<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Date/Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>K-7th grade years</td>
<td>Attend Shaare Emeth’s Religious School, or an approved equivalent, for 4+ years prior to becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah (must include the year in which the student is preparing to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December of 4th grade year</td>
<td>Cantor’s office will contact you by email to set up a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October of 6th grade year, Sunday of 6th grade retreat</td>
<td>Attend 6th Grade Parents Meeting (parents/guardians only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January of 6th grade year, last Sunday</td>
<td>Attend B’nei Mitzvah Experience event for B’nei Mitzvah families</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-12 months prior to Bar/Bat Mitzvah service</td>
<td>Contact our director of operations concerning room rentals (if you plan to take photographs, have a luncheon, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8 months prior to BM service</td>
<td>Cantor’s office will contact you by email to set up your First Appointment with the Cantor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 months prior to BM service</td>
<td>Attend First Appointment with the Cantor (student and 1+ parent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7 months prior to BM</td>
<td>Contact Rabbis’ Office and Attend First Appointment with assigned Rabbi (student and 1+ parent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7 months prior to BM</td>
<td>Contact Dir. Of Jewish Life &amp; Learning and Attend First Project Chesed Appointment (student and 1+ parent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-7 months prior to BM service</td>
<td>Fill out and turn in student info sheets, sent to you in the initial scheduling email sent by the Cantor’s Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throughout the months prior to BM</td>
<td>Attend weekly B’nei Mitzvah lessons (student only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throughout the months prior to BM</td>
<td>Attend periodic Project Chesed meetings (student only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Throughout the months prior to BM</td>
<td>Attend periodic lessons with your Rabbi—frequency determined by your assigned Rabbi (student only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Throughout the months prior to BM</td>
<td>Attend at least 10 Jewish worship services (student only)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-4 weeks before BM service</td>
<td>Attend 2 rehearsals with Hebrew teacher Jodi Granok (student and 1+ parent; in addition to weekly lessons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday before BM service</td>
<td>Attend Final Appointment with the Cantor; (student and 1+ parent; in addition to weekly lessons)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday before BM service</td>
<td>Attend Pre-Service Nosh and Kabbalat Shabbat Service, light Shabbat candles during the service</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saturday Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service</td>
<td>Lead Saturday Morning Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-30 days after BM Service</td>
<td>Rabbis’ Office will contact you for a Follow-Up Appointment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-30 days after BM Service</td>
<td>Attend Follow-Up Appointment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Three Pillars of Judaism and the B’nei Mitzvah Program

The Congregation Shaare Emeth B’nei Mitzvah Program is built upon three pillars: Torah, Worship and Acts of Loving Kindness. Our requirements for each B’nei Mitzvah student are based on fulfilling goals in each of these three areas.

Torah: Study

In Jewish tradition, Torah means “teaching” or “knowledge.” We expect each student to attain the basic knowledge of Judaism, Hebrew, and Torah which we feel is essential to becoming a Jewish adult. Each Bar and Bat Mitzvah student will:

1. **Attend Religious School.** In order to become Bar/Bat Mitzvah, each student must have been enrolled in and attended Shaare Emeth Religious School, or an approved equivalent, for at least four years (must include the year in which the student is preparing to become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah).

2. **Make a commitment to continue his or her lifelong Jewish education, including Confirmation and beyond.** We consider religious education an ongoing obligation, and we expect that our B’nei Mitzvah students will continue to participate in our religious education.

3. **Engage fully in the B’nei Mitzvah study process.** Each student will receive one-on-one study with the cantor, as well as work in small groups with peers and teachers to prepare for leading the service and chanting from the Torah and Haftarah. Students will work closely with one of the rabbis to outline their interpretation of their Torah and Haftarah portions and will write introductions for both. They will also work closely with their rabbi to outline and write their D’var Torah.

Avodah: Worship

Worship and Prayer are building blocks of Jewish life. At Shaare Emeth, we celebrate each child becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah as part of a communal worship service. We want our students to become comfortable with personal prayer and with public worship. Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah will:
1. **Lead the Congregation in worship on Shabbat morning.** Each student will learn the basic prayers of the service during Religious School sessions and become proficient in leading the service through the study process with the cantor and his team before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Our students lead the majority of the service on the Shabbat morning when they become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Specific goals will be set with the student by the rabbis and cantor.

2. **Participate in Friday evening Shabbat Worship on the Friday preceding the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.** Your family will sit in the front row of the Congregation and participate during the service in several honors, such as lighting the Shabbat candles, reciting the kiddush, and reciting the blessings before and after the reading of the Torah. Families needing extra help with the Hebrew and English can set a time to meet with Cantor Warner.

3. **Attend Worship Services at Congregation Shaare Emeth.** In order to fully understand how Shabbat worship services work, it is necessary to experience them. It is required that each student and family attend at least 10 services during the year preceding the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. We suggest at least 3 Friday night services and 7 Saturday morning services. Attending these services allows families to be familiar with our Shaare Emeth style of worship. Participating will help your family to feel more comfortable in your role and allows students to practice as they participate in services. If you attend services at another temple, bring back the Order of Service program or flyer that accompanied the service.

You’ll find that you will view Shabbat morning B’nei Mitzvah services through a different lens when you are planning your own family’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah service.

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**Gemilut Chasidim: Acts of Loving Kindness**

In order to become a Jewish adult, we believe each person must develop a commitment to tzedakah, social justice and gemilut chasadim (acts of loving kindness).

1. **Project Chesed:** Chesed is a concept that all parents/guardians hope will be instilled in our children at an early age, and will be expressed naturally throughout their lives. We know that we can’t specifically teach children to be compassionate and kind, but we can help them see the potential that lies within each of them. Each student is given a Project Chesed chip that represents the hopes and dreams of his/her parents/guardians that serves as a reminder that kindness is an important factor in their lives. Take a look at past Project Chesed projects in the book located at the temple Tzedakah Center (North Lobby). Contact Debbie Bram, Director of Jewish Life and Learning, to learn more.

2. **Other Tzedakah:** Please consider other acts of tzedakah for you and your family in honor of this occasion, such as:

   a. **Donate a percentage of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah gifts** to a charity or cause of your choice;
b. Use *tzedakah* as a way to celebrate the occasion, such as displaying centerpieces made of books or toys or other objects in lieu of flowers or other centerpieces. These items can be donated to the Temple, another library, or delivered to a worthy cause;

c. **Plant trees in Israel** in honor of this day—go to [www.jnf.org](http://www.jnf.org) and do it online from the Jewish National Fund.

d. Make a donation to **Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger**. We strongly encourage your participation in this important cause! This national Jewish organization fights world hunger by encouraging us to make a contribution of 3% of the cost of our celebration or reception. By adding these small contributions to those of many other Jews who are also celebrating *simchas*, *Mazon* can make large grants to worthy organizations fighting world hunger. Over the years, *Mazon* has literally donated millions of dollars on behalf of the Jewish community. Your contribution to *Mazon* can be made through the rabbis’ office, and will, if you wish, be announced in the Shaare Emeth *Bulletin*. See [www.mazon.org](http://www.mazon.org) for more information.

e. **Display food baskets** in addition to *bema* flowers. Many people choose to arrange for baskets of food to be placed on the *bema* on Saturday morning and/or to be displayed as centerpieces for your reception. Please have the food baskets delivered the Friday of your event and no earlier. Food baskets are not added to our Friday night service flier or Temple Bulletin. To arrange for these food baskets, please contact the Jewish Food Pantry at (314) 993-1000. The Jewish Food Pantry will try and work with the families to coordinate on color and/or themes with these baskets, within reason.
We Have Our Date – Now What?

**B’nei Mitzvah Fee & Temple Accounts**

The Congregation Shaare Emeth **B’nei Mitzvah** Fee is $475 per child and will be posted to your account approximately one year before your child’s **Bar/Bat Mitzvah** service. The **B’nei Mitzvah** process with Cantor Warner cannot begin until the fee has been paid and your account is in good standing (the process usually begins approximately 6-7 months before the **Bar/Bat Mitzvah** date).

Congregation Shaare Emeth does not deny membership or religious education to any family due to financial hardship, but we do ask our members to communicate with us regarding their financial commitments to the congregation. Special arrangements may be made with Rosalie Stein, Executive Director, but must be done before lessons can begin. You can reach her directly at (314) 692-5353.

The **B’nei Mitzvah** fee covers books, lessons, worship space visits and all materials associated with the student’s **Bar/Bat Mitzvah** education. Materials that are lost or damaged will be replaced, the cost of which is the responsibility of the family.

**Scheduling Lessons & Appointments**

It is the goal of Shaare Emeth that all **B’nei Mitzvah** students will be engaged in the program no later than 6 months prior to their **Bar/Bat Mitzvah** date. It is the family’s obligation to confirm all meeting dates and times with the Rabbis’ and Cantor’s offices. Once your financial account is settled, the **B’nei Mitzvah** Assistant will contact you to begin scheduling lessons and appointments. The attendance at the below appointments is mandatory.

**FIRST APPOINTMENT WITH THE CANTOR**

The **B’nei Mitzvah** learning process begins with a 45-minute FIRST APPOINTMENT between the student and at least one parent/guardian (preferably all) to orient your family to the expectations and requirements of our program. This first meeting is scheduled by the family through the **B’nei Mitzvah** Assistant, Shandi Greve Penrod, who will email you. In preparation for this meeting, bring completed **B’nei Mitzvah** Information and Sponsor Opportunities forms (completed to the best of your knowledge).

**WEEKLY LESSONS WITH THE CANTOR**

At the time of scheduling the First Appointment, the student will also sign up for a weekly 45-minute lesson time (held Monday or Wednesday afternoons—please choose a time outside of Religious School) to study with the cantor and a few other students. During these lessons,
Cantor Warner speaks individually with students to check individual progress and help set individual goals. In the small group settings, students who are farther along in the process will help their peers. In initial sessions, Cantor will review the student’s abilities with the prayers. (A CD provided with this manual includes all the prayers your student should be familiar with from their Religious School education.) Later sessions will cover chanting the student’s selected Torah and Haftarah portions. The Cantor will prepare a CD of your student’s sections for their continued practice at home.

**FIRST RABBI MEETING WITH THE ASSIGNED RABBI**

The student will meet with his/her assigned rabbi to begin studying the Torah portion and to begin writing the Torah and Haftarah introductions and D’var Torah. This meeting usually occurs in the week or two following your first appointment with the cantor. The student will also meet with the assigned rabbi periodically after this first meeting. It is the family’s obligation to establish the first meeting’s specific date and time with the rabbis’ administrative assistant, Stacy Jespersen. Call Stacy in the Temple Office, (314) 569-0010, after scheduling your First Appointment with the Cantor. At least one parent must be present for this first meeting.

**PROJECT CHESED MEETING WITH THE DIR. JEWISH LIFE & LEARNING**

Debbie Bram, Director of Jewish Life and Learning, will work with the student on choosing, planning and documenting his or her Project Chesed—Bar/Bat Mitzvah project. Ideally this meeting is held shortly after meeting with the Cantor the first time. After scheduling the First Appointment with the Cantor, please call Debbie Bram to set up a Project Chesed meeting, (314) 692-5308.

**TWO REHEARSALS WITH B’NEI MITZVAH TUTOR**

Students will work in the worship space on their bema presence and practice reading from the Torah, as well as practice in the Rubin Library and study rooms adjacent to the Cantor’s Study. During the process, your family will have the opportunity to make decisions about the worship service, as well as get some recommendations of readings and music. Your family will have two rehearsals with Hebrew teacher Jodi Granok in the worship space to read from the Torah and work on presentation from the pulpit, occurring on Thursdays approximately two to three weeks before the service.

**FINAL APPOINTMENT WITH THE CANTOR**

Students and parents will meet with the cantor in the worship space for a one-hour appointment on the Tuesday afternoon preceding your Bar/Bat Mitzvah at either 4 or 5 p.m. All parents/guardians must attend this appointment.

**HOME STUDY**

Obviously, a student cannot prepare for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah merely by attending these lessons. Students are asked to commit to studying their B’nei Mitzvah materials at home for 20 minutes a day, six days a week. Parents/guardians are asked to encourage students to practice and to help them set achievable goals for their progress.

**ADDITIONAL TUTORING**

If the rabbis, cantor, parents/guardians and/or students feel that their 45-minute weekly lessons with Cantor Warner, combined with the student’s home practice, is not enough for them, arrangements for extra help can be made through Cantor Warner’s office. The expense of such arrangements is the responsibility of the family.
FOLLOW-UP APPOINTMENT WITH THE ASSIGNED RABBI
Finally, the student and at least one parent will meet with the assigned rabbi to discuss and review the B’nei Mitzvah process. The Rabbis’ Office will contact your family to schedule this appointment for 10 to 30 days after the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service.

Shandi Greve Penrod is the B’nei Mitzvah Assistant. She can help walk your family through the process, including setting up a schedule of study with Cantor Warner. Cantor Warner oversees the entire B’nei Mitzvah experience and is available to you with your concerns and any questions. Of course, Cantor Warner and Rabbis Bennett, Goldstein and Zinn are also available to help your family through the process.
Guests & Teens

Please make sure that your guests know that our services begin promptly at either 9 a.m. or 11 a.m., and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah leads the entire service. The service generally lasts about 1 hour and 20 minutes.

We encourage you and your family to invite those who you wish to celebrate with you. If you are expecting a large number of teens to be in attendance, appoint one or more adults to sit with the group of teens to encourage appropriate behavior. We ask teens to sit in the section closest to the windows, to the right as you enter the worship space. You may wish to speak with your child’s friends yourself to impress upon them the kind of behavior we expect in our synagogue. Inappropriate behavior in the worship space or in any other part of the Shaare Emeth facility will not be tolerated.

Adults and teens are reminded that cell phone usage, including texting and reading, are not appropriate during worship times.

Greeters

You will need to provide two adult greeters to welcome guests on Saturday morning and distribute the “Order of Service” (program) as people arrive for services. Greeters should be in place by 8:35 a.m. for the 9 a.m. service and 10:35 a.m. for the 11 a.m. service. It is helpful if at least one of your greeters is a Shaare Emeth member, as they will be more familiar with the policies and procedures of our Congregation. Refer to the Instructions for Greeters handout in the front pocket of the blue folder and give the card to your greeters so they can prepare to help you. Greeters are reminded that they have the responsibility to monitor the Congregation and particularly the young people.
Copies of these instructions are in the pocket of your blue folder. Give a copy directly to your greeters. They are required to follow these instructions.

**Instructions for Greeters**

1. Arrive at the temple 30 minutes prior to the start of services.
2. As guests enter the worship space, greet them kindly and give them the *Order of Service* (program) and any special handouts.
3. Close the worship space doors when the service begins. Check with the other greeters and arrange for someone to remain in the foyer for 10 minutes to assist latecomers.
4. If numbers of teenagers are leaving the Sanctuary for “social reasons,” a greeter should ask them to return to the service. If appropriate, gently remind them that paying attention is a way of supporting their peer.

Also:
- A box of *kippot* is available for those who wish to use one. Congregational policy is to not force anyone to wear or to remove a *kippah*. Both men and women may choose to or not to wear *kippot*.

Thank you for fulfilling this *Mitzvah*.

**Photography & Videography**

It is the policy of Congregation Shaare Emeth that non-professional, still photography and videography are approved during services provided that the cameras are in a stationary location at the back of the worship space, mounted on a tripod, and that no flash is used at any time. The camera and photographer may not move from the rear corner.

If the videographer has not worked at Shaare Emeth, please encourage him/her to make an appointment with our Director of Operations to see the worship space. (Please see Instructions for Photographers/Videographers).

You may arrange to have professional photographs taken before or after the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* service or during the week before the ceremony. Many families and photographers prefer to take pictures during the week prior to the service so that they will not be rushed. Generally, it is not possible to have your photo session before or after your final rehearsal. Under no conditions can a photo session be scheduled during a Final Rehearsal. **Please contact Robert Colton, our Director of Operations, at least 3 months prior to your ceremony to reserve the worship space for your photo session.**

Many families wish to have the rabbis and cantor present for photo sessions. Our clergy are happy to be a part of your *simcha*. If you would like to include them, please contact them well in advance so they can place the date and time on their calendars.
Shabbat Worship, Family Participation & Honors

There are many opportunities for parents/guardians and families to be involved in the B’nei Mitzvah process. We hope that the entire family will find this experience meaningful and fulfilling.

Lighting the Shabbat Candles – All members of the immediate family are invited to light the Shabbat candles and recite the blessings during Friday night services. You will be asked to indicate who will be participating in this honor. If there is another Bar/Bat Mitzvah on the Shabbat of your service, you will share this honor with the other family.

B’nei Mitzvah Students Participating Friday night – We ask our B’nei Mitzvah students to assist in leading the service in several ways. Students may be asked to recite the Torah blessings on Friday nights and/or assist in leading of the liturgy by reciting V’ahavta and/or Kiddush. Please keep in mind that if there is another Bar/Bat Mitzvah on that Shabbat your family may share in these honors with the other family.

The Parents/Guardians Prayer or Blessing Saturday morning – In addition to participation and honors noted above, we ask the parents/guardians of each of our B’nei Mitzvah students to offer some personal words to their child during the Saturday service. While this is traditionally thought of as the “parents’ speech,” we hope that you will instead think of this as a

Copies of these instructions are in the pocket of your blue folder. Give a copy directly to your photographer and/or videographer. They are required to follow these instructions.
parents/guardians’ blessing or prayer. This is not the time to speak at length about your child – such speeches are more appropriate at a party or reception. Rather, we hope that you will speak to your child about how proud you are at his or her accomplishment, recognize the significance of the day, express your love for your child, and thank God for this special occasion. We encourage you to keep your remarks brief (two or three paragraphs should suffice). The cantor and rabbis are happy to review your thoughts.

**Appropriate Attire** – As trends and styles change, it is common for students to want to reflect the most up-to-date fashion trends. The clergy and Congregation respectfully request that students be dressed modestly and appropriately for worship at both the evening and morning Shabbat services. Examples of appropriateness include boys wearing slacks, matching socks, dress shoes, collared shirt, blazer or suit; and girls wearing slacks or dresses or skirts that are of an appropriate length. Sleeveless attire should be accompanied by a sweater, drape or shawl. (It is not appropriate to use a tallit as the cover-up.)

**Kippah and Tallit** – In keeping with Reform Judaism’s emphasis on freedom of choice, the wearing of a kippah (yarmulke) and tallit (prayer shawl) is optional for the student, family, and all male and female guests. Kippot are always available at the entrance of the worship space. If you wish, you may order special kippot for the ceremony; however, it is not appropriate to require your guests to wear them.

If the Bar/Bat Mitzvah wishes to wear a tallit during the service, it may be presented by a family member or friend at the beginning of the service or presented privately before the service begins. We encourage our students to consider wearing the tallit when attending future services as well, rather than wearing the tallit only on the day of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service.

**Passing the Torah and carrying it during the Hakafah (Torah processional)** – During the Saturday morning service, the Torah is passed from generation to generation, from grandparents, to parents/guardians, to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This may be done on the bema or in the front row of the worship space. The Torah is then carried around the Temple in a hakafah (processional). The Bar/Bat Mitzvah generally carries the Torah, however, a parent, older sibling or other family member or friend may be given this honor.

**Aliyot** – It is customary to divide the Torah reading into sections and to introduce and follow each section with a blessing. The honor of being “called up” to the bema for these blessings is called an Aliyah. We permit up to three aliyyot in our Torah service, with the third chanted by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. You may designate one or more people to recite the blessings for the first and second aliyyot. They will be called to the bema at the appropriate time. Please make certain that those designated for this honor are able to recite these blessings appropriately.

**Torah and Haftarah reading** – All students are required to chant the blessings before and after the reading of the Torah and Haftarah, the appropriate prayers in the Shabbat morning service, and their Torah and Haftarah portions.

**Dressing and Undressing the Torah** – You may honor family members or friends by inviting two or three of them to undress and/or dress the Torah for the Torah reading on Saturday morning. The rabbis will instruct them on exactly what to do when they are called to the bema. This is an excellent honor for younger siblings or family members.
Hagba’ah (lifting the Torah) – You may honor an adult or older sibling by asking them to lift the Torah following the reading on Saturday morning. While this is not overly difficult, the person honored should be able to lift a fairly heavy object with confidence. It is helpful if the person fulfilling this honor is present at the final rehearsal so he/she can practice.

Receptions – Receptions are a popular addition proceeding both the Friday and Saturday services. Call Robert Colton at (314) 692-5309 for room rentals at Shaare Emeth.

Other Options

Creative Services – Occasionally, families choose to compile their own, creative service with the help of the rabbis and cantor. With the introduction of Mishkan T’fillah, the Reform movement’s prayer book, there are many options of how to use the prayer book to make your Bar/Bat Mitzvah experience a personal and creative one. Before undertaking creating and printing a service, check with the rabbis and cantor about how Mishkan T’fillah can be used creatively. Sample copies of other creative services are available from the rabbis.

Music – During your process, you will be meeting with Cantor Warner to discuss certain musical aspects of the service, including melodies and arrangements that may be particularly meaningful to your family. The Congregation provides a pianist to accompany the service. You may also want to discuss creative ways the Bar/Bat Mitzvah or a sibling may want to contribute musically to the service in an appropriate way. The Hashemesh Band can also be included in the Saturday morning service, if you wish, at your expense.

Service supplements/programs – Each Shabbat, the clergy’s assistant, Stacy Jespersen, prepares our “Order of Service,” which explains our service and outlines the service and music for that Shabbat. However, you are welcome to distribute an additional supplement to your guests, explaining the significance of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, explaining the meaning of symbols in our worship space, or adding creative prayers or readings to the worship service. Please discuss your plans with your rabbi or the cantor so they may review your copy. If you want a supplement distributed with our “Order of Service,” please have all materials to the Temple Office by noon on the Wednesday before your Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

Siblings and other children – We recommend that younger siblings be seated with a relative or friend who can assume responsibility while you are involved in the worship service. We also urge you to arrange for child care for children too young to sit through the entire service. Arranging a babysitter for out of town relatives and friends is a wonderful Mitzvah for parents/guardians, children and the Congregation. Siblings of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will be invited to join the family on the bema for the kiddush at the conclusion of services.

The Kaddish list – It is our practice to read the names of deceased relatives of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family before the Kaddish on Shabbat morning. Please note these names and relationship to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah on the enclosed information form.
**Bema Flower Fund** – If you wish, you or other family or friends may sponsor the *Shabbat bema* flowers by making a contribution to the *Bema* Flower Fund. The contributor will be named in the Temple’s monthly *Bulletin* as well as in the Friday night flyer. The suggested sponsorship donation is $50 per family. You will receive additional information when you are first contacted by the Cantor’s Office.

**Nosh Sponsorship** – Another option to honor the Bar or Bat Mitzvah is sponsoring the Friday night nosh, held 5:15-6 p.m. before Friday night Shabbat services. The sponsoring family or individuals, along with the Bar or Bat Mitzvah, will be named in the temple’s monthly *Bulletin* and Friday night flyer. Nosh sponsorship is $250 per family. You will receive additional information when you are first contacted by the Cantor’s Office.

**Temple Tribute Funds** – Families often wish to make tax-deductible contributions to our Temple in order to show appreciation for the support and assistance of the Temple staff in helping the student prepare for this day. Families often select the Rabbis’ Special Fund or the Cantor’s Special Fund for this purpose, though donations to any endowment fund is welcome. You can make these donations by visiting www.sestl.org and clicking the Login button in the upper right corner. Please note: You will need your family’s login ID and password (all temple members and school families have one). If you do not know yours, select “Don’t know your login ID and password?”

**Tree of Life** – To honor the occasion of your child becoming a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, you may choose to purchase a plaque with your child’s name and date of ceremony. This will be permanently displayed on the Tree of Life. If you wish to participate, contact Stacy Jespersen in the Temple office, (314) 569-0010.

**Bema Baskets** – Many families wish to rent *bema* baskets for displaying in the worship space during the service. These *bema* baskets are both decorative and represent a food donation your money buys for the Harvey Kornblum Jewish Food Pantry. Ribbon colors on the baskets can be customized to match your preferred color scheme. *Bema Baskets must be ordered from Harvey Kornblum Jewish Food Pantry* (part of Jewish Family & Children’s Services) at least one month in advance of your *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* date. The price of a *bema* basket is $65. Please call HKJFP for the current price. The Temple does not handle the ordering or creation of these baskets. You can reach the coordinator of these baskets at the HKJFP at (314) 513-1675.
**Gemilut Chasadim – Acts of Loving Kindness**

**Project Chesed / Kindness**

In an effort to help your family keep the “Mitzvah” in becoming a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, Shaare Emeth requires each *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* student to engage in Project Chesed.

Chesed means kindness. This is the third pillar of Judaism: *Gemilut Chasadim*, acts of loving kindness. The goal of Project Chesed is for YOU to begin to understand what it means to be a responsible member of our community. We will guide you through the process of learning to make a difference in our community and our world. Remember, we are only asked to begin making the world a better place; we are not required to complete it all.

MAKE IT MEANINGFUL. HAVE FUN. MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN OUR COMMUNITY AND WORLD.

**STEPS TO FOLLOW:**

1. **Limtzo V’limod: Find and Learn**
   a. First comes the "Jewish" in choosing your Project Chesed. Begin by studying your *Torah* portion and how it relates to the social justice issues facing us today. With our Director of Jewish Life and Learning, Debbie Bram, you will determine if there is an issue that interests you or your family that relates to your portion.
      i. The most important pieces of Project Chesed are that you decide what you want to do, and you have some significant interaction with others around the issue. Your project should not be for credit in any venue, i.e. it should not count toward school community service hours.

2. **La’asot: Act**
   a. Engage in your Project Chesed at least 3-4 times. We ask that you do this at least 3-4 times as the first few times it will seem foreign and uncomfortable. By the third time you will be able to fully engage with the project and the people.
   b. Take photos and send a photo of you in action to Debbie Bram, [dbram@sestl.org](mailto:dbram@sestl.org).
   c. Write up what you did and its importance to you for your speech.

3. **L’hamlitz V’ilammed: Advocate and Teach**
   a. Meet with Debbie Bram 6-8 weeks before your *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* service to review your project and your thoughts.
      i. Debbie will write up your thoughts and put them on display on the Project Chesed board in the Temple lobby.
      ii. One month after becoming a *Bar/Bat Mitzvah*, this display will go in a book near the cantor’s office for others to view.
   b. You may be asked to present your project to our *Tzedek* Committee for adoption by our congregation.
Minimizing Your Environmental Impact

Adapted from the Jewish Environmental Initiative, www.jei.org, “Choosing the Colors for Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah...Why Not Make it Green?”

You and your family are about to ascend on one of the most meaningful life cycle experiences in your life. Many families are looking for ways to reclaim the significance of this important rite of passage. When planning your Bar/Bat Mitzvah, we want our families to think about making their celebration meaningful, unique and relevant to the child’s life. We suggest having a Bar/Bat Mitzvah that reflects our responsibility, as Jews, to care for and repair our environment. Please consider these guidelines and suggestions when planning. Many thanks for your help in making a difference in the world we live.

Cantor Warner

Please take time to incorporate at least one way of lessening your event’s impact on the environment:

Invitations
- **Electronic invitation services** (such as evite.com or weddingwindow.com) let you put out a lovely invitation website along with a handy way to send reminders and track RSVPs.
- **Consider a postcard invitation.** Include basic information on the postcard and put the details and a place to RSVP on a free website (use a free service such as www.eventpearl.com). Many of these services, including Event Pearl, offer RSVP tracking and even a guestbook.
- **Look for ways to reduce the amount of paper** if using traditional invitations. Ask guests to RSVP by phone or email instead of a card and envelope.
- **When choosing paper**, look for 30% or higher post-consumer content recycled paper with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification. You may also choose soy-based inks and papers not bleached with chlorine.

Food and Catering
- Choose an energy efficient facility and a caterer that is environmentally conscious.
- When buying food yourself, buy in bulk to minimize packaging.
- Consider organic and locally produced food and Fair Trade Certified coffee, tea, sugar and chocolate. Organics typically taste better, too.
- Use reusable or compostable plates, cups and silverware. Consider composting kitchen scraps, and recycle bottles and cans. (Please note: we do not have composting availability at the Temple, but you may collect materials for composting elsewhere.)
- Donate extra food to a local kitchen or put in recycled paper containers for lucky guests.

Decorations
- Balloons, cut flowers, candles and paper goods all have social and environmental impacts. Do something different and give your guests something to remember.
• Many cut flowers are flown in from far away and grown by workers under unfair conditions. Consider locally grown, live potted plants that people can take home with them or locally grown, organic cut flowers from a local farmer’s market.
• Avoid balloons, banners and other “one time” items. Latex balloons are better than mylar balloons.
• Be creative! Almost anything can add color and flair to your simcha. Consider edible centerpieces or something attractive to donate (such as bema baskets, sporting equipment or art supplies).

Travel
• Travel is often a big impact. You can cut back a little by being a carpool matchmaker for your guests.
• For the plane and auto travel you can’t avoid, consider helping guests offset their carbon emissions. Several qualified sites are available such as Brighter Planet or Jewish National Fund. (Carbon credits make great gift suggestions, too!)

Giving and Receiving
• Get what you really want. A gift or donation registry works great as does telling people what you want or don’t want.
• Gift cards and experiences make great gifts too.

The Ceremony and Preparation
• The Torah is full of connections to our environment. Your sermon or Project Chesed is a great way to bring the message of environmental caring to your guests and community.
• Kippot, tallitot and even your clothing can make an eco-statement as well. Previously owned tallitot are beautiful and available on places like eBay. Use a grandparent’s special tallit, or made your own from an organic or Fair Trade silk scarf. There are a variety of eco kippot online, as well, including one made from seed paper. Search “eco kippot” in a search engine to find them.
• The Jewish National Fund, instrumental in the creation of the state of Israel, is also one of the country’s major environmental agencies. At www.jnf.org/simcha you will find a variety of offerings specifically designed to connect your simcha with a Mitzvah in the state of Israel that will help the environment.

Additional Resources:
• Green and Just Celebrations is a free, downloadable, handy and comprehensive workbook produced by Jews United for Justice. www.jufj.org/content/green-and-just-celebrations.
• Caring for the Cycle of Life is a great downloadable publication by the Coalition for the Environment and Judaism (COEJL), the U.S. environmental umbrella organization.
http://www.coejl.org/resources/lifecyle/

Every family is different. Some will choose to implement many of the ideas they find, others will find just a few that speak to them or that turn out to be feasible. Bear in mind Rabbi Tarfon’s advice: It is not your task to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it.

For questions or help, contact Cantor Warner, Rabbi Bennett, Rabbi Goldstein, Rabbi Zinn or Dir. of Jewish Life & Learning Debbie Bram
The B’nei Mitzvah Program generally communicates by email—make sure to regularly check email at the address on file with the temple.
Congregation Shaare Emeth
*B'nei Mitzvah* Program Contacts

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www.sestl.org/bneimitzvah

Cantor Seth Warner, *B'nei Mitzvah* Program Coordinator (date selection, general B’nei student special needs, Mitzvah Program questions)
(314) 692–5301  swarner@sestl.org

Shandi Greve Penrod, *B'nei Mitzvah* Assistant (appointments with the cantor, scheduling of weekly lessons, general *B'nei Mitzvah* Program questions)
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Shandi Greve Penrod is the 2018 *B'nei Mitzvah Assistant*. She can help walk your family through the process, including setting up a schedule of study with Cantor Warner. Cantor Warner oversees the entire *B'nei Mitzvah* experience and is available to you with your concerns and any questions. Of course, Rabbis Bennett, Goldstein and Zinn are also available to help your family through the process.

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Natalie Goldman & Ann Gottesman, Hebrew Teachers
Contact Cantor Warner or Shandi Greve Penrod to reach these teachers

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