



Bar/Bat Mitzvah Checklist and Timetable

Make sure to plan early for your child's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Pick your preferences for a date and finalize after Okaying with important guests, locations, or Rabbi/Cantor. Start a notebook/ file folder to hold all of your planning notes for the myriad of details you need to organize.

Eighteen Months Before Event:

Decide on the type of event you want (day, evening, formal etc.). For summer events check "sun down" times, this might affect your preferences of booking the synagogue or an outside banquet facility.

Prepare a preliminary guest list and budget.

Estimate number of guests and investigate size or limitations to the reception hall or caterer.

Discuss your child's interests in a Mitzvah project. An early start on the project will allow your child a more meaningful & elaborate effort. It may also help shape a theme for their event and allow your student more time to study for the ceremony when the date gets closer.

Fifteen Months – Twelve Months:

Meet with a party planner, if so desired

Investigate your party theme (this may affect your banquet room choice)

Investigate & book banquet facility and/or caterer

Investigate & book your band or DJ

Investigate & book the photographer/ video photographer

Six to Twelve Months Before Event:

Make arrangements for any special tutoring your child may need to learn his/her Torah portion.

Arrange for out-of-town guest accommodations

Decide on your party theme & color scheme.

Talk to florists about prices and floral designs

Decide on centerpieces/balloon designs/prop designs

Start looking at invitation designs and prices

Create a guest list with complete and current mailing addresses

Start shopping for outfits for all the weekend events (Friday night services, Saturday morning services/kiddush, Saturday evening services if needed)

Three to Six Months Before Event:

Order your invitations.

Order or design your sign-in board and guest book

Order party favors.

Order personalized kippot, party favors, & napkins so they arrive in time

Confirm menu/wine and other beverages

Talk to reception site/caterer, and reserve any additional rental items you will need

Three Months Before Event:

Finalize the guest list.

Send out 'Save the Date' cards, especially for out of town guests

Make a hotel packet for out-of-towners.

Make appointments with florist/balloonist and place order.

Try to make your final selections on clothing and accessories.

Buy stamps.

Have completely assembled invitations weighed to ensure correct postage.

Find calligrapher.

Six to Eight Weeks Before Event:

Mail the invitations.

If you choose to do a Havdalah service or a cake cutting ceremony, select who you will be calling up, and write a nice introduction about each of them.

Make up a song for the band.

Develop a timetable for your reception – entertainment, banquet hall, caterer

If you're planning on bringing kids to the party make sure you start to arrange transport

One Month Before Event:

Talk to your rabbi about final timeline and final details of the services

Sit down with your child's tutor and make sure they are ready for their big day, take this last month to narrow down on any trouble spots they may have.

Begin working on seating arrangements with reception site, have them provide you with a diagram of the room, and table placements.

Make sure arrangements are complete with centerpieces, napkins, balloons, sign-in board etc.

Place announcement in synagogue bulletin and American Jewish World

Make a hotel welcome packet for out-of –town guests that could include: itinerary, directions, brochure of things to do, etc.

Make hair stylist and manicure appointments.

Have final fittings done for clothing

Arrange catering for brunch

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Write prayers or speeches.

Two to Three Weeks Before Event:

Your child's and your speeches should be complete at this time so you may polish their delivery

Choose people for aliyot and honors.

Choose the people to be honored if you have a candle lighting ceremony and write poems

Connect with DJ about last minute instructions, music requests, & candle lighting songs.

Develop seating arrangements

Order food for Kiddush or Oneg Shabbat

Call guests who haven't responded

Give final instructions for photographer/videographer

Finalize seating arrangements and have place cards printed

Review your service contracts, get payments in order for all hires

Make sure suits, gowns and shoes all fit, and are pressed and ready to wear

One Week Before Event:

Take formal pictures and pictures on Bimah.

Confirm final guest count with caterer. Confirm set-up instructions and menu items

Give decorator, or florist, final number of tables for centerpieces

Make arrangements to get your guests from the airport to the hotel.

Bring welcome baskets to the hotels where your guests are staying.

Review the exact timeline of all events (point out any changes) with all or your reception providers.

Go through responsibilities with your friends and family involved. Choose one person to make sure your timeline is followed throughout your event and to greet the reception providers.

Confirm your hair and makeup appointments

Confirm your brunch arrangements

Make final seating adjustments

The Day of the Event:

Make sure you and your child get a good night's sleep and have a good breakfast

Leave yourself plenty of time to get ready

Remember matches or lighter for candle lighting

Relish the "joy" of your Simcha and relax

Don't forget to praise and support the Bar/Bat Mitzvah throughout the whole day for their fine job and incredible effort.