

# Becoming B'nei Mitzvah at Germantown Jewish Centre



Germantown **Jewish** Centre  
A community of communities

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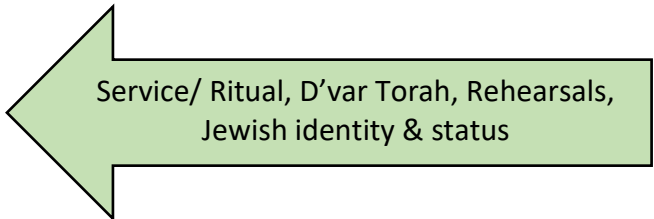
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## Ask Me About



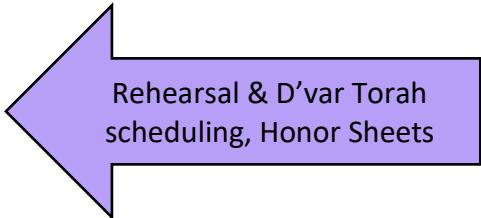
Service/ Ritual, D'var Torah, Rehearsals,  
Jewish identity & status



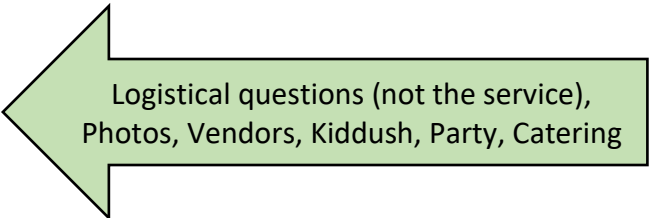
Tutoring, Mitzvah Project,  
Class Lists, BBMM



Scheduling and Meeting Coordination



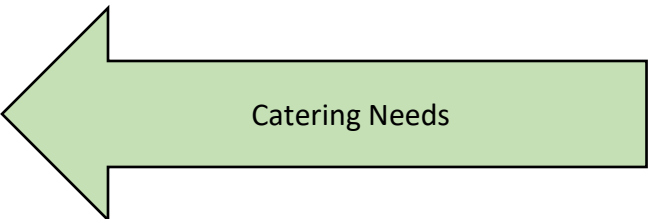
Rehearsal & D'var Torah  
scheduling, Honor Sheets



Logistical questions (not the service),  
Photos, Vendors, Kiddush, Party, Catering



Membership status, Finances



Catering Needs

# Table of Contents

Page 4: **Bar/Bat Mitzvah Student Requirements**

- Five Years of Jewish Study
- Participation in the BBMM program
- Completing a *Mitzvah* Project
- Chanting Torah at Weekday Morning *Minyan*
- Leading at the Bar/ Bat Mitzvah Service
- Teaching the community through a *D'var Torah*

Page 7: **Bar/Bat Mitzvah Family Requirements**

- A word about Spiritual Preparation
- List of Family Requirements
- *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* tutors
- Parent Blessings
- Providing a *Kiddush*

Page 9: **The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service**

- Honors at the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* Service
- *Shabbat* Decorum
- Prayer Groups at GJC & Location Options

Page 12: **Everything but the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service**

- Coordination
- Deliveries Before *Shabbat*
- *Shabbat* Musical Instrument Policy at GJC
- Saturday Night Parties
- *Kashrut*
- Catering
- *Kashrut* Policies
- Room Request Forms
- *Tzedaka*
- Continuing Jewish Education

Page 17: **Time-Table Checklist**

# **Bar/Bat Mitzvah Student Requirements**

## Overview

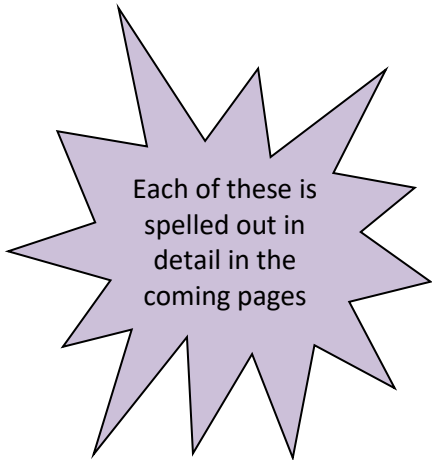
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In our contemporary Jewish world, the *B'nei Mitzvah* of our children represents a major Jewish milestone for the child, the parents and both the nuclear and extended family. The event marks the time in a young person's life when we recognize his or her ability to participate actively in upholding the *mitzvot* (commandments) of our tradition. It also marks the moment when Jewish law considers the child accountable to God and to the community for his/her/their actions.

Today, children 13 years-old are still sheltered under the protective wings of their parents. Yet, within synagogue walls, we encourage them to take on adult practices such as meaningful worship, community-building endeavors, and the continuation of their Jewish education. Many of the requirements that are listed below have either been incorporated in your student's learning or are being encouraged and tried-out on the road to *B'nei Mitzvah*.

### **This is a list of our student requirements:**

1. At least five years of Jewish study immediately previous to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*
2. Participation in GJC's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah Mehina* (BBMM) program
3. Creating and engaging in a *Mitzvah* Project
4. Assisting the weekday morning GJC *minyan* by reading a portion of the *Torah*
5. Leading prayer services on the occasion of their *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*
6. Teaching the community through delivering a *Dvar Torah* on the occasion of their *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*



Each of these is spelled out in detail in the coming pages

**A note about gender:** Hebrew is a gendered language and as such, words in Hebrew are either gendered male or female. We know that for people, including our emerging Jewish teens, who identify as part of a wider spectrum of gender, this binary language of male or female/ *Bar* or *Bat Mitzvah* can be problematic. This handbook intentionally uses the term *B'nei Mitzvah* (Hebrew plural – but, for some, also a possibility for a singular gender-neutral form parallel to the pronouns *they/ them/ theirs*) interchangeably with *Bar/ Bat Mitzvah* in an effort to ensure that all are seen, and all feel represented both by our language and in this important coming of age milestone in Jewish Tradition.



**A Note about Special Needs:** We see *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* as a “meaningful challenge” for our students, recognizing that each student comes with his/her/their own background, abilities and learning needs. As you work with our rabbis to plan your *simcha*, our goal is to partner with you in crafting a learning plan that works for your child.

## 1. Five years of Jewish Study

GJC is a member of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ) and subscribes to the standards for *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* established by the USCJ. According to these standards, the student must complete a **minimum of five years of Jewish study in an accredited religious school or Jewish day school, and this program must meet for a minimum of 5 hours per week. GJC requires that this study must be leading to and completing the academic year of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.**

Parents of children with special needs should contact the rabbis – we work hard to collaborate with each individual family to ensure that marking Bar or Bat Mitzvah can be a special and holy moment for both you and your child.

## 2. Bar/Bat Mitzvah Mehina (BBMM) program

Participation in the BBMM program, during the 6<sup>th</sup> grade academic year of the student, is a **requirement** for both students and parents. Our BBMM program also incorporates curriculum created by [Moving Traditions](#), and are part of a national cohort of congregations piloting this material. BBMM is comprised of two parts.

**BBMM Shabbat** | In preparation (*mechina*) for their entry into adult Jewish life, our 6<sup>th</sup> graders deepen their relationship to Jewish prayer, to one another, and to the many prayer communities that make up GJC, as they look ahead to becoming *B'nai Mitzvah*. BBMMers engage in interactive programming and text study with Ben Rotenberg (our Director of Education & BBMM teacher!) and explore and pray in each of GJC's *minyanim*.

**Family BBMM** | Six times during the year, on Sunday morning, parents and students engaging in learning together! This learning is especially important as adolescence begins, with its natural questioning and exploration of issues around God, our personal expressions of Judaism, and finding our places in the Jewish community. These programs also include sessions intended to orient and guide families with practical support as they proceed with the planning and preparation of this joyous event.

## 3. Mitzvah Project

Jewish tradition views service to the Jewish and larger community as an essential part of becoming a full-fledged adult member of the community. The moment of becoming *Bar* and *Bat Mitzvah* is a great opportunity for students and families to come together to work towards a more just and compassionate world. As part of the BBMM program, we will offer resources to help each student and family choose a *Mitzvah* Project, a commitment they make to contribute to the community in a way that is rooted in their unique set of skills and interests. A year before your child's *Bar/ Bat Mitzvah*, you will meet with [Ben Rotenberg](#) to begin the process of choosing and planning the *Mitzvah* project. When relevant, we can arrange for your child to be connected with one or more members the GJC Tikkun Olam Coordinating Committee to provide advice and mentorship on these project, and perhaps to help connect your child with the ongoing Tikkun Olam events at GJC. We hope Bar/Bat Mitzvah will be the beginning of a life-long commitment to *Tikkun Olam* (repair of the world), and that each young adult will know his or her power to make a difference in the lives of others.

#### **4. Chant Torah @ Morning Minyan**

During the week prior to a student's *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, students are **required** to assist the morning *minyan* at GJC (which takes place on Monday and Thursday). The service begins at 7:15am (7:00am on *Rosh Hodesh* and some holidays) and concludes at around 8:00am. At this service the student will read the *Torah* verses he or she has prepared, and parents may be called up for an *aliyah*. Students will also have the opportunity to put on *tefillin* and pray wearing a *tallit* for the first time during this week leading up to *B'nei Mitzvah*. Our rabbis and community members are available to help teach both students and parents about these *mitzvot*.

#### **5. Lead the Community in Prayer During your Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service**

Students are expected to participate in the prayer services the evening before, and on the day of their *B'nei Mitzvah* ceremony. A little more than one year prior to the service, we will be in touch with you to schedule a family meeting with [Rabbi Zeff](#) about these and other ritual aspects of *B'nei Mitzvah*.

##### **Typically, students will:**

- Recite the Friday evening *Kiddush* at *Kabbalat Shabbat* services
- Lead the service for taking the *Torah* out of the Ark
- Chant the *maftir* portion from the *Torah* reading with the *Torah* blessings
- Chant the *Haftarah* reading and corresponding blessings

##### **Additionally, students may elect to:**

- Lead *Shacharit*, *Musaf*, or other pieces of the service
- Lead the service for returning the *Torah* to the Ark
- Chant additional portions (*aliyot*) from the *Torah*

#### **6. Writing and Giving a D'var Torah**

One of the important transformations of the *Bar/ Bat Mitzvah* moment is going from child to adult – from student to teacher – in the eyes of community. Students work closely with our rabbis to prepare a short *D'var Torah* (speech), about five to ten minutes in length, to deliver on the day of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* as part of the service.

- Approximately three months prior to the event, the student begins to meet with one of the rabbis to discuss the *D'var Torah*.
- Most students meet with the rabbi 3-4 times (the first time is as a whole family; the others are just the student) to craft and refine their *D'var Torah*.

# **Bar/Bat Mitzvah Family Requirements**

## Overview

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Though B'nai Mitzvah is about a teenager marking the transition into Jewish adulthood, it is truly a mile-stone moment for the whole family. It is for this reason that we strive to both help families navigate the many steps in the process that goes in to planning for this *simcha* (joyous occasion) and also to accompany you on this journey, spiritually and emotionally.

### **Family Obligations for Bar/ Bat Mitzvah**

This is a list of our family requirements:

1. Consult with and keep appointments with GJC staff.
2. Attend the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah Mehina* (BBMM) programs with your child.
3. Be a member in-good-standing of GJC with all dues and payments current.
4. Regularly attend *Shabbat* morning services with your child.
5. Arrange for an appropriate tutor for your child (page 8).
6. Give a “parent blessing” at the B’nei Mitzvah service (optional, page 8).
7. Provide a *Kiddush* (refreshment reception) for the community (page 8).

### **Meetings... at a glance**

- ✓ About the Service  
12 months out with Rabbi Zeff
- ✓ Tutoring & Mitzvah project  
12 months out with Ben Rotenberg
- ✓ Logistics  
8 months out with Teena Robinson
- ✓ Three D’var Torah meetings  
Beginning 3 months out with Rabb Zeff
- ✓ Two Rehearsals  
Beginning 6-8 weeks out with Rabbi Zeff

**Full B’nei Mitzvah checklist on page 17**

### **A Word about \*Spiritual\* Preparation as a Family**

It is easy to lose sight of the religious and spiritual significance of this moment in the midst of the whirlwind of logistics and preparations. We try to do our best to help families attend to the more personal and spiritual aspects of the ceremony.

- Many families find the book ***Putting God on the Guest List*, by Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin**, to be particularly helpful in maintaining perspective and some measure of purpose amidst mundane matters. This book is available for purchase in The Little Shop.
- Check in with **friends who have gone through a Bar/Bat Mitzvah recently** for help, advice and perspective. Parents need as much support as students in dealing with such a complex event!
- Attend our **Bar & Bat Mitzvah parent panel**, arranged by parents each year to connect families with one another and create a forum for sharing ideas.
- Think about **Fair Trade, locally sourced products/ vendors and other values-based purchasing** to help you and your family stay anchored as you plan. GJC has a Fair Trade working group that is happy to work with families in this process. You can reach out to Betsy Teutsch, Chair of the Fair Trade Working Group for more information ([bpteutsch@comcast.net](mailto:bpteutsch@comcast.net)).
- **When in doubt – reach out!** [Rabbi Zeff](#) and [Ben Rotenberg \(our Director of Education\)](#) will do everything we can to help you manage the frustrating moments. You are welcome to drop us a line when you have a question or concern, or just need a little help or sympathy, as you prepare for this wonderful family milestone.

## **B'nei Mitzvah Tutoring**

A little more than one year prior to a student's scheduled *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, we will be in touch with you to schedule a meeting with [Ben Rotenberg \(our Director of Education\)](#) to select a tutor. There are a number of tutors with whom our students have worked in recent years, and we are happy to help you connect with one who will be a good fit for your child. Once you have selected a tutor, the tutor will meet with your child weekly to teach Torah and Haftarah trope and help your child prepare readings, blessings, and prayers that s/he/they will lead. Parents are expected to pay tutors directly for their services and to arrange tutoring times. Rates and schedules vary from tutor to tutor.

Ben Rotenberg will maintain regular contact with the tutor to monitor progress and are always available to help troubleshoot or answer any questions that come up around the service, assigning honors, and other moments during this year of preparation. See the contact list on page 2 for a quick guide on to whom you should direct which questions. Students typically have two rehearsals with the rabbi, one about 6-8 weeks prior and the other about 2 weeks prior to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. We expect students to be fully prepared 4-6 weeks before the event.

## **Parent Blessings**

In the moments following putting away the Torah Scrolls, we take a moment for gratitude and blessing. In addition to blessings from our rabbi and the presentation of gifts from our Men's' and Women's clubs (and, depending on the family, from minyanim, schools and camps!), we invite the parents of the Bar/ Bat Mitzvah to come forward and offer their child a special, personal blessing.

This is a *brief* moment for blessing, lasting **no more than 2 or 3 minutes**. Longer, biographical tributes to the child are inappropriate at the service; such speeches are better reserved for a luncheon following the ceremony or a separate family event. The rabbis are happy to discuss the parents' blessing, and also additional options and opportunities for participation throughout the service with you.

## **Provide a Kiddush for the prayer community**

Every *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is a cause for celebration. *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* families are required to provide *Kiddush* for everyone attending the service in which you celebrate on the day of the event. Arrangements for the *Kiddush* are made with Teena Robinson (Admin Assistant) and the appropriate caterer.

These arrangements must be made well in advance of the event (see timeline at the end of this handbook).



# **The B'nei Mitzvah Service**

## **Honors at B'nei Mitzvah Services**

You are welcome and encouraged to honor friends and family by having them participate in the service. Opportunities for honors are listed below.

**Note:** If you are holding your event with *Dorshei Derekh* or *Minyan Masorti*, the list of honors may be somewhat different. Please check with [Rabbi Zeff](#) to determine how to assign honors. More information about *minyan* and *B'nei Mitzvah* can be found in the next section.

If your event is located in the Charry Sanctuary (even if it is a combined service), your "Honors List" must be submitted to [Natalie Lyalin](#) (Rabbinic Assistant) **at least two weeks prior** to the ceremony. This list should include the Hebrew names in transliteration (and the names of their parents) of all those receiving *aliyot* (being called to the *Torah*).

### *Greeters & Honors Assistant*

Greeters should be assigned to welcome worshippers.

An honors assistant (who will work with the GJC honors usher) who knows your family members should be assigned to help us identify them for their honors.

### *Open and Close Ark*

This is an honor reserved for Jewish guests of the family. Two individuals may be assigned this honor at the beginning of the *Torah* Service, and two may be invited at the end of the *Torah* Service.

### *Aliyot (being called to the Torah)*

Five of the seven *aliyot* will be reserved for your family and friends. In addition, the *maftir aliyah* will be reserved for the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* student. People called to the *Torah* must be Jewish adults. Those people having *aliyot* should be fluent in the blessings; please contact the rabbis for practice materials if necessary. We do ask that you provide, in advance, the full Hebrew names of everyone being called to the *Torah* for an *aliyah*.

We wish to be inclusive of all family members, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Non-Jewish relatives and friends may be included in other ways in the service. [Rabbi Zeff](#) can be of assistance in helping families come up with ways to honor all of their guests.

### *Prayer for The Renewal of Creation/ Our Country/ Israel Prayer for Peace*

Guests of all backgrounds may be invited to lead these readings in English (Prayer for Israel may be read in either English or Hebrew) asking for blessings for the world, for our country and the blessing of peace for our world.

### *Torah Readers*

*Torah* readers selected by the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* family may chant a portion from the *Torah*.

Please note that chanting from the *Torah* is a special skill that involves reading directly from the

*Torah* scroll without transliteration or other aids. We can help arrange for support for those who wish to learn how to chant from the *Torah* or who need some help preparing; please contact the rabbis for details.

### *Hagbahah and G'lilah*

The *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* family may choose two Jewish adults to fulfill the honors of *Hagbah* (lifting the *Torah*) and *G'lilah* (rolling and dressing the *Torah*). Since *Hagbahah* involves lifting the *Torah*, the person selected must be physically able to do so. On *Shabbatot* when more than one *Torah* is used, additional *hagbahah* and *g'lilah* honors may be assigned.

### *Ashrei, Ein Keloheinu and Adon Olam*

Pre-*Bar/Bat Mitzvah* age Jewish siblings and friends are encouraged to participate in the event by leading *Ashrei, Ein Keloheinu* and/or *Adon Olam* towards the end of the service. Again, practice materials may be obtained from the rabbis. **There is also a strong tradition at GJC of inviting the entire BBMM class to lead one of these three pieces**, either alone or as part of a larger group.

## ***Shabbat Decorum***

Please be aware that our synagogue community has adopted certain customs regarding dress and behavior on *Shabbat* about which you are requested to inform your guests.



### ***Ritual Apparel***

As a sign of respect, all men are required to wear a *kippah* (head covering) in the synagogue during services. Women are all encouraged to wear a *kippah* or other head covering. *Tallitot* should be worn by adult Jews (post *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* age) who are participating in the service, including the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Did you know that there are Fair Trade options for Kippot, Tallitot, and other Jewish ritual items? Fair Trade Judaica has many offerings (see [www.fairtradejudaica.org](http://www.fairtradejudaica.org)), which you can purchase directly or through The Little Shop.

### ***Shabbat Prohibitions***

The use of electronic devices, including cell phones, pagers, and all types of cameras and computers, as well as writing and smoking, **are not permitted in the synagogue building or on the GJC grounds on Shabbat**. We ask that you inform your guests of the need to refrain from these activities. We also ask that you request that your guests (especially teen and tween guests) not to bring electronic or other visually distracting toys or fidgets (including fidget spinners, even though they are not electronic). Other analog fidgets (cubes, putty, etc.) are welcome!

### ***Gifts***

Please encourage your guests not to bring gifts, packages, or cameras into the sanctuary on *Shabbat*.

### ***Behavior of Guests***

Friends and guests must behave appropriately at the synagogue services and throughout the building. Parents will be held responsible for any damage done by their children. Parents must provide ample chaperones for parties and similar events in the synagogue.

### **Candy Showering**

There is a tradition of “showering” the *B’nei Mitzvah* student with candy after the completion of the *Haftarah* as a celebration of the sweetness of the day. The synagogue will provide appropriate candy for this purpose, taking both *kashrut* and safety considerations into account.



### **Optional elements: Flowers, Kippot, & Handouts**

Providing flowers for the sanctuary, *kippot* for guests to wear at the service, and explanatory handouts for guests are all optional. The office can tell you which area florists have worked with the Centre successfully in the past, and we have examples of handouts that have been used by other families. For coordination purposes, the GJC office should be informed well in advance of the event if families wish to provide *kippot* or handouts.

### **Belong to a Minyan???**

#### **Celebrating B’nei Mitzvah in and with our Prayer Groups at Germantown Jewish Centre**

At GJC, families participate in several different prayer groups on *Shabbat* morning. Over the years we have worked out effective ways for members of *Dorshei Derekh* and *Minyan Masorti* to coordinate with the rabbis and the Charry Sanctuary service. If you know that your event will be held with either *Dorshei Derekh* or *Minyan Masorti*, please let the executive director know as early as possible. You must also contact the appropriate coordinator of your *minyan* and inform the coordinator of the nature of your event and your needs. You can always contact [Rabbi Zeff](#) for advice or information on how to structure or arrange a service. See below for details on the different logistical options available.

### **Location options for families who are members of *Dorshei Derekh* or *Minyan Masorti***

**Option 1:** Joint service of *Minyan Masorti* or *Dorshei Derekh* with the Charry Sanctuary Service in the Charry Sanctuary

- The service begins at 9:30am, rather than the usual 10:00am.
- For the comfort of our *davenners* and based on the standards established by the Conservative movement, the Charry Sanctuary service uses pre-set microphones.
- We recite the blessings for *Kiddush*, handwashing and *ha-motzi* together at the end of services in the sanctuary.
- All talks in the Charry Sanctuary take place after the *Torah* is returned to the ark.
- The rabbi will offer a charge to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*.
- Two *aliyot* must be reserved for the congregation.
- *Kiddush*:
  - If you invite the entire group from the sanctuary (i.e.: *minyan*, Charry regulars, and guests), there is no room rental fee for the Marcus Auditorium.
  - If the *Kiddush* luncheon in the Marcus Auditorium is for invited guests only, there will be a room rental fee for the afternoon. As mentioned above, *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* families are required to provide *Kiddush* for everyone attending the service. Please consult [Teena Robinson](#) for details on room rental fees and standard *Kiddush* pricing.

Option 2:     *Minyan* on its own in the Marcus Auditorium

- Options for set-up include facing the windows or facing the stage. There is a good-quality sound system.
- There is an ark and a reading table in the Marcus Auditorium.
- GJC Staff will bring up any *siddurim*, *humashim*, *kippot*, *tallitot*, & *Torah* scrolls necessary for the service.
- *Kiddush*:
  - Food for *Kiddush* or luncheon must be provided either by an approved kosher caterer or prepared in the GJC kitchen with supervision (see above).
  - Other than this, *Kiddush* guidelines are as they are on a regular *Shabbat* in the *minyan*.

Option 3:     *Minyan* on its own in its regular location

- If there will be few guests, the service can take place in the *minyan's* usual location.
- Please check with the main office about the Maximum Capacity of the particular space. We have a legal obligation to adhere to all capacity requirements, as set by the fire marshal, for all of our rooms and celebration spaces.
- *Kiddush* guidelines are as they would be on a regular *Shabbat* in the *minyan*.

# Everything But the Service...

## Coordination

Holding a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* is a complex event that requires good coordination and communication between family and synagogue. Our executive director and the office staff are available to assist you in planning for the event.

In particular, clarity regarding your plans makes things move more smoothly. If you wish to use synagogue spaces for your celebration, the rooms must be reserved with the GJC office as early as possible.

## Deliveries before *Shabbat*

All food, flowers, balloons and supplies must be brought to GJC no later than 2 p.m. on Friday, prior to a *Shabbat* function. Nothing may be brought into or removed from the building on *Shabbat* (this applies to the entire building).

## Saturday Night Parties

Parties **must begin after *Shabbat* is officially over**, which is one hour after candle-lighting time on Friday. Please confirm the time [with the office](#).

## Musical instruments at your *Shabbat* celebration

The Centre has adopted policies permitting some use of acoustic, non-amplified musical instruments in the building on *Shabbat* (see chart below), and it includes specific guidelines regarding the use of musical instruments at a private luncheon on *Shabbat* afternoon. Please consult with [Rabbi Zeff](#) for details and for a list of approved musicians.

### Shabbat Musical Instrument Policy at Germantown Jewish Centre

Religious Services			
Acoustic (non-electric, not amplified) instruments may be used, subject to the policy of the prayer community in which the service takes place.			
Details below for specific prayer communities are examples of what has been done in the past; please consult the leaders of each prayer community for details on current policy.			
Charry Sanctuary	Minyan Masorti	Dorshei Derekh	Kol D'Mamah
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hand drums</li> <li>no stick drums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no musical instruments permitted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hand drums</li> <li>hand percussion</li> <li>no stick drums</li> <li>acoustic guitar, not amplified</li> <li>tambourine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hand drums</li> <li>hand percussion</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>must be announced at least a week before service date</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>must be announced at least a week before service date</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>must be announced through publicity</li> </ul>

<b>Parties, Kiddush</b>	
No musical instruments may be used at public functions. For specific guidelines for bands and musicians, please consult with the Executive Director.	
<b>Public Functions</b>	<b>Private Functions</b>
Open to community	Invited guests only
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>no musical instruments permitted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hand drums</li> <li>hand percussion</li> <li>no stick drums</li> <li>acoustic guitar, not amplified</li> <li>acoustic instruments, not amplified</li> <li>no DJ's or playing of pre-recorded music</li> </ul>

### ***Kashrut***

We encourage all families to celebrate the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* with a kosher *Seudat Mitzvah* (celebratory meal). The Centre has attractive facilities available for such an event. In addition, policies and procedures governing catering and kosher food preparation are available from the office. We encourage families to use our facilities to enhance their celebration on *Shabbat* afternoon or evening. To reserve rooms and to learn more about our facilities, please contact [Teena Robinson](#) in the GJC Office.

### **Catering**

Detailed information about catering rules and procedures is available from the office. We encourage families to avail themselves of the wide range of resources available at the Centre in planning their event. If you have specific questions about how to arrange for food service, feel free to consult with the office.

### ***Kashrut Policies***

Most families choose to continue their celebration, following the service with a festive *Kiddush* and/or meal. Therefore, it is important to know the catering options, and *kashrut* policies of the synagogue.

*The following policy and guidelines are established in order to provide a standard of synagogue practices consistent with the Conservative Movement.*

There are two different food guidelines in use in the synagogue.

- 1) In the Canteen Room or Maslow Auditorium, dairy or *pareve* foods prepared at home or purchased may be served. Members are expected to observe the rules of *kashrut* in preparing foods to be brought into the synagogue. No meat foods may be brought into these areas of the synagogue.
- 2) For functions being held in the Marcus Auditorium, Silver Kiddush Lounge or Charry Sanctuary Lobby, only the three catering options listed below are available.

- a) On-premises kosher caterer ([Frank Krafchik](#) & Centre Catering)  
Centre Catering, (215) 844-1507 ext. 25, is an independently owned and operated business. Food is prepared on site in the Marcus Kitchen under the *kashrut*

supervision of our *mashgiach*, Traditional Kosher Supervision (TKS). All food needs and staffing can be provided through Centre Catering. Sample menus are available from Centre Catering. Frank Krafchik can be reached at the number above, or at 215-247-4460. You can also email him at [avbaco@aol.com](mailto:avbaco@aol.com). We have worked with Centre Catering to expand fair trade offerings. Fair Trade coffee is available, at no extra charge. Is chocolate on your menu? Ask Frank to make sure it is fair trade! The Fair Trade working group can help you with table signs about the fair trade nature of your event if you are interested. Email Betsy Teutsch ([bpteutsch@comcast.net](mailto:bpteutsch@comcast.net)) for more information.

b) Self-catering

Families have the option of preparing their own food in the Marcus Kitchen under the supervision of our *mashgiach*, Traditional Kosher Supervision (TKS). There is a complete set of guidelines for self-catering available through the GJC office. The document aims to answer questions families most typically have about the process. It also includes an equipment list, kosher symbols, non-kosher fish (i.e., those you may not use), kosher establishments (bakeries, food stores, etc.), number of tables and chairs available, and so on. The executive director is available to consult with any families interested in considering self-catering.

c) Off-premises kosher caterers

Germantown Jewish Centre maintains a list of kosher caterers approved for use in the building. Sample menus and PR materials from approved caterers are available in the GJC office. The executive director must be informed of your choice of caterer at least two months prior to the event.

## Room Request Forms

Regardless of your catering choice or the type of event you choose to sponsor (*Kiddush* for the congregation, private affair, or use of Marcus Kitchen), room requests must be turned into the GJC office well in advance of your event. Scheduling the use of the Marcus Kitchen should be done at least 60 days in advance of the planned use.

## The Little Shop

Through The Little Shop, GJC attempts to support families planning a *simḥa*, while at the same time supporting the synagogue through the Women's Club. The Little Shop can help families arrange for invitations to the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. The Little Shop also sells *tallitot* and *kippot*. We encourage parents to purchase (or make) a *tallit* for every *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* student. **The Little Shop also maintains a gift registry** in which students can select items they wish to receive as gifts. For assistance with any of these matters, contact The Little Shop directly at 215-844-1507, ext. 21.

## Tzedakah

We encourage every family holding *B'nei Mitzvah* at GJC to assume an obligation of *tzedakah* (righteous giving) in honor of the event. Contributions may be made to the synagogue in general, to specific funds, or to other charitable organizations. A complete list of GJC funds is available in the office and on our [website](#).

## Continuing Jewish Education

We hope you will not view the *B'nei Mitzvah Shabbat* as the end-point of your child's Jewish education. The *B'nei Mitzvah* ceremony is a public statement that indicates each individual's willingness to be counted as an adult member of Jewish community. It is a stepping stone and a transitional point in each teen's emerging Jewish identity.

Through the turbulence of the adolescent years, a continued grounding in Jewish learning will give your child a value system to help respond to the many types of stimuli to which s/he/they will be exposed. There are opportunities at GJC and in our community for this higher level of education, including T<sup>2</sup> (Teen Tuesdays) & Confirmation Class, Jewish Scouting, Summer Camp, Gratz College Community High School, or Barrack Hebrew Academy. We encourage every family and every *B'nei Mitzvah* student to make a commitment to continuing Jewish education following *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*. Please contact [Ben Rotenberg \(our Director of Education\)](#) to learn more about these opportunities for continuing education.





# Time Table Checklist

## Three Years Before

- \_\_\_ Choose Date (typically, in the winter/ spring of 4<sup>th</sup> grade, as a whole class).
- \_\_\_ Begin to think about any off-site venues that might need to be reserved several years out.

## One and a Half -Two Years Before

- \_\_\_ Students and parents participate in *Bar and Bat Mitzvah Mehina* program (BBMM) – this is a **required** part of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade year for all Religious School and Day School families.

## 14 Months Before

- \_\_\_ Education Department will reach out to schedule your Year Out and Logistics meetings.

## One Year Before

- \_\_\_ Make sure you are up-to-date with your GJC Membership status and payments with [Rebecca Paquet](#) (Finance Assistant).
- \_\_\_ Year Out Meeting with Rabbi Zeff regarding the ritual aspects of the *B'nei Mitzvah*. This can also include questions that are coming up for your family around Jewish identity, status, and multifaith participation in the *Bar/ Bat Mitzvah* service.
- \_\_\_ Year Out Meeting with Ben Rotenberg to discuss tutoring and *Mitzvah* project. This is also a good time to discuss special needs and your child's best learning styles, pieces that might inform the learning process.
- \_\_\_ Reserve appropriate GJC approved caterer.
- \_\_\_ If you are affiliated with a *minyan*, let the minyan and the GJC office know which of the three service options (page 11), is your preference.

## Eight Months Before

- \_\_\_ Logistics meeting with [Teena Robinson](#) (GJC Office).
- \_\_\_ Register at The Little Shop.

## Six Months Before

- \_\_\_ Rabbis will check-in to make sure that studies are on schedule.
- \_\_\_ If family members or friends are planning to read *Torah*, make sure the rabbis know.
- \_\_\_ Schedule D'var Torah meetings and Rehearsals
- \_\_\_ Create the guest list and send out save the date cards.
- \_\_\_ Select invitations (consult with the Little Shop or refer to our resource book in the office).
- \_\_\_ Purchase *tallit, kippot, tefillin*. If you are interested, you can ask the Little Shop to purchase these items as fair trade in connection with Fair Trade Judaica (<http://fairtradejudaica.org/>).

### Three Months Before

- \_\_\_ Confirm with the GJC office all logistical pieces for your *simcha* (ordering flowers and other items for Shabbat morning, name of your caterer, synagogue *Kiddush* option you are selecting, and building logistics for your room rentals)
- \_\_\_ First D'var Torah meeting
- \_\_\_ Discuss the menu and other arrangements with your caterer.
- \_\_\_ Turn in lists of florist, musicians, and any other vendors to the GJC office and **provide certificates of insurance for all vendors.**

### Two Months Before

- \_\_\_ First rehearsal with the rabbis
- \_\_\_ Mitzvah Project complete

### One Month Before

- \_\_\_ Schedule an appointment through the GJC office for photos the week of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with the rabbis.

### Two Weeks Before

- \_\_\_ Give [Natalie Lyalin](#) (Rabbinic Assistant) your completed honors sheet.
- \_\_\_ Give your caterer final numbers.
- \_\_\_ Final rehearsal with the rabbis (don't forget to wear the shoes you planning to wear at your *Bar/ Bat Mitzvah*).

### Final Week

- \_\_\_ Chant Torah on Monday and/ or Thursday at morning *minyan*.
- \_\_\_ Coordinate delivery times of flowers, food and other things with the office.
- \_\_\_ Take *B'nei Mitzvah* photos.
- \_\_\_ Take a moment, breathe and enjoy!

