



PLEASANTVILLE
COMMUNITY
SYNAGOGUE

**Fifth/Sixth Grade
B'nei Mitzvah
HANDBOOK
2020-2021**



PLEASANTVILLE
COMMUNITY
SYNAGOGUE

Fifth/Sixth Grade B'nei Mitzvah Parent Meeting March 4, 2020

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Pleasantville Community Synagogue

www.shalompcs.com

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B'nei Mitzvah Policy, 2020-21

At Pleasantville Community Synagogue, we view Jewish learning as a lifelong endeavor. We are committed to helping our children attain an increasingly rich storehouse of Jewish knowledge, memories, and commitments. Moreover, we want our children to feel connected to their Jewish peers, comfortable in the synagogue, and knowledgeable about our services and ritual practices. None of this, of course, can happen overnight. We therefore encourage parents to begin their children's education as early as possible. Our program starts with kindergarten. To become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah we require at least five years of Hebrew School education, expecting our children to start no later than the age of 8. The minimum parameters for children of ages above 8 are as follows:

- If your child is between the ages of 9 and 11, s/he will be admitted to the PCS Hebrew School, but will be required to obtain private tutoring in order to "catch up" to her/his class (unless there has been adequate previous training.)
- If your child has attained her/his eleventh birthday, an individual assessment by the synagogue will be required. Private tutoring may need to be obtained, and alternative Bar/Bat Mitzvah times (i.e., other than Saturday morning) and dates (i.e., beyond the thirteenth birthday) may need to be considered. A three-year membership commitment to the synagogue is required of all families with a child 11 years old or above intending to stand for Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Calendaring for Bar/Bat Mitzvah is done by Ed Sperling, the B'nei Mitzvah Committee chair. Dates are assigned when students are eleven years old and/or by the end of the fifth grade.

By standing for Bar/Bat Mitzvah, a Jewish child affirms his/her commitment to Jewish values and to a life of Jewish practice. To that end, prospective B'nei Mitzvah are:

- Obligated to attend Shabbat services at PCS a minimum of five times during their fifth grade year (either Friday night or Saturday morning), and 10 Shabbat services (at least four Friday night and at least six Saturday morning) during their sixth and seventh grade years (four must be Family Education Shabbats). Parents are strongly encouraged to attend services along with their children, and required to participate in the Family Education Shabbats.
- Obligated to attend Friday Kabbalat Shabbat, which is part of the Bar Mitzvah Shabbat. The Bar/Bat Mitzvah and their family will participate and have roles in leading the service.
- Required to fulfill a Community Service commitment of at least 10 mitzvah hours during the Bat/Bar Mitzvah year.
- Required to complete the seventh grade of Hebrew School.

- Parents in the sixth grade year are expected to help usher during a (seventh grade) Bar/Bat mitzvah ceremony at PCS. They are also asked to help in the Kiddush clean-up of that day, and bring the leftover food that day or the next day (Sunday, if they have access to the building) to the Food Pantry, Neighbors Link, homeless shelter or other appropriate setting.

We at PCS are especially committed to promoting the Jewish value of "klal yisrael" (the good of the greater Jewish community). To that end, we require that our prospective B'nei Mitzvah receive an exclusively Jewish religious education.

We greatly value the participation of all family members in celebrating the Bat or Bar Mitzvah. Jewish or non-Jewish family members may be invited to do English readings (provided by the Rabbi) on Saturday morning. Jewish family members can be given Torah honors including aliyot, carrying, dressing, and lifting the Torah, and/or chant a Torah selection or lead Hebrew prayers. A non-Jewish parent may accompany a Jewish spouse who is called up for an aliyah and for "handing down" the Torah (an optional ritual) as we take it out of the ark. Parents are invited to offer brief remarks or words of blessing (original or a reading provided by Rabbi Julie) to their son or daughter after their Devar Torah. On Friday night, the entire family is also invited to say the candle blessing and family members may do English readings. A head covering or kippah may be worn by men or women of any religion, and Jewish adults (men or women) should also wear a tallit, at least when making an aliyah.

Pleasantville Community Synagogue strives to be an "inclusive" community, and we are committed to helping each family achieve its Jewish goals within the parameters of the tradition. We are aware of the personal and sensitive nature of some of the issues that attend to Bar/Bat Mitzvah. For that reason we ask that, if you are interested in Bar/Bat Mitzvah for your child, please contact our Rabbi to schedule an initial discussion.

Finally, PCS is committed to helping all Jewish families to become full members of our community regardless of financial situation. Notwithstanding, we ask that you commit to the following minimum financial obligations:

- All dues and fees must be paid in full six months prior to the Bar/Bat mitzvah event.
- A B'nei Mitzvah fee is required of all families. This annually determined fee covers the costs associated with the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The current fee is \$1,450 of which \$600 must be paid upon receiving notification of the Bar/Bat mitzvah date, in order to confirm that date. The \$850 balance is due no later than 180 days (6 months) prior to the event.
- PCS will provide the congregational oneg on the Friday evening before. **The family is required to sponsor the Kiddush lunch on Saturday for a minimum of 20 people.** Please notify the synagogue office as to how many guests you expect for either with regard to seating and logistics.

Further detail regarding the kiddush is provided in the 7th Grade Handbook for those serving lunch, or you may contact Marcy Gray in the office to discuss. Please be aware that you must contact the caterer and make your payment before Kiddush arrangements are made for lunch.

PCS is committed to making the Bar/Bat Mitzvah process a fulfilling and enriching experience for every student and his/her family. We look forward to working with you toward that goal and invite you to contact members of the B'nei Mitzvah Committee and the PCS office with any questions.

***Fees listed are in accordance with the fiscal 2019-20 budget. Fees are subject to change with the fiscal 2020-21 budget.**



B'nei Mitzvah Timeline

Mazal Tov on your journey as a B'nei Mitzvah family! This timeline is intended to provide a general guide on what to expect during the B'nei Mitzvah process. Should you have any questions as to the details of any specific piece of the process, please do not hesitate to get in touch with the contact given. Details will also be provided at the two meetings that parents will attend as a class.

FIRST STEPS

January, two years (plus) prior to the calendar year of your b'nei date – **B'nei Date Assignment Letter goes out** (e.g. for 2022 B'nei dates, assignments were given around February 2020) along with the **B'nei Mitzvah Timeline**.

B'nei Date Lock-in Deposit due within 30 days of receipt of assignment (*see B'nei Policy*). Contact our treasurer, Oren Cohen, orencohen99@gmail.com, to make any special arrangements and Barbara Doctor, our bookkeeper, at bdoctor670@gmail.com with any questions related to your payment.

5th GRADE YEAR

Fall – Service Attendance Requirements begin – These requirements are explained to the class at the beginning of the school year and a notice is sent home with the children. **At least five times during the academic year are required, either Friday night or Saturday morning.** Contact Ed Sperling or Educational Director Galit Messman with any questions. (*See B'nei Policy and Service Attendance Procedure.*)

Spring - Meeting of 5th Grade Parents with the Rabbi and the Committee - General discussion of the "b'nei mitzvah journey"; B'nei Class Calendar, PCS B'nei Mitzvah Policy statement, Usher Schedule and Guidelines are distributed.

6th GRADE YEAR

Fall - Service Requirements continue: 10 Shabbat services – Friday night or Saturday morning - with *at least* four on Friday night and *at least* six on Saturday morning, including four Family Education Shabbats. **Parents must attend the Family Education Shabbats with their child.**

Fall – Usher Schedule begins, and continues throughout the year. Contact Galit Messman, pcshebrewschool@gmail.com with questions. (*See B’nei Policy, Usher Schedule and Usher Guidelines.*)

Spring – B’nei Mitzvah Instruction* begins for 7th grade **fall/winter b’nei mitzvahs**. See *Details below*.

7th GRADE YEAR

Fall - Service Requirements continue: 10 Shabbat services – Friday night or Saturday morning - with *at least* four on Friday night and *at least* six on Saturday morning. In the case of early (winter) Bar/Bat mitzvahs, five must be completed before the event.

Fall - Meeting of 7th Grade Parents with the Rabbi and Committee regarding expectations for Community Service (including forms), B’nei Instruction procedures, Kiddush Guidelines, Honors Listing sheets and other rituals of the b’nei service.

Fall - B’nei Mitzvah Instruction* begins for 7th grade **spring b’nei mitzvahs**. See *Details below*.

6 months before – Proposals for Community Service** must be submitted to Community Service Coordinator Pam Papish, pjpapish@gmail.com. See *details below*.

Early Winter – B’nei Mitzvah Instruction for **late fall b’nei mitzvahs (of the 8th grade year)** begins. See *details below*.

6 months before – Balance of B’nei Mitzvah Fee is due (*see B’nei Policy*). Please contact Barbara Doctor for details related to payment at bdoctor670@gmail.com.

4 months before – Advise Ed Sperling of any **Family Torah Readers** at edsperling@gmail.com. *Readers must be able to chant from the Torah scroll.*

4 months before – The Rabbi will meet with each family and in addition will meet with the student approximately 3 times (parents also welcome) to prepare their speech/Devar Torah. You will be contacted by Rabbi Julie regarding the scheduling of these meetings, which typically take place in the weeks immediately prior to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, unless there are intervening holidays or the summer vacation, in which case the dates are adjusted. Parents are strongly encouraged to schedule their own meeting(s) with the rabbi at rabbi@shalompcs.com, well in advance of this time.

1 month or more before – You will be contacted by the synagogue office to discuss your plans as relates to **Kiddush** and seating for your guests. (*See Kiddush Guidelines and contact Marcy Gray in the synagogue office at 769-2672 or mgray@shalompcs.com with questions.*)

1 month before – The B’nei Mitzvah student writes a paragraph or two describing the project for the PCS newsletter, to be submitted to Community Service coordinator Pam Papish by the 15th of the prior month (in order to run in the same issue as the event itself.)

2-3 weeks before – Aliyot and other honors are discussed in detail at the first rehearsal. Please obtain the contact information for your gabbai from the PCS office and contact him/her for detailed information and guidance.

1 week before – One Torah Service Rehearsal takes place with the gabbai for your service just prior to the event. **The Honors Listing** is turned in at the rehearsal, the week of the event. **Photography** sessions are generally accommodated at this rehearsal, as there is no photography allowed in the synagogue on Shabbat. Please alert your gabbai to arrange this ahead of time. The entire service is walked/talked through at this rehearsal.

1 week before – Plans are finalized for the PCS **Kiddush** with the synagogue office. If applicable, you might discuss additional arrangements with the caterer, Shalom Shushan, at Seasons at (914) 472-2240 or Shalom@seasonskosher.com.

Any time during the week before – Touch base with PCS office to confirm logistics at mgray@shalompcs.com or (914) 769-2672.

DETAILS

***B’nei Mitzvah Instruction** is approximately a 9-month process (depending on summer vacation plans, etc.) comprising 25-30 twenty minute lessons with B’nei Mitzvah Committee Chair Ed Sperling who will contact you a month before lessons are to begin. You may contact Ed at edsperling@gmail.com prior to that time if you have questions.

****Community Service Requirement** - At least 10 hours of community service is required. A class discussion with the community service coordinator will take place during one of the 7th grade fall classes. Parents are encouraged to attend. Contact the community service coordinator, Pam Papish at pjpapish@gmail.com at any time with questions or concerns.

**Again, *Mazal Tov* from the
B’nei Mitzvah Committee!**



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B'nei Mitzvah Contacts 2020-2021

Rabbi Julie: rabbi@shalompcs.com, 769-2672

B'nei Mitzvah Committee Chair

Ed Sperling: edsperling@gmail.com, 714-1412

Community Service

Pam Papish: pjpapish@gmail.com, 449-6799

Gabbai Scheduling

Michael Safranek: mlsafranek@aol.com, 420-1815

Synagogue Office Kiddush and Logistics

Marcy Gray: mgray@shalompcs.com, 769-2672

Usher Scheduling

Galit Messman: pcshebrewschool@gmail.com, 769-2672



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2021 B'nei Mitzvah Calendar

DATE	NAME/HOLIDAY	TORAH PORTION
2021		
Jan.		
2		
9		
Monday, Jan. 18	<i>Martin Luther King, Jr., Day</i>	
23		
Wednesday, Jan. 27	<i>Erev Tu B'Shvat</i>	
30		
Feb.		
6		
13		
Monday, Feb. 15	<i>Presidents' Day</i>	
20		
Thursday, Feb. 25	<i>Erev Purim</i>	
27		
March		
9		
13		
20		
27	<i>Erev Pesach</i>	
April		
3		
Wednesday, April 7	<i>Erev Yom HaShoah</i>	
10	Jacob Gendler	Shmini
Tuesday, April 13	<i>Erev Yom HaZikaron</i>	
Wednesday, April 14	<i>Erev Yom Ha'Atsmaut</i>	
17		
24		
May		
1		
8	Arun Mahadeva	Behar-Behukotai
15		
Sunday, May 16	<i>Erev Shavuot</i>	
22		
29		
Monday, May 31	<i>Memorial Day</i>	

June	5 12 19 26	Pam Terzuoli <i>Juneteenth</i>	Sh'lach Lecha
July-August		<i>Eve Rutman in Israel</i> <i>Follow-up Maftir/Haftarah at PCS in late Fall (date tbd)</i>	
Sept.	4 <i>Monday, Sept. 6</i> 11 <i>Wednesday, Sept. 15</i> 18 <i>Monday, Sept. 20</i> 25 <i>Monday, Sept. 27</i> <i>Tuesday, Sept. 28</i>	<i>Labor Day and Erev Rosh Hashana</i> <i>Erev Yom Kippur</i> <i>Erev Sukkot</i> <i>Erev Shemini Atzeret</i> <i>Erev Simchat Torah</i>	
Oct.	2 9 <i>Monday, Oct. 11</i> 16 23 30	 <i>Indigenous People's Day and Columbus Day</i> 	
Nov.	6 13 20 <i>Thursday, Nov. 25</i> 27 <i>Sunday, Nov. 28</i>	 <i>Thanksgiving</i> <i>First night of Hannukah</i>	
Dec.	4 11 18 25		



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2022 B'nei Mitzvah Calendar

[First draft, March 3, 2020]

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NAME/HOLIDAY</u>	<u>TORAH PORTION</u>
2022		
Jan. 1		
8		
15		
Sunday night, Jan. 16	<i>Erev Tu Bishvat</i>	
Monday, Jan. 17	<i>Martin Luther King, Jr., Day</i>	
22		
29		
Feb. 5		
12		
19		
Monday, Feb. 21	<i>Presidents' Day</i>	
26		
March 5		
12		
Wednesday, March 16	<i>Erev Purim</i>	
19		
26		
April 2	Trevor Galin	Tazria
9		
Friday night, April 15	<i>Erev Pesach</i>	
Saturday, April 16	<i>First Day of Pesach</i>	
Saturday, April 23	<i>Last Day of Pesach</i>	
Thursday, April 28	<i>Holocaust Memorial Day</i>	
30		

May**Sunday, May 1***Wednesday, May 4**Thursday, May 5*

7

14

21

28

*Monday, May 30***Isabel Cohen***Israel Memorial Day**Israel Independence Day***Jonah Aghen****Behar***Memorial Day***June 4***Saturday night, June 4*

11

18

25

*Erev Shavuot***July-August****No B'nei Mitzvot****Sept. 3***Monday, Sept. 5*

10

17

24

*Sunday, Sept. 25**Labor Day**Erev Rosh Hashana***Oct. 1***Tuesday, Oct. 4*

8

*Sunday, Oct. 9**Monday, Oct. 10*

15

*Sunday, Oct. 16**Monday, Oct. 17*

22

29

*Erev Yom Kippur**Erev Sukkot**Indigenous People's Day and Columbus Day**Erev Shmini Atzeret**Erev Simchat Torah***Nov. 5**

12

19

Thursday, Nov. 24

26

*Thanksgiving***Dec. 3**

10

17

Sunday, Dec. 18

24

31

First Night of Hanukkah



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2020 B'nei Mitzvah Usher Calendar

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>USHER FAMILY</u>
2020		
Jan. 4		
11		
18		
<i>Monday, Jan. 20</i>	<i>Martin Luther King., Jr., Day</i>	
25		
Feb. 1		
8		
<i>Sunday, Feb. 9</i>	<i>Erev Tu B'Shvat</i>	
15		
<i>Monday, Feb. 17</i>	<i>Presidents' Day</i>	
22		
29		
March 7	Ava and Lila Berkowitz	Jonah Aghen family
<i>Monday, March 9</i>	<i>Erev Purim</i>	
14		
21		
28	Jadyn Serebin (Mincha at 4 pm)	
April 4	Skylar Aghen	Eve Rutman family
<i>Wednesday, April 8</i>	<i>Erev Pesach</i>	
11		
18	Lilly Brown	Trevor Galin family
25		
May 2		
9		
16		
23		
<i>Monday, May 25</i>	<i>Memorial Day</i>	
<i>Thursday, May 28</i>	<i>Erev Shavuot</i>	
30		

June	6 13 20 27	Nolan Rhodes Daisy Star	Arun Mahadeva family Isabel Cohen family
July-August		No B'nei Mitzvot	
Sept.	5 <i>Monday, Sept. 7</i> 12 <i>Friday, Sept. 18</i> 19 26 <i>Sunday, Sept. 27</i>	<i>Labor Day</i> <i>Erev Rosh Hashana</i> <i>Erev Yom Kippur</i>	
Oct.	<i>Friday, Oct. 2</i> 3 <i>Friday, Oct. 9</i> 10 <i>Monday, Oct. 12</i> 17 24 31	<i>Erev Sukkot</i> <i>Shemini Atzeret</i> <i>Simchat Torah</i> <i>Columbus Day</i> Aiden McGinley	Jacob Gendler family
Nov.	7 14 21 <i>Thursday, Nov. 26</i> 28	<i>Thanksgiving</i>	
Dec.	5 <i>Thursday, Dec. 10</i> <i>1st Night of Hanukkah</i> 12 19 26	Gabriella Downey	Pam Terzuoli family



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PCS B'nei Mitzvah Usher Guidelines

Overall Responsibility:

- The B'nei Mitzvah family will call you in advance of the date to communicate any relevant information.
- To welcome guests and congregants, help them with coats, tallisim and kippot as they walk in the door. The key is to create a welcoming and friendly atmosphere.
- To assist with seating and prayer books.
- To make sure that B'nei Mitzvah children log in their attendance appropriately.
- To establish a level of decorum in regard to appropriate times for entering the sanctuary.
- To help supervise in the social hall so as to provide a warm and pleasant Kiddush experience for the B'nei Mitzvah family, friends and guests.

Specific expectations and duties:

- Arrive by 9:15 am. There should be at least two people, of which one must be a parent.
- Make sure the tallitot are accessible, as well as kippot, head coverings and pins. If there are brochures, they can be distributed.
- Say hello to each person as they walk in. Help them with their coats when appropriate.
- Handle any special needs cases such as elderly guests. Assist them to a seat near the front, if possible.
- Direct friends and classmates of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah to seats near the front on the West (left) side of the sanctuary. Keep an eye on the children so they do not disrupt the service.
- Tell people with young children that there are two small play areas, one in the back corner of the sanctuary and one in the corner of the back room.
- Assist people with availability of the bathroom, and when crowded, direct them to the bathroom near the social hall. Make sure a/c is on low if the weather warrants it.
- Check the bathroom occasionally to make sure it is clean and there are no water problems.
- Postpone seating at certain times of the service, most essentially during the "Kedusha" of the Amidah (first two pages of the communal standing praying) and the Rabbi's sermon. Use good judgment at other times.
- Make sure the aisles are clear when we carry the Torah around the Sanctuary.
- Assist attendees with what books to use, especially when we switch to the Chumash for the Torah service.
- Assist our kiddush server at the close of services and remain until 1 pm if required.
- If b'm family is not taking home the leftovers, bring to Neighbor's Link (27 Columbus Avenue, Mount Kisco, NY 10549, 914-666-3410) or other charity. (Sunday is OK if the building is open.)
- Be available to assist the gabbai and Rabbi as needed.



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PCS Service Attendance Q & A

The members of Pleasantville Community Synagogue are in the enviable position of having Shabbat services that are thoughtful, musical, spiritual and user-friendly. They are led by the Rabbi in a way that makes our services a wonderful combination of elements taken from all the progressive Jewish movements. They are assisted by a large number of lay congregants as prayer leaders, Torah readers, gabbais and meditation leaders. It is the hope of all concerned, from the synagogue Board of Trustees to each family member that the children growing up as members of PCS should experience a sufficient number of services as to give them a sense of the inner beauty of our Jewish religion.

But how many services should we ask our children to attend? Or should we make any requirement at all for attendance, allowing only for the best judgment of the children and their parents? This is an issue which has demanded and received a great deal of attention by the leadership of PCS. It is understood that any "requirement" for services is in some way a contradiction of the ideal which allows for each person's spiritual needs to be followed. However, the spiritual sense in our children needs to be nurtured and stimulated. We can do that at home; we can certainly do that in the synagogue. It is with this thought in mind that the children in our 5th, 6th and 7th grades are asked to attend a minimum number of Friday night and Saturday morning services. Answers to some of the many questions about this synagogue requirement are as follows:

1) Why don't services attended at other synagogues count towards the requirement?

Experiencing services at other synagogues is a wonderful idea. Each synagogue puts their own stamp on the traditional order of the Jewish service and to see the many expressions of our religion is a great idea. However, that each synagogue has its own way of conducting a service is exactly why a minimum number of services at PCS should be experienced. Our research shows that synagogues that allow for attendance at other synagogues to "count" have a much greater number of required services.

2) Why can't the 6th and 7th grader attend primarily Friday night services to fulfill the service requirements? Friday night services are a wonderful introduction to PCS services. They are shorter and far more easily appreciated by young people. However, the Saturday morning services are different in a great many ways, such that Friday night services alone would fail to give our children a full appreciation of Shabbat services.

3) Why do the sixth grade students have to attend four Family Education Shabbats? Family Education Shabbats are a highlight of the synagogue experience for our children. At no other time do they have the opportunity to speak out and express their own individual thoughts on a wide variety of ethical and spiritual issues. For us parents, it is frequently a jaw dropping experience, listening to the amazing things our children say! Please, everyone come to at least one of these Family Education Shabbats. You will be amazed and delighted.

4) Do I need to attend services with my child? You do not have to attend services along with your child. It is only required that your child in the 6th and 7th grade enter the synagogue before 10 am and place a star alongside their name in the appropriate attendance book. It is likely that you will want to attend at least some of the services alongside your child, making a shared experience of the moment of bringing out the Torah, of touching the Torah with your tallit or prayer book as it passes you by in the aisle. You can sing along with your child, or just listen to the wonderful music and chanting that goes on during the entire service. You can dance in the aisle at each of the B'nei Mitzvah celebrations. Would you want to share all of this with your child? *Of course you would!*