



The Reform Congregation of Central Baltimore

**The Bar and Bat Mitzvah
Experience at
Bolton Street Synagogue

A Handbook for Families**

212 W. Cold Spring Lane
Baltimore, MD 21210

www.boltonstreet.org

410.235.5354

DEAR PARENTS AND STUDENTS:

B'ruchim haba'im, welcome, to the journey of your child and your family toward bar or bat mitzvah at Bolton Street Synagogue. We are a diverse community and we come to this journey from various places. Some of you are continuing a tradition of generation after generation of bar/bat mitzvah. Some of you have yourselves joined the Jewish people. And some of you are not Jewish but are raising your children as Jews. Together, you weave the fabric of this colorful and beautiful community. The Bolton Street community is eager to help you find your own way on that road.

The Hebrew word “*mitzvah*” means more than “good deed.” It signifies a commitment. And the words *bar or bat*, when combined with “*mitzvah*,” form an idiom that means “One who takes on a commitment.” A bar/bat mitzvah is one who takes upon him/herself the commitment of being involved with Judaism and the life of the Jewish community. The ceremony is designed to allow your child to demonstrate that preparation and to begin living Jewish life.

PUT YOUR WHOLE SELF IN

The bar or bat mitzvah should approach the ceremony with his/her heart, head, and hands. Throughout this Guide, each activity will be marked by a symbol connecting it to heart, head, and/or hands.



Since logistics are a part of the process, we include information on those as well.



When a religious service works, it touches the heart. Worship is known in Hebrew as *avodat halev*, “service of the heart.” The bar or bat mitzvah brings his or her whole heart to leading us in worship. Part of that includes reading and chanting in Hebrew from the prayerbook, the Torah scroll (containing the Five Books of Moses), and the Haftarah (a selection from the prophetic books of the bible that relates to the Torah portion). Hebrew, too, is an expression of the heart. Sometimes called *lashon kodesh*, the holy language, it has a power to move us beyond the meaning of its words. It connects us with Judaism and with Jews throughout the world.



A bar or bat mitzvah gives a talk at the service. In Hebrew this is called a *D'var Torah*, which means a “word of Torah.” At the age of thirteen, children can typically use their heads to begin synthesizing what they’ve learned. This is the first step into adulthood. At Bolton Street Synagogue, we want our children to take what they’ve learned in their

Jewish education (including their study of their Torah portion), add to it what they have learned from their experience of life, and bring the two together to give their own interpretation of their Torah portion.



One can't live as a Jew without doing Jewish deeds. We ask our b'nai mitzvah not just to feel and to think, but also to act. They do this in their *Ma'asei Mitzvah*, mitzvah projects, where they use their hands to assist others and so help repair the world (*tikkun olam*).

COMMUNITY. Bar or bat mitzvah is not just an individual or family celebration, but one for the entire community. We as a community welcome a new Jewish adult into our midst. For this reason, the ceremony takes place in the Synagogue Sanctuary during only the regularly scheduled communal worship ceremonies, at which time a representative of our Synagogue congratulates the youngster on his/her new status. In the spirit of inclusion and *menschlichkeit*, please be sure to invite all of your child's Religious School classmates to his/her *simcha*.

SPECIAL NEEDS. Every Jewish child is capable of becoming bar or bat mitzvah. At Bolton Street Synagogue, we are eager to make all appropriate accommodations to ensure that no disability prevents anyone from joining our community as a Jewish adult.

JEWISH EDUCATION POST-BAR OR BAT MITZVAH. Because bar and bat mitzvah is an expression of commitment to Jewish living, b'nai mitzvah are expected to keep their commitment to Jewish learning through their high school years at the Bolton Street Synagogue Religious School and throughout their lives. In so doing, we hope they will embrace the practice of lifelong Jewish learning.

Throughout this journey, please do not hesitate to contact Erin Felsen, Bolton Street Synagogue Administrator, or me with any questions you have. May you and your family go from strength to strength and find the bar/bat mitzvah experience rewarding and worthwhile.

L'shalom,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John A. Franken". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rabbi John Franken

STEPS TOWARD A SUCCESSFUL B'NAI MITZVAH EXPERIENCE



PREPARATION AND SUPPORT AT HOME

Good preparation is the key to a successful and fulfilling bar/bat mitzvah experience. It requires a significant commitment of time—about 2-3 hours a week. Parental support in this process is invaluable. Here are some examples:

- 1) Schedule: Many of our children are heavily programmed. The last four months of bar/bat mitzvah preparation are a time to refrain from taking on additional obligations. In fact, if there is a way to cut down on extracurricular activities during this period your child will be substantially more relaxed and more apt to enjoy the process.
- 2) Listen to him/her chant and practice. If you know Hebrew and can help, that's great. If you don't, please listen anyway. Trust us, it makes a difference.



PREPARATION AT BSS

Our religious school curriculum is designed to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to participate fully in Jewish life. The academic prerequisite for b'nai mitzvah is your child's completion of four years of religious education and continued enrollment in our religious school throughout the b'nai mitzvah year and then on through the Confirmation program. The school program provides the foundation on which preparation for b'nai mitzvah is built.

Specific training for the b'nai mitzvah service takes place both inside and outside of school hours. During religious school classes in sixth grade, students will learn key prayers of the Shabbat morning liturgy and preliminary Torah reading skills. This lays a good foundation to assist them in learning to lead the service and to chant their individual Torah and Haftarah portions. Please consult the b'nai mitzvah timeline on page 14 for specific details.



B'NAI MITZVAH CHAVURAH

Our b'nai mitzvah Chavurah meets during the sixth grade year. This program helps b'nai mitzvah students and their families learn about and connect with various aspects of this important experience.

- Bar/bat mitzvah: What's it all about and how to make it a meaningful family experience
- The mitzvah connection
- The bar/bat mitzvah service



INDIVIDUALIZED B'NAI MITZVAH INSTRUCTION

You will be contacted by a staff person approximately nine months before your bar/bat mitzvah date to schedule an initial meeting with Rabbi Franken. At this meeting your child will receive his/her bar/bat mitzvah binder. The initial meeting with the Rabbi will usually involve the parents in addition to the bar/bat mitzvah student. Subsequent meetings with the Rabbi are just for the student.

- **PRIVATE HEBREW TUTORING SESSIONS**

Individualized instruction begins approximately six to nine months before the bar/bat mitzvah date with weekly 30 minute lessons. Students will learn to chant Torah and Haftarah readings and review the Shabbat liturgy.

At Bolton Street Synagogue, it is the responsibility of the family to engage a tutor to help each child prepare for his/her individual parashah (portion). The following is a list of approved tutors:

1. Lisa Berger
(C) 443-831-6741
barkberger@verizon.net
2. Steven Land
(H) 410-655-1509
(C) 443-756-8849
smland@verizon.net
3. Maia Meeron
(C) 410-258-8349
maiameeron@gmail.com
4. Debbie Wilcox (Howard County)
(H) 410-935-1243

You may want to talk with other families who have had bar/bat mitzvah to hear their opinions about the tutors that they used. Many families then call one or more of the tutors and speak with them or meet with them, with the student, to make sure that the tutor is the right fit for your family.

- **MEETINGS WITH RABBI FRANKEN**

Beginning approximately three months before the service, students will meet with Rabbi Franken for approximately 30 minutes a week. Students will prepare a *D'var Torah*, or speech, with the Rabbi's guidance. It will be based on the student's interactions with the Torah text, its traditional and modern interpretations, and his/her own life experience.

- **REHEARSAL**

There is a final rehearsal for the child and parents, usually at 3:30-5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday preceding the b'nai mitzvah service.

SHABBAT ATTENDANCE



Understanding what the prayer service is all about and becoming part of the community at BSS is an important part of the B'nai mitzvah process. We ask that students attend a number of Shabbat services equal to their grade (i.e. one service for first grade, two for second grade, etc.). We recommend that parents attend with their child. This may include Friday night, Shabbat morning, and festival services.

Regular attendance at services by the entire family remains the single most important factor in preparing for the meaning of this day. It will afford you the opportunity to develop a family tradition of sharing in the serenity and the joy of Shabbat. In particular, attendance at services where there is a bar/bat mitzvah affords you the opportunity to see what your family's roles will be on the day of your own ceremony.



MITZVAH PROJECT

Just as reading from Torah, leading a service and delivering a *D'var Torah* are central components of the b'nai mitzvah process, so too is the mitzvah project. It is your child's opportunity to demonstrate that she or he has accepted the obligation central to Judaism—*Tikkun Olam* (repair of the world).

The mitzvah project should represent a substantial commitment of time and energy. A simple request for *tzedakah* towards a particular project, while admirable, is typically not sufficient. We hope your child will become involved on a deeper level. The mitzvah project should be selected no later than the end of the sixth grade year because a portion of the seventh grade religious school curriculum is built around the projects selected by the members of the class. Here are some examples of past mitzvah projects:

- Collecting supplies for the animals at the MSPCA
- Tutoring at an elementary school
- Assisting in an afterschool program for young children
- Collecting books for a school library in need of books
- Volunteering in a nursing home with the elderly
- Raising awareness of the genocide in Darfur

TZEDAKAH

A *simcha* (joyous event) is to be an opportunity to share one's good fortune with others who are in need. We hope you will contribute to your own synagogue community. In addition, many b'nai mitzvah contribute 3 percent of their gift money to Mazon, a national Jewish organization to feed the hungry. More information is available at www.mazon.org.

THE B'NAI MITZVAH SERVICE



THE SERVICE ITSELF

- Shabbat morning services at Bolton Street Synagogue begin at 10:30 a.m. and conclude at approximately 12:10 p.m. Some families choose to list 10:15 a.m. as the starting time on their invitations to minimize disruption to the service due to late arrivals.
- Services are held in the Sanctuary.
- Appendix A provides an informational booklet that explains some Bolton Street Synagogue traditions and customs. If desired, families may create and distribute customized booklets. If you choose to create a booklet, please ask Rabbi Franken to review your text at least two weeks before the ceremony.
- If you have questions or concerns about the music for the ceremony, please discuss them with the cantorial soloist well in advance of the service.

PARTICIPATION OF THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH



Through many years of experience, we have developed a set of expectations for bar/bat mitzvah candidates. These are designed to stretch the child without demanding too much of him/her. Of course, each child is unique. There will be times when these requirements will need to be modified and we will adjust them accordingly.

We take bar/bat mitzvah seriously and we expect our students to do so as well. Occasionally a student fails to make satisfactory progress. In this case, your tutor should contact you promptly. Sometimes there are external causes, in which case we can make adjustments as needed. At other times, the student has failed to progress due to his/her own lack of effort. Typically additional support from home corrects the problem. On those extremely rare occasions when it does not, other steps may be necessary to postpone or cancel the bar/bat mitzvah ceremony.

Typically, bar/bat mitzvah students are responsible for the following:

- Kiddush on Friday night and Shabbat morning
- Leading selected prayers during the Torah service
- Blessings before and after the Torah reading
- Blessings before and after the Haftarah reading
- Chanting approximately 12-15 verses of Torah
- Chanting approximately 5 verses of Haftarah
- D'var Torah (speech)

All bar and bat mitzvah students are expected to develop a rudimentary and passing ability to read Hebrew so that the chanting of the Torah reading, the Haftarah reading and any prayers will be in Hebrew. The use of transliterations for Torah, Haftarah and prayers is not an acceptable alternative. Some bar or bat mitzvah students may require extra tutoring to enable him or her to read from the actual texts, the Torah, or the prayer book. Please speak with our principal about the status of your child.

FAMILY PARTICIPATION

FRIDAY NIGHT

Erev Shabbat services typically run 1¼ hours in length. **Consult the administrative office to verify the time for the weekend of your celebration.** It is expected that b'nai mitzvah candidates and their families attend the Friday night service the Shabbat of their bar/bat mitzvah and for family members to kindle the Shabbat candles. The bar/bat mitzvah leads the Kiddush.

SATURDAY MORNING

The immediate family will gather in the Rabbi's study at 10:15 a.m. At this point the family presents the Bar/bat mitzvah with a *tallit*. Many families purchase or create a *tallit* for the occasion. One may also be borrowed from the synagogue. The *tallit* is typically worn only by Jews who have become Bar/bat mitzvah. Its presentation is the first tangible mark of their entry into Jewish adulthood. Photographs may be taken in the Sanctuary from 9:00-10:00 on the morning of the Bar/bat mitzvah service. No still photography is permitted during the service itself.

SERVICE HONORS

Bolton Street Synagogue provides opportunities for the family and friends of the b'nai mitzvah to participate in our weekly Shabbat services. The following honors are available on Saturday mornings.

B'NAI MITZVAH SERVICE HONORS

Ark Opening/Closing: One or two persons may be designated to open the ark at the following times:

- At the beginning of the Torah service
- At the end of the Torah service

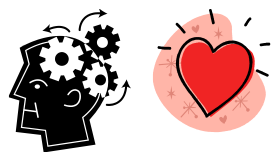
This honor is available to anyone, Jewish or non-Jewish.

Undressing the Torah: Someone to remove the decorations, mantle, etc., as the Torah is placed on the table to be read. This honor is appropriate for Jews only.

Intergenerational Torah Pass: An optional exercise when the Torah is taken from the Ark. The grandparents and parents may pass the Torah down the generations to the bar/bat mitzvah.

Aliyot: Recitation of the Torah blessings is an honor appropriate for adult members of the Jewish community. However, a non-Jewish spouse and/or children under the age of 13 may accompany those who are reciting the blessings.

There are three aliyot. The first is customarily said by grandparents or other close relatives or friends. The second *aliyah* is usually for parents. The final *aliyah* is reserved for the bar/bat mitzvah. The blessings are in this packet and are on the Torah table (in both Hebrew and transliteration).



Hagba: (lifting the Torah Scroll) After the Torah is read, it is lifted up and held aloft for the congregation to see. This honor is appropriate for Jews only.

Gelila: (rolling and dressing the Torah) Someone to dress the Torah scroll, i.e., roll it, put the sash around it & tie it, and put on the mantle, and the decorations/silver. Someone will be there coaching the honoree. This honor is appropriate for Jews only.

Parental Blessing: One or more parents are asked to prepare and read an individualized blessing for his/her child. This blessing should be brief (no more than two or three minutes long). Guidelines are included in the Appendix.

For the Honors sheet, please see the Appendix.



LOGISTICS

CHOOSING A DATE

B'nai mitzvah at BSS occur between Sukkot in the fall and the middle of June. If you do not yet have a date for your bar or bat mitzvah, please contact the synagogue Administrator at (410) 235-5354 to choose an available date that will be convenient for your family. Scheduling can be done 36 months in advance. There is no obligation to reserve dates three years in advance and families that prefer to wait are free to do so.

CHOOSING A TIME

The normal and customary time for celebrating a bar or bat mitzvah is during Shabbat morning services which begin at 10:30 a.m. If there are special circumstances which you feel warrant requesting an alternate time, such as a Monday or Thursday morning, please speak with Rabbi Franken.

SPECIAL FAMILY CONSIDERATIONS

Every family is unique. If your family has specific questions, concerns or problems related to the ceremony, the reception and the role of parents and other family members, or other concerns (such as divorce, stepparents, etc) they should be addressed in consultation with the Rabbi well in advance of the date of the event. Everyone's goal should be to ensure that the day of the bar/bat mitzvah ceremony be as happy and meaningful as possible for your child.

A NOTE ABOUT ATTIRE

Everything in a bar/bat mitzvah ceremony should reflect and enhance both the importance and the holiness of the occasion. This includes attire. Girls should dress modestly, with shoulders covered and with skirts of a proper length for a house of worship. Boys should wear jackets and ties. Formal wear, such as tuxedos and prom dresses, are not appropriate. If you have questions about appropriate attire, please ask.



GREETING

Families are expected to serve as greeters for the b'nai mitzvah service which falls immediately before their own. In many cases, this will be the week immediately prior to your bar/bat mitzvah ceremony. See the Appendix section of this handbook entitled "Instructions for Greeters."



FOOD GUIDELINES

Neither a kosher caterer nor kosher-certified products are required for serving food such as chicken or beef. However, shellfish, pork, and the products of other animals that categorically are not kosher (e.g., rabbit, eel) shall not be brought into, prepared or served at Bolton Street events or activities, including those taking place outside the synagogue building.

At congregational events, including Shabbat afternoon Kiddush, milk and meat products shall not be served together.

As you consult with different caterers, you may want to ask about what they provide. Some caterers will supply not only the food, but also the plates, glasses, linens, beverages (both alcoholic and non-alcoholic) and servers. Others only provide some of these items, and you then provide the rest. This is helpful to know, both in comparing costs (it's not always "apples to apples") and also in deciding how much or how little you will need to do with other providers.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

All membership accounts must be paid in full, or alternative arrangements for payment (i.e., monthly) must be in place, in order for your child to become a bar/bat mitzvah at Bolton Street Synagogue. There is a b'nai mitzvah fee (currently \$375) that is billed during the year that the student is in the Zayin class. If you choose to have a reception at Bolton Street, there will be an additional charge.

PARKING: Because there is limited parking in front of the synagogue, you may want to inform your guests that if that lot is full, there parking in our lower parking lot at 210 W. Coldspring Lane. Street parking is also available on Cold Spring Lane. On the Bolton Street web site, www.boltonstreet.org, information on directions and parking is found by clicking the link on the homepage.

ACCESS TO THE BUILDING: If you need to get into the building to meet with the tutor, photographer, or for any other reason, please contact the Administrator to find a time that is convenient for you when the building will be open.

If you are having things delivered to the synagogue (flowers, centerpieces, etc.), the synagogue is generally open Tuesday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. However, before scheduling a delivery, please call the Administrator to make sure someone will be there to let the delivery person in. Also, the synagogue is open one hour prior to the start of the service, so deliveries can be also made then.

SERVICE SUPPLEMENT

Oftentimes at Bolton Street, families will prepare a supplement to hand out to those who attend the service. This is by no means mandatory, and is at the discretion of each individual family. Each supplement is different, but they all share similar elements. Generally, there is information about Bolton Street Synagogue and the service itself. Some families choose to include the *D'var Torah* while others include the Torah and Haftarah portions. These can also be found in the books in the Sanctuary.

In the Appendix of this booklet, you will find a sample of some of the information included in one supplement. This is not meant to be a definitive text, but is meant to give you some idea of what one family chose to do. Please note that the Administrator has copies of many different supplements and will be glad to give you copies to read and use as you see fit. Also, many families who have made similar supplements may still have the text on their computers and would probably be happy to share that with you so that you do not have to retype the complete text.

TALLITOT AND KIPPOT

In the Rabbi's study prior to the start of the service, the student will don his or her own tallit. The tallit is a fringed prayer shawl and usually is put on by the Rabbi and the parents.

It is traditional for men to wear a small cap called a *kippah* (plural: *kippot*) or yarmulke in the Sanctuary. It is customary, though not strictly required, at Bolton Street. Often, women also choose to wear one. Some families decide to give out *kippot* to all in attendance, oftentimes with the name of the bar/bat mitzvah student and the date printed inside. These can be purchased online or from Central Hebrew Bookstore on Reisterstown Road.

PLANTS ON THE BIMA

Some families like to have flowers or plants on the bima for the service. If you choose to have them, please make sure that they are in containers that will not leak on the wood floor, and please remove all plants on the day of the service.

INVITATIONS

There are many places from where you can order invitations for the bar or bat mitzvah, both in Baltimore and online. Additionally, some families choose to make their own invitations. ***Please call the office before you print your invitations to confirm service starting times.*** In the spirit of inclusion and *menschlichkeit* (kindness), please be sure to invite all of your child's Religious School classmates to his/her *simcha*. You are also welcome to send invitations to the clergy and synagogue staff. Please understand that it is not possible for them to attend every bar/bat mitzvah reception.

KIDDUSH/RECEPTION: It is expected that families will provide the Kiddush for all who attend the service, both invited guests and the handful of members of the BSS community.

KIDDUSH/MOTZI: Recitation of the Kiddush (blessing over wine) and the Motzi (blessing over challah) should precede any reception, whether at the synagogue or in another location. For synagogue receptions, the blessings are said at the end of services.

THE RECEPTION

There are a myriad of options available to you when choosing a way to celebrate the accomplishments of your bar or bat mitzvah. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but below are some types of celebrations:

- Catered luncheon in the Social Hall following the service
- Kiddush lunch in the Social Hall with an evening party with DJ at another location
- Luncheon following the service in a restaurant with an evening kids' bowling or laser tag party
- Luncheon in the social hall with food provided by you
- Catered evening reception with a band at a restaurant or rented location such as the Museum of Industry

Each family needs to decide for themselves what type of celebration would best suit them, taking into account many factors, not limited to financial, time of day, location, family values, etc.

RENTING THE SOCIAL HALL

If you decide that you would like all or part of your reception to be in the Social Hall at Bolton Street, this option is available to you. Although we schedule a maximum of one bar or bat mitzvah each Shabbat, the social hall gets used for other events so it is best to reserve the date with the Administrator as soon as you know that you would like to have your reception there.

The cost to rent the Social Hall for a short kiddush luncheon (up to two hours) is currently \$375 with each additional hour costing \$150. To rent it for a reception that will last up to five hours, the cost is \$750 with each additional hour costing \$150. The fee includes the use of the kitchen, janitorial setup, and whatever tables and chairs are on the premises available for use. Linens, place settings, additional tables and chairs, etc. are at the discretion and cost of the renter. If your event will have dancing/entertainment, rental of a dance floor is mandatory.

At the time that you notify the Administrator that you would like to rent the space, a \$100 non-refundable deposit is due to reserve the facility. The balance is due two months prior to the event. In addition, a \$300 security deposit is due two months before the event. If there is no damage, the money will be refunded. If there is damage, the money will be used for repairs and if there is any money left over, it will be refunded. Please let the Administrator know at least one week before the service how you would like the Social Hall arranged. A layout of the social hall will be provided.

MUSIC

There are a number of options for music at the reception. Some families choose to have no music. Others bring CDs or tapes which can be played through the speakers in the social hall. Bands and DJs are other options. All of these choices are acceptable at Bolton Street so long as they are tasteful and appropriate for the occasion. If your event will include dancing/entertainment, rental of a dance floor is mandatory. If you are having a reception elsewhere, consult with the staff there as to what is acceptable.

OTHER ENTERTAINMENT

Some families choose to have other types of entertainment at their reception. These may include magicians, caricaturists, etc.

DECORATIONS

Please note that in the Social Hall, you cannot put nails, tape, etc. on the walls or ceiling. You can bring balloons, flowers, etc. and put them around the Social Hall on the floor or on the tables. As in the Sanctuary, please make sure that any flowers or plants are in containers that do not leak.



SPECIAL BOLTON STREET SYNAGOGUE TRADITIONS

SITTING ON THE BIMAH

As the newest adult member of the Jewish community, each student is invited to sit on the bimah during a Shabbat morning service in the weeks immediately following his/her Bar/bat mitzvah service

FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR TORAH/HAFTARAH READING

Students who have become bar/bat mitzvah are encouraged to speak with the Rabbi and Cantor about opportunities to chant Torah and/or Haftarah at BSS.



Bar/bat mitzvah Preparation Timeline

Grade 6 Year


- B'nai mitzvah Chavurah session with parents, students, Rabbi Franken and the Administrative Assistant

Grade 7 Year

Individual Preparation Begins. You will be contacted by the Administrator to begin scheduling the various meetings roughly 8-9 months prior to the bar/bat mitzvah date. Preparation for students who have dates in the fall begins slightly earlier to allow for summer vacation schedules. See the chart on the following page.

- Initial meeting with Rabbi Franken nine months ahead of event
- Weekly meeting with the tutor beginning nine months ahead of event
- Six to nine meetings with Rabbi Franken beginning three months ahead of bar/bat mitzvah

INDIVIDUAL PREPARATION TIMELINE

				
24-36 Months Prior	Study of prayers and Torah Chanting in 6 th grade classes at BSS		Research, begin considering your Mitzvah Project	Arrange rental of BSS facilities or other venue for reception
By previous May 1	Notify office of your preference at B'nai Mitzvah service for our Cantorial Soloist or Shabbat Unplugged musicians/songleader			NOTE: Preferences cannot be guaranteed.
9 Months Prior	Begin attending services	Initial family meeting with Rabbi. Receive Siddur and discuss any questions	Meet with Educator and/or Rabbi to discuss/brainstorm Mitzvah Project	
9 Months Prior	Student begins weekly tutoring sessions		Begin work on Mitzvah Project	Complete all facility arrangements with Administrator—including contract and Payment Options Form.
3-5 months prior	Continue lessons		Complete Mitzvah Project	Confirm names (English/ Hebrew) as you wish them to appear in Chaverim, Service Bulletin. Forward photo and student bio to office for Chaverim. Arrange to have invitations printed. Order imprinted kippot, if desired.
3 Mos. Prior		Begin meetings with Rabbi		Mail invitations
2 Mos. Prior				Send Biographical Sketch (Appendix I) and headshot to efelsen@boltonstreet.org
1 Month Prior	Lessons continue	Lessons continue		For private Kiddush or reception—have caterer forward certificate of insurance to Administrator.
1 Week Prior	Email form with names of all honors to efelsen@boltonstreet.org			For private Kiddush or reception—fax or deliver floor plan to Administrator
Week of bar/bat mitzvah	<i>Final Rehearsal – usually on the Tuesday prior</i>			Have family come to B'nai mitzvah rehearsal, 3:30-5:00.
Day of bar/bat mitzvah				Get a good night's sleep on Friday! Photos prior to service: 9:00-10:00, if desired Immediate family meets in Rabbi's study at 10:15

Shabbat Morning Service
Bar Mitzvah
of

John Franken, Rabbi
Judith Daniel, Cantorial Soloist

Welcome to Bolton Street Synagogue

Bolton Street Synagogue was founded in 1986 and remains an independent congregation in that we are not affiliated with any of the major branches of Judaism (Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, Orthodox), although we share many traditions and practices with those branches. Our mission is to be “an open Jewish community rooted in tradition.” Our spiritual leader since July 2012 has been Rabbi John Franken. Our congregation moved to its current home in December 2003. The red brick portion of the building was constructed in 1954 as a sub-station for Baltimore Gas and Electric but was never used once it was built. The current building, designed by the architecture firm of Charles Alexander and Associates, underwent an 18 month renovation to create the sanctuary, social hall, nine classrooms, three offices, and a library.

The stained glass window in the lobby was designed by Walter Schwarz, one of our founding members. At the beginning of the Nazi era, Mr. Schwarz lived through *Kristallnacht* or “The Night of Broken Glass.” It was on this night in November 1938 that the glass windows in almost every German synagogue and in most Jewish owned businesses were shattered. Following this

experience, Mr. Schwarz swore that if he should escape Nazi German, he would one day learn to create and build with glass. The yellow star serves as a memorial to the six million Jews who perished in the flames of the Holocaust

ABOUT THE SANCTUARY

On the east wall of the sanctuary is the Aron Ha Kodesh or the Holy Ark. It faces Jerusalem and contains two hand-lettered parchment Torah scrolls. The Torah contains the Five Books of Moses, the most sacred of Jewish writings (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy), and forms the basis of the Hebrew bible. The Torah scrolls are written in a special Hebrew script which contains no vowels or punctuation. It is composed in the ancient form of Hebrew lettering and must be chanted according to a traditional melody.

One of our two Torahs was the gift of a congregant and was written in Israel. The other Torah is on permanent loan from the Memorial Scrolls Trust of London. It was confiscated from a Czech synagogue by Nazis and recovered after World War II. We treasure it as a memorial to those who died during the Holocaust. The raised platform from which the Torah is read is called the bimah, meaning high place. According to tradition, we read the Torah from an elevated platform to signify our respect for its holiness.

Suspended over the Ark is our Ner Tamid or eternal light. You will find a Ner Tamid burning perpetually in

front of every Ark in every synagogue throughout the world.

Local artist Wendy Jachman created the doors of the Ark, which depict the Tree of Life, with the uppermost branches creating a Menorah. The Hebrew text running through the red band toward the bottom of the piece states “It (Torah) is a Tree of Life to those who hold fast to it and all its supporters are happy.”

WHAT IS A BAT MITZVAH?

The Hebrew words bat mitzvah mean “daughter of the commandments.” The bat mitzvah ceremony is one of initiation, marking a young woman’s entrance into the adult Jewish community. The bat mitzvah ceremony is not a separate service, but an integral part of the regular service for Saturday morning, the morning of the Jewish Sabbath.

During the Middle Ages, a tradition developed in Europe of marking a boy’s rite of passage by calling him to the pulpit to read a section of the morning’s Torah portion, along with the appropriate blessings. The Bat Mitzvah ceremony for girls developed in the last century as Reconstructionist, Reform and Conservative congregations stressed the egalitarian nature of Judaism by calling women to the Torah.

What to Expect from the Service

For many here today, this may be your first Bar Mitzvah service. We hope that you will feel comfortable and help make today a special day.

This guide is intended to provide you with some background information about our service.

- When the congregation stands, please stand.
- Wearing a head covering is optional. The special kippot provided today may be taken with you following the service.
- Please do not enter or leave the sanctuary when the Ark is open.
- Please participate in whichever prayers you are comfortable reciting.
- Never place a prayer book on the floor. It is a holy book.
- There is no photography during the service.
- Please turn off all cell phones and pagers during the service.

The Shabbat Morning Service

The Shabbat Morning Service begins with meditations, songs, and blessings designed to create the proper mood and tenor of the morning.

The main portion of the service begins with a “Call to Prayer,” the *Barechu*. In ancient times, the priests would sing this prayer over the walls of the Temple to call the people from the marketplace.

The section that follows is called the “*Shema* and its Blessings.” The prayer that precedes the *Shema* praises God as the creator of all things. The prayer that follows speaks of the Covenant between God and the Jewish people.

Next is the *Shmoneh Esray* including the *Amidah*. Most commonly known as the *Tefillah*, “The Prayer,” because it serves as the central prayer of the service. On Shabbat we are encouraged to appreciate what we already have, so the blessings thank God for the gift of the Sabbath.

At this point, the Torah is removed from the Holy Ark, the portion for this day is read in sections. This portion is led by the bar/bat mitzvah and marks the moment s/he takes his place in the community. Then the *haftarah*, “conclusion” is read. The *haftarah* portion relates to the ideas of the Torah portion, or to the time of the year. Both Torah and *haftarah* are chanted with special melodies traditionally assigned. Then the Torah is returned to the Ark.

Usually the service includes a *Mi Sheberakh*, or prayer of healing. With a holistic view of humankind, it prays for physical cure as well as spiritual healing, asking for blessing, compassion, restoration, and strength, within the community of others facing illness as well as all Jews and all human beings. The Rabbi will ask all in attendance for names of those that might be in need of healing.

The service concludes with several prayers including the prayers is the *Aleinu*, a prayer for the perfection of the world and the Mourner’s *Kaddish*. Again the Rabbi will ask the congregation to offer any names of those who have passed away in the previous 30 days, or those marking the anniversary

of a death. The congregation stands as a sign of respect to those grieving in our community and also in tribute to those who have passed and have no one to stand for them. The service then ends with announcements, the *Kiddush* and a hymn.

Customs and Symbols of the Synagogue

Head Covering: Kippah or Yarmulke

To cover one's head is regarded as an expression of humility and reverence. It is a reminder God is "above us." The kippah are worn at the worshipper's option and are provided in the back of the sanctuary.

Prayer Shawl: The Tallit

The purpose of the prayer shawl is to serve as a reminder of the commandments, which are symbolized by knots in the fringes (*tzitzit*). The Bar/Bat Mitzvah usually marks the first time one dons a tallit. _____ created his/her *tallit* two years ago in preparation for this day.

The Ark: Aron Kodesh

At the front of the sanctuary is a raised platform, the *bimah* or pulpit. On the *bimah* is the Holy Ark. Covered by a curtain or door or both, it contains one or more *Torah* scrolls. It reminds us of the Ark containing the tablets of the Ten Commandments, which was carried by the Israelites during their years of wandering in the wilderness.

The congregation stands anytime the Ark is opened.

The Torah: Sefer Torah

The scriptures that we use in services are called the *Torah*. The *Torah* contains the Five Books of Moses, the first five books of the Bible in Hebrew and includes the most sacred writings and traditions of Judaism. It is handwritten on parchment made from animal skin, usually sheepskin. No vowels appear in the Torah scroll because the vowel system was introduced to the Hebrew language centuries after the first scroll was written. The parchment is attached to two wooden rollers and it is clothed in a velvet mantle.

Silver ornaments may adorn the top of the handles, or a crown may be used to cover them. A carved silver *yad*, or "hand" is attached; the reader uses the *yad* to follow the text-because you are not supposed to touch the parchment on these scrolls.

The Eternal Light: *Ner Tamid*

Above the Ark, the Eternal Light burns continuously in memory of the lamp that burned in the tent sanctuary where the ancient Israelites worshipped during the time of Moses. this light is also a reminder of the never-ending faith of the Jewish people and of the eternal presence of God.

Pareshat _____

The Torah portion begins with Jacob's sending messengers to his brother Esau. They are about the meet after twenty years of separation. We are told of Jacob's fears, of his division of his community into two camps, and of his wrestling with a man-angel who changes Jacob's name to Israel. Following that struggle, Jacob and Esau meet and part peacefully, each

going his separate way. Toward the end of the portion, Jacob's last son Benjamin is born.

SOMETHING ON HAFTARAH PORTION

Special Honors

Ark Openers

Undress the Torah

First Aliyah

Second Aliyah

Third Aliyah

Hagbah (Torah Lifter)

Gelilah (Torah Dresser)

Ark Closers

Kiddush & Motzi

Live Each Day to the Fullest

from the Talmud

Live each day to the fullest,
Get the most from each hour, each day,
And each age of your life.
Then you can look forward with confidence
And back without regrets.

Be yourself - but be your best self.
Dare to be different and to follow your own star.
And don't be afraid to be happy.
Enjoy what is beautiful.
Love with all your heart and soul.
Believe that those you love, love you.

Forget what you have done for your friends.
And remember what they have done for you.
Disregard what the world owes you
And concentrate on what you owe the world.

When you are faced with a decision,
Make that decision as wisely as possible,
Then forget it.
The moment of absolute certainty never arises.

And above all, remember that God helps those who
help themselves.
Pray as if everything depended on God
Act as if everything depended on you.

Special Thanks

We are grateful to _____.

Thank you to the congregation of Bolton Street
Synagogue and to our family and friends for joining us
in this celebration.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
שֶׁהִתְיַנְנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה: (אָמֵן)

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam
shehecheyanu v'kiyimanu v'higi'anu laz'man hazeh. (Amein)

Blessed are you, Lord, our God, sovereign of the universe
who has kept us alive, sustained us, and enabled us to reach
this season (Amen)

Appendix B

A BIBLIOGRAPHY

Some families wish to enrich their experience by having a deeper understanding of it. We have suggested some books to aid you in the study of Judaism and the ceremony of Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Diamant, Anita and Cooper, Howard, *Living a Jewish Life: Jewish Traditions, Customs and Values for Today's Families*, Harper, 1991

CCAR, *Gates of the Seasons: A Guide to the Jewish Year*, 1983.

CCAR, *Gates of Mitzvah: A Guide to the Jewish Cycle*, 1979

CCAR, *Gates of Shabbat: A Guide for Observing Shabbat*, 1991.

Einstein, Stephen J. and Kukoff, Lydia, *Every Person's Guide to Judaism*, URJ Press, 1989.

Salkin, Jeffrey K., *Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah*, Jewish Lights Publishing, 1992.

Salkin, Jeffrey K., *For Kids -- Putting God on the Guest List: How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Bar or Bat Mitzvah*, Jewish Lights Publishing

Sonsino, Rifat and Daniel Syme, *Finding God: Ten Jewish Responses*, URJ Press, 1986.

INTERNET RESOURCES

www.jewish.com Check the "Ask a Rabbi" section for answers to many, many questions about Shabbat services and Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

www.urj.com The place to learn everything about Progressive Judaism.

Please feel free to take advantage of the Synagogue's Lifelong Learning and attend Shabbat Services as a way to learn even more.

Appendix C

GLOSSARY

<i>Aliyah</i>	Hebrew for “Going up”; refers to the honor of saying the blessing for Torah
<i>Bar Mitzvah</i>	“Son of the commandment”
<i>Bat Mitzvah</i>	“Daughter of the commandment”
<i>Bimah</i>	“Platform; refers to the altar area
<i>D’var Torah</i>	Commentary and lesson based on the weekly Torah portion
<i>Hagbah</i>	The act of lifting the Torah after it is read
<i>Haftarah</i>	A reading from the Book of Prophets that is an adjunct to the Torah reading
<i>Havdalah</i>	Evening service that ends Shabbat on Saturday evening
<i>Kiddush</i>	The prayer over the Sabbath and/or festival wine
<i>Kippah</i>	Hebrew name for head covering. The more commonly used Yiddish word is <i>yarmulke</i> .
<i>Ma’ariv</i>	Short evening service
<i>Maftir</i>	Last portion of the Torah recited before the Haftarah portion is read
<i>Mazel Tov</i>	“Congratulations”
<i>Mensch</i>	Yiddish word meaning an honorable or decent person
<i>Mincha</i>	Afternoon service
<i>Mitzvah</i>	A good deed, sacred obligation, commandment; hence a holy or good deed
<i>Motzi</i>	Blessing over bread
<i>Parasha</i>	Weekly reading from the Torah
<i>Shacharit</i>	Morning service
<i>Simcha</i>	A joyous occasion
<i>Tallit</i>	Fringed prayer shawl
<i>Torah</i>	The Five Books of Moses, or Pentateuch - the axis around which Judaism orbits
<i>Trope</i>	Musical notations for chanting Torah and Haftarah (different for each)
<i>Tzedakah</i>	Righteous giving, as in charity

Appendix D

FRIDAY NIGHT BLESSINGS**Candle Blessing**

1. The Rabbi will announce that the candle blessings will be read. The Rabbi usually invites the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, his/her parents and his/her siblings to say the blessings over the candles.
2. Light the candles before you read the blessing.
3. Together, we sing the candle blessing in Hebrew. Don't worry; here is a transliteration:

BLESSINGS FOR SHABBAT
The candles are lit before the blessing is recited.

BARUCH atah, Adonai
 Eloheinu, Melech haolam,
 asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav,
 v'tzivanu l'hadlik
 ner shel Shabbat.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו,
 וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק
 נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

BLESSED ARE YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
 who hallows us with mitzvot,
 commanding us to kindle the light of Shabbat.

Friday Evening Kiddush/Challah

1. Rabbi will announce the Kiddush and ask the family to join her/him at the back of the Social Hall.
2. Holding the wine cup, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will chant the Kiddush.

Kiddush Transliteration:

BARUCH atah, Adonai
 Eloheinu, Melech haolam,
 borei p'ri hagafen.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

Praise to You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.

4. The blessing over the challah follows the Kiddush.

Challah Blessing Transliteration

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu,
 Melech haolam,
 hamotzi lechem min haaretz.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ,
 מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Our praise to You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,
 who brings forth bread from the earth.

Appendix E

TRANSLITERATIONS OF TORAH BLESSINGS

Many people already know them or choose to memorize them. For the rest of us, they are provided on a very large, laminated card right on the pulpit. It is fine to read them.

The type on this card is so large that most people don't even need their reading glasses. Try it out at a rehearsal!

Before Reading the Torah

BAR'CHU et Adonai ham'vorach.

Baruch Adonai ham'vorach l'olam va-ed.

Baruch atah, Adonai

Eloheinu, Melech haolam,

asher bachar banu mikol haamim,

v'natan lanu et Torato.

Baruch atah, Adonai, notein haTorah.

בְּרַכּוּ אֶת יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ.
 בְּרוּךְ יְיָ הַמְּבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בְּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים,
 וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

BLESS ADONAI who is blessed.

Blessed is Adonai who is blessed now and forever.

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

After Reading the Torah

BARUCH atah, Adonai

Eloheinu, Melech haolam,

asher natan lanu Torat emet,

v'chayei olam nata b'tocheinu.

Baruch atah, Adonai, notein haTorah.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת,
 וְחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכֵנוּ.
 בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יְיָ, נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

BLESSED ARE YOU, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who has given us a Torah of truth, implanting within us eternal life.

Blessed are You, Adonai, who gives the Torah.

Appendix F

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ONEG SHABBAT

It has been our custom for B'nai Mitzvah families to have the honor of sponsoring refreshments for the *Oneg Shabbat*, which follows the Friday evening Shabbat services prior to their child's B'nai Mitzvah the next day. However, to make things easier, you may trade dates with another b'nai mitzvah family so long as you let the administrative office know. Please use this list as a minimum of the number of food items needed to feed the membership after a typical service:

1 bottle of wine

1 challah

4 dozen hand held snack items (baked cookies, brownies, etc.)

2 bottles of white grape juice

Fruit salad

All food needs to be delivered to the Synagogue before services begin. Please allow enough time for the food to be set out and arranged on serving platters. If you cannot attend services the night you are sponsoring the Oneg please contact the Administrator at (410) 235-5354 to arrange a time when the food can be delivered on Friday afternoon. The office is generally open until 3:00 on Friday afternoons. The building reopens an hour before evening services. As the sponsor of the Oneg, you are responsible for set-up and clean-up with assistance from our maintenance staff.

You are welcome to use the paper goods provided by the Synagogue, which are white or brown. If you would like something more elegant you may provide your own.

However, if these options are not feasible, Bolton Street Synagogue will provide the Oneg Shabbat refreshments for you at an additional cost. Please contact the contact the office for more information.

Appendix G

**PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOTAPING POLICY OF
BOLTON STREET SYNAGOGUE**

Still Photography

Still photography is not permitted at all during any worship service, either by guests or by professional photographers. In order to have photographs representing the service, the following options are available:

1. Arrange a “walk through” photography session prior to the actual service. This must be coordinated with the synagogue office so that we can find a time when the sanctuary is not being used.

or

2. You may take photographs on the day of service if you arrive at least 60 minutes prior to the service to take all pictures in the sanctuary (i.e., child with Torah, family in front of open Ark, etc.). If you choose this option (photographs the same day as a service), all photography must be completed and the photographer’s equipment must be “out of sight” at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the service. We do not want to have the photographer working or clearing out equipment as people are coming in to worship and we may need your attention to other matters prior to the start of the service (including welcoming your guests).

If you want to take photographs with the Torah, we open the ark for you. Photographs may not be taken with the Torah without a member of the synagogue staff (or their designee) present.

Videotaping

Under no circumstances may video lights be used during a service. Lighting is not usually a problem: our Sanctuary is blessed with an abundance of natural light.

The video camera may be left running during the service provided that it is stationed in the rear of the Sanctuary, as inconspicuously as possible. It must be out of the way of the Torah processional. The Rabbi or his/her designee will show the videographer an appropriate spot.

The video camera must remain in one spot for the entire service and the videographer must be stationary and sitting down so as not to detract from the service.

Enforcement

Failure to adhere to this policy may result in being excluded from worship services and/or the loss of privileges to engage in any photography or videography at BSS events.

Appendix H

Honors for B'nai Mitzvah		
Bolton Street Synagogue ~ 212 W. Cold Spring Lane ~ Baltimore, MD 21210 ~ 410.234-5354		
Date:	Bar/Bat Mitzvah:	Hebrew Name:
Torah Portion (Name, Citation & Page)	Haftarah Portion (Citation & Page)	
Ark Openers (2 persons) 1. 2.		CUE: When Torah service singing starts on p. 75, please approach the Ark. After Rabbi motions to you, each of you pulls open one ark door. Remain standing until dismissed.
Intergenerational Torah Pass Requested?		CUE: Page 75: As Torah is taken from the Ark, parents line everyone up from oldest to youngest, left to right, facing the congregation.
Torah Undressers: (1-2 persons) 1. 2.		CUE: As the bar/bat mitzvah parades with the Torah, please ascend the bima and wait behind the lectern.
1st Aliyah (usually grandparents) (1-4) 1. 2.	Hebrew Names	CUE: Please come to the left side of the bima during the Torah procession and sit in a "Reserved" seat.
2nd Aliyah (usually parents) 1. 2.	Hebrew Names	CUE: Please come to the left side of the bima during the Torah procession and sit in a "Reserved" seat.
3rd Aliyah (bar/bat mitzvah):		
Hagbah: Torah Lifter (one strong person) 1.		CUE: Please come to the left side of the bima during the third aliyah.
Gelilah (Torah roller and dresser) (1-2 persons) 1. 2.		CUE: Please come to the left side of the bima during the third aliyah.

<p>Ark Closers (returning the Torah to the Ark) (2 persons)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 	<p>CUE: Please come to the left side of the bima during the Haftarah (prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah speech) and be seated. After the Rabbi's blessing, he will nod to you to stand on either side of the ark. When he signals to you, you will each close one ark door and then sit down.</p>
<p>NOTES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ark openers are an appropriate honor for either Jewish or non-Jewish family or friends. • Please let us know if anyone you have selected will need assistance coming to the bima. • You need not select someone for every honor listed. (Congregants are available to fill those positions.) 	
<p>FOR STAFF USE ONLY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gift Presenter: • Ushers: • Building Attendant: • Bar/Bat Mitzvah Family: 	

Appendix I

Biographical Sketch (for Synagogue Bulletin)

Your *simcha* is our *simcha!* It is our wish to share some of your child's accomplishments and talents with the members of our congregation. When you complete the following form, we will include a short biographical sketch of your child in the BSS Chaverim, the Shabbat evening bulletin, and our welcome screen.

Please fill this out with your child and return it to efelsen@boltonstreet.org two months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please also include a headshot of your child.

Parent Names (as you wish them to appear in the Bulletin) _____

Student Name _____ School & Grade _____

What are your special thoughts as you are about to become Bar/Bat Mitzvah? _____

What is the name of your Torah portion? _____

What is the main idea that you learned from your Torah portion? _____

What is your favorite subject? _____

What activities do you participate in? (sports, instruments, hobbies, etc.) _____

List your brothers, sisters and their ages. _____

Write a few lines of information about yourself that you would like to include in your article.

Appendix J

Guidelines for Ushers

The job of the usher is to welcome guests of our Synagogue and make them feel comfortable, to help make the service run smoothly, and to minimize distractions from worship for the professional staff, our congregants, and all guests. Please read these instructions and familiarize yourself with your job *before* you get to the Synagogue for the service.

Before the Service

- Be sure to arrive early – at least 30 minutes before the service is to begin.
- When you arrive, check with the Rabbi and Bar/Bat Mitzvah host family to confirm what book(s) or supplemental materials will be used.
- You should be in the Sanctuary entrance at least 20 minutes before the service begins to greet and seat congregants and guests. Show guests where to find the coatroom, tallitot and kippot.

If guests are carrying cameras or video recorders, advise them of our policies regarding still photography (none permitted during the service) and videotaping.

During the Service

- Stand inside the door of the Sanctuary, and help people find seats and books.
- Tell latecomers the page we are at in the prayer book, so they can join the service as soon as they are seated.
- If latecomers arrive while the congregation is standing, ask them to wait outside the Sanctuary until the congregation sits. Also, no one should leave the Sanctuary while the congregation is standing.

Troubleshooting

- If children become disruptive, please admonish them gently to be respectful. If necessary, quietly escort them out of the service.
- Familiarize yourself with the rules for photography and videotaping and help to enforce them if necessary.

Appendix K

Guidelines for Parents' Remarks at B'nai Mitzvah

Dear Parents:

Following the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's Torah reading, it is customary for the parent(s) to offer a blessing. The blessing affords parents the opportunity to express the love, pride and joy they feel in their son/daughter. Ideally, the blessing will itself teach and embody the spirit of Torah.

The following are guidelines for the blessing:

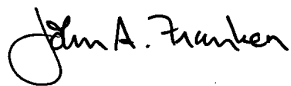
Content: The blessing should get to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's essence as a person honor them for the wonderful, loving son/daughter that they are. Preferably the blessing will also include a Jewish text or teaching and a prayer oriented toward the future. The blessing should not recite exhaustively the long list of accomplishments and outstanding personal qualities of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Those can be expressed and/or presented later at the reception.

Length: Around 100-300 words or one-page double-spaced.

Form: The blessing must be prepared in advance and be put in writing. Normally, it will be one unified statement.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John A. Franken". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Rabbi John A. Franken

Appendix L

KEEPING BAR AND BAT MITZVAH IN PERSPECTIVE

Bar/bat mitzvah is about the acceptance of responsibility. In the final analysis, this is the bottom line of become a bar/bat mitzvah. It's not about acquiring the skill of *k'riah*,--"the reading of the *Torah*." Rather, it's about acquiring the skill of responding to a challenge: a mitzvah. This is how Judaism defines maturity.

The *Torah* is the center of Judaism. Everything we do as Jews, everything we believe, everything we value revolves around the *Torah*. The *Torah* is the testimony of our people's encounter with God. And however you interpret those events in the wilderness of Sinai some three millennia ago, what cannot be dismissed is the sacredness with which our ancestors have embraced this legacy. This is why the first Mitzvah we expect our children to fulfill is to stand at *Torah*.

Bar/bat mitzvah is a community observance. It is not by coincidence that we choose to hold this initiation ceremony in public. To be a Jew means to live within a conventional relationship—mot only with God but with other Jews as well. Bar/bat mitzvah marks the entry of the child as a full-fledged member of the community. The awarding of an Aliyah, ("being call to the *Torah*"), is a gift of the Jewish people. For this reason, the marking of the child's coming of age takes place in the synagogue—the communal home during a regularly scheduled congregational service.

The bar/bat mitzvah ceremony is not a performance - it's a celebration. The synagogue is not a theater, the bimah is not a stage, and the congregation is not an audience. More to the point the only mistake one can make at a bar/bat mitzvah is to lose sight of this truth.

Try to think of the reception that follows not as a separate event but as a continuation of the celebration. In fact, Judaism has a formal name for the meal after a bar/bat mitzvah: *Seudat Mitzvah*. This meal is in honor of the performance of a mitzvah. It, too, is a sacred gathering. This is not to say that it must be solemn; it *is* to say, however, that the spirit of the morning's celebration should be perpetuated through the performance of mitzvot. The recitation of the blessings and the setting aside of a portion of one's bounty for the poor demonstrate that the morning's celebration was not an isolated event but a standard from which to follow.

Being a bar/bat mitzvah is not the experience of a lifetime. It is a lifetime experience—a state of being that remains with us throughout our lives. Indeed, the true measure of performance comes not on the day one becomes a bar/bat mitzvah but in the days that follow. In other words, becoming a bar/bat mitzvah should be thought of as a Jewish "commencement," marking not an end point but a beginning—a beginning of a lifetime of mitzvot, a beginning of a lifetime of learning. As such, it is our firm belief that the bar/bat mitzvah celebration is validated and enhanced by a commitment to continue religious education through Confirmation and participation in our young group.

Appendix M

ENRICHMENT SUGGESTIONS FOR B'NAI MITZVAH**TALMUD TORAH – Study**

- Read a book about Judaism
- Research a topic related to Judaism and write a report
- Research and write a report about the people and events in your Torah and/or Haftarah portions
- Write a short story or poem about being Jewish
- Twin your bar/bat mitzvah with an Ethiopian boy or girl in Israel through the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry

TELFILAH – Prayer

- Recite the Shema before you go to sleep for one month
- Attend Shabbat services at Bolton Street for one month
- Write a prayer for someone who is ill or thanking God for the things you have
- Lead part of the service at a Religious School worship service

SHMIRAT SHABBAT – Observing Shabbat

- Cook or bake two traditional dishes for a Shabbat meal
- Make one of these objects for home use: challah cover, kiddush cup, candle holders
- Lead your family in the Shabbat blessings at Friday evening dinner for a month
- Learn the Havdalah blessings and lead the Havdalah ceremony in your home

GEMILUT CHASADIM – Acts of Loving Kindness

- As a family, choose to participate in Mazon – a Jewish Response to Hunger by donating 3% of the cost of your bar/bat mitzvah reception
- Donate a percentage of your gift money to a tzedakah organization of our choice
- Collect clothes, toys, books, etc. and donate them to an organization of your choice
- Write to an elected official about an issue that concerns you as a Jew
- Volunteer your time at a nursing home or other organization that you can assist by being there to help others
- Volunteer at Bolton Street's Mitzvah Day activities
- Participate in a walk-a-thon for a cause of your choice

SHMIRAT CHAGIM – Observing Holidays

- Cook or bake two traditional dishes for a holiday celebration
- Fast a full day on *Yom Kippur*
- Build a *sukkah* at home and eat at least one meal in it
- Send *Mishloach Manot* baskets for Purim to a nursing home
- Plant trees in Israel through the Jewish National Fund on Tu B'Shevat
- Give up *Chametz* (food with leavening) for all of Passover.

Remember! These are only suggestions. You can add your own ideas.