

# B"H

## B Mitzvah Handbook

### WELCOME

In Judaism, the B Mitzvah marks a most significant stage in the life of a young person. As they grow older, they will constantly reflect on this momentous occasion as a major part of their maturing process. It is this turning point at which a mere child is suddenly transformed into a Jewish adult. Feeling the pride of being a full fledged member of the Jewish nation... Identifying with their essence in a strong and positive manner... Realizing they are an integral part of our beautiful traditions and rich heritage. This feeling and commitment ultimately serves to inspire them to constantly recognize their privilege and responsibilities to themselves, fellow human beings, and above all to G-d.

### OUR PHILOSOPHY

#### **Personalized**

We believe that no two children are the same and no two families are the same and we therefore strive to personalize this most meaningful life cycle event to make it most meaningful, enjoyable and inspiring for your family.

#### **Meaningful and Relevant**

Our goal is to instill in each child the meaning and relevance behind what it is they are doing so the experience is meaningful and relevant to their lives in today's day and age.

#### **Not just a ceremony, but about being Jewish**

The B Mitzvah is much more than a ceremony, it is about who we are. Our focus is on experiencing the joy and depth of being Jewish. The ceremony is only one part of that. The training and preparation for the B Mitzvah reflects that as well.

As students are taught the meaning of what it means to be Jewish and are given time to ask and reflect on their becoming a B Mitzvah with the rabbi's and teachers they study with.

#### **Enjoy the whole experience**

It is not just about the destination but the journey should be meaningful and enjoyable as well.

#### **Celebrate each child's individual strengths**

We tailor make each B Mitzvah to fit the strengths of each child.

#### **Keep stress to a minimum**

## **It is not a contest**

### **Community is very important**

Through our own community involvement we show our children the importance of community. Making the B Mitzvah celebration a more communal event by inviting their Hebrew School classmates adds an important dimension to the experience.

### **Parental involvement very important**

Your child's B Mitzvah experience is greatly enhanced when the parents are involved and participate in their child's B Mitzvah preparation.

## **STANDARDS & PROCEDURES**

The following B Mitzvah information guide will outline the aspects, options and policies at Chabad of Fairfield.

### **1. YEAR OF B MITZVAH AT-A-GLANCE**

1. General Group Meeting 1
2. Teffilin and talit order form (boys)
3. Set up personal B-Mitzvah Meeting #1 with Miriam ([miriam@chabadff.com](mailto:miriam@chabadff.com)), where you'll choose important dates, and make all the major decisions.
4. Discovery Course takes place - November-March - 5:00-6:30pm  
boys - 5:30-7:00pm girls
5. Private training with Rabbi Shlame (boys) or Miriam Landa (girls). Number of training sessions will depend on the child's capabilities and what the ceremony includes.
6. Honors list and program
7. Follow up meetings # 2, 3 with Miriam
8. Rehearsal of B Mitzvah

### **2. PURCHASING TALIT AND TEFFILIN (boys)**

One of the most special mitzvot is the mitzvah of Talit and Teffilin. During the course the children learn how they are made and all about their significance and they are very excited and proud of this unique Mitzvah.

This mitzvah helps instill in children self control, living a life full of purpose, being a better person and giving them a meaningful way to connect with G-d.

We suggest that each family purchase a new Talit and Teffilin for their child. Having a new pair is very important for each child and teaches them the value of a mitzvah.

There is a special size and standard for Talit and Tefillin - we will order them for you. Just fill out the order form before the last day of Hebrew School.

### 3. DATE & CEREMONY

Preparation for a B Mitzvah takes 8 - 18 months. In order to properly prepare and plan your special day, clear the date you wish to reserve and choose the ceremony that best fits your needs, you will need to call the office to setup an appointment with Miriam Landa a minimum of 16 months prior to the B Mitzvah date. In addition there will be 2 follow up meetings during the year to make sure everything is running smoothly.

#### Types of ceremonies for girls:

- a. Friday Evening
- b. Sunday Morning
- c. Saturday Night/Havdalah
- (d. Additional Challah Baking Private event available on Thursday evening before ceremony.)

This table will help you choose the ceremony that fits your family the best (girls)

	Pictures /Music	Family and friends only	Time of day	Food options
<b>Sunday</b>	Y	Y	Anytime	Many options
<b>Friday Evening</b>	Y (before Shabbat begins)	Optional	1 hour before Shabbat	Sit down or buffet Kiddush OR dinner
<b>Saturday Night</b>	Y	Y	30 minutes after Shabbat	Many options

Parts of the ceremony that are available for the Bat Mitzvah to lead:

- a. MC entire ceremony
- b. Aishet Chayil - Woman of Valor
- c. Prayer of choice
- d. Psalms
- e. Ani Maamin - 13 principles of faith
- f. Jewish Leader essay
- g. Dvar Torah on the weekly portion
- h. Significance of Jewish name
- i. Hamotzie

All these options are available at all the Bat Mitzvah types.

**Types of ceremonies for boys:**

- a. Shabbat Morning
- b. Shabbat Afternoon/mincha & Havdalah
- c. Sunday Rosh Chodesh
- d. Monday or Thursday (holiday weekend)
- e. Tefillin ceremony

This table will help you choose the ceremony that fits your family the best (boys)

	Pictures /Music	Family and friends only	# of Aliyas	Length of service	Time of day	Food options	Service followed (usually) by:	% lead by B-Mitzva boy	need for additional Tefillin ceremony
<b>Shabbat morning</b>	N	No, Family joins community for services	8, Including B-Mitzvah	2 hrs	10 am - 12 pm	Warm food limited to stew	sit down or kiddush luncheon	20-40%	Y
<b>Shabbat afternoon</b>	N	Y	3	1 hr and 15 min	1 1/2 hrs before shabbat ends	warm food limited to stew	sit down or buffet kiddush	30-60%	Y
<b>Sunday- Rosh Chodesh (when available)</b>	Y	Y	4	1 1/2 hrs	Morning	no limit	Sit down or buffet brunch or lunch	30-60%	N
<b>Mon./Thurs. (holiday weekend)</b>	Y	Y	3	1 hr and 15 min	Morning	no limit	Sit down or buffet brunch or lunch	30-60%	N
<b>Tefillin ceremony</b>	Y	Y	n/a	1 hr	Morning	n/a	Cake and fruit	n/a	n/a

Parts of the service that are available for the Bar Mitzvah to lead:

- a. Lead services
- b. Haftorah
- c. Haftorah blessing
- d. Torah blessings
- e. Read from Torah
- f. Kiddush
- g. Hamotzie
- h. Havdallah

This table shows what is available when:

	Lead services	Haftorah	Haftorah Blessing	Torah blessing	Read from Torah	Kiddush	Hamotzie	Havdallah
Shabbat morning	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Shabbat afternoon	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Sunday	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	y	N
Monday or Thursday	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	y	N
Tefillin ceremony	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	y	N

#### 4. TEFFILIN CEREMONY (boys)

If your Bar mitzvah is on Shabbat, then on the Thursday prior to the Bar Mitzvah will be the Tefillin ceremony. Tefillin are not worn on Shabbat and the putting on of the Tefillin is one of the most important parts of the Bar Mitzvah. This is usually a small intimate family service. The Thursday before the Bar mitzvah is a beautiful opportunity for photos, video, and a pleasurable intimate beginning of the Bar Mitzvah weekend. This will also serve as the rehearsal for the B Mitzvah.

#### 5. DISCOVERY COURSE

All B Mitzvah boys and girls must attend our B Mitzvah Discovery Course. This is a twelve week course that runs every year from November through March. The classes are Monday nights from 5:00-6:30 pm boys- 5:30-7:00pm girls and are led by Rabbi Shlame Landa.

The course covers many important and fascinating aspects of Judaism and the vital role they play in it. In addition the course will prepare them for parts of their actual B Mitzvah ceremony as well as develop friendships with other B Mitzvah boys and girls.

The B Mitzvah Discovery Course includes the following:

1. **The Meaning Of B Mitzvah** - A deep appreciation and understanding of this transformational life cycle event.

2. **Ani Ma'Amin - The 13 Principles of Faith** - An in depth study of the 13 principles of Faith authored by Rabbi Moses Maimonides. These principles are the fundamentals that define our faith.

3. **Torah, Haftorah and Blessings** - (boys) An overview of the origins, traditions and customs connected with the reading of the Torah and Haftorah. The boys will also learn the meaning of the blessings before and after the reading of the Torah and Haftorah.

4. **Aishet Chayil - A Woman of Valor** - (girls) An in depth study of this famous chapter of Proverbs where king Solomon talks about the great qualities of the Jewish woman.

5. **Special Mitzvot Connected with B Mitzvah** - Understand the meaning and traditions connected with the (Girls) - Shabbat candles and the mitzvah of Challah, and the (boys) - Talit and Tefillin. Learn how they are made, why we wear them, what makes them Kosher, how to put them on and care for them.

6. **Jewish Leaders In History** - A comprehensive study of the role of Jewish leaders throughout history with relevant lessons for life in the 21st century. Each B Mitzvah student will choose a Jewish leader to prepare an essay on for his/her B Mitzvah.

7. **Ahavat Yisroel - Love For A Fellow Jew** - This unit will focus on and develop a sense of responsibility for the people around us and especially for our Jewish brothers and sisters as well as our Non- Jewish cousins. Each B-Mitzvah will choose a Chesed project.

We will provide a special binder in which will be recorded all the above mentioned studies and accomplishments as they are fulfilled.

## Your B Mitzvah Discovery Course Checklist:

A. It is advisable that your child (parents and family are welcome to attend as well) attend Shabbat morning services as often as possible during the year prior to their B Mitzvah so that the synagogue experience is more familiar and enjoyable for them.

B. (boys) Bring your Talit and Tefillin to all Hebrew School and discovery course classes.

C. Choose a Chesed - Kindness Project; e.g., Friendship Circle volunteer, Adopt a Grandparent, Volunteer at Chabad's "Adopt a Household" at the Jewish Senior Services, study with someone who needs help, send cards and care packages to victims of terror in Israel etc., and fill out the Chesed report.

D. Choose a ritual mitzvah in honor of your B Mitzvah; e.g say the Shema morning and evening, study Torah 15 minutes a day, observe the Sabbath or give charity daily, keep a level of kosher, put on Tefillin, make blessing before or after eating etc. and fill out the Mitzvah report.

E. Write a 200 Word essay on one of the Jewish Leaders, that was covered in the course to be used in the B Mitzvah speech.

### **Parent Participation:**

Parents are welcome to sit in on the entire course. The first class is an orientation class and parents must attend.

The calendar will be available by September 1. The forms for this course will be given out at the first class.

## **6. PRIVATE TRAINING**

In addition to the B Mitzvah Discovery course each B Mitzvah will need to prepare for their own individual ceremony. In order to personalize and prepare your child for their B Mitzvah ceremony they will need private training with Rabbi Shlame or Miriam Landa.

Your child will meet once a week, for 45 minutes, beginning a few months before the B Mitzvah. Depending on what the family has decided the B Mitzvah will be doing at the ceremony as well as how involved the parents will be in helping their child prepare and how motivated the child is to do the work on their own, will determine how much tutoring they will need (average 8-12 sessions.)

To set up dates and time please email [Miriam@ChabadFF.com](mailto:Miriam@ChabadFF.com).

## 7. REHEARSAL

Before the B Mitzvah there will be a rehearsal so that everyone knows what to do and what to expect.

The date and time will be decided in your meeting with Miriam.

(Boys) If you are having a tefilin ceremony, the rehearsal is part of the ceremony.

## 8. THE CEREMONY AND SERVICE

For boys - The services are warm and traditional, with men and women sitting separately divided by a Mechitzah (divider). The separation symbolizes our personal connection with G-d. During the Kiddush or reception there is no separation between the men and women. Tefillin Ceremony, as well, does not require a separation between men and women.

All prayer books are Hebrew/English. All announcements, speeches and sermons are in English. We recommend personalizing a nice program booklet that we have on file, which describes and explains main elements of the service for the guests and what to expect.

For girls - The men and women sit together and follow along with the English and Hebrew program printed especially for the Bat Mitzvah.

Dress code is respectful and formal. Women and girls should dress appropriately and have their upper arms covered with either a sweater or shawl.

## 9. HONORING SHABBAT (Only if your ceremony is on Shabbat)

In honor of Shabbat everything needed for the B Mitzvah should be brought to the center before Shabbat begins on Friday evening. You can make arrangements to drop everything off a day or two before your event, between 9:30 am - 1:30 pm. Arrangements can be made with Caroline at 203.373.7551 or [carolinechabad@gmail.com](mailto:carolinechabad@gmail.com).

There also cannot be any music, or pictures taken at the ceremony itself.

However, the weekday tefillin ceremony (boys) and/or the rehearsal provide the perfect opportunity for a photo and video session.



## 10. OUR FACILITY AND CATERING OPTIONS

Our facility can accommodate a Kiddush and/or reception. The facility can accommodate approx. 80 people seated, and approx. 130 people buffet style.

Miriam will help coordinate and organize the Kiddush and/or reception and she is available to help guide you through menu, different catering options, and décor.

Our resource guide will provide you with a list of approved caterers, party planners, decor and other resources you might need.

Chabad of Fairfield has 100 "theatre" style chairs used for services only, plus 50 assorted chairs for services &/or dining, 4-6' rectangle tables, and 4-8' rectangle tables. If you need more chairs or if you would like round tables etc. for your reception, they can be rented from a local vendor.

## 11. HONORS LIST, PRAYERS, PROGRAMS & INVITATIONS

We will provide you with an honors list that includes a list of honors and prayers to be given to various family members and friends together with a description of what the honors are and who they can be given to.

The 5 English Prayers can be given to close family and friends whom you wish to honor.

These prayers can be recited by anyone Jewish or not, adults or children. They will be provided to you in downloadable form, and you can email them to your guests that you will be honoring. Please have all these designated people share a few sweet words/toast to the B Mitzvah. Additional guests can be called up for toasts.

If you need assistance for the wording of the B Mitzvah invitation we have samples from which you can choose. A copy of the invitation must be submitted 1 week prior to printing, to [miriam@chabadff.com](mailto:miriam@chabadff.com).

Invitation standards:

- a. Hebrew Name
- b. (Boys) Include Torah portion

Programs are a good way for your guests to follow the service and to know what to expect. We have sample programs available for reference.

All members of the B Mitzvah boy's and girl's Hebrew School class and of the B Mitzvah Discovery Course should be invited to the B Mitzvah. The entire family need not be invited to the reception but should be invited to the ceremony so that they can experience a B Mitzvah before their own. The full list with names and addresses will be available at the start of the course.

## 12. YOUR INVESTMENT

The investments are as follows:

B Mitzvah Fee (due upon reserving date)	\$500
B Mitzvah Discovery Course	\$350
Private Weekly Training With Rabbi/Miriam	\$50 per session
Facility Fee (due at Meeting #3)	\$300
Teffilin (boys)	\$275 and up
Talit (boys)	\$50 and up

## 13. B MITZVAH DONATION

It is customary for families to make a donation in honor of the B Mitzvah at this special time.