

Or Chadash Bar/Bat Mitzvah Celebration Planning Guide

Mazel tov to your son/daughter being called to read from the Torah as a Bar/Bat Mitzvah! This Planning Guide provides you with a list of options as well as local businesses that other Temple members have used. The list of resources is not intended to represent all the vendors available to you; talking to parents who have recently gone through the process is *highly recommended*. We hope that you will find this guide helpful, and that when your event is over you will also share the knowledge you have gained to make this guide even more useful!

The planning guide covers:

- 1) Celebration Settings (including venues, catering)
- 2) Accommodations for Out-of-Town Guests
- 3) Bus Transportation
- 4) Photography/videography
- 5) Entertainment and Accessories (party planners, yarmulkes, tallit, invitations, photo booths, balloons, etc.)
- 6) Other (florists, seamstress, dresses and suits)
- 7) Other Helpful Information
- 8) Basic scenarios and Sample Schedule
- 9) Suggested Readings

1. Celebration Settings:

When choosing a setting, we recommend considering distance (many families invite children who need to be dropped/picked up), parking (for larger parties) and access to facilities if inviting any family member with walkers or wheelchairs. Note that most locations are less expensive for a lunch service. If your service will be in the winter, be sure that alternate dates are part of your plan to deal with bad weather.

Popular venues include your home, and the temple. The temple's sanctuary and outside space can be used for up to 200 people if using tents for the outside space, and 100 people comfortably for an indoor reception. Facility rental agreements are on the website, and caterers can be recommended.

Local venues for outside receptions include:

- Beaver Brook Country Club, Annandale (beaverbrookcc.com)
- Bridgewater Manor, Bridgewater (bridgewatermanor.com)
- Casa Maya Mexican Restaurant, High Bridge (casamayamexican.com)
- Copper Hill Country Club, Ringoes (copperhillcc.com)
- Fox Hollow Gold Club, Branchburg (foxhollowgc.com)
- Grand Colonial, Perryville (thefarmhousenj.com)
- Lambertville Station, Lambertville (lambertvillestation.com)
- Mountain View Chalet, Asbury (mountainviewchalet.com)
- Hawke Pointe Golf Club, Washington (hawkepointegolf.com)
- Holiday Inn, Clinton
- Hunterdon Hills Playhouse, Hampton (hhplayhouse.com)
- Spain Inn II, Asbury
- Stanton Ridge Country Club, Whitehouse (stanonridgecc.com)
- Raspberry's Banquet Center, Flemington (razberrys.net)
- Whispering Pines Banquet Center, Milford (whisperingpinesinhollandtownship.org)
- Willows Restaurant and Catering, Asbury (atthewillows.com)

Popular alternative party receptions:

- Courtside Racquet Club, Lebanon
- Healthquest, Flemington
- Bridgewater Sports Arena
- Frenchtown Roller Rink
- Aspen Ice, Flemington
- Oakwood Lanes, Washington
- West Hunterdon Lanes, Frenchtown
- Warren Lanes, Phillipsburg

For receptions at your home, or at Or Chadash, this is a partial list of local caterers:

- Christie's Artisan Bread and Pastry Shop, Clinton (christiesbakeshop.com)
- Emily's Café & Catering, Pennington (emilyscafe.com)
- Enjoy Your Party, Lebanon (enjoyyourparty.com)
- Fired-Up Flatbread Pizza, Pittstown (firedupflatbread.com)
- Food Architects, Piscataway (thefoodarchitectsnj.com)
- Matt's Red Rooster Grill, Flemington (mattsredroostergrill.com)
- Max's Trattoria 31, Flemington (maxs31menu.com)
- Pittstown Inn, Pittstown (pittstowninn.com)
- Shop Rite, Kings, Wegmans

2. Accommodations for out-of-town guests:

Local hotels:

- Hampton Inn, Clinton
- Hampton Inn, Flemington
- Holiday Inn Select at Clinton
- Inn at Lambertville Station, Lambertville
- Marriott Courtyard, Lebanon
- Old Mill Inn, Basking Ridge
- Hyatt House, Branchburg

Local Bed & Breakfasts:

- Main Street Manor Bed & Breakfast Inc., Flemington
- Neighbour House Bed & Breakfast, Long Valley (speak Hebrew)
- Riverside Victorian Bed & Breakfast, Clinton
- Woolverton Inn, Stockton

3. Bus transportation

Helpful Hint: It is a good idea to give the Bus Driver written directions from Temple to the place you will be holding your party. Bus Drivers have been known to get lost!

- Snyder Bus, Washington (908-689-6799)
- First Student, Hampton (908-537-4409)

4. Photography/Videography

- Black Lab Studio, Flemington (blacklabimaging.com)
- Fodera Photography, Stewartsville
- Debra Gichan Photography, Pittstown (deborahgichan.com)
- M & M Video Productions (mmvideoproductions.com)
- Picture Perfect Photography, Clinton (pictureperfectdesignerphotography.com)
- Village Studio, High Bridge (villagestudio.us)
- **Glenn & Robin Wasserman, Branchburg (Temple members)**

5. Entertainment and accessories

DJs, live bands, arcade games, or outdoor slides/bounce houses are popular entertainment choices, but this is completely optional and dependent on location. DJs sometimes include “motivators”, and often host games for kids. These tend to change frequently, and word-of-mouth is the best way to learn of current entertainment options. You may opt to go with a party planner who will coordinate everything for you.

- The Big Smoothies, Port Ewen, NY
- Klezmer Connection (klezmerconnection.com)
- Paul Anthony Entertainment, Flemington
- Primetime Entertainers, Somerset
- Rich Kaufman, DJ (732-740-0683)

Tents/games/slides/bouncehouse/decoration rentals:

Eggsotic Events, Hampton (eggsoticevents.com)
Rental Center USA, Hampton (rentcenterusa.com)
Starr's Party and Tent Rental, Glen Gardner (starrsparty.com)
Super Stuff Party Supply, Hackettstown (superstuffpartyrental.com)
Taylor Rental Center, Washington (taylorrentalwashington.com)

Photo booths, party favors, yarmulkes, tallit, balloons:

Photo Booth: Snap a Smile (snapasmile.biz)
Candy favors: Candy Warehouse (candywarehouse.com)
Yarmukles: A1 Skullcap (skullcap.com)
Tallit: Ahuva (ahuva.com) Note: allow plenty of time for delivery, the items are actually sent from Israel
Décor: Balloon sculptures/arches, etc. (eventsbyballoonworks.com)

Invitations/thank you cards/place settings/sign in album/centerpieces/dance socks/favors:

Invitations: Tiny Prints (tinyprints.com), Zazzle (zazzle.com)

The best place to find these are online. If you find a fabulous local vendor, please let us know!

6) Other (florists, seamstress, dresses and suits)

Local florists:

- All Seasons Flowers, Lebanon
- Flemington Floral Co. & Greenhouses
- The Flower Basket, Clinton
- Gilded Lily, Flemington
- Greens & Beans Florist, Clinton
- Helen's Flower & Garden Center, Whitehouse Station

Tailor/seamstress:

Always Elegant Bridal and More, Flemington (elegantonmain.com)
Mary in Flemington by Shoprite 908-782-6202
Cleaners usually have a tailor on site

Dresses/suits:

We definitely recommend talking to parents of previous Bar/Bat Mitzvahs! Everyone who has gone through this process has dresses and suits sitting in their closets that could be used!

7) Other Helpful Information

- Traditionally, the family provides oneg at services the night before. Please check with the Rabbi to get a head count, and you can either donate money for food to be purchased, or bring goodies. This is a nice opportunity for your Bar/Bat Mitzvah to stand on the bimah as a mini rehearsal, as the Rabbi will ask the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to briefly read. Additionally, this is a nice low-key occasion for friends/family from out-of-town.
- Ushering is highly recommended, and needed! Ushering helps you and your child experience multiple Bar/Bat Mitzvahs beforehand, to get a feel for the rhythm of the service. Ushers generally greet guests, hand them yarmulkes, a program and a prayer book, then sit in the temple during the service itself.
- Celebrations are generally anywhere from small (30-40 people), medium (100 people) to large (150+ people). The temple can accommodate a maximum of 250 people for a service, and 150 for a celebration. Guests can be mostly family and friends, and/or include many children. It is helpful to notify the Rabbi of the projected size, including percentage of children, so the room can be set up beforehand accordingly.
- Traditionally, the family orders flowers for the bimah, delivered for the service the night before.
- Afterwards:
 - Please feedback your experience, so we can update this guide!
 - Be sure to have your child write thank you notes for all gifts within a reasonable timeframe.

8) Basic scenarios and Sample Schedule

Here are just a few basic tried-and-true scenarios:

- Havdallah Service held at the temple 5:00 pm, followed by a light reception at the temple with catering.
- Morning Service held at the temple 10:00 am. Unaccompanied children are dropped at the temple. Afterwards, unaccompanied children are bussed to venue (parents and family/friends drive). Party is from 12:30-5:00 pm (lunch). Children are picked up by parents at the venue.
- Havdallah Service held at the temple 5:00 pm. Unaccompanied children are dropped at the temple. Afterwards, unaccompanied children are bussed to venue (parents and family/friends drive). Party is from 8-11pm (dinner). Children are bussed back to the temple, and picked up by parents at midnight.
- Morning Service held at the temple 10:00 am. Unaccompanied children are dropped at the temple. Afterwards, unaccompanied children are carpooled by friends and family to your house (parents and family/friends drive). Party is from 12:30-5:00 pm (lunch). Children are picked up by parents at your house.

A note about unaccompanied minors:

- In general, it is traditional for all of the children from your child’s **Hebrew** school class to be invited to the service. They provide the backbone of support during the service, with song and morale.
- Based on the celebration size/location, families may opt to also invite:
 - o For a bat mitzvah, just the girls from a child’s school class (or, just boys from a child’s school class for a bar mitzvah)
 - o Just a few friends from a child’s school class
 - o The entire school class (if it’s small enough)
 - o Only siblings and friends and family members

It is a mitzvah to invite minors who may never have attended a Bar/Bat Mitzvah service! This is a chance for us to introduce others to a different culture and tradition. You may want to include a supplement in the invitation to discuss the service, what to expect, how to dress, and other etiquette, as well as spell out the transportation details for the parents. If you google “educating your non-Jewish audience” or “what a bar/bat mitzvah guest needs to know” you will find plenty of information and good examples.

Sample schedule:

Time	Activity
12:15-1:15	cocktail hour
1:35	first course, bread blessing and candles
2:00	hora
2:30	kids served
2:40	adult main course
3:00	slide show
3:15	candle lighting
3:30	dessert service
4:00	cake
5:00	End/pickup

9. Suggested Readings

For Parents:

Revision 1, 2018 edition

Putting God on Your Guest List, by Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin
Bar and Bat Mitzvah Basics, by Cantor Helen Leneman
The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Survival Guide, by Randi Reisfeld
The Complete Bar/Bat Mitzvah Guide, by Patti Moskowitz (Section on Interfaith Families)
Today I am a boy, by David Hays
B'nai Mitzvah Checklist, by Daniella Wexler

For B'nai Mitzvah Students:

For Kids-Putting God on Your Guest List, by Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin
Emma Ansly-Levine and Her Mitzvah Machine, by Lawrence Bush
Turning Thirteen, by Susan Beth Pfeffer

For B'nai Mitzvah Relatives:

Putting God on Your Guest List, by Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Personal Albums:

My Bar/Bat Mitzvah, by Union of American Hebrew Congregations (a personalized memory album that you fill in with all the details of your Bar/Bat Mitzvah)
Bat Mitzvah, by Sarah Silberstein Swartz (an introduction to Jewish literature, philosophy and custom with write-in sections to enter personal memories, thoughts and feelings.)