



Manetto Hill
JEWISH CENTER

RABBI NEIL SCHUMAN
Spiritual Leader

SUSAN MARTIN
Education Director

Bar / Bat Mitzvah Handbook



Revised 2024

Let's Start Planning...

Resources:

MHJC Synagogue Office: (516) 935-5454

Rabbi Neil Schuman

Susan Martin – Education Director

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Committee Co-Chairs

Ilene Sudran 516-567-2121 email MI4Suds@aol.com

Jodi Hirsch 516-637-4099 email jodihirschaud@gmail.com

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions, concerns, options, or inquiries. We will assist you to resolve any issue that may arise. Our goal is to make each Bar/Bat Mitzvah shine on their special day.

Becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah means to become responsible for fulfilling the *mitzvot* of deeds that connect us to Judaism, to each other and to G-d. To be ethical, kind and compassionate and to understand that it is a privilege to live a full, rich Jewish life.



From the Rabbi's Study

Mazal Tov! You are entering into a wonderful and exciting period of Jewish education and celebration – the Bar/Bat Mitzvah of your child. All of us at MHJC want to help make your child's upcoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah a meaningful and memorable experience for your family and our entire congregation!

At MHJC we seek to create an environment of becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah in which every family will understand the child's responsibilities and privileges within the context of our community. Your child will develop fluency in the skills and customs needed to participate as an adult.

We urge your family to attend Shabbat Services regularly. This will help everyone feel more comfortable with the service on the day of your simcha. It cannot be emphasized enough that the frequency of attendance at Shabbat services will enhance your child's appreciation of the service and increase the level of comfort and skill they will have in leading the service.

Services at MHJC are for all our congregants. We want our children to feel that they are part of our MHJC community and the Jewish community at large. As such, *Aufrufs* (calling a bride and groom for an *Aliyah*), baby naming's, recognition of anniversaries, birthdays or *yahrzeits* may be part of a Shabbat Service in addition to a Bar/Bat B'nai Mitzvah.

We look forward to seeing you at the synagogue as we all contribute to the beauty and significance of this milestone in your family's life.

Mazal Tov!

Rabbi Neil

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Timeline

Six Months Ahead

- Bar/Bat Mitzvah begins to plan Mitzvah project.
- Family meeting with the Rabbi.
- Make sure Synagogue dues and other fees are paid in full.
- Start individual lessons with the Rabbi.

Four Months Ahead

- Discuss with the Rabbi which parts of the service will be led by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student.
- Plan *Aliyot* (Torah Honors) Ark openers, Torah readers and other roles for family and friends.
- Read through Torah portion in preparation for the *D'var Torah*.
- Arrange for announcement/picture to be placed in the frame for display and in the e-blast.

Two to Three Months Ahead

- Arrangements to host the Friday *Oneg Shabbat* and the Shabbat morning *Kiddush*.
- Advise Bar/Bat Mitzvah Committee Chair(s) of any dietary restrictions.
- Discuss and write the *D'var Torah* (Bar/Bat Mitzvah speech).
- Prepare Parent's Words of Encouragement Speech (OPTIONAL).

One Month Ahead

- Submit honors form to synagogue office.
- Schedule weekday photography session and vendor deliveries with the synagogue office.
- Provide the final count of guests.

Final Week

- Review ceremony and honors assignments with the Rabbi.
- Photo session at synagogue.
- Confirm vendor deliveries to synagogue.

Bar / Bat Mitzvah Eligibility

Historically, when a boy turned 13, he was called to the *Torah* at a public worship service to mark his coming of age in the Jewish community. The child was considered an adult and afforded all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of any member of the community. At MHJC, an egalitarian Conservative synagogue, that tradition has been preserved and extended to all young persons. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony, usually part of the Congregation's regular Shabbat morning service, invites each young person to participate in a way that demonstrates their skills and abilities to function as an adult member of the Jewish community.

Jewish Status

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate must be Jewish according to the standards of the Conservative Movement. Any concerns in this area should be discussed confidentially with the Rabbi.

Educational Requirements

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate must successfully complete the Manetto Hill Jewish Center Religious School or attend an area Jewish day school, or at the Rabbi's discretion. Any child who is new to the community will be evaluated for prior learning and Hebrew skills. Every effort will be made to facilitate a timely Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Parents will be responsible for securing a tutor, if needed, to facilitate this process. Tutors must be approved in advance by the Rabbi.

Mitzvah Project

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate is encouraged to successfully complete a mitzvah project. A mitzvah project makes your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah much more meaningful. Whether it is collecting for charity or giving of his/her time, there are many ways to make a difference. There are many organizations and sources to find a project.

Tzedakah

A Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration should include acts of charity and prayer. It is quite appropriate to dedicate prayer books or *tallit* in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Also appropriate is a donation of an item from the synagogue's donatable list or a donation to a worthy charity.

The Wall of Life, Tree of Life, Path of Honor

All memorable occasions deserve to be commemorated. One meaningful way is to have your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah inscribed on our Wall of Life. You can also order an engraved leaf to add to our Tree of Life to commemorate your event or inscribe a brick paver to be placed in our Path of Honor walkway. You can also memorialize one of the Jews of Kolin who perished in the Holocaust. All of these options are a way to give tzedakah to MHJC while commemorating your simcha. For additional information and to order, please contact the Synagogue office at 516-935-5454.

Abilities

We will train the Bar/Bat Mitzvah candidate to prepare and present a *D'var Torah* (Bar/Bat Mitzvah's thoughts and explanation about a *Torah* theme) and further participate in the Shabbat Services in the following ways:

- a. Recite the blessings for the *Torah* reading.
- b. Lain *Torah*
- c. Chant the *Haftarah* and its blessings.
- d. Lead portions of the Shabbat Service
- e. Recite the blessings for *Kiddush* (blessings for wine & challah)

NOTE: the *Torah* reading is primary focus followed by *Haftarah*, additional blessings, readings and prayers that your child may also learn, based on your child's ability that will be determined by the Rabbi. It is highly recommended to check in monthly, with the rabbi, on your child's progress in learning and preparing for their special day.

Practice

We recommend that you encourage your child to practice two to three times per week, with one time in front of you at least once a week. This will enable you to monitor your child's progress. Additionally, they will become more comfortable "performing in public".

If a student cannot attend a lesson for any reason, please call the Rabbi. Please try to avoid cancellations except in emergency circumstances. Likewise, please avoid tardy arrivals so there is sufficient time for learning and preparation. Instruction cannot be scheduled during Religious School hours.

Bar / Bat Mitzvah Lessons

Six months or more prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah the student will meet with the Rabbi for individual instruction. This will be in addition to Religious School.

Your child's comfort level on his/her special day will be directly related to the amount of time invested in practice. It is your responsibility to ensure that your child is maintaining a daily routine of practice. 45-minute sessions are given on a weekly basis. In general, the lessons start approximately six (6) months before your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah date, as illustrated below:

<u>Month of Bar/Bat Mitzvah</u>	<u>Month Lessons Start</u>
January	May
February	June
March	September
April	October
May	November
June	December
September	January
October	February
November	March
December	April

Please note that this is a general guideline and assumes that lessons will not take place during July or August. If you or your child's teachers feel that your child will need additional time to prepare, then the lessons may be scheduled to start at an earlier date. If supplemental tutoring is required, the synagogue can help facilitate additional lessons at a cost to the parents and the tutor will bill the family directly.

Attending Services

To facilitate better understanding and proficiency, students and their families are encouraged to attend two Shabbat services monthly during the 12 months prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah. In the six months prior to their Bar/Bat Mitzvah, students should attend two services monthly. Their families are also encouraged to attend. During at least one weekend, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah students will help lead services.

****** It cannot be emphasized enough that the frequency of attendance at Shabbat services will enhance the child's appreciation of the service and increase the level of comfort and skill they will have in leading the service.***

Family Meeting with the Rabbi

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family should schedule an initial meeting with our Rabbi approximately 2 weeks after Bar/Bat Mitzvah lessons start. This meeting may be scheduled earlier, if preferred. This meeting is an opportunity for your child and you to share thoughts about becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Contact the Rabbi or office to schedule the meeting.

Deliveries

Decorations, *kippot* (yarmulkes), centerpieces, balloons and all food and beverages must be brought to the synagogue before noon on Friday. No items can be brought to the synagogue after Shabbat has begun.

Also, please note that nothing can be removed from the synagogue until after the end of Shabbat. This includes centerpieces, extra *kippot* and leftover food and beverages.

Note: Shabbat morning services conclude at approximately 12:00 noon with Kiddush reception to follow.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Weekend

Please arrive no later than 15 minutes prior to the start of your service and please make sure your guests are informed of the service's start time to avoid any last-minute confusion.

* The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family shares its simcha with the entire congregation by serving as host, sponsoring an *Oneg Shabbat* dessert after Friday evening services, and a *Kiddush* reception following Shabbat morning services. These two receptions provide an opportunity for the synagogue family to come together and rejoice with your family.

Shabbat Decorum

Dress

At both the Friday Evening Service prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and at the Shabbat Morning Service, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child and his/her family should wear clothing appropriate for the *Bimah*. For men, a jacket and tie are appropriate. For women, please refrain from wearing low cut, sleeveless, strapless, or backless attire. Guests are expected to dress in a manner appropriate for synagogue services.

Ritual Apparel

As a sign of respect, all men must wear a *kippah* (head covering) while in the synagogue building. Jewish men above the age of Bar Mitzvah should wear a *tallit* (prayer shawl), during morning services. In accordance with egalitarian practice Jewish women above the age of Bat Mitzvah are encouraged to wear a *kippah* or other head covering and have the option of wearing a *tallit* during morning services.

Buses and Commercial Vehicles

Buses and commercial vehicles may not park or pick up guests on the synagogue premises and may not use the parking lot during Shabbat for any reason. Buses and commercial vehicles are discouraged from parking on Manetto Hill Road as this creates a hazardous traffic situation. The Diamond Drive exit of the parking lot has been used as a bus loading area. Please make sure to advise your bus company accordingly

Electronic Devices;

Cellphones, Photography and Videography

The use of cell phones and cameras is prohibited during Shabbat.

In addition to the use of any electronic devices during Shabbat services being prohibited it is extremely disruptive to the service, it is disrespectful and rude. Moreover, in the spirit of Shabbat, unless it is an emergency, please do not use cell phones anywhere in the building.

Please ensure your guests are aware no cell phones for any purpose including taking photos is prohibited on Shabbat. To maintain a sacred decorum in the sanctuary, personal photography, and videography during shabbat is prohibited. Families may arrange to take pictures on the *Bimah* during the week prior to or following their simcha by contacting the synagogue office. These arrangements must be made in advance. Photographers will not be allowed in the sanctuary without prior arrangement with the office.

We do Zoom/livestream our services at MHJC, zoom links for services will be available for you to share with your guests that cannot attend your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah in person. Zoom recordings of the service can be requested, arrangements must be made in advance.

Financial Obligations

All Synagogue pledges, and obligations and all synagogue and sisterhood fees, must be paid in full, or arrangements made with the synagogue financial secretaires prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration.

Fees and Expenses

If financial responsibilities are not satisfied, the policy of the Manetto Hill Jewish Center states that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah may not take place.

Summary of Costs

The following base fees are associated with having a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Manetto Hill Jewish Center:

- Bar/Bat Mitzvah Lesson Fee: \$750,
+\$250 per additional child
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah Sisterhood Hospitality Fee: \$600*,
 - Traditionally, Sisterhood provides fresh fruit platter, a Mazel Tov cake, Friday night *Oneg Shabbat* dessert, Shabbat morning refreshments, ceremonial challah, coffee, tea, juice, plastic-ware, and a candy basket for the Shabbat morning service. Included is a basic Shabbat morning *Kiddush* for up to 100 guests. There may be an additional fee of \$50 for each twenty-five (25) people, you expect over 100. If the family is hosting a catered Shabbat luncheon (extended Kiddush), Sisterhood will not supply the refreshments for Saturday morning, the Sisterhood Hospitality Fee will be reduced to \$360, and the synagogue's room rental fee of \$300 will be incurred.
- Security Guard Fee (if applicable) based on contracted rate

Total Base Fees: \$ 1,500.00*

*Includes security guard, does not include price adjustments for extended kiddush option

Optional Extended Kiddush, Luncheon, or Celebration

The following information will assist you if you wish to use the synagogue building for an extended *Kiddush*, luncheon, celebration, etc.

- Synagogue maintains a list of approved caterers. A copy of the list is included in your packet or can be obtained in the synagogue office.
- All food must be arranged through one of our approved caterers. You cannot bring your own food into the synagogue.
- Friday night *Oneg Shabbat* must be pareve.
- Saturday *Kiddush* or luncheon may be either meat, pareve, or dairy.
- It is your responsibility to reserve the use of our facilities for a particular date. Be sure to contact the Synagogue office at least six (6) months in advance.
- Catered food and/or Sisterhood *Kiddush* food may not be supplemented by any outside food.
- If you have an extended *Kiddush*, the *Kiddush* must be open to all who attend services. Please include +10 congregants to be included in your final count to caterer.
- If you are having an extended *Kiddush*, luncheon, or other celebration, then a room rental fee of \$300 will be added to your synagogue bill. Families hosting an extended *Kiddush*, luncheon, or celebration will be charged a reduced Sisterhood Hospitality fee of \$360.
- If your event is not on Shabbat morning, additional fees may apply to cover additional custodial &/or staff fees and other synagogue costs.

Questions or for additional information,

Please contact the Synagogue office at 516-935-5454 or

Ilene Sudran at 516-567-2121 or email MI4Suds@aol.com or

Jodi Hirsch at 516-637-4099 or email jodihirschaud@gmail.com