

## BAR/BAT MITZVAH PARENT CHECKLIST

1. **Tallit Presentation** – A short ceremony that takes place **before** the service begins. A family member may give the tallit to the Bar/t Mitzvah with words of blessing. This may take place near the bimah with family gathered, or upstairs in the library. When the service begins, the Bar/t Mitzvah will be wearing the tallit and ready to begin on the bimah.
2. **Honors** – Each family has the opportunity to give out many of the honors that are offered during the service. Honors (excluding aliyahs) may be given to one person, e.g. opening the Ark. On a Shabbat, the family may give out **5** of the aliyot to the Torah, one of which is reserved for parents. Aliyot may only be given to Jews. We only call up 2 people for an aliyah if they are husband and wife. (One person reads the blessing before, and one reads the blessing after.) We will need the full Hebrew names for each individual called for an aliyah—*Avraham ben Yitzchak, Chana bat Shmuel*. Please indicate if the person is a Kohen/Levi.

**Please be sure to notify your guests well in advance about the honors they are receiving. Rabbi Tow will provide materials that they may use to practice their honors both for English and Hebrew parts.**

**Honors for Non-Jewish Guests:** There are opportunities for English readings that may be given to non-Jewish guests.

**Completed honors forms are due 3 weeks in advance of the simcha –**  
**Please send to board member Marc Isenberg for review.**  
**bravoms@verizon.net**

3. **Parent Blessing** - After the Bar/t Mitzvah reads the Maftir, or the last reading of the day, parents have the opportunity to offer the traditional blessing for children in Hebrew and English. *A personal parent blessing may be offered to the child at Kiddush following the service. If kiddush/motzi are recited in the sanctuary, you may offer your personal blessing to your child when the community has gathered in the social hall.* A microphone will be set up to facilitate this speech.
4. **Passing the Torah One Generation to the Next** – We invite one grandparent, one parent, and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to the bimah at the beginning of the Torah service. The Torah is handed to the grandparent, who passes it to a parent, who then passes it to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
5. **“For a Sweet Life”** –You are invited, but not required, to offer candy or sweets as part of the kiddush with the message of wishing a sweet life for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah. We offer this opportunity in lieu of candy throwing.
6. **Attendance at Services** -- In 15+ years of experience as a teacher of Bar/t Mitzvah, the single most important factor in the student’s ability to feel confident and successful is attendance at services in the months prior to the Bar/t Mitzvah. In addition, attending services **as a family** builds a level of comfort and familiarity with services and also serves **to connect the family to the community**.

With this in mind, the Bar/t Mitzvah student is required to attend both Friday night and Saturday morning services in the year of the Bar/t Mitzvah, about 3 weekends a month. Attendance at another synagogue’s services is acceptable from time to time. **The student’s training will be more positive and successful with regular attendance at services.** For this reason, we will

keep a record of the child's attendance throughout the course of the Bar/t Mitzvah training.

7. **Rehearsal** -- A rehearsal will be scheduled with the Rabbi 2-3 weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. At the rehearsal, the student and parents will have a chance to practice their parts.
8. **Bar/Bat Mitzvah program** – Creating a program for the Shabbat morning of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an option for each family. It is not required. The program can be as simple as one sheet of paper printed with words of welcome and the names and family relationship of those being called up for honors. It could include a few sentences about the meaning of the Torah and Haftarah portion. **Programs must be reviewed by Rabbi Tow before they are printed.**
9. **Pictures** – Pictures may be taken in the sanctuary during business hours on Thursday afternoons and Friday mornings. Please notify Rabbi Tow about plans for photos so that we can make sure the sanctuary is available.
10. **Inviting the Class** – Every family is *strongly encouraged* to invite all members of the Hay class to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. It is only in this way that all children will feel included as part of our extended Jewish family here at the GRJC. In the past, a child or children who were not invited have felt upset, isolated, and confused and we do not want this to happen again. *Please consider inviting all the students in the class to the Bar/Bat mitzvah reception whether they are all friends of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah or not.*
11. **Mitzvah Project** – Think about a project that reflects the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's interests. A one-time or ongoing project.
12. **Bar/t Mitzvah Speech** – Each student writes a speech about his/her **Torah portion**. The Torah portion (*parasha*) is the weekly selection from the five Books (Genesis/Exodus/Leviticus/Numbers/Deuteronomy) that we read in synagogue each Saturday morning. Please read the *entire* portion in English with your son/daughter and think about points of interest to the student. In order to find your son/daughter's *parasha*, you can check with the Rabbi, or visit [www.hebc.com](http://www.hebc.com) and you can find the *parasha* listed for each Shabbat morning.
13. Glossary of a few helpful terms:
  - a. *Parasha* - The selection read in synagogue each Shabbat throughout the year. We move from Genesis through Deuteronomy each year. Each *parasha* selection is named by the first few Hebrew words in the weekly selection that will usually cover several chapters. Each chapter is divided into verses. A verse is a sentence.
  - b. *Haftarah* – A selection from one of the books of the Prophets (e.g. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) that is connected in a thematic way to the weekly *parasha*.
  - c. *Maftir* – A short reading from the Torah that each student learns after completing the *Haftarah*. Once the student learns the Maftir, then he/she will continue to learn more of the Torah reading for the day.
  - d. *Aliyah* – Each Shabbat morning, the *parasha* is divided into 7 sections, each of which is called an “*aliyah*”, meaning, “going up”. The name refers to walking up to the bimah to say the blessings before and after the Torah reading. So, when someone “has an *aliyah*”, that means that the individual receives the honor of coming up to the Torah to say the blessings before and after the reading of one of the 7 sections of the *parasha*. The Maftir is most often a repetition of the last few verses of the 7<sup>th</sup> *aliyah*, and so it is, in effect, an 8<sup>th</sup> *aliyah* reserved for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. *The Maftir is the first aliyah that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah receives as a Jewish adult, and it is a very sacred and special occasion.*