

Mazal tov!

Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at



The Experience and Timeline

Primary Contacts: Rabbi Bolton, Sigal Hirsch, Deborah Wenger

1. Open Your Letter! (It's in the sealed envelope enclosed in this packet.)

You have received a letter from Rabbi Bolton, which begins the B'nei Mitzvah process. Included in this letter are your child's Hebrew birthday and details about choosing a date for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. A young woman becomes a Bat Mitzvah on her 12th birthday and a young man becomes a Bar Mitzvah on his 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. 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 ceremonies and celebrations on days other than Shabbat.**

Prior to selecting a date, families are welcome to connect with Rabbi Bolton if they'd like guidance in considering the calendar.

2. Request Dates

Complete the date request form and send it to Deborah Wenger, in the OZ office. Please note that dates are given on a first-come, first-served basis, so please submit your date request form immediately.

3. Get Your Date!

After submitting your date selection form, you'll receive an agreement form from Or Zarua with the confirmed date. Please note that date assignments are first come, first served. 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 "Jewish Learning Contract," which will outline certain choices and expectations for Jewish learning and experiences leading up to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony.

4. Finalize and Secure Your Date

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

5. Participate in the B'nei Mitzvah Cohort

All 6th Graders and their families participate in our B'nei Mitzvah Cohort, bringing together all students and their 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 experience the process of preparing for Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

All of the documents about B'nei Mitzvah can be found at
<http://www.orzarua.org/or-latid/bnei-mitzvah/>



6. 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, and talk through preparation. You'll also plan ongoing family learning and a commitment to hesed (community service).

7. 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 the form on the approved tutor list and submit it to the OZ office.

8. 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.

9. Attend services at OZ

As children prepare to come to the bimah to celebrate becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, we require that they come to Or Zarua services 6 or more times leading up to the ceremony, on Shabbat or any other morning. This gives families the opportunity to see what OZ's services are like and gives the rest of the community a chance to get to know your family, as you become part of our unique t'filah community. **At least six Shabbat mornings are required.** Families are also encouraged to attend Friday night services a few times, as Bar and Bat Mitzvah children are invited to make kiddush at that service the Friday night before their ceremony.

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