



# *B'NEI MITZVAH* HANDBOOK

...the child stands between the generations inheriting  
from one and transmitting to the other...

Please read through this handbook and use it as a tool to familiarize yourself with the *bar/bat mitzvah* experience that is in your near future. The information contained herein is current for 2010-2011, is reviewed annually and is subject to change.



Dear Friends,

This booklet contains information which will guide you through the process of becoming *bar/bat mitzvah* here at Central Synagogue, what we trust will be a very meaningful time for you and your family. Our people have noted the journey of a Jewish child towards adulthood and for centuries have bestowed the occasion with great meaning and ritual.

The origins of a child becoming *bar/bat mitzvah* are based in the emergence of a 13-year-old boy into legal adulthood. After a young man's thirteenth birthday he was able to read from the *Torah*, a right reserved only for adults. He was legitimately counted as part of a minyan and was encouraged to marry, earn a living and raise a family. Though girls were not afforded the right to read from *Torah*, they were granted legal rights of maturity at age twelve.

While we realize that the legal stature of becoming *bar/bat mitzvah* (note the terms are nouns and should not be used as verbs - such as in the phrase "to be *bar/bat mitzvah*") no longer has significant impact, the occasion still contains a tremendous affirmation of continuity. We attach great importance to these celebrations and take seriously both the preparation and the commitments we ask of our students. I look forward to discussing the meaning when we meet.

However, no one would expect to end his/her formal secular education at age 13; neither should we think of the completion of this process as an end. It would not be fair to expect adults to function well with a 13-year-old's knowledge of Judaism; the most difficult religious issues need ever greater maturity for discussion. Becoming an acknowledged son or daughter of our people is opening a window to a lifetime of Jewish learning.

The following pages provide a road map of the next few years. Please be assured that we will work closely with you to answer questions you may have and that during the process of a child's preparation, your family will meet privately with one of our Rabbis and with the Cantor. Of course, please feel free to contact any of our clergy for counsel or guidance.

We look forward to a wonderful and rewarding family celebration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Peter J. Rubinstein". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and "R".

Peter J. Rubinstein  
Senior Rabbi



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# INTRODUCTION FOR PARENTS

Sons and daughters are given to us so that we may care for them and help them grow. Care and sustenance are necessary not just for the physical but also for hope and faith. In this sense, parents are partners with God in creating life as well as giving meaning and value to it. Jewish education is the means by which the spirit of the individual is helped to grow and mature. To stop growing is to stop living. This is the purpose of Jewish education; children join as partners with parents in passing down our Jewish heritage.

*Bar/Bat mitzvah*, meaning “son/daughter of the Commandments,” cannot claim ancient origins. There is not a hint of it in the *Torah*, but the Talmud says that 13 is the age “for the fulfillment of the Commandments.” Children were denied the privilege of observing the commandments until they were 13, so these became the central features of the *bar/bat mitzvah* observance.

The actual ceremony of becoming a *bar/bat mitzvah* is included in the ritual of regular community *Shabbat* services. The student shows that he/she is prepared to take on responsibilities in Jewish life when he/she reads from *Torah* and leads the congregation in worship, thus demonstrating what he/she has learned and his/her familiarity with our tradition. However, becoming a *bar/bat mitzvah* bestows no magical and instant transformation. At age 13 our children are still children, and will remain so for years to come. A *bar/bat mitzvah* celebrates the process of becoming a Jewish adult committed to observing *mitzvot*. It takes guidance from parents and many years of learning to accomplish this goal. But it is a goal within the reach of our children and one worth striving for.

In earlier times, the celebration of this occasion took place in the student’s home where a modest meal was served after the service in the synagogue. With the passage of time, the festive family meal grew into a party and sometimes banquets held in public halls. We encourage dignified celebrations, so that festivities will not dwarf the religious significance.

The Religious School, Rabbis, Cantors and tutors appointed by the Cantor provide the preparation but the parents’ help is essential. Parents should motivate their children properly for study, encourage excellence in their activities, attend worship services with their child and arrange the celebration itself in accordance with the religious spirit of the occasion. While a student is studying for this important religious life cycle event, parents should take to heart their own obligations as Jews. Likewise, parents should never give students an indication that *bar/bat mitzvah* is the end of their religious education. It is properly only the beginning.

“At every stage in life, in personality and character development, at which a person is beginning to search for his or her own unique, personal, individual identity, Judaism had the genius to distinguish that person by name, call that person by name out of the congregation. We call the person by their Hebrew name as well, linking Jewish identity with personal identity and with a sense of wider purpose: with a community beyond the individual self. We link this sacred Jewish observance with family, with life, with expressions of congratulations and appreciation for the child, and provide the person with a sense of self worth.

Let us show by the way we celebrate *bar/bat mitzvah*, by the dignity, the beauty, and the warmth of the observance, as we practice it, that we, too, are continuing in the way of the best of our ancestors going back to Abraham and Sarah. Ours is the task of restoring and maintaining the true luster to this jewel of ours in the treasure of Judaism.”

Rabbi Herbert Bronstein, *Bar Mitzvah and Idolatry*

# RITUAL INFORMATION

## STUDENT'S ROLE IN THE *SHABBAT* SERVICE

At the service when a child becomes *bar or bat mitzvah*, he or she will do the following:

- Chant from the *Torah* and the corresponding *Haftarah* in Hebrew
- Chant the associated blessings on the *Torah* and *Haftarah* in Hebrew
- Deliver a brief *d'var Torah* (teaching) about the *Torah* portion
- Assist in leading the *Torah* service

## HONORS: *SHABBAT* EVE

### Candle lighting

It is customary at Central Synagogue for two representatives of the *bar/bat mitzvah's* family to kindle the *Shabbat* lights on Friday evening. If the *bar/bat mitzvah* has a younger sibling, he/she may accompany the adult to the *Bimah* for this honor. The honoree will light the candles as the Cantor leads the congregation in the Hebrew blessing.

## HONORS: *SHABBAT* MORNING

### Hakafah

When the *Torah* Scroll is removed from the Ark, the *bar/bat mitzvah's* immediate family – parents and siblings – will join the *bar/bat mitzvah* and the clergy in the procession around the sanctuary. Following the procession, siblings will retake their seats, and grandparents and great grandparents will join the parents and the *bar/bat mitzvah* for the *Torah* Passing Ceremony.

### *Torah* Passing Ceremony

Family members and the *bar/bat mitzvah* will participate in the “chain of tradition,” where the Rabbi symbolically passes the *Torah* down from one generation to the next by holding the *Sefer Torah* (*Torah* Scroll) in front of each member of the family as they stand on the *Bimah*. Grandparents, great grandparents, parents, and the *bar/bat mitzvah* will form a line along which the *Torah* Scroll is ‘passed’ from generation to generation. Parents have the opportunity at this time to share a private statement of one or two sentences with their child before handing down the *Torah*. Once the *bar/bat mitzvah* has received the *Torah* Scroll, it will be brought to the lectern to be prepared for reading.

## *Aliyot*

There are three *Torah* honors called *Aliyot*. Family participates in the first two *Aliyot*, and the *bar/bat mitzvah* receives the third. Each *Aliyah* involves honorees chanting the blessings before and after the *Torah* reading. Family members who feel uncomfortable reciting or chanting Hebrew will be encouraged to read their blessings in English. Transliteration is available as an aid for people who know the blessings but are unsure of the Hebrew letters. Non-Jewish family members may also participate by reading the English translation. At least two people, but no more than four, can participate in the blessings before and after the reading of the *Torah*. At least two should be able to recite the blessings in Hebrew. It is important to note, however, that there should be a single voice heard, i.e. the blessings should not be recited by more than one person at a time. *Aliyot* may go to anyone over the age of thirteen the *bar/bat mitzvah* family seeks to honor. Honorees often include, but are not limited to: grandparents, parents, older siblings, aunts, uncles, and cousins.

## **HONORS FOR NON-JEWISH FAMILY MEMBERS**

We encourage family members to participate in *Shabbat* services as an important way for the student becoming a *bar/bat mitzvah* to honor those whose love has brought him/her to this milestone. We recognize that some of these family members may not be Jewish, and that their support has been no less instrumental in guiding the *bar/bat mitzvah* toward this day. Therefore, we seek to include non-Jewish parents and relatives in the celebration in equally meaningful ways, and we will be guided by each family's sense of what is authentic and appropriate. The only honor we reserve specifically for Jewish family members is the ritual Hebrew recitation of the blessing over the *Torah* reading and the lighting of the *Shabbat* candles. The translation of these blessings may be offered by non-Jewish family members.

# EDUCATION

## CURRICULUM OVERVIEW: SIXTH AND SEVENTH GRADES

The Religious School curriculum is based around six key areas of Jewish belief and identity:

- *God*
- *Torah* (sacred texts and Jewish ethics)
- *Israel*
- *Avodah* (worship and ritual)
- *Kehilah* (community)
- *Tikkun Olam* (social justice).

### *Kitah Zayin (6<sup>th</sup> Grade)*

*(v’Im lo achshav, eimatai?) ...And If The Time Is Not Now, When Will It Be?*

*Hineni (“I am here”): Responding to moral issues facing contemporary Jews*

The 6<sup>th</sup> grade curriculum provides students with the tools to identify and respond to moral issues facing the Jewish community today. Regular discussions of current events provide a lens through which students examine their values and beliefs. Students study the historical events that led to the Holocaust and the establishment of the modern state of Israel, formulating their own ideas about the role of God in the modern world.

As they begin to prepare to become *b’nei mitzvah*, students take turns leading grade-wide worship services from *Gates of Prayer*, the *siddur* (prayerbook) used at Central Synagogue. Students develop skills for the creation of a *d’var Torah* (words of Torah) using Rabbinical and modern commentaries as their guide.

## ***7th/8th Grade “Limmud Aleph & Bet”***

In this year, students will engage Judaism on a deeper level in order to take their place as adults in our community. Students learn about the *b'nei mitzvah* experience and understanding both the cultural and personal significance this ritual holds. Students will begin to look at this occasion as a true shift in their role and responsibilities within the Jewish community. This shift will begin through an exploration of the teachings of the Torah; which reveals the roots of these responsibilities, shown through the choices that our ancestors made. Students will look at how we and others use this source to inform how we live our lives today. This will include an investigation of our Reform Movement as well as the interpretations of both Orthodox and Conservative Judaism. Expanding the circle even further, students will examine how our texts, culture and experiences relate to that of other major world religions including Christianity, Islam and Buddhism; in an effort to breed more understanding on a global level. With this knowledge, students will examine the concept of social justice, specifically looking at *Tzedakah* as a way of taking responsibility for the world in which we live, an integral part of being a Jewish adult. Finally, students will begin to examine their relationship to and with God. *B'nei mitzvah* students will look at the texts of well known Jewish philosophers such as Maimonides, Baruch Spinoza, Martin Buber, Abraham Joshua Heschel as they take begin to integrate what they have learned into their everyday life.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR BECOMING *BAR/BAT MITZVAH* AT CENTRAL SYNAGOGUE

- *Bar/Bat mitzvah* is only open to members of Central Synagogue.
- It is understood that all students who are becoming *b'nei mitzvah* at Central Synagogue are raised solely in the Jewish tradition.
- From the beginning of your affiliation with Central Synagogue and our religious school, and from the first meeting at which *b'nei mitzvah* dates were handed out, we have indicated the policy of our congregation – that any student who wishes to become *bar/bat mitzvah* takes it upon him/herself with the full support of his/her family to attend religious school regularly through the time of becoming a *bar/bat mitzvah*. If this is impossible due to extenuating circumstances, parents must meet with the Religious School Education Director to work out an alternative means of Jewish education for their child. If a student does not attend Religious School and no alternative education has been arranged, his/her *bar/bat mitzvah* date will be released. We take the commitment to Jewish education **very seriously** at Central Synagogue.
- Students are required to have **three years** of participation in the Central Synagogue religious school prior to becoming *bar or bat mitzvah*. Students must fulfill all religious school requirements, including regular attendance, participation, and completion of work. Students who join the religious school later than the fourth grade may require additional tutoring in Hebrew beyond that offered by the religious school.
- Students who join the religious school later than the fourth grade, and who have not had a previous equivalent religious education may become *b'nei mitzvah* in the second half of their third year of study at Central Synagogue. Students transferring from another religious school or recognized program may have this requirement reduced, at the discretion of the clergy.
- Students are expected to attend services regularly, but at least twice monthly for the six months prior to becoming a *bar/bat mitzvah*. Worship is part of Jewish life and it is especially important that students and their families become accustomed to the flow of *Shabbat* service so that it is comfortable for them when they help lead it. The Religious School office keeps a record of all students' attendance at services.
- Prior to the beginning of their *b'nei mitzvah* tutoring, students must demonstrate mastery of the blessings before and after the reading of the *Torah* and *Haftarah* to the cantor. Students will be learning the blessings in religious school with the assistance of CDs or MP3 downloads given out in the fourth grade. (To download the blessings from our website, go to [www.centralsynagogue.org](http://www.centralsynagogue.org), click on “Worship” at the top left of the screen, then click on “Shabbat and Torah Blessings” on the drop-down menu.

# ABOUT THE B'NEI MITZVAH PROGRAM

## SETTING THE DATE

Children become *b'nei mitzvah* as part of our congregational *Shabbat* services on Saturday mornings. Usually, two children become *bar or bat mitzvah* at the same *Shabbat* service. When there are more than two children becoming *bar or bat mitzvah* on a Saturday, we will have two consecutive identical services; one at 9:30 a.m., and one at 11:30 a.m., with two children becoming *bar or bat mitzvah* at the early service, and one or two children becoming *bar or bat mitzvah* at the later service. Each child has identical responsibilities for preparation and equivalent roles during the service.

Three calendar years prior to the *b'nei mitzvah* year you will receive a letter from the B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator in the Cantors' office requesting you fill out an enclosed form stating your family's wish that your child become a *bar/bat mitzvah* at Central Synagogue. Parents will be notified in advance of the deadline for submitting this form.

After the Cantors' office has received all the forms, dates will be assigned guided by each student's birthday. We will do our best to avoid dates that parents indicate will not work for their family. Every endeavor is made to avoid assigning the same date to students attending the same secular school. Roughly two months later, usually in December of fourth grade, a program will take place at which assigned dates will be handed out in person to each family by the Central Synagogue clergy. At least one parent and the student should attend.

Families of students who join the school after fourth grade should request assignment of a date from the Cantors' office.

## 6<sup>th</sup> GRADE MASA MITZVAH RETREAT

The Religious School schedules and conducts a *Shabbat* family retreat the winter prior to the *b'nei mitzvah* year. At the retreat families and clergy come together to study and celebrate *Shabbat* and to discuss the values of the *bar/bat mitzvah* experience.

## **MITZVAH PROJECT**

All *b'nei mitzvah* students are expected to complete a mitzvah project consisting of thirteen hours of community service. The details on how to complete this project will be given out in the spring of the sixth grade year. The projects are expected to be completed before each student's *bar/bat mitzvah*. For more information please contact Jackie Schreiber ([schreiberj@censyn.org](mailto:schreiberj@censyn.org)).

## ***BAR/BAT MITZVAH SERVICE PREPARATION***

Approximately seven to nine months prior to the *bar/bat mitzvah* date, parents and children becoming *b'nei mitzvah* in the same six month period will attend a dinner seminar with the Cantors to review the details of *b'nei mitzvah* tutoring.

The B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator will schedule all tutoring in preparation for becoming *bar/bat mitzvah*. These sessions take place after secular school once a week for a half hour on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

Weekly meetings with a Central Synagogue tutor and periodic consultations with the Cantor will guide each student along the path to mastering the chanting of the *Torah* and *Haftarah* portions. Approximately six to seven months prior to the student becoming a *bar/bat mitzvah*, the B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator will contact you to schedule regular weekly 30-minute tutoring sessions with one of our *b'nei mitzvah* tutors. Additional meetings will also be arranged between the student and the assigned Cantor: the first, to which the family is encouraged to attend, shortly after the start of the tutoring process.

Four to six weeks prior to becoming a *bar* or *bat mitzvah*, the student will begin private meetings with one of the Rabbis. With the Rabbi's guidance, he/she will practice reading from the *Torah* scroll, study his/her *Torah* portion and develop a *d'var Torah* (brief sermon). The *d'var Torah* is an exposition of the *Torah* portion as it applies to the life of the student and as the student would choose to teach it to the congregation. Thus, it is not an opportunity for personal 'thank you's.

There will then be two rehearsals in the main sanctuary. These appointments are scheduled by the B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator. Parents must attend the final rehearsal, which generally occurs the week immediately

prior to a child's becoming *bar* or *bat mitzvah*. The names of those participating on Friday evening and in the *Aliyot* on Saturday should be sent to the B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator by the day of the first sanctuary rehearsal.

## **ADDITIONAL TUTORING**

When a child requires tutoring **as a supplement to religious school**, generally for additional Hebrew tutoring, the education office will recommend a tutor. The tutor will regularly report to the education office and the classroom teachers on the progress of the student. If a family employs a tutor who has not been recommended by the school, we ask that you please have the tutor coordinate with the school office on matters of curriculum and ongoing assessment. Our goal is to provide an educational program in which students only require outside tutoring under unusual circumstances (such as an extended absence from school), and for the duration of the tutoring to be short-term.

When a child requires tutoring **as a supplement to *b'nei mitzvah* preparation** the B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator will provide you with a list of approved private tutors. We ask that you let the Cantors' office know the name of (and contact information for) your child's tutor, so that the Cantors can periodically assess the progress of your child. In these cases, fees for (and location of) extra-curricular tutoring will be negotiated directly between the family and the tutor. Central Synagogue does not provide a space for private tutoring.

## **USHERING AT ANOTHER FAMILY'S CELEBRATION**

It is Central Synagogue's tradition that families help each other by ushering at a *Shabbat* service before their own. By doing so we share the delight in the Sabbath and help one another celebrate the occasion. We greet and welcome members of the congregation and visitors who have come to worship. Your date for ushering will be assigned by the Shamashim Coordinator, Paul Dorfman. The Shamashim are Central Synagogue's group of congregants trained in welcoming guests. Please note that ushering begins one half hour before services, and lasts through the conclusion of the service.

# LOGISTICAL MATTERS

## FLOWERS

Central Synagogue orders the flowers for the Sanctuary *Bimah* for the *Shabbat*. The cost is covered by a portion of your *bar/bat mitzvah* fee.

## *KIPOT AND TALITOT*

The congregation provides *kippot* and *talitot* for those who choose to wear them. We do not allow families to distribute individualized *kippot* at services.

## *HIDDUR MITZVAH*

Our tradition teaches that one should try to wear fine clothes on the *Shabbat*, for it is written (Isaiah 58:13) “and you shall honor,” which is interpreted by the Rabbis to mean that the garments worn on the *Shabbat* shall not be the same as those worn on weekdays.

We recognize that standards for dress have become somewhat less formal than in previous generations. Still, it is our expectation that worshippers of all ages will come to services dressed in a manner reflecting “*hiddur mitzvah*.” Specifically, jeans, sweatshirts, t-shirts, baseball caps, bare shoulders, short skirts, and similar clothing are not appropriate.

## PROPER DECORUM AT SERVICES

Sadly, we sometimes have problems with decorum, especially among our younger guests and school friends, though at times among adult guests as well. In order to maintain the dignity and sacredness of the service, we hope that you will explain to your guests that the importance of quiet during services. Ushers are instructed to ask guests who do not maintain proper decorum to leave the sanctuary. If disruptive behavior continues, the service will be halted.

## CELL PHONES

All cell phones are to be turned off while in the sanctuary; especially during services.

## **RULES GOVERNING THE USE OF PHOTOGRAPHIC AND VIDEO EQUIPMENT**

Photographs may NOT be taken in the sanctuary on *Shabbat*. When a child is becoming *bar/bat mitzvah*, family photographs may be taken either before or after your last rehearsal or at another scheduled time when the Sanctuary is available. Lights and flash may be used at that time. Pulpit furniture may NOT be moved for the purpose of photographs. Photo shoots CANNOT be booked until all rabbi appointments, including Sanctuary rehearsals, are scheduled and confirmed. Once appointments are confirmed, arrangements for your family photographs can be made through the Events Department by contacting Melissa Pisarra ([pisarram@censyn.org](mailto:pisarram@censyn.org)). Photographs may be taken at the *kiddush* reception after services. Photographers must cooperate with the clergy, our security guards, and the Events Department regarding all matters.

## **VIDEO RECORDING**

As a special service to our congregants, Central Synagogue now offers a digital video recording service for your *simcha*. It is the policy of Central Synagogue that no outside photographers or videographers are permitted to take photos or video during services. However, Central Synagogue will provide a professional quality DVD of your child becoming a *bar/bat mitzvah* through our in-house A/V *consultant*. The cost of one DVD will be included in the *bar/bat mitzvah* fee.

## **INVITATIONS**

Your invitations should invite your guests to be at the Saturday Morning *Shabbat* services in the sanctuary promptly at the stated starting time of either 9:30 or 11:30AM. Friday evening *Shabbat* services in the sanctuary start promptly at 6:00PM. If you will be hosting a luncheon or *Kiddush* in the Pavilion, Community House, or elsewhere immediately following services, this should be included on your invitation. **There will be no announcements made from the *Bimah* concerning family celebrations.**

## ***KIDDUSH***

Central Synagogue presents a congregational *kiddush*. You and your guests are welcome participants. The *kiddush* consists of wine and *challah*.

## BOOKING OF AN EVENT

### **B'nei Mitzvah Shared Kiddush Policy**

Central Synagogue offers room rentals for your Kiddush, luncheon, or evening event. We also offer room rentals for other lifecycle events, meetings and parties. We look forward to helping you to celebrate your upcoming *simcha*.

The clergy are encouraging members of our congregation to share their Kiddushes following bar mitzvah services.

Central Synagogue now offers all families the opportunity to hold a 1 hour Kiddush in the Pavilion immediately following your child's bar mitzvah service. In order to accommodate up to four families per Saturday, we are revising our Private Room Rental Policy to a new Shared Kiddush Program which will allow both families in the first service to share the Kiddush with each other, and the families in the second service to do the same. It is a meaningful way to provide a celebration for your family's milestone event and acknowledge that your family is part of the larger Central Synagogue Community.

To request a room rental for your Kiddush, please go to the following link:

[http://www.centralsynagogue.org/index.php/lifecycles/room\\_rentals/](http://www.centralsynagogue.org/index.php/lifecycles/room_rentals/) on the Central Synagogue website, no sooner than 12 months before your Bar/Bat mitzvah date. Five months prior to the date, if only one family has signed up for the Kiddush, you may have a single family celebration. More specific information, including pricing, can be found by contacting Steve Weingord (212-838-5122 Ext 3001) or on the Central Synagogue's website under "Room Rentals," as of January 1, 2012.

# **CELEBRATE THROUGH *TZEDAKAH*: GIFTS OF TIME AND RESOURCES**

*Tzedakah*, according to the Torah, is “equal to all other commandments combined.” Giving of charitable gifts is basic to Jewish tradition and is the traditional way for Jews to express their gratitude. *Tzedakah*—which literally means “justice”—is one of the basic tenets of living Judaism: helping to make the world better by helping others.

A child’s becoming a *bar/bat mitzvah* can be an occasion to demonstrate your support of your synagogue community through *Tzedakah* and to share your gratitude for your family’s joy. Central Synagogue depends on the charitable support of its members to carry out its many programs, with donations responsible for over 25% of our annual budget.

You can tailor your gifts to your family’s interests and ability. We strongly encourage all members of Central Synagogue to participate in our Yom Kippur Appeal, which supports the General Fund and helps offset the ongoing operational costs of running the synagogue. *B’nei mitzvah* families are invited to sponsor the Oneg Shabbat on the Friday evening prior to the *bar/bat mitzvah*. Many families ask how to demonstrate their appreciation to the clergy. Each member of the clergy has a charitable discretionary fund to which donations can be made.

For more information about donations to Central Synagogue, please contact Daniel Nadelmann, Director of Development, at 212-838-5122, extension 2021.

# GLOSSARY

We do not like to assume that every family is familiar with all the terms that may be used in this process. Therefore, we are listing some words below that are associated with the *bar/bat mitzvah* ceremony.

**Aliyah:** literally “going up;” the blessings before and after the *Torah* readings; it is an honor to be invited to recite these blessings.

**Bar/Bat mitzvah:** literally translated as “Son/Daughter of the Commandment,” more accurately understood as “the Commanded One.” Figuratively, it means the age of responsibility.

**Bimah:** the pulpit or raised area at the front of the sanctuary/chapel.

**B’nei Mitzvah:** more than one *bar/bat mitzvah*. Used when referring to more than one child.

**B’not Mitzvah:** more than one *Bat mitzvah*. Used when referring to more than one girl. If you have 50 girls and one boy, the term ‘*B’nei mitzvah*’ is still used.

**Confirmation:** a life cycle event of equal ritual significance in the life of a Jewish child. It is a ceremony that takes place during the holiday of *Shavuot* when the child and his/her classmates confirm their commitment to Judaism. At Central Synagogue we celebrate Confirmation in tenth grade.

**Haftarah:** the portion from the Prophets or writings that is read after the reading of the *Torah*.

**Kipah:** *yarmulke* or head covering.

**Parshat ha’Shavua:** the *Torah* portion of the week.

**Seder K’riat ha’Torah:** the portion of the service when the *Torah* and *Haftarah* are read.

**Shacharit:** the morning service.

**Tallit:** a Jewish prayer shawl once only worn by men and boys from the age of *bar mitzvah*. Today, girls and women wear them also. A *tallit* must have *tzitzit* on the corners.

**Torah:** also known as the Five Books of Moses. The *Torah* is the first section of the Hebrew Bible.

**Tzitzit:** specially tied fringes on the corners of the *tallit* that are meant to be symbolic of the *Mitzvot*.

**Yad:** the pointer used when reading from the *Torah*.

**Hebrew Name:** a Hebrew name is used for ritual purposes. It is composed of your Hebrew name and the Hebrew name of both your parents. The word “*ben*” or “*bat*” is inserted to mean “son of” or “daughter of,” and the letter *vav* is used to mean “and,” e.g. Yoseif Tzvi ben Mordechai v’Esther; Sara Rivka bat Hannah v’Shalom.

# CONTACT SHEET

**Executive Director**

**Livia Thompson**

**212-838-5122 x 2001**

*Contact with questions regarding your account or membership issues in regards to your simcha at Central Synagogue.*

**Assistant Director, Member Services**

**Caren Keller**

**212-838-508-3009**

*Contact with questions regarding your membership at Central Synagogue.*

**Director of Operations/Events**

**Beth Woloff**

**212-838-5122 x.3001**

*Contact with questions regarding facilities and logistics revolving around your simcha at Central Synagogue.*

**Events Manager**

**Steve Weingord**

**212-838-5122 x.3002**

*Contact with questions regarding booking a room, contracting, catering and scheduling your photo shoots and other logistics for your simcha at Central Synagogue.*

**B'nei Mitzvah Coordinator**

**Sabrina Ferrer**

**212-838-5122 x.1015**

*Contact with questions regarding tutoring, clergy appointments, and b'nei mitzvah dates, questions and concerns.*

**Billing**

**Tashauna Hylton**

**212-838-5122 x.2012**

*Contact with questions regarding your membership at Central Synagogue.*

**Religious School Principal**

**Arielle Garellek**

**212-838-5122 x.4032**

*Contact regarding Religious School-related inquiries.*

**Mitzvah Project, Religious School**

**Jackie Schreiber**

**212-838-5122 x.4040**

*Contact regarding mitzvah projects and educational questions.*