

CHABAD OF PASADENA BAT MITZVAH HANDBOOK

WELCOME

In Judaism, the Bat Mitzvah marks a most significant stage in the life of a young woman. As she grows older, she will constantly reflect on this momentous occasion as a major part of her maturing process. It is this turning point at which a mere girl is suddenly transformed into a Jewish adult. Feeling the pride of being a full fledged member of the Jewish nation... Identifying with her essence in a strong and positive manner... Realizing she is an integral part of our beautiful traditions and rich heritage. This feeling and commitment ultimately serves to inspire her to constantly recognize her privilege and responsibilities to herself, fellow human beings, and above all to G-d.

At Chabad of Pasadena, the Bat Mitzvah celebrations are faithful to the beauty and authenticity of Jewish tradition. It is a ceremony which will bring your daughter to deep recognition and appreciation of her special role as a part of the Jewish nation.

1. OUR PHILOSOPHY

❖ Personalized

We believe that no two children are the same and no two families are the same, and we therefore strive to personalize this most meaningful lifecycle event to make it most meaningful, enjoyable and inspiring for your family. We celebrate each child's individual strengths by tailor-making each Bat Mitzvah to fit the unique needs of the child

❖ Meaningful and Relevant

Our goal is to instill in each child the meaning and relevance behind what it is they are doing, so the experience is meaningful and relevant to their lives in today's day and age.

❖ Not just a ceremony, but about being Jewish

The Bat Mitzvah is much more than a ceremony, it is about who we are. Our focus is on experiencing the joy and depth of being Jewish. The ceremony is only one part of that. The training and preparation for the Bat Mitzvah reflects that as well. The child is taught the meaning of what it means to be

Jewish and is given time to ask and reflect on her becoming a Bat Mitzvah with the teachers she studies with.

❖ **Enjoy the whole experience**

It is not just about the destination, the journey should be meaningful and enjoyable as well. We want your child to always remember her Bat Mitzvah and the training that preceded it, as joyous experience.

❖ **Community is very important**

Through our own involvement we show our children the importance of community. Family participation in community events and services adds an important dimension to the experience.

❖ **Parental involvement very important**

Your child's Bat Mitzvah experience is greatly enhanced when the parents are involved and participate in their child's Bat Mitzvah preparation.

2. PREPARATION

In order to properly prepare the young girl for her Bat Mitzvah we usually recommend private tutoring for about 6-8 months prior to the service. (May be less if enrolled at Juda Hebrew School)

During this time the Bat Mitzvah will learn all about what it means to be a Jewish woman, the importance of Judaism in our lives and of course the actual necessities for the ceremony itself. The Bat mitzvah girl will create a beautiful scrapbook as a keepsake and reminder of what she learned. The tutoring will be customized on an individual basis. The Bat Mitzvah can choose which components they would like to focus on for the ceremony.

Topics that will be covered:

- **The Meaning of Bat Mitzvah** - A deep appreciation and understanding of this transformational life cycle event.
- **Great Jewish Women In History** - A comprehensive study of the role of Jewish women throughout history with relevant lessons for life in the 21st century.
- **Special Mitzvot Connected with Bat Mitzvah** - Understand the meaning and traditions connected with the Candle Lighting. Learn what it means both from a historical and practical perspective.
- **Ahavat Yisrael / Love For A Fellow** - This unit will focus on and develop a sense of responsibility for the people around us and especially for our Jewish brothers and sisters as well as our

Non-Jewish neighbors. (Your daughter will choose a Chessed project for her Bat Mitzvah).

- **Optional: The 12 Torah Passages** - An in depth study of The 12 Pesukim (verses). These 12 Torah passages are the fundamentals that define our faith and practice
- **Ceremony Components** - She will also learn to read Hebrew and practice the verses she chooses to read at her ceremony (Psalm 13, Aishes Chayil, 12 Torah passages) as well as prepare the various speeches and insights she will be delivering during her Bat Mitzvah ceremony.

During these months of preparation there are some simultaneous preparation habits the Bat Mitzvah is involved in.

❖ **Bat Mitzvah Lead-Up**

- Private tutoring for 6-8 months (depending on child's capabilities and the ceremony she chooses)
- Begin Lighting Shabbat Candles Weekly
- Choose and implement Chessed Project
- Mitzvah Undertaking
- Write Bat Mitzvah essay

❖ **Candle Lighting**

One of the most special mitzvot for a Bat Mitzvah is the Mitzvah of Shabbat candles. During training girls learn all about their significance and they are very excited and proud of this unique Mitzvah. This Mitzvah helps instill in Jewish girls the sense that they can illuminate their families and world through their personal acts of goodness. If she is not yet doing so, the Bat Mitzvah girl (and her mother) should make it a weekly practice to light Shabbat candles in the months leading up to the ceremony.

3. DATE & CEREMONY

In order to properly prepare and plan your special day, clear the date you wish to reserve, and choose the ceremony that best fits your needs. Menucha will be happy to go through options that best fit your needs and will ensure there is ongoing communication during the preparation process.

Ceremony Date Types

1. Weekday Evening
2. Sunday Morning/Evening
3. Friday Evening
4. Saturday Evening

Ceremony Components

The following parts of the service are available for the Bat Mitzvah to lead at the ceremony:

1. Read the 12 customary verses of the Torah
2. Dvar Torah - Speech
3. Cup of Blessing
4. Candle lighting ceremony
5. Candle Lighting (Friday Night)
6. Tehillim (Psalms) recital

4. THE CEREMONY AND SERVICE

Our services are warm and traditional. The Bat Mitzvah is a celebration of a young Jewish woman, and there is much creativity involved in customizing the service.

All prayer books are Hebrew/English. All announcements, speeches and sermons are in English. We recommend personalizing a nice program booklet that we have on file, which describes and explains main elements of the service for the guests and what to expect.

A typical Bat Mitzvah ceremony looks something like this:

- Greetings from the Rabbi
- Reading of the 12 Torah Passages
- Tehillim (Psalms) Recital
- Dvar Torah Speech with Torah Reading
- Candy Throwing with Siman Tov Song
- Parents' Blessing
- Rabbi's Blessing
- Cup of Blessing Ceremony
- Various songs throughout the ceremony
- Friday: Candle Lighting Ceremony
- Saturday night: Havdalah Ceremony

5. PICTURES AND MUSIC

If your ceremony is on Friday evening, pictures and music are permissible until candle lighting. If it is on Saturday night, pictures and music are allowed after the conclusion of Shabbat. There is no limit to music and pictures during a weekday ceremony.

6. SYNAGOGUE ATTENDANCE

Most Synagogues require two years of membership in order to perform a Bat Mitzvah. Chabad is open to the entire Jewish community regardless of observance or affiliation. At the same time we feel that a Bat Mitzvah is not a

one-time event, rather an ongoing process of growth and learning. Therefore, the following synagogue attendance is encouraged:

- For 12 months leading up to the ceremony the Bat Mitzvah girl and her family are encouraged to attend Shabbat services (Friday night or Shabbat morning) at least once a month.
- During the year following the ceremony the Bat Mitzvah girl and her family are encouraged to continue attending Shabbat services at least once a month.
- The Bat Mitzvah girl and her family are encouraged to attend High Holiday services at Chabad.

6. CHESSED PROJECT

As part of becoming a responsible Jewish woman, each Bat-Mitzvah girl should choose a Chessed - Kindness Project; e.g., Adopt a senior through Smile on Seniors, raise money for poor families, volunteer for a Jewish organization, study with someone who needs help, befriend someone who needs a friend, send cards and care packages to victims of terror in Israel, entertain seniors in honor of a Holiday, etc., and fill out the Chessed report.

7. FACILITY AND CATERING OPTIONS

Our facility can accommodate a Kiddush and/or reception of up to 125 people comfortably. If necessary, the family can rent a party tent and we can accommodate 200 people.

You will need to coordinate with Mrs. Chani Hanoka who will help you organize a reception. At your first meeting you will be provided with a resource guide with a list of approved caterers and in-house catering options, and Chani is happy to help guide you through menu, different catering options, and décor.

Chabad has 125 chairs and 25 6-foot tables. Round tables, Tablecloths and any additional chairs you might need for your reception can be rented from a local vendor.

8. BAT-MITZVAH PARTY

Although not necessary, many families have a Bat-Mitzvah party in addition to the Synagogue ceremony. Chabad requires that any parties associated with the Bat-Mitzvah serve only Kosher food. There are numerous Kosher catering options available in Los Angeles and we will be happy to assist you.

9. YOUR INVESTMENT

Your investment in your daughter's Bat-Mitzvah experience is as follows:

- Siddur \$25
- Private Training \$50 (per session)
- All fees associated with Kiddush/reception will be coordinated with Chani Hanoka who can be reached at 626-818-4573.

As always, no child is turned away from Chabad for lack of funds. If necessary, other financial options can be discussed at the first meeting.

11. CONTACT INFO

Should you have any questions, Menucha Hanoka can be reached at 608-622-6259 or Menucha@chabadpasadena.com. Our mailing address is: Chabad of Pasadena, 1090 East Walnut Street, Pasadena, CA 91106

To sign up for private tutoring please go to Chabadpasadena.com/BatMitzvahs and we will be in touch with you.