



B'nai Mitzvah Covenant

A perspective on B'nai Mitzvah and Community:

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Is a Community Observance. It is not by coincidence that we choose to hold this initiation ceremony in public. To be a Jew means to live within a covenantal relationship—not only with God but with other Jews as well. For thousands of years, since the time of Abraham, we have entered a covenant with God. Each of us affirms this covenant when we become the age of B'nai Mitzvah. Bar/Bat Mitzvah marks the entry of the child as a full-fledged member of the community. The awarding of an *aliyah*, (“being called to the *Torah*”), is a gift of the Jewish people. For this reason, the marking of the child’s coming of age takes place in the synagogue—the communal home.

The Meaning of Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah Is Enduring Only If It Takes Place within a Context of Continued Jewish Growth. Being a Bat or Bar Mitzvah is not the experience of a lifetime. It is a lifetime experience—a state of being that remains with us throughout our lives. Indeed, the true measure of **performance** comes not on the day one becomes a Bat or Bar Mitzvah but in the days that follow. In other words, becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah should be thought of as a Jewish “commencement,” marking not an end point but a beginning—a beginning of a lifetime of *mitzvot*, a beginning of a lifetime of learning. As such, it is our firm belief that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration is validated and enhanced by a commitment to continue religious education vis-à-vis Setzer Youth Education programming, JTLI (Jewish Teen Leadership Initiative) and Kadima into USY.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah is an important milestone in one's Jewish life, connecting them to the Jewish people and its history and traditions. Our goal is to integrate the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student and family into the larger synagogue community, so that the family's *simcha* is also the community's celebration. From the moment a child joins our community, they embark on this sacred journey which is designed to guide them toward Jewish learning, *mitzvot*, prayer and acts of kindness. Our family focused program fosters communication between parents and their children. In this way, the entire family may engage in opportunities to define and experience their Jewish identity.

This process requires a significant commitment from the student and their families. In an effort to show _____ (child’s name) the importance of their relationship with God, with others, and their own responsibilities as a B’nai Mitzvah candidate, _____ (child’s name) and their parent(s) _____ (parent names) pledges to the following:

- 1) **Service Attendance** laid out in the B’nai Mitzvah Handbook
- 2) **School Attendance** laid out in the B’nai Mitzvah Handbook
- 2) **Family Education Attendance** laid out in the B’nai Mitzvah Handbook
- 4) **Mitzvah Program** laid out in the B’nai Mitzvah Handbook
- 5) **Post B'nai Mitzvah Requirements** laid out in the B’nai Mitzvah Handbook

6) **Responsible Behavior:** The student understands that their actions reflect their relationships with God, others, and themselves. Hence, the student will take responsibility for their actions.

7) **Communication with B'nai Mitzvah Staff:** Each person promises to commit to ongoing dialogue with their B'nai Mitzvah tutor and Hazzan Holzer regarding the progress of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student and any thoughts and concerns they might have. Parents/Guardians will assist the tutoring process by being a strong source of encouragement for their child.

A bar/bat mitzah fee of \$1,000 is billed to the family, and helps to subsidize the cost of materials, training, and family education programs. The fee is due to be paid no later than 30-days out from your child's service date. Please indicate your billing preference below:

- ☐ Bill the fee to my account as soon as my child's bar/bat mitzvah date is confirmed
- ☐ Bill the fee to my account at the start of my child's 6th grade year
- ☐ Bill the fee to my account at the start of my child's 7th grade year

This Bar/Bat Mitzvah Covenant is a binding agreement between the Jacksonville Jewish Center and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student and their family.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date