



## on beginning your *B'nei Mitzvah* journey!

At RSNS, we believe that becoming *B'nei Mitzvah* is a holistic process - one that engages the whole child, the whole family, the whole Jewish community, and even the whole world. To that end, we've provided a LOT of information on the pages that follow - instructions, helpful suggestions, and guidance on every step of this process. We know that this can seem overwhelming, but the most important thing to remember is that you have a caring, knowledgeable, experienced staff to support you on this journey, and every member of our team - administrative, lay leaders, and clergy - are here to answer your questions, assist you with logistics, and to help you make this experience meaningful for your individual family within the context of the larger community. If there's one message we want our *B'nei Mitzvah* and their families to take away from this experience, it's that you are not alone; you are embraced by a community that will be with you throughout this process of coming of age and self-discovery as you deepen your connections to Judaism and the Jewish people.

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# I *B'NEI MITZVAH* CURRICULUM AND FAMILY PREPARATION

## A. *KADIMA* CLASS

Students in the *kadima* year (usually 7<sup>th</sup> grade) attend class every Tuesday from 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. Students will be joined by parents once a month. Through this class, we hope to form both a spiritual and a learning community wherein *B'nei Mitzvah* students and their parents will encounter Judaism through the eyes of those who have helped shape our heritage and give each participant a common vocabulary of the Jewish experience to build upon as they continue to develop their own relationship with Judaism. **Students are required to complete the *kadima* class regardless of the date they become *B'nei Mitzvah*.** The *kadima* class will include a "local" day-long Saturday retreat September, 9<sup>th</sup>.

Another component of the *kadima* year, in addition to the weekly classes and students' independent social action projects, is a piece called, "**Judaism in Action.**" Students will pick two Jewish actions from a list on the website listed below. Actions are divided into two categories: Ritual and Cultural. Every student should pick one Action from each category to explore in depth over the course of the year. At our final *kadima* class of the year, we will break up into small groups, where each student will share a 5 minute presentation with a few other families whose students have chosen similar Actions to focus on throughout the year. These presentations should be detailed, personal accounts of the Actions each student explored and include a visual element (story-board, video, shared artifacts, ritual items, etc).

The creation of this Judaism in Action component came from feedback we received that, in addition to studying Torah, learning about Judaism in *kadima* class, and preparing privately for participating in the *B'nei Mitzvah* service, students were lacking opportunities to "try their Judaism on for size" in a more experiential and personal way. We are here to support you in participation of this component, and hope that you find it a meaningful way to enrich and explore Jewish identity in the context of our class community. You can find resources and information about Judaism in Action at: <http://judaisminaction.weebly.com/>. *Kadima* faculty members are available to speak with each family about this program, either via phone or skype appointments. Please contact us to set up an initial consultation.

### **Personalized Paraphernalia in Class**

As Reconstructionist Jews, we place community at the forefront of our concerns. As a result, we are always looking for ways to improve the climate of our community and our synagogue. To that end, we strive to avoid marginalizing anyone. We are particularly sensitive to the feelings of those who are the most vulnerable - our children. In the past, students have come to the synagogue wearing personalized clothing they received as *B'nei Mitzvah* favors. Students who did not attend the party often feel excluded. Consider how the 'uninvited' children feel when they come into our synagogue and see many of their classmates wearing the same party favor. Therefore, as you plan your child's *B'nei Mitzvah* celebration, please think of the impact that your choice of party favor will have on the synagogue and secular school communities.

Because we recognize that not every child can be invited to every *B'nei Mitzvah*, our hope is that a heightened sensitivity among our community can relieve some of the tension in our children's lives. Should your children receive these personalized party favors, take the time to discuss the consequences of wearing these favors on those who have not been invited. It is difficult for our children to experience this kind of marginalization in their secular schools. As a self-conscious, sacred community, we want our synagogue to be a safe haven for all of our children. **Consequently, wearing personalized paraphernalia will not be permitted in our seventh grade *kadima* class.** There will be many opportunities to talk about this and related issues in the months to come. We hope that these discussions will inform this most special and important year for everyone in our community.

## B. INDIVIDUAL TUTORING

All *B'nei Mitzvah* students are tutored individually for approximately six months by a member of the clergy team, allowing more time for early fall dates. Lessons are weekly and last for twenty minutes. Families can choose to do lessons in person, or via Facetime/Zoom, and are welcome to switch between the two options. **Parents/Guardians are asked to attend the first lesson, which will include a brief orientation and a special blessing.** In addition to the lessons with a member of the clergy team, each student will meet with a member of the clergy team in the sanctuary to read from the Torah and practice on the bima, sometime during the month before the *B'nei Mitzvah* service.

Initially, the amount of ritual preparation and Hebrew chanting that is required of the *B'nei Mitzvah* can seem daunting to a twelve-year-old. This is not accidental. Like most cultures, Judaism recognizes the need for a rite of passage for adolescents as they seek full status as members of the community. This demands dedication, perseverance and, even, courage. We recognize that each student is different, with distinct aptitudes and personalities. It is our intent to help guide each student along the path that will ultimately give them a sense of accomplishment, fulfillment and acceptance as members of our community in their own right.

With the understanding that every student comes to this endeavor with a unique set of abilities and challenges, the following is a basic framework for private study which forms the "core curriculum" of what *B'nei Mitzvah* will be studying with a member of the clergy team. Students begin by learning *tallit* and Torah blessings, then mastering several essential prayers of the Shabbat morning service, which they will be leading. This is followed by learning to chant the final section from the morning's Torah portion (*maftir*), and some also learn the *haftarah* and its blessings.

Though lessons are very important, the 'at home' preparation is key to each student's experience of and success in becoming *B'nei Mitzvah*. Students are responsible for being well-prepared for every lesson. You can help your child by reminding them to study for at least fifteen to twenty minutes each night. Please make an extra copy of the materials, in case the originals are misplaced or lost, and please call immediately if you have any questions, need extra help, or additional/replacement materials. A member of the clergy team will email or text you audio files of each prayer and Torah portion which can then be used on a phone or computer. You can also access materials on our website at <http://rsns.org/lifelong-learning/bnei-mitzvah>.

As mentioned above, we envision the *B'nei Mitzvah* process as a journey of spiritual growth and exploration of our traditions, and not just the mastery of the Hebrew and chanting. Therefore, in conjunction with the ongoing weekly classes, there will be opportunities during private lessons for discussions concerning any subjects or questions brought up in class or other issues regarding the process of becoming a Jewish adult. To this end, we encourage each student to keep a journal or blog in which they can record their thoughts, feelings, and questions during this process. We hope that each student will take full advantage of this additional element of the *B'nei Mitzvah* process, which can help give this process an even deeper meaning for the student and their family.

## C. FAMILY D'VAR TORAH / TORAH TEACHING

The Torah is, in effect, the constitution of the Jewish people. In order to ensure that Jewish people are familiar with its contents, it is read in synagogue each Shabbat. Divided into fifty-four portions of unequal lengths, the Torah readings are fixed and continuous – that is, we start with the beginning of Genesis and read continuously, week after week, until we get to the end of Deuteronomy. That fixed and continuous order is interrupted only for holidays, when the normal reading is replaced by the holiday reading.

We invite each of you to participate in your child's becoming *B'nei Mitzvah* by studying the Torah portion read on the morning of the *B'nei Mitzvah* service. Following the Vav Orientation, you will be given a copy of the Torah reading for the day on which your child becomes *B'nei Mitzvah*. After your family has read the text at home, a member of the clergy team will meet with you to help guide you through the text, to answer questions, address problems, and help focus your course of study. Families should begin this process at least six months in advance of the *B'nei Mitzvah* service. A second meeting with a member of the clergy team should take place two months before the service. A final draft should be in hand three weeks in advance of the service. The Ritual Committee has mandated a *D'var Torah* rehearsal in the sanctuary no later than a week before the service.

The *D'var Torah* should be eight to twelve minutes long and include the participation of as much of your nuclear family as possible. The following page contains a list of resources that can be used in preparing the *D'var Torah*.

### D'VAR TORAH RESOURCES

#### Basic Commentaries

*Etz Hayim: Torah and Commentary*, David L. Lieber, Jules Harlow, eds. (Jewish Publication Society of America)

*Exploring Exodus*, Nahum M. Sarna (New York: Schocken Books, 1986)

*Five Books of Miriam: A Woman's Commentary on the Torah*, Ellen Frankel, (HarperOne (December 29, 1997)

*The JPS Torah Commentary*, Nahum M. Sarna, general editor, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 5 volumes

*Teaching Torah*, Sorel Goldberg Loeb and Barbara Binder Kadden, (Denver: Alternatives in Religious Education)

*A Torah Commentary for Our Times*, Harvey Fields, (New York: UAHC Press, 1993), 3 volumes.

*The Torah: A Modern Commentary*, W. Gunther Plaut, ed., (New York: UAHC Press, 1981)

*The Torah: Portion-by-Portion*, Seymour Rossel (Los Angeles: Torah Aura Productions, 2007)

*Understanding Genesis*, Nahum M. Sarna (New York: Schocken Books, 1971)

Various volumes from the *Anchor Bible Series*, (New York: Doubleday)

*Who Wrote the Bible?* Richard E. Friedman, (HarperOne, 1997)

#### Online Resources

[www.reconstructingjudaism.org/divrei-torah](http://www.reconstructingjudaism.org/divrei-torah)

[www.thetorah.com](http://www.thetorah.com)

[www.truah.org/resources/torah](http://www.truah.org/resources/torah)

<https://reformjudaism.org/learning/torah-study>

## **D. PARTICIPATION OF FAMILY**

Siblings of *B'nei Mitzvah* students can participate in the service in a variety of ways. Older siblings who have become *B'nei Mitzvah* may have a Torah *aliyah* and/or read from the Torah. They, along with younger siblings, may also chant part of the liturgy, offer a reading, or recite the blessings over the wine and/or the challah. All parents and siblings are encouraged to participate in the family *D'var Torah*. Please discuss questions of family participation with a member of the clergy team.

## **E. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MEETINGS**

As your child begins their lessons with our clergy, you will be contacted to set up a meeting with our Executive Director as well. The purpose of this meeting will be to review the contents of this handbook, to answer any questions you may have, and for us to discuss the ways in which we can be most helpful to you during the planning process. About a month before the actual service, you will meet again with our Executive Director to finalize logistics, review your service outline, and settle any outstanding balances that there may be. We know that this process can seem daunting and overwhelming, and we are here to help alleviate your anxiety during this process and encourage you to call us at any time.

## **F. ATTENDANCE AT SERVICES**

The best way to understand and appreciate the unique aspects of our services and give context to the readings, the honors, and the *D'var Torah* is to experience several Shabbat morning services in which we welcome *B'nei Mitzvah* students. To this end, **we urge you to attend** services, either in person, or on [Zoom1](#) (password=RSNS).

## G. SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS

We invite you to prepare a collection of readings to complement or inform the themes of the Saturday morning service. Although this is a good opportunity for you to include family members and friends in the service, *the readings are used primarily to complement the liturgy and must focus on liturgical themes.* These themes include: prayer, study, God, faith, holiness, Shabbat, nature, community, children, family, peace, Israel, history, memory, life cycle, and Torah study. You can include up to eight readings in the service, which may be read by family members, friends, or by the congregation. Take care to vary your reading themes.

Readings can be found on the internet or the back of the Sabbath prayer book.

There is also a collection of archived English readings for the b'nei mitzvah service which can be accessed online by [clicking here](#) or on our website ([rsns.org](http://rsns.org)) and [going to B'nei Mitzvah under Lifelong Learning](#).

Readings must be reviewed by a member of the clergy team who will place them in order of the service. Schedule a meeting with a clergy team member at least four weeks before you need to give your reading supplement to the printer or formatting it as an online slideshow. (We recommend giving your supplement to the printer or your slideshow to a team member at least one month before the service.) Families are responsible for the typing and printing, or slideshow formatting, of their own supplements. If you need assistance with design or layout or a suggestion for a printer, contact the office, and the staff will be happy to help you. Note that printing your supplement is optional, and you may have your readings projected on screens in the sanctuary during the service in lieu of printed supplements. You may also include videos of readers if they are not able to attend the service live. If you are interested in having your readings and videos projected during the service, please let our executive director know at least one month before the service.

On the following two pages are the introductory materials that must be included in printed supplements or made available on the table in the lobby if your readings are being projected.

This reading **must** appear as the first page of every printed supplement or made available on the table in the lobby if your readings are being projected.

## **Reconstructionism . . .**

**F**or Reconstructionists, Judaism is more than a religion: it is our history, our literature, art and music, our Land and languages, as well as our customs and ritual observances. All of these define Judaism as a religious civilization.

Our sense of belonging to the Jewish people is affirmed through our shared past, our collective values, and our communal experience of worship, study, and celebration. As Reconstructionist Jews, we understand that behaving and believing arise from belonging and are integral to our tradition and to our future.

Tradition, we believe, “has a vote but not a veto.” We are respectful of traditional Jewish practice, but we are also open to new interpretations and forms of religious expression. Our own religious practice — egalitarian, participatory, and inclusive — is a reflection of our ancestors’ search for meaning, purpose, and value.

Our diverse views of God emphasize ‘godliness,’ valuing that power in the universe that infuses all of creation with a sense of transcendence and impels us to improve the world and ourselves.

We will leave to future generations a legacy that is both cultural and spiritual, as the evolution of Judaism continues, as we continue to preserve and shape that legacy through our particular Reconstructionist approach.



**The following information must appear in your printed supplement or be made available on the table in the lobby if your readings are being projected.**

### **THE SERVICE**

You will notice a few differences from other synagogue services you have attended:

We use poetry and prose from a wide range of religious and secular sources in order to expand on the liturgical themes of the service and to enhance communal participation.

The Reconstructionist version of the Torah blessings contain wording that reflect Reconstructionism's belief that, as Jews, we have been brought near to God's service by living an ethical life. The traditional version, which declares the Jewish people to be chosen by God, is customarily not recited in Reconstructionist synagogues. Both versions, however, are on the bimah, and either may be said.

Our services are relatively informal, and we hope you will feel comfortable. We would appreciate, however, that you not enter or leave the sanctuary while the *B'nei Mitzvah* is chanting or speaking.

*Kippot* and *tallitot* are available for use during the service.

### **THE BUILDING**

\*No smoking anywhere in the synagogue.

\*Turn off or silence all cell phones while in the sanctuary.

## H. SOCIAL ACTION / SOCIAL JUSTICE

According to our sages, the world is sustained by three things: Learning (*Torah*), Ritual (*avodah*), and Social Action (*g'milut hasadim*). While the months of preparation, Torah study, *kadima* classes, and coming to Shabbat services help fulfill the first two “pillars” of being a member of a Jewish community, there are many ways for our students to fulfill the third pillar of social action.

**1) Social Action Project:** As our tradition says, “It is not up to the individual to finish repairing the world (*tikkun olam*), but neither are they exempt from doing their part.” The months leading up to the *B'nei Mitzvah* service is an ideal time for each student to **pick a social action project**, making a link between their studies, their prayers, and their responsibility as a Jew to make the world a better place. Students may choose a project that has a **connection to their own interests** (a hobby or talent, or a loved one impacted by a particular disease) or raise money/awareness about a more **general cause** (climate change, racial justice, etc). Or they may **volunteer their time** with a worthy organization. On the following pages is a **list of ideas** that may spark your interest in choosing a social action project. A member of the clergy team is also happy to offer guidance and support through this process.

Thanks to a generous donation by Paula and Marvin z”l Silverman in memory of their son, Fred, **every student can receive up to \$36 from The Fred Silverman Fund in support of their project or organization.** Instructions for receiving this donation are on the following pages. There are also instructions on the following pages for how to **publicize your project.**

**2) Social Responsibility:** Another important way to introduce the values of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) into this lifecycle event is by making it as socially responsible as possible. There are resources on the following pages for **environmentally-friendly** invitations, *kippot*, etc, and we encourage you to talk to your caterer about **sustainable food choices** for your reception as well. You can also talk to your caterer about **donating any untouched leftover food**, which can be picked up by [Island Harvest](#) (516-294-8528) or your class’ food recovery liaison. One last way to make the connection between this *simcha* and those in need is to **donate a small percentage** of what is spent on the reception to [Mazon](#), which works to eradicate world hunger, or [Masbia](#), which provides emergency food to people in need due to financial status or because of natural disasters.

**3) Giving Back:** Finally, the gift from the congregation to your child is a hand-crafted *tzedaka* box commissioned by a local artist. This is our way of saying that becoming *B'nei Mitzvah* means owning your responsibility to the Jewish People and the world by helping those in need by giving *tzedaka*. The *tzedaka* box is, thereby, the “gift that keeps on taking” — from the *B'nei Mitzvah*’s pocket to others. You can reinforce this value by making your own contribution marking the occasion of your child becoming a *B'nei Mitzvah*.

**INSTRUCTIONS AND PROCEDURES  
FOR B'NEI MITZVAH SOCIAL ACTION PROJECTS**

1) Check out the COMMUNITY SERVICE RESOURCES section of this packet (pages 12-13) for tons of ideas, suggestions, and websites to help you pick a project and a cause that you really connect with and are passionate to take on! A clergy team member is always available to discuss ideas and resources with you.

2) Every student will write a brief speech (2-3 paragraphs) about their social action project, which they will give on the Friday night before they become a *B'nei Mitzvah*. **Students must give their completed speech to a member of the clergy team one month before their last lesson.** Please rehearse the speech from the bimah during the run through of your family's *D'var Torah*. Students must include the following language in their speech: **“Special thanks to the Fred Silverman Fund for their generous contribution to my project.”**

3) Thanks to a generous donation from Paula and Marvin z”l Silverman in memory of their son, Fred, every *B'nei Mitzvah* student will receive a grant of up to \$36 to support their social action project. This money can be used for: project supplies, marketing, or a **direct donation to the organization you are supporting.**

**In order to receive your grant, you must submit the following to the office:**

A) A thank-you note addressed to Paula Silverman, informing them of what your project is. This can be nearly identical to your Friday night speech.

B) Either the name of the organization you'd like the \$36 check written out to, or receipts for all of your expenses, up to \$36, that you are requesting reimbursement for.

4) Once you've decided on a project, there are several ways our community can help promote and support your efforts:

A) You may write a brief description of your project (including a request for donations and a link for fundraising), and send it to the office so we can publicize it in our weekly communications and on our social media.

B) If you are collecting items for donation, you may place a collection box in the donation bins located in the coat room outside the sanctuary during the week before you become *B'nei Mitzvah*.

C) Regardless of the date of your *B'nei Mitzvah*, you may request a spot in our lobby during Mitzvah Day to promote your social action project.

*B'nei Mitzvah* social action projects help connect your Jewish identity to your responsibility to help repair the world (*tikkun olam*), and we look forward to supporting your endeavors as you continue to inspire and inform our congregation with your efforts!

## TIKKUN OLAM / COMMUNITY SERVICE RESOURCES FOR B'NEI MITZVAH

### STARTING PLACES

- **Time for Good:** Your one-stop shop for Jewish Social Action! [www.timeforgood.org](http://www.timeforgood.org)
- **Mitzvah Market:** An incredible assortment of projects, searchable by category: [www.mitzvahmarket.com/find-projects](http://www.mitzvahmarket.com/find-projects)
- **Do Something!** Find a cause that you're passionate about here" [www.dosomething.org/us/campaigns](http://www.dosomething.org/us/campaigns)

### PARTNERSHIPS

- **Action for Post-Soviet Jewry:** This organization twins the *B'nei Mitzvah* with a child from the former Soviet Union. Information about background, interests, and family as well as photos of the *B'nei Mitzvah* twins are exchanged. You can also "Adopt-a-Bubbe!" **E-mail ActionPSJ@aol.com** or visit them on the web at <https://www.actionpsj.org/services-apsj-provides.html>
- **Kav Lachayim:** Each year, Kav Lachayim organizes *B'nei Mitzvah* celebrations for dozens of children who have serious illnesses and disabilities throughout Israel. All of the arrangements are taken care of by Kav Lachayim, who join with the celebrant for the synagogue service. The cost per celebration is over \$1,000, but sponsorships are available from \$250 and up. **Call 212-268-2577 or email KavlachayimUS@aol.com**
- **North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry (NACOEJ):** By participating in the twinning program, you can give important assistance to Ethiopian youngsters in Israel. When you join the program, you'll make a gift to your twin's class in Israel. Your gifts can buy books, computer programs, or other educational materials, and enable Ethiopian youngsters to go on school trips with their classmates. Your gift can also help provide a group *B'nei Mitzvah* celebration. For information, visit their website at [www.nacoej.org](http://www.nacoej.org)
- **OHEL:** For a child in OHEL, the joy of celebrating a *B'nei Mitzvah* can be overshadowed by the memories of being neglected or abused. OHEL's *Simcha* Fund is designed to enable people to create a celebration for a child in need. Alternatively, you can have centerpieces that will be given as gifts for children at OHEL. For more information, please visit their website at [www.ohelfamily.org](http://www.ohelfamily.org) or contact **Deena Fogel at 718-686-3103**.
- **Lend a Hand:** This organization provides material and emotional support to families in need on Long Island. The *B'nei Mitzvah* can "adopt a family" by learning about them and provide support to them by sending several packages of requested items throughout the year. Learn more at [www.lendahandproject.org/our-programs/](http://www.lendahandproject.org/our-programs/)

### GREAT WAYS TO HELP

- **Peace Players** uses basketball to bring together children & their communities. ([www.peaceplayers.org/](http://www.peaceplayers.org/))
- **Help Israeli Football help others:** email Silverbacks chairman **D'vir Mintz** ([dvir.silverbacks@gmail.com](mailto:dvir.silverbacks@gmail.com)) to partner with an IFL team who work with inner-city kids in Israel.
- **Jaffa Institute:** ([www.jaffainstitute.org](http://www.jaffainstitute.org)) The Institute's mission is to provide educational, recreational, and social enrichment programs for Israel's poorest disabled children & their families.
- **Me'ir Panim:** An amazing human services organization in Israel that operates soup kitchens, job training, subsidized wellness and healthcare centers, and legal advice to the neediest populations throughout the country. You can donate to them directly or buy place cards, Judaica, and other items at their online store. Learn more at [www.meir-panim.org/](http://www.meir-panim.org/)
- Partner with **Keshet** to work for LGBTQ rights and inclusion. ([www.keshetonline.org/resources/topic/bnei.mitzvah/](http://www.keshetonline.org/resources/topic/bnei.mitzvah/))
- Make your milestone meaningful with **Sharsheret** ([www.sharsheret.org/bnai-mitzvah-celebrations/](http://www.sharsheret.org/bnai-mitzvah-celebrations/)), which supports Jewish women and families facing breast and ovarian cancer.

## **OFF THE TOP OF YOUR HEAD** (Ways your *kippah* can save the world!)

- [www.mayaworks.org](http://www.mayaworks.org) - Your purchase of **MayaWorks** kippot brings income to the artisans who create them--that means better food on their family table, better access to health care and school for their children.
- [www.kulanuboutique.com](http://www.kulanuboutique.com) - **Kulanu** is a non-profit group that provides assistance to struggling Jewish communities in India, Africa, South America, and around the world. Kippot are made by members of the Abayudaya Jewish Community in Uganda, or the B'nei Menashe Jews of India.
- [www.jessyjudaica.com/store/kippah-gallery/eco-suede-kippah](http://www.jessyjudaica.com/store/kippah-gallery/eco-suede-kippah) - "**Eco-suede**" *kippot*, made from recycled cardboard!

## **ADDITIONAL IDEAS**

- Blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah
- Find more ways to "green" your *B'nei Mitzvah* here: [www.jufj.org/green-and-just-celebrations](http://www.jufj.org/green-and-just-celebrations)
- Lead Shabbat services for the elderly or sick
- Organize a book or clothing drive
- Have everyone that attends the celebration bring something to donate (books, clothes, toiletries, toys, etc.)
- Centerpieces can be made out of items that can be donated (plants, toys, CD's, books)
- Donate the flowers on the bimah used during the service to a shelter or hospital
- Get ideas and inspiration from an environmental Jewish organization, like [www.hazon.org](http://www.hazon.org), [www.coejl.org](http://www.coejl.org), or [www.canfeinesharim.org](http://www.canfeinesharim.org)
- Volunteer at a local food pantry (like the New Pantry at the Sid Jacobson JCC or Our Lady of Fatima in Port Washington)
- Cook & serve at the weekly Hempstead Food Share ([www.communitysolidarity.org](http://www.communitysolidarity.org))
- Play an instrument, juggle, or do magic for a children's hospital, nursing home, etc.
- Learn with someone who wouldn't normally learn. Tutor a friend or neighbor in a subject that you are an "expert" in. (Computers? Ice Hockey? Italian?)
- Read to people who have difficulty seeing.
- Raise awareness about the realities of pediatric cancer by supporting Golden Heroes. Email Annie Cohen ([abcohen2001@gmail.com](mailto:abcohen2001@gmail.com)) for more info.
- Help empower children and adults with disabilities through Viscardi Center ([www.viscardicenter.org](http://www.viscardicenter.org)).
- Support the following organizations, who make a difference across the Jewish world and beyond:  
**Bend the Arc** ([www.bendthearc.us](http://www.bendthearc.us)), **UJA Federation of NY** ([www.ujafedny.org](http://www.ujafedny.org)), **Anti-Defamation League** ([www.ADL.org](http://www.ADL.org)), **American Jewish World Service** ([www.ajws.org](http://www.ajws.org)), **New Israel Fund** ([www.nif.org](http://www.nif.org)), **T'ruah – The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights** ([www.truah.org](http://www.truah.org)), **Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy** ([www.hias.org](http://www.hias.org)), **Repair the World** ([www.werepair.org/brooklyn](http://www.werepair.org/brooklyn))

## Food Recovery at RSNS

Here's how to donate leftovers from your *simcha* at RSNS  
(As well as catered events outside of RSNS):

- Inform the caterer that you plan to donate leftovers to the needy. Ask the caterer to wrap the food in trays or boxes as appropriate. If necessary, we can provide the caterer with a copy of the *Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Law*, which allows food donations and collections to take place without liability.
- Contact your *Kadima* Class food recovery liaison to coordinate the date and time of the event and establish what, when, and where leftovers will be picked up. The more lead time, the better!
- The liaison will coordinate with an RSNS volunteer to handle the specific food storage and delivery details. They will also keep a log of all food donated by RSNS so that we are able to track how many meals we provide to those in need. Currently, we deliver food to Our Lady of Fatima Food Pantry in Manorhaven, the Food Co-Op on Lower Main Street and the Senior Center in Manorhaven. There is also a kosher food pantry in Syosset which may be a site for future deliveries.
- If you are interested in helping with food deliveries, please let your liaison know! And if there are older siblings in your family, this is a great opportunity for high school students who have their driver's license! This is also a wonderful family activity that requires very little time and guarantees a very good feeling of preventing waste and supporting our own community.

# **ISLAND HARVEST SERVES AS THE BRIDGE BETWEEN THOSE THAT HAVE EXCESS FOOD AND THOSE THAT NEED IT**

*Together we can be partners in the effort to end hunger on Long Island. We've been making that connection since 1992. Every week we provide healthy, nutritious food to tens of thousands of hungry Long Islanders. We can help get your food to them.*

## ***Wholesome Nutritious Food***

Our goal is to provide wholesome nutritious food to emergency food programs throughout Long Island. Our refrigerated trucks and staff of trained volunteers are able to safely pick up and deliver all types of food: prepared and perishable food, produce, frozen food, bakery products, prepackaged and non-perishables, dairy, meat and poultry. We cannot accept products that contain alcohol.

## ***Guidelines***

We know we can rely on you to apply your knowledge and professional standard to the question of what is suitable for donation. We follow national and local food safety guidelines. Please call us at (516) 294-8528 if you have any questions.

## ***Our Donors***

We rescue food daily from all types of donors - restaurants, cafeterias, caterers, bakeries, hotels, markets, corporations, farms, wholesalers and distributors.

## ***Reaching the Hungry***

Island Harvest delivers to a network of more than 450 nonprofit member agencies on Long Island - food pantries, soup kitchens, day care and senior citizen centers, homeless shelters, community

programs and charitable organizations serving low-income families and individuals.

## ***Donor Packing***

We supply all the materials that you will need for packing food: half-size disposable aluminum trays with lids, two gallon zip lock bags along with small and large clear, food grade bags with the Island Harvest logo.

## ***Good Samaritan Laws***

Both New York State and the federal government have laws that protect donors from liability. At Island Harvest we take our responsibility very seriously. All our drivers and recipient agencies are trained in handling food safely.

## ***Tax Advantages***

In addition to the satisfaction of providing food to Long Island's hungriest people, your donation may be tax deductible **or** have other tax advantages. Each situation is unique, so we recommend you consult your tax advisor.

## **ISLAND • HARVEST**

199 Second Street • Mineola, NY 11501

P (516) 294-8528 F (516) 747-6843

[www.islandharvest.org](http://www.islandharvest.org)

II A LISTING AND EXPLANATION OF B'NEI MITZVAH SERVICE HONORS

JEWISH PARTY PLANNING LIST

- Rabbi
- Invitations
- Food
- Flowers
- Music
- 3% for MAZON

A Jewish Response to Hunger

When all the details are complete, consider one final embellishment to your joy: Contribute 3% of the cost of your celebration — wedding, bar or bat mitzvah, anniversary, birthday, every joyous occasion — to MAZON

MAZON (the Hebrew word for "food"), is a national Jewish organization that grants funds to feed hungry people in our local communities, across the country and around the world. Please share your simcha by making a contribution to:



**MAZON**  
A Jewish Response to Hunger  
1990 S. Bundy Drive, Suite 260  
Los Angeles, CA 90025-5232

*If you would like to know more about us, please call (310) 442-0020 or visit our website at [www.mazon.org](http://www.mazon.org)*

MAZON

**A Jewish Response to Hunger**  
*cordially invites you to share your good fortune with those who are hungry by contributing*

**3%**

of the cost of your simcha — bar or bat mitzvah, wedding, anniversary, birthday, every joyous occasion — to

MAZON  
A Jewish Response to Hunger

MAZON

(the Hebrew word for "food") is a national Jewish organization that grants funds to feed hungry people in our local communities, across the country and around the world. By contributing 3% of the cost of your simcha to MAZON, you can give the celebration a deeper meaning and provide food, help and hope to hungry people everywhere.



**MAZON**  
1990 S. Bundy Drive, Suite 260  
Los Angeles, CA 90025-5232  
Phone: (310) 442-0020

*R.S. V.P. as soon as possible:*

I/we .....  
will be pleased to contribute \$ .....  
on the occasion of .....



→ The service work sheet (page 20-21) must be completed with the names of all participants and returned to the synagogue office *four weeks* prior to the service or in a meeting with a member of the clergy team. Note that all honors related to the Torah – ark openings, scroll bearing, Torah blessings (*aliyot*), Torah readings, and the lifting and dressing of the scroll – are open to people who self-identify as Jews and/or have an affinity to the Jewish people. Anyone may offer an English reading.

## A. OPENING THE ARK BEFORE & AFTER THE TORAH SERVICE

The Ark is opened twice during the service. At least two people are used for each opening. The participants can be of any age and must be self-identified as Jews and/or have an affinity to the Jewish people. This is a good way to include younger siblings, cousins, and/or friends, and/or the *kadima* class.

## B. CARRYING THE TORAH SCROLL BEFORE & AFTER THE TORAH READING

The person bearing the Torah scroll must be self-identified as Jewish and/or have an affinity to the Jewish people and be post *B'nei Mitzvah* age. Most families elect to have the *B'nei Mitzvah* bear the scroll following the Torah reading. The scroll is heavy to carry and is awkward to hold. Take this into consideration when selecting your Torah bearer.

### C1. TORAH BLESSING HONORS (*Aliyot*)

There are eight possible Torah honors *including* the young adult who is becoming *B'nei Mitzvah*. The people who participate in this honor must be self-identified Jews and/or have an affinity to the Jewish people and be post *B'nei Mitzvah* age. People can be called in groups for this honor — e.g., aunt and uncle, siblings, grandparents. **One of the eight *aliyot* in the morning service is reserved for the congregation at large.** Although it is listed as number six on the worksheet, the congregational honor may be placed anywhere in the order of Torah honors. The seventh honor is generally taken by the parent(s) of the *B'nei Mitzvah*.

Instructions and Hebrew texts with English transliterations are included on pages 22-24 of this booklet. *These blessings should be sent to honorees well in advance of the day of the B'nei Mitzvah service.* A link to the Reconstructionist Torah blessings and audio can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/reconblessings>. The audio and text for the traditional Torah blessings can be found at: [tinyurl.com/tradblessings](http://tinyurl.com/tradblessings)

Note: The Reconstructionist version of the Torah blessings differs from the traditional version. Because Reconstructionist Judaism views the concept of a chosen people as inconsistent with democratic values, we substitute the phrase *a-sher kayr-VA-nu la-a-vo-da-to* ("who has called us near to God's service") for the phrase *a-sher ba-har BA-nu mi-kawl ha-a-mim* ("who has chosen us from among all peoples"). Individuals who feel more comfortable reciting the traditional blessings are invited to do so. Copies of both versions of the Torah blessings are included in this packet (pages 23-24).

In order to strike a balance between gender inclusivity and tradition, our community's custom is to call people to the Torah in the following manner: "*Na la-amod*, [Hebrew name] *ben/bat/b'nei* [parents' Hebrew names]..." "*Na la'amod*" uses the infinitive instead of a gendered conjugation of the Hebrew verb "to come up". We still retain the traditional "*ben*" (son) or "*bat*" (daughter), to honor each individual's identity. If any person being given a Torah honor would prefer to use the completely traditional language (*na Ta-amod/Ya'amod*), or if they would prefer a more gender-neutral construction ([Hebrew name] *mi-beit*\* [parents' Hebrew names]), please let us know when you are filling out your outline. \*"from the house of"

When possible, secure the Hebrew/Yiddish names of the people who are being honored with these Torah honors, together with the Hebrew/Yiddish names of their parents.

## **C2. TORAH READING HONORS**

You and / or your guests may read a Torah portion. *This requires the participant to read from the Hebrew.* They may read/chant the portion from their own copy or from the scroll. Given sufficient lead time, a member of the clergy team will record the portion and rehearse the participant(s) as needed. ***Please note: The Ritual Committee has mandated that all Torah chanters who have not previously read at our services MUST read their portion for a member of the clergy team no less than TEN DAYS prior to the service.***

### **D. LIFT AND DRESS THE TORAH SCROLL**

The Torah lifter elevates the scroll. The person honored must be self-identified as Jewish and/or have an affinity to the Jewish people and be post *B'nei Mitzvah* age, and ***strong enough to lift twenty pounds over their head.*** If the person has never done it before, they may want to arrange a practice session before-hand. The Torah wrapper can be just under the age of thirteen.

### **E. PRESENTATION OF TALLIT**

The *B'nei Mitzvah* is presented with a *tallit* at the beginning of the Torah service. Usually a person or persons close to the *B'nei Mitzvah* — parent(s), grandparent(s), sibling(s), close family friend(s) — hold(s) the *tallit* while the *B'nei Mitzvah* recites the blessing.

### **F. MAFTIR**

*Maftir* is the term for the final selection from the weekly portion which the *B'nei Mitzvah* chants from the Torah scroll.

### **G. ENGLISH READINGS**

English readings that relate to the themes of the service are dispersed throughout the service. You may look through the materials available at the synagogue by clicking [here](#) (or by going onto our website - <https://rsns.org/lifelong-learning/bnei-mitzvah>), or choose appropriate readings of your own. One or more people may offer any single reading. You may include as many as eight readings. See page 6 of this information packet for more details regarding readings.

### **H. CHARGE AND CHARGE READINGS**

Parent(s) usually address the *B'nei Mitzvah* following the Torah service. Siblings may also deliver a charge. This can be done in the form of a reading or something written by the participants. This address should be no longer than five minutes and should reflect parents' hopes, dreams, and expectations for their child as they become a fully responsible member of the Jewish community. We recommend preparing the charge at least one month before the service. Whether or not you opt to participate in this part of the service, a member of the clergy team and a synagogue board member will address the *B'nei Mitzvah*. The board member or clergy team member will present the congregation's gift at this time.

### **I. BLESSINGS OVER WINE AND CHALLAH (KIDDUSH AND MOTZI)**

We conclude the service with the blessings over wine/grape juice and challah provided by the family. The blessings (on page 20) are usually made by the *B'nei Mitzvah*, but can be made by anyone of your choosing.

## BLESSINGS OVER THE CANDLES, WINE, and CHALLAH

### HADLAKAT NEROT SHABBAT הדלקת נרות שבת

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם אשר קדשנו  
במצותיו וצונו להדליק נר של שבת.

Baruḥ atah adonay eloheynu meleḥ ha'olam asher kideshanu  
bemitzvotav vetzivanu lehadlik ner shel shabbat.

Blessed are you, SOURCE OF LIGHT our God, the sovereign of  
all worlds, who has made us holy with your mitzvot, and  
commanded us to kindle the Shabbat light.

### KIDDUSH

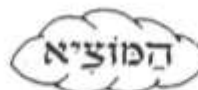


ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם בורא פרי הגפן:

Baruḥ atah adonay eloheynu meleḥ ha'olam borey peri  
hagafen.

Blessed are you, THE BOUNDLESS ONE our God, the sovereign  
of all worlds, who creates the fruit of the vine.

### HAMOTZI



ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם  
המוציא לחם מן הארץ:

Baruḥ atah adonay eloheynu meleḥ ha'olam  
hamotzi leḥem min ha'aretz.

Blessed are you, BOUNTIFUL, the sovereign of all worlds,  
who brings forth bread from the earth.



**STUDENTS: REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR YAD TO THE SERVICE** (if you have not already done so)

**→TORAH LIFTER AND WRAPPER:**

LIFTER English Name: \_\_\_\_\_

WRAPPER English Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*The 'Lifter' must be strong enough to lift an open Torah scroll (about 20 pounds) above their head.*

**OTHER HONORS**

**→TALLIT PRESENTER:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**→CHARGE(S):** A parent or parents may address the *B'nei Mitzvah*, either by reading a poem or a piece of prose, or with words of their own. Siblings may do the same.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**→KIDDUSH & MOTZI:** blessings over wine and challah

*Kiddush:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Motzi:* \_\_\_\_\_

~ ~ ~

**→READERS for English Readings**

**PRINT CLEARLY ONLY first & last names of each reader**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_

## TORAH HONORS

When giving out Torah honors to family and friends, **please include a copy of these instructions** along with the blessings on the following page.

Hebrew texts with English transliterations are included on pages 23-24 of this booklet. *These blessings should be sent to honorees well in advance of the day of the B'nei Mitzvah service.* A link to the Reconstructionist Torah blessings and audio can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/reconblessings>.

The audio and text for the traditional Torah blessings is at: <http://tinyurl.com/tradblessings>

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR THOSE CALLED TO THE TORAH FOR AN ALIYAH

You have been honored to receive an *aliyah* to the Torah. The word *aliyah* comes from the Hebrew word to “go up” and is used to designate the honor of “going up” to the Torah.

You will be called first by your English name and then by your Hebrew/Yiddish name (if we have it). After you are called, come up to the table where the scroll is being read. If you are wearing a *tallit*, take the fringe of the *tallit* and touch the place in the scroll indicated by the Torah reader. You may also use a prayer book for this purpose, touching the corner of the prayer book to the place indicated by the reader. This is, in effect, a way of “signing in.” The scroll will then be closed. Then, begin reading or chanting the blessing before the Torah reading. Attached to this sheet is a copy of the blessings in Hebrew and in English transliteration. If you forget these sheets, there will be large print copies at the Torah table. Please be sure to familiarize yourself with the blessings in advance. You can listen to recordings of these blessings at <http://tinyurl.com/reconblessings> (Reconstructionist) and <http://tinyurl.com/tradblessings> (Traditional).

After you finish the first blessing, the reader will read a portion of the Torah. When they finish, touch your *tallit* or prayer book to the spot indicated by the reader. The scroll will then be closed. Conclude with the blessings after the reading of the Torah. You will then move to the left side of the reader's desk as the next person honored is called. When that person concludes the blessings, you can take your seat.

If you forget these directions, be assured that those at the reader's table will do everything possible to make you feel comfortable.

## TORAH BLESSINGS (2 Versions)

These two pages contain the Torah blessings that are recited before and after each Torah reading. Make as many copies as you need for your honorees. The first page is the Reconstructionist version of the *bracha* over the Torah. There is only a slight difference in the text between the two. The *B'nei Mitzvah* will recite the Reconstructionist version, but the rest of your honorees may choose either text. The *bracha* after the Torah reading is the same for everyone. Please be sure to familiarize yourself with the blessing in advance.

Reconstructionist Torah blessings and audio can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/reconblessings>. The audio and text for the traditional Torah blessings can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/tradblessings>.

Those who receive an *aliyah* to the Torah say the following blessing:



Those who receive an *aliyah* to the Torah lead the blessing, saying:

Barekhu et Adonai hamevorakh. בָּרְכוּ אֶת יי הַמְבָרָךְ.

The congregation responds:

Barukh Adonai hamevorakh le'olam va'ed. בָּרוּךְ יי הַמְבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

The leader(s) continue:

Barukh Adonai hamevorakh le'olam va'ed. בָּרוּךְ יי הַמְבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam asher keirvanu la'avodato venatan lanu et torato. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִרְבָּנוּ לְעַבֹדֹתוֹ וְנָתַן לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ.

Barukh atah Adonai notein haTorah. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

## Blessings after the reading of the Torah

The leader(s) say:

Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melek ha'olam asher natan lanu torat emet vekhayei olam nata betokheinu. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת וַחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נָטַע בְּתוֹכֵנוּ.

Barukh atah Adonai notein haTorah. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.



Reconstructionist Torah blessings and audio can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/reconblessings>. The audio and text for the traditional Torah blessings can be found at: <http://tinyurl.com/tradblessings>.

 **RECONSTRUCTING  
JUDAISM**

# TRADITIONAL

## Blessings before the reading of the Torah

Those who receive an *aliyah* to the Torah lead the blessing, saying:

*Barekhu et Adonai hamevorakh.*

בָּרְכוּ אֶת יי הַמְבָרָךְ.

The congregation responds:

*Barukh Adonai hamevorakh le'olam  
va'ed.*

בְּרוּךְ יי הַמְבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֵד.

The leader(s) continue:

*Barukh Adonai hamevorakh  
le'olam va'ed.*

בְּרוּךְ יי הַמְבָרָךְ לְעוֹלָם וָעֵד.

*Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu melekh  
ha'olam asher bakhar banu mikol  
ha'amim venatan lanu et Torah.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בְּנוּ מִכָּל הָעַמִּים וְנָתַן  
לָנוּ אֶת תּוֹרָתוֹ.

*Barukh atah Adonai notein haTorah.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.

## Blessings after the reading of the Torah

The leader(s) say:

*Barukh atah Adonai Eloheinu  
melekh ha'olam asher natan  
lanu torat emet vekhayei olam  
nata betokheinu.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ  
הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָנוּ תּוֹרַת אֱמֶת  
וַחַיֵּי עוֹלָם נִטַּע בְּתוֹכֵנוּ.

*Barukh atah Adonai notein haTorah.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי נוֹתֵן הַתּוֹרָה.



### **III ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

#### **A. FRIDAY NIGHT ONEG**

*Onegs:*

An *oneg* is a time for our community to come together after Friday evening service, to share refreshments and celebrate. Each *kadima* family will be assigned to serve as the "coordinator" for one *oneg* for a child in your child's *kadima* class. The coordinator will be ultimately responsible for the refreshments at that *oneg*.

*Oneg* Coordinators:

Coordinators will be responsible for:

- 1 - contacting the *B'nei Mitzvah* family a month prior to ascertain how many guests they are anticipating at the *oneg* and whether there are any dietary specifications;
- 2 - contacting the RSNS *oneg* chair to coordinate with their efforts for the event. Call the RSNS office for the name and contact information of *oneg* chairs.
- 3 - coordinating volunteers (usually friends and family of the *B'nei Mitzvah* family from within and/or outside of the congregation) to bring different items to the *oneg*, i.e., baked goods, fruit, beverages, etc.
- 4 - set up *oneg* prior to services, and clean up afterwards (basic paper-goods are available at RSNS, pack up leftover food)

#### **B. DELIVERIES TO THE SYNAGOGUE**

All deliveries — flowers, plants, food and the like — must be arranged through the office. Do not schedule deliveries without checking the time first with the office.

#### **C. PROVIDING FOR SATURDAY MORNING KIDDUSH**

The *B'nei Mitzvah* family must provide a simple *kiddush* following the Saturday morning service. This consists of sliced challah and grape juice for everyone in attendance, as well as an unsliced challah for the bimah. The synagogue custodial staff will set up the *kiddush*. Families may elect to have RSNS provide the challah and grape juice. Please contact the office at least two weeks before the event if you would like RSNS to take care of the *kiddush* provisions and for the current cost.

#### **D. FLOWERS**

Some families choose to have flowers on the *bimah* on Shabbat. All sanctuary flowers must be coordinated through the synagogue office. Speak with the office before ordering flowers at least one month before the event.

#### **E. USHERING**

Parents of *kadima* class students will be assigned to usher during services for the *B'nei Mitzvah* preceding their child's service. Ushers are responsible for welcoming guests and maintaining order inside the sanctuary. They will need to pay particular attention to unaccompanied children who have a tendency to be disruptive or noisy. Important: Families who are unable to usher on their assigned dates should trade dates with another *kadima* family.

## **F. SECURITY**

For the safety and security of everyone in attendance, you must pay for a security guard for every service. Less than 100 guests will require one security guard. More than 100 guests will require two (2) security guards at the expense of the responsible party at the current hourly rate. You must notify the office one week before your service to let us know how many people you are expecting at your service so we can make sure to staff appropriately.

## **G. TIME OF SERVICES**

Saturday morning services begin **promptly** at 9:45 a.m. and usually run until noon. It is suggested that you use 9:30 a.m. as a starting time for the service on your invitations.

## **H. PHOTOGRAPHERS, VIDEO EQUIPMENT, AND STREAMING**

All services in our sanctuary are streamed and recorded. Please contact the office for guidance on service streaming, as well as the link to share the livestream and download the recording. During the service, still photography is permitted as long as no flash is used. Cameras are not permitted on the *bimah* during the service. Please contact the office at least one month before the event to schedule a time to take photos at the synagogue. The synagogue requires all videographers to abide by a set of rules enclosed in this packet. All families must return a copy of the Rules for Videography and Photography signed by your videographer and or photographer, at least two weeks prior to your *B'nei Mitzvah* service. If necessary use two copies of the form.

## **I. FRIDAY EVENING PARTICIPATION**

Your family is expected to attend services the night before your child becomes *B'nei Mitzvah*. Your child's presence enables members of the synagogue to participate in your *simcha* and helps foster community. There are many opportunities for participation in this service, including candle lighting (see page 19) and reciting *kiddush*. During the Friday evening service, it is customary for parents of the *B'nei Mitzvah* to present both unwrapped books of Jewish interest to their child and a donation to RSNS. It is appropriate to say a few words about why you have chosen the book for your child. With respect to the donation for the congregation, please consult the Executive Director.

Each *kadima* student is asked to undertake a social action project in connection with becoming a *B'nei Mitzvah* (see pp. 10-13). The *B'nei Mitzvah* talks about this project at Friday evening services. In this way, members of the congregation can more fully support each family's social action efforts and be inspired by the variety of projects undertaken by our students and their families.

## **J. ORDERING KIPPOT/YARMULKES**

You may order *kippot* (*yarmulkes*) from a vendor of your choice. (See page 13 for eco-friendly options.) Allow at least four weeks for delivery.

**K. ROOM USAGE AGREEMENT**

RSNS invites you to continue the celebration of your *simcha* in our space. Below, please provide the following information:

Event Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Expected Number of Participants: \_\_\_\_\_

Event Type: \_\_\_\_\_ Room: \_\_\_\_\_

Event Description: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Responsible Party: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Caterer Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Caterer Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Caterer Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**ROOM RATES (as of January 2023-subject to change)**

**Social Hall/Blue Room/Back Parking Lot/ Courtyard: \$200.00 per hour**  
(hourly fee must include set up and clean up time by our custodian(s))

**Please contact Liza Wilson at (516) 627-6274 if you would like to rent the Courtyard with our 30x40 tent.**

***\$200.00 deposit is required to reserve your room.***

***Please make the check payable to RSNS, or pay directly through your Shulcloud account.***

- *Rates will cover the fee of one (1) security guard and one (1) custodian.*
- *Less than 100 guests will require one (1) security guard. More than 100 guests will require two (2) security guards at the expense of the responsible party at the current hourly rate.*
- *The synagogue will provide 10 tables, 100 chairs, and 10 cocktail tables.*
- *The Responsible Party, or their vendors, must provide staff to set up and clean up the food, which includes taking the trash out to the dumpster. It is the Responsible Party's responsibility to ensure that the facilities are left in the same condition in which they were found.*

### Additional Rules

1. All caterers, party planners, and coordinators must be approved by RSNS when the contract is signed.
2. All vendors must provide a certificate of \$1,000,000 liability insurance naming RSNS as an additional insured at least one month prior to the event. This includes Workman's Compensation, General Liability, and Liquor Law Liability. Alcohol of any kind **may NOT** be served without a valid N.Y.S. liquor license, which must be provided at least one week prior to the event.
3. All storage spaces used must be left in the original condition or an additional fee may be charges.
4. A \$200 deposit due upon the signing of the contract. Balance must be paid in full **ONE WEEK PRIOR** to the event. If fees are not collected, **RSNS reserves the right to cancel the event.**
5. RSNS reserves the right to charge additional fees should the event not adhere to the terms of this contract and/or the facility costs associated with this event rise (for example, more guests than contracted for attend, janitorial costs rise).
6. All decorations must be flameproof and free standing and are subject to approval by RSNS. Smoke machines, sparklers, flame throwers, birdseed, rice, and glitter are prohibited on the property and inside the synagogue.
7. The timing of all deliveries for the event must be coordinated with the synagogue office.
8. As we are a Jewish establishment, the laws of Kashrut must be observed in accordance with the standards set forth by our Ritual Advisory Committee.
9. Pursuant to State Laws, RSNS has adopted a smoke-free policy in all parts of the facility.
10. Responsible Party will comply with all requirements of laws, ordinances, orders, and regulations of the Federal, State, County, and Municipal authorities and with the directions of any public officer called to the premises while engaged by the Responsible Party.
11. RSNS shall have no responsibility for failure to supply any service when prevented from doing so by strikes, accidents, weather, or any cause beyond the synagogue's reasonable control, or by orders or regulations of any governmental authority, or failure of oil or other fuel supply, water, gas, electricity, heat, or air conditioning.
12. Responsible Party agrees to indemnify RSNS for any and all damages caused by or to any person participating at the function, whether such damage is caused by the use of alcohol or otherwise.
13. Responsible Party agrees to hold RSNS harmless from any damages caused to or by any person who is a participant at the function in the event there is legal action arising from the use of the premises and/or the sale or furnishing of alcoholic beverages on said premises.
- 14. Gratuities for maintenance and security personnel are strongly encouraged.**

## **L. CATERING AND KASHRUT**

### **KASHRUT POLICY**

The term *kashrut* refers to the dietary laws, rules, and regulations and their observance. The significance of *kashrut* continues to be recognized in modern times. In his writings, Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, wrote the following:

1. *Kashrut* links us to past generations.
2. It creates a Jewish style of life. It has contributed to the perpetuation of the Jewish people and the retention of its way of life.
3. It serves as a means of Jewish identification and distinctiveness.
4. It can generate spiritual values in that it can habituate the Jew to the practice of viewing the commonplace physical need for food as a source of spiritual values.

According to Kaplan, the tradition of *kashrut* should not be viewed as a “law” commanded by God, or understood as a mystic communion with God. The observance of *kashrut* should not be regarded as hygienic, as intending to help one earn salvation in the here or the hereafter, or to produce a marked effect upon one's character. *Kashrut* practices should be seen as traditional folkways that contribute to Jewish atmosphere of the home, and in solidarity with those Jews who are *kashrut* observing.

Most of the dietary laws are found in Chapter 11 of Leviticus and Chapter 14 of Deuteronomy. The following foods are permitted:

- ◀ all vegetables and plants
- ◀ all four-footed animals that chew the cud and have cleft hooves
- ◀ all fish having both fins and scales
- ◀ all fowl that are considered to be kosher

The Ritual Committee has studied the subject of *kashrut* and has adjudicated how it applies to our synagogue. Our priorities are to keep a connection to tradition, to create a comfortable place for all Jews, and to be as inclusive as possible. Our rules are as follows:

1. Do not mix meat and dairy at *any* event.
2. Only kosher caterers may bring and/or prepare meat in our facilities.
3. You may use dairy foods either brought from home or from a caterer
4. You may use any food from certified kosher caterers

*Note:* A more restrictive set of rules applies to Pesah. If you have specific questions, please contact a member of the clergy team.

## **M. SYNAGOGUE POLICIES**

The next two pages contain lists of rules that must be given to and signed by your caterer, photographer, and/or videographer and returned to the synagogue office.

**RECONSTRUCTIONIST SYNAGOGUE OF THE NORTH SHORE  
RULES FOR CATERERS**

The following is a list of rules to be given to and signed by the caterer. The completed signed sheet MUST be returned to the synagogue office upon booking the caterer and no later than four weeks prior to the *B'nei Mitzvah* service.

1. The congregation has a *kashrut* policy that must be strictly adhered to. (See back of form.)
2. Saturday morning services start promptly at 9:45 a.m. and usually end at noon. No deliveries can be made after 9:00 a.m. The building will be opened at 8:30 a.m. for your deliveries.
3. Arrangements must be made with the Executive Director for all deliveries.
4. You may use the synagogue's tables and chairs, if arrangements have been made in advance. You must submit your floor plan to the Executive Director at least one week prior to the *B'nei Mitzvah*.
5. When you arrive on the day of the *B'nei Mitzvah*, you must empty your vehicle(s) and move them to the rear of our building immediately. No vehicles may stand in the fire lane and/or in the front parking lot.
6. We expect that your staff will respect that a service is going on and keep noise to a minimum.
7. You are responsible for thoroughly cleaning up after the event. This includes leaving the kitchen as clean, neat and organized you found it and taking all garbage out to the dumpsters.

Please sign and email a copy of this document to [executivedirector@rsns.org](mailto:executivedirector@rsns.org).

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of *B'nei Mitzvah* Family

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Event

I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
Name of Caterer

of \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Company Phone Number

have read the above guidelines and *kashrut* policy and agree to abide by them.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Caterer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**RULES FOR VIDEOGRAPHY AND PHOTOGRAPHY AT RSNS**

The following is a list of rules that must be given to the photographer and/or videographer and signed by them. This completed signed sheet **must** be returned to the synagogue office no later than two weeks prior to the *B'nei Mitzvah* service.

1. Saturday morning services start promptly at 9:45 a.m. and usually end around noon. Plan to arrive one hour prior to the start of services to set up. If you are unfamiliar with our synagogue, you may wish to see our facilities prior to the service. Call the office to make an appointment (516-627-6274).
2. Filming can be done from the balcony, and back of the sanctuary.
3. During the service, photography is permitted as long as no flash is used. Cameras are not permitted on the *bimah* during the service.
4. Do not stand in front of, or block people's view.
5. Additional lighting is not permitted.
6. Proper decorum is expected at all times prior to, during, and after the service.

The guidelines listed above are meant to ensure that the service is not disrupted and the participants are not distracted by photography or videography. Thank you for your cooperation.

Please sign and email a copy of this document to [executivedirector@rsns.org](mailto:executivedirector@rsns.org). Include the name of the *B'nei Mitzvah* family in the subject line.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of *B'nei Mitzvah* Family

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Event

I, \_\_\_\_\_,  
Name of Photographer/Videographer

of \_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Company Phone Number

have read and agree to abide by the above guidelines.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Photographer/Videographer

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

#### IV. DIRECTIONS TO THE SYNAGOGUE

**Eastbound:** Long Island Expressway to Exit 35, Shelter Rock Road. Left turn (at the light) and proceed north going under the LIE to Northern Boulevard. Turn left on Northern Boulevard, at second traffic light turn right on Plandome Road. Travel approximately 1 mile on Plandome Road to synagogue on the left.

OR, take Grand Central/ Northern State Parkway to Exit 27 North, Shelter Rock Road. Continue on Shelter Rock Road to Northern Boulevard, continue as directed above.

**Westbound:** Long Island Expressway to Exit 36, Searingtown Road. Continue on service road to Shelter Rock Road. Turn right on Shelter Rock Road to Northern Boulevard. Turn left on Northern Boulevard, at second traffic light turn right on Plandome Road. Travel approximately 1 mile on Plandome Road to synagogue on the left.

OR, take Grand Central/Northern State Parkway to Exit 27 (North, towards Manhasset/Searingtown) Turn right on Shelter Rock Road to Northern Boulevard, continue as directed above.

**Long Island Rail Road:** From Penn Station, take the Port Washington line to the Manhasset station. RSNS is 0.7 miles north on Plandome Road. It is an easy walk and taxis are always available at the station.

#### V. GLOSSARY

<i>aliyah</i>	From the Hebrew root meaning ‘to go up,’ <i>aliyah</i> , refers to a Torah honor in the context of a service. The person honored with an <i>aliyah</i> is expected to chant or read the Torah blessings in Hebrew.
<i>B’nei Mitzvah</i>	A <i>B’nei Mitzvah</i> is a person who is twelve-thirteen years old and obligated to fulfill the ritual commandments of Judaism.
<i>D’var Torah</i>	Literally, a “word of Torah,” a <i>D’var Torah</i> is an interpretation of a Torah portion.
<i>haftara</i>	A reading from the second third of the Hebrew Bible that the early rabbis selected to be chanted each Shabbat, which often has a thematic connection to the Torah portion.
<i>kashrut</i>	The Jewish dietary laws.
<i>kiddush</i>	<i>Kiddush</i> is both the prayer over wine as well as the refreshments that follows a Shabbat morning service.
<i>kipot/yarmulkes</i>	These words are synonymous ( <i>kipot</i> : Hebrew, <i>yarmulkes</i> : Yiddish). They are head coverings usually associated with traditional Jewish men.
lifter ( <i>magbia/magbiha</i> )	One who lifts the Torah scroll following the Torah reading.
<i>maftir</i>	From the same root as the word <i>haftara</i> , the <i>maftir</i> is the end portion of the weekly Torah reading taken from the last lines of the weekly reading.
<i>oneg shabbat</i>	The “nosh” that follows Friday night services.
<i>tzedaka</i>	From the Hebrew root ‘justice,’ <i>tzedaka</i> is often mistranslated as ‘charity.’ <i>Tzedaka</i> , or the giving of resources (money, time, or the like), is Judaism’s way of correcting imbalances in the world.
wrapper ( <i>golel/golelet</i> )	Paired with the lifter, the wrapper is the one who rolls and dresses the Torah scroll.



## VI. TIME TABLE / CHECKLIST

This is a reminder list of things to do. It may not all apply to your *B'nei Mitzvah* celebration. Please refer to the information packet for details. Lead times are approximate and may vary with your particular situation.

	<i>Lead Time</i>
1. Reserve location for your party	1-2 years
2. Contact DJ/Band, Photographer, Party Planner, etc.	1 year
3. Attend <i>B'nei Mitzvah</i> services with your family	1 year
4. Make appointment with a clergy member to begin family <i>D'var Torah</i>	1 year - 6 months
5. Research and begin social action project	1 year - 6 months
6. Student begins individual lessons with a member of the clergy	6-7 months
7. If necessary, to review the elements of the service and to discuss the various honors, arrange parent appointment with a clergy member	6 months
8. Meet with Executive Director to go over the entire process, fees, and logistics and answer any questions you may have	6 months
9. Order invitations, thank you cards, etc.	4-5 months
10. Begin researching supplementary readings	4-5 months
11. Order <i>kippot</i>	2-3 months
12. Have a second meeting about your family <i>D'var Torah</i> with a clergy member	2 months
13. Order flowers for the synagogue. Speak with the office first. (Optional)	1-2 months
14. Give completed speech about social action project to a clergy member	1-2 months
15. Assign Torah honors, and send instructions and blessings to honorees	1-2 months
16. Meet with a clergy member to go over supplementary readings	1-2 months (or earlier)
17. Prepare for Friday evening service	1-2 months
18. Return Rules for Caterers form to the office	1-2 months
19. Contact the office to schedule four student lessons with a clergy member in the sanctuary	6-8 weeks
20. Bring your supplement to the printer/send projected readings and participant videos to the office	1 month
21. Prepare parent charges to <i>B'nei Mitzvah</i> , and buy books for Friday evening presentation & procure <i>tallit</i>	1 month

- |     |                                                                                                                                  |           |
|-----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 22. | Final meeting with Executive Director to finalize logistics, review your service outline, and settle any outstanding balances    | 1 month   |
| 23. | Notify the office if you plan to take photos at synagogue                                                                        | 1 month   |
| 24. | Submit <i>B'nei Mitzvah</i> service work sheet to the office                                                                     | 4 weeks   |
| 25. | Submit final draft of family <i>D'var Torah</i> , and arrange rehearsal in sanctuary                                             | 3 weeks   |
| 26. | Arrange for grape juice/wine and challah at synagogue for blessings on the <i>bimah</i> (Speak with the office)                  | 2-3 weeks |
| 27. | Return Rules for Videography/Photography form to the office, obtain link for livestream                                          | 2-3 weeks |
| 28. | If necessary, arrange meeting with a clergy team member for Torah chanters who have not previously read at our services          | 2 weeks   |
| 29. | Call your class's Food Recovery liaison or Island Harvest (516-294-8528) to arrange pick-up of leftover food from your reception | 1 week    |
| 30. | Notify the office of how many people are expected to attend the service                                                          | 1 week    |
| 31. | Deliver completed supplement, <i>kippot</i> , and <i>yad</i>                                                                     | 2-3 DAYS  |