR
1) WEEKLY ARS ATTENDANCE
- Attendance at B’nei Mitzvah Experience family meetings
- Grade Seven curriculum includes reviewing all Hebrew skills, as well as an exploration of Jewish identity and adulthood through the Jewish life cycle and an examination of the Holocaust

2) COHORT MEETING
   Approximately seven – nine months in advance of B’nei Mitzvah, our clergy host a group meeting for students and parents; this will give an initial overview of the B’nei Mitzvah preparation process. This cohort is based on the season of the year, and will encompass all of the B’nei Mitzvah students in the fall, winter, or spring. This meeting often occurs over Zoom. (For some students, this takes place in 6th grade.)

3) INITIAL FAMILY MEETING
   The B’nei Mitzvah student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) meet with Rabbi Berkman approximately seven months before the B’nei Mitzvah date to get to know each other, reflect on how they are feeling about the process, address any concerns and answer any questions.

4) MITZVAH PROJECT AND SERVICE TO THE TEMPLE OHABEI SHALOM COMMUNITY
   A mitzvah project is one of the first responsibilities we ask you to assume as you become an adult in our community. Tikkun olam, repairing the world, is central to who we are at Ohabei Shalom and to the B’nei Mitzvah process. It teaches our children that Torah “learning” and “doing” go hand in hand.

   Your Mitzvah project should represent a substantial commitment of time and energy to a project of your choice.
Guidelines for completing a meaningful mitzvah project:

- Your project should involve at least 15 hours of community service.
- Projects can be done individually or as a small group.
- Be as creative as you like.
- Every project includes at least three of these key elements:
  - Hands-on work (time spent working) with the organization
  - Advocacy for the cause
  - Educating others about the issue
  - Collecting items or Tzedakah (money) for the cause

Service to the TOS Community:
Give back by donating three or more hours of your time to Ohabei Shalom. (e.g. babysitting, mailings, yard work or library work, Mitzvah Day volunteering, etc.)

If you have any questions about your Mitzvah Project, please reach out to Cassie Dezii (cdezii@ohabei.org).

5) **TORAH CHANTING PREPARATION**
Individualized instruction begins approximately six months before B’nei Mitzvah date with weekly 30-minute lessons. Students will learn to chant their Torah portions and review all other Hebrew elements of the Shabbat morning service. These sessions will be with our B’nei Mitzvah Educator and Tutor, Cantor Maayan Harel, and are scheduled by parents using Calendly. Cantor Maayan will reach out to families individually to begin this process. Students traditionally receive 26 30-minute lessons over this time.

6) **D’VAR TORAH PREPARATION**
Students will prepare a d’var Torah, a teaching rooted in Torah, with guidance from the clergy. It will draw from traditional and modern interpretations of the Torah text as well as from their own life experience. The five 30-minute meetings with our clergy begin three or four months prior to the B’nei Mitzvah date.

7) **ARS PREPARATION**
As an additional special moment, on the Tuesday before the student’s B’nei Mitzvah, they will have the chance to chant their Torah portion from the Torah at ARS tefilah. It’s both a chance for them to practice, as well as a chance for them to serve as an example to the rest of the community.
8) **Rehearsal**

You will have two opportunities to rehearse at TOS with our clergy. You will schedule these times in advance, when you have your family meeting with Rabbi Berkman (Daria Cohen, *Executive Assistant*, will help coordinate this). Parent(s)/guardian(s) should bring the completed Honors Form (see page 24) and their Blessing for Parents/Guardians (see page 12) to the rehearsal. At the rehearsals, we will also review all technological needs.
**SHABBAT SERVICE ATTENDANCE – STUDENT’S LOG**

Your B’nei Mitzvah will be more enjoyable if you are comfortable with the Shabbat morning service. In order to achieve this goal, we expect that in the year before your B’nei Mitzvah you will attend at least six Shabbat morning services at Ohabei Shalom and three morning services at another congregation. Please use this log to keep track of your progress and share it with the clergy.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Synagogue</th>
<th>Your experience ~ What surprised you? Other thoughts.</th>
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# B’nei Mitzvah Preparation Timeline

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<th>WORSHIP</th>
<th>LEARN</th>
<th>TAKE ACTION</th>
<th>PLAN</th>
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<td><strong>Avodat haLev</strong>&lt;br&gt;Service of the Heart</td>
<td><strong>Share your own teaching, or Dvar Torah</strong></td>
<td><strong>Do Tikkuon Olam</strong>&lt;br&gt;(repair the world)</td>
<td><strong>Your special day</strong></td>
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### 12+ Months Prior
- Study of prayers and Torah chanting in grades 5 & 6 at ARS. Plan to attend 6 Shabbat Services during the 6th grade year.
- Attend all B’nei Mitzvah experience family education programs.
- Begin research and planning for your Mitzvah Project during 6th grade year.
- If you know you’d like to have a celebration at TOS, reserve your space with Stacey Boisvert, Event Coordinator: aboisvert@babei.org

### 7 Months Prior
- Continue to attend Shabbat Services, at TOS and at other synagogues to compare and contrast what Shabbat morning services are about.
- Cohort Meeting with clergy and other students.
- Individual Family Meeting with clergy to connect, discuss Torah portion, answer questions.
- Continue Mitzvah Project planning.
- Connect with Stacey Boisvert, Event Coordinator for any in person arrangements.

### 6 Months Prior
- Continue to attend Shabbat Services.
- Student begins weekly learning sessions in preparation to chant Torah.
- Continue Mitzvah Project planning.
- Begin active involvement in Mitzvah Project.

### 3-5 Months Prior
- Continue to attend Shabbat Services.
- Continue Torah chanting lessons.
- Continue Mitzvah Project.
- Obtain tallit and kippah.
- If desired, order printed kippot.

### 2-3 Months Prior
- Continue to attend Shabbat Services.
- Practice leading services at ARS tefillah.
- Begin d’var Torah planning sessions with clergy.
- Continue Torah chanting sessions.
- Continue Mitzvah Project.
- Check in with Stacey Boisvert, Event Coordinator: aboisvert@babei.org
- Mail invitations, including the entire b’nei mitzvah class.

### 1 Month Prior
- Attend Shabbat Services.
- Family attends B’nei Mitzvah rehearsal #1.
- Dvar Torah sessions have been completed.
- Continue Torah chanting sessions.
- Plan to conclude your mitzvah project.
- Provide all vendor information to Stacey Boisvert: aboisvert@babei.org

### 2 Weeks Prior
- Family attends B’nei Mitzvah rehearsal #2.
- Continue Torah Chanting sessions.
- Finalize and wrap up Mitzvah Project.
- Confirm rehearsal time and arrangements with Stacey Boisvert: aboisvert@babei.org

### 1 Week Prior
- Attend Shabbat Services.
- Read your Torah portion at ARS tefillah.
- Continue Torah chanting sessions.
- Make arrangements with Stacey for all deliveries (flowers, programs, etc.) for the Friday before by 3pm at the latest.

### Week of B’nei Mitzvah
- Bring a copy of the completed Honors Form
- Bring a copy of the Parent Blessing
- Attend Eve of Shabbat Services on Friday night to lead Kiddush and Motzi.

### Day of B’nei Mitzvah

**REMEMBER TO BRING:**
- Your binder with the Torah text and your d’var Torah.
- Your tallit and kippah, if applicable (bring d’var pins to keep it in place)

**TIMELINE OF THE MORNING:**
- Photos prior to service from 9:00—9:45am, if desired.
- At 9:45am, family completes sound check for Zoom sound with our tech guru.
- At 10:00 am, family meets with the clergy for a special moment before the service.
- Service begins at 10:30am.
LOGISTICS

Tzedakah
A simcha (joyous event) is an opportunity to share one’s good fortune with others who are in need. We encourage families to consider ways in which they can do this, in addition to the B’nei Mitzvah student’s individual Mitzvah Project. For example, families might consider decorating tables with “mitzvah centerpieces,” centerpieces constructed of products, equipment or goods to be donated after the party to a particular cause or organization.

It is also customary to mark this wonderful occasion by making a donation to one of Temple Ohabei Shalom’s funds in honor of your child, and encouraging your family and friends to do the same. We suggest a contribution to a fund that will honor the experience of becoming a committed adult member of the community, such as the Fund for Lifelong Learning, the discretionary funds of our clergy, or the Circle of Giving.

Financial Considerations
All membership accounts (including B’nei Mitzvah fees, ARS tuition and Temple dues) must be paid in full six months in advance in order for your child to become a B’nei Mitzvah at Temple Ohabei Shalom. Additional costs associated with the B’nei Mitzvah are:

- **B’nei Mitzvah Fee:** This fee, which covers tutoring costs, the B’nei Mitzvah Experience, and clergy meetings, will be billed in two installments; one in the 5th grade year and one in the 6th grade year. In the 2021-2022 year, the cost is $750 in 5th grade and $850 in 6th grade. (As always, abatements are available if needed – reach out to Shari Churwin, Executive Director, at schurwin@ohabei.org.)

- **Rental Information:** We have two beautiful social halls that you can rent for your celebration. Be in touch with Stacey Boisvert, Event Coordinator, for more details: sboisbert@ohabei.org.

- **B’nei Mitzvah Class Gift:** A few years ago families asked TOS to coordinate a class gift - instead of all the students exchanging gifts as each b’nei mitzvah approaches, you can make a one-time donation to TOS in honor of all of your ARS friends! Making a donation to TOS in honor of each student will help minimize any expectations to give each child an expensive gift, while at the same time you are making a meaningful contribution to the community. We will send out information about this at the start of the 7th grade year.
COVID Policies/Changes
Please note that this section is subject to change, and is up-to-date as of February 2022.
As we progress through this pandemic, many things are changing rapidly.

SERVICES
• In-person attendance at services are currently only for the invited guests of the B’nei Mitzvah; TOS community members are welcomed to join on Zoom
• All guests must be fully vaccinated as per the TOS guidelines listed at www.ohabei.org/protocols
• Masks must be worn at all times, except for those on the bima
• If possible, the B’nei Mitzvah family should test on the morning of the service

KIDDUSH/LUNCHEON
Before the pandemic, we expected families to provide a small kiddush/snack after services and in exchange, there were no rental fees for a family’s kiddush celebration. As of February 2022, B’nei Mitzvah services are only open in person to guests of the family; all other members of the TOS community are welcome to join on Zoom. Therefore, currently you are not expected to invite members of the TOS community to your kiddush celebration (nor is a kiddush celebration mandatory!) Please check in with Stacey Boisvert, sboisvert@ohabei.org, 6 months prior to your simcha for up-to-date information.

Families are welcome to rent our spaces for private events. We have two beautiful social halls at TOS; Penn-Spero and Lissner Hall. Both are available for rental for private parties. Contact Stacey Boisvert, our Event Coordinator, for more information: sboisvert@ohabei.org.

Technology in 2022
All services at TOS are on Zoom, in addition to in-person. Your family will receive a unique Zoom link and password which you can send to all attendees. After the service, you will receive a copy of the video, as well as the Zoom chat.

We have a high-definition PTZ Camera to capture every moment of the B’nei Mitzvah as well as high quality sound feeding to Zoom. There will always be a designated A/V person for your B’nei Mitzvah to take care of all A/V needs. At your rehearsal, we will review the names of anyone having an honor during the service so that we can ensure that we capture those special moments.

Since the start of the pandemic, many families have added a photo slideshow to their child’s B’nei Mitzvah which we can play over Zoom and on a large screen on the bima; all slidehows must be sent to techhelp@ohabei.org no later than 48 hours before the event. We can also show the faces of those on Zoom so everyone in person can see them. Keep in mind that you will NOT be able to talk to those on Zoom until the end of the service. At the
end of the service, you and the clergy can use the bima iPad to “Join Audio” and enable a two-way conversation.

**Photography/Videography/Cellphone Use**
Photography must be completed before 10am on the morning of your service. Professional photography is not permitted during the service.

Please note that no photography is allowed during the service. Please advise your guests to refrain from using cellphones during the service.

**Accessibility**
Accessible entry to the Sanctuary is available through the Temple parking lot on Marshal Street. For accessible entry into the banquet halls, it is necessary to exit the Sanctuary and reenter through the TCEE/ARS entrance on Marshal Street.

Large print books and assisted listening devices are available.

**Parking**
There is on-street parking available on Beacon Street and on side streets in the vicinity of the Temple.

Please do not park in TOS parking lot, as your vehicle is subject to towing at your expense. Be sure to inform your guests of this parking and accessibility information.

**Hiddur Mitzvah – Making it Beautiful**
There is a Jewish concept called *hiddur mitzvah*, to beautify a sacred obligation. There are many ways in which we can participate in this important mitzvah and make the B’nei Mitzvah service even more special.

**Flowers for the Bimah**
Families often provide one (3-dimensional) 3 ½ - 4 foot flower arrangement for the Sanctuary. They will need to be delivered by 3 pm on the Friday preceding the ceremony.

**Candy Throwing**
There is a custom of throwing (soft) candy at the B’nei Mitzvah student after they’ve completed leading the service, as we sing Siman Tov U’Mazel Tov, blessing the B’nei Mitzvah student with sweetness. If you would like to do this, please purchase either Swedish fish (individually wrapped) or Sunkist fruit gems; they should be delivered on Friday before the service with other ritual items (like kippot or programs). The clergy will help you to know when it is time to throw the candy.
**CHALLAH AND KIDDUSH**
Families are responsible to bring their own challah and wine/grape juice; many families choose to bring a kiddush cup or challah cover that has personal meaning to their family to make the ceremony even more beautiful.

**KIPPOT AND TALLIT**
Many families choose to purchase kippot (also known as yarmulkes) to be used at the B’nei Mitzvah. These can be personalized with the name and date of the B’nei Mitzvah. (If you choose not to do this, TOS has enough to share.) It is customary to wear a kippah in a Jewish service, and all are welcome to do so.

As mentioned previously, the B’nei Mitzvah student wears a tallit on the bima (stage). Some families may have a tallit in the family which the student can wear; others may choose to purchase a new one. We are lucky here in Brookline to be able to purchase Judaica at Kolbo or at the Israel Book Shop, both on Harvard Street. Please ask the clergy or educators if you have any questions about purchasing a tallit.

Additionally, we ask that family members who are coming up to chant the Aliyah blessings wear a tallit, which we will have available at the bima for them, or if they’d like to wear one throughout the service, we have them available at the back of the sanctuary or chapel.

**A NOTE ABOUT ATTIRE**
Everything in a B’nei Mitzvah ceremony should reflect and enhance both the importance and the holiness of the occasion, including attire. Formal wear such as tuxedos or prom dresses is not appropriate, but students should wear clothing that reflects that this is a special day. Proper bima attire consists of covered shoulders, and skirts at a length that is suitable for sitting on the bima facing the congregation. If you have questions about appropriate attire for your student(s), please ask.
Guidelines for Ushers

B’nei Mitzvah families are expected to serve as ushers at the B’nei Mitzvah immediately preceding their own. By welcoming visitors, distributing prayer books and giving direction, ushers create a warm, welcoming environment and help to ensure a smooth, participatory worship experience. Your participation is truly a mitzvah. Please read below to familiarize yourself with understanding warm welcome instructions, accessibility questions, and security protocols.

- Stand at the sanctuary entrance by 10:10am.
- Please stay at this location until 10:45am and then feel free to sit in the last row for the remainder of the service. Keep one eye on the “door” and greet people as they come in.
- Welcome people as they enter. Use words like, “Welcome, Shabbat Shalom,” “Welcome, Good Shabbos,” “Good morning!” or similar greetings.
- Please ensure people are masked when entering the building and if not, offer a mask. If people refuse a mask, please indicate that masks are required in the building and they are welcomed to worship virtually if they choose not to wear one.
- Hand out the weekly bulletin (if applicable) and the Shabbat prayer book (Mishkan Tfilah). These are available at the back of the sanctuary by the interior doors. Large print books are also available.
- Know the locations of:
  - Bathrooms – Located on either side of the sanctuary and also down the stairs outside of Penn Hall. Two single stall/gender neutral restrooms are to the left of the sanctuary and a ladies room is located on the right just up a few stairs.
  - Kippot (Yarmulkes): located as you walk in the sanctuary in several bins.

At the end of the service please be at the doors to collect books and give a farewell greeting.

When in doubt about something, don’t hesitate to ask one of our staff members. Thank you for contributing to the feeling of warmth and welcome that our community is known for.
SECURITY ROLE OF GREETERS AND USHERS
(Always with a smile)

If you are like most ushers, you have little or no background in protection or security activities. You may feel inexperienced interacting with people who are upset or question your ability to engage in these types of situations. You may be friendly in a quiet way or assertively outgoing. You probably thought your role as a greeter or usher would involve smiling, shaking hands, directing guests, and helping during services. Fortunately, those will continue to be your primary tasks.

However, we all share responsibility for the safety and security of the congregation. You are not expected to do it all yourself or act as a security officer, but you are expected to continuously observe people and the environment, assess the situation to see if there is danger, and respond appropriately.

Your primary security tasks are to observe and assess, then get assistance or take appropriate emergency action. The best way for you to fulfill your role is to be aware, alert and ready to get assistance.

Be balanced in your approach. You should not be stricter or more lenient than appropriate or base your actions on your personal likes or dislikes about people or behaviors. Your actions can have an impact on the reputation and welfare of the entire synagogue. When in doubt, get another opinion and assistance, unless the matter is an emergency.

Get assistance if you have a concern: If you need to talk to someone whose behavior concerns you or if you are checking on a suspicious situation, do not confront someone on your own unless you have no other choice. Ask a facility person, lay leader or another guest to assist you. Stay alert to such situations so you can assist others quickly. IF YOU SEE, HEAR, OR SMELL ANYTHING SUSPICIOUS SAY SOMETHING!

If you need to, call 911 or Press Panic Button. We have a remote panic button that either the custodian/staff or usher will be wearing. Simply press and hold the button for 5 seconds and the alarm company will automatically call the police.
### Honors for Saturday Morning
Temple Ohabei Shalom ~ 1187 Beacon Street ~ Brookline, MA 02446 ~ 617.277.6610

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>B’nei Mitzvah:</th>
<th>Hebrew Name:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Torah Portion (&amp; page)</td>
<td>Haftarah Portion (&amp; page)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1. Ark Openers**  
(may choose 1-4 persons for single)  
**CUE:**  
Come up to the bima after prayers on page 244. Rabbis will call you up.

**2. Torah Undressers:**  
(May choose 1-2 persons for single; 1 person for double)  
**CUE:**  
Come up to the bima after prayers on page 244. Rabbis will call you up.

**3. 1st Aliyah**  
(usually grandparents)  
**CUE:**  
Please come to sit on the bima during or following the Torah procession.

**4. 2nd Aliyah** (parents) (1-2)  
**CUE:**  
Please come to sit on the bima during or following the Torah procession.

**5. 3rd Aliyah (B’nei Mitzvah):**  
**CUE:**  
Please come to the bima after the parent(s)’ blessing.

**6. Hagbah: Torah Lifter** (one strong person)  
**CUE:**  
Please come to the bima after the parent(s)’ blessing.

**7. Gelilah** (Torah roller and dresser) (1-2)  
**CUE:**  
Please come to the bima after the Prayer for Israel on page 374.

**8. Ark Openers** (returning the Torah to the Ark) (1-4)  
**CUE:**  
Please come to the bima after the Prayer for Israel on page 374.

### NOTES:
- Ark openers are an appropriate honor for either Jewish or non-Jewish family or friends.
- Please let us know if anyone you have selected will need assistance coming to the bima.
- You need not select someone for every honor listed.
EXPLANATION OF HONORS

The following honors are usually available on Saturday mornings:

**Ark Opening:** There are two separate opportunities for up to three people to open the Ark (at the beginning of the Torah service and at the end of the Torah service.)

**Undressing the Torah:** This honor consists of removing the decorations, mantle, etc., before the Torah is placed on the table to be read.

**Aliyot:** One who is called to recite the blessings during the reading of the Torah receives an *aliyah* (plural = *aliyot*). The family is invited to participate in a total of three *aliyot* (blessings of the Torah). Recitation of the Torah blessings is an honor reserved for adult members of the Jewish community. A non-Jewish spouse and/or children under the age of 13 may accompany those who are reciting the blessings. The first *aliyah* is customarily for grandparents or other close relatives or friends. The second *aliyah* is usually for parents. The third *aliyah* is reserved for the B’nei Mitzvah. The *brachot* (blessings) are in the Resources Section of this manual (see page 26) and are on the Torah table (in both Hebrew and transliteration) during the Shabbat service. You can also listen to the blessings on our website at: www.ohabei.org/bneimitzvah.html

**Hagbah** (lifting the Torah scroll): After the Torah is read, it is lifted up and held high for the congregation to see. (The scrolls are heavy! Please assign someone strong; it is also easier if this person has some advance training in Torah lifting.)

**Gelilah** (rolling and dressing the Torah): This honor consists of rolling the Torah scroll, tying the sash around it, and putting on the mantle and the decorations/silver.

**Blessing for Parents/Guardians:** Parents are asked to prepare and read an individualized blessing for their child. This blessing should be brief (1-2 paragraphs or 1-2 minutes in length). Guidelines for this blessing can be found on page 12 of this handbook.
BLESSINGS FOR AN ALIYAH

Before the Reading

Ba-re-chu et A-do-nai ha-me-vo-rach!
Ba-ruch A-do-nai ha-me-vo-rach le-o-lam va-ed!
Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam,
a-she-r ba-char ba-nu mi-kol ha-a-mim, ve-na-tan la-nu et To-ra-to.
Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai, no-tein ha-to-rah.

Bless Adonai who is blessed.
Blessed is Adonai who is blessed now and forever.
Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who has chosen us from among the peoples, and given us the Torah.
Blessed are You, Adonai, who gives the Torah.

After the Reading

Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu, me-lech ha-o-lam,
a-she-r na-tan la-nu To-rat e-met, ve-cha-yei o-lam na-ta be-to-chei-nu.
Ba-ruch a-ta, A-do-nai, no-tein ha-to-rah.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
who has given us a Torah of truth, implanting within us eternal life.
Blessed are you, Adonai, who gives the Torah.

To hear these blessings chanted, go to www.ohabei.org/bneimitzvah.html and click on the sound files.