



KI B'NEI MITZVAH GUIDE - 5787

WELCOME!



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Message From the B'nei Mitzvah Team

Dear B'nei Mitzvah Families,

Mazal tov! We are so excited to join you on the journey towards this life transition for your child. You have had the privilege of watching them grow from infancy through childhood, and at this point we hope you are quite proud of who they are beginning to become as they approach their teenage years. Our tradition offers the wisdom that at this developmental milestone of increasing independence and maturity, we honor our young people by acknowledging who they are becoming. We know that they are not yet ready to fully fly as adults, but we create the space for them to stretch their wings and start to take on new roles in our community. This is a moment of setting their course towards who they are and hope to be in their homes, their local communities, their Jewish community, and indeed the world.



Message From the B'Nei Mitzvah Team



At KI, our philosophy is to create bar and bat mitzvah celebrations that honor the individual young people and families who make up this vibrant and diverse community. There is no cut and dried way to become bar or bat mitzvah in the KI community, but we strive for ceremonies and celebrations that meet each of our young people where they are, asking them to take on a course of learning that will be challenging for them and give them a sense of tremendous accomplishment in the context of Jewish community. For many of our b'nei mitzvah, that will involve having an aliyah to the Torah, chanting significant passages from the Torah and/or prophets, grappling with the text and sharing their thinking with the congregation in a d'var Torah, or leading part of the service. We hope that our b'nei mitzvah take the ample opportunities available to them to express their own commitments and creativity -- for example, through creating artwork on the themes of the Torah portion, engaging in significant justice work in the community, engaging in thoughtful travel locally, in Israel, or internationally, or figuring out how to use their athletic talents to serve the larger world.

Message From the B'Nei Mitzvah Team

We celebrate our young people not only on their own and not only in the context of their families, but in the context of the larger community. A bar/bat mitzvah celebration marks a passage not only from one stage to another of an individual life, but into a new way of being part of community.

Celebrations at KI reflect these values as each child comes into his or her own in our community, and the entire community celebrates the child's transition. There is nothing sweeter than the proud grins of morning minyan goers watching a child read Torah for the first time or the energetic moment of singing siman tov umazel tov in the sanctuary as the entire congregation joins in joyful song. Your family's simcha is a lifecycle moment for this entire community.

As you embark on this journey, and all along the way, please do not hesitate to call on us for support. We love learning with your family and helping you create the path for a bar/bat mitzvah celebration that fits who you are and who you are watching your child become.

Many blessings for this sweet journey,

Rabbi Bill Hamilton
Hazzan Ariel Wyner
Dr. Samantha Pickette

KI Staff Roles and Contact Information

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main office, **617-277-9155**

Preparation

We hope that the year spent preparing for becoming bar/bat mitzvah can ultimately be less about one specific morning and more about laying a foundation for a lifetime of Jewish living and learning. In the year leading up to bar/bat mitzvah, your child will investigate mitzvot, the full range of Jewish actions in the world with an emphasis on tzedakah; learn a Torah portion in depth through their own questions and traditional and modern commentaries; and learn the skills of chanting text and/or leading tefillah. As a whole family, you will have the opportunity to connect and learn with other families who are preparing for bar/bat mitzvah at the same time.

B'nei Mitzvah Timeline



B'nei Mitzvah Seminar and Mitzvah Project

This annual seminar, led by KI's clergy team, is for all students who will become a bar/bat mitzvah within a calendar year, together with their parents. We invite all students becoming bar/bat mitzvah in the year of their bar/bat mitzvah to participate. Once a month we will meet (timing flexible and TBD) and spend time learning and volunteering together, as well as clarifying values individually and as a group. Additionally, we hope that students will devote significant time to serving the community in the year leading up to bar/bat mitzvah, in a way that reflects their values and aspirations.



Working with a Tutor

The most intensive work that our students put into preparing for their b'nei mitzvah, in terms of learning Torah and building skills, takes place in weekly meetings with a tutor. Students typically are assigned a tutor 13 months before their bar/bat mitzvah and prepare according to their interests and skills, so that the preparation is both challenging and satisfying for each individual student. Tutors prepare students for all aspects of the ceremony, teaching them to chant, doing the in-depth learning, writing and editing work of crafting a brief (3-5 minute) d'var Torah, and building the confidence necessary to stand up in front of the kahal. We also have certain tutors that specialize in services like Shacharit, Musaf, and Kabbalat Shabbat. Because we have significant expectations for the relationship between tutor and student, we require that tutors be approved by Hazzan Ariel Wyner before beginning to work with students. We maintain a list of excellent tutors in the area and are very happy to match your child with a tutor who will be a good fit for their personality, interests, learning style, skills and aspirations. Tutors are paid directly by the family, and their rates are in addition to synagogue dues and school tuition.



Three Years Ahead

- Families receive a letter with information about selecting a date and a form to formally submit the date, as well as pay the administrative fee for having your simcha at KI.
- Make sure you are a current member in good standing.
- Reserve your chosen date with the office and inform the office of your plans for your child's Jewish Education over the next three years.
- As soon as you have chosen a date, meet with the Director of Programs to discuss your space needs and to reserve the rooms that you wish to use for any aspects of the celebration. To ensure you have your first preference, you want to have all needs documented and contracted as soon as possible after picking a date, and no later than two years out. Within two years, we will do our absolute best to accommodate your first choice date and if we are unable to, we will work with you to ensure that you are satisfied with the next available date on the calendar.

16 to 13 MONTHS AHEAD

- Hazzan Ariel Wyner invites families to a preliminary meeting, where you receive the bar/bat mitzvah parent/student guide and receive information about expectations for families and students, a timeline of the bar/bat mitzvah year, and have the chance to ask questions.
- We will review the student's goals, prayer skills and do some vocal warmups. We will then help assign a tutor for your child based on these goals.
- With your family, plan to attend Shabbat morning services regularly.
- Register your child for the b'nei mitzvah seminar.
- Plan hotel accommodations for out-of-town guests.



13 MONTHS AHEAD

- Your child begins weekly tutoring.
- You and your child begin participating in the B'nei Mitzvah Seminar*
- Make plans to purchase tefillin and a tallit (or make one).
- Contact your vendors (caterer, florist, etc) to begin arrangements.

**The amount of time between the seminar and your child's bat/bar mitvah will vary depending upon the date their ceremony is scheduled for.*



6 MONTHS AHEAD

- With your family, consider attending morning minyan, so your child can learn to put on tefillin.
- Order kippot and benchers.
- Order invitations, including any response cards, maps, directions.
- Finalize your vendor contracts and send copies to the synagogue office.
- Order or make program booklets.
- Make arrangements for meals for out-of-town guests.
- Office will coordinate a meeting both with the Rabbi and the Hazzan to check in on your progress and set additional goals.



3 MONTHS AHEAD

- Office will reach out to set up a final appointment with one of the clergy to meet in the months leading up to the simcha.
- Contact the Director of Programs to confirm all aspects of the simcha operations.
- We will send you an honors card to be filled out.
- Mail invitations, including directions and hotel information.
- Complete catering menus, and plans for decorations.



1 MONTH TO 3 WEEKS AHEAD

- Complete the aliyah/honors form and send to Larry Cohen (larry_cohen@comcast.net)
- Contact the office if you have any questions or need assistance with your family's upcoming simcha.

*Mazal
To!*

