



A Guide to B_Mitzvah

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B_Mitzvah at Temple Beth Am

Our Values and Approach

Life-cycle rituals are one way that Judaism reminds us to appreciate the special milestones in our lives. The journey of B_Mitzvah is a life-cycle ritual encouraging families to celebrate the growth, learning, and communal role that a young person takes on as they begin the transition to adulthood and are called to Torah. Our Temple Beth Am Mission¹, Vision², and Values³ guide us in this process— ensuring an emphasis on community, on-going Jewish growth and learning, alongside joyful and meaningful Jewish experiences.

Temple Beth Am sees the B_Mitzvah experience as part of an ongoing, holistic relationship to Judaism and the Temple Beth Am community. The B_Mitzvah process is tightly interwoven into Gan HaLimmud (“The Gan”), which offers learning, community gatherings, retreats, and so much more. While each offering something different, The Gan and our B_Mitzvah program share a sacred purpose: to inspire youth to joyfully deepen relationships to Judaism and our community by engaging the soul, heart, and mind.

A Note on B_Mitzvah

B_Mitzvah is a term that is gender-neutral. The underscore is for each student to fill in with whichever terminology they feel most comfortable with. We hope to best connect with the terms we have inherited from our tradition while also reflecting the beautiful diversity of our student community. Please use the chart below to best understand the options. If you have questions or suggestions for another term we should include, please let us know.

בָּר	בַּת	בְּנֵי	בָּנוֹת	מִבֵּית
<i>Bar</i>	<i>Bat</i>	<i>B'nai</i>	<i>B'not</i>	<i>MiBeit</i>
Son	Daughter	Children	Daughters	“From the house of...”
Singular Male	Singular female	Plural (male or multiple genders)	Plural female	Gender-Neutral (singular or plural)

¹ We deepen relationships to Judaism and our community by engaging the soul, heart, and mind.

² Inspiring lives and healing the world through powerful Jewish experiences.

³ Inclusion, Inspiration, Purpose, Engagement, Curiosity, Responsibility – For greater explanations, please go to templebetham.org/about-us/mission-vision-and-values/

The Journey of B_Mitzvah

Our Temple Beth Am community is based around building relationships, deepening connections, and learning from each other.

- As a life-cycle event, the path towards B_Mitzvah and beyond begins at home from an early age through meaningful Jewish experiences, rituals, and friendships. As a compliment to home learning, The Gan enables students to explore Jewish values, music, art, and more, including Hebrew through motion, *tefilah* (prayer) and building connections with peers alongside Jewish mentors.
 - To encourage connections with Judaism and the Temple Beth Am community, we require all families to enroll in The Gan for at least two years before becoming B_Mitzvah (unless moving from another synagogue).
- To familiarize families, alongside students, with Shabbat services at Temple Beth Am, regular attendance is essential. Our expectations are that students and their families will attend Shabbat services:
 - 4 times in their 4th Grade year
 - 5 times in their 5th Grade year
 - 6 times in their 6th Grade year
 - 7 times in their 7th Grade year
 - 12 times after beginning meetings with Temple Beth Am Clergy. We encourage more Shabbat morning services on Saturdays.
- In Grades 4-7, we encourage opportunities for learning and connection with increased opportunities and resources:
 - 4th Grade – students have more opportunities in The Gan (including retreats, youth group events, and midweek learning).
 - 5th Grade – families are invited to a B_Mitzvah Orientation during the student's 5th grad year Families will receive their B_Mitzvah dates*, learn about the goals of the B_Mitzvah program, and start building connections with families of their classmates.
 - *Once dates are set, families can ask to change dates for any reason up until one year before the original date. Within one year, dates will only be changed for emergency reasons (at the discretion of Clergy).
 - 6th Grade – Families are invited to attend a B_Mitzvah meeting to help families navigate the details of the process, including the sharing of tutor information, this is facilitated by TBA clergy and is a great opportunity to get to know our congregational Rabbis and staff.

- **Around** 8-10 months before the B_Mitzvah date, our Temple Beth Am team will contact families with a schedule of six meetings with Clergy and two rehearsals. We strongly encourage families to begin weekly meetings with a Beth Am approved Tutor at this time.
 - At these meetings, the rabbis will get to know the families and guide the students on choosing their Torah and Haftarah portions, D'var Torah, Mitzvah Project, Family Honors, and more.
- The **Rehearsals** will take place at the following times, with few exceptions (recognizing it may require students to miss school):
 - **First Rehearsal** – Thursday nine days before the B_Mitzvah from 10 AM-12 PM
 - **Final Rehearsal** – The Friday directly before the B_Mitzvah service from 10 AM-12 PM
- The Weekend of the B_Mitzvah – at the Friday Shabbat Evening service, students will lead 1-2 prayers in addition to leading on Saturday Shabbat morning.
- We look forward to your student(s) continuing their Jewish journey through a variety of experiences including: The Gan, the Madrichim Program, Covenant Renewal in 10th Grade (including a trip to Washington D.C.), the 11th-12th Grade Trip to New York, NFTY participation, URJ Summer Camps and Israel programs, and much more.

At Temple Beth Am, we strongly believe that B_Mitzvah is not the end of the Jewish journey, it is just beginning! We are excited to be on this journey with you.

B_Mitzvah Intake Form

****We encourage you to complete this form online [here](#)****

Please also share any information regarding your student's needs or family dynamics that will help us guide you through this process.

Student

Student's Name/Preferred Name:	
Pronouns (he/him, she/her, they/them, etc):	
Preferred Service Language (Bar/Bat/B'Brit/B'nai/etc):	
Hebrew Name:	
Birthday:	
School/Grade:	
Hobbies/Interests:	
Hebrew Tutor:	
Mitzvah Project:	

Parent/Guardian 1

Name/Preferred Name:	
Pronouns:	
Hebrew Name:	
Jewish? (If no, do you identify with a faith tradition?):	
Occupation/Organization/ Interests/Activities	
Email address:	
Phone number:	

Parent/Guardian 2

Name/Preferred Name:	
Pronouns:	
Hebrew Name:	
Jewish? (If no, do you identify with a faith tradition?):	
Occupation/Organization/ Interests/Activities	
Email address:	
Phone number:	

Guide for B_Mitzvah Meetings with the Clergy

Meeting 1—Introductory Meeting with Rabbi Ruth

When	About 8-9 months before the B_Mitzvah date
What	Beginning the process together, including discussing the values and purpose of B_Mitzvah and a great opportunity for families to begin building relationships
Who Comes	B_Mitzvah student(s) and all parents
Bring to meeting	Completed intake form (if not submitted online)
Given at meeting	A Guide to B_Mitzvah: this guidebook will have everything each student and family need to support them through the B_Mitzvah process
Length	One hour

Meeting 2—Choose Your Verses with Rabbi Debbie

When	About two weeks after the Introductory Meeting
What	Student(s) choose which Torah and Haftarah verses will be chanted, and we discuss the Torah and Haftarah portions, along with explaining the TaNaKh (Jewish Bible)
Who Comes	Student(s)—no parents required. For two students, both will meet with the Rabbi at the same time
Preparation	Student(s) need to have read the entire Torah portion in English and should arrive prepared to discuss the text, including any questions or concerns. We encourage parents' involvement in reading.
Bring to meeting	Blue Torah Portion Booklet
Given at meeting	Verses to be chanted for Torah and Haftarah
Length	45 minutes to one hour

Meeting 3—D'var Torah Planning Meeting with Rabbi Laura

When	About a month after the second meeting
What	An explanation of the purpose, process, and support of writing the D'var Torah
Who Comes	Student(s)—no parents required
Preparation	Student(s) should be familiar with the entire portion and their assigned verses.
Bring to meeting	A Guide to B_Mitzvah and Blue Torah Portion Booklet
Length	45 minutes

Meeting 4—D'var Torah Check-In & Exploring the Haftarah with Rabbi Laura

When	About one month after the 3 rd meeting and focuses on the Haftarah
What	Encouragement and feedback for editing their D'var Torah, and studying the purpose and text of the Haftarah
Who Comes	Student(s)—no parents required
Bring to meeting	A Guide to B_Mitzvah, a draft of the D'var Torah, and an update on the Mitzvah Project
Length	45 minutes

Meeting 5—Music Selection with Chava

When	About one month before the final meeting
What	Discussion of history of Jewish music, the variety of Jewish music globally, and choosing of some pieces of the music for the service. For two students, prayer assignments are confirmed with tutors
Who Comes	Student(s) and at least one parent (for each student)
Bring to meeting	Nothing is needed
Length	45 minutes

Meeting 6—Wrap Up & Assigning Service Parts with Rabbi Ruth

When	About one month before the B_Mitzvah
What	Opportunity for families to ask any remaining questions and address any concerns about the B_Mitzvah
Who Comes	Student(s) and at least one parent (for each student)
Bring to meeting	Current draft of students' D'var Torah (preferably printed) Family Blessing for the Rabbi to edit and approve (email or printed) Participation Opportunities Worksheet (email or printed)
Length	One hour

First Rehearsal with Rabbi Debbie

When	The Thursday nine days before the B_Mitzvah
Who Comes	Student(s) and one parent (for each student), all parents welcome
Bring to meeting	A Guide to B_Mitzvah, finished D'var Torah, tallit, and the shoes that will be worn at the service. (This is to make sure that the student(s) practice holding the Torah in these shoes. We caution against wearing large heels.)
Length	2 hours from 10 AM-12 PM

Final Rehearsal with the Rabbi officiating at the B Mitzvah

When	The Friday directly before the B_Mitzvah service
Who Comes	Student(s) and all parents (family and loved ones welcome)
Bring to meeting	A Guide to B_Mitzvah, finished D'var Torah, tallit, shoes, and anything you will want on the Bimah
Length	2 hours from 10 AM-12 PM

Families planning on having a photographer may take photos either at the final rehearsal or Saturday morning before the services*. To ensure Shabbat remains a sacred occasion, photos may not be taken during services. However, all livestreams are recorded and will be available for your family on YouTube. Photos may also not be taken after the service on Saturday as we will be continuing to celebrate with your family during the Kiddush lunch, which is part of the sacred ritual. **Please let us know if you wish to take photos with the Torah as a Rabbi will need to help with those. For all scheduling related to photos, please email bnaimitzvah@templebetham.org.**

* Photos on Saturday before services can happen between 8:30-9:30am. *Please note that we hold our Tot Shabbat service in the sanctuary on the 3rd Saturday of the month from 9:30-10am. Other events may also be scheduled during this time.*

Friday Immediately Preceding the B Mitzvah

When	Friday evening Shabbat Services at 6:15pm
What	Each B_Mitzvah student must attend. Students lead both the V'ahavta and Kiddush
Who Comes	Everyone is welcome including visiting friends and family

Day of the B Mitzvah

When	Plan to arrive by 9:45am (unless you would like to take photos). If you wish to take photos that day, please coordinate with our professional team.
Who Comes	The B_Mitzvah student, the Temple Beth Am community and all loved ones.
Bring to meeting	Printed copy of your D'var Torah, Blue Torah Portion Booklet, prayer book, tallit, Family Blessing, anything else you want on the bimah, and a lot of energy
Prior to leaving	Please remember to take your certificates, book, and mezuzah. A link to the recording of the service will be sent within the next week.

For any questions or comments, please contact us at:

bnaimitzvah@templebetham.org.

Sacred Obligations of B_Mitzvah

Continuing Your Education

At Temple Beth Am it is our understanding that the B_Mitzvah is one step in your lifelong Jewish connection. We fully expect you to remain enrolled in The Gan through 10th grade Covenant Renewal or 12th grade Graduation, or engaged actively in Jewish community in some fashion, such as youth group, camp, volunteering, social justice, and more.

Mitzvah Project

A Mitzvah Project is a community service project designed and carried out by each individual B_Mitzvah student as a way of engaging in mitzvot that help others, which is a central message of Torah and Judaism. The project must be:

- Hands-on: Do a project where you perform tasks that assist those in need. Raising money and babysitting do not qualify.
- Designed to bring direct benefit to an agency or individual, often having contact with those you help, such as visiting shut-ins, serving food to homeless people, and preparing meals for someone who is ill are all examples of direct benefit. If there is a cause that is important to you, and does not have direct work, contact their volunteer services to find a way to do some work that ultimately benefits its clients.
- Designed in a realistic manner to be carried out and completed in advance of becoming B_Mitzvah. Even a short-term, concrete project can have a greater impact than you realize.
- Time invested makes a difference. Most B_Mitzvah students go 2-6 times for a total of around 13 hours, to engage in one specific volunteer project.
- Projects are best designed by students (sometimes with a little help from parents) around their own personal concerns and talents. Be aware that many animal shelters have a minimum age of 16 to volunteer.

Giving Tzedakah

- An important Jewish tradition is to give charitable donations during an important moment in our lives. One way we thank God for what is good in our lives is by sharing with someone for whom things may be more challenging. Discuss important charities and causes as a family. Many parents make a donation in honor of the B_Mitzvah and you can also make your own.
- Some families donate 3% of the cost of their own celebration to Jewish organizations, both in Seattle and around the world, including a contribution to Temple Beth Am. We are happy to provide suggestions or recommendations.

Approach to Preparation

- B_Mitzvah preparation should be a positive and meaningful experience, but is also a very serious commitment. If, during the months leading up to the service, you are unable to make time to participate in tutoring sessions, practice regularly, complete the appropriate work, and attend Saturday morning Shabbat services regularly, we will work with you to reschedule the date for a time when you can make this commitment.
- Have fun! Learning, growing, and preparing to become B_ Mitzvah may be one of the most special and enjoyable experiences in your Jewish journey.

Tips for Writing your D'var Torah

2-3 pages, double spaced (14-point font). Please put your name and page numbers on each page. Remember to write in paragraphs for each section.

Part I: Introduction

- A one to two sentence catchy introduction

Part II: Summary

- Summarize in one paragraph the Torah portion. This should be the shortest section. Make sure that you mention the name of the portion in this section.

Part III: Interpretation

- This is the longest part of your D'var Torah. This draws a deeper meaning from the Torah story, and shows the connection of the story to your life. It should involve three elements:
 - o Explanation of your theme
 - o Share insight from one to two commentators
 - o Share how this theme connects to your life and the lives of others through personal experience, movie, TV show, song lyric, etc.

Part IV: Teaching

- This is the lesson that you want people to walk away with—what do you want them to learn?
- Some suggestions:
 - o This can be in the form of a prayer:
 - “Given the lessons of this Torah portion, I pray that we will...”
 - o This can be in the form of a hope:
 - “I hope that we can learn from our Torah portion that...”

Part V: Conclusion

- A one to two sentence summarizing conclusion.

Bimah Participation Opportunities & Guidelines

Shabbat morning at Temple Beth Am is a community experience. Together, we celebrate each student being called to Torah. We also welcome various individuals to participate in the Shabbat morning services, including both community members and those chosen by each B_ Mitzvah family. These ritual honors help share this sacred moment with those who close to you.

We limit the number of honors in order to maintain the importance of a communal worship service, and keep the service to a reasonable length. Please remember to give honors out evenly, trying to avoid any undue hurt among family.

This guide will help families select whom to honor. Please speak to your Rabbi about any individual questions or needs that you may have.

Parents:

Parents participate in the passing of the Torah, the hakafah (parading the Torah around the community), stand with their child for their final Aliyah (reading from the Torah), and then are welcome to offer a short personal blessing to their young adult in front of the open Torah. The blessing is described in the Family Prayer Guidelines and is submitted at the final clergy meeting. Please save longer speeches for your celebration after the service.

Grandparents and Great-grandparents:

Grandparents and great-grandparents are welcome to come up to the bimah when the Torah is removed from the Ark and participate in passing the Torah down through the generations, as they are able. They will return to their seats during the hakafah so that they can see and hear their grandchild.

Undressing the Torah:

One Family can invite two people (must be Jewish) to join in the hakafah and then come up to the bimah to undress the Torah, including the crowns, yad (pointer), cover, and belt. These objects are placed on a small table on the bimah. They then return to their seats in the congregation.

Torah Blessing / Aliyah:

Each Family may have up to four adult Jewish participants join in a single Aliyah together, chanting the prayer both before and after the reading in Hebrew. They remain on the bimah after their second blessing as the B_Mitzvah leads and reads their second Aliyah. They then return to their seats in the congregation.

Mi Shebeirach Prayer:

During the service, we will pause to say a prayer for those in need of healing. While we do not keep a formal list, the clergy will invite anyone in the congregation to share names aloud.

Dressing and Returning the Torah / Hagbah & G'lilah

One Family can invite one Jewish adult to do Hagbah, the lifting of the Torah before wrapping it, and another adult to do G'lilah, the dressing of the Torah. The Hagbah needs to know how to lift the Torah correctly. After lifting the Torah, the Hagbah turns around to show the community what was just read in the scroll. They then sit while it is dressed, before returning the Torah to the Ark. They then return to their seats in the congregation.

Ark Opener/Closer:

Each Family may have two participants, Jewish or not, of any age, open the Ark when we return the Torah to the Ark. They remain at the Ark to close the curtains and doors as well. They then return to their seats in the congregation. This is the recommended honor for participants under 13.

Kaddish List:

In addition to the weekly congregational kaddish list, the Rabbi will read the names of any loved ones who have died and the family would like to be mentioned, such as grandparents, family friends, and other relatives. Please provide the Rabbi with the relationship between your loved one and the B_Mitzvah student.

Participation Opportunities Worksheet

Return this form at the 5th Clergy meeting

We encourage you to complete this form online, [here](#)

Student's Name:		
Student's Hebrew name:		
B_Mitzvah Date:		
Parents Names (English & Hebrew):		
Will grandparents participate in the passing of the Torah?	Yes	No
How many grandparents from your family will participate? (Please include names)		
Are there any mobility issues?		

Undressing the Torah (2 participants, must be Jewish)—ONE FAMILY

Name	Relationship
1.	
2.	

Blessing over the Torah / Aliyah (up to 4 participants, must be Jewish)—EACH FAMILY

Name (English)	Name (Hebrew)	Relationship
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		

Ark Opener (2 participants)—EACH FAMILY

Name	Relationship
1.	
2.	

Returning the Torah—ONE FAMILY

Lifting the Torah / Hagbah (participant must be Jewish AND able to lift the Torah)

Name	Relationship

Dressing the Torah / G'ililah (participant must be Jewish)

Name	Relationship

Guidelines for Family Prayer

1. The family prayer is optional. It can be delivered by one parent, all parents, or can be omitted.
2. This is a prayer about your hopes for the moment, not a speech about your child. Please save longer speeches for your celebration after the service.
3. The total prayer should not exceed one paragraph (250-300 words), but can be shorter as well.
4. There is only one prayer per family, with that one paragraph split amongst all parents.
5. The prayer must be submitted for approval by your Rabbi at the B_Mitzvah Wrap-Up meeting, email or printed.
6. All drafts must be finalized by the First B_Mitzvah Rehearsal (nine days before the B_ Mitzvah).

Please Do:

- Offer words of guidance and wisdom as your child enters adulthood
- Use this as an opportunity to express gratitude
- Consider concluding your blessing with the words of the Shehechyanu or another formal text—thanking God for enabling friends and family to share this special day. This blessing and other samples are included below.

Please Do Not:

- Summarize everything that has happened in the life of your child (I remember when they had diapers, then they had braces, etc.)
- Embarrass or insult your child by sharing early childhood memories or using unflattering adjectives to describe them.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to be in touch with your Rabbi at any time.

We hope these guidelines will help make this special day more meaningful for you and your family.

Sample Family Prayers

Please note: These prayers are just examples—feel free to be creative.

Shehechiyanu

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁהֵחֵי-יָנוּ
וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעַנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה.

Baruch ata Adonai Eloheinu melech ha-olam, sheh-heh-cheh-yanu v'kiy-ma-nu
v'hi-gi-anu laz-mahn ha-zeh.

Our praise to You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of all: for giving us life,
sustaining us, and enabling us to reach this season.

* * *

Parents' Blessing from the Babylonian Talmud, Berachot 17a:

May you live to see your world fulfilled.

May your destiny be for worlds still to come.

And may you have hope in generations past and yet to be.

May your heart overflow with understanding.

May your mouth utter wisdom, and your tongue bring forth song.

May your vision be on a straight path before you,

And your eyes shine with the light of Torah.

May your face shine like the brightness of the heavens.

May your lips utter knowledge

And your being rejoice in righteousness.

And may you passionately pursue the sacred,

as you yearn to hear the words of the Holy One of Blessing.

* * *

God, we stand here today before you with gladness and thanksgiving. For you have kept us alive, sustained us and enabled us to reach this precious moment.

We give thanks to You for the wondrous privilege of seeing our son/daughter attain this milestone. Growing day by day, week by week, year by year; For the health, strength that you have given him/her; For the spirit and mind which you bestow upon him/her; for his/her ability to elicit and return love – for all of these precious gifts we give our thanks O, God.

May the teachings of our heritage and the traditions of the Jewish people guide him/her throughout life and may he/she lead a life worthy of your blessings. Today, cherished dreams and hopes are fulfilled. Today, new hopes are born.

* * *

We give thanks for this day, dear God, and for the years of growth and learning that preceded it. And, for the privilege of participating in this community as a family of life-long learners. Now as our child steps forth to affirm his/her commitment to the ideals and mitzvot of our faith, our soul is joyful, our mind is a peace.

We pray that this day's service may long echo in our child's memory. May it engrave on his/her heart the understanding that this day initiates a life more firmly dedicated to the study of Torah and the fulfillment of mitzvot, to deeds of justice and kindness, to faithful membership in the Household of Israel.

* * *

What I wish for my child, I wish for all our children.
I wish for you to be a person of character
Strong but not tough, gentle but not weak.
I wish for you to be righteous
But not self-righteous, honest but not unforgiving.
Wherever you journey, may your steps be firm
And may you walk in just paths and not be afraid.
Whenever you speak, may your words be words of wisdom and friendship.
May your hands build and your heart preserve
What is good and beautiful in our world.
May the voices of the generation of our people move through you
and may the God of our ancestors be your God as well.
May you know that there is a people, a rich heritage
To which you belong and from that a sacred place
You are connected to all who dwell on this earth.
May the stories of our people be upon your heart
And the grace of the Torah dance in your soul.

* * *

Gratefully we thank you for the joyous privilege
Of seeing our child attain this milestone.
On this day cherished dreams and hopes are fulfilled.
On this day new dreams and new hopes are born.
We pray that Your protecting and loving care will accompany her.
Wherever she goes and in all that she does,
Help her to become all that she is capable of being.
Give her strength to do all good things that are within her reach.
Keep her loyal to the best that she has been shown,
and to the noblest Jewish teachings she has been taught.
May her deeds find favor in the eyes of others and be worthy of your
blessings.

Sponsored Kiddush Luncheon

One of the major moments of Shabbat is when our entire community gathers after services to break bread and enjoy a Kiddush Lunch, connecting, celebrating, and enjoying what it means to be all together. To fulfill the mitzvah of breaking bread as a community after this exciting milestone, B_Mitzvah families host a light lunch in the social hall for their guests and the congregation on the Shabbat that their child is called to Torah. This Kiddush Lunch affirms that this is not a private occasion, rather that Shabbat is a sacred moment for everyone in the Temple Beth Am community to be together.

Catering options:

Below is the information for five different caterers who are familiar with Temple Beth Am policies and practices. These options are wide-ranging when it comes to menu options, price points, and service (i.e. delivery, enhanced delivery, full-service catering).

Please note that Zylberschein's is not a full-service caterer, though you may inquire with them directly about that option as it may be possible.

Booking:

It is up to the B_Mitzvah families to book directly with the caterer and choose a menu for the lunch. For double B'nai Mitzvah families, this process will be done with the other family. It is important to note that caterers often book several months in advance, so you should book your caterer at least eight weeks in advance, if not sooner. Temple Beth Am needs you to let us know who your caterer is at least four weeks in advance by emailing temple@templebetham.org.

Your Guests and TBA Congregants:

Families are responsible for paying for lunch for their guests. Please let your caterer know your personal guest count, including personal guests who are Temple members. In alignment with our community values, please let your caterer know to add 30 extra meals for Temple Beth Am community members and to bill Temple Beth Am directly to cover the congregants who are attending services and who are not your invited B_Mitzvah guests. Given the range of pricing among the below caterers, Temple Beth Am will either:

1. pay for between 30 people in the guest count (not including delivery and staffing), if this adds up to \$750 or under, or
2. pay \$750 directly to the caterer, in the case that you choose a catering option where the price of 30 people exceeds \$750

As community-member attendance at services fluctuates seasonally, we will connect with the caterer and have them bill us directly if the congregant count is expected to exceed 30 people.

Food and Drink

Traditionally the Kiddush Lunch is vegetarian and kosher style but can and often includes fish. Please note we do not allow pork or shellfish, and we prefer that congregants avoid meat and poultry. Temple Beth Am provides coffee, tea, and water but we ask that you provide dessert.

Set-up:

At least five days prior to the event, you or your caterer should contact Temple Beth Am staff to finalize the room set-up. As noted, please consider traffic flow when planning your set up. The temple custodial staff will set up tables and chairs according to the room set-up developed among the families, caterer and Beth Am facilities manager.

Temple Beth Am can provide the following items for the lunch (as space allows):

- 18 large round tables (60" diameter)
- 11 Stand-up café tables (36" diameter; 30" or 42" high)
- 18 6' long rectangular tables
- 8 8' long rectangular tables
- serving utensils
- disposable table clothes and compostable service ware

Please note that Temple Beth Am does not provide table linens. As standard practice, we can set out plastic tablecloths and provide disposable napkins, dishes, and cutlery. If you would like linens, dishware or anything other than what's listed above, you must arrange for that with your caterer.

Additionally, you may request outside seating but please note that the tents in the courtyard are not waterproof.

Additional Notes

- Please arrange in advance with the Facilities Manager if your caterer is using the Temple Beth Am kitchen for food preparation and storage
- If your caterer wants to use our flatware or dishes, it is the responsibility of caterers and families to clean dishes, glasses and flatware and return them to the appropriate cabinet or cart

Caterers:

Eric Gorbman Catering
(206) 582 4764
egorbman@hotmail.com

Mangia Bene Catering
(206) 548-4994
deb@mangiabenecatering.net
www.mangiabenecatering.net

On Safari Foods
(206) 932-9497
teresa@onsafarifoods.com
www.onsafarifoods.com

Nourish Catering
206-403-1365
<https://nourishcatering.com>
events@nourishcatering.com

Zylberschtein's Delicatessen & Bakery
(206) 403-1202
catering@zylberschtein.com
<https://zylberschtein.com/catering>

Mitzvah Project Opportunities

Teen Feed

Provides meals and support to homeless teens.

www.teenfeed.org, volunteer@teenfeed.org

Duties of former B_Mitzvah volunteers included: preparing, delivering and serving meals to homeless teens, serving as Allies (youth) and Advocates (adults), sitting and talking with the guests. Allies handed out items from the supply closet while Advocates dined with the homeless youth.

WestSide Baby

Collects and distributes free diapers, clothing, cribs and safety gear for babies and children www.westsidebaby.org

Shana Allen, Volunteer Manager, (206) 686-6659, shana@westsidebaby.org

Duties of former B_Mitzvah volunteers included: processing orders for social workers and putting together packages of infant clothing and gear for distribution.

University District Food Bank

A walk-in food bank servicing families from across Northeast Seattle

www.udistrictfoodbank.org, volunteer@udistrictfoodbank.org, (206) 523-7060

Duties of former B_Mitzvah volunteers included: repackaging bulk items into single servings and stocking shelves for customers from supplies in storage/intake area.

Tree House

Provides support and services for foster children.

www.treehouse4kids.org, volunteer@treehouseforkids.org, (206) 267-5117

Duties of former B_Mitzvah volunteers included: sorting items in the warehouse for the Tree House Store and working at the holiday carousel in downtown Seattle (all proceeds from the carousel went to the organization).

Jewish Family Services

Helps vulnerable individuals and families in the Puget Sound region achieve well-being, health and stability.

<http://www.jfsseattle.org/>

Jane Deer-Hileman at (206) 861-3155, volunteer@jfsseattle.org

Duties of former B_Mitzvah volunteers included: stocking shelves, repackaging bulk items into single servings, asking vendors of the Capitol Hill Farmers Market to donate produce to the food bank, packing lunches, grocery bags or boxes for delivery, and occasionally delivering food once sorted.

Compass Center

Develops and provides essential services and affordable housing for homeless and low-income people in the greater Puget Sound region
www.compasshousingalliance.org, volunteer@compasshousingalliance.org,
(206) 474-1067

Duties of former B_Mitzvah volunteers included: preparing food for Operation Sack Lunch.

Friendship Circle

Bridges the gap between special needs and typical youth through shared experience, empowers special needs youth with the skills they need to live a productive and independent adult life, gives parents and families much-needed respite, and nurtures a sense of awareness and communal responsibility in our teens.

www.friendshipcirclewa.org, (206) 374-3637

Mary's Place

Provides meals, hygiene facilities, showers, laundry, medical care, support groups and resources for housing, employment and benefits to homeless women and children.

www.marysplaceseseattle.org

Erin McKay (206) 621-8474, erin@marysplaceseseattle.org

Duties of former B_Mitzvah volunteers included: Helping with kids' activities (supervising coloring book time, helping with video dance parties, serving snacks), sorting and organizing clothing donations and cleaning.

Ballard Food Bank

Provides access to nutritious foods and services that support self-sufficiency through the food bank, home delivery, and weekend food for kids' program, as well as emergency financial assistance.

www.ballardfoodbank.org, peggyb@ballardfoodbank.org, (206) 789-7800

Duties of former B_Mitzvah volunteers included: stocking shelves and serving clients.

Summit at First Hill

Independent and assisted living facility.

www.klinegalland.org/the-summit-at-first-hill

Michael Thygerson, Director of Life Enrichment, (206) 456-9717,

michaelt@summitatfirsthill.org

Duties of former B_Mitzvah volunteers included: helping residents with any computer needs (accessing email, printing documents, accessing online information) and helping with other miscellaneous tasks ("parking" walkers) when there was down time in the computer room.

Special Olympics

Provides year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other athletes, and the community.

www.specialolympicswashington.org

[www.specialolympicswashington.org/volunteer/become a volunteer/interest form](http://www.specialolympicswashington.org/volunteer/become_a_volunteer/interest_form)

Duties of former B_Mitzvah volunteers included: helping with administrative duties in the downtown office, participating on the Eckstein Unified soccer team which pairs disabled kids with able-bodied kids for practices and games and helping out at the spring Special Olympics by timing events.

Earthcorps

Provides environmental restoration and service education locally and globally.

www.earthcorps.org, volunteer@earthcorps.org, (206) 322-9296 x-217

Duties of former B_Mitzvah volunteers BA included: working at local parks, beaches, forests and open spaces to remove aggressive weeds, maintain areas where aggressive weeds have been removed, and plant trees and shrubs.

Seattle Parks and Recreation

www.seattle.gov/parks/volunteers/default.htm, parksvolunteer@seattle.gov, (206) 684-8028

Duties of former B_Mitzvah volunteers included: cleaning up trash at parks.

Additional ideas from former B_Mitzvah families:

- Volunteer as a family to foster animals through PAWS
- Make quilts to donate to the neonatal unit at Children's
- Parents who volunteer along with children: check with your employer to determine whether they provide corporate matching for volunteer hours (for example, Microsoft donates \$25/hour for every hour of volunteer service).

TEMPLE BETH AM TUTORS

Last Updated July 20, 2026

CANNON, Laura 206-321-1974 lauralexum@gmail.com

GOLDBERG, Leisa 206-779-3463 Buddah007@mac.com

MASSARANO, Rabbi Debbie 402-598-5430 bethamdebbie@gmail.com

BECK, Leah (virtual only) 360-910-0341 aviellah94@gmail.com

ZISSER, Solomon (he, they) 914-329-6983 solomonzisser@gmail.com

All of the above individuals have extensive experience in B'nai Mitzvah tutoring. Unless you have received special permission from our rabbis and educators to use an outside tutor, it is requested that you choose your tutor from this approved list. Bios for all of our tutors are included on the following pages.

LAURA CANNON

Phone: 206-321-3577 / *Email:* lauralexum@gmail.com

Rate: \$60 in my home, \$65 at Beth Am or your home

Meeting Place: My home, Temple Beth Am, or your home

About Me:

I have been tutoring B'nai Mitzvah students since 2009, and this process is truly my passion. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony is a celebration of years of hard work and dedication to Judaism, but it is also something more. It is the catalyst for an intense period of self-discovery and confidence building in the context of the ancient words of the Jewish people. The student's family is also very involved in the process, and it is my goal to educate them, as well. I love being part of these studies, and it is truly a joy to watch a student connect to Torah and tradition.

I was the Cantorial Soloist at Congregation Kol Shalom until 2019. My work there included trope classes for adults and children, and I organized and helped design their B'nai Mitzvah program. I also taught Hebrew to students of all ages. Prior to that, I was a French and Spanish teacher, and I still hold WA state credentials in that area. Currently, I am in cantorial school in the Aleph Ordination Program.

I believe that each student comes to their training with a unique set of skills and challenges, and together we will discover the best way for them to learn Torah. I enjoy being able to tailor my approach to the needs of each student, and I have successfully taught all different types of learners, including those with learning challenges. There should be no barriers to learning Torah and participating in community prayers, and I am passionate about making these things accessible to everyone.

I look forward to meeting you, and beginning the Bar or Bat Mitzvah process with your family.

SOLOMON ZISSER

Phone: 914-329-6983 / Email: solomonzisser@gmail.com

Rate: \$75 per 50 minutes (\$70 for zoom lessons)

Meeting Place: Your house or Temple Beth Am

About Me:

I am a graduate of Dickinson College, where I studied theatre (design and technology) and Judaic Studies. I spent a semester at Hebrew University, and I am a proud product of Jewish day school through 12th grade and Camp Ramah (as a baby in the Gan through to serving on staff for seven summers).

I am a Jewish professional, currently serving as the Jconnect Director at Hillel at the University of Washington. Previously I was a Springboard Fellow at Hillel at the University of Rochester in NY, and served as the Director of Jewish Education there for one year as well. I have over a decade of experience in teaching (extensively in Hebrew Schools and at my own day school that I attended as a student), tutoring, and leading teen programming.

My teaching approach is to meet students where they are - as young Jews and as learners - and help them on their journey in learning to chant Torah/ Haftarah, feel more confident in reading Hebrew and leading services, and to ultimately feel proud and accomplished when they have reached becoming a b'nai mitzvah.

I look forward to the opportunity to work with your family. Please contact me if you have any questions.

LEISA GOLDBERG

Phone: 206-779-3463 / Email: Buddah007@mac.com

Rate: 45 minute lesson/\$70, 1 Hour lesson/\$80

Meeting Place: Temple Beth Am or my house near the Lake Forest Park Town Center. In the event of scheduling conflicts, I can work with families to create hybrid lessons of in-person and Zoom.

About Me:

If families feel that they need a head start on preparation, I am happy to begin with meeting a few times a month at first and then move to once per week as we get closer. My goal is that each student will have an individualized study plan, based on their learning style. I will fully assess each student at the beginning of our time together in order to help he/she/them be most successful. Most importantly, I want the experience of both the student and the parents to be as stress-free and joyful as possible!

My career as a Jewish educator began in high school 30 years ago when I started tutoring students for their bar/bat mitzvahs at my conservative synagogue in Columbus, Ohio. I've come full circle! Since that time, I've been working almost non-stop in the Jewish communities where I've lived.

I am a born teacher. I love working with kids and secondary education is my specialty. I have a BA in Theatre and English from Indiana University and a degree in secondary education from Seattle Pacific University. I spent seven years teaching English in the International Baccalaureate program at EdmondsWoodway High School. For two years I worked as a private English, writing and SAT tutor for high school students.

In the Seattle Jewish community, I've worked for 25 years as a secondary Jewish educator. I taught 7th grade at Herzl Ner Tamid, 6th and 7th grades at Temple Beth Shalom, 9-12th grades at the Community High School of Jewish Studies and 13 years teaching 6th grade at TBA. Little known fact-I was the youth group advisor for TBA in the mid-nineties when Rabbis Beth and Jonathan Singer first started. I also developed the bar/bat mitzvah curriculum that was used in all of the 6th grade Hebrew classes.

I am a member of TBA and both of my children had their b'nai mitzvahs here. Yes, I tutored both of them. My daughter was a madrichah all the way through 12th grade and my son is currently a madrich. I really enjoy working with the b'nai mitzvah students one on one and I look forward to meeting you. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

RABBI DEBBIE MASSARANO, MARE, RJE

Phone: 402-598-5430 / *Email:* bethamdebbie@gmail.com

Rate: \$45 per 30 minute session (negotiable)

Meeting Place: Your house, Temple Beth Am, or my house (I live in Mountlake Terrace)

About Me:

My goal as a tutor is to provide a positive Jewish learning experience for my students. I have tutored for 30+ years and have an expertise in creating meaningful learning opportunities. I believe the tutoring experience is about creating relationships – between me and my student and their family, my student and Torah, and my student and their Jewish community.

In addition to Rabbinic Ordination, I have a Masters in Jewish Education from Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute for Religion. I have been involved as a Jewish professional from the age of 16 – as a Religious School Teacher. I have taught in public schools and Jewish Day schools. I have been a camp counselor and director. I have, most recently, been the Director of Lifelong Learning at two Reform congregations (Dallas and Omaha). I love creating fun and creative ways to guide my students' learning. I also use this creative approach with great success in working with students with differing learning needs.

In addition to my tutoring practice, I am also an Executive Function Coach helping students with time management, organizational skills, and task completion. My work as an EF Coach works seamlessly with the work I do as a B Mitzvah tutor.

I look forward to working with your family to create a vibrant and meaningful learning experience. Please email me if you would like a list of references.