

**Columbia Jewish Congregation's**  
**B'Mitzvah Handbook**  
**2025/5785 edition**

**Columbia Jewish Congregation**  
5885 Robert Oliver Place, Columbia, MD 21045  
410-730-6044      [cjc@columbiajewish.org](mailto:cjc@columbiajewish.org)

[www.columbiajewish.org](http://www.columbiajewish.org)



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## Introduction

It may be hard to believe that you have been handed CJC's B'Mitzvah Handbook! MAZEL TOV! This means that you and your family are about to launch into a grand and centuries-old Jewish adventure! Soon your child will be called to the *Torah* to proclaim, before their community, that they are now recognized as a young adult member of the Jewish community, with all the rights and responsibilities that that honor and privilege entails.

In order to help alleviate any anxiety you might have regarding the B'Mitzvah process, and to help you focus on the meaning of the day, we are providing you with this handbook - packed with the information, guidelines, and timelines you will need to prepare for your big day!

We hope that this handbook will answer many of your questions and allow you to enter this time of growth, learning, and Jewish self-discovery with a sense of groundedness. Please read it carefully and let us know when you have questions or concerns.

### **IMPORTANT TERMS TO KNOW:**

- **Bar/Bat Mitzvah:** literally - son/daughter of the Commandment.
  - The religious initiation ceremony of a Jewish child who has reached the age of 13 and is regarded, according to Jewish law and practice, as ready to observe mitzvot and eligible to take part in communal worship (by counting in a minyan).
- **B' Mitzvah:** a modern, gender-inclusive way to talk about a Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- **B'nei Mitzvah:** the plural form of Bar Mitzvah
- **B'not Mitzvah:** the plural form of Bat Mitzvah

### **CJC's B'Mitzvah Philosophy**

The *B'Mitzvah* is a BIG lifecycle event! Jewish parents anticipate this moment as soon as we meet our child! And children anticipate it from their early years of Jewish school. It is a joyous event that celebrates an important time of transition for every child and every family, welcoming that child as an "adult" member of the Jewish community. It is also a milestone that requires commitment and a lot of preparation on the part of both the child and the family. Columbia Jewish Congregation wants the preparation process to be meaningful for all!

At CJC, we understand a *B'Mitzvah* as an event that:

- A) marks the culmination of one's Jewish education as a child and the transition into learning on a more adult level;
- B) affirms a child's (and a family's) sense of Jewish identity and belonging within their Jewish community; and
- C) marks the opportunity to dig into Judaism and explore Jewish identity with more agency, feeling more empowered, and with a fuller toolkit.

No two B'nei Mitzvah are the same. Every student is different - with different learning styles, different levels of knowledge and different comfort. We are committed to tailoring the preparation process to each student's strengths and interests.

## **ASSIGNMENT OF DATES**

The Executive Director will inform the parents of the dates that are available to be reserved for Saturday morning mitzvah services.

Dates will be assigned on a first-come, first-serve basis. Dates selected may be no more than 30 days before the child's thirteenth (13<sup>th</sup>) birthday (calculated either by the Hebrew or Gregorian calendar).

In order that a B'Mitzvah date may be assigned:

- The family's membership must be in good financial standing;
- Each child, in their fifth grade year, will receive an application for date selection (in November). Dates will be announced in January. If an application is not received by the end of December, the office will automatically assign your child a date.

## **Special Circumstances**

In the event that a child is not enrolled in the School by the third grade or does not meet the educational requirements or has other special circumstances, the Rabbi and Educational Director will discuss the situation with the family and determine if an individualized plan is appropriate. If it is appropriate, an individualized plan of study will be developed that will enable the child to achieve the education and skills necessary for B'Mitzvah.

In a case where non-educational guidelines (i.e., attendance at service, membership in CJC, etc.) are not met, the Rabbi, Cantor or Executive Director will meet with the family to discuss the situation and arrive at a mutually satisfactory solution, so that the child may continue towards B'Mitzvah. It is understood that failure to follow any or all of the guidelines may result in a delay of the actual B'Mitzvah ceremony beyond the age of 13. The Rabbi and/or Educational Director should be contacted as soon as possible if the family finds that there may be difficulty following any of these guidelines.

## **B'Mitzvah Fee**

**\$180** - This fee will be placed on your account and is to be paid one month prior to your simcha.

This fee covers your sponsorship of the congregational oneg on Friday Night and kiddush on Saturday morning. It includes: compostables\*\*, flatware and dishes, wine, grape juice, challah, table covers, a sweet tray and fruit. You are welcome to contribute more to the oneg and kiddush if you desire (nut-free and dairy/pareve). The fee also includes 1-3 bags of kosher soft candy to be tossed during the B' Mitzvah service.

Please contact our Executive Director, in the office, if you have any questions.

\*\*CJC is a 100% compostable congregation.

## **Working with the Rabbi**

Approximately one year before the big day, the Rabbi will meet with your family (namely the *B'Mitzvah* student and parent(s)/guardian(s)) to complete a *B' Mitzvah* intake. In this meeting, you will discuss special considerations and make a plan for when and how to move forward.

Unless otherwise discussed, about 4-5 months prior to the *B'Mitzvah*, your student will begin attending regular bi-weekly/weekly meetings with the Rabbi (depending on the needs of the student). These meetings allow for a one-on-one experience where both the child and Rabbi learn from and teach each other. In these meetings, your student will explore and interpret their *Torah* portion, plan their mitzvah project (see page 17), write their *drash*/speech, and plan the service. **It is the responsibility of the family to contact the Rabbi to set the first meeting.**

The writing of the *drash* provides an opportunity for family learning. It is important that the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) become familiar with the meaning and interpretations of the *Torah* so they can work with their child to focus their *drash* on issues that are meaningful. The Rabbi will work together with the parents and child on the writing of the *drash*. It is important to note that part of the Rabbi's goal is to help with interpretations and meanings, but not to write the *drash* for the child. Ultimately, it is not important that the *drash* be "perfect," but rather that it expresses the thoughts and feelings of the child.

## **Working with the Cantor**

Following the intake meeting with the Rabbi, your student will begin working with the Cantor - approximately 12-8 months before the *B'Mitzvah*, unless otherwise discussed.

The Cantor teaches the following skills, keeping in mind the each individual student's abilities:

- 1) **Blessings for the *Torah*.** These blessings are central components of the *Torah* service. Learning them first prepares the student to begin studying *Torah* and provides a sense of accomplishment.
- 2) ***Torah* portion of *parashat ha'shavuah* (the weekly *Torah* portion) in Hebrew** - using vowels and *trope* (cantillation). When the *Torah* portion is mastered with vowels, then it is studied without vowels. Learning *trope* (cantillation) is an important skill because it enables the child to transfer the skill to the reading of additional portions from the *Torah* during the *B'Mitzvah* or other times in their life.
- 3) **Prayers of the Saturday morning service.**

Once the tutoring process begins, please be sure to check that your child is studying at home. It is important to the Cantor and congregation that the student takes responsibility for studying. At least 20 minutes of daily study outside of the 30-minute weekly tutoring session is expected. Encourage your child to read their assignment aloud, to you, even if you do not know Hebrew yourself, at least twice per week.

## **B'Mitzvah Educational Programs**

### **5th Grade B' Mitzvah Orientation**

The 5th Grade cohort (parents and children) will meet together with the Rabbi, Cantor and Executive Director, to talk through the *B'Mitzvah* timeline and to ask any preliminary questions.

### **6th Grade Programs**

The year before the *B'Mitzvah*, as your student launches into their prep, we will gather their class (parents and students), twice, to explore the reasons for this milestone and the blessings and stresses that come with it.

#### **Program I - B' Mitzvah: Why Am I Doing This?**

Participants will learn about the history of *B'Mitzvah*, explore why someone would want to have one, and explore what it means to identify as Jewish.

#### **Program II - What Does It Mean to Become A Teen?**

Participants will understand the experience of becoming a *B' Mitzvah* as the launch into becoming a teenager and begin to articulate their family's and community's values around the *B'Mitzvah* experience

### **Service Attendance During the Year Prior to the B'Mitzvah**

In order to feel comfortable with the service, and with the preparation of the service outline, the CJC *B'Mitzvah* guidelines (see Appendix B) require that the *B'Mitzvah* family attend a minimum of **6 Friday night services** and **6 Saturday morning services** in the year leading up to the *B'Mitzvah*. In addition to familiarizing yourself with the services, it will also enable you to feel more a part of the larger CJC community as your child prepares to become a young adult member.

**Please prioritize the other CJC B'Mitzvah ceremonies that occur in the year leading up to your big day.** This is a way to learn what to expect at your own *B'Mitzvah* service and to show support/cheer on your peers! It is our hope that becoming more familiar with other members of the CJC community will encourage CJC members who may not be officially invited to your *B'Mitzvah* and reception to attend the service as a way of celebrating with you.

Up to **two** Shabbat services, attended at another synagogue, can be counted toward your requirement.

### **Inviting the CJC Class**

In the name of creating an inclusive and loving Jewish community, we ask that you invite all the kids from your child's Hebrew School class to your *B'Mitzvah* celebration. Please reach out to our Education Director for a class list and family contact information. If you have concerns, please talk to the rabbi.

## **B' Mitzvah Projects**

***One should use one's face, hands, and feet to honor one's Creator.***  
***(Tosefta Brachot 4:1)***

Becoming a *B'Mitzvah* means that one assumes responsibility for observance of the *mitzvot* (commandments). Three important *mitzvot* are the giving of *tzedakah* (charity), *gemilut hasadim* (acts of loving kindness), and *tikkun olam* (repair of the world). Each child is required to create and implement a community service project. This project will be done under the supervision of the Rabbi and with the support of the parent(s)/guardian(s).

In Judaism, *tzedakah* is more than voluntary charity; *tzedakah* is an obligation. As part of becoming a *B'Mitzvah* we hope that each child will choose charities to contribute to from the money they receive as gifts. Based on Jewish tradition, it is recommended that your child donate 10% of their monetary gifts to *tzedakah*. In addition, it is appropriate for parents and family to donate *tzedakah* in honor of your child's *B'Mitzvah*. You may choose from a variety of Jewish and non-Jewish causes that are worthwhile.

### **Greening Your B'nai Mitzvah for Justice!**

Each year, Jewish families in the DC/Baltimore Metro areas spend \$30 million dollars on weddings and *B'Mitzvah* celebrations! Imagine if that money was used in a way that reflects our Jewish values! We encourage you, wherever possible, to make choices that are mindful of workers' rights, waste, and environmental impact. For more ideas, talk to the Rabbi.

### **Supporting Your Community**

In addition to *tzedakah*, Judaism has always viewed support of the community as the responsibility of all Jews. In keeping with this spirit, it is also appropriate to [make a donation](#) to one of CJC's funds to express your support and thanks for your Jewish community. The various funds can be [found here](#). Each one serves a special purpose. Please review them and choose where you would like to make a donation.

A number of wonderful resources are available on the web to help you determine your project. In particular, [www.jchoice.org](http://www.jchoice.org) and [www.actsofkindness.org](http://www.actsofkindness.org) are sites that may be exactly the catalyst for good work for you.

The following information (excerpted from ziv.org) may be useful to you in planning and implementing the mitzvah project:

“How can we add that special ingredient of *tikkun olam* or fixing the world to our upcoming *simcha* so that many more people can benefit from our happiness and joy? It's really easy to find that special idea, the one you will enjoy working on and the one that will give you a special glow when you complete your work. In the process you will see how many other people's lives have been changed because you cared and you care.”

### **The Questions We Need to Ask**

#### **1. What am I good at?**

Giving big hugs? playing soccer? baking chocolate chip cookies? painting the most beautiful pictures?

**2. What do I like to do?**

In order to answer what you like to do you will have to think a little bit more. What activities bring you the most joy? Can you sit and read for hours? Are you really excited about playing the guitar or keyboard?

**3. What bothers me so much about what is wrong in the world that I get very angry and want to do whatever I can to change it?**

Are we tired of hearing that there are untold numbers of kids who go to bed hungry every night? Are you enraged when you think about climate change? Now--turn what bothers you into making a difference.

**4. Whom do I know?**

Know someone who works at a soup kitchen and can connect you to their volunteer coordinator? Know someone who enjoys playing a musical instrument as much as you do and would like to join you in a concert at a local nursing home? Or, maybe you have a relative who is a dentist and is willing to give you dental supplies that can be donated to a clinic? There is no end to the answers to this question—you just need to think about it....and, do it!

**5. Why not?**

Your project should be a stretch and a challenge for you but it should be doable! Make sure you are choosing a project, as a family, that can be done alongside your student's other responsibilities!

# THE BIG SHABBAT!

## *The Friday Evening Service*

### The Location of the Service

The *B'Mitzvah* is held at OMI in Room 100, which is the Congregation's main worship space and holds up to 250 people. OMI is wheelchair accessible and the bathrooms are ADA approved. There is a non-gendered bathroom available.

### The Timing of the Service

All services will begin promptly at 7:30 PM. The service will last approximately one and a half hours. Starting on time is essential. In order to make this happen, please arrive early. Please let your guests know that your family will be lighting the Shabbat candles at the beginning of the service, so they should arrive on time.

### What Will Be Asked of Us?

Although the actual celebration of your child becoming a *B'Mitzvah* will take place at the Saturday morning *Shabbat* service, attending *Kabbalat Shabbat* (*Welcoming Shabbat*) services on Friday night adds to the celebration and makes the entire *Shabbat* part of the experience. **Please plan to be in attendance. Invite your guest too! The more the merrier!** Please consult with the Rabbi if you have concerns about participation in Friday night services.

- 1) **Candlelighting:** The Rabbi will also invite your family to light the Shabbat candles to honor your big milestone.
- 2) **V'ahavta:** The Cantor will work with your child so that they will be prepared to recite V'Ahavta during the Friday night service.
- 3) **Kiddush:** The Cantor will work with your child so that they will be prepared to recite the full *Kiddush* over the wine on Friday night, as well as additional prayers.
- 4) **Oneg:** Your *B'Mitzvah* fee covers your sponsorship of the *oneg* on Friday night, following services. On your behalf, CJC will provide compostables, challah, wine, grape juice, sweets and fruit. We will also include a sign announcing your *simcha*! Feel free to bring more goodies to contribute to the celebration. (see page 12 for CJC's Dietary Policy)

\*\*CJC is a 100% compostable congregation.

# THE BIG SHABBAT!

## *The Shabbat Morning Service*

### **The Location of the Service**

The *B'Mitzvah* is held in The Meeting House in Room 100, which is the Congregation's main worship space and holds up to 250 people. The Meeting House is wheelchair accessible and the bathrooms are ADA approved. There is a non-gendered bathroom available.

### **The Timing of the Service**

All services will begin promptly at 10:00 AM. The service will last approximately two and a half hours. Starting on time is essential! In order to make this happen, please arrive early. Please let your guests know that your child will lead the entire service, from start to finish, so, to show them solid support and to avoid distracting them, folks should arrive on time.

### **The Siddur (Prayer Book) and supplement**

You have the option of creating a supplement to give to your guests. We recommend doing so, especially, if you expect that a large number of your guests will not be familiar with Jewish traditions.

As part of the supplement you may wish to include an explanation of the *B'Mitzvah* and a description of the *Shabbat* morning service and ritual objects. You may use the prepared piece that the office has (*please see Appendix E*) or you may wish to write an explanation in your own words. **However, you must show this to the Rabbi prior to printing the supplement.**

Examples of *B'Mitzvah* programs, created by our families, are available in the CJC office. There are also templates online. Here is [one example from Etsy.com](#) that several of our families have used.

### **Arrival Time For the Immediate Family (without photography)**

Please plan to arrive to OMI by 9:30. Encourage guests to arrive by 9:55

### **Arrival Time for the Immediate Family (with photography)**

If you plan to take photos before the service, please plan to arrive between 8:30 and 9. Photography needs to be completed by 9:30 to allow your child some down time before the service begins.

### **Passing the Torah**

During the service we will "pass the *Torah*" from generation to generation. The *Torah* represents Jewish teaching that is passed down from parent to child. When the ark is open, you have the option of asking grandparents, parents and the *B'Mitzvah* child to stand in front of the ark as the *Torah* is passed from one generation to the next. The *B'Mitzvah* child then holds the *Torah* during the processional around the congregation, followed by their family members. Many people find this to be a meaningful symbol of what is taking place during the *B'Mitzvah* ceremony.

### **Honors for your Family**

#### **Aliyot (Torah Blessings)**

An *aliyah* (Hebrew for “rising”) is the honor of being called to the *Torah* to recite a blessing before and after a section of *Torah* is read. During a *B'Mitzvah* service, there will be three *aliyot*. One (the final one) is reserved for the *B'Mitzvah* child. An individual or a group (up to 7 people) may recite an *aliyah*. Each person reciting the *aliyah* will have a choice of reading [the traditional or the Reconstructionist version of the blessing](#). We also have a gender-neutral language if it is desired. If it is, please tell the Rabbi ahead of your service.

If someone does not feel comfortable with the Hebrew or is “out of practice” **please provide them with the Hebrew and/or transliteration to practice ahead of time.** (A voice recording of the blessings can be made available for you upon request.) The Reconstructionist *Torah* blessings are also on our [website](#). If the person still does not feel comfortable reciting the blessing it would be best to give them another honor, such as an English reading or opening or closing the ark. The recitation of the *Torah* blessing is a special and sacred honor and should not be taken lightly.

### **Lifting (Hagba'ah) and Dressing (G'lilah) the Torah**

**G'lilah:** You will also need someone to perform *g'lilah*, dressing the *Torah*, after it is read. The honor of *g'lilah* can be given to anyone who is Jewish and is often given to younger siblings or other pre-*B'Mitzvah* children.

**Hagba'ah:** The honor of *hagba'ah*, the lifting of the *Torah*, is assigned by the Rabbi in order to ensure that the *Torah* is protected. If there is someone in your family who is interested and able to lift the *Torah* (it takes muscle!), you are welcome to share this information with the Rabbi. It will require practice in advance.

### **Readings**

You are invited to include up to three English readings in your service that speak to you and your child. Please give these to the Rabbi a week before your service so that she can incorporate them into the service with intention.

### **Photography, Videotaping and Live Streaming during the service.**

We realize that many families want to record every moment of the *B'Mitzvah* ceremony for posterity. We don’t blame you! The following guidelines are in effect to preserve the sanctity of the *Shabbat* and to avoid disrupting the service:

- Contact the Rabbi or Cantor if you wish to take pictures with the *Torah*. It is recommended that the photographer “stage” scenes and photograph them following the service, or on the day of the rehearsal. If your guests ask, please inform them that they may take photos prior to or following, **but not during the service.**
  - a. **DURING THE SERVICE:** Appropriate technology may be used consistent with the spirituality of ritual observance. Flash photography is not permitted. All photography and recording devices must be operated by CJC authorized personnel. During the service, all cameras/recording devices must be on a tripod behind the last row of seats and must remain stationary. Any wires, cords, cables, etc. must be set up so as not to be intrusive or present any hazards to people walking in the room.
  - b. Your service will be livestreamed. A copy of the livestream recording will be provided for you following the ceremony.

- c. Signage will be placed at the Sanctuary entrance advising that for the honor of the Torah, the safety of the participants, and to avoid distractions, that only CJC-designated photographer(s) are permitted.
- d. A request will be made from the bimah that all electronic devices be silenced. If you are providing a supplement, we also encourage you to include this request within it.
- If you would like to arrange for pictures to be taken on the day of the rehearsal, please contact the office so that the room may be reserved for additional time. If you would like a picture with the Rabbi or Cantor, please inform them ahead of time. If the photographer would like to use the *Torah* for photographs, (no more than 15 minutes), the Rabbi or Cantor must be present to open the ark and oversee the use of the *Torah*. Please make arrangements for this ahead of time.
- **Please review all of these guidelines with your photographer and videographer prior to the B'Mitzvah date.**

### **Live Streaming/Zooming Your B'Mitzvah**

1. Use the permanent Streamspot live streaming service installed in Room 100. This option is similar to watching a video; it is one way. The week following your B' Mitzvah you will receive a link to view and download the recording.
2. Every service is Zoomed. We will make a link accessible to you so that you can share it with your loved ones who will be unable to attend in-person. With this option, you can include people in the service who are joining from their homes. Via Zoom, guests can offer readings or even rise for an Aliyah.

### **Room and Oneg/Kiddush Setup**

Please inform the CJC Executive Director of approximately how many guests you expect for your B'Mitzvah at least one month in advance so the appropriate number of chairs can be set up.

All families are responsible for sponsoring the Oneg after services on Friday night and the Kiddush after the service on Saturday. CJC will provide the wine, challah, grape juice, kiddush cups, plates, and flatware\*\* in addition to sweets and fruit on your behalf. You may choose to bring additional food in yourself or, if you rent rooms through The Meeting House, you may prefer to have the Kiddush catered. If you choose to rent rooms through The Meeting House, please be aware that you may not use confetti or balloons.

It is important to remember that The Meeting House often has our worship space reserved for other services or events later in the day. This requires that the room be vacated no later than 2:00pm, unless otherwise reserved ahead of time. Please speak with the CJC Executive Director with any questions.

Below is a list of what **the synagogue will provide for a basic Oneg/Kiddush**. Please feel free to embellish as you choose. Please speak with The Administrator if you have any questions:

- Challah – platter or basket for bread (*CJC provides two challahs – one for Friday night and one for Saturday morning*)
- Wine and Grape Juice (Kosher Concord Grape) – 1 ounce plastic wine cups – tray on which to place them,

- *CJC provides tablecloths for the Oneg on Friday evening.*

\*\*CJC is a 100% compostable congregation.

## **Kitchen Rental**

According to the rules of The Meeting House you must reserve the kitchen if you are planning to use it for any preparation of the *Oneg/Kiddush* whatsoever (more extensive than the *Kiddush* setup described above). To find out about availability contact the CJC Administrator.

## **CJC Dietary Policy**

If you desire to enhance the standard *Oneg/Kiddush* by providing food from outside CJC, please keep in mind:

- **KEEP IT KOSHER-STYLE:** The CJC dietary policy requires that any CJC event (including an *Oneg/Kiddush* immediately following a *B'Mitzvah*) be designated either dairy or pareve. CJC does not require a kosher heksher (certification) but does require that all ingredients be kosher ingredients (ie - no shellfish, no pork). Please feel free to contact the Rabbi with questions about kashrut.
- **KEEP IT NUT-FREE:** To protect those in our community with nut allergies, we ask that all outside food be nut-free.

## **Babysitting**

CJC provides babysitting space for your *B'Mitzvah*. Families can hire a babysitter with whom you are familiar, if you wish to have this room available. You can confirm the room rental with CJC's Executive Director.

## FAQs: Beginning the Process

### **Where do I start?**

- CJC's Executive Director, Robin Rosenfeld, will help you with room reservations, *Kiddush* following the service, logistics, set-up information, and other related issues. She can be reached at 410.730.6044 or via email at [robin@columbiajewish.org](mailto:robin@columbiajewish.org).
- Rabbi will meet with your family about 12 months out to begin the process. Please arrange this visit by calling the office, 410-730-6044 or emailing her at [rabbimichael@columbiajewish.org](mailto:rabbimichael@columbiajewish.org).
- The Cantor will work with your child on their Torah portion and prayers. Contact the Cantor in the CJC office at 410.730.6044.
- Decide on your reception site after you've received a firm *B'Mitzvah* date with CJC.

### **When do we meet with the Rabbi?**

Contact the Rabbi 12 months before your date to set up a family meeting. Rabbi will meet with your child about five months before the *B'Mitzvah* date to begin writing the *drash*.

### **When do we meet with the tutor?**

After your *B'Mitzvah* intake meeting with the Rabbi, you will be connected to the Cantor who will work with your family to schedule your child's Hebrew Assessment. The beginning of tutoring will depend on the results of the assessment. The start of tutoring will range from **12 - 8 months** prior to your *B'Mitzvah* date.

### **What about the child who doesn't understand the need for a *B'Mitzvah*?**

Discuss this with the Rabbi to talk about ways of explaining the significance of the *B'Mitzvah* and alternatives within the framework.

### **How can we, as a family, learn about the *Torah* portion?**

Contact the Rabbi! If there are members of your family or friends who would like to read or chant a *Torah* portion, please contact the Rabbi as soon as possible.

### **Are we finally done with Hebrew School?**

A *B'Mitzvah* signifies the beginning of adulthood. The learning never ends. We'll anticipate your child being part of Hebrew School to continue and expand their education. You'll see a number of ways for your child to participate in our teen programs and as a madrich/a in the next chapter.

### **Who addresses special unique cases?**

The Rabbi is the best place to begin.

### **How standardized are our services?**

There is a service outline that is followed by everyone and that allows a lot of room to make the service meaningful and individualized. Please share all your ideas with the Rabbi.

### **Will my child feel "double" special if they share a service?**

In the past, when we have had doubles, both children learn the entire service. However, the leading is divided based on interest and ability. They both will be able to read *Torah*, lead the service, and give a *drash*. There will be nothing significantly altered in the service except that we will double the joy we experience on Shabbat.

***What would a child do the Friday night before their B'Mitzvah service?***

A child can lead as much of the Friday night service as possible, including leading certain prayers and leading Kiddish. The family will be invited to light the Shabbat candles.

***Why is CJC not considering summer B'nai Mitzvah?***

CJC has worked hard to honor the original intention of introducing our young adults to their full community at the time of their *B'Mitzvah*. Part of this process is developing a close relationship with both the Rabbi and the Cantor. During the summer months, both the Rabbi and Cantor take well-deserved vacations, and the synagogue plans feverishly for the High Holy Days and the beginning of Hebrew School. In order for you to have the most meaningful experience involving your whole community it would be better to hold the *B'Mitzvah* between mid-August and the end of June.

## The Process Continues...for LIFE!

At the beginning of this handbook, we conveyed our basic premise that a *B'Mitzvah* is a launching pad into a vibrant, engaged Jewish life! Learning, growing, thinking, absorbing, giving back, and becoming part of the larger community are all desired outcomes of this process. We hope that Jewish life will take shape in a healthy, respectful, cogent, and pleasurable way.

To that end, it is important to think, as a family, about what comes next after the *B'Mitzvah*. The possibilities are endless, including, but not limited, to the following:

- Attending ***Yallah: CJC's Teen Class***
  - Ready to go deeper? Do you have big questions about Judaism/your Jewish identity that you have always wanted to ask? *Yallah* is a brave place to continue evolving your Jewish identity in the company of other teens. Pizza is served at every class! Interested in getting out of town and exploring the Jewish world outside of Howard County? *Yallah* also goes on a class trip each year!
- Participating in CJC's choir, *klezmer* band, and/or Israeli Dance Troop,
- Serving as a *madrich/aide* in the Hebrew School,
  - In this position, you will bring your knowledge and your experience to the Hebrew School to help support students and teachers. If you have a skill, let us know! We will put it to good use. Working as a *madrich[a]* can be compensated through payment or through community service hours.
- Participating in your local **BBYO** chapter,
  - [There are three local BBYO Chapters in Howard County.](#) Kids can begin to participate in their 8th grade year:
    - [Hila BBG](#)
    - [Max Cowan AZA](#)
    - [Oseh Shalom BBYO](#) ← all genders!
- Working on an independent study or mitzvah project,
- Becoming a **Sukkah Builder** and/or a **Sukkah Decorator!**
  - Do you like building, hammering, and collaborating with others to create something beautiful and important for the community? The CJC sukkah goes up every fall after Yom Kippur and we are always looking for new builders who will bring energy and imagination!
- **Reading Torah** at a Shabbat service,
  - You can read it, sing it, and perhaps even translate it now, so maybe you'd be willing to share your knowledge with the congregation at a Saturday morning lay-led or Clergy-led service! The Cantor will make a recording for you. And, if you're interested in learning some of the other trope, the Cantor will be happy to teach you. Let the Rabbi or Cantor know.
- Joining CJC's **Green Team**,

- Like putting your hands to work, building and rebuilding? Is it important to you to keep OMI green and to help maintain the grounds and gardens? This is a place for you!
- Serving as our **Teen Representative** on the CJC Board of Directors,
  - At CJC, you are now considered an adult which means that your voice counts! Each year, we invite a teen to bring their voice to our Board of Directors. Here you will learn the inner workings of our synagogue and get a vote on matters of great importance. This is a role that requires discretion, wisdom, and vision!
- Volunteering in the CJC office,
- Working in the CJC library.

**THAT'S A LOT!**

## APPENDIX A

### **B'Mitzvah Policy of the Columbia Jewish Congregation**

In order to prepare appropriately for a B'Mitzvah, it is important that a child receives an adequate Jewish education and that the child and their family become a part of a congregation prior to the B'Mitzvah period. In this way the B'Mitzvah is not viewed as an event isolated from the rest of the family's Jewish life, but rather as an integral part of a family's relationship to their Judaism and to their Jewish community.

In order to assure that the B'Mitzvah is a meaningful experience for all involved, the Columbia Jewish Congregation has instituted the following policy regarding congregational membership, school enrollment and B'Mitzvah preparation. In devising these policies the leadership of the congregation is well aware that congregational membership and school enrollment requires not only a commitment of time and energy, but of finances as well. We will do everything possible to assist families in need and thereby enable them to join the congregation and enroll their child(ren) in the school. If you have concerns regarding finances, please contact the congregation's Executive Director and/or the school's educational director to discuss these issues.

If you have questions about any aspect of the B'Mitzvah policy, or if you feel that you may find it difficult to comply with any of the guidelines, please contact the appropriate person (i.e., Rabbi, Cantor, Educational Director or President) as soon as possible so that potential problems may be avoided and the process can be positive for everyone involved.

### **LIFNIM MISHURAT HADIN**

"And thou shalt do that which is right and good in the sight of the **Lord**." (Deut. 6:18).

It is a Jewish ideal to always act beyond the letter of the law. The Rabbis teach that if we behave towards others *lifnim mishurat hadin* (literally, "inside the line of law"), with generosity and kindness beyond what is strictly required, then we might hope that Gd will act *lifnim mishurat hadin* with us, and forgo the harshness that rigorous application of justice would require.

*Lifnim mishurat hadin* is a Talmudic provision by which the Rabbis afford halakhic leniency. Therefore, CJC's policies provide that, upon showing of good cause and that it is in the interest of justice, case-by-case adjustments will be made.

Any adjustments to these policies will require the parents to meet with, and obtain the approval of, the Rabbi.

## APPENDIX B

### B'MITZVAH GUIDELINES

In order for a child to become a B'Mitzvah at Columbia the Congregation, the congregation requires that:

1. The child must be enrolled in the Congregation's religious school, beginning no later than the third grade. (If a family is new to the area, attendance at another accredited religious school will be considered.)
2. The family joins the congregation by the time the child enters the third grade. (If a family is new to the area, previous membership in another congregation will be acceptable.)
3. All B'Mitzvah students prepare with the Rabbi and Cantor. In addition, all B'Mitzvah students and their parents are expected to attend CJC's 5th Grade B'Mitzvah Orientation Meeting, and both family education programs (page 7, above), as this learning is an integral part of the preparation process.
4. B'Mitzvah students and their parents attend a minimum of **12 Shabbat services** during the year prior to the B'Mitzvah (6 Friday Night services and 6 Saturday morning services). This will help provide a sense of community for the students and their families, help them feel more comfortable at services and with the liturgy, and help create a greater sense of belonging to CJC and to the larger Jewish community.
5. B'Mitzvah students create and implement a Mitzvah Project.
6. Families must continue to be in good financial standing at the time of the B'Mitzvah.
7. CJC encourages the family to continue membership in the congregation and asks the child(ren) to continue attendance in the Religious School following their B'Mitzvah. Families must remain members of the congregation following the B'Mitzvah of one child and continue membership for the B'Mitzvah of a subsequent child.

## APPENDIX C

### THE TIMELINE FOR PREPARATION (for your fridge!)

#### 2+ years prior:

- Date is assigned.
- **All** outstanding financial obligations to CJC and B'Yachad must be brought up-to-date. Please contact the office if you have any questions.
- Parents and their B'Mitzvah student will attend an orientation meeting, together with other members of their class.

#### 1 year prior:

- Families must be members in good standing.
- Make an appointment with the Rabbi to begin to talk about how your child will be prepared for the special day.
  - As part of CJC's attempt to individualize the *B'Mitzvah* service each family will, at this time, have an opportunity to determine the course of preparation for their student.
  - Sign your Brit B'Mitzvah/B'Mitzvah Covenant.
- Cantor does a Hebrew skills assessment with your student.
- Families will attend two *B'Mitzvah* Educational programs with your cohort.
- Families begin attending services regularly (as detailed in our *B'Mitzvah Guidelines* in Appendix B).

**8 months prior:** Begin regular meetings with the Rabbi and Cantor/tutor. Accommodations can be made to begin these meetings earlier depending on the needs of your child.

#### One-month prior:

- Inform the CJC office of the number of guests you are expecting and any special requirements you might have.
- Present Rabbi with any materials for a supplement, or that you plan to have read at the service, for approval. The rabbi must review all supplementary materials before printing.
- Provide the Rabbi with the final order of service, including the names of those reading English parts and those with honors like presenting the tallit, opening the ark and dressing the Torah.
- Provide the Rabbi with Hebrew names of all those reciting *aliyot* (Torah blessings). This should include the Hebrew names of both of the person's parents. If Hebrew names of parents are not known, please provide English names.

**Two-weeks prior:** The office will send you a questionnaire asking questions regarding candy, number of guests, photography, etc. Please return this questionnaire in a timely manner as it will allow CJC to make appropriate logistical arrangements.

**Rehearsal:** Typically, a rehearsal, with the Rabbi, will take place on the Thursday ten days prior to the *B'Mitzvah* at 4:00 pm. During the rehearsal you and the Rabbi will review logistics for the service and go through the prayers together. The student will read their *drash* aloud and read from the Torah. Please plan for the rehearsal to take 1.5 hours.

**At the time of the rehearsal please:** Bring your siddur, Torah portion, *drash*, and tallit. For students who plan to wear high-heeled shoes, please bring those also, as it is helpful to practice carrying Torah in the shoes you will be wearing on the big day.

**APPENDIX D**  
**PARENT CHECK LIST**

The following information should help you create a smooth plan for your B'Mitzvah event at the synagogue. The CJC office can help you coordinate logistics.

**THE OFFICE STAFF'S RESPONSIBILITIES ON SATURDAY MORNING:**

- Room set-up for service--pulling out the cart of prayer books, taking out the *tallit* tree, having basket of *kippot* out, etc.
- Preparation of bima
- *Kiddush* set-up in back of room (when no caterer is present), including tables, challah, pouring wine and juice
- Returning prayer books, *tallit and, kippot* to storage

**PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES PRIOR TO SERVICE:**

   Let the CJC office know how many guests you are expecting for seating a month before the service. Be sure to allow for 20 additional congregation members to ensure adequate seat set up and prayer book availability.

   Let the CJC office know if you are planning a special table set-up. Normal set-up includes 2 rectangular tables in the back on the right side as you walk in the room for *Kiddush*, and 1 rectangular table by the door for *kippot* and programs.

   Let the CJC office know your arrangements for photography and videography.

   If you are having a caterer for *Kiddush* after the service, inform the CJC office that a caterer will be present (reminder that the food should be kosher-style).

**PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES ON FRIDAY NIGHT:**

   Show up and bring your family!

   Be prepared to welcome Shabbat by lighting the candles!

**PARENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES ON SATURDAY MORNING:**

   Bring all food, drinks, paper products, *kippot*, programs, and centerpieces you are providing for *Kiddush* to the CJC office by Friday at 12:00 pm. CJC will provide one challah, wine, grape juice, and small cups. If you plan to provide your own supplies or supplement these already provided, let the office know what you will be providing at least 1 week before the date.

- \_\_\_ Bring your child's prayer book, *tallit*, speeches (parent and child), copies of readings, and program guides.
- \_\_\_ If distributing candy at the end of service, provide soft, individually wrapped Kosher candy and 2-3 baskets (candy can be purchased from the CJC office). The ushers will be happy to distribute the candy during the *Kiddush*, the blessing over the wine.
- \_\_\_ If you plan to distribute the wine for *Kiddush* to guests in their seats, arrange for 3-4 guests to do so right before *Kiddush* (alternatively, wine can be left on the back table to drink after the service)
- \_\_\_ If you wish to have photographs with the Torah, this can be done only at the rehearsal or immediately after the service.
- \_\_\_ If videotaping, inform videographers that they must be set up by 9:30am. Set up is in the back of the room by the *Kiddush* table. They must remain stationary, with no standing on chairs or tables.
- \_\_\_ If having unescorted young guests, arrange to have responsible adults sit with them to maintain decorum. There should be one adult for every ten teens or children.

**APPENDIX E:**  
**SERVICE EXPLANATION – *Text of handout***

Welcome to the Shabbat morning service at Columbia Jewish Congregation. If this is your first visit to synagogue, you may have some questions. It is our hope that this information will provide you with some explanation. Please feel free to ask the Rabbi or Cantor additional questions after the service.

***Shabbat Shalom*** - “a peaceful Sabbath to you”. Jewish people gather together on the Sabbath, a time of rest, peace and renewal. The mood is both reflective and joyous, as we pray and study the Torah – as individuals and as part of our community.

Columbia Jewish Congregation is a Reconstructionist congregation, egalitarian in nature and working in partnership with Gd. Many of the members, regardless of gender, cover their heads with a *kippah* (a skullcap or *yarmulke*) as a sign of respect and piety. Some of the congregants wear a prayer shawl called a *tallit*. The special fringes denote the 613 commandments in the Torah, and as we wrap ourselves in the shawl, we have a sense of protection and shelter.

We use the prayer book, ***Kol Haneshama***. You'll notice that it is read from right to left, because we read Hebrew from right to left. There are many commentaries included below the line on each page, as well as transliterations of the Hebrew, so that you can get a sense of the meaning of the prayers. Please take the time to follow along in English, or read the transliterations with the congregation.

**Here is a general order of the major parts of the service:**

**The Sabbath morning service is divided into the following principal parts:**

***Birchot Ha-Shachar*** (Morning blessings). These early blessings help us to move from sleep to spiritual wakefulness. We include prayers of gratitude, including blessings of thanks for the body, mind, and soul. During the course of the morning, we recite many blessings. Jews are sometimes called “blessing seekers” because of the number of blessings we have, both in and out of the synagogue.

***P'sukei d'Zimra*** (Verses of Song and Praise) - a series of psalms of praise and gratitude, sung or read, silently as well as aloud. This portion of the service is meant to awaken us further and to prepare us, heart and soul, for our formal prayer.

***Shacharit*** (Morning Service) begins the formal public worship of the morning. This part of our service includes *Bar'chu*, the formal call to worship, in which we rise. Bowing, the service leader begins this prayer, sings, “Bless Gd who is to be blessed.” The congregation then responds, also bowing. The *Shema* prayer is probably the most universally recognized prayer, beginning with “Hear, O Israel! Adonai is our Gd, Adonai is One.” The first lines are then followed by several paragraphs from the Torah (Deuteronomy and Numbers). Some in the congregation will cover their eyes while chanting the first line of the *Shema*, to permit total concentration on these words and their meaning.

We stand for the silent prayer, the ***Amida*** (literally “standing.”). We read the *Amida* silently, sitting when finished. You are invited to use this time for private prayer or meditation, and to sit when finished. Some people read these pages in Hebrew, some in English, some compose their own personal prayers. Some bow when reciting certain phrases praising G-d. The Cantor leads a

repetition of the *Amidah* after we are finished with our silent prayer. We focus on celebration and gratitude for the Sabbath, ending with the hope that our prayers will be accepted, and we end with a prayer for peace.

The **Torah Service** is the next major part of the service. If you are attending a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, this is the part of the service where the 13-year-old participates most actively, because he or she today joins the adult Jewish community, assuming adult responsibility and obligations. This newest member of our adult community is given the honor of an *Aliyah*, of being called to the Torah to recite a special blessing for the first time.

We hold the Torah with great reverence. When the ark is opened, note the *ner tamid* (eternal light). This light reminds us of the Temple in Jerusalem, as well as of the earlier Tabernacle in the desert, where we are reminded that we each carry the light of the Torah within us. As the Torah is carried around in a processional, many people will touch the Torah with their *tallit* or prayer book. The congregation always rises when the Ark is opened and does not sit again until the Ark is closed and the Torah is laid down on the reading table.

After the processional, the “portion of the week” is read. You will see people going up to the reading table, reciting blessings of thanks for the gift of the Torah, and then reading along as the reader chants. The Torah is printed differently from the text you have in your book. It is written on parchment, with no vowels or punctuation of any kind. It has been written entirely by hand by a scribe. There can be no errors in the writing of the Torah. The musical notes are not printed in the Torah – the reader has practiced for many hours in order to pronounce the words correctly, and to use the right notes and phrasing.

We read the Five Books of Moses over the course of the year. The same Torah portion will be read on any particular Sabbath morning, no matter where we are in the world. After the portion is read, and the Bar or Bat Mitzvah has been called to the Torah to complete the portion, chanting the *Maftir* (completion section), the Torah is lifted and turned for all to see. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah may then chant the *Haftorah*, a prophetic message related in some way to the Biblical reading of the day.

The Bar or Bat Mitzvah and the Rabbi give a talk, or *d'var Torah*, usually picking up on some theme or event we have just read about in the Biblical portion. Because the Torah is so concise in its telling of our story, lends itself well to uncovering the meaning and commentaries and expansion of the text. After the talk is completed, we return the Torah to the Ark and move into the concluding part of the service. We rise again, and sing a prayer from the Book of Proverbs affirming, “The Torah is a tree of life to those who grasp it, its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace.”

We chant the **Aleinu** prayer, praying for the day when all will be united and accept Gd's Sovereignty.

The Rabbi then reads a list of people whose *Yahrzeit* (anniversary of death) is commemorated. Those commemorating the *Yahrzeit* rise and recite the **Kaddish** prayer. Many of us stand with the mourners, in solidarity and to remember those who have no one to recite *Kaddish* for him or her. This prayer, glorifying G-d, helps us reconnect with the values and beliefs we held before this death. This prayer keeps us connected to and supported by our synagogue community.

We conclude with a hymn and blessings over wine and bread. Following the service, we wish each other a Shabbat Shalom, and join together for the *Kiddush*.

## APPENDIX F

### Brit B'Mitzvah / B'Mitzvah Covenant (to be signed by the **B'Mitzvah student** at intake)

One of the central tenets of the Jewish tradition is to be mindful of our relationships. The ancient rabbis taught about two important types of connection: the relationship between each person and Gd (Bein Adam LaMakom), and each individual's relationship with others (Bein Adam L'Chaveiro). To these, Rabbi Robert Gordis, of blessed memory, added an important third: the relationship we have with ourselves (Bein Adam L'Atzmo).

All of these relationships come into play as you become B'Mitzvah. As you transition into Jewish adulthood, and into your teens, you begin to take responsibility for your actions as well as these relationships. Through your religious school education and your B'Mitzvah training at CJC, you will learn to cultivate, appreciate, and nurture your unique relationship with Gd, with the Jewish people, with the rest of humanity, AND with yourself.

In an effort to show that you, \_\_\_\_\_ (student's name) understand the importance of these relationships and your responsibilities as a B'Mitzvah candidate, you enter into the following covenant in preparation for your ceremony on \_\_\_\_\_. (ceremony date).

**Today, I \_\_\_\_\_ make the following commitments:**

- 1) I will attend services.** In an effort to develop an adult relationship with Gd, prayer, and with the people in my community, I pledge that I will attend at least twelve (12) Shabbat services in the year leading up to my B'Mitzvah - accompanied by, at least, one of my parents/guardians. Specifically, I will attend at least six (6) Friday evening services, and six (6) Saturday morning services.
- 2) I will attend Hebrew School.** I will take seriously the commandment of Talmud Torah (religious study) by attending B'Yachad on a weekly basis. I will complete my 7th Grade year in B'Yachad. After my B'Mitzvah, I commit to making Jewish learning a lifelong endeavor.
- 3) I will be self-motivated.** While I will meet with the Rabbi and the Cantor weekly, I know my success depends on my ability to practice and complete tasks at home, between my weekly meetings. If something arises that makes this difficult for me, I will talk to the Rabbi and Cantor in order to find a solution that works better for me.
- 4) I will be a role model.** Preparing for my B'Mitzvah is not just about learning to read, chant, and interpret Torah. It is also about learning how to LIVE Torah. I commit to practicing mindfulness about how I speak and act, recognizing the growing power of my words and actions AND recognizing that, as a soon-to-be Jewish adult, I am a role model for others in my community and a spokesperson for the Jewish people.

I understand that these four components are the core of the covenant/commitment that I make with myself, my synagogue, and my family. If, for any reason, I am struggling to fulfill these commitments, I pledge to talk through my challenges with the Rabbi. I am ready to take on the challenges and the fun of preparing for my B'Mitzvah!

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Student

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Rabbi

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Cantor

## APPENDIX G

### Brit B'Mitzvah / B'Mitzvah Covenant (to be signed by the B'Mitzvah **parents/guardians** at intake)

One of the central tenets of the Jewish tradition is to be mindful of our relationships. The ancient rabbis taught about two important types of connection: the relationship between each person and Gd (Bein Adam LaMakom), and each individual's relationship with others (Bein Adam L'Chaveiro). To these, Rabbi Robert Gordis, of blessed memory, added an important third: the relationship we have with ourselves (Bein Adam L'Atzmo).

All of these relationships come into play as your student becomes a B' Mitzvah. As they transition into their teens (and into Jewish adulthood), they begin to take responsibility for their actions as well as these relationships. Through their religious school education and their B'Mitzvah training, our students learn to cultivate, nurture, and appreciate their unique relationships with Gd, the Jewish people, this community, and the rest of humanity.

In an effort to show that your child, \_\_\_\_\_ (child's name) understands the importance of both the relationships and their responsibilities as a B'Mitzvah candidate, we enter into the following covenant in preparation for their ceremony on \_\_\_\_\_. (ceremony date).

**1) Service Attendance.** In an effort to develop an adult relationship with God and with others in my community, I pledge to have my child attend at least twelve (12) Shabbat services in the year leading up to their B'Mitzvah - accompanied by, at least, one of their parents/guardians.

Specifically, we will attend at least (6) Friday evening services, and four (6) Saturday morning services.

**2) Jewish Learning Support.** I will take seriously the commandment of Talmud Torah (religious study) in three ways (and hopefully more):

- 1) by supporting our child's weekly attendance at B'Yachad through the end of their 7th Grade year - even after the B'Mitzvah ceremony is over;
- 2) I will work with my child, at home, to supplement the learning they do with the Rabbi and Cantor - ensuring that they complete homework assignments and practice weekly.
- 3) I will strongly encourage my child to embrace Talmud Torah as part of a lifelong journey and to continue their Jewish learning through their teens and into adulthood.

**3) Synagogue Membership.** Because becoming a B'Mitzvah is best expressed in the context of a kehillah kedoshah – a sacred community, we commit to being CJC members in good standing for the duration of our child's training and education (and hopefully for many years afterward). We also agree to pay the \$180 B'Mitzvah fee.

We understand that these three components are the core of the covenant that we make with our Columbia Jewish Congregation at the beginning of this journey. By fulfilling these responsibilities, we will be able to celebrate our simcha in the synagogue community on the day we selected. If for any reason we are unable to fulfill our commitments, we pledge to reach out to the synagogue staff to let them know our concerns and to make all efforts to find a workable solution. If no resolution can be made, we relinquish our claim to the date and the event.

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Student Parent/Guardian #1

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Parent/Guardian #2  
(where applicable)

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Rabbi

## **APPENDIX H**

### **RESOURCES**

*There are many creative ways to infuse your simcha with meaning. The following are examples of options that may be helpful for your family. Please note that this is not a recommendation for one company over another company.*

#### **Kippot**

Want to have most beautiful kippot for your guests? Ones that no one has ever seen before? Brightly colored and beautifully patterned? Call MayaWorks, 773-506-4905, [mayaworks-chi@attbi.com](mailto:mayaworks-chi@attbi.com), [www.mayaworks.org](http://www.mayaworks.org). These kippot will not only wow your guests but will also help support the women who make them in remote villages of Guatemala. (These women are VERY busy—you need to place your order early.)

#### **Centerpieces**

When it comes to your party, there are so many things you can do for centerpieces:

1. Books, books and books! An arrangement of kids' books, audio tapes, video tapes and CD's can then be given away to a deserving organization in your area.
2. Food, food, and food! An arrangement of canned and boxed foods in a basket can then be donated to a local pantry or shelter.
3. Want to go the traditional route with flowers or plants? Arrangements of individual plants and flowers can be broken up and distributed to the local hospital, shelter or nursing home, or you can ask the Rabbi or the CJC office to give you the names of congregants who might enjoy some. You can do this with bima arrangements, too.
4. Speaking of bima arrangements....don't forget you can make attractive baskets of toys and stuffed animals and distribute them as well.
5. Are you a sports fan? Try collecting sports equipment and arrange it as centerpieces. After the party? Give it away to local shelters where kids may not have their own equipment.
6. Use your imagination! There are hundreds of ways to do this—just keep thinking up mitzvahs!

#### **Books**

**\*\* denotes a book that you can find in the CJC Library**

**\*\*The Bar Mitzvah Book** by Moira Paterson

**\*\*A Spiritual Journey: The Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah Handbook** by Seymour Rossel

**\*\*For Kids--Putting God on Your Guest List : How to Claim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Bnai Mitzvah** by Jeffrey K. Salkin

\*\*Putting God on the Guest List : How to Reclaim the Spiritual Meaning of Your Child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah  
by Jeffrey K. Salkin, et al

The Bnai Mitzvah Survival Guide by Randi Reisfeld

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Basics : A Practical Family Guide to Coming of Age Together -- by Cantor Helen Leneman (Editor), et al;

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Planbook by Jane Lewit

Whose Bar/Bat Mitzvah Is This, Anyway? : A Guide for Parents Through a Family Rite of Passage by Judith Davis

The Complete Bar/Bat Mitzvah Planner : An Indispensable, Money-Saving Workbook for Organizing Every Aspect of the Event-From Temple Service to Receipt by Linda Seifer Sage

The Complete Bar/Bat Mitzvah Book : Everything You Need to Plan a Meaningful Celebration by Patti Moskovitz

Make Your Own Bar/Bat Mitzvah: A Personal Approach to Creating a Meaningful Rite of Passage by Rabbi Goldie Milgram.

Bat Mitzvah: A Jewish Girl's Coming of Age by Barbara Diamond Goldin