



Bet Mitzvah Handbook



Updated January 2026

Becoming Bet Mitzvah at Congregation B'nai Israel

Becoming a Bet Mitzvah is one of the most valued milestones in the life of any Jewish person. Historically, it indicated that a child of 12 or 13 was ready to take on the roles of adulthood and the responsibilities of following Jewish law. In our modern world, becoming Bet Mitzvah is part of the journey of growing up, of exploring Jewish identity and becoming the next link in the chain of our ancient heritage.

At B'nai Israel, we strive to create a Bet Mitzvah journey for our young people and our families that reflects our community's values. We want to ensure that each child has an experience that is joyous, affirming and meaningful, and each family is fully able to celebrate their child's Jewish identity and accomplishments.

Becoming Bet Mitzvah at B'nai Israel means:

- Passing on the joy of Jewish ritual and tradition in an individualized way for each student as a lifelong pursuit from generation to generation.
- Building a deeper understanding of tikkun olam, our responsibility to repair the world.
- Leading and educating the congregation and sharing a love and pride of Judaism in the broader community.
- Connecting with the sacred texts of our tradition and awareness of their own Jewish identities.
- Developing community with other B'nai Israel families, positive social relationships with peers grounded in Jewish values, and love of the B'nai Israel community.

Young people becoming Bet Mitzvah at B'nai Israel will:

- Help to lead the prayers of the Shabbat morning service alongside our clergy
- Be called to bless the Torah as a Jewish adult
- Chant verses from the week's [parshah](#) using the Torah scroll
- Chant verses from the week's [haftarah](#)
- Prepare and deliver a [d'var Torah](#).
- Lead the [kiddush](#) blessing at the prior evening's Friday Shabbat service
- Complete a mitzvah project

This guide is intended to explain the practical elements of becoming Bet Mitzvah in our community with the hope of making this process as clear and transparent as possible. We hope it will be of help to your family as you plan and share the process of participating in one of Judaism's greatest Mitzvot.

Please keep in mind that our Rabbis and Cantor are available to meet with you at any time to discuss questions and concerns and you should feel free to call on them.

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Glossary of Important Bet Mitzvah Terms

aliyah - can mean either:

- 1) The honor of reciting the blessings before and after a section of Torah is chanted: “You will have the first aliyah next Shabbat.”
- 2) A reference to the section of Torah itself. “There are three aliyot being chanted this Shabbat.”

bet mitzvah - gender neutral term to refer to the Jewish coming of age ceremony

bima - a raised platform in the sanctuary from where services are led

d’var Torah - literally, a “word of Torah”; a speech summarizing and explaining the week’s Torah portion and its message

haftarah - a selection from the prophetic books connected to the week’s Torah portion, or the time of year in the Jewish calendar

hagbah - lifting and presenting the Torah to the congregation after it is read

hakafah - parading the Torah around the congregation; many have a custom of kissing the Torah with their siddur or tallit

kiddush - can mean either:

- 1) the blessing over wine recited by the Mitzvah child on Friday night
- 2) the serving of wine and challah following Saturday morning services, sometimes with a light meal or other food

kippah - a traditional Jewish head covering (also known as a yarmulke)

kitah - “class”; usually followed by hebrew letters denoting grade level

oneg shabbat - literally “joy of shabbat”; light refreshments served before the Friday night service (or after at other synagogues)

parshah - weekly Torah portion

siddur - prayer book

tallit - a fringed prayer shawl (also sometimes known as a tallis)

Choosing a Date

Children at B'nai Israel usually become Bet Mitzvah around the time they turn 13. This takes place during a Saturday Morning Shabbat Service at 11:00 a.m. An alternative option would be the congregation's Saturday morning Service at 8:00 a.m. Our Religious Practices Committee has reaffirmed a long-standing policy that Friday night and Saturday afternoon/evening services are not available for Bet Mitzvah. Two Bet Mitzvah may share the same service.

The process begins **three calendar years** before your child's expected Bet Mitzvah date. That fall there is an initial meeting with our clergy to review the date selection procedure. Families are then sent a calendar of potential dates. They then fill out an online form choosing their top 3 dates, along with their preferences for sharing a mitzvah date. Once the forms have been returned, families usually receive their child's Bet Mitzvah date within 4-6 weeks. For those who join B'nai Israel with a child in sixth or seventh grade, we will set a meeting with the rabbi, cantor, and Education Director to choose a date and enroll in Kehilah.

We are blessed to have a Congregation of over 600 families, celebrating dozens of Bet Mitzvah each year. With holidays, summer vacations, and Congregational events there are fewer than 40 Shabbatot available each calendar year. During the selection process, we do our absolute best to honor your requests and schedule as close to a child's 13th birthday as possible. If there are extenuating circumstances and a child's Mitzvah date must be changed, please contact [Rabbi Schultz](#).

Financial Contribution

There are two aspects to the financial contribution toward a child's Bet Mitzvah.

- The first is maintaining good financial standing with the congregation. The details of this standing may be unique to each family, yet all members of B'nai Israel share a commitment to support the community as a whole. Below is the congregation's policy regarding Financial Status and Bet Mitzvah:

Board of Trustees Policy on Financial Status

Congregation B'nai Israel encourages children of members to celebrate the life cycle event of Bar/Bat Mitzvah when they attain the age of 13. The congregation is committed to assisting the students and their parents in all aspects of a child's becoming a Bet Mitzvah. The family of the Bet Mitzvah must also commit to assisting in this preparation and fulfilling their financial commitments to the congregation.

Based on this policy, in order for a child to begin individual training (4-6 months prior to their Bet Mitzvah; see table under Individual Tutoring section), the member must be current in all financial obligations to the congregation or be in compliance with an agreed upon financial plan. Any member who has not complied with their financial obligations to B'nai Israel will risk the Bet Mitzvah not taking place as scheduled.

- The second is the expected costs in connection with your child's Bet Mitzvah. There are two fees you will be billed, one is the **Bet Mitzvah** fee, which covers the expense of preparation and materials. These current costs, which are in effect at the time you receive this document, are as follows:

BET MITZVAH.....\$650.00

The other fee is for the [Oneg Shabbat](#) preceding the service *and* the bima flowers which are arranged by the synagogue but are a financial obligation of the Bet Mitzvah family.

ONEG / PULPIT FLOWERS.....\$260.00

TOTAL FEES.....\$910.00

Fees are subject to change by the Board of Trustees

These charges will appear on your billing statement in January of the prior year if your child's expected date is January - June and in July of the prior year if their expected date is July - December.

These fees are to be paid in full 90 days before your Bet Mitzvah date.

Please know that these financial contributions should never be a barrier to any family, but rather a means of supporting our congregation and covering the costs of the Bet Mitzvah process. If you ever have questions or concerns about your contributions, please reach out to us at any time.

Enrollment

At B'nai Israel, we see the journey through Bet Mitzvah as part of a lifetime of learning and community engagement. In our Kehilah (religious school) program, students build the skills and the relationships they will need for this important milestone. **Therefore, in order for a child to be eligible for Bet Mitzvah, they must complete our curriculum through 7th**

grade and be enrolled in our Religious School at the time of the Bet Mitzvah ceremony. If your child has specific learning needs, or requires accommodations of any kind, please let our educators know as soon as possible. Extra help or tutoring is always available. Regular attendance is expected, and if the Director of Education indicates that attendance requirements have not been met, an assigned date may be withdrawn.

In addition, we hope that each family becomes an integrated part of our community by attending Shabbat services, celebrating holidays, and getting involved in congregational life. B'nai Israel strives to be an inclusive and engaging community for members of all ages and backgrounds.

Celebrating at B'nai Israel (Facility Rental)

B'nai Israel is a wonderful place to celebrate your child's Bet Mitzvah. Our facility is able to accommodate both an afternoon and an evening celebration on the same day (for the same family), and has space appropriate for a small [kiddush](#) luncheon. The Social Hall can accommodate a maximum of 175 guests for a seated kiddush and the Pavilion can accommodate a maximum of 80 seated guests.

Please reserve your date at least one year in advance; we understand plans change but we cannot guarantee your date if it's not on our master calendar.

Contact our Maintenance Director [Eric Braisted](#) for detailed information about the use of the facility.

Preparation Timeline

Below is a timeline outlining the steps of preparation to become Bet Mitzvah. Each element will be described in more detail in the rest of this section.

| | Preparation Timeline |
|---------------------|--|
| 10-14 months prior | Bet Mitzvah Family Workshops |
| | Group Prayer Classes (Sunday Mornings with Cantor) |
| 5-7 months prior | Initial meeting with Cantor - 1:1 tutoring begins |
| 3 months prior | Initial meeting with Rabbi Schultz – Service Honors Introduction |
| | D'var Torah preparation with assigned d'var Torah coach/Mitzvah Project Check-In |
| 2 months prior | Continued Tutoring with Cantor |
| 1-2 weeks prior | Final check-in with Rabbi Schultz and Complete Honors Sheet |
| week of event | Family rehearsal with Cantor |
| 1 day prior | Friday evening Kabbalat Shabbat service |
| The Big Day! | |

Bet Mitzvah Mandatory Family Workshops

During their sixth grade year, the Mitzvah child and their parent(s) will be invited to the mandatory family workshop which will take place in January/February. A choice of two dates will be available to attend the workshop. These workshops are designed to help kids and parents explore what becoming a Bet Mitzvah means for them, meet other families going through the process, and introduce you and your child to all the aspects of preparation. Students will learn about their [parshah](#) and choose the section they would like to focus on. This will determine which verses they chant from the Torah and speak about in their [d'var Torah](#). They will receive a parshah booklet containing the Hebrew text, translation, and selected commentary on that portion. They will also receive their personalized [siddur](#) and an introduction to the mitzvah projects.

During this time, each child is assigned a d'var Torah coach: [Rabbi Schultz](#) or [Rabbi Marion](#). They will oversee your child's mitzvah project progress, as well as help them write their d'var Torah at a later date. We will also have at least one parent-only meeting to review some of the more logistical aspects of the Bet Mitzvah ceremony.

Group Prayer Class

Beginning in 6th grade your child will be part of an introductory Prayer Class taught by the Cantor and Kehilah tutor Bonnie Appel. The class is offered during Kitah Vav (6th grade) and meets on Thursday afternoons (during regular Kehilah). In 7th grade, the class continues to progress through the prayers and service and meets on Sunday mornings (during regular Kehilah) with the Cantor.

In the Cantor's class, your child will learn to chant all blessings surrounding the Torah and Haftarah portions, as well as selected passages from the prayer book. Learning this material is aided by the use of a professionally produced audio download, which your child will receive in 6th grade. The audio file will be used in conjunction with the prayer book your child will also receive.

During the class, students will practice and recite these prayers with and in front of their peers. The material from the Cantor's class must be mastered before private instruction begins. If the Cantor determines that a student is having difficulty learning the prescribed materials, the student may be asked to supplement their preparation by seeking additional tutoring.

Regular attendance in both the Cantor's class and Religious School classes are prerequisites for a student to become a Bet Mitzvah. You can find the downloads for the prayers a bet mitzvah needs to learn [here](#).

Mitzvah Projects

The term Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah literally means becoming a “son or daughter of the mitzvot (commandments).” One way we highlight the idea of becoming responsible for the mitzvot is through completing a mitzvah project. This project is intended to inspire our young people to live their Jewish values in the world, empower them with leadership and initiative, and engage in the work of tikkun olam (repairing the world).

At our family workshops, we will review the expectations for the mitzvah project and provide each family with resources to help choose the project that is right for them. We are very lucky in the Greater Bridgeport community to have a vast array of organizations looking for help. In addition, there are many opportunities within our own congregation to volunteer. There is no minimum time commitment for your mitzvah project. We just ask that your child choose something meaningful to them, and that your child plays an active role in planning and completing it. In addition, while we encourage students to complete their projects prior to their Mitzvah date, there is no official deadline and projects can be completed after their ceremony as well.

Our guideline is that students choose a project no later than 6 months prior to their Bet Mitzvah date, and complete the project no later than 6 months afterward. Once the project is completed, we ask each child to complete a short online evaluation form, reflecting on their work and providing tips for future students who may be inspired by your child’s ideas.

For help with mitzvah project ideas, contact Rabbi Marion. For a list of Mitzvah Project resources, see QR Code on separate **Mitzvah Project Information** sheet or go to <https://tinyurl.com/2rp68xsk>

Individual Tutoring

Individual Bet Mitzvah preparation focuses on learning to chant the Torah portion and [haftarah](#). The Torah portion training culminates in chanting from the Torah scroll itself, written without vowels or grammatical markings. Additionally, students will review the prayers they’ve learned and practice leading the service from the Sanctuary.

The first step is an initial meeting with [Cantor](#) and the child, along with a parent. At this meeting, students should have the [parshah](#) booklet given to them at the family workshops. Cantor will review the verses assigned to them. Following this meeting, students will begin weekly 30 minute tutoring sessions, first with a tutor and then with Cantor. Every child receives 4 months of 1:1 preparation, **not including the month of their Bet Mitzvah, or the summer months**. Therefore, those students with Bet Mitzvah in early fall may begin earlier than 4 months prior to account for the summer break. This is a general rule of thumb for when your child may start their individual tutoring.

Please note that all Bet Mitzvah fees must be paid prior to the start of tutoring and all Annual Contribution fees should be on a payment schedule if not previously paid in full.

| B/M Date | Tutoring Start |
|----------|----------------|
| Jan | Sept |
| Feb | Oct |
| Mar | Nov |
| Apr | Dec |
| May | Jan |
| Jun | Feb |
| Jul | |
| Aug | |
| Sep | Mar |
| Oct | Apr |
| Nov | May |
| Dec | June |

Summer lessons are available on a more limited basis for those students who are available. In addition, Cantor can provide materials for a student to use while away at summer camp, vacation, etc.

D'var Torah

A child becoming Bet Mitzvah takes on many roles and one of the most important is that of becoming a teacher of Torah. They will do this by preparing a [d'var Torah](#). Students will meet individually with the d'var Torah coach assigned to them at the family workshops. Their coach will help guide them through the text and how they may interpret it in their own words. Then students will write a first draft and send it to their coach for review. Once their d'var Torah is complete they will practice reciting it with the Cantor in the weeks before their Mitzvah. We encourage parents to help their child prepare their d'var Torah, but also remember not to “over-help” them. See appendix for more about writing a d'var Torah.

Family Rehearsal

During the week preceding the Bet Mitzvah, your family will schedule a rehearsal with Cantor in the Sanctuary to prepare for the service. We ask all parents to attend and siblings are welcome (though not required) to be there as well. This rehearsal will be an opportunity to do a final walkthrough of the service, review the parental role in the service, and answer any questions you may have. The rehearsal usually lasts around an hour.

Delivery Items

Please have any personal decorations, foods or any other items you wish to have at the synagogue for your kiddush, luncheon or party brought in before Shabbat starts on Friday. If you work with a party planner or caterer, check with [Eric Braisted](#) for coordinating delivery times.

Friday Evening Kabbalat Shabbat Service

Kabbalat (welcoming) Shabbat services begin at 6:00 p.m. on Friday evenings and last about 75 minutes. Please encourage your family and friends to arrive early to enjoy light refreshments at the [Oneg Shabbat](#) beginning at 5:30 p.m. The Bet Mitzvah family will be invited to light the Shabbat candles at the beginning of the service. At the end of the service, the Mitzvah child will be called forward to lead the [kiddush](#) blessing.

The Big Day!

On Saturday morning, the Bet Mitzvah family and all those who will have a role in the service should be in the Sanctuary by 10:40 a.m. The ushers should see that all guests are seated in the sanctuary so that the Service may begin promptly at 11:00 a.m. The service will end at around 12:15 p.m.

Bet Mitzvah Kiddush takes place on the Bima with wine & challah. If you would like an additional catered kiddush, please see Facilities Rental information within.

Service Honors

During the Bet Mitzvah service, there are several opportunities to honor family and friends. These include reciting prayers in Hebrew, English readings, and non-speaking roles. Every family is unique, and we can adjust certain honors depending on your family's needs. Please know that non-Jewish family members and friends are welcome and encouraged to participate in virtually every aspect of the service. Each family meets with Rabbi Schultz to review the honors and then coordinates with him on their choices. Below is a description of potential honors in the service and how many people are needed to fill that honor:

Service Ushers (2 people):

- Help people find seats, pass out programs, etc. during the Shabbat morning service.

Open/Close Ark #1 (2 people):

- Open and close the ark doors when the Torah is removed from the ark

Carry Torah (1 person):

- Holds the Torah scroll on the [bima](#) after it is removed from the ark
- Participates in the [hakafah](#) by carrying the Torah around the sanctuary

Undress Scroll (1 or more people):

- Help remove the decorations and coverings from the Torah scroll

[Aliyah](#) (3 groups of 1 or more people): (Please submit Hebrew names on Honors Sheet)

- Recite a Hebrew blessing before and after the mitzvah child chants each of **three** sections of their Torah portion. These blessings can be found on [page 368](#) of our [siddur](#), Mishkan T'filah.
- At least one person participating in an aliyah must be Jewish and be over the age of 13.
- Parents typically take either aliyah #1 or #2, with the third reserved for the child themselves.

[Hagbah](#) (1 person):

- After the Torah is read, lifts the Torah and presents it to the congregation
- Holds the Torah as it is being dressed

Dress Scroll (1 or more people):

- Help dress the Torah after it is lifted

Open/Close Ark #2 (2 people):

- Open and close the ark doors when the Torah is returned to the ark

If your family needs more opportunities to honor people, there are additional English readings that may be added to the service before the Torah is returned to the ark.

The Parent's Role

We feel strongly that the experience for the students becomes most positive when parents too, are involved and supportive. Regardless of whether you became Bet Mitzvah yourself, there are so many ways you are integral to this process, such as:

- Participating in the **Mandatory** Family Workshops
- Attending the initial meetings with Cantor and the d'var Torah coach.
- Assisting your child with their [d'var Torah](#) and mitzvah project.
- **Ensuring your child practices regularly at home.** Whether in prayer class or in their 1:1 lesson, your child will have weekly assignments to complete along with continuing to review what they've learned. Therefore, practicing must become part of their regular routine each day. In addition, it is essential that students continue to review regularly over the summer and in the months between when prayer class ends and their tutoring begins.
- **Attending services regularly.** This is the best way to familiarize your family with the prayers and various elements of the service, as well as bring meaning to these rituals. In particular, we welcome all upcoming Mitzvah families to attend current Bet Mitzvah services.

Many B'nai Israel families include a parent/caregiver who is not Jewish. Our congregation strongly believes that all parents play an integral role in a child's Jewish journey and growth. We expect and encourage the non-Jewish parent to play as active a role in the service as they feel comfortable with. For those elements involving Hebrew, this can mean reciting the blessing along with the Jewish parent, or simply standing by their side as they recite it.

During the Bet Mitzvah service itself, parents again play a vital role in helping their child take their place in the chain of Jewish tradition. Below are the ways parents (and siblings) participate on Friday night and Saturday morning:

Friday Evening Shabbat Service: the Bet Mitzvah child, parents, and siblings are invited to light the Shabbat candles. This involves an English reading, lighting the candles, and reciting the candle blessing in Hebrew. Both the English and Hebrew can be found on [page 121](#) of Mishkan T'filah.

Saturday Morning Service (in chronological order):

1. Parents are invited on the [bima](#) to present their child with a [tallit](#). After the Mitzvah child recites the blessing, parents place the tallit over their shoulders.
2. Directly before the Torah is removed from the ark, parents come on the bima to read a blessing to their child. Parents have a choice of three blessings which can be found on [pages 380-381](#) of Mishkan T'filah.
3. Parents recite either the first or second [Aliyah](#) during the child's Torah reading. **We strongly encourage parents to practice these blessings several weeks ahead of time.** They can be found on [page 368](#) of Mishkan T'filah. A recording can also be provided by the Cantor.
4. After the Torah reading, parents have the opportunity to speak directly to their child in front of the scroll. This speech is intended to be a moment for you to share your wisdom with your child and your hopes for them on their Mitzvah day. A good guideline would be to speak for around 2 minutes.
5. Parents and siblings are invited to join the Mitzvah child in front of the open ark as the Rabbi and Cantor bestow the Priestly Blessing on them.

Tallit and Kippah

Wearing a [kippah](#) is a widespread custom for Jewish people and those attending Jewish services. B'nai Israel does not require attendants to wear kippot, although many choose to do so. Additionally, while this tradition has at times been limited only to males, our community welcomes all genders to wear a kippah. Past families have advised that if you choose to order custom kippot, do so several months in advance.

The [tallit](#) is traditionally worn on Shabbat morning and by all those leading a service. As with the kippah, all are welcome to wear one. The fringes of the tallit represent the 613 mitzvot in the Torah. It is, therefore, traditional that when a child becomes Bet Mitzvah, they also wear a tallit for the first time. If you would like to purchase a tallit for your child, they are available for sale at the congregation's Judaica shop.

Photography and Live Streaming

Families are welcome to take pictures in the sanctuary before or after the service, or Friday the day before. Pictures must be concluded by 10:40 a.m. before the service begins.

Photography and videography are also permitted during the service, provided it is done without flash and from the back of the sanctuary. We want those attending the service to be as present in the moment as possible, therefore, we ask worshippers not to record or take pictures on their personal devices.

The service can also be recorded through Zoom, although the quality is less consistent than if using a professional videographer. If you choose to live stream your child's service, the congregation will provide a private link for you to share with your guests.

Security

We always have a security guard on duty for all bet mitzvah services. If you would like to also hire an off-duty Bridgeport Police officer, please email [Eric Braisted](mailto:Eric.Braisted). They work in four hour shifts and there is an extra charge for this service.

Service Program

Some families choose to create a written program for their child's service including a list of service honors and other information for worshippers.

Candy

Families are welcome to bring candy to throw at the end of the service. Just please make sure it is SOFT candy. We recommend the Sunkist fruit gems.

Congregational Gift

Families can choose either a [kiddush](#) cup or candlesticks as a gift from the congregation to their child. [Ilene Feuerberg](#) in the main office will reach out to you several months in advance of your child's Mitzvah to request your choice.

Bet Mitzvah Certificate

Your child will receive a Certificate of Bet Mitzvah. Ilene Feuerberg in the main office will produce the certificate. We ask that both parents indicate their Hebrew names (or applicable parent) on their Honors Sheet along with the child's Hebrew name.

Donations

If you are so moved, you may choose to make a contribution in honor of your child's Bet Mitzvah. Past families have suggested donations to our Cantor, Rabbi(s), and Education Director. If you have questions about donations, please contact [Ilene Feuerberg](#) in the main office.

Shared Bet Mitzvah

Currently the vast majority of our Bet Mitzvah are solo, however, there are times when a service may be shared between two families. In those cases, there are some important differences to note regarding the service.

- Each Mitzvah child will chant their own verses from the week's [parshah](#) and [haftarah](#), and each will have 3 aliyot. Therefore, each family will have the same 3 opportunities to bless the Torah as a single would.
- [Cantor](#) will coordinate which prayers are recited by each student. Some prayers may be split or recited together.
- Other honors in the service such as undressing/dressing the Torah and opening and closing the ark will be shared between both families. This will be coordinated with [Rabbi Schultz](#).
- Any use of the facility for a [Kiddush](#) or other reception following the service will be coordinated with our Maintenance Director [Eric Braisted](#).
- If both families plan to have their own [Kippot](#) or programs, past families have suggested instructing the ushers from each side to distribute them to each family's respective guests.

Being a Teen at B'nai Israel

Our congregation sees Bet Mitzvah as one step in a young person's Jewish journey. We are blessed to have an amazing cohort of teens in our community, and there are many opportunities for them to continue to learn and grow with us.

Kitah Chet (8th Grade) and Merkaz

Beginning in Kitah Chet (8th grade), students can participate in Merkaz, our Community High School for Jewish Studies. Merkaz also takes place on Tuesday evenings at B'nai Israel and is organized by the Federation for Jewish Philanthropy of Upper Fairfield County. Students from across the greater Bridgeport area gather to learn together, choosing from a wide array of classes taught by highly skilled faculty. To learn more about Merkaz, visit <https://www.shalomct.org/about-us>

BIFTY

B'nai Israel Federation of Temple Youth is our youth group open to teens in grades 8-12. BIFTY has social events every week and plays an active role in many synagogue-wide projects and programs.

BIFTY members can also participate in regional events through NFTY-Northeast, including overnights, and weekend trips. To learn more, contact [Rabbi Marion](#).

Hadrakhah Team

High school students and some Middle school students are invited to join the Hadrakhah (leadership) team. These teens are embedded in Kehilah on Sunday mornings from 9:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. They serve as role models for our younger learners and partners for our teachers, all while building important leadership skills. Our hope is that these teens will take what they learn and make being a Jewish leader part of their adult lives.

10th Grade Confirmation

Confirmation is one of B'nai Israel's oldest traditions and most meaningful experiences for our teens. Over the course of the year, students gather with Rabbi Schultz to learn, share, and explore their own unique Jewish identity. Confirmation also includes a trip to the Religious Action Center (www.rac.org) where teens from all over the country have the opportunity to advocate for their Jewish values on Capitol Hill. The year culminates in a service created by our students and family celebration.

NFTY in Israel

Each child on the day of their Bet Mitzvah receives a gift certificate toward a NFTY in Israel program. NFTY is the national organization for Reform Jewish youth who run various summer and semester programs in Israel for high school students. It is our hope that all of our young people take advantage of these amazing Israel experiences. For information about NFTY in Israel or URJ Heller High, please visit <https://reformjudaism.org/youth-programs/yallah-israel>.

Whom do I ask?

While we hope this handbook provides all the information you need regarding Bet Mitzvah, we also know there will be times when you have questions connected to different aspects of the process. Below is a list of contact information for our clergy and staff and who can best address specific concerns. Of course, when in doubt, ask any staff member. We are happy to help direct you to the right person to answer your question.

Main Phone: 203-336-1858

Rabbi Evan Schultz: eschultz@cbibpt.org

- Bet Mitzvah dates and scheduling
- Service honors
- Live streaming
- Ritual or logistical aspects of the service

Cantor Scott Harris: sharris@cbibpt.org

- Family workshops
- Your child's Torah portion, [haftarah](#), or prayers
- Your child's learning needs and/or the timeline of their training
- Parent's role in the service
- Copies of any prayers or blessings recited by the parents or other guests
- Family rehearsal

Rabbi Sarah Marion: smarion@cbibpt.org

- Mitzvah project ideas (& see Mitzvah Project Information sheet with QR Code)

Alexa Cohen: acohen@cbibpt.org

- Kehilah enrollment
- Coordinating extra help and tutoring in 5th and 6th grades

Eric Braisted: ebraisted@cbibpt.org

- Facility Rental
- Additional Security
- Coordinating Deliveries

Ilene Feuerberg: ifeuerberg@cbibpt.org

- Flowers
- Gift from congregation
- Certificates
- Contributions