

B'nei Mitzvah

at Temple Isaiah



Table of Contents

Our Vision and Our Mission	4
Parents' Blessing	5
Glossary	10
Additional Information	11
Suggested Caterers	14
Additional Resources	15
Day of B'nei Mitzvah Checklist	16
Greeters' Guidelines	17
Room Rental	18

B'nei Mitzvah at Temple Isaiah

Our Vision:

A program in which students are inspired and excited about their heritage, their present participation, and their future. A community of engaged youth where children feel empowered to think independently and creatively. It is a community where parents are full partners in the nourishment of their children's souls and their own. It is a journey on which our children encounter mystery and awe. Our students complete their B'nei Mitzvah with a great sense of being part of something transcendent, much bigger than themselves. They have deep sense of purpose and meaningful connection to both the Isaiah community and the Jewish people. They believe in themselves and others. They are motivated to make a difference, to pursue peace and justice, and have the tools to succeed.

Our Mission:

- Empower our B'nei Mitzvah families to embrace their Judaism with joy and newfound maturity.
- Cultivate deeper relationships between family members, between families and their community, between individuals and God.
- Educate our students in engaging and compelling study of Torah through tradition and innovation.
- Infuse the B'nei Mitzvah process with spirituality and joy.
- Ensure our B'nei Mitzvah families feel connected to and cared for by our community and staff throughout the entire process of preparing for this sacred Jewish milestone, including follow-up post-b'nei mitzvah.

Parent Blessing

Your blessing...

- is a blessing not a speech.
- is 200 words or less, per parent.
- takes place ***immediately after*** your child has read Torah.
- is not mandatory.
- does not have to be original. (see below)

At the B'nei mitzvah, parents have an opportunity to offer a blessing. You may be familiar with the parent *speech*, which are filled with stories and anecdotes. While a full speech may be most appropriate at your celebration, we are asking you to shift that idea to a blessing during the b'nei mitzvah service.

The essence of this holy moment is that this child is stepping through a spiritual gateway toward Jewish adulthood. The celebrant is proclaiming his or her identity as a Jew, a participating member in our community. It is a moment that celebrates and sanctifies the future. We honor this young Jewish adult proudly taking the torch that has been passed down through the generations for thousands of years and marching confidently with it into a new unfolding world. The celebrant will, this day, stand at the Torah table and chant from the ancient, sacred script. Afterwards, the student will share words he or she has composed based on personal insight and in-depth study of Torah text and sacred wisdom. They are words he or she has written to teach and inspire.

A parents' blessing should continue with the celebration of the child's future by focusing on where this young person is going as opposed to where he or she has been. The parents' blessing should in no way compete and overshadow the students' *d'var Torah*. The blessing should be brief, poignant, hopeful, and future-oriented. It could even pay homage to the student's wise words by drawing from a similar theme from the Torah portion. **Please limit your blessings to 200 words per parent.**

Please consider sharing additional, wonderful family stories at a Friday night dinner or at the celebration following the ceremony. The rabbis and the cantor are available to help you compose a blessing for the b'nei mitzvah service that maintains the holy essence of this sacred day.

Examples of Parent Blessings:

Parent Blessing A – 161 words

May your compassion and empathy continue to surround you with true friends and may the warmth and caring that you share with people be reflected back a thousandfold. Continue to stand up for what you know is right, even when those of us around you may think you're wrong. Remember that you come from a tradition of unforgettable women who can withstand anything and look good while doing it.

The one thing that any of us has got is our true nature. Don't ever let anybody change yours.

A wicked sense of humor complements a kind heart.

Jump first & ask questions later. Laugh often, eat well.

Keep letting your Jewish soul lead you toward discovering your extraordinary wisdom.

Create life every day from a blank canvas - it's a work of art.

Open yourself to love and your life will be filled with beautiful, heartfelt music.

Use your superpowers for good. And when all else fails...dance.

Te amo mucho, Mamitza

Parent Blessing B – 205 words

Jon, as we look at you on the Bima today we have so much to say to you.

Mom and I pray that you will be blessed with a long and healthy life. Without your health, nothing else will matter, so take good care of yourself.

We pray that you will continue to work hard and secure a good education, so you will have a solid foundation for your future.

We pray that you will continue your Jewish education and embrace the Jewish faith. As you know, your Great, and Great-Great Grandparents sacrificed everything to come to this country so their families could continue to be Jews and have Religious Freedom.

We pray that you will always be kind and loving to your brother and sister, they will always be there for you and look after you.

We pray that you will seize opportunities and fight through challenges with courage and composure as they come your way.

Most importantly, we pray that you will chase your dreams and ambitions and never give up on yourself. You must believe!

May your life be long, may your dreams come true, and remember this day as just the beginning of many good mitzvahs to come your way. Amen

Parent Blessing C - 199 words

My darling Zoe... As I watched you study for your Bat Mitzvah, I realized that your preparation was not only for Torah but was a preparation for life and things to come. I saw triumph when your studies went well and frustration when they didn't.

Throughout life you will experience triumphs and frustrations. And, just as you are surrounded by family and friends today, know that you will always be surrounded by your family and friends to share not only your happiness, but your sorrows as well.

Today marks the beginning of the journey of the next chapter of your life. Cherish every moment, and every triumph. Learn from your disappointments. Cherish your friends. Love your family.

May you hold on to your childhood world of curiosity, enthusiasm and energy and at the same time, begin to embrace the responsibilities of adulthood. May your eyes shine as bright as the heavens above and may you see all of your visions come true.

May you be blessed with understanding, patience and tolerance. May you remain true to yourself and true to your beliefs.

May you always love your family and friends as they love you...I love you! Mazel Tov!

Blessings to Borrow

Blessing *Talmud, Berachot 17a*

May you live to see your world fulfilled
May your destiny be for worlds still to come,
And may you trust in generations past and yet to be.
May your heart be filled with intuition
and your words be filled with insight.
May the songs of praise ever be upon your tongue
and your vision be on a straight path before you.
May your eyes shine with the light of holy words
and your face reflect the brightness of the heavens.

What I Wish *Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso*

What I wish for my daughter,
I wish for all our children.
I wish for you to be a
person of character
strong but not tough,
gentle but not weak.

I wish for you to be righteous but not self-righteous
honest but not unforgiving.

Wherever you journey, may your steps be firm
and may you walk in just paths
and not be afraid.

Whenever you speak, may your words
be words of wisdom and friendship.

May your hands build
and your heart preserve what is good
and beautiful in our world.

May the voices of the generations of our people
move through you
and may the God of our ancestors
be your God as well.

May you know that there is a people,
a rich heritage, to which you belong
and from that sacred place
you are connected to all who dwell on the earth.

May the stories of our people
be upon your heart
and the grace of the Torah rhythm
dance in your soul.

A Parent's Perspective *Rabbi Harold M. Schulweis*

You are not today as you were yesterday
Nor are we.
Something has occurred.

We sit with the congregation
You stand alone on the Bimah

You lead the congregation
We follow
You sing, pray, speak
We listen.

You are not an echo of our sand
You have your own words.
The still, small voice of conscience stands alone
Stronger in you now than ever before
A blessed distance between us
You are ours but also your own.

When you were called to the Torah,
Your name and our names interwoven,
You are not us
We are not you
But we are inseparable.

I Hope You Dance *Leanne Womack*

I hope you never lose your sense of wonder,
Get your fill to eat and always keep that hunger.
May you never take one single breath for granted,
God forbid love ever leave you empty-handed.

I hope you still feel small when you stand beside the ocean.
Whenever one door closes I hope one more opens.
Promise me that you give faith a fighting chance
and when you get the choice to sit it out or dance...
I hope you dance.

May you never fear those mountains in the distance.
Never settle for the path of least resistance.
Living might mean taking chances but they're worth taking,
Loving might be a mistake but it's worth making.

I hope a helping heart never leaves you bitter.
When you come close to selling out, reconsider.
Give the heavens above more than just a passing glance
and when you get the choice to sit it out or dance...

I hope you dance.

I hope you still feel small when you stand beside the ocean.
Whenever one door closes I hope one more opens.
I hope that you give faith a fighting chance and if you get the choice to sit it out or dance...
Dance!

HONORS GLOSSARY

ALIYOT: (plural form of aliyah) the honor of being called up to the Torah in synagogue to recite Hebrew blessings before and after the Torah reading. Aliyot may be given to individuals or to a group of people. The blessings are written in both Hebrew and English transliteration, and they can be found in our siddur (prayer book). We recommend sending a copy to your honorees ahead of time so they can become familiar with the text. Parents often take the 4th aliyah so that they are at the Torah when their child reads the 5th and final blessing. **Please note: with the exception of non-Jewish parents, aliyot should be given as honors to Jews.**

HAGBAH: The Hagbah will lift the Torah up high and turn 180 degrees (back facing congregation) in order to show the congregation the verses read.

GALILAH: The Galilah will help to dress the Torah with its belt/sash, outer covering and silver yad (reading pointer) after the Hagbah. Clergy will be close by to assist.

ARK OPENERS: This honor may be given to two people (one person per side) or to a small group. Honorees will be called up to open the ark at the beginning of the Torah service and at its conclusion. If desired, you may use the same set of ark openers for both honors. **Ark openers may be any age.**

PASSING THE TORAH: Judaism is a living, breathing tradition kept alive by the transmission of Torah from one generation to the next. As the Torah is taken out of the ark, we invite grandparents and parents to stand on our bimah, and to ritually pass the Torah through the generations until it rests in the arms of the B'nei Mitzvah.

TALIT PRESENTATION: Family members or special teachers/mentors may choose to present the B'nei Mitzvah with a talit (prayer shawl) at the beginning of the service. The presenter(s) will read a small paragraph in English before the B'nei Mitzvah recites the blessing for wearing a talit. You may choose to say a few words about the origin of the tallit and its symbolism. (e.g. This was your grandfather's prayer shawl, given to him on the day of his Bar Mitzvah.)

PARENT(S) BLESSING TO CHILD: This is an opportunity to bless your child with words of love, support, and recognition as s/he accepts responsibility for becoming a Jewish adult. We strongly recommend writing out the entire blessing so that your child will have a record of your words (it's a big day, and it's easy to be distracted!) and so that your words will be poignant, concise and thoughtful.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

PARKING

Parking is available on both sides of Pico Blvd. and surrounding streets. Please read the posted street signs regarding parking regulations. The golf course is not available for parking on the weekends.

PHOTOS

A photo of each B'nei Mitzvah student will be featured in our newsletter. **PLEASE SUBMIT A PHOTOGRAPH AT LEAST THREE MONTHS PRIOR TO THE B'NEI MITZVAH DATE.** A small black and white or color school photo will do, or you can send the photo to us electronically. Please write your child's name on the back or name the digital image with your child's name.

INVITATIONS

The invitation your guests receive is their introduction to the tone and significance of this moment in the life of your family. Therefore, your choice of style and the wording of your invitation should reflect what is important to you about your child becoming a B'nei Mitzvah. Be sure to include the correct starting time on the invitations. **Please remember to invite all of your child's Religious School classmates, so that no one feels excluded.** Since they have been studying together, they will surely want to share in each other's celebration.

MORNING AND AFTERNOON SERVICES

The morning service begins at 10:30 A.M., and the afternoon service begins at 5:00 P.M. The services last about ninety or eighty minutes respectively. The temple provides a Kiddush table (challah and wine for both A.M. and P.M. services and Havdalah candle and spices for PM services between mid-November and mid-March) as an integral part of the service. Depending on the season and sunset times, it may or may not be appropriate to conclude an afternoon service with Havdalah marking the separation of Shabbat from the rest of the week.

CATERING

We encourage you to hold your event (extended Kiddush, luncheon or dinner party) in our Social Hall, either in the afternoon or evening. The Temple requires notification one year in advance of your event in order to ensure that the Social Hall is available. **If such notification is not received, the Social Hall may not be available for your celebration.** There is a room rental fee. If your service is scheduled for 10:30am, you may use the Social Hall until 3:00pm. In the evening, you may use the Social Hall until 11:00pm.

While we do not maintain a strictly kosher kitchen, pork and shellfish products are **not** allowed in the Temple. In addition, we ask that you separate meat and dairy foods (e.g. no cheeseburgers or meat dishes with cream sauces. Dairy desserts or coffee with cream after a meat-based meal is fine.) This handbook contains a list of potential caterers.

If you have additional questions regarding caterers, please contact the Temple Office.

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT

Unfortunately, Temple Isaiah does not rent or loan audio/visual equipment, including, but not limited to, computers, projectors, microphones, cables, screens, DVD players or sound equipment. Please contact Ever Delcid (ebdelcid@hotmail.com) if you would like additional technical support (streaming/audio and video recording, etc.)

DECORATIONS

Decorations on the bimah are always welcome. **Flowers should be no higher than 3 feet and no wider than 2½ feet**, and there should be **no** ribbons. ***NO FRAGRANT FLOWERS ARE PERMITTED; this means NO LILIES, NO ROSES, NO LILACS, NO FREESIAS, NO GARDENIAS, etc.*** They should be delivered to the Temple on the Friday afternoon prior to the B'nei Mitzvah between 12:30 P.M. and 2:00 P.M. or 3:15 P.M. and 4:00 P.M.

When you think about decorating the Social Hall, please consider creating centerpieces that reflect your family's ethical concerns. A centerpiece of packaged food can feed the hungry, and a centerpiece of school supplies can be donated to a local school. Please note: **NOTHING MAY BE AFFIXED TO THE WALLS except papers held in place by blue painter's tape.**

PHOTOGRAPHERS/VIDEOGRAPHERS

Flash photography is **not** permitted during the service. For the morning service, you will be able to enter the sanctuary at 9:00am.

Photos may be taken during the service without a flash, as long as the photographer stays in the back of the sanctuary and does not move up and down the aisles during the service. No other photography is permitted. If you would like the Rabbi or Cantor to appear in your photos, you will need to arrange this in advance. If the Torah is to be included in your photographs, a Rabbi, Cantor or Temple Representative must be present to assist.

The Custodian will show photographers and videographers where they are allowed to position themselves during the service.

MUSIC/NOISE

In consideration of our neighbors, amplified music, whether live or recorded, is **not** permitted after 11:00 P.M. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS.** We also ask that you encourage your guests to keep the noise in the garage and the outdoor areas of the Temple to a minimum. **Sound in the Social Hall can be no louder than 90 decibels. Amplified music is not allowed on the Vollmer Deck at any time.**

CUSTODIAL AND SECURITY SERVICES

The safety and security of your family and guests is of the utmost importance. Temple Custodians and Security Guards are required to be on duty at the Temple for the duration of your event, beginning with the first person scheduled to arrive (guest or sub-contractor) and ending with the last person (guest or sub-contractor) to leave. Therefore, you must let the Temple know when your first set-up people or guests plan to arrive. Otherwise, there may not be anyone here to let them in. It also is expected that you, your guests and your service provider(s) will leave the Temple by 11:00pm.

TEMPLE CUSTODIAN

This person represents Temple Isaiah and is the go-to person for any issues that may arise during your event. All guests and hired staff are expected to adhere to any requests or directions that the Temple Custodian may make during your service or event.

GREETERS

Most B'nei Mitzvah families will have selected relatives or friends to greet their guests during the service. (See Greeters' Guidelines in this booklet for more information.)

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

If you have any special requirements to accommodate your guests, please advise the Temple Office in advance of your event. Examples might be the need for a babysitting area or the storage of personal items and/or medical supplies, etc.

SANCTUARY ETIQUETTE

- On the Friday evening prior to your Bar or Bat Mitzvah, your family is encouraged to sit in the front rows of the Sanctuary, close to the Torah table.
- Families are encouraged to attend several Shabbat evening services and/or B'nei Mitzvah services before their children's B'nei Mitzvah to become more familiar with Temple Isaiah's Shabbat rituals.
- Talitot (singular: talit) are traditionally worn during Shabbat or weekday morning services or when we read Torah. When one is not leading services, it is not customary to wear a talit on Friday night.

B'NEI MITZVAH TUTORING POLICY

- Each student receives 22 half-hour sessions, which is included in the B'nei Mitzvah fee. They can receive 23 sessions, if needed.
- Missed appointments:
 - There are 2 kinds of missed appointments on the tutoring day:
 - No good reason (i.e., soccer, forgot, etc.)
 - An understandable excuse (i.e., sickness)
 - Students will receive 2 additional half hour sessions if they miss their scheduled appointment. Beyond that, no additional sessions will be offered unless the family compensates.
- If there is an extenuating circumstance, please contact the clergy.
- Additional lessons are available but are compensated by the family

CATERERS

CALIFORNIA FRESH

ATTN: April

(310) 234-0333

<https://californiafreshla.com/catering>

CIELO CATERING + EVENTS

ATTN: Marcy Feldman

(818) 522-4994

marcy@cielocateringevents.com

CORNUCOPIA CATERERS

16011 Arminta Street

Van Nuys, CA 91406

(818) 909-0075

DELICACIES FINE CATERING

FACTOR'S FAMOUS DELI

ATTN: Debbie Ullman

9420 West Pico Boulevard

Los Angeles, CA 90035

(310) 278-9175 (Restaurant)

(310) 277-3100 (Debbie)

(310) 278-9196 (Fax)

GOURMET FETISHES

ATTN: Dale Greenblatt

(310) 838-0500

LOUISE'S ITALIAN CATERING

(323) 962-9510

SHAMSHIRI GRILL

ATTN: Hamid Mosavi

1712 Westwood Blvd.

Los Angeles, CA 90024

(310) 474-1410

SILVER SPOONS

ATTN: Scott Tessler

P. O. Box 570699

Tarzana, CA 91357

(818) 996-2911

silverspns@aol.com

www.silverspns.com

SOMEONE'S IN THE KITCHEN

ATTN: JoAnn Roth

5973 Reseda Boulevard

Tarzana, CA 91356

(818) 343-5151

(818) 343-1140 (Fax)

TENDER GREENS

ATTN: Heidi Wahl

2633 Fairfax Avenue

Culver City, CA 90232

(323) 244-6976

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Flowers

Dandelion Ranch
Clover Chadwick (temple member)
323-640-1590
Insta: @dandelionranch
clover@dandelionranch.com

Sonny Alexander Flowers
9330 W. Pico Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90035
(310) 777-0356

Apropos
Jody Nankin
9221 West Olympic Blvd.
Beverly Hills, CA 90212
(310) 271-3332

Event Planner/Coordinator/Helper

Crest Events
Abby Johnson
(424) 343-6847
www.crestevents.com
crestevents@gmail.com

Nathalie Holtzman
(former temple member)
(310) 488-6137
nathalie@simplycelebrations.com
www.simplycelebrations.com

Montage Videos

Ilana Malleus
Pancake Sunday Films
<https://www.pancakesundaysfilms.com/>

Videographer/Livestreaming

Ever Delcid
(316) 990-4696
ebdelcid@hotmail.com

Photographers

Eddie Barron Photography
(310) 652-8034

Tracey Landworth Photography
(310) 839-8866
www.traceylandworthphotography.com

Dennis Trantham (temple member)
(310) 479-8119
dennis@westsidestudio.net

Jan Birch (former temple member)
(310) 877-5422
www.janbirch.com

Suzanne Landis (former temple member)
(310) 614-7628
www.suzannelandisphotography.com

Cat and Adi Benner (temple members)
Next Exit Photography
(310) 474-7871
www.nextexitphotography.com/mitzvahs

DAY OF B'NEI MITZVAH CHECKLIST

THE NIGHT BEFORE

- ☐ charge your cell phone
- ☐ confirm delivery of gift baskets to hotel for out-of-town guests
- ☐ put signs (HOLD FOR SAM'S BAR MITZVAH) on anything left at temple

DAY OF EVENT

- ☐ arrive well in advance of service start time, especially if taking photos
- ☐ bring speech(es), special readings, hard copy of *d'var Torah* (double-spaced, large font, page numbers and 3-hole punched)
- ☐ bring reading glasses
- ☐ coordinate with rabbi or temple custodian on special arrangements (e.g., handicapped guests, deliveries, rabbi/cantor for photos, bus or limo, changes in honors & aliyot, etc.)
- ☐ designate someone to deal with late arrivals, deliveries, bus or limo, clean-up, etc. (if needed)
- ☐ bring bar/bar mitzvah folder, all study materials
- ☐ bring extra cards/maps that give directions to the off-site party location
- ☐ bring extra copy of seating chart for lunch/dinner tables
- ☐ bring guest book and pens
- ☐ bring talit/talitot, kippot (optional)
- ☐ bring outstanding payments for vendors – cash, checks
- ☐ bring list of vendors' cell phone numbers
- ☐ bring emergency kit (sewing kit, headache medicine, medication)
- ☐ bring light snacks, water bottles
- ☐ bring light sweater or shawl, comfortable shoes – change of clothing?
- ☐ bring handicapped parking permit
- ☐ take sanctuary displays or centerpieces from temple to party or home

AFTER EVENT

- ☐ thank vendors who did a great job
- ☐ make a record of all gifts
- ☐ have your child write thank you notes
- ☐ send thank you notes to the rabbi, cantor and tutor – even better if your child writes them!
- ☐ a contribution to the rabbi's and cantor's discretionary funds is customary/optional

GREETERS' GUIDELINES

We join the family celebrating its Bar or Bat Mitzvah today in thanking you for agreeing to greet guests. We hope the following information will be useful to you. We suggest you arrive at least 45 minutes prior to the beginning of the service.

People who arrive on time generally do not have difficulty finding their own seats. However, you can be helpful to latecomers by directing them to available seats and, if necessary, asking people to slide down the pew so newcomers can be seated more easily.

You might suggest that parents bringing small children into the service sit on the aisle, so it will be less disruptive to everyone if they need to leave the Sanctuary during the service.

If you are asked, the men's and women's restrooms are on the same level as the Sanctuary: off the lobby on the way to the Library.

Please do not allow anyone to bring food or beverages into the Sanctuary.

Please stay aware of any activity in the lobby and on the deck to assure that noise does not filter into the Sanctuary. Similarly, don't hesitate to tactfully ask disruptive or noisy people in the Sanctuary to please be quiet.

If you need any special assistance, please ask the Temple Custodian.

If you see any suspicious activity, or if there is a medical or other emergency, please contact one of the Security Guards immediately or call 911. The closest Guard to the Sanctuary will be just outside the front door at the Pico Boulevard entrance.

ROOM RENTAL

ROOM RENTAL:

To discuss use of the Social Hall and fees for extended Kiddush and afternoon and evening B'nei Mitzvah celebrations, please contact the Temple office at (310) 277-2772.

- Extended Kiddush – 2 hours
- Luncheon: Room usage from 12:00–3:00pm. Up to 165 guests (approx. 16 tables)
- Dinner: Room usage from 6:30–11:00pm. Up to 165 guests (approx. 16 tables) – up to approximately 120 guests (12 tables) with a dance floor

NOTE: There is an additional fee for coffee set-up if supplied by Temple Isaiah.

All above fees are to be paid by the family hosting the event.

Please remember that all Temple dues and fees need to be paid or current at least six months prior to B'nei Mitzvah.

(These rates are subject to change without notification)

THESE FEES MUST BE PAID PRIOR TO THE EVENT.