

The Adult B'nei Mitzvah Program @ Central Synagogue

We are so excited that you are interested in celebrating your status as an adult B'nei Mitzvah. This year-long course will familiarize you with the morning Shabbat liturgy, teach you the skills you need to chant Torah, and introduce you to a vibrant community of other members committed to prayer and learning.

At the conclusion of the class, students will receive a special blessing during a Friday night Shabbat service and will be assigned in groups to chant Torah at one of our Saturday morning "Mishkan" services in the Winter/Spring of 2023.

We know you probably have lots of questions, and we will do our best to anticipate them here. But if you have other questions or concerns, do not hesitate to reach out to Rabbi Auerbach (auerbachn@censyn.org).

Who is teaching the class?

The primary instructors will be Cantor Daniel Mutlu, Rabbi Nicole Auerbach, and Jewish Educator Melissa De Lowe, with occasional "guest appearances" by other Central clergy. Students will be supported in their learning to chant in one-on-one sessions with our cantors and cantorial intern.

Are there any prerequisites or outside commitments?

We expect that students will enter the Adult B'nei Mitzvah cohort with varying levels of formal Jewish study. There is no prerequisite to join, but if you have not already taken one of our Adult Education classes, we ask that you choose at least one class over the course of the year to take in addition to the B'nei Mitzvah class. This can be any sort of class – text study, history, culture, you name it. As long as it broadens your Jewish knowledge, it counts. If you'd like to learn more about our classes or need a recommendation, please contact Rabbi Sarah Berman (bermans@censyn.org).

Because you will be preparing to chant Torah as part of our Saturday morning [Mishkan](#) community, we do ask that you commit to attending (in person or via Zoom) at least **one Mishkan service per month**, beginning no later than the fall of 2022. This will not only familiarize you with the liturgy and blessings of the service but will also allow you to build a connection to our Saturday morning prayer community. By participating in these services, you will ensure that when you are called up to the Torah, you will look out and see the familiar faces of your community, eager to support you.

When does the class meet, and what will we learn?

The class will meet on **Wednesdays from 9-10 AM on Zoom**, beginning on **February 2, 2021**. We will plan periodic in-person get-togethers throughout the program so that you can get to know one another and experience Jewish life as a group.

The outline for the class is as follows:

February 2022 – Foundations

In our first month, we will get to know one another, and also get a grounding in some basic topics related to B'nei Mitzvah, including the nature of mitzvot (commanded acts), the meaning of becoming B'nei Mitzvah, the relationship between the Torah and other foundational Jewish texts, and an overview of Jewish liturgical music. This portion of the class will be taught by Cantor Mutlu, Rabbi Auerbach, and Rabbi Lorge.

March-April 2022 – Hebrew Decoding

Working with seasoned and engaging Jewish Educator Melissa De Lowe (who taught Rabbi Auerbach to read Hebrew!), you will learn the Hebrew alphabet and vowel system, and learn to sound out Hebrew words.

May-June 2022 – Torah Trope

Melissa De Lowe will introduce students to Torah trope – the system of symbols that indicate how chanted Torah text should sound. By learning trope, you will get the “keys” to Torah chanting and will be empowered to chant Torah not only as we celebrate your being B'nei Mitzvah, but for years to come.

Summer 2022 – Independent Study

We'll take a break from classes over the summer, but you'll be assigned your Torah portions and can start learning them with help (and recordings) from Cantor Mutlu.

Fall 2022 (After the High Holy Days) – The Morning Prayers

Rabbi Nicole Auerbach will lead the class in a deep dive into the Shabbat morning prayer book. We will learn about the structure and meaning of the prayers and explore their meaning in our lives. This will conclude the formal “classroom” learning, but students will continue to meet one-on-one with the clergy to learn and practice their Torah portion.

Winter 2022 – Spring 2023 – Leading Our Community

At the conclusion of the fall prayer class, we will invite students to receive a special blessing at Friday night Shabbat services, so that our whole community can celebrate your accomplishment. Then, throughout the Spring, you will be assigned in groups to chant Torah during one of our Saturday morning “Mishkan” services.

What is the cost for joining the class?

The cost for the class is \$360 per semester (for a total of \$720). As with all of our adult educational offerings, we do not want cost to be a barrier to your participation. If you would like to discuss tuition assistance, please contact Rabbi Auerbach.

If you have more questions, please reach out to Rabbi Nicole Auerbach (auerbachn@censyn.org).