Dear friends,

Mazel tov and welcome to the B’nei Mitzvah journey at Central Synagogue. When a child is called to Torah for the first time, it is a simcha, a joy, for the entire community. In that spirit, we thank you for sharing your joy with our Central family. This brochure contains information which will guide you through our meaningful process of becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Many cultures have found a way to acknowledge the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual changes in the lives of teens. Some communities celebrate this moment by having their children demonstrate physical prowess, while others challenge their teens to wildlife survival. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah calls upon our young adults to read and teach from the Torah. This taps into your physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual selves in the most meaningful of ways as we recognize your entrance into adulthood.

Jewish culture is the collective wisdom of our civilization that is passed, l’dor v’dor, from generation to generation, through literature, symbols and customs. We call this total conversation “the Study of Torah”. Becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a bold step in joining the 3,000 year conversation about living Jewishly. As you embrace the Torah on the day of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, you will be our scholar and teacher. The cantors, rabbis, tutors, and lay leaders are with you in your learning and preparation, and we look forward to learning from you as well. We will work closely with you to support you in this process, and we look forward to sharing the journey with you.

Warmly,

Cantor Daniel Mutlu
Senior Cantor

Cantor Julia Cadrain

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B’nei Mitzvah Timeline

Below is a list of key events in the B’nei Mitzvah process for you to look forward to. Keep in mind that these are in addition to the expectations/requirements listed in this brochure and in our B’nei Mitzvah Handout on our website.

1. **NITZANIM 4TH GRADE**
   - Attend Brit B’nei Mitzvah Family Program

2. **CHALUTZIM 6TH GRADE**
   - Attend Masa Mitzvah Retreat and complete Social Justice Project. Serve as Shamashim

3. **6 MONTHS PRIOR**
   - Begin tutoring

4. **8-10 MONTHS PRIOR**
   - Trope class led by Cantors

5. **4-5 MONTHS PRIOR**
   - First Cantor Meeting with students and parent(s)

6. **2 MONTHS PRIOR**
   - Parent/Rabbi Meeting, First Student/Rabbi Meeting, Second Student/Cantor Meeting

7. **2 WEEKS PRIOR**
   - First Rehearsal (with service partner)

8. **1 WEEK PRIOR**
   - Final Rehearsal with parents (and service partner)

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

- Harry M. Epstein, The Eternal Light

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Central Synagogue

123 East 55th Street
New York, NY 10022
(212) 838-5122
www.centralsynagogue.org
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Cantor Daniel Mutlu
Senior Cantor
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The B’nei Mitzvah Program

Below is a list of key events in the B’nei Mitzvah process for you to look forward to. Keep in mind that these are in addition to the expectations/requirements listed in this brochure and in our B’nei Mitzvah Handout on our website.

**B’nei Mitzvah Timeline**

**NITZANIM**
**4TH GRADE**
1. Attend Brit B’nei Mitzvah Family Program
2. Receive Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date at Dance of Mitzvah

**CHALUTZIM**
**6TH GRADE**

**BONIM**
**5TH GRADE**
4. Trope class led by Cantors

**8-10 MONTHS PRIOR**
5. First Cantor Meeting with students and parent(s)

**4-5 MONTHS PRIOR**
6. First Cantor Meeting with students and parent(s)
7. Begin tutoring

**2 MONTHS PRIOR**
8. Parent/Rabbi Meeting, First Student/Rabbi Meeting, Second Student/Cantor Meeting

**2 WEEKS PRIOR**
9. First Rehearsal (with service partner)

**12 MONTHS**
10. Second Student/Rabbi Meeting, Third Student/Cantor Meeting
11. Final Rehearsal with parents (and service partner)

**NITZANIM**
**4TH GRADE**
12. Final Rehearsal with parents (and service partner)

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Warmly,

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B’nei Mitzvah Timeline

We look forward to being with your families for these key events on the journey to becoming bnei mitzvah.

1. NITZANIM 4TH GRADE
   Receive Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date at Derech Mitzvah

2. BONIM 5TH GRADE
   Brit B’nei Mitzvah Family Program

3. CHALUTZIM 6TH GRADE
   Masa Mitzvah Retreat and complete Social Justice Project. Serve as Shomashlim

4. 8-10 MONTHS PRIOR
   Trope class led by Cantors

5. 6 MONTHS PRIOR
   Begin tutoring

6. 4-5 MONTHS PRIOR
   First Cantor Meeting with students and parent(s)

7. 2 MONTHS PRIOR
   Parent/Rabbi Meeting, First Student/Rabbi Meeting, Second Student/Cantor Meeting

8. 2 WEEKS PRIOR
   First Rehearsal (with service partner)

9. 1 WEEK PRIOR
   Second Student/Rabbi Meeting, Third Student/Cantor Meeting

10. 1 WEEK PRIOR
    Final Rehearsal with parents (and service partner)

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Bar or Bat Mitzvah means son or daughter of the commandments. Children become Bar or Bat Mitzvah at 13 years old. The Torah, the major corpus of Jewish law, describes this rite of passage as the age at which children become personally responsible for their observance. At Central, we mark this special moment with a Bar or Bat Mitzvah service. At this service, your child will be called to serve in the Torah service for the first time. Typically, they will also chant Haftarah (a reading from the Prophets), and give a d’var Torah (a teaching from their Torah portion).

How will my child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah date be assigned?
We make every attempt to assign a date close to your child’s birthday. As we don’t hold B’nai Mitzvah services at Central in July or August, children with summer birthdays will be assigned a date in the Spring or Fall, as close to their birthday as possible. As per our policy, we do not assign the same B’nai Mitzvah weekend to students who attend the same school, with the exception of twins.

What if we are assigned a date that does not work for our family?
After all dates are assigned at the Darche Mitzvah program, you will be notified of the dates prior to requesting a date change. Although we cannot guarantee a specific date will be available, we will do our best to find a date that works for your family. We ask that you do not request a specific date for your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah. However, if there are certain dates that you know will not work for your family, please let us know via the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date Form to be filled out prior to Darche Mitzvah.

Who will be officiating my child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah service?
Can I request a Rabbi or Cantor?
Clergy assignments are completed in the Spring preceding the academic year. We know that you may have special relationships with specific clergy, and in assigning dates, we will take those relationships into account. Regardless of who officiates, it will be a meaningful day for your family.

What is the difference between the 9:30 AM and the 11:30 AM service?
Children celebrate becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah at our Shabbat morning services at 9:30 AM. If we have more than two children becoming Bar/ Bat Mitzvah on a Shabbat morning, we will hold an 11:30 AM morning service as well. The liturgy and role of the Bar Mitzvah will be the same at both services.

What if my child has special learning needs?
We have special education support at Central and will be happy to discuss with you how we meet the needs of all our B’nai Mitzvah students. If you would like to speak with a clergy member about your child’s needs, please contact our B’nai Mitzvah Program Manager, Karen Eckstein, at ecksteink@centralnyc.org.

When will my child start preparing?
Tuition begins 6 to 8 months prior to the b’nai mitzvah date. The b’nai Mitzvah Program Manager will be in touch to schedule the tutoring time slot and confirm all appointments and rehearsals.

I don’t know Hebrew. How can I help my child prepare?
You do not need to know Hebrew. The best way to help your child prepare is to show them the importance of this lifecycle event, and to hold them accountable to regular at-home practice sessions. We have found that when you show your child you care about the service, your child will care too.

Will my child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah service be recorded?
How can I obtain a copy of the video?
Central Synagogue live streams all of its services on our website, as well as Friday night, Saturday morning (9:30am), and holiday services on the Jewish Broadcasting Service (JBS). Any person present at Central Synagogue during these times gives consent to being filmed.

Will my child be able to attend a service before his/her own Bar/Bat Mitzvah?
It is Central Synagogue’s tradition that families help each other by serving as ushers (shammashim) 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 give welcome and great members of the congregation and visitors who have come to worship. We expect this requirement to be completed in the sixth grade.

RITUAL INFORMATION

What role will my child have in the Shabbat service?
At the service when a child becomes Bar or Bat Mitzvah, he or she will typically do the following:
• Chant from the Torah and the corresponding Haftarah in Hebrew
• Chant the associated blessings for the Torah and Haftarah in Hebrew
• Deliver a d’var Torah (teaching) about the Torah portion

What honors can I give my family?
Every child comes to Torah through the support and love of family and community, and we want to honor those who have been part of the journey. There are many ways to honor loved ones for your child’s Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The officiating rabbi will discuss honors opportunities at your parent meetings.
• Two loved ones may kindle the Shabbat lights on Friday evening. This is a low pressure honor that does not require speaking or chanting. This honor works well for younger siblings, but can be for anyone you choose.
• When the Torah Scroll is removed from the Ark, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and his/her immediate family — parents and siblings — will join the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and the clergy in the procession around the sanctuary.
• There are three Torah honors called Aliyot. Family and loved ones participate in the first two Aliyot, and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah receives the third. Each Aliyah involves honoring chanting the blessings before and after the Torah is raised. Any Jew may go to anyone over the age of thirteen who the Bar/Bat Mitzvah family seeks to honor. Honorees often include, but are not limited to: grandparents, parents, older siblings, mates, and friends.
• Prior to your child’s first rehearsal, we ask that you fill out the honors form here: www.centralnyc.org/BNeshabbatHonors.

What is the Torah Passing Ceremony?
Grandparents, great-grandparents, and parents, are invited to 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. The Torah pass is a moving and emotional moment for you to look forward to.

What honors can I give to non-Jewish family and friends?
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 blessings over the Torah reading. The translation of these blessings may be offered by non-Jewish family members.

LOGISTICS

When can I take photos with my family?
Families often choose to take photos before or after the final rehearsal. Some families even choose to take photos on a date after the actual Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, as it can be less hectic. This component is completely optional. You may reserve a photographer after confirming all other necessary times with the Program Manager. If you have any questions about taking photos in the Sanctuary, please contact Chelsey Linkens, our Events Manager, at linkensc@centralnyc.org.

Celebrate through Tzedakah

How can we demonstrate support of our synagogue community through Tzedakah and share our gratitude for our family’s joy?
Here are several ways in which you can honor your child becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah through a gift to Central Synagogue. We ask that you consider an increased gift to the annual Yom Kippur Appeal, which is the single most important way to help the ongoing financial needs of the Synagogue. In addition, you may make a contribution to the synagogue in honor of one or more members of the clergy for the meaningful role they play in this important lifecycle event for your family.

Is there a kiddush following the B’nai Mitzvah service?
Central Synagogue provides a congregational kiddush following each service on Saturday morning. You and your guests are welcome to attend. The Saturday congregational kiddush consists of wine and challah.

What is the B’nai Mitzvah Shared Kiddush Program?
Central Synagogue now offers all families the opportunity to hold a shared kiddush in the Pavilion, immediately following your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. In order to accommodate up to four families on Saturday, we are offering an all-inclusive 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 participate in the shared kiddush program, please visit: www.centralnyc.org/SharedKiddush.

For more specific information, including pricing, please contact Events Manager, Steve Weingard, at weingards@centralnyc.org.

CELEBRATE THROUGH TZEDAKAH
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

ABOUT THE B’NEI MITZVAH PROGRAM

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• How will my child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah date be assigned?
We make every attempt to assign a date close to your child’s birthday. As we don’t have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah service at Central in July or August, children with summer birthdays will be assigned a date in the Spring or Fall, as close as possible. As per our policy, we do not assign the same Bar/Bat Mitzvah weekend to students who attend the same school, with the exception of twins.

• What if we are assigned a date that does not work for our family?
After all dates are assigned at the Derech Mitzvah program, you will be notified of the particulars requiring a date change. Although we cannot guarantee a specific date will be available, we will do our best to find a date that works for your family. We ask that you do not request a specific date for your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah. However, if there are certain dates that you know will not work for your family, please let us know via the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date Form to be filled out prior to Derech Mitzvah.

• Who will be officiating my child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah service?
Can I request a Rabbi or Cantor?
Clergy assignments are done in the Spring preceding the academic year. We know that you may have special relationships with specific clergy, and in assigning dates, we will take those relationships into account. Regardless of who officiates, it will be a meaningful day for your family.

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• What if my child has special learning needs?
We have special education support at Central and will be happy to discuss with you how we meet the needs of all our Bar/Bat Mitzvah students. If you would like to speak with a clergy member about your child’s needs, please contact our Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program Manager, Karen Eckstein, at ecksteink@censyn.org.

• When will my child start preparing?
Tutoring begins 6 to 8 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program Manager will be in touch to schedule a tutoring time slot and confirm all appointments and rehearsals.

• I don’t know Hebrew. How can I help my child prepare?
You do not need to know Hebrew. The best way to help your child prepare is to show them the importance of this lifecycle event, and to hold them accountable to regular at-home practice sessions. We have found that when you show your child you care about the service, your child will care too.

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It is Central Synagogue’s tradition that families help each other by serving as ushers (shamashim) at a Shabbat service before their own. By doing so, we share the dignity of the Sabbath and help one another celebrate the occasion. We welcome and great members of the congregation and visitors who have come to worship. We expect this requirement to be completed in the sixth grade.

RITUAL INFORMATION

• What role will my child have in the Shabbat service?
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LOGISTICS

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• Is there a kiddush following the Bar/Bat Mitzvah service?
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• What is the B’nei Mitzvah Shared kiddush Program?
Central Synagogue now offers all families the opportunity to hold a special private kiddush in the Pavilion, immediately following your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. In order to accommodate up to four families on Saturday, we are offering an all-inclusive shared kiddush program which will allow both families in the first service to share the kiddush with each other, and then 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 participate in the shared kiddush program, please visit: www.central synagogue.org/SharedKiddush.

For more specific information, including pricing, please contact Events Manager, Steve Weingard, at weingardscsyn.org.

CELEBRATE THROUGH TZEĐAHAJK

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There are several ways in which you can honor your child becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah through a gift to Central Synagogue. We ask that you consider an increased gift to the annual Yom Kippur Appeal, which is designed to help ensure that every child and youth in need can participate in our synagogue community. Any person present at Central Synagogue during the Yom Kippur Appeal’s one-hour special observance will be asked to make a contribution to the synagogue in honor of one or more loved ones. These donations are tax deductible and helps sustain our exceptional congregation — everything from our beautiful sanctuary, to our extracurricular clergy, to our in-kind commitment that no family be turned away for financial reasons. You can also help by sponsoring the Great Shabbath on the Friday evening before your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. This gift will cover the cost of the reception immediately following services, including food for as many as 500 people. Your family’s name will be listed in our Order of Service, which is distributed by our ushers at the beginning of services on Friday night and Saturday morning. Finally, you may want to make a contribution to the synagogue in honor of one or more members of the clergy for the meaningful role they play in this important lifecycle event for your family.

If you have any questions about making a contribution in honor of your child’s Bar or Bat Mitzvah, please contact Director of Development, Daniel Nadelmann at 212.838.5189 or nadelmannd@censyn.org.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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¿How will my child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah date be assigned?
We make every attempt to assign a date close to your child’s birthday. As we don’t have B’nai Mitzvah services at Central in July or August, children with summer birthdays will be assigned a date in the Spring or Fall, as dictated by the Bar/Bat Mitzvah program. As per our policy, we do not assign the same B’nai Mitzvah weekend to students who attend the same school, with the exception of twins.

¿What if we are assigned a date that does not work for our family?
After all dates are assigned at the Derech Mitzvah program, you will be notified of the proposed date and asked to confirm. If you cannot confirm a specific date, we will do our best to find a date that works for your family. We ask that you do not request a specific date for your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah. However, if there are certain dates that you know will not work for your family, please let us know via the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date Form to be filled out prior to Derech Mitzvah.

¿Will my child be able to attend a service before his/her own Bar/Bat Mitzvah?
It is Central’s Synagogue’s tradition that families help each other by serving as ushers (shamashim) 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. We expect this requirement to be completed in the sixth grade.

REQUIREMENTS

¿What are the requirements for becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Central Synagogue?
• Bar/Bat Mitzvah is only open to members of Central Synagogue.
• Students are required to have at least four years of participation in our religious school (the LCLJ), beginning by the third grade, and continuous participation in our Bar/Bat Mitzvah service.
• Students must fulfill all religious school requirements, including regular attendance, participation, and completion of work. Students who join the LCLJ later than the third grade may require additional tutoring in Hebrew beyond that offered by the LCLJ.
• Students are expected to attend services regularly – at least five times per year during 4th, 5th, and 6th grade, and at least seven times per year during the 7th grade year. 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 they are comfortable when they help lead it.
• All B’nai Mitzvah students are expected complete the social justice unit specific to their 6th grade year at the LCLJ.

¿What is the flow of Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Central Synagogue?
Tuition begins 6 to 8 months prior to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah date. The B’nai Mitzvah Program Manager will be in touch to schedule a tutoring time slot and confirm all appointments and rehearsals.

¿I don’t know Hebrew. How can I help my child prepare?
You do not need to know Hebrew. The best way to help your child prepare is to show them the importance of this lifecycle event, and to hold them accountable to regular at-home practice sessions. We have found that when you show your child you care about the service, your child will care too.

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RITUAL INFORMATION

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At the service when a child becomes Bar or Bat Mitzvah, he or she will typically do the following:
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• Deliver a d’var Torah (teaching) about the Torah portion.

¿What honors can I give my family?
Every child comes to Torah through the support and love of family and community, and we want to honor those who have been part of the journey. There are many ways to honor loved ones for your child’s Bar or Bat Mitzvah. The officiating rabbi will discuss honors opportunities at your parent meetings.
• Two loved ones may kindle the Shabbat lights on Friday evening. This is a low pressure honor that does not require speaking or chanting. This honor works well for younger siblings, but can be for anyone you choose.
• When the Torah Scroll is removed from the Ark, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and his/her immediate family – parents and siblings – will join the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and the clergy in the procession around the sanctuary.
• There are three Torah honors called Aliyot. Family and loved ones participate in the first two Aliyot, and the Bar/Bat Mitzvah receives the third. Each Aliyah involves honoring chanting the blessings before and after the Torah reading. Aliyot may go to anyone over the age of thirteen who is a Bar/Bat Mitzvah family seeks to honor. Honors often include, but are not limited to: grandparents, parents, older siblings, aunts, uncles, and cousins.
• Prior to your child’s first rehearsal, we ask that you fill out the honors form here: www.central synagogues.org/B’naiMitzvahHonor.

¿What is the Torah Passing Ceremony?
Grandparents, great grandparents, and parents, are invited to 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. Please use “I have not witnessed a Torah pass, please join us for our bnei mitzvah service and experience the emotional charge that this moment brings.”

¿What honors can I give to non-Jewish family and friends?!
We seek to include non-Jews who are a part of 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 blessings over the Torah reading. The translation of these blessings may be offered by non-Jewish family members.

LOGISTICS

¿When can I take photos with my family?
Families often choose to take photos before or after the final rehearsal. Some families even choose to take photos on a date after the actual Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, as it can be less hectic. This component is completely optional. You may reserve a photoshoot after confirming all other meeting times with the B’nai Mitzvah Program Manager. If you have any questions about taking photos in the Sanctuary, please contact Chelsey Linkner, our Events Manager, at b.mitzvah@centralsynagogue.org.

CELEBRATE THROUGH TZEDAKAH

¿How can we demonstrate support of our synagogue community through Tzedakah and share our gratitude for our family’s joy?
There are several ways in which you can honor your child becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah through a gift to Central Synagogue. We ask that you consider an increased gift to the annual Yom Kippur Appeal, which is responsible for funding nearly one third of our operating budget and helps sustain our exceptional congregation — everything from our beautiful sanctuary, to our extraordinary clergy, to our uncondoned commitment to no family be taxed away for financial reasons. You can also help sponsor the Great Shabbat on the Friday evening before your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. This gift will help cover the cost of the reception immediately following services, including food for as many as 500 people. Your family’s name will be listed in our Order of Service, which is distributed by our ushers at the beginning of services on Friday night and Saturday morning. Finally, you may want to make a contribution to the synagogue in honor of one or more members of the clergy for the meaningful role they play in this important lifecycle event for your family.

If you have any questions about making a contribution in honor of your child’s Bar or Bat Mitzvah, please contact Director of Development Daniel Nadelman at 212-888-5189 or nadelman@centralsynagogue.org.

For more specific information, including pricing, please contact Events Manager, Steve Weingart, at sweingart@centralsynagogue.org.

¿Is there a kiddush following the B’nai Mitzvah service?
Central Synagogue provides a general kiddush following each service on Saturday morning. You and your guests are welcome to attend. The Saturday congregational kiddush consists of wine and challah.

¿What is the B’nai Mitzvah Shared Kiddush Program?
Central Synagogue now offers all families the opportunity to hold a communal Kiddush in the Pavilion, immediately following your child’s Bar or Bat Mitzvah service. In order to accommodate up to four families on Saturday, we are offering an all-inclusive 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 participate in the shared kiddush program, please visit: www.central synagogues.org/SharesKiddush.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
ABOUT THE B’NEI MITZVAH PROGRAM

What is a Bar or Bat Mitzvah?
Bar or Bat Mitzvah means son or daughter of the commandments. Children become Bar or Bat Mitzvah at 13 years old. The Torah, the major compilation of Jewish law, describes this rite of passage as the age at which children become personally responsible for their observance. At Central, we mark this special moment with a Bar or Bat Mitzvah service. At this service, your child will be called to the Torah for the first time. Typically, they will also chant Haftarah (a reading from the Prophets), and give a d’var Torah (a teaching from their Torah portion).

How will my child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah date be assigned?
We make every attempt to assign a date close to your child’s birthday. As we don’t have a B’nai Mitzvah services at Central in July or August, children with summer birthdays will be assigned a date in the Spring or Fall, as close as possible. As per our policy, we do not assign the same B’nai Mitzvah weekend to students who attend the same school, with the exception of twins.

What if we are assigned a date that does not work for our family?
After all dates are assigned at the Derech Mitzvah program, you will be notified of the possibility of requesting a date change. Although we cannot guarantee a specific date will be available, we will do our best to find a date that works for your family. We ask that you do not request a specific date for your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah. However, if there are certain dates that you know will not work for your family, please let us know via the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date Form to be filled out prior to Derech Mitzvah.

Who will be officiating my child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah service?
Clergy assign.

Can I request a Rabbi or Cantor?
Regardless of who officiates, it will be a meaningful milestone event for your family.

What role will my child have in the Shabbat service?
As the service when a child becomes Bar or Bat Mitzvah, he or she will typically do the following:
• Chant from the Torah and the corresponding Haftarah in Hebrew
• Chant the associated blessings for the Torah and Haftarah in Hebrew
• Deliver a d’var Torah (teaching) about the Torah portion

What honors can I give my family?
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Some families even choose to take photos on a date after the actual service on Saturday morning. You and your guests are welcome to attend. The Saturday congregational kiddush consists of wine and challah.

What is the B’nei Mitzvah Shared Kiddush Program?
Central Synagogue now offers all families the opportunity to hold a Kiddush kiddush in the Pavilion, immediately following your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. In order to accommodate up to four families on Saturday, we are offering an all-inclusive 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 milestone event and acknowledge that your family is part of the larger Central Synagogue community. To participate in the shared kiddush program, please visit: www.central synagogue.org/SharedKiddush.

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What honors can I give my family with Tzedakah?
• Several families often choose to take photos before or after the final rehearsal. Some families even choose to take photos on a date after the actual Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, as it can be less hectic. This component is completely optional. You may reserve a photographer after confirming all other service providers with the Events Program Manager. If you have any questions about taking photos in the Sanctuary, please contact Chelsy Linkens, our Events Manager, at events@central syn.org.

LOGISTICS
When will my child start preparing?
Tutoring begins 6 to 12 months prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah date. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Program Manager will find an appropriate time slot and confirm all appointments and rehearsals.

I don’t know Hebrew. How can I help my child prepare?
You do not need to know Hebrew. The best way to help your child prepare is to show them the importance of this lifecycle event, and to hold them accountable to regular at-home practice sessions. We have found that when you show your child you care about the service, your child will care too.

Will my child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah service be recorded?
Can I obtain a copy of the video?
Central Synagogue livestreams all of its services on our website, as well as Friday night, Saturday morning (9:30am), and holiday services on the Jewish Broadcasting Service (JBS). Any person present at Central Synagogue during these times gives consent to being filmed.

Will my child be able to attend a service before his/her own Bar/Bat Mitzvah?
It is Central Synagogue’s tradition that families help each other by serving as ushers (shammashim) at a Shabbat service before their own. By doing so, we share the delight in the Sabbath and help one another celebrate.

• Students are required to attend all school year of their Bar/Bat Mitzvah service. Students must fulfill all religious school requirements, including attendance, participation, and completion of work. Students who join the LCLJ later than their third grade may require additional tutoring in Hebrew beyond that offered by the LCLJ.
• Students are expected to attend services regularly – at least five times per year during 4th, 5th and 6th grade, and at least seven times per year during the 7th grade year. 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 they are comfortable when they help lead it.
• All B’nai Mitzvah students are expected complete the social justice unit in their 6th grade year at the LCLJ.

My child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah is in the Fall. Do they need to be enrolled in LCLJ?
Enrollment in the LCLJ is an important piece of instilling a sense of community and belonging, and it is especially important that families help each other by serving as ushers (shammashim) at a Shabbat service before their own.

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My child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah is in the Fall. Do they need to be enrolled in LCLJ?
Enrollment in the LCLJ is an important piece of instilling a sense of community in your child, therefore, enrollment and attendance are both mandatory for the full year of your child’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah service.
Meet the Team

Cantor Daniel Mutlu
Senior Cantor
clergy@censyn.org
212.838.5122 x1000

Cantor Julia Cadrain
clergy@censyn.org
212.838.5122 x1000

Keren Eckstein
B'nei Mitzvah Program Manager
eckstein@censyn.org
212.838.5122 x1015

Rabbi Rebecca Rosenthal
Director of Youth and Family Education
rosenthalr@censyn.org
212.838.5122 x4041
LCLJ Related Questions

Steve Weingord
Events Manager
weingords@censyn.org
212.838.5122 x3002
Planning the Kiddush on Saturday

Chelsey Linkens
Events Manager
linkensc@censyn.org
212.838.5122 x3003
Booking the Photoshoot

Amanda Bernstein and Anna Kosatka
Development Team
bernsteina@censyn.org/kosatkaa@censyn.org
212.838.5122 x2022
Sponsoring the Oneg on Friday Night / Enhancing Your Gift to the Yom Kippur Appeal

www.centralsynagogue.org
ear friends,

Mazel tov and welcome to the B’nei Mitzvah journey at Central Synagogue. When a child is called to Torah for the first time, it is a simcha, a joy, for the entire community. In that spirit, we thank you for sharing your joy with our Central family. This brochure contains information which will guide you through our meaningful process of becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Many cultures have found a way to acknowledge the physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual changes in the lives of teens. Some communities celebrate this moment by having their children demonstrate physical prowess, while others challenge their teens to wildlife survival. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah calls upon our young adults to read and teach from the Torah. This taps into your physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual selves in the most meaningful of ways as we recognize your entrance into adulthood.

Jewish culture is the collective wisdom of our civilization that is passed, l’dor v’dor, from generation to generation, through literature, symbols and customs. We call this total conversation “the Study of Torah”. Becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a bold step in joining the 3,000 year conversation about living Jewishly. As you embrace the Torah on the day of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah service, you will be our scholar and teacher. The cantors, rabbis, tutors, and lay leaders are with you in your learning and preparation, and we look forward to learning from you as well. We will work closely with you to support you in this process, and we look forward to sharing the journey with you.

Warmly,

Cantor Daniel Mutlu
Senior Cantor

Cantor Julia Cadrain

B’nei Mitzvah Timeline

Below is a list of key events in the B’nei Mitzvah process for you to look forward to. Keep in mind that these are in addition to the expectations/requirements listed in this brochure and in our B’nei Mitzvah Handout on our website.

BONIM 5TH GRADE
Attend Brit B’nei Mitzvah Family Program

8-10 MONTHS PRIOR
Trope class led by Cantors

4-5 MONTHS PRIOR
First Cantor Meeting with students and parent(s)

2 MONTHS PRIOR
Parent/Rabbi Meeting, First Student/Rabbi Meeting, Second Student/Cantor Meeting

2 WEEKS PRIOR
First Rehearsal (with service partner)

1 WEEK PRIOR
Final Rehearsal with parents (and service partner)

NITZANIM 4TH GRADE
Receive Bar/Bat Mitzvah Date at Derech Mitzvah

6 MONTHS PRIOR
Begin tutoring

3 MONTHS PRIOR
D’var Torah Workshop led by Rabbis

1 MONTH PRIOR
Second Student/Rabbi Meeting, Third Student/Cantor Meeting

12 WEEKS PRIOR
First Rehearsal (with service partner)

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

- Harry M. Epstein, The Eternal Light

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