

# B'nai Mitzvah Handbook



Everything you need to know for your child's upcoming  
Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah Celebration

*Whoever teaches his children teaches not only his children, but also his children's children, and so on to the end of generations.*

Talmud Kiddushin 10a

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## Glossary

### **Bar, Bat, and Brit Mitzvah**

--the gendered terms Bar and Bat Mitzvah literally mean "son or daughter of the covenant."  
Brit Mitzvah is a gender-neutral term recognizing the child's covenant status.

--refers to either the person ("*We call the Bar Mitzvah to come up to the Torah*") or to the occasion ("*I went to a lovely Bat Mitzvah last week*").

--is not properly used in context as a passive experience ("*I was Brit Mitzvahed in 2002*") but rather we talk about the transition of this rite of passage ("*I became a Brit Mitzvah*").

### **B'nai Mitzvah**

--the plural of Bar or Bat Mitzvah or ("*The twins will become B'nai Mitzvah next year.*")

### **B'not Mitzvah**

--the plural of Bat Mitzvah ("*They were the first B'not Mitzvah at our synagogue*")

### **Simcha**

--any joyous occasion ("*The last simcha in our family was my sister's wedding*")

### **Bima**

--the stage in the sanctuary, which the Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah ascends to lead services or read Torah

### **D'var Torah, also called "Drash"**

--literally "a word of Torah". Refers to the short talk (speech) the Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah delivers to the congregation on Shabbat

### **Aliyah**

--literally "to go up." Refers to coming up to the Torah or bima for an honor, such as blessings before and after a Torah reading or raising (hagbah) and dressing (gelilah) the Torah

### **Gabbai**

--individual who helps facilitate the Torah service and stands on either side of the Torah to assist readers. Plural: gabbaim

## MAZEL TOV!

Dear Congregation Neveh Shalom B'nai Mitzvah Families,

The Neveh Shalom kehillah shares your joy as you prepare for your upcoming *simcha*! By working as a team during the preparation months, we can better ensure the Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah experience will be rewarding for the entire family. We strongly encourage each of our young people and their families to participate to their fullest potential. The uniqueness of each family and its needs are given sensitive consideration as we plan and create each person's role in the Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah rituals.

At Neveh Shalom, the Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah is both a joyous and a momentous occasion for our youth to celebrate their physical maturity, intellectual growth, moral responsibilities, and capacity to sanctify life and time. This occasion is an important milestone in the journey of Jewish learning and ritual practice, but certainly not the endpoint.

In our congregation, all young people, regardless of gender, celebrate becoming Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah after their 13<sup>th</sup> Hebrew birthday. Our B'nai Mitzvah program is a cohort-based model according to birth year, not by grade.

Cantor Bitton oversees the B'nai Mitzvah Program and one of our team of expert tutors will be assigned to work with your child one-on-one to individualize their training. During the year of skill training, our students will become deeply familiar with some of our tradition's most central Shabbat prayers, learn to chant Torah and Haftarah; study the meaning of their Torah portion and examine its relevance to their own lives; and write a D'var Torah (talk about their Torah portion).

The Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah is an important milestone not only in the life of a young person and their family, but also for the community. We celebrate when a young person steps before the congregation to lead the community in prayer and to teach Torah. The event is not a private family affair, but a rite of passage observed amidst the regular ritualized worship tradition of our community.

B'Shalom,

Rabbi David Kosak  
Rabbi Eve Posen  
Cantor Eyal Bitton  
The Leadership of Congregation Neveh Shalom

## What does a Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah mean in your family?

Although many of us share the “naches” (joy) when a child becomes Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah, every family has its own story, and every milestone has its own particular meaning in the life of that family. You are encouraged to consider and discuss as a family what that meaning is.

- Who in your family has had B’nai Mitzvah? Who has not?
- What is special about this child’s milestone in your family?
- What does this milestone mean to your child?
- What changes when your child becomes a ritual adult?
- Will your 13-year-old take on new responsibilities at synagogue or at home? What will these be?
- What do you as parents want to learn or know for your child’s Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah? Are there synagogue skills or Torah skills you would like to learn?
- Who are the people in your family you want to honor through this ceremony?

## B'nai Mitzvah—Timeline

### *2 years prior (December – April)*

- Receive an email inviting you to make your date request
- Complete and submit the online date request form
- CNS will confirm the date and send information about the B'nai Mitzvah Fee schedule
  - Fees: \$1,800 (Payment in full due 1 month prior to BM Date)
- B'nai Mitzvah Orientation Cohort Meeting

### *12 months prior*

- Students and parents meet with **Cantor** to discuss preparation for their family's B'nai Mitzvah experience
- Tutor Assignment
- Receive packet with parasha/haftarah information
- Tutor connects with family and begins scheduling weekly meetings with student
- Discuss location of services, rehearsal protocol
- Schedule meetings for your child with Cantor Bitton (at 20, 14, 8, and 4 weeks out)
- Schedule D'var Torah meeting with officiating Rabbi:
  - *Rabbi Kosak* four times (**at 20, 14, 8, and 4 weeks out**).
  - *Rabbi Posen* keeps her own calendar and will reach out to schedule meetings with her families beginning 10 weeks out from the event
- Contact Century Catering for Kiddush information and other party options

### *6 months prior*

- Receive an **Honors Form** (honors, service participants, child bio for program booklet)

### *1 month prior*

- Turn in head count for Kiddush
- One week before the event, submit all information for publication, and special requests from the family
- One day before the event, final rehearsal in the synagogue with clergy

## Expectations & Preparation (Please read carefully)

### Membership & Educational Expectations

Becoming a Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah at Neveh Shalom is a privilege of membership and of participation in our *ALIYAH Jewish Learning* program. According to Board policy, students are expected to be enrolled from 1<sup>st</sup> grade through 7<sup>th</sup> grade unless they have created an alternative arrangement with our Director of Congregational Learning. All Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah families must be members in good standing in order to begin the B'nai Mitzvah tutoring program. **Students whose lack of enrollment or attendance has caused lagging skills in Hebrew reading may incur additional tutoring fees prior to or during the year-long B'nai Mitzvah tutoring process.**

### B'nai Mitzvah Meeting:

All families in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grades will be invited to our annual B'nai Mitzvah Orientation meeting, usually held in March, which allows upcoming B'nai Mitzvah families to share information, meet with the Clergy, and meet other recent B'nai Mitzvah families happy to mentor those new to the planning process.

### Synagogue Attendance:

The best preparation for your family's special occasion is to join the community by participating as a family regularly at Shabbat morning, Friday evening, or daily morning minyan services during the years and months leading up to your child's Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah. Your participation in religious services says something very powerful to your children about the importance of community, tradition, and life-long learning. Also, there is no such thing as "crashing" a Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah service or Kiddush lunch! Come as a family to as many B'nai Mitzvah as you can—it will be a huge help as you discuss what you imagine for your own child's ceremony and celebration.

### PJA Families:

Members with children at PJA must be enrolled for the 6th grade Judaics program (Sunday mornings 9-12) and 7th grade Tichon program (Wednesday evenings 6:30-8:30pm).

### Special Needs:

We have a commitment to work and celebrate with every family and child. If you have concerns about your child's ability to learn the traditional parts for Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah, please be in touch with Mel Berwin or Cantor Bitton to discuss your concerns. Our B'nai Mitzvah tutors are very experienced at working with all types of learners (two are professionally trained in Special Education), and there are a number of alternatives to the traditional Shabbat Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah ceremony if you feel that a different environment would be more appropriate.



## **ALIYAH: Educational and Social Preparation**

### **K-6<sup>th</sup> Grade as Preparation for B'nai Mitzvah**

While our ALIYAH program's primary aim is to help Jewish kids feel at home in Judaism throughout their lives, there are many aspects of the program that helps prepare kids for B'nai Mitzvah, beginning in kindergarten. In our Hebrew program, students learn Hebrew language (decoding, fluency, and comprehension) and participate in our youth-led prayer community. We teach how the service is structured, the meaning of the prayers, and the choreography of the service. In addition, our Judaics program provides students with an excellent overall understanding of important Jewish traditions, including holidays, lifecycle rituals, religious concepts, and values such as giving tzedakah and caring for those in need. In short, they learn and experience the value of participating in the Jewish community, so that their Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah is all the more meaningful as they commit to engaging in Jewish life as a ritual adult.

### **The 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Program**

The 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum is geared toward B'nai Mitzvah preparation.

- In Hebrew, the students learn the prayers of the Torah Service, including the songs that accompany the taking out and returning of the Torah to the Ark, and the blessings before and after reading from the Torah during an aliyah.
- The Judaics curriculum focuses on Leadership, from many perspectives: leadership of the synagogue; tzedakah as a form of leadership and thinking about a tzedakah- or volunteer-focused B'nai Mitzvah project; inclusion as a form of leadership; and their own leadership, as they facilitate the Chanukah, Purim, and Lag BaOmer celebrations for the younger children in ALIYAH.
- 6<sup>th</sup> grade is also when our PJA students join their classmates if they haven't already, and it is a fun and important bonding year for the class as they head into an exciting year of celebrating together.
- Perhaps most importantly, we host a 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Family Program, a monthly program for 6<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents on Sunday mornings designed to bring our pre-B'nai Mitzvah families together for learning, discussion, and social time. These are the families that will attend your child's Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah and we want everyone to have a chance to meet and to become more invested in this important community!

### **The 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Program**

7<sup>th</sup> grade in our "Tichon" (High School) program is also a required part of the B'nai Mitzvah program. Students have graduated from Sunday mornings and attend only on Wednesday evenings (6:30-8:30pm); many enjoy coming to our optional Wednesday evening dinner (5:45-6:30) to socialize with their friends. Our 7<sup>th</sup> graders join 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade peers for a year of learning and growing as a community, with choices of educational program including Jewish text, art, history, current events, storytelling, and social justice. They participate in community-wide events and Jewish holiday celebrations. We encourage our teens in 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades to continue their engagement in Jewish life and learning in Tichon and/ or our Madrichim teen leadership programs.

## Scheduling a Date

B'nai Mitzvah at Neveh Shalom are scheduled approximately two years in advance.

- Each year B'nai Mitzvah are scheduled as a cohort according to **birth year (not by grade)**. For example, in **December 2023**, all families with students **born in 2013**, who are eligible for **B'nai Mitzvah in 2026**, will receive an email regarding date requests.
- Complete and submit the online form, indicating your top three date preferences. Note any concerns you have about your child's or family's special circumstances, whether regarding special needs, date requests that differ from a traditional Shabbat service, a conversion that needs to happen before this occasion, etc.
- Cantor Bitton, in consultation with other Neveh Shalom staff, assigns dates based on those requests. Considerations include clergy availability, Jewish holidays, and the best fit for each family. If needed, you will receive follow-up communications from Cantor Bitton during this process in January or early February.
- A confirmation letter with your assigned date and invoice for your B'nai Mitzvah fees will be sent to you no later than March. At this point, your date is confirmed on the Neveh Shalom calendar—tell your friends and family to save the date!

## B'nai Mitzvah Tutoring Program

Students enrolled in our ALIYAH Program with a confirmed Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah date work with one of our professional tutors in weekly sessions for approximately the year leading up to the Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah. These one-on-one sessions are scheduled for one half hour per week at a mutually agreed upon time. If you have a request for a specific tutor, or if you would like to tutor your child yourself, please be in touch with Cantor Bitton.

Our tutors follow a template for the service, but also individualize the experience based on the student's skills and interests. Among the parts of the service that students can learn are:

- Torah tropes and the recitation of their Torah portion
- Haftarah tropes and the recitation of their Haftarah portion
- Blessings before and after the Torah and Haftarah readings
- Shabbat morning Torah service
- Other selected prayers such as Ashrei, Ein K'Eloheinu, Aleinu and others...
- Kiddush and other Friday night prayers

### A Note about B'nai Mitzvah Fees

**The fees are a total of \$1,800 (in addition to your annual Membership Commitment and ALIYAH tuition).** This covers a year of tutoring prior to your child's Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah, as well as a digital recording of their service. All fees must be paid in full 1 month prior to your B'nai Mitzvah. Requests for payment plans can be discussed with our Accounting Office.

### A Special Opportunity: Morning Minyan and the Tefillin Program

A generous family in our community has made this offer: Any 6<sup>th</sup> grader who attends a weekday Morning Minyan (Sunday-Friday morning) on a regular (weekly) basis for a year is granted a set of tefillin at their Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah. This incentive is meant to encourage our young daveners to join a warm and welcoming community of our most committed prayer participants. Many of these "Minyanaires" are of an older generation, and the relationships that our young people build with them are priceless.

## Planning the Ceremony

### Meeting with the Rabbi & Cantor

Our clergy are looking forward to meeting your family. The Rabbi will guide students through studying the Torah portion and writing a d'var Torah (short speech teaching a lesson about the portion). The rabbi is designated based on the date of your child's Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah. Rabbi Posen officiates on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Shabbat/Saturday of each month. Rabbi Kosak officiates at all others. A representative will reach out to you to schedule appointments with Rabbi Kosak. Rabbi Posen keeps her own schedule.

**NOTE: Rabbi Kosak & Cantor Bitton keep rigid schedules and are only available to meet with students on Mon, Wed, and Thurs. Thank you in advance for your flexibility.**

### Friday Morning Rehearsal

The Friday morning of the Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah weekend, families usually meet with Cantor Bitton and the presiding rabbi from 10:30-11:30am for a final rehearsal. Family members reading Torah or coming up for an aliyah should also plan to attend this rehearsal. Many families have photographs taken before or after the rehearsal. Candid photos taken **during** rehearsal should **NOT** interrupt or disturb the rehearsal session.

### Photography

Flash photography is prohibited on Shabbat (both Friday night and Saturday) and Festivals. This includes the time during our services, your kiddush luncheon, and anytime on the premises before Shabbat is over. Photography without flash is permitted on Shabbat at your kiddush luncheon/reception only. You will receive a video recording of our live-stream broadcast. If you plan to use a professional photographer for family photos before Shabbat, please inform our administration to schedule the time in the sanctuary or chapel. Many families schedule a photography session on Friday morning, before or after rehearsal.

### Which Sanctuary Will Our Services Be Held In?

Most services are held in Stampfer Chapel, which holds up to 185 people, or in the Main Sanctuary, which is suited for up to 400 people. Service location subject to availability.

### B'nai Mitzvah Are Community Events

B'nai Mitzvah are a very special part of our community and are considered community events. Other occasions may coincide with your simcha, such as baby-namings, special synagogue events, or aufrufs (calling a bride and groom to the Torah) and may include honors during the service. When planning your services, plan for about 30-40 community members in addition to your invited guests.

### **Gifts to the Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah**

Your child will receive a certificate of Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah and a copy of the Tanakh presented by the congregation. They will also receive a Kiddush cup, given by the Men's Club and Sisterhood. It is appropriate for your child to acknowledge these with thank you notes.

### **Throwing Candy**

The tradition of throwing candy after the reading of the Haftarah is a sweet one! The synagogue will provide a couple baskets of soft, kosher candy wrapped individually for friends in the front rows to throw gently, and younger kids to come collect and enjoy. Please do not provide candy purchased on your own. The Rabbi or gabbaim will see that the baskets are distributed to the family in advance of the throwing moment.

## Friday Evening and Shabbat Morning Services

### Overview of Shabbat Services

#### Typical Order of Service for Friday Evening (6:15-7:30 pm)

Opening prayers or songs

Tallit (prayer shawl) Presentation (by parents or grandparents to Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah)

Kabbalat Shabbat (Welcoming the Sabbath) service

L'chu N'ranana

Lcha Dodi

Tov L'hodot

Dvar Torah (short sermon) by Rabbi

Ma'ariv (evening) service

Barchu

Ahavat Olam

Sh'ma

V'Shamru

Amidah

Kiddush

Aleinu

Mourners Kaddish

Yigdal or Adon Olam

#### **Friday Evening Service Participation (Optional)**

The Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah family may choose to attend the Friday evening service which begins at 6:15pm. The Friday evening service lasts approximately one hour. The Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah may lead several prayers including the Kiddush for Erev Shabbat.

➤ Blessings and prayers of the Friday evening service can be found on our website:

[\(http://nevehshalom.org/bar-bat-Mitzvah/\)](http://nevehshalom.org/bar-bat-Mitzvah/)

- ALL Friday night services will occur at 6:15pm and conclude by 7:30pm.
- Most Friday evening services will take place in the Stampfer Chapel unless an unusually large crowd is expected, in which case the service will be in the Main Sanctuary.
- During the summer months Erev Shabbat services are held in the Upper Plaza outside, weather permitting.
- Occasionally on Shabbat, we have special events that may impact your Friday evening service time, service location and/or the number of people expected to attend the service. If your simcha falls on one of these event dates, we will be in touch with you well in advance.

### **Typical Order of Service for Saturday Morning (9:30-12:00)**

Psukei D'Zimra & Shacharit (preliminary service & morning service, starts at 9:30am)  
Barchu  
    Sh'ma  
    Amidah  
Torah service  
    Prayers for taking out the Torah (and Torah procession)  
    Blessings and Chanting of the Torah (7 sections plus Maftir, or last paragraph)  
    Wrap the Torah and put aside  
    Chanting the Haftarah with blessing before and after  
    Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah's Dvar Torah (addressing the congregation)  
    Prayers while Torah is out (prayer for congregation, for peace, Ashrei)  
    Prayers for replacing the Torah scrolls (Torah procession)  
Rabbi's charge to Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah & presentations  
Musaf service (final service of Shabbat morning, including Amidah)  
Concluding prayers (Ein K'Eloheinu, Aleinu, Mourners Kaddish, Adon Olam)  
Kiddush and Hamotzi

### **Shabbat (Saturday) Morning Service—Overview**

Services on Saturday morning begin at 9:30am and families are requested to arrive by 9:15am. Friends and family members who have an aliyah or another honor should arrive no later than 9:30 am and sit in the front section so that they can be easily identified. The gabbai (service helper) may need your assistance to identify these individuals. This service includes several parts including the morning service, the Torah service, the dvar Torah (an explanation by the Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah of the Torah portion and its personal relevance), and the ending service. The service concludes around noon, and it is traditional that the Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah family hosts a Kiddush lunch for their guests and congregants following the service.

- Blessings and prayers of the Saturday morning service can be found on our website: [\(http://nevehshalom.org/bar-bat-Mitzvah/\)](http://nevehshalom.org/bar-bat-Mitzvah/)

### **Order of Service Handout for Friday Evening and Saturday Morning**

An Order of Service (one-page handout) is printed for Friday night and Saturday morning. As the Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah family for the weekend, you are entitled to honor your family, guests, or friends by including them as participants in our service, and to personalize the handout with your child's name and photo (or other design). Details will be collected using the online Honors form, see next page. To see a sample handout, request one from the office.

### **Special Programming**

Occasionally on Shabbat, we have special events that may impact your Friday evening service time and/or the number of people expected to attend the service. If your simcha falls on one of these event dates, we will be in touch with you well in advance.

## Honors

There are several opportunities for your relatives and guests to participate in our Shabbat morning service, and many families consider this a way to honor special people in their child's life. Those friends or family members who will be reciting a blessing or prayer may want to practice with your tutor or may be asked to attend the Friday morning rehearsal. You will be sent an online Honors form to list those who will be participating in the service.

- The blessings for coming up to the Torah as an Aliyah are on our website:  
<http://nevehshalom.org/bar-bat-Mitzvah/>

Here are some more details on the honors that can be given out for your child's Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah:

Aliyah—coming up to the bimah during the Torah service to recite the blessing before and after one of the 7 Torah readings.

Reading Torah—chanting one of the seven sections of Torah in the traditional trope from the Torah scroll (without vowels or cantillation). This is an honor for those who have learned this skill. Torah readers not from our congregation should make sure to set a phone or in-person meeting with Cantor Bitton so that he can hear them rehearse the part. As early as you would like, you may contact Cantor to obtain a list of the Torah readings, request photocopies of the text, and/or an mp3 or CD recording (please allow two weeks to process your request). Cantor will help you with the reading assignment and will gladly send the information directly to your friend or family member if you provide him with the names, street and email addresses. ***Your complete list of Torah readers must be provided to Cantor no later than two months before your Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah date.*** If there are still Torah readings that have not been assigned, Cantor will confirm with you, then ask one of our regular Torah readers to read the unassigned portion(s).

Sitting on the Bimah-- If you plan to use the Main Sanctuary you may ask a family member or tutor to sit with your child. Honoring someone with "sitting on the bima" is not applicable in the Stampfer Chapel due to the configuration of the room.

Community Prayers – there are 3 prayers that fall into this category: 1) The Prayer for our Country, 2) The Prayer for the State of Israel, and 3) The Prayer for Peace. These prayers may be recited in English and therefore can be an honor for a family member or friend who does not know Hebrew or is not Jewish.

### **Participation of non-Jews in Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah Ceremonies**

We offer numerous avenues for non-Jews to participate in our congregational life. There are several ways in which a non-Jewish parent, grandparent, other relative, or friend can participate in the service. These include the tallit presentation, sitting on the bimah with the child, leading the Community Prayers, and opening the ark. The non-Jewish parent of a Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah is welcome to accompany the Jewish parent on the bimah when the Jewish parent recites blessings over the Torah during an aliyah. This is our current policy, but other ideas are being discussed by the Ritual Committee and leadership. Please be in touch with the rabbis or cantor for updated information.

## **Attire & Decorum**

### **Synagogue Decorum**

When you step into the sanctuary on Shabbat, you are stepping out of everyday activities and into a sacred space. It is a time to enjoy the holiness of Shabbat, as well as to show respect for the Rabbis, the Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah family, and the congregation. You will probably be inviting many adults and children who are unfamiliar with our customs and facilities. In order to ensure security, decorum and enjoyment for all who come to worship and celebrate, we request that children be always supervised. Smoking is prohibited on synagogue premises at all times. Cell phones and other electronic devices should be turned off while at the synagogue. Writing is prohibited on Shabbat and Festivals. Applause is not appropriate at any time during the service. Instead, express appreciation with the phrase, “Yasher Koach” (strength be to you). Business attire is appropriate for all worshippers and guests. Many families choose to send a letter before the occasion to explain what the guests should expect.

### **Proper Attire**

It is customary to dress respectfully and modestly when in a sanctuary. Please remember that everyone, *especially the Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah and anyone else participating in the leadership of the service*, should dress in an appropriate and modest manner when participating in a religious service. Bare shoulders or midriffs are not considered appropriate, nor are short, tight or suggestive clothes. The ideal for all shul-goers is dressier than day-to-day clothes but nothing that calls attention to oneself or one's body.

### **Kipot and Tallitot**

All self-identified men must wear a Kipah or other head covering when entering the sanctuary. Self-identified women are encouraged to wear a head covering, especially if they will be on the bimah. Kipot are available in the foyer. Should you choose to purchase personalized Kipot, you may order them through the Sisterhood Gift Shop or several sites online. Allow six weeks for printing and delivery. Additionally, a tallit and head-covering must be worn by the Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah and family members when reading from the Torah, having a Torah-related honor, or leading parts of the service. Covering our head acknowledges our entrance into a sacred space;



the tallit symbolizes our obligation as Jews to the mitzvot and to each other. Please direct any questions to Rabbi Kosak.

Parents' Speech and Blessings:

### **Presenting the Tallit**

During the Erev Shabbat (Friday night) or Saturday morning service, we invite parents to present their child as a new leader into the community with the symbol of wearing a tallit for the first time. The parents are invited to share a few words expressing their family's joy, reflecting on their pride in their child's accomplishments, and their sincere commitment to passing on the ancient and sacred tradition of becoming a Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah.

#### **Some items for your consideration:**

- ***Please limit your talking time to five minutes or less.***
- It's a good idea to write out your presentation and practice reading it a few times in advance. This can be very emotional; preparation will boost your confidence.
- We all want to hear your words of pride and praise, so please speak slowly and clearly, directly into the mic. Do not hesitate to make adjustments to the mic before you begin.

## Planning the Celebration

### Chronicle Announcement

You will be contacted by email 2-4 weeks before the Chronicle deadline so that you may include information about your child in our quarterly synagogue publication. It will include a high-resolution photo; names of parents, siblings, grandparents, and great-grandparents; school name and grade; hobbies and interests.

### Invitations

Invitations can be as formal or informal as your family chooses. Both paper and email invitations are common. Here are some considerations when creating your invitation list:

- It is expected that *all students invite the entire Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah cohort to the ceremony and Kiddush*. (A cohort list can be provided.)
- It is a courtesy when sending invitations to include Rabbi David and Laura Kosak, Rabbi Eve Posen and Duncan Gilman, Cantor Eyal Bitton & Michèle Tredger, and any other Neveh Shalom clergy, staff, or teachers who have been meaningfully involved in your child's education or Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah process.
- Addresses for the Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah class and for teachers and staff can be requested from the Education Office. All other member addresses can be obtained from the synagogue directory (online).
- All invitations should indicate when your service begins on Friday at 6:15 pm and on Saturday at 9:30 am.
- As mentioned above, some families choose to send an informational letter to guests to explain more of the customs of the Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah service and our synagogue.

### Luncheon, Cookie Table, and Challah

(All Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah luncheons will occur in the Birnbach Hall unless another major synagogue event precludes this option.)

#### The Kiddush Luncheon

The Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah **family hosts/sponsors a festive luncheon following the Shabbat morning service in honor of their child**. This is held in Birnbach Hall, which can be decorated to fit the occasion. **Allen Levin of Century Catering** will plan the menu with you and review the associated fees. This communal luncheon is integral to the warmth and hospitality of Shabbat at Neveh Shalom. In addition to the head count that you provide for the kiddush luncheon, you can anticipate approximately 40 members of our community will attend services and the kiddush. We encourage the B'nai Mitzvah family to sponsor kiddush for our entire community on the day of their celebration. **Our kitchen is strictly kosher**. No food, other than cookies, may be brought in from the outside.

## Catering Your Simcha at Neveh Shalom

**There are three options available: Catering fees are billed separately by Century Catering.**

1. **“Basic Kiddush”** - This option provides a basic lunch for your guests and is provided by Century Catering. The Basic Kiddush includes bagels, cream cheese, tuna salad, fresh fruit platters, hot drinks, cold drinks, all paper goods, linens and labor/service for a set number of people you have agreed upon with Century Catering. We encourage all B’nai Mitzvah families to sponsor the entire kiddush lunch which includes approximately 40 congregants who attend services. There may be no modifications made to our “Basic Kiddush” menu.
2. **“Upgraded Kiddush”** - Century Catering can help you upgrade the basic kiddush lunch. If you would like to add a hot dish, special salad or additional lunch item, please contact **Allen Levin of Century Catering**.
3. The family may choose to use a **kosher caterer who has been approved by CNS and has a licensed business (including a food handlers license)**. There is a separate contract for the family and caterer, which addresses details such as notifying staff, arrangement of kitchen space, and additional fees for our facility's use. Please contact our Neveh Shalom office for details.
4. NO FOOD, with the exception of home baked goods, may be brought into the facility for serving at a simcha-based event. Self-catering is not permissible.

**In the event an off-site luncheon is also scheduled, the family must plan to provide the “Basic kiddush” (see #1) at a minimum. The family should inform their guests and plan to spend 15-20 minutes at the synagogue after services with the Neveh Shalom community prior to departing.**

### **Cookies for Your Shabbat Luncheon**

A sweet tradition at Neveh Shalom—the Cookie Tables. It is our custom that the Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah family, friends, and relatives bake sweets at home in advance for the Kiddush Luncheon. While this is not required, friends consider it an honor to bake for your simcha (joyous event), and to help assemble the sweets onto trays on the *Friday morning of your weekend*. While we understand that this tradition can cause angst among some families, we have found that often there are a couple of parents who volunteer to be “Cookie Captains” for the class and will help to coordinate this part of the celebration with you. Alternatively, or as a supplement to the home-baked items, our caterer can provide treats, or Kosher dessert can be bought from Safeway or other stores that sell kosher cookies.

- See the Neveh Shalom Baking Guidelines on page 23

### **Challah for Saturday Morning**

Challah will be provided by our caterer each week. It can also be baked by family or friends. The Challah is only needed on Saturday at the end of services before the Kiddush luncheon.

## Decorations

### **Flowers for the Bimah (optional)**

Neveh Shalom maintains lovely floral arrangements on the Bimah. The B'nai Mitzvah family may choose to have fresh flowers for the bimah in the Main Sanctuary and they must be delivered on Friday, before or during the rehearsal

The Stampfer Chapel does not have adequate space allowance for large floral displays, so most families opt out.

### **Decorations and Centerpieces for the Kiddush**

You are welcome to decorate the tables in Birnbach Hall as part of the celebration of your simcha. Decorations and centerpieces for Shabbat should be in keeping with the spirit of the day. Items that are inappropriate for use on Shabbat and Festivals (cameras, writing implements, money, and candles) should not be used in your theme or décor. When in doubt, check with our Neveh Shalom staff. Mylar confetti may **not** be used as part of your decorations, upstairs and/or downstairs. Fresh cut flowers and kosher candy are popular choices. Delivery and set up of your Kiddush décor may be arranged with our Operations Coordinator.

## Extending your Celebration at Neveh Shalom

### **The Atrium for Friday night dinner (optional)**

Some families choose to host a Friday night dinner for their out-of-town guests, family, and friends following the service. This is a lovely way to begin your weekend of celebration. The dinner would begin around 7:45 pm, shortly after the conclusion of services. Our Atrium can accommodate up to 40 people. Larger families might consider using Birnbach Hall. Additional fees apply. Contact the Neveh Shalom Office for more information.

### **Use of the Birnbach Hall for Saturday evening Celebrations (optional)**

Families often choose to celebrate their Saturday evening party in Birnbach Hall. The room is extremely versatile and can accommodate smaller or larger crowds with an accordion room divider. It “dresses up” beautifully with the rental of proper lighting, draping, festive balloons, etc. The office can share photos of previous events held in Birnbach Hall to give you some creative ideas.

Birnbach Hall can accommodate anywhere from 100 – 300+ guests seated at tables. The large room offers great flexibility and setup options; it can be divided in two with our accordion curtains for smaller crowds and left open for larger parties. The stage works well for bands and DJ's. The wood floor is perfect for dancing! You and the catering staff can decide which setup works best for your event. Contact the Neveh Shalom Office for additional information.

## Our Gift Shop

Our Sisterhood Gift Shop, located across from the main office, has many items to help you celebrate your Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah, including tallitot, head coverings, jewelry, personalized Kipot, and beautiful Judaica gift ideas. We can also order kosher candy. We have a variety of items in stock and are happy to order for you from our trusted vendors.

### Hours:

Monday and Wednesday:	11:00 am -1:00 pm
Friday	10:00 am -12:00 pm
Sunday	9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Contact Jennifer Kalenscher 503-893-0822 or Dana Sirkin 503-680-5877 for more information, special orders, and additional hours.

## Shabbat Greeters

Please provide two greeters for Shabbat morning. Being welcomed upon arrival at simcha and having Shabbat Greeters is a very important part of the Friday night and Saturday morning service for your B'nai Mitzvah. Your synagogue member friends and family at the door are a great way to welcome your out-of-town guests, child's friends from school and family to the synagogue.

Coordinate Greeters as you would your cookie bakers. Offer to greet for other families and ask them to greet at your event. This can be a powerful way to feel connected to the families in your child's class.

Here are the responsibilities of the Greeter:

- Stack and hand out the Friday night Siddur (blue prayer book) or the Etz Hayim (red prayer book) and Siddur for Saturday, along with a copy of the Order of Service (and any additional handouts).
- Smile and direct guests to the worship space we will be using for the service, as well as bathroom locations.
- Hand out kippot (see policy, page 18)
- Full instructions for greeters can be found in the cabinet labeled "Shabbat Greeters" in the foyer of the Main Sanctuary.

Informational videos:

1. "A Guide for Visitors to Neveh Shalom," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=swhVCUxRjGM> is viewable on the CNS webpage. This video will help orient guests to CNS and our customs. To sign up to greet, go to: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409044eafa62ca5fe3-cnsshabbat>. This is a Sign Up Genius site. It's easy to use and automatically generates reminders.
2. Next watch the "Greeter Guide" video for all of the best tips for greeting! <https://tinyurl.com/greeter-guide>

## Baking Guidelines for Cookie Bakers

Dear Home Baker,

Congregation Neveh Shalom has a long tradition of our members contributing baked goods they have lovingly created at home for various events. As Neveh Shalom maintains a strictly kosher kitchen, all food served at congregational events must be kosher and prepared according to the dictates of Halachah (Jewish Law). The purpose of these guidelines is to provide you with the information you need to follow to enable you to bring baked goods to Neveh Shalom.

### UTENSILS

These guidelines apply to ordinary utensils, pots, and pans; serving dishes, and anything else which touches the food you bring to the synagogue.

- In a non-kosher home, it is ideal to use disposable utensils or glass (not Pyrex), or utensils you have bought for, and use only for, preparing baked goods to bring to the synagogue.
- It is also acceptable to use metal or glass utensils by washing them very thoroughly and then rinsing by pouring boiling water over them. This must be done each time you prepare baked goods to bring to the synagogue. Wood and plastic utensils cannot be koshered in this way.
- It is also acceptable to cover utensils with aluminum foil in such a way that the food you prepare does not touch the utensil.

### INGREDIENTS

- Fresh fruit, vegetables, and nuts are kosher. **If you use nuts, please label your cookies for people with nut allergies to avoid.**
- Basic ingredients such as flour, sugar, spices, corn starch, baking soda/powder are kosher.
- Use only shortenings and cooking oils that are 100% vegetable with a kosher mark. Use margarine or butter with a kosher mark.
- Eggs are kosher only if they do not contain a blood spot. Break eggs one at a time into a separate container. Discard any egg with blood spots and discontinue using the container.
- All other purchased/processed ingredients for baking, such as fruit filling, gelatin, chocolate, cocoa, marshmallows, and baking mixes must be in a package with a kosher mark such as Ⓢ.



### PURCHASED BAKED GOODS

If you decide to purchase your cookies, you can find kosher marked items at the bakery of the Safeway on Barbur Blvd. and at most Trader Joe's. When purchasing baked goods, make sure there is a U in a circle, or a K in a triangle. A partial list of acceptable kosher symbols is in the figure above. Many bakeries, like Elephants, are not kosher. Ask before purchasing.

Thank you for taking the time to bake! We look forward to sharing your delicious cookies at Neveh Shalom.