

Welcome to an Exciting and Meaningful Experience

Our focus is on the Bar/Bat Mitzvah the service and the sanctity of the experience. It is a major life cycle event focusing on the individual and his/her relationship with God, the Jewish people and our congregation. We look forward to providing a positive and memorable experience for your child.

General Requirements

Four years of study (or the equivalent as determined by the rabbi) in our religious school

Minimum of six months of personalized instruction with one of our Bar/Bat Mitzvah tutors on a weekly basis with minimum absences

Tutors and Studying

All fees must be up to date and members must be in good standing. About six to eight months before the scheduled date, the rabbi will assign a tutor who will contact the family to schedule regular weekly meetings to study and learn the Torah portion and prayers that comprise the service. Each student will be given music files with the Torah portion and other special recordings as needed. The prayers involved in the service can be found online at bethmiriam.org.

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah service is individually crafted with the family and the rabbi and will be based the child's abilities. Special needs and concerns should be brought to our attention as early as possible. The tutor keeps the rabbi apprised of the student's progress and he will meet with the family and the student to plan the service and begin to outline the sermon several months prior to the service. Our goal is for each student to become proficient in reading or chanting from the Torah and leading the rest of the service.

Helpful Hints for Your Special Weekend

The service is shared with family, friends and the congregation. Attending and participating in Friday night Shabbat services allows the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to explore his or her commitment to Judaism and to gain comfort with leading the congregation in prayer. Familiarity with leading prayers on the bima also provides the student with experience that increases his or her comfort and poise during the service. Our practice is to invite regular attendance at Friday night Shabbat services during the six months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Please arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of the service to get an English reading part from the rabbi. Family members are strongly encouraged to also attend.

Congregants are always welcome to attend all religious services at the temple, including B'nai Mitzvah. Of course, the family has full control over who is invited to the reception. You are encouraged to invite the entire religious school class.

Clothing at all Shabbat services should reflect respect for the bima.

Our congregation's celebration of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah begins on erev Shabbat (Friday night.) At the beginning of the service a parent kindles the Shabbat candles and recites the prayer for the lighting of the candles. The child then chants the Kiddush blessing. The rabbi will plan this part of the service with you.

Tzedakah - Kishrei Halev (Connections of the Heart)

Temple Beth Miriam strongly believes in the importance of the mitzvah of Tzedakah and we encourage the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to incorporate volunteering into the experience. A Kishrei Halev advisor will contact you during the 6th grade school year.

Our Hope

Our hope is that your Bar/Bat Mitzvah's commitment to making Judaism a part of his or her life will continue after the ceremony. We encourage continued participation in services, attendance at religious school and post Bar/Bat mitzvah experiences including the Rabbi's Teen Academy and our Temple Youth Group. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah can be a life-changing event for your child. The confidence gained from the experience is invaluable and the bonds formed with their peers during and after the year can be lifelong.