

## Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Or Zarua: The Timeline

*Primary Contacts: Rabbi Bolton, Sigal Hirsch, Deborah Wenger*

### 2-3 Years in Advance

#### Open Your Letter!

When your child is in 4th or 5th grade, you'll receive a letter from Rabbi Bolton, beginning the B'nei Mitzvah Process. Included in this letter will be your child's Hebrew birthday and details about establishing a date for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. Children officially "become" Bar or Bat Mitzvah on a girl's 12th birthday and a boy's 13th birthday. The ceremonial celebration (services, Torah reading, etc.) can happen any time on or after that birthday, when the child is ready to mark this transition into Jewish adulthood. Girls can choose to celebrate a Bat Mitzvah at 12 or at 13, whichever the family prefers. While many families choose a celebration on Shabbat, in consultation with Rabbi Bolton, families may choose to celebrate on a Sunday if it's *Rosh Hodesh* or a Jewish holiday, or Monday if it's a national holiday. Please note that there is a fee for B'nei Mitzvah on days other than Shabbat.

***Prior to selecting a date, you are welcome to set up a meeting with Rabbi Bolton if you'd like guidance in considering timing and goals for your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah.***

#### Request Dates

Complete the date selection form and send it to Deborah Wenger, in the OZ office.

#### Get Your Date!

After submitting your date selection form, you'll receive a contract back from Or Zarua with the confirmed date or an invitation from Rabbi Bolton to discuss possibilities. Please note that dates are first come, first serve. If there is a possible conflict with the dates you've requested, we'll be in touch to work out an alternative.

You'll also receive a "Learning Contract," which will outline certain choices and expectations for Jewish learning leading up to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony and ask for your family's commitment to this process.

#### Finalize and Secure Your Date

Return the two signed contracts to finalize and secure the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date.

### 1-2 Years in Advance

#### Participate in the B'nei Mitzvah Cohort

All 6th Graders and their families participate in our B'nei Mitzvah Cohort, bringing together Hebrew School and Day School families in a community of learners. Together, we'll consider what it means to "become" a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Chart a path towards Jewish adulthood and deepen your experience of the process and ritual celebration of becoming at Bar/Bat Mitzvah.



## 1 Year in Advance

### Choose a Tutor

Connect with tutors from our approved tutor list and find the best fit for your child and family. If you'd like a recommendation, please reach out to Sigal. If you have a tutor you'd like to work with who is not on our list, please connect with Rabbi Bolton so that he can review our requirements, trope, nusach (siddur) and customs with the tutor to confirm that they'll uphold the standards and rituals of Or Zarua. Once you've selected a tutor, fill out "B'nei Mitzvah Tutor" Google Form (found on the B'nei Mitvah page of the website) so that we know who you'll be working with.

### Buy a Notebook

This process is filled with learning and exploration. As such, we ask that you buy a 3-section notebook with the following sections: Hesed, Family Study, Study with Rabbi Bolton. Please be sure to have a folder (or a pocket in the notebook) to keep loose papers.

### Meet with Rabbi Bolton as a Family

With Rabbi Bolton's guidance, you'll determine what your ceremony will look like - how much of the parashah (Torah portion) you'll read, verify your Haftarah, discuss what parts of the service you could lead, etc. You'll also plan ongoing family learning and a commitment to hesed (community service).

**We expect all those celebrating becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at a Shabbat service to read the *Maffir Aliyah* (from the Torah) and the *Haftarah* in Hebrew, and to be called to the Torah for an *Aliyah*.**

**Requirements at other services must be discussed with Rabbi Bolton.**

## 6-9 Months in Advance

### Begin Tutoring Sessions

Within one year of your ceremony (about 6-9 months prior), begin your tutoring sessions to prepare your Torah reading and Haftarah. If your child needs extra support in reading the Hebrew texts, be sure to begin on the earlier end of that range.