**Pre Bar/Bat Mitzvah Preparation**

**FAILURE TO SATISFACTORILY COMPLETE THE PREPARATION AND OBLIGATIONS MAY RESULT IN RESCHEDULING OR CANCELLATION OF THE BAR/BAT MITAVAH DATE.**

**A. Jewish Education**

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah must, during the entire period of training and at the time of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, either (a) satisfactorily complete all requirements of MJCBY Religious School and, if the Bar/Bat Mitzvah occurs after graduation, be in the good standing at the Morris County High School for Hebrew Studies, or (b) be in full time attendance at a Jewish Day School. As a reminder, the MJCBY Religious School requires the following to be in good standing:

1. Regular attendance at all classes and completion of all assignments. Attendance is critical to Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation. MJCBY is considering a substantially increased Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fee for those who do not satisfy this requirement.

2. Attendance of 2/3 of Junior Congregation each year from 5th Grade on. Attendance is critical to Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation. MJCBY is considering a substantially increased Bar/Bat Mitzvah Fee for those who do not satisfy this requirement.

3. Leading Junior Congregation two times during 6th Grade and two times during 7th Grade.

4. Appropriate conduct when attending services and specifically during Bar/Bat Mitzvahs of classmates, friends and relatives. If behavior is not appropriate, the individual may be required to sit with his/her parents when attending future Bar/Bat Mitzvahs.

5. Completion of the 6th Grade Mitzvah program. This requires completion of thirteen (13) of the mitzvot on the Mitzvah List, as well as an appropriate mitzvah project. Please complete the Mitzvah Contract which is attached as Schedule 3, sign it, and return it to 6th grade teacher at least six months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

6. Completion of the 6th grade curriculum on the meaning of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the introduction to their Parsha and Haftorah, and the introduction to the use of Tefillin.

**B. Bar/Bat Mitzvah Lessons with the Cantor**

1. Approximately six months or more before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, your child will be assigned to an orientation class with the Cantor. The class covers the prayers in the service, the Haftorah blessings and the Haftorah trope (melodies). It is a prerequisite for this class that your child can satisfactorily read Hebrew, as the class is not intended to teach Hebrew reading. This class is given immediately following Hebrew School on Wednesdays from 6:00 to 6:30 PM. Private lessons generally commence 2-3 months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

2. Preparation for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah cannot occur just in the group classes and individual lessons with the Cantor. During the period of group lessons, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah must devote at least 20 minutes a day to practice and preparation. During the period of individual lessons, the Bnai Mitzvah must devote at least thirty minutes a day to practice and preparation. The amount of time specified here is an average. Particular Bar/Bat Mitzvahs may need to devote more time depending on the length and difficulty of the torah reading and haftorah, as well as the number of prayers that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will be leading in services.

**C. Preparation with the Rabbi**

Approximately three months before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, Rabbi Nesson will arrange to meet with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to start working on the speeches that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah will give, and to address any other questions or issues that have arisen. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah needs to plan to spend at least two hours a week working on these speeches during this time period until the speeches are completed and ready. This amount is an average and is set with the hope that the Bnai Mitzvah who devotes this amount of time will be finished writing his/her speeches at least two weeks prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. There will be some Bar/Bat Mitzvahs who find that they must devote more time to this preparation because of the subject matter of the Torah and Haftorah portions. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah can prepare for his/her sessions with Rabbi Nesson by reading his/her Torah portion and Haftorah in English, and answering the following questions:

1. What is the Torah Portion about?

2. What is the Haftorah about?

3. Is there anything in your Torah reading that is particularly important to you?

4. Is there anything in your Torah reading which teaches you a lesson that you would like to share with your family and friends?

5. What does becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah mean to you and why is it important?

6. What does becoming a Bar/Mitzvah mean to your family, parents and grandparents?

7. Do you see this event in your life as being the end of your Judaism or the beginning?

8. What do you want to do to learn more about your Jewishness?

9. Are there any people that you would like to thank for helping you reach this important day (e.g. parents, grandparents, Cantor, teachers, Rabbi, others)?

**D. Attendance at Services:** The Bar/Bat Mitzvah and his/her family are required to attend four Shabbat evening (Friday Night) and four Shabbat morning (Saturday) services at MJCBY during the six to eight week period immediately prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to help both the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and the family to become familiar with the service.

**E. Other Family Responsibilities:**

1. **Bar/Bat Mitzvah Profile:** Complete the Bar Mitzvah Profile that is attached to this Guide as Schedule 2 and return it to Rabbi Nesson one month prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

2. **Optional Blessing:** After the Bar/Bat Mitzvah’s aliyah, you may recite the blessing which gives thanks for releasing you from the religious obligations for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. This is optional. A copy of the blessing is enclosed.

3. **Parent’s Prayer:** If you intend to give a Parent’s Prayer at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, you may select one of the attached prayers. The details of the Parent’s Prayer are discussed above.

4. **Preparation of Honors List:** Approximately three (3) weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, the Rabbi will meet with you to review the honors list. You must assign the honors and return the honors sheet which is attached as Schedule 6 no later than two weeks prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. We have provided you with instructions for various honors in Schedule 7. The following rules apply to honors:

a. All individuals with honors must be Jewish. We do not allow non-Jews to participate on the Bimah during services.

b. All men with honors must wear a kippah and on Saturday morning, a Tallit.

c. All women with honors must wear a head covering. On Saturday morning, a tallit may be worn by those women who have chosen to do so.

d. All individuals selected for Aliyot must be able to recite the blessings before and after the aliyah in Hebrew. A copy of the blessing is attached in Hebrew, transliteration (the Hebrew words phonetically spelled in English) and an English translation. However, reading the blessings in English is NOT an option. A cassette tape is also available from the Cantor or Rabbi should you need to practice.

e. All individuals who are to read Torah must comply with the provisions of Section I C above.

f. The person who is asked to tie the torah should be someone who has done that before and knows what he/she is supposed to do.

g. You may request that a person who is on MJCBY’s list of approved individuals for lifting the Torah lift the Torah at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. MJCBY will generally be able to honor the request if the individual is at services that morning.

h. Hebrew names are required for all individuals who are called for Aliyot, including the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, his/her parents, and the individual who is asked to tie the torah. The Hebrew name consists of the individual’s Hebrew name as well as the Hebrew name of the individual’s father. You may also include the Hebrew name of the individual’s mother. PLEASE make sure you get these Hebrew names. It becomes very embarrassing for the individuals if they arrive on the Bimah for an Aliyah and do not know their Hebrew names.

i. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah family is limited to four aliyot, since the parents take the seventh aliyah, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah takes the Maftir aliyah, and two aliyahs are reserved for the congregation. It is preferable that the first aliyah be given to a Kohen and that the second aliyah is given to a Levi. The third and fourth aliyahs may not be given to either a Kohen or a Levi. Since the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family is limited as to the number of aliyahs that it receives, an aliyah may be shared by multiple people (e.g. Husband and Wife, all Aunts and Uncles, all Grandparents, all siblings of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah who have already had their Bar/Bat Mitzvah). MJCBY does, however, reserve the right to limit the number of individuals called for a single aliyah or to call a group aliyah that consists of more than 4 individuals by number, rather than name.

j. The attached form for honors is to be provided to the office at least two weeks before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Revisions must be made no later than one week before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

k. Please make sure that all individuals with honors on Friday Night arrive no later than the scheduled time for the start of services; and that all individuals with honors during the Saturday Morning service arrive no later than 9:50AM. If there is significant doubt or concern as to whether an honoree will be able to arrive by 9:50 AM, please list an alternate for that honor on the back of the honors form. If the alternate is to have an aliyah, please provide the alternate’s Hebrew Name.

4. **Preparation of your Guests:** Please advise your guests of the following either with the invitations or after they RSVP:

a. This is a religious service. We expect appropriate dress and behavior from all attendees. Women and Men should comply with the dress requirements in Section I above.

b. We expect all men to wear Kippot during services. We expect Jewish men to wear a Tallit.

c. Unlike many other synagogues, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah participates in many parts of the service starting at the very beginning (9:30 AM) and therefore arrival no later than 9:45 AM is strongly suggested. As most of the service is in Hebrew, we recommend that non-Jewish classmates and, at your option, non Jewish guests, be invited to arrive at 10:15, so that they are present before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah gives his/her speech on the Torah reading.

d. While we allow entry and exit from the Sanctuary at all times, we do hold people who have entered at the back of the Sanctuary if they arrive during certain prayers or during the sermon. We also ask that entry and exit, except at the end of services or before services begin at 9:30 AM, be done quietly without stopping to talk to people that you know along the way.

e. No food, drinks or candy (gum) should be brought into the building, because of Kashrut, or the Sanctuary, because of decorum. Please also advise them of the restrictions on cell phone usage, picture taking and smoking found in Section I A.

f. The size of our parking lot is limited. For those who are not local, please provide them with directions that include alternate parking locations. Please check with the office as to where parking is allowed other than in the public parking lot or metered spots on the streets. The office also has a map if you should need it. If you have guests staying at the Hyatt who do not wish to walk to services and you expect a large number of guests, we recommend that you check with the Hyatt about having a Hyatt van bring take them to/from services.

g. Gifts should not be brought to or given at the synagogue. If guests are dropped off at the Synagogue and will not be picked up until after a reception at another location, please ask them to either drop off the gift at your house the day before or the day after the Bar/Bat Mitzvah

5. **Chaperone Duty:** As part of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah responsibility to MJCBY, each family will be assigned to chaperone at the Shabbat Morning services of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah which **immediately precedes** yours, and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah which **immediately follows** yours. Please review the Chaperone Guide that is attached as Schedule 5. If you expect more than twenty (20) of your child’s friends who are between the ages of 11 and 14 to attend services on Shabbat Morning, you must arrange for two additional adults to help chaperone for each additional ten (10) “friends” that you expect. Thus, if you expect 40 friends to attend, you need to arrange for four (4) additional adult chaperones. If you ask adults to chaperone who do not have children in the current MJCBY Bar/Bat Mitzvah class, please provide them with a copy of Schedule 5 so they know what they are supposed to do. Please provide the names of the additional adult chaperones to the MJCBY Office no later than one week prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

6. **Ritual Purchases:**

a. For boys having a Bar Mitzvah and girls who elect to wear a Tallit and use Tefillin, purchase a Tallit and Tefillin. Tallitot can be bought through the Sisterhood gift shop or at a number of stores in New Jersey and New York. Consult the Rabbi with regard to the purchase of Tefillin.

b. Kippot: Many parents elect to provide kippot for guests and others. These may be ordered through Sisterhood.

7. **Candy:** It is traditional to throw candy at the Bar/Bat Mitzvah after the conclusion the blessings after the haftorah. The candy must be Kosher, which means that the candy must have an acceptable Hekscher on the box or container. The candy must also be soft (e.g. Sunkist Fruit Gems). Finally, the candy must be wrapped. The family is limited to 25 pieces of candy which must be supplied to the MJCBY office no later than noon on Friday. The candy is handed out by a member of the Ritual Committee.

8. **Gift of Israel:** The Morristown Jewish Center Beit Yisrael and UJC of MetroWest encourage all Bar/Bat Mitzvah families to enroll in the community’s gift of Israel Registry and to start saving now for an organized teen trip to Israel. UJC of MetroWest contributes to this. In conjunction with this, UJC of MetroWest suggests that you consider reproducing and adding the language that appears in Schedule 4 to your Bar or Bat Mitzvah invitations.

9. **Program Guides:** MJCBY normally prints a guide to Shabbat Morning services. Some families prefer to prepare a somewhat more elaborate program guide for family, friends and congregants to follow along and to keep as a memento. If you intend to prepare a program for your child’s service, please submit it to the Rabbi for review at least two weeks prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The Rabbi must approve the draft before you have it printed. Only approved programs may be distributed at MJCBY services.

10**. Honoraria** Though not required, many families would like to do something to express their thanks and acknowledge the hard working commitment by both the Rabbi and the Cantor in helping to prepare your child. We suggest that a donation be made to the Rabbi and the Cantor honoring the work with your child and the entire family toward the success of the day. MJCBY does not recommend a specific amount. An honorarium is entirely discretionary and should reflect what the family feels is appropriate.

In addition you may wish to make a donation to a specific MJCBY fund such as the Building, Education or Renovation Funds. For naming opportunities or the creation of an endowment please speak to the President of MJCBY.