

שופר KOL קול SHOFAR

*Congregation Kol Shofar*

***B'nei Mitzvah Handbook***



Dear Parents, children and families,

Mazal tov on your upcoming celebration! With the Bar or Bat Mitzvah on the horizon, you are entering into an incredibly exciting period of Jewish education. All of us at Kol Shofar wish to help make the process and ceremony a meaningful and memorable experience for you, your family, and the whole congregation.

Traditionally, thirteen is the age of responsibility and adulthood in Judaism. Therefore, this is the earliest age of which one can be called to the Torah to recite blessings on behalf of the entire community. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah marks this occasion of growth, not only for the child, but also for the family, the Kol Shofar community, and whole Jewish people. The ceremony happens on the Saturday morning service, after the child's Hebrew birthday.

At Kol Shofar, we seek to create an environment wherein everyone in the family is a part of the process, comfortably involved in the learning and understanding of this spiritual time of transition. Accordingly, we have created a series of learning opportunities for family members from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade through the 7<sup>th</sup> grades, which are designed to broaden and deepen our connection to our tradition and community. Of course, we encourage your family to attend Shabbat services, which provides everyone with a sense of comfort and familiarity with the service prior to day of the celebration itself.

Finally, services at Kol Shofar are for all. We want our B'nei Mitzvah to not only feel that they are an important part of the community, as well as the whole Jewish people. As such, on a given Shabbat, it is not unusual for the occasion of *aufrufs* (recognizing a soon to be bride and groom), baby-namings, anniversaries, birthdays, *yahrtzeits*, or blessings for those going to and/or returning from Israel.

Please review the information in this handbook and discuss it together as a family. Your awareness of these guidelines and your help in adhering to them will ensure that we all gain as much from this powerful moment in the family lifecycle! We look forward to seeing you at synagogue to learn with you and share in this wonderful moment in your family's life.

Bivrahkot Shalom,



Rabbi Susan Leider



Rabbi Paul Steinberg

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# **CKS B'nai Mitzvah Program: Educational Philosophy**

## **1. The Power of the Bar and Bat Mitzvah**

Becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah (literally, “one of the commandments”) is a complex and powerful event. It is not simply a religious ritual or a big birthday party. Nor is it just another developmental milestone along a child’s path to adulthood. A Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a major transitional event in the life of an entire family, including the child, parents, grandparents, siblings, as well as extended family.

Such an incredible moment affects the family in two ways. The first is that it is a time of great joy, as well as a time that can be challenging. As the spotlight turns to the child’s stage of transition (into adolescence), it also points to other members of the family: relationships between couples, growing older, and relationships among all family members. This, along with the stresses of preparation, makes it for a very exciting yet also potentially tumultuous time for a family.

The Bar or Bat Mitzvah also offers opportunities for each of us to heal and grow from challenging times. It can help to bring relief to the anxieties and difficulties that a family may experience. The preparation, the increased attention on Jewish identification and learning, and the event itself can each help to liberate and bring meaning to what is difficult and important to a family. Indeed, the Bar or Bat Mitzvah reflects the deep wisdom of Judaism as a spiritual tradition.

## **2. Child and Family Preparation**

Congregation Kol Shofar strives to enrich the Bar or Bat Mitzvah experience through student tutoring and skill development and family education. On one hand, we want to ensure that every child is properly tutored and trained for the event itself. Students have a lot of material and skills to master in a relatively short period of time. We have a system of skills tutoring that will guarantee that each student will be ready and confident. On the other hand, we look to address the Bar or Bat Mitzvah as a family event, with preparatory experiences that includes parents and children, as well as parents alone. This involves spending time together as a family or sometimes as parents alone, to reflect upon and study the emotional and spiritual aspects of this lifecycle transition.

## **3. Family Education**

Because the Bar or Bat Mitzvah is such a momentous occasion, informed by the wisdom and spirit of the Jewish tradition, this is precisely the time for students and parents to focus on their Jewish identity. Now is the time to tap into the grandeur of Jewish ritual, the sensitivity of the Jewish notion of family dynamics, and the genius of Jewish morality. Moreover, it is a time to reconnect with the Kol Shofar community and its clergy. Therefore, we ask that each family participate in one family education program during each of your child’s 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade years. They are:

- **5<sup>th</sup> grade: Journey into Torah (Spring).** Once the Bar or Bat Mitzvah date has been selected in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade year, we are ready to study your Torah portion. This program familiarizes families to Torah study and the Torah portion that will both inform and begin to personalize the Bar or Bat Mitzvah experience.
- **6<sup>th</sup> grade: B'nei Mitzvah Family Retreat (Spring).** During the 6<sup>th</sup> grade year, children and their families acknowledge that it is time to “get serious” about preparing for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Knowing how to prioritize the preparation, what conversations need to take place, and how express what is happening in the family, however, can be a little tricky. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade family retreat weekend at Walker Creek Ranch is a unique opportunity to dive into every question together with Kol Shofar clergy, teachers, and other families in the same cohort. Undoubtedly, this experience helps everyone navigate through the details and meaning of the process, including everything from the *D'rash* to the party.
- **7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Tikkun Olam Workshop (Fall semester).** This workshop, now very close to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah, focuses on what happens afterwards. In other words, the Bar or Bat Mitzvah asks: what does it mean to take responsibility as a Bar or Bat Mitzvah both spiritually (through Jewish symbols such as Tallit and Tefillin) and as a moral citizen? How does one assess where to place one’s energy, time, and money when responding to the world’s needs?

### **Parent Learning**

In addition to family educational programs, parents are asked to attend three 90-minute sessions in either over the course of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade year.

The three sessions are as follows:

- 1) “Everything You Need to Know about Judaism to be a BM Parent” w/Kol Shofar Rabbis
- 2) “Adolescence through the Lenses of Psychology and Judaism”
- 3) “Where Do I Stand? The Choreography of the BM Ceremony” w/Kol Shofar Rabbis

## In the Time of COVID-19: Addendum

When the COVID-19 shelter in place began, most of our B'nei Mitzvah families chose to postpone to another date in hopes that things would revert to normal in the fall. Unfortunately, that does not appear to be what's happening. In light of that reality and the spirit of offering what is both timely and timeless, we are offering a few options for how we may conduct B'nei Mitzvah in the coming months.

One of our timeless guiding principles is to be as inclusive of our whole community as possible. Although the Bar or Bat Mitzvah may be about a particular child and a particular family, it's also about their place in the entire Jewish community and all of Jewish history, thereby making it a whole communal celebration.

In that vein, just as we ask each Kol Shofar B'nei Mitzvah family to invite their entire Beit Binah class to the in-person service, we similarly ask that you invite your class to the service over Zoom.

### Fall B'nei Mitzvah Options:

**Option #1:** *A Zoom B'nei Mitzvah.* This is a typical Shabbat morning Zoom service with the Bar or Bat Mitzvah participating and doing their parts from their own locale.

**Option #2:** *Postpone the B'nei Mitzvah.* Choose a new date when current COVID-19 restrictions may be lifted. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah will chant the same Torah portion and prayers of the Shabbat that they were originally assigned (i.e., no need to learn anything new).

**Option #3:** *A Saturday morning "Backyard" B'nei Mitzvah.* Conduct the Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony with a small group of socially distanced guests in a designated outside venue, such as a backyard, park, or front area of the Kol Shofar building. A Kol Shofar Rabbi will officiate in person. We strongly encourage a Zoom component to this option so that the congregation, family, and friends can participate from afar. This option includes several mandatory safety protocols regarding the use of a Torah scroll and prayer book distribution, which can be detailed by Rabbi Steinberg in a meeting and which will be available soon in a document on the website.

**Option #3 (a):** *A Saturday afternoon "Backyard" B'nei Mitzvah.* Although the service is slightly different, B'nei Mitzvah students will easily be able to apply what their tutors taught them to these services (a rabbi can consult). These may be preferable times and days due to flexibility. Again, we strongly encourage a Zoom component to this option.

## Outdoor B'nei Mitzvah Mandatory Health and Safety Protocols

### Prior to Date:

- 10 days prior to date:
  - The family submits number of requested prayer books and *chumashim* to Sara Glass at [sglass@kolshofar.org](mailto:sglass@kolshofar.org).
  - 10 days prior to date, plans and strategies for Zoom-in option for additional family and friends (e.g., microphones, Zoom videographer, screens, sound), as well as any other set-up details are completed and submitted to Sara.
  - Family schedules time of return of prayer books, *chumashim*, and Torah on the Tuesday following the B'nei Mitzvah, and coordinated with Sarah Glass.
- Thursday before date, family will pick up a rolled and set Torah scroll, with requested number of prayer books and *chumashim*.
- Thursday before date, family will submit to Dawn final list of in-person guests with names and contact information for all.
- The Torah scroll will be dressed and wrapped in *Tallit*, stored with *Tallit* wrap.
- Families must provide tents and/or sufficient roofing to shade and protect the Torah scroll from possible weather events.

### During B'nei Mitzvah Day:

- Masks are required for all in-person guests.
- Seating arrangements should be according to county guidelines for social distancing (i.e., 6 feet apart).
- The Torah Reading
  - Torah reading will be done on a flat table.
  - Opening the “ark” is unwrapping the *Tallit*.
  - Only the officiating rabbi will touch the Torah, as well as one designee to assist lifting and redressing the Torah.
  - No touching the Torah to kiss it with Tallit fringes. No touching the readers pointer (the *yad*) against the Torah.
  - Torah readers and *aliyot* honorees must wear a mask while reading and/or reciting blessings to diminish spray.

### After the Date:

- Tuesday after the date, families return Torah, prayer books, and *chumashim* at previously scheduled time of day. Maintenance will be present to receive the Torah with gloves.

## Timeline of Preparation and Educational Programs

The organizing principle for preparation and education is based upon grade levels. This provides for a natural cohort of families and friends with which to share in the process together, especially regarding the family educational programs.

### I. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade (app. 2-3 years out from B. Mitzvah)

- a. **Fall:** Letter goes to families in order to begin BM date setting
  - i. Secular Birthday and Hebrew Birthday organized in advance
  - ii. Hebrew Names Organized and Recorded
- b. **Spring** (January – March) – B. Mitzvah Dates & Torah portions are Set
  - i. BM Guide and Policies is sent home.
- c. **Late Spring** (March/April): **Family Education Program**
  - i. *Topic:* Journey into Torah: What is Torah, *Parshah*, and What's it Got to Do with the B. Mitzvah?
  - ii. Distribution of prayer books (siddurim) to students.

### II. 6<sup>th</sup> Grade (app. 1-2 years out from B. Mitzvah)

- a. **Fall:** Parent Education Workshops: “Just for Parents”
  - i. “Everything You need to Know about Judaism to be a B. Mitzvah Parent”
  - ii. “Adolescence through the Lenses of Psychology and Judaism”
  - iii. “Where do I stand? The Choreography of the B. Mitzvah Ceremony”
- b. **Spring** (March-April): **Family Education Program**
  - i. *Family Retreat at Walker Creek Ranch*
- c. **Skills Development**
  - i. **Skills Assessment:** Approximately 1 yr from B. Mitzvah Date
    - Report to parents and introduce student needs, resources, tutor options
  - ii. **Tutor Assignment:** Following Skills Assessment Report
  - iii. **Personal Check In (1 yr - 9mos Out):** Phone call reviewing BM Policy Guide, Honors List, Questions, & Next Steps (clergy, tutors, lay people)



### III. 7<sup>th</sup> grade (year of B. Mitzvah)

#### a. **Fall: Family Education Program**

- i. *Topic:* Tallit, Tefillin & Tikkun Olam – Responsibility (what do I do with all the gifts)
  - *Parents & Families invited to bring their personal tallit & tefillin.*

#### b. **7 Weeks Out – Rabbi Family Meeting**

- i. Officiating Rabbi Meets with Whole Family (including BM) to discuss the meaning of the event, help to fill out remaining honors, discuss and schedule *d'rash*-writing meetings.

#### c. **6-Weeks Out – *D'rash* Writing w/Officiating Rabbi**

- i. 3-5 weekly meetings with officiating rabbi on Torah *d'rash*

#### d. **1-Week Out - Rehearsal**

## **B'nei Mitzvah Tutors**

B'nei Mitzvah tutors are community members that have expertise with the Hebrew prayers and Torah skills necessary for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah service. Moreover, they are upstanding members of the community that represent the Jewish values important to becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. B'nei Mitzvah tutors serve as invaluable resources in helping prepare the Bar or Bat Mitzvah candidate for the upcoming ceremony, as well as mediators and advocates on behalf of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah with the clergy in preparation for the ceremony.

*Each and every B'nai Mitzvah tutor must be approved by the Kol Shofar clergy.*

### **Fees**

B'nei Mitzvah tutors generally vary in fees depending upon the need, particular offerings, and the convenience they provide. Generally, Kol Shofar B'nei Mitzvah tutors charge approximately \$85 per hour. If you are need of financial assistance for tutoring, please contact one of the Kol Shofar rabbis.

### **Approved List of B'nei Mitzvah Tutors:**

- 1) Marilyn Goodman (415) 305-3566
- 2) Sharon Laveson (415) 888-8038
- 3) Jessie Leider (310) 486-4211
- 4) Alona Rafael (415) 461-0614
- 5) Sandy Stadtler (415) 460-5464

*Available for Hebrew and prayer skills without Torah and Haftarah Trope*

Stella Farael\* (415) 336-3576

Dorit Israel\* (415)608-3939

*Extra fee for voice training*

Illana Zauderer Parker\*\* (415) 515-6884

***\*Any tutors beyond this list must be approved by Kol Shofar clergy***

## Standards

All Kol Shofar B'nei Mitzvah are asked to lead certain parts of the Saturday morning Shabbat service. Enrolling in our Beit Binah program or a Day School education helps to ensure a smooth transition into the necessary skills. Tutors certainly help to individualize the learning and preparation, as well.

The following is a list of typical standards for Kol Shofar B'nei Mitzvah:

1. **Jewish Education:** Each student must be currently enrolled in a Jewish educational program that minimally meets the requirements of Kol Shofar's Beit Binah.
2. **Shabbat Service Attendance:** Upcoming B'nei Mitzvah must attend a minimum of 12 Shabbat services in the year leading to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah.
3. **Synagogue Skills & Prayers**
  - a. Lead the Torah Service
  - b. Chant the blessings for an *Aliyah*
  - c. Chant Torah (as opposed to mere memorization, we stress the learning of tropes, which is a skill that can be used for future Torah chanting)
  - d. Lead the *Musaf* service
4. **Optional Synagogue Skills**
  - a. Chant the Haftarah blessings
  - b. Chant the Haftarah portion (students that do not chant the Haftarah are invited to chant an additional Torah reading)
5. **D'rash:** The officiating rabbi will help to prepare.
6. **Tikkun Olam Project:** Each student is encouraged to choose a Tikkun Olam (social service/action) project during their year of Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Consult with the officiating rabbi about which project.

### B'nei Mitzvah Recordings

Please note that recordings of all off the standard prayers and skills for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah can be found at our website [www.kolshofar.org](http://www.kolshofar.org), under Spiritual Life / Lifecycle / b'nei mitzvah.

## Bar / Bat Mitzvah Service Outline: Sample

<b>Name</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Hebrew Date</b>	
<b>Parshah</b>	

<b>Pesukei D'zimra</b>	Congregant
<b>Shaharit Service</b>	Congregant
<b>Torah Service</b>	Bar or Bat Mitzvah
<b>Ark Opening</b> <small>2 people</small>	Honorees of Family
<b>Drash on Torah portion</b>	Bar or Bat Mitzvah

<b>Aliyah Number</b>	<b>English Name</b>	<b>Hebrew name of honoree</b>	<b>Honoree's father (or parent)'s Hebrew name</b>	<b>Honoree's mother (or parent)'s Hebrew name</b>	<b>Torah Reader</b>
<b>1</b>	reserved for congregant				
<b>2</b>	reserved for congregant				
<b>3</b> <small>1<sup>st</sup> honoree</small>					
<b>3</b> <small>2<sup>nd</sup> honoree</small>					
<b>4</b> <small>1<sup>st</sup> honoree</small>					
<b>4</b> <small>2<sup>nd</sup> honoree</small>					
<b>5</b> <small>1<sup>st</sup> honoree</small>					
<b>5</b> <small>2<sup>nd</sup> honoree</small>					
<b>6</b> <small>1<sup>st</sup> honoree</small>					
<b>6</b> <small>2<sup>nd</sup> honoree</small>					
<b>7</b> <small>1<sup>st</sup> honoree</small>	usually parent				
<b>7</b> <small>2<sup>nd</sup> honoree</small>	usually parent				
<b>Maftir*</b>	Bar or Bat Mitzvah				Bar or Bat Mitzvah

<b>Hagbah</b> raising the Torah.	Honoree of Family
<b>Gelilah</b> dressing the Torah.	Honoree of Family
<b>Haftarah and Blessings</b>	Bar Mitzvah student
<b>Rabbi's drash</b>	Rabbi
<b>English Reading #1: Prayer for our Country</b>	Honoree of Family
<b>(Optional)Hebrew Reading: Prayer for State of Israel</b>	Honoree of Family or member of the congregation
<b>English Reading #2: Prayer for Peace or another prayer of your choice</b> <small>may be done here or before Torah service</small>	Honoree of Family
<b>Ark Opening</b> 2 people	Honorees of Family
<b>Musaf Service</b>	Bar or Bat Mitzvah

<b>Optional Honors (after the service)</b>	
<b>Kiddush</b>	Honoree of Family
<b>Hamotzi</b>	Honoree of Family
<b>Birkat Hamazon</b>	Honoree of Family

## Shabbat Services and the Honors List

Services begin at Kol Shofar at 9:45 AM. B'nei Mitzvah families are expected to be seated by that time. The Torah service begins at approximately 10:20 AM.

Parents are welcome to give their child his or her *tallit* in at the beginning of the service. If you need help with the blessing for putting on the tallit (found in the prayer book), please speak with the rabbi. B'nei Mitzvah wear their *tallitot* during the entire service.

Kol Shofar is an egalitarian synagogue; both men and women called to the Torah wear a tallit and a head covering.

B'nei Mitzvah families may give *aliyot* to the Torah to their guests and family members. When there are two B'nei Mitzvah on the same morning, each family is allowed 3 *aliyot* for individuals or couples. For a single Bar/Bat mitzvah or for twins in one family, each family is offered 5 *aliyot*.

Those receiving *aliyot* are called by their Hebrew names (e.g., name, *ben* or *bat*, first name of Jewish parents). Please return the *aliyot*/honors form to the synagogue two weeks before the service. Please make sure that all people receiving *aliyot* are able to recite the blessings in Hebrew. Guests who will be having an *aliyah* to this page in our website for guidance on how to have an *aliyah*: [www.kolshofar.org/services/prayer-melodies/](http://www.kolshofar.org/services/prayer-melodies/)

Only two people may be called for a shared *aliyah*. They may recite the blessings in unison, or one person may recite them.

Non-Jewish friends and family are welcome in Kol Shofar services and may participate by reading English prayers. English prayers may be included in the service. Each family may include 2 readings to assign to people. Please make one of your English prayers "Prayer for Our Country," found on p. 177 in our prayer book. The other prayer may be chosen from the many beautiful prayers and poems found in *Siddur Lev Shalem* or may be of your own choosing. You may also assign "Prayer for the State of Israel" (page 178). Additionally, non-Jewish friends and family may participate in opening and closing the ark.

*Hagbah* (Lifting the Torah) and *Gelilah* (dressing the Torah) are two honors that may be offered to friends or family members. The person who does *Hagbah* must be able to lift approximately 40-50 lbs. above their head. *Hagbah* and *Gelilah* must wear a tallit and head covering.

Rather than "throwing candy" at the bar/bat mitzvah, we follow the custom of "showering candy" in which an invited honoree/s drops a basket of candy on the Bar/ Bat mitzvah as we sing "*siman tov u'mazel tov.*"

## Decorum and Attire

We offer these guidelines in order to ensure that both guests and regulars feel comfortable, adhering to our values of modesty and respect.

*Kippot* (or *yarmulkes*) are worn by all males, Jewish and non-Jewish. Women are encouraged, but not required, to wear head coverings.

All Jewish men should wear *Tallitot* (prayer shawls), and Jewish women are encouraged to do so. Women called to the Torah must wear a *tallit* and head covering.

*Siddurim* (prayer books) and *Humashim* (books of the Torah) are holy books and should not be placed on the floor. All stand when the ark is opened and when the Torah is carried.

On Shabbat, both during and after the service, including lunch, we do not utilize: videotaping, recording, cameras, cell phones, writing, and handling of money. If you must keep your beeper on, please change it to vibrate mode.

Appropriate dress for the synagogue is modest and respectful – please no strapless dresses, spaghetti straps, short skirts, or exposed midriffs.

We congratulate participants by saying “*Yasher Ko’ah*” or “*Mazel Tov*,” as opposed to applause. It is appropriate to clap during the singing of *Siman Tov u’Mazel Tov* or as a part of certain prayers.

## Parts of the Service

The Shabbat service has 4 parts: *Psukei D’zimra*, *Shaharit*, Torah Service, and *Musaf*.

*Psukei D’zimra* means “verses of song” and consists of blessings, songs, and prayers that express praise and gratitude and that are recited every day of the year. This part of the service prepares us for the central prayers of *Shacharit*.

*Shaharit* is the daily morning service, which begins with *Barhu*, call to prayer. *Shaharit* consists of (1) the *Shema* and surrounding blessings and (2) the *Amidah*, the standing silent prayer. The *Amidah* is also repeated aloud for the community.

Torah service includes the preliminary prayers and removal of the Torah from ark, the chanting of the weekly portion, the additional prophetic reading, and concluding blessings.

*Musaf* is the “additional” service, done on Shabbat and holidays. It consists of an additional *Amidah*. After *Musaf*, and subsequent concluding prayers, the rabbi offers the Bar or Bat Mitzvah a blessing.

# The *D'rash*

## Meaning and Purpose of the *D'rash*

The Jewish tradition maintains that the Torah is a relevant document to all who engage it, at whatever time and in whatever place. Indeed, studying Torah is intended to improve our lives, as the Kotzker Rebbe declared: "What good is understanding a text, if one does not thereby attain a better understanding of oneself!"<sup>1</sup> The Bar or Bat Mitzvah Torah *d'rash* is an opportunity to study or "dig in" to one's Torah portion in order draw relevant meaning for the purpose of elevating one's life. It is noteworthy, that the word *d'rash* itself comes from the Hebrew root, meaning, "seek," "explore," or "learn."

The *d'rash*, however, is intended to be wisdom shared with the entire community, as the Jewish tradition calls upon us to share our insights and our inspiration so that everyone can benefit. Becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah means that one is now eligible to be a teacher of the community, and, within the framework of this rite of passage, we offer time and space for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah to share his or her teaching with all present.

## Standards and Counsel Regarding the Bar or Bat Mitzvah *D'rash*

- 1) Length: A standard Bar or Bat Mitzvah *d'rash* is approximately 2-3 pages, typed (double-spaced, 1-inch margins). This is equivalent to approximately 5-minutes of spoken word, as it takes 2 minutes to speak 1-page typed.
- 2) Topic: The *d'rash* is a brief, yet comprehensive commentary upon either the Torah portion of the week or the *Haftarah* (additional prophetic reading associated with the Torah portion). The goal is to identify a relevant, universal moral derived from the reading.
- 3) Resources and Help: Although the Bar or Bat Mitzvah is expected to write his or her own *d'rash* (authenticity is a value), it is acceptable and encouraged for him or her to seek out guidance from family, teachers, friends, as well as scholarly resources. The officiating Rabbi will schedule meetings to help the Bar or Bat Mitzvah to work draft and edit the final version.
- 4) Public Speaking: Fear and anxiety around speaking in public is natural. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah is expected read his or her *d'rash* rather than speaking extemporaneously. Preparation and practice is necessary. It also is easier for listeners to hear and comprehend the *d'rash* when delivered at regular, slow pace, annunciating each word.

## Getting Started

Writing a *d'rash* happens in phases. Here is a suggested process for getting started:

- 1) *Read*: Review the Torah portion, looking for verses, ideas, stories that are striking and interesting.
- 2) *Identify Your Questions*: Write down questions about that area of the Torah portion, explore pertinent commentary, and discuss with family, teachers, and rabbis in order to gain clarity on what inspires or puzzles you.

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<sup>1</sup> See AJ Heschel, *A Passion for Truth* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1973), p. 107.



- 3) *Develop a Thesis Statement:* After your research, questioning and discussion, state what you want the point of your *d'rash* to be in one sentence. That is, when others talk about what you said in your *d'rash*, they should be able to do so in one sentence. What is that sentence? I.e., Finish this following in one clear sentence: "For my *d'rash* I talked about ..."

### **How to Write a *D'rash***

Now you are ready to start writing. There are 4 Steps in the process, which can be broken into 4 fundamental questions. Each question should be answered in one paragraph (3-5 sentences), in this order:

- a) **What does the Torah say?** Retell what the Torah actually says. Simply states the facts: what happened, who, when, what was the context. This is not a time to answer deeper questions.
- b) **What does the Torah mean?** Share some of your research. What have scholars, rabbis, and others traditionally said about this part of the Torah addresses your questions. (See commentary resources). For example, "Rashi – Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki – asks why God only speaks of Noah's righteousness when Noah is not present. Other commentators point out that Noah may have been bigheaded and therefore, God kept His opinions to Himself."
- c) **What does the Torah mean to me?** Now that you have retold what the Torah says and what others in history have said about it, give our opinion about what the Torah means to you. How is does it apply to your life? How do you see the same issues in your own life – among your friends, family, society, or your own personal life? For example: "I think that we have to be mindful of what we say about other people. Just as God was cautious in making Noah's head too big, we don't want to overly praise people to their face. However, when they are not around, we should speak about all of our their wonderful qualities."
- d) **What am I going to do about it?** A Bar or Bat Mitzvah is expected to take responsibility with what they learn. Take a moment here to express how you are going to apply what you have learned from the Torah. For example: "From this teaching, I am committing to speaking kindly of people when they are not present because if we live in a community where everyone is speaking nicely about each other, we will all feel safer and more trusting."
  - If there is an opportunity, relate a Tikkun Olam Project with what you have learned. For example: "In my Tikkun Olam Project, I worked with underprivileged children. In this experience, I learned how important is to emphasize their good qualities and to not speak badly about others, as this behavior builds trust and self-esteem."

## ***D'rash* and B'nei Mitzvah Resources**

### **I. Books**

1. *Etz Hayim Torah and Commentary* (2001), ed. David Lieber, The Jewish Publication Society.
2. *Torah Commentary for Our Times, 3 Vols.* (1991), Harvey J. Fields, J Levine/Millennium Publishing.
3. *Text Messages: A Commentary for Teens* (2012), Jeffrey K. Salkin, Jewish Lights.
4. *Tough Questions Jews Ask: A Young Adults Guide to Building a Jewish Life* (2012, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), Edward Feinstein, Jewish Lights.

### **II. Websites & Podcasts**

1. **Jewish Calendar, Birthday, Date Converter, Portion Finder: Hebcal.com:** <https://www.hebcal.com/>
2. **Non-Denominational Torah Portion Summary and Learning: MyJewishLearning.com:** <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/torah-portions/>
3. **Torah Portion Podcast (Conservative): JTS Torah Commentary:** <https://player.fm/series/jts-torah-commentary>
4. **Reform Judaism Weekly Torah Portion:** <https://reformjudaism.org/learning/torah-study>
5. **Orthodox Weekly Commentary:** <http://www.aish.com/tp/>

### **III. Miscellaneous B'nai Mitzvah Resources**

1. ***What to Expect Attending a Bar or Bat Mitzvah – Godcast Video***  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqTO9BID\\_Xs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GqTO9BID_Xs)
2. ***History of Bar or Bat Mitzvah:***  
<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/history-of-bar-mitzvah/>
3. ***What to Give as a Bar or Bat Mitzvah Gift***
  - i. Money and/or Bonds
  - ii. Judaica (Jewish ritual objects)
  - iii. Jewelry
  - iv. Torah Art
  - v. Charitable Donations
  - vi. Books
  - vii. More Ideas: <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/bar-or-bat-mitzvah-gift-guide/#anchor6>

## B'nai Mitzvah Dues and Fees

**Membership Dues [6 Months Prior]:** B'nai Mitzvah are largely expressions of connection to the Jewish people and one's own Jewish community. Accordingly, families are required to be current in their financial obligations to Kol Shofar six months prior to the date of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Arrangement for membership dues can be made with the Kol Shofar Business Office.

**Associated Fees [1 Month Prior]:** In addition to membership dues, the other fees that must be covered one month prior to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah date, include:

- The full cost of Kiddush (minus deposit paid 3-months prior to date – see next page)
- The Facility Fee
- Registered and up to date with Beit Binah tuition (for non-Day School families)

**B'nei Mitzvah Facility Fee:** \$360

## Kiddush Lunch Information

- Shabbat lunch is one of the holy meals of the Sabbath that includes *Kiddush* (sanctifying the day over wine), *hamotzi* (blessing for bread) over challah, and *birkat hamazon* (grace after meals). *Kiddush* lunch is an important time for the Kol Shofar community to gather together for blessing, eating, singing, and connecting with each other. Each week, a Kol Shofar family or individual sponsors the *Kiddush*. When there is a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, the B'nei Mitzvah families customarily sponsor the *Kiddush* for the community and for their guests. When there are two B'nei Mitzvah on the same Shabbat, the *Kiddush* is sponsored by the B'nei Mitzvah families.
- The sponsored *Kiddush* provides enough food for a lunch for the community, e.g., bagels and cream cheese, salads, fruit and cookies. It need not be overly extravagant.
- In addition to invited Bar or Bat Mitzvah guests, please provide food for 120 people who regularly attend Shabbat Services.
- If the cost of providing *Kiddush* is a hardship for your family, please speak to one of the rabbis, and we will make arrangements to ensure a *Kiddush*.
- All food must be kosher in accordance with our kashrut policy, which can be found on our website, <http://kolshofar.org/about-us/rental-information/kiddushkitchen/>
- There are three ways with which to sponsor a *Kiddush*: (1) hire a caterer from the list below; (2) use our in-house kitchen staff; or (3) do your own *Kiddush*. See next section for further explanation.
- We aim for a green, zero-waste *Kiddush*. Please plan to use our silverware (not plastic utensils) and to purchase biodegradable paper products, which will be composted.

## Kiddush Lunch Options

**Note:** Catering options need to be approved and reserved with a deposit ***three months*** prior to the date of the B. Mitzvah. Kiddush reservations include 120 congregants in addition to guests.

### **Option 1: Kol Shofar Approved Local Caterers:**

Local Caterers who will prepare in our kosher kitchen:

<i>Avi-ously Delicious</i>	Avi Cohen	(415) 892-7685 or (415) 883-8283
<i>Delicious! Catering</i>	Jan Goldberg	(415) 453-3710
<i>Eli's Gourmet Cooking</i>	Eli Gilad	(510) 912-8235
<i>L'Chaim Foods</i>	Marcus Hoffman	(415)-323-0030
<i>Mangia Nosh</i>	Robert Meyer	(415) 472-2894
<i>Taste by Two</i>	Susan Schatzberg	(415) 454-9979

### **Approved Regional Kosher Caterers:**

<i>Epic Bites</i>	Heshy Fried	(646) 853-4630
<i>Milk &amp; Honey</i>	Deborah Kelman	(650) 212-6455
<i>Park Avenue</i>	Bruce Riezenman	(707) 793-9645
<i>Too Caterers</i>	Wendy Kleckner	(650) 322-4189

### **Option 2: Kol Shofar's In-House Kitchen Staff**

Kol Shofar employs a part-time kitchen coordinator. For 120 people (or less), our coordinator can provide a simple Kiddush lunch. The fee is \$30 per hour for 6 hours on the day of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah @ is \$14 per person. For more than 120 people, please contact our Ritual Manager: (415) 388-1818, ext. 100.

The menu: Wine and juice; 3 hallot; 8 dozen assorted mini-bagels; cream cheese; freshly garnished green salad w/dressing; fresh, seasonal fruit salad or pasta salad; tuna salad; egg salad; assorted cookies or bars; coffee and tea; and paper products and table coverings. For extra cost, inclusions are: Lox with condiment platter (\$6 per person); half-sheet cakes (for 40 guests) from Sweet Things (\$88).

### **Option 3: Self-Catered Kiddush**

In the spirit of community, families may organize a group of families who will work together in our kitchen to provide *Kiddush* for each other. In this case, all food must be prepared in the Kol Shofar kitchen, with Kol Shofar utensils. This may also involving hiring our kitchen coordinator to help at the rate of \$30/hour to help with set up and clean up on the day of the Bar or Bat mitzvah. This is more work, but also less expensive than a caterer.

How? Some wonderful congregants prepared a fantastic manual for how to do your own *Kiddush*, which can be found here:

<http://kolshofar.org/wpcontent/uploads/2014/06/KOL-SHOFAR-KIDDUSH-GUIDE.pdf>

What? Our complete kashrut policy can be found here: Please speak to the rabbis if you have any questions. <http://kolshofar.org/about-us/rental-information/kiddush-kitchen/>

When? Food for Kiddush must be delivered and cooked before 3:00 pm on Friday. Please call our staff at (415) 388-1818, ext. 100 to schedule time to work in the Kol Shofar kitchen.

## **Celebrating and Community**

Here are some final thoughts on ensuring an inclusive and warm celebration.

### **1) Invite Classmates**

In the spirit of being an inclusive, but also applying the values of citizenship and respect, Kol Shofar asks that each Bar or Bat Mitzvah invite all of their Kol Shofar classmates to the service on Shabbat morning. A class list is supplied in the Beit Binah Directory or please contact our office for more contact information.

### **2) Information Pamphlet**

Families may create a pamphlet/program for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. There are several examples available in the Kol Shofar offices and online. Please consult a rabbi with any questions.

### **3) The Party**

The party is, of course, a celebration that marks a spiritual stage within the life of the child and family. Kol Shofar encourages a party that accords with the spirituality of the moment. Our social hall (Beit Am) is available to rent. The Beit Am is a great place to use, with its sweeping mountain views, floor to ceiling glass doors, and sparkling bamboo floors perfect for dancing. Please contact our Membership Manager for more information: (415) 388-1818, ext. 106.

### **4) Communication with Kol Shofar**

Kol Shofar assumes permission to announce B'nei Mitzvah children's names, parents' names, dates and photos in our newsletter, Kolnections (weekly e-blast), our website, and the Bay Area's JWeekly. To opt out, please contact our offices @ (415) 388-1818, ext. 100.

## Bar / Bat Mitzvah Glossary of Terms

**Aliyah** (literally, “ascension”); pl. **aliyot** A division within a given Torah reading. The number of *aliyot* varies by day: a minimum of three *aliyot* at a weekday Torah reading, four on Rosh Hodesh, five on a festival day, six on Yom Kippur, and seven on Shabbat. *Aliyah* is also the term for the honor of reciting the blessings before and after the reading.

**Amidah** (literally, “Standing”) The central Jewish prayer that is said silently while standing. It is also referred to as *Ha-Tefilah* (The Prayer) and as the *Shemoneh Esrei* (Eighteen Blessings).

**Aramaic** An ancient Semitic language closely related to Hebrew. Jews are understood to have adopted Aramaic during the Babylonian exile, thus leading to the use of Aramaic in parts of the Tanakh (e.g., Daniel); the Talmud; and the Zohar. The *Kol Nidre* prayer on the evening of Yom Kippur and the *Kaddish* are in Aramaic.

**Birkat Hamazon** the blessing after the meal, is also known colloquially as “benching,” the English version of the Yiddish term *bentshn*, which means “to bless.” This blessing follows any meal in which bread has been eaten, since according to Jewish law, eating bread officially constitutes a meal.

**Humash** A book containing the Torah, usually including commentary from the Rabbinic tradition. Some *chumashim* (plural) are designed for synagogue ritual and include the weekly *haftarot* and special holiday readings.

**Covenant** An agreement that includes God. While contracts are rigid, making no room for disagreement, covenants are dynamic. Covenants take into account the constantly changing nature of human beings. They allow for hurt and healing, shame and comforting, betrayal and forgiveness.

**Consequences** The result of one’s actions, positive or negative. Consequences are not necessarily bad. Good actions have good consequences (we hope), but we are powerless to determine outcomes.

**Gelilah** (literally, “tying” or “rolling up”) The term for rolling up and tying the Torah scroll and replacing its cover and ornaments, which is done by the *goleil*.

**Gemara** Usually referred to as the Talmud, even though this description is technically erroneous. Written in Aramaic, the Gemara (literally, “Completion”) is the discussion of and commentary on the laws of the Mishnah by the Rabbinic sages of the 2nd through 5th centuries C.E., who are known as *amoraim*. Two 5th-century Babylonian sages, Ravina and Rav Ashi, have traditionally been given credit for finalizing the Gemara; modern scholars, believe that it did not reach its present form until the end of the 7th century.

**Golden Rule, The Jewish Version** “What is hateful to you, do not do to someone else.” - Rabbi Hillel

**Haftarah** (pl. *haftarot*) A selected portion from the Bible’s Book of Prophets that is read following the Torah reading (*parshah*) on Shabbat and most holidays.

**Hagbah** (literally, “lifting”) The lifting of the opened Torah scroll after the public Torah reading is complete. The one doing the lifting is called the *mag’bi’ah*.

**halakhah** (literally, “the way”); pl. **halakhot** Jewish law originating in the Torah and organized by the Rabbis in the Mishnah and Talmud.

**Hamotzi** The one-line blessing over bread and/or to commence a meal, concluding with the words *hamotzi lehem min ha-aretz*.

**Holiness** To be holy is to sanctify or elevate everyday actions. “Something sacred is at stake in every event.” – Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel

**Kaddish** The prayer traditionally recited in memory of the dead, although it makes no mention of death. It is in Aramaic rather than Hebrew and included in all three daily prayer services.

**Kashrut** (literally, “fit” or “proper”) The body of Jewish dietary laws dealing with foods, combinations of foods, and how these foods are to be prepared and eaten. The term in English is “kosher,” which is also used to describe objects that are made in accordance with Jewish law and are fit for ritual use.

**Kiddush** (literally, “Sanctification”) The blessing recited over wine. It is said every Sabbath, on Jewish holidays, and before celebratory meals to sanctify these occasions.

**Lashon Ha-Ra** “The evil tongue”; gossip, defamation (tearing someone down).

**Love** (Hebrew: *Ahavah*) The commitment to enhance and nurture the spiritual and emotional growth of oneself and another. To act in loving ways, even when one does not feel like it. Love is a commitment, not a feeling.

**Maftir** The additional Torah reading and *aliyah* on Shabbat and holidays. The person called to read the blessing for that reading is called the *maftir aliyah*, who is also the person to chant the Haftarah portion.

**Midrash** (literally, “Elucidation” or “Exposition”) A body of work that combines the theological, homiletical, and ethical lore of the Palestinian rabbis from the 3rd through 10th centuries C.E.. The word midrash is derived from the verb root *darash*, which denotes searching out and discovering other meanings and information from Scripture.

**Minhag** (literally, “custom”); pl. *minhagim* A custom observed and transmitted by the Jewish people. *Minhagim* often reflect the time and place of the Jews who first kept them. For many people, adherence to Jewish customs can be as strictly maintained as adherence to Jewish law (*halakhah*).

**Mishnah** (literally, “Teaching.”) The first compilation of the Oral Law and the foundational text for the Talmud and for the Rabbinic tradition. Most scholars attribute it to Rabbi Yehudah Ha-Nasi (Rabbi Judah the Patriarch, who lived in Judea under control of the Roman Empire) and date its final editing to circa 200 C.E.. There are six “orders,” or volumes, of the Mishnah categorized by different areas of Jewish law. The word Mishnah is derived from the verb root “repetition,” indicating the primary method for learning and oral study at that time.

**Mitzvah** (literally, “commandment”); pl. *mitzvot* One of the religious obligations detailed in the Torah, the majority of which fall into the positive category of religious, ethical, or moral obligations. The Torah also contains negative mitzvot, which are prohibitions.

**Musaf** (literally, “additional”) The additional *Amidah* prayer recited on Shabbat, Rosh Hodesh, and holidays. It represents the additional temple sacrifice that was given on such days.

**Obligation** Adherence to a decent path of living; acknowledgement that one should to live within limits and boundaries. Being bound to live our core values.

**Parshah** (literally, “portion”); pl. **parshiyot** The weekly Torah portion, also called *sidrah*. The Torah is divided into 54 of these portions—one section for each week of a leap year on the Hebrew lunar calendar. In non-leap years some of the portions are combined to create double *parshahs* that compensate for the reduced number of weeks.

**Shabbat**; pl. **Shabbatot** The Sabbath, or day of rest. It begins at sunset on Friday night and ends about 25 hours later, after sunset on Saturday night. (The extra hour ensures that the full 24-hour period was observed.)

**Simchah** (literally, “joy” or “happiness”); pl. **s’machot** A joyous celebration, such as a wedding or bar mitzvah.

**Talmud** The central and most important body of Rabbinic literature. Combining the Mishnah and Gemara, the Talmud contains material from the Rabbinic academies that dates from sometime before the 2nd century C.E. through the 6th century C.E.. It includes legal and moral expositions, wisdom, personal stories, and arguments. There are two versions: the Jerusalem (*Yerushalmi*), or Palestinian, Talmud and the Babylonian (*Bavli*) Talmud. When people speak of the Talmud generically, they are referring to the *Bavli*, as it is more extensive and widely used. There are 63 areas of study that make up the Talmud, called tractates (*masechtot*). The Talmud serves as the primary source for all later codes of Jewish law.

**Tanakh** An acronym for the three books that make up the cornerstone of Jewish beliefs comprising Torah (the Five Books of Moses); Nevi'im (Prophets); and Kethuvim (Writings). When Jews speak of the Bible, they are referring to the Tanakh.

**Teshuvah** (literally, “return”) Referring to the “return to God,” *teshuvah* is often translated as “repentance.” Teshuvah may be an apology, yet requires admission of wrongdoing, taking responsibility, righting the wrong however possible, and making a plan for not committing the wrong again.

**Tzedakah** An obligation to provide for the poor, the widow, the orphan and the stranger.

**Tzelem Elohim** (literally, “The image of God”). Derived from the verse, “Man was created in God’s image” (Gen 1:27). *Tzelem Elohim* refers not to one’s physical image, but to the soul. Each person has qualities in common with God, such as caring about others, being able to think, creativity and love.

**Yetzer Ha-Tov & Yetzer Ha-Ra** Both good and evil come from God. The good inclination (*yetzer ha-tov*) is good. The evil inclination (*yetzer ha-ra*) can also be good – in proper measure. You can have evil feelings without acting on them. You can harness “evil” energy and put it to good use. The struggle between the *yetzer ha-tov* and *yetzer ha-ra* is what makes us human. Both are necessary parts.



