



B-Mitzvah FAQs: Your Guide to the Journey

Planning a B-Mitzvah is an exciting milestone for your child and your family. This document provides answers to common questions about the process, from selecting a date and working with tutors to preparing for the service and celebration. Use this guide as a quick reference to help you navigate each step and make the experience meaningful, joyful, and manageable.

Q: How do we set the date?

When your child enters 6th grade—or about a year before your desired date—contact the rabbi to secure a B-Mitzvah date. Once your child begins working with a tutor, the rabbi and tutor will coordinate with your family to select the specific Torah portion. They will also stay in touch throughout the year regarding progress and plans.

Q: How do we work with the UUCA?

After setting a date with the rabbi, contact the Room Rental Coordinator at UUCA to reserve the necessary rooms. Most B-Mitzvahs are held in the Sanctuary on the upper level, followed by a kiddush in the Reeb Gallery or Fellowship Hall. You may also choose other arrangements, such as using the Activity Room, which does not incur an extra charge.

Families are responsible for the rental costs of upper-level rooms. If you wish to record the service in the upper-level spaces, you will need to work with the UUCA to arrange the livestream. You will also sign a UUCA facility agreement.

Q: Are we responsible for securing set-up hosts for the B-Mitzvah service from the community?

For services in the Sanctuary with a B-Mitzvah, we request two hosts for the first half of the morning and two for the second half. We encourage families to host one another's simchas whenever possible, helping students become familiar with the service and providing support. Please sign up in advance on the Shabbat Hosting Sign-Up Genius.

Q: Who provides the challah, grape juice, and tablecloths?

These items, along with paper goods and other supplies, are the responsibility of the B-Mitzvah family. Kol Ami has a limited number of royal blue tablecloths available for use; they must be washed and returned. We prefer grape juice rather than wine at kiddush.



Q: What is the best way for my family to communicate with the Kol Ami community to invite them to our service and celebration? How many people can we expect?

Most families send a simple email to the community several times before the event. You may also use an Evite if you prefer. RSVPs may vary, but typically 15–25 community members attend.

Q: How do we arrange for the Kol Amite musicians to play?

The Rabbi will invite all our volunteer musicians and will inform you who is expected to play.

Q: What is the policy regarding the use of Kol Ami supplies kept in the closet at the UUCA for B-Mitzvahs?

Families may use Kol Ami tablecloths and serving implements, provided they are washed and returned. Paper goods may be used in a pinch, but must be replaced.

Q: What is the Kol Ami Kashrut policy?

Food brought to a Kol Ami event should be vegetarian or include fish (no shellfish). Foods may be dairy or pareve, and potential allergens should be labeled.

Q: Does my child need to attend JCEP?

Attendance at JCEP is not required, but we strongly encourage enrollment. Years of Jewish learning and building friendships in Hebrew school enhance understanding and identity.

Q: How often do we need to attend services?

We encourage families to attend services at least once a month in the year prior to the B-Mitzvah, at Kol Ami or elsewhere. B-Mitzvah students can also serve as “Zoom Gabbai” to help run hybrid services and familiarize themselves with the service.

Q: When do we meet with the rabbi?

Families typically meet with the rabbi three times in the year prior to the B-Mitzvah, plus a rehearsal the week before the service.

- **First meeting:** Introductions, overview of the service, and discussion of your child's interests.
- **Second meeting:** Study the Torah portion and discuss themes; your child prepares a draft d'var Torah.
- **Third meeting:** Review the draft d'var Torah. Subsequent drafts are finalized via Google Doc or email.
- **Rehearsal:** The student delivers the d'var Torah; final adjustments are made as needed.



Q: How do we get hold of the prayerbook?

Kol Ami uses *Kol Haneshamah: Shabbat Vehagim* (3rd edition, 2009). It may be purchased online or borrowed from Kol Ami (must be returned in original condition).

Q: Who are the tutors available to help my child?

Kol Ami has several tutors who support students in preparing their Torah portion, d'var Torah, and other aspects of the service. The rabbi can guide you in selecting a tutor who fits your child's learning style.

Q: Are there recommended resources for preparing for a B-Mitzvah?

Yes. Recommended books include:

- Rabbi Jeffrey Salkin, *Putting God on the Guest List*
- Rabbi Goldie Milgram, *Make Your Own Bar/Bat Mitzvah*
- Rabbi Ronald H. Isaacs & Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky, *Doing Mitzvot*
- Danny Siegel, *The Bar and Bat Mitzvah Mitzvah Book*
- Esther Goldenberg, *The Out-of-the-Box Bat Mitzvah*