Congregation Agudas Achim
ק"ק אגודת אחים



B'nei Mitzvah Guide
2026-2027

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Who's Who at Congregation Agudas Achim



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Part 1. Introduction

Mazel tov on reaching this exciting moment! We are overjoyed to welcome your child into Jewish adulthood as they become Bar or Bat Mitzvah. We hope that this is a time of joy and celebration, a time to reflect on how far your child has come in their Jewish learning, and an opportunity to think about what the next step in their Jewish journey will be. We are privileged to walk this journey with you.

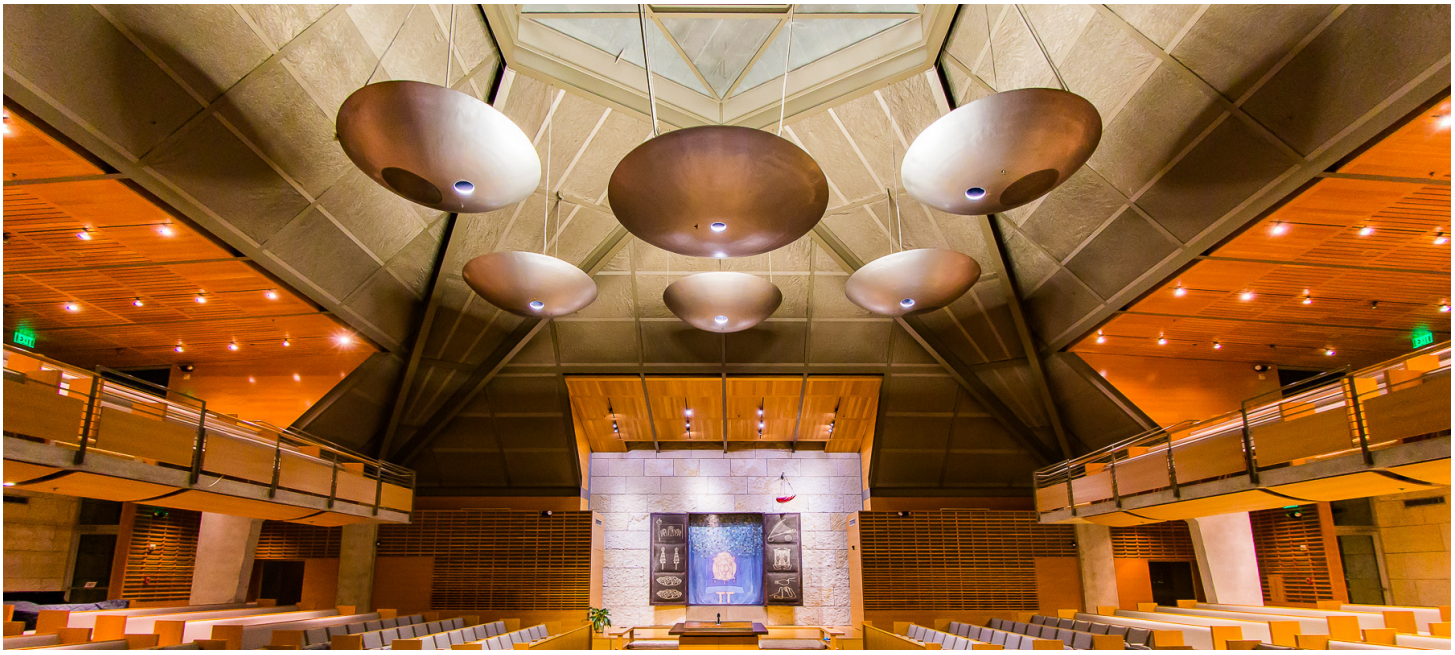
This manual contains the policies, philosophy and specifics related to becoming B'nei Mitzvah at CAA. Our hope is that it will help all families have a smooth, rich and rewarding experience throughout the process.

Please pay special attention to the Checklist and Timeline (page 9) for Bar/Bat Mitzvah on, as well as the various forms that are provided.

A. The Congregational Community & Your Family

The name Agudas Achim, meaning band of brothers (and sisters), captures the spirit of community that is the hallmark of our congregation. The ceremony of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is one of many celebrations, programs, rites of passage, and life cycle events that take place during the course of the year. Sharing simchas builds our sense of community.

Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Agudas Achim takes place during our regularly scheduled congregational services. The congregation welcomes our B'nei Mitzvah as they take their place in our congregational family. Together we share in the joy and pride of this significant achievement.



B. Family Commitment

Strategies for Success

- Regular attendance at CAARS. The curriculum is designed to provide the core skills related to leading and participating in a service
- Showing interest, support and a positive attitude in students practicing
- Prioritizing, modifying or pausing extra-curricular activities

***As a reminder, families must be members in good standing, and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah must meet attendance requirements either at CAARS or AJA in order to retain their selected date.**

Please note: B'nei Mitzvah students, in accordance with the Conservative Movement, must either have been born to a Jewish mother or have had a recognized conversion. Please contact Rabbi Blumofe as soon as possible if there are any questions or issues regarding this requirement.

***Note for students with separated or divorced parents**

In CAA's desire to best support our B'nei Mitzvah students, we will communicate with both parents regardless of membership status. Please feel free to consult with our rabbis or the others listed on page 5 for assistance in planning. It can be useful to have copies of study materials at both parent's homes (please ask Jane Weiss for an extra copy if relevant).



Part 2. Preparations

A. Fees

A fee of $180 is assessed to all B'nei Mitzvah families when the date of their simcha is confirmed. It must be paid prior to your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah, and covers the costs involved in preparing to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah including:

- Study materials
- Books
- Background checks for tutors

- Non-member families will be assessed a $540 B'nei Mitzvah Fee to secure a minyan date.
- Please note that costs for the Kiddush luncheon are not included as part of the B'nei Mitzvah fee. Final payment for the Kiddush luncheon is due 10 days prior to the Simcha.
- Tutoring costs are paid directly by the family and are not part of the B'nei Mitzvah fee.
- Please note that all meetings, sessions, or conferences with Rabbi Blumofe or Rabbi Swedroe are included in synagogue membership.



B. Mitzvah Project

Congregation Agudas Achim requires all students to participate in a Mitzvah Project during their Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparations. These projects are intended to provide an opportunity for each student to experience the importance of doing a mitzvah "ben adam l'chavayroh", that is, a sacred obligation between one person and another.

Projects should involve

- Directly working with people
- Can include collecting money and donating, but must also have direct service component
- Involvement with project for ~6 months
- Recommended completion in 6th grade

If you would like to publicize your project, we are happy to include it in our weekly CAARS Newsletter.

C. Remember Us: The Holocaust B'nei Mitzvah Project

This project gives B'nei Mitzvah students the opportunity, during their ceremony, to honor a child who lost their life during the Holocaust. There are several different options how this child can be remembered:

- Doing Mitzvot in the name of the child
- Mentioning the child during the D'var Torah
- Taking on the Mitzvah of saying Kaddish
- Lighting a yahrzeit candle yearly

For more information, please visit the Remember Us website: www.remember-us.org

D. Checklist & Timeline for Bar/Bat Mitzvah

6th Grade

- Continue or begin regular service attendance
- Begin discussion with child on selection of Mitzvah Project
- Complete Mitzvah Project Planning Form and contact Rabbi Swedroe with any questions.

9-12 Months Prior

- Family meeting with Rabbi Swedroe to receive tutoring binder and discuss the B'nei Mitzvah process
- Individual tutoring begins

6 Months Prior

- Select sponsor and begin meeting
- Contact Rabbi Swedroe with the name of sponsor or if you need assistance in selecting someone

3-4 Months Prior

- Begin regular tutoring sessions with Rabbi Blumofe and Rabbi Swedroe
- If family still has questions regarding family participation, please be in touch with Rabbi Blumofe or Rabbi Swedroe to discuss
- Contact the Torah Reading Coordinator if you wish to assign Torah readers
- Contact Torah readers with their portions
- Request updated class list for your invitations from the B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator
- Contact the Director of Catering for information regarding the Kiddush Luncheon.
- Pick out invitations

2 Months Prior

- Begin choosing honorees for Aliyot and other honors. Contact Jane Weiss for assistance
- Begin getting Hebrew names for honorees
- Schedule sanctuary photo session with Jane Weiss
- Schedule final run through

1 Month Prior

- Submit D'var Torah to the Rabbis to begin review process
- Choose ushers
- Give honorees appropriate instructions
- Practice delivery of D'var Torah and review of all parts of service
- Finalize Kiddush luncheon menu

2 Weeks Prior

- Turn in Honors/Aliyot Sheet to Jane Weiss
- Turn in Program Worksheet to Jane Weiss (pg 27-28)
- Submit Letter from Parents and Bar/ Bat mitzvah to Jane Weiss (electronically) (optional)
- Submit Bar/Bat Mitzvah thank you remarks to Jane Weiss (electronically) (optional)
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah run through which may necessitate missing some school
- Final guest count and payment for Kiddush luncheon due

Week Prior

- Proofread final service program—Jane Weiss will contact you
- Submit D'Var Torah to Jane Weiss to be printed for Shabbat morning (optional)
- Send alphabetical list of guests to Jane Weiss for Shalom Austin security.

Day Before Simcha

- Attend photo session, if scheduled
- Prior to 3 p.m. bring kippot, and any candies/decorations to CAA

E. Educational Background

- Prior to date choosing: All students should have achieved a basic level of competence in decoding (reading) Hebrew. If further Hebrew instruction or tutoring is necessary, students should receive educational support prior to date choosing. This tutoring is at the family's expense.

- 6th grade: CAARS students will have the opportunity to learn Torah and Haftarah Trope as part of CAARS.

F. Service Participation Goals

For each service, there is a standard participation level for Bar/Bat Mitzvah students at CAA.

These are the sections of the service that a Bar/Bat Mitzvah generally leads or chants, and therefore mastery of these sections of the service is the initial goal of Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation:

Shabbat Morning

- Leading the Torah service
- Chanting the Aliyah (Torah) blessings
- Chanting the Maftir Torah portion
- Chanting the Haftarah blessings
- Chanting the Haftarah
- Delivering a D'var Torah
- Leading Musaf with a hechi kedushah

** Please note, if your child is celebrating as part of a Double B'nei Mitzvah, please speak with Rabbi Swedroe to discuss how the service will be shared.*

Shabbat Mincha

- Leading the Torah service
- Chanting the Aliyah blessings
- Chanting a Torah portion
- Leading Havdalah
- Delivering a D'var Torah

Monday/Thursday/Rosh Chodesh

- Student will read what is assigned
- Chanting the Aliyah blessings
- Chanting a Torah portion
- Parents will have an Aliyah and can do a blessing
- Delivering a D'var Torah

G. Additional Leading Opportunities

On Friday night

- the Shema & V'ahavta
- V'shamru
- Aleinu
- Kiddush

Bar/Bat Mitzvah students may also discuss with our rabbis, participation in additional sections of the service beyond standard participation. It may be determined, either in the initial meetings with the rabbis or subsequently, that the standard participation should be modified for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah student.

On Shabbat morning

- chanting additional Torah readings
- leading the Shacharit service

On Shabbat afternoon (Mincha)

- leading the Mincha service or
- leading the Ma'ariv service

H. Individual Tutoring

Before tutoring begins, the family will meet with Rabbi Swedroe to discuss expectations and questions surrounding the B'nei Mitzvah process. At this time, the student will receive their binder with study materials. They will also discuss tutor and sponsor options if those have not already been selected by the family.

- Tutoring generally begins approximately ***9 to 12 months prior*** to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The amount of individual tutoring required by Bar/Bat Mitzvah students differs.
- Rabbi Swedroe maintains a list of suggested tutors and can make suggestions to best meet your child's needs.
- Tutoring sessions should last 45 to 60 minutes and take place once a week.
- Tutoring costs are paid directly by the family to the tutor. As of Fall 2026, it is an average of $73/hr.
- You can help to reduce the amount of tutoring needed by supervising your child's practice at home and actively following along during Shabbat morning services.
- Should families choose a tutor who is not suggested by CAA, please contact Rabbi Swedroe before tutoring begins for approval. All of the service participation guidelines will still apply and CAA clergy will still determine each child's participation in the service.

I. D'var Torah and the Sponsor

- Sponsor must be an adult member of CAA, other than a parent.
- Sponsor helps Bar/Bat Mitzvah student study and understand Torah portion and in preparing for their D'var Torah.
- D'var Torah is a 3-5 minute speech where student connects the Torah portion to today's experiences.
- Begin meeting with sponsor 6 months prior to simcha.
- Share name of sponsor as soon as selected with Rabbi Swedroe.
- Sponsor Training Workshops are typically held in the fall and spring.
- Our rabbis are available to support the sponsors and our students in this process.

J. Regular Meetings with the Rabbis

Your child will begin regular meetings with Rabbi Blumofe and Rabbi Swedroe about 3 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The meetings take place on Wednesday or Thursday afternoons. Please schedule your child's after school activities accordingly.

You will be contacted by Jane Weiss when it is time to schedule these appointments. At this time, these meetings may be in person, over Zoom or by phone based on mutual availability. We will do our best to accommodate preferred methods of meeting.

K. Final Run-Through

- A final run-through of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service will be scheduled within the 10 days prior to the event.
- This session is scheduled Tuesday through Thursday between 9 am and 4 pm and will take approximately 1 ½ hours.
- It may be necessary to schedule this during the school day, so please realize this may be possibility.
- It is very important that both parents attend this session.
- Candid photos or videos may be taken during this session, but this is not an appropriate time for formal posed photos.

Part 3. The Service and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Family

Families are invited to participate in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service in the following ways (OPTIONAL):

- Presenting a tallit to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- Participating in the Torah passing ritual
- Assigning available Aliyot
- Assigning Torah readings
- Inviting friends of family to open and close the Ark, left and tie the Torah
- Giving brief blessing to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah (parent or sponsor)
- Providing sweets to be tossed
- Reciting the Prayer for our Country, the Prayer for Peace, and the Prayer for Israel
- Choosing ushers
- Providing kippot

All parts of the service not specifically identified as allocated to families are reserved for the general congregation. If you have a special circumstance and would like to honor a family member with leading an additional prayer, please discuss this possibility with Rabbi Blumofe.

Participation of Non-Jewish Family and Friends

Non-Jewish family and friends may be honored with the reading of the Prayer for Our Country, and the Prayer for Peace. Grandparents, regardless of faith background, may join the family on the Bimah for the passing of the Torah. A non-Jewish relative may accompany Jewish family members in opening and closing the ark.

Families who have questions regarding non-Jewish family participation should contact Rabbi Blumofe. It is our goal for all family members to have meaningful way to be part of your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

A. Tallit Presentation

At the beginning of the service, two family members (usually the parents) may present the Bar/Bat Mitzvah with his or her tallit. The tallit is held by the designated people as the Bar/Bat Mitzvah recites the blessing for wearing the tallit, and then the tallit is placed over his or her shoulders.

B. Service for Passing the Torah

When the Torah is taken out of the Ark to be read (and, also when it is returned to the Ark during a double Bar/Bat Mitzvah), there is a lovely opportunity for your family to engage in the custom of passing the Torah down through the generations to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This moment symbolizes one important facet of becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, the passing of Judaism from generation to generation (MiDor L'Dor).

If any family members have any physical limitations that might impact their ability to participate in this ritual, please discuss this with Rabbi Blumofe or Rabbi Swedroe so that plans can be made for appropriate modifications or accommodations.



C. Honors

What is an Aliyah?

An Aliyah is the blessing recited before and after the Torah is read. CAA policy states that every individual participating in an Aliyah must be Jewish.

Interfaith families

We warmly welcome both parents onto the amud while the Bar/Bat Mitzvah has his/her Aliyah and Torah reading to share in this special moment. Per our policy, we will call the Jewish parent by name for the Aliyah, though both parents will come up, and stand with their child.

Assigning Aliyot for Shabbat Morning

Consistent with the concept of community, two Aliyot are reserved each Shabbat for members of the general CAA community. Bar/Bat Mitzvah families generally choose honorees for the Aliyot as follows:

1. For a single Bar/Bat Mitzvah, you are invited to honor family or friends with five of the seven Shabbat morning Aliyot.
2. For a single Bar/Bat Mitzvah, one of the Aliyot reserved for the congregation must be a Yisrael Aliyah (Aliyah 3-7). In other words, the two Aliyot reserved for the congregation cannot be both the Kohen and Levi. The Maftir Aliyah is usually given to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah at a single Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
3. The parents of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah are customarily honored with the Aliyah preceding the Maftir.
4. You may honor up to four people at one of the Aliyot. Two people may be honored for each of the remaining Aliyot.
5. We request that Aliyot be assigned in generational order, i.e. grandparents before parents, parents before children.
6. Please see page 25 for details that are included for one being honored with Hagbah and Gelilah.

Double Bar/Bat Mitzvah

- The two families share all of the Aliyot on Shabbat morning
- Each child has an individual Aliyah, which is recognized as their Bar/Bat Mitzvah Aliyah
- If both children are from the same family, the family will reserve two aliyot for the congregation (same policy as for single B'nei Mitzvah)

Assigning Aliyot for Shabbat Mincha Service

- There are three Aliyot at a Shabbat Mincha service: a Kohen Aliyah, a Levi Aliyah, and a Sh'lishi Aliyah
- The Bar/Bat Mitzvah child always has the Shlishi Aliyah
- In cases where the parents are not Kohanim or Levites, the parents may share in the Levi Aliyah by accompanying a Levi.
- Parents may assign all of the Aliyot for this service. If you would like to see a current list of congregants who are Kohanim or Levi'im, please request this from Jane Weiss.



Other information

- A person of any gender, is a Kohen or a Levi if their father is a Kohen or a Levi. If you do not have a Kohen or Levi whom you wish to honor, you need not choose a person for this Aliyah.
- If a person honored with an Aliyah is also reading from the Torah, s/he should be given the Aliyah for his/her Torah portion.
- When assigning Aliyot, a parent generally should not immediately follow their child.

Receiving an Aliyah

- Please see Page 24 for specific directions for those being honored with an Aliyah.
- Make copies of these instructions for all of your honorees so they are familiar with CAA's customs.
- A recording of the blessings is available on the CAA website (www.theaustinsynagogue.org) to assist with preparation.
- The Blessings in Hebrew and in English transliteration are on the Amud.
- All honorees should practice the blessings and associated rituals to insure a smooth flow of the service
- Contact Jane Weiss if any honoree would like further information or to schedule a practice session for these blessings.



Assigning the honor of tying the Torah (G'lilah)

- This honor follows the Torah readings.
- Those receiving this honor must be Jewish.
- Choose one person for this honor.
- This honor does not require any knowledge of Hebrew.
- On special Shabbatot (e.g., Rosh Hodesh) more than one Torah may be read from.
- If more than one Torah is read from, the additional G'illah is reserved for the congregation

How to do G'lilah

The person honored with G'lilah ties and dresses the Torah after it has been lifted by the Hagbah. The Gabbai (person helping with the Torah service) will assist in this process. This person must be Jewish. No special skills are required.

Ark Openings

- You may choose two people for the first Ark opening, and two people for the final Ark opening.
- You will not need to provide Hebrew names for these people, and no special skills are required; however, they must be Jewish. Non-Jewish family members of the honoree may accompany the Jewish ark opener.
- The Jewish individuals opening the Ark must be Jewish and do not have to be of Bar/Bat mitzvah age.

D. Assigning Torah Readers

If you would like Torah portions to be read by skilled family members or friends, please contact the Torah Reading Coordinator, Sara Blatt, **no later than 3 months prior to the service** to find out which portions are available. Torah reading is an option for families; it is not mandatory.

Readers need not be members of the synagogue. However, **they must be able to read their portions directly from the Torah with proper Hebrew pronunciation and with the use of the traditional Torah trope.** A recording of the portion can be provided.

One to two weeks prior to the event, **readers who will be honored with a Torah reading can contact Sara Blatt, the Torah Reader coordinator, to request a run through of the portion**. For out of town readers, a telephone session could be scheduled.

E. Honors Sheet

The Honors Sheet will be in the binder you will receive at your meeting with Rabbi Swedroe approximately 9 months before your date and will be emailed to you 6-8 weeks in advance. It provides spaces for you to include the names of all of your honorees to the synagogue and should be submitted to Jane Weiss no later than two weeks prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, before the run-through in the sanctuary. The information is used for the service program and by those conducting the service on the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

On this form you must include the full Hebrew name (or Yiddish or Ladino) of the individuals to be honored with Aliyot, Hagbah and G'lilah. Please be aware that names are structured as follows:

"Hebrew first name" + ben or bat (son or daughter of) + "father's Hebrew name" + v' (and)"+ mother's Hebrew name"

Example: Sara bat Yosef v'Rivka
or Aaron ben Moshe v'Leah

You may use either Hebrew or English letters to write the names.

Note: Start requesting this information from your honorees about 6 weeks beforehand.

You will also provide the English names and relationships of people participating in the Torah passing ceremony and the Ark openings on the Aliyah sheet.

We also request that you designate a family member (or one person on each side of the family) who can point out to the floor gabbai those who have been assigned honors. They should be in the sanctuary by 9:40, before services start, and ideally sit in an aisle so that the floor gabbai may consult with them easily if need be.



Double B'nei Mitzvah Family Participation

Please see Page 23 for further instructions on assigning honors.

F. Etiquette During Honors

- Anyone (regardless of age or gender) who comes onto the Bima or Amud for any reason must wear a head covering.
- Small white lace head coverings and simple black kippot are provided by the congregation for all services in the sanctuary.
- Men who have an Aliyah must wear a tallit; women are invited to do so.

Tz'niut (modesty) is an important Jewish value. Tradition encourages modesty in our attitudes, in our behavior, and in our dress. We request that anyone having an honor, cover their shoulders and refrain from wearing clothing that is inappropriate or too revealing.



G. Parent or Sponsor Blessing

- Parents **or** the Sponsor are invited to bless their child. **Remarks should not exceed 225 words if both parents speak; 150 words if one parent speaks.**
- These blessings are an opportunity to impart hopes, wishes and dreams to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah: looks forward towards the future, rather than on the past and previous accomplishments.
- Please refrain from offering a D'var Torah or trying to entertain the congregation.
- Additional remarks may be shared with guests you may be having.

H. Ushers

You are welcome to provide ushers to assist congregants and your guests, but this is not a requirement. Your child's friends may also serve as ushers when accompanied and supervised by an adult.

Ushers should

- Be familiar with CAA's space and customs
- Greet everyone and direct guests to the sanctuary
- Ensure that all men who enter the sanctuary are wearing a kippah
- Hand out the marshmallows/Sunkist candies to toss and explain this custom to guests unfamiliar with it
- Give everyone a service program
- Encourage quiet in the foyer
- Assist people until 10:10 a.m.

I. Tossing Sweets

Families are invited, but not required, to provide sweets for the congregation to toss at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah in celebration following his or her Aliyah. This custom originates from a Talmudic reference to showering a bridegroom with nuts and raisins, and has become traditional at B'nei Mitzvah.

CAA allows 2 options for tossing sweets:

1. Sunkist Fruit Gems (other brands are not kosher). CAA can provide Sunkist Fruit Gems upon request when planning your kiddush menu with our Kitchen/Catering manager.
2. or wrapped KOSHER marshmallows are both approved for sweets for tossing. If using marshmallows, please wrap in cloth covering, not netting or cellophane, to prevent any damage to our facilities.

REMEMBER:

- **Please bring your sweets and kippot to the synagogue before Friday afternoon at 3:00pm prior to your simcha and leave them with our Administrative Assistant to the Clergy.**
- **Please note, sweets should be limited in number (no more than 200) based on your number of expected guests.**

J. Kippot

- Families may purchase special kippot to be handed out by the ushers.
- CAA always has plenty of plain black kippot available.
- There are many websites that sell kippot, or you may contact the CAA Sisterhood.
- Many families order enough kippot for half of the guests that you are anticipating.
- Be sure to check with your vendor to see how far in advance these need to be ordered.



Part 4. Logistics, Programs, and Event Planning

A. Invitations

- If your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah is during a Shabbat Mincha service, **you must confirm** the correct time of the service with Jane Weiss prior to ordering the invitations.
- CAA's Sisterhood gift shop has a variety of invitations that may meet your needs.
- The rabbis are happy to review any Hebrew spelling or time of service questions.
- Please check with your vendor for when to order invitations.



B. Shabbat Observance at CAA Events

In keeping with Shabbat, and in accordance with the practices of the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Congregation Agudas Achim observes the following policies. These policies apply from the time of candle lighting (18 minutes before sundown) on Friday evening to 25 minutes after sundown on Saturday evening.

In observance of Shabbat, we refrain from the following:

- Writing, cutting, and the handling of money
- Turning lights on and off
- Bringing in/taking out of the synagogue items for your celebration
- Photography from 3:00 pm Friday through twilight on Saturday
- **Using cell phones inside or outside on synagogue grounds.** (Phones must be silenced in sanctuary. We request that in emergencies people take their phones to their car.)
- Smoking
- If a festival or holiday falls on Friday, the synagogue will be closed, and all items must be brought in by the previous day by 3:00

C. Event Coordination

About ***3 months in advance*** of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah, contact the Catering Director to schedule a meeting to discuss:

- Arrangements for Kiddush Luncheon
- Caterer and menu
- Facility and kitchen usage fees
- The Building Usage/Reservation Agreement
- A deposit of 50% of estimated costs will be due at this time. See additional forms and information related to planning for the Kiddush Luncheon on our website.
- The most current menus and prices are posted on our website.

If you are having a Shabbat Mincha service with no party or event at CAA, we still ask that you meet with the Catering Director to arrange logistics for the service one month prior to your simcha.

D. Shalom Austin

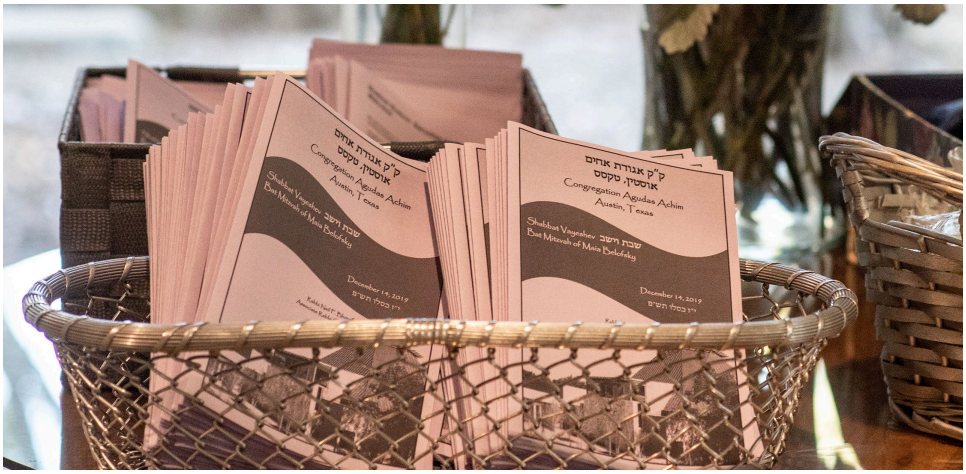
We encourage you to submit information about your child's simcha to Shalom Austin to be included in the Jewish Outlook. Please contact Wendy Goodman at wendy.goodman@shalomaustin.org or go https://shalomaustin.org/events/community/add/ to be included.

E. Printed Program

Congregation Agudas Achim prints a weekly Shabbat program that provides congregants and guests with information about the service. Families may offer a supplemental page to:

- Offer greetings
- Mention the child's Mitzvah Project
- List thank yous
- Reflect on an important aspect of their child's life.
- The Bar/Bat Mitzvah may also submit a page for his or her thank you comments. **This information should be emailed to Jane Weiss two weeks prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.**
- Families are also invited to list sponsorship of the Kiddush luncheon and bimah flowers. Please submit this information on the Program Worksheet (see page 26 or 27).

If a family chooses to create a program supplement, they are responsible for all costs and must submit it 2 weeks in advance to Jane Weiss for approval by the rabbis.



F. Photography

You may choose to schedule a session with your photographer in the sanctuary prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This session is often scheduled on the Friday immediately prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah so that out-of-town relatives may participate, or on the previous Friday. As taking photographs or videos is not permitted on Shabbat during the actual Bar/Bat Mitzvah, please remember that all photos on Friday must be completed by 3:00 p.m.

Please contact Jane Weiss who will assist you in scheduling.

Photographers must have approval from the rabbis to remove a Torah from the Ark, and may never unroll it. For photographs of Torah reading or other pictures with the Torah unrolled, the rabbis or an approved tutor must be present. Though videos are not permitted on Shabbat, families may film the final run-through in the sanctuary.

G. Kiddush Luncheon

At Congregation Agudas Achim, a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an event shared by the entire congregation. Parents or other family members are expected to host a Kiddush luncheon at CAA after the Shabbat Morning Service. This Kiddush serves to welcome the Bar/Bat Mitzvah into the Jewish community at large.



In the spirit of sharing simchas with the congregation, all members, as well as your guests, are invited to the Kiddush Luncheon. There are around 125 regular attendees on Shabbat morning who would be included in the count for the luncheon in addition to your invited guests. Please contact the Catering Director to arrive at a specific estimate of attendees for your event.

We do not differentiate between guests who received a personal invitation from the Bar/Bat Mitzvah families and other members of the congregation and private luncheons at CAA following a Bar/Bat Mitzvah are not permitted. Tables should not be reserved specifically for “invited guests.” Reserving tables for elderly and/or physically disabled guests and one table for the immediate family is appropriate.

In a similar manner, if the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is held on a morning other than Shabbat and the family hosts a breakfast at CAA, it is appropriate to invite all members of the minyan in attendance.

CAA maintains a Kosher facility and all catering is done in our own kitchen. Please contact the Director of Catering for further information.

Traditional Kiddush Table

A traditional Kiddush table (herring, wine, juice, challah, a bourbon, and a scotch) is considered a continuation of the Shabbat morning service and is where the congregation gathers immediately following the Shabbat morning service for Kiddush. The synagogue will provide this for B’nei Mitzvah families who are sponsoring the Kiddush Luncheon.

H. Catering

Kiddush Luncheon

For the Kiddush Luncheon, please contact CAA Catering at 512-735-8410 or catering@caa-austin.org. Please visit the Catering and Events page of the CAA website for the current Kiddush Luncheon menu and other menu options.

Friday night dinner

- Some families choose to host a Friday night dinner at CAA for their out-of-town family and guests.
- Please contact the Director of Catering about 3 months prior to your event to discuss space availability and to design a menu for your gathering.

I. Decorations

Decorations and centerpieces can usually be set up by the family and friends, or party planner on the Friday afternoon preceding the event and must be completed by 3:00 pm. Should there be a conflict with use of the Social Hall on Friday afternoon with another synagogue event, alternative arrangements will be made in advance

J. Bima Flowers

- The family generally provides flowers or plants for the bimah, whether the B'nei Mitzvah is scheduled for Shabbat morning or for Mincha/Maariv.
- Delivery and arrangements should be completed by 3:00 pm on Friday.
- There is a standard vase and stand available for your use, or you can provide your own.
- If you have no specific floral preferences, you may sponsor a standard arrangement for $200.
- Families may also choose to display a basket of food in lieu of flowers to symbolize a charitable donation.
- Contact the Director of Catering for information.



K. Parties

In the spirit of fostering a sense of community and acceptance of all children:

- Everyone in your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah class is to be invited to the actual Simcha (service).
- If you are having an additional function such as a Saturday night party, the entire B'nei Mitzvah class (CAARS and AJA students) are to be invited as we foster a kehillat kadosh, a holy and respectful community.
- Please encourage your child to support all of the other students in his or her class by attending the services and celebrations for each Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- If the simcha is a double B'nei Mitzvah, families should coordinate their events so that no one feels excluded. This can be accomplished by holding one party jointly or having separate parties at different times.

Note: Immediately ***before addressing invitations***, request an updated list of your child's B'nei Mitzvah class from Jane Weiss.



APPENDICES

Appendix A

Congregation Agudas Achim
Outline of Shabbat Service for "Double" Bar/Bat Mitzvah

1. Presentation of Tallit (prior to service commencing). Presented separately to each Bar/Bat Mitzvah
2. Shacharit
3. Service for Taking out Torah (Hotsa'ah) (Eyn Kamokha). Led by "Bar/Bat Mitzvah A" (including passing Torah through generations on Bimah)
4. Introduction to Torah Reading (Rabbis)
5. Torah Reading (including Mi Sheberakh for sick usually after 5th aliyah)
6. Include aliyot for parents, family members, friend
7. Hatzi Kaddish (Rabbis)
8. Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah called separately for "special B'nei Mitzvah" Aliyah (Rabbis)
9. Chanting of Maftir (usually one of the B'nei)
10. Bar/Bat Mitzvah Mi Sheberakh (blessing) for each student individually (Rabbis)
11. Hagbah and Glilah (Lifting and Tying the Torah)
12. D'var Torah - Bar/Bat Mitzvah "A"
13. Remarks from sponsor/parent of "Bar/Bat Mitzvah A" and blessing from Rabbis
14. Introduction to Haftarah (Rabbis)
15. Chanting of Haftarah with blessings before and about half of Haftarah chanted by one Bar/Bat Mitzvah and approximately half of Haftarah and blessings after chanted by other Bar/Bat Mitzvah
16. D'var Torah - "Bar/Bat Mitzvah B"
17. Remarks from sponsor/parent of "Bar/Bat Mitzvah B" and blessing from Rabbis
18. Prayers for Our Country and Israel
19. Blessing for " …reaching this time" (Shehecheyanu) - Rabbis and both families
20. Marshmallows/Sunkist Gels
21. Ashrei (B'nei Mitzvah & friends)
22. Service for Returning the Torah (Hachnasah) (Yehallelu) Led by "Bar/Bat Mitzvah B" (including passing Torah through generations to "Bar/Bat Mitzvah B" on Bimah)
23. Ending with "Hashiveinu" and closing Ark with family on Bimah (All standing between the Bimah and the Amud)
24. Sermon/Dvar Torah (Rabbis)
25. Musaf "Bar/Bat Mitzvah B"
26. Closing Prayers (Ein Keloheinu, Aleinu, Kaddish) (B'nei Mitzvah & friends)
27. Announcements, Adon Olam

Appendix B

Being Called for an Aliyah

If you are honored with an Aliyah at CAA, the following procedure will be followed:

- You will be called up by your Hebrew name by the Gabbai (person helping the with the Torah service), who will also say your name in English.

- Men must wear a tallit and a kippah. Women must wear a head covering; wearing a tallit is encouraged. Note: tallitot can be found inside the sanctuary door. Kippot and head coverings are in the sanctuary foyer.

- You will be called to the Aliyah after the person before you has made his/her concluding blessing. When called, go up to the Amud and stand to the Torah reader's right.

- At the podium, the reader will point out the place in the Torah where s/he will begin reading. You should take the end of your tallit and touch that place in the Torah with it, then kiss the tallit. A woman not wearing a tallit touches the place in the Torah with the sash used to tie the Torah, then kisses it.

- You should then grasp onto the wooden handles of the Torah with your left hand.

- You will find the blessings on the sheet called Torah Blessings written in the Hebrew and in English transliteration, on a laminated sheet next to the Torah. You will recite these blessings.

- If you are called to the Torah with one other person, both of you should follow the above procedure.

- If you are called with more than one person, only those called by their Hebrew names will kiss the Torah.

- You can listen to the Torah Blessings by logging on to the CAA website at https://theaustinsynagogue.org/torah-service/ and scroll down to "Torah Service," and click on "Blessing before the Torah reading & Blessing after the Torah reading." You will hear Rabbi Blumofe give instructions and recite the blessing. Further down the page you will see the transliteration sheet that will be on the bimah.

Appendix C

G'lilah

G'lilah

- The person assigned this honor must be Jewish.
- After the Hagbah is seated, the person honored with G'lilah ties and dresses the Torah. The Gabbai (person helping with the Torah service) will assist in this process.
- First the person honored with G'lilah helps roll the Torah back up.
- Then they affix the belt around the middle of the Torah with the opening facing the person who just performed Hagbah.
- Next the cover is replaced onto the Torah with the picture facing the person who just performed Hagbah.
- Finally the yad is put onto the right Eitz (handle) of the Torah.

Appendix D

Program Worksheet for Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service Program

Please complete and submit this form, along with the Honors Sheet, to Jane Weiss, B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator. Contact Jane at Jane.Weiss@caa-austin.org or 512-293-6112 if you have questions regarding submitting these forms.

Items with * below are optional. If you know who is leading, please list, otherwise, leave blank.

Name of Bar/Bat Mitzvah : _____

Who will be presenting the tallit? _____

*Shacharit led by : _____

Hotza'at ha Torah (service of taking out the Torah, usually led by Bar/Bat Mitzvah):

_____

Haftarah (usually read by Bar/Bat Mitzvah) : _____

D'var Torah (usually by Bar/Bat Mitzvah) : _____

Name of Sponsor: _____

Parent or Sponsor Remarks (choose one, list who will speak) : _____

Ashrei led by (*Bar/Bat Mitzvah may choose CAARS/AJA/Camp friends to co-lead) :

_____

Hachnassat haTorah (service for returning the Torah usually led by Bar/Bat Mitzvah) :

_____

*Musaf (usually led by Bar/Bat Mitzvah) : _____

Ushers (list all names) : _____

_____

Kiddush Luncheon- list sponsor(s), who lunch is in memory or honor of, any specific wording that you would like to be used in the program :

_____

_____

Bima Flowers—list sponsor(s), who the flowers are in honor or memory of, any specific wording you would like used in program :

_____

_____

Approximate Number of Expected Guests : _____

Color of Program (please circle): white, beige, grey, pink, purple, blue, yellow or green

Appendix E

Program Worksheet for Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service Program (Mincha/Ma'ariv)

Please complete and submit this form, along with the Honors Sheet, to Jane Weiss, B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator. Contact Jane at Jane.Weiss@caa-austin.org or 512-293-6112 if you have questions regarding submitting these forms.

Items with * below are optional. If you know who is leading, please list, otherwise, leave blank.

Name of Bar/Bat Mitzvah : _____

Who will be presenting the tallit?_____

*Mincha opening (usually led by Bar/Bat Mitzvah) : _____

Hotza'at ha Torah (service of taking out the Torah usually led by Bar/Bat Mitzvah) :

_____

D'var Torah (usually led by Bar/Bat Mitzvah) : _____

Name of Sponsor :_____

Parent or Sponsor Remarks (choose one, list who will speak) : _____

Hachnassat haTorah (service for returning the Torah usually led by Bar/Bat Mitzvah) :

_____

* Mincha Conclusion led by: _____

* Ma'ariv led by : _____

* Havdalah (usually led by Bar/Bat Mitzvah) : _____

Ushers (list all names) : _____

_____

Bima Flowers—if you are sponsoring, please specify who the flowers are in honor or memory of, any specific wording you would like used in program :

_____

_____

_____

Approximate Number of Expected Guests : _____

Color of Program (please circle) : white, beige, grey, pink, purple, blue, yellow or green