

STEPHEN WISE TEMPLE



Mazal tov!

We are thrilled to be embarking on this journey with you as you begin to plan for your bar or bat mitzvah experience. This is a time of great *simchah* (joy) and celebration for you, your loved ones, and our entire community.

Your spiritual development is equally as important as your intellectual and physical growth, and we hope the b'nai mitzvah process will be a launching pad for the deeper development of your own Jewish life and identity. This formative experience will provide opportunities for you to make meaning in your own life through study, prayer, community engagement, and changing the world for the better through your growing commitment to *tikkun olam*.

The *bar* or *bat mitzvah* journey is about *becoming*. Rather than representing a destination, it represents a waypoint, a significant stop on your Jewish journey. It provides an opportunity for reflection and contemplation. It is when *you* begin to choose what role Judaism plays in your life. It is when *you* begin to decide, day by day, choice by choice, who you are going to be in this world and what it means to be a part of our community and our People.

We look forward to sharing moments filled with thoughtfulness and joy, searching and holiness, discovery and celebration, as we travel on this road of *becoming* together...

L'shalom,

Rabbi Yoshi Zweiback
Cantor Emma Lutz
Rabbi David Woznica
Rabbi Ron Stern
Rabbi Sari Laufer
Rabbi Josh Knobel

ABBREVIATED TIMELINE TO THE B'NAI MITZVAH PROCESS

This abbreviated timeline depicts the various stages of your child(ren)'s bar/bat mitzvah journey. We hope it will serve as a quick guide to assist you in navigating and understanding the B'nai Mitzvah process; from choosing your service date to planning for the big day! Please note that this template has been simplified and does not contain all the necessary information pertaining to our program's requirements and/or expectations.

**This document is subject to change slightly from year-to-year and without prior notice.*

4th/5th Grade

An email will be sent requesting each family to choose three date and time options. We will then assign your date, send a notice to e-sign your service contract and make a deposit payment to secure and confirm your child's service.

3 years before the BM date



Family Education Meetings & WTY Teen Program



Wise Elementary School and the Religious School will hold 5th & 6th grade Family Programs. You will be contacted by the Wise Temple Youth (WTY) office regarding registration for the 7th grade teen program.

2 years before the BM date

Intro to B'nai Mitzvah Program

Families will be invited to attend one or more informational meetings. At this time, you will have the opportunity to ask questions, review program expectations, and will receive other important material.

2 to 3 years before the BM date



Meeting with the officiating rabbi and/or cantor



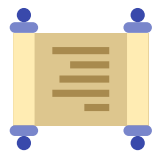
Families will receive email notifications to schedule an Initial Family Bar/Bat Mitzvah Meeting with the officiating rabbi. Please note, your Temple account will be reviewed prior to this meeting and must be in good-standing at this time (1 year out from your service date).

1 year before confirmed BM date

Service Leading & Torah Reading Prep

Student assessment will be required prior to assigning a mentor. Mentoring meetings will be scheduled and student should begin planning and working on their *Tikkun Olam* Project at this time.

9 months before the BM date



Torah Study & D'var Torah Prep



Email notifications will be sent to schedule the student's D'var Torah (speech) meetings. Each student is required to attend

these 30- minute sessions and will plan to meet 3-4 times to complete their speech.

3 months before the BM date

Final Family Rehearsal

You will spend one and half hours with the clergy to practice and run through the service. Plan to review speeches, blessings & honor participants.



5 to 7 days before the BM date

B'NAI MITZVAH CONTACTS / RESOURCES



SENIOR CANTOR EMMA LUTZ
Head of B'nai Mitzvah Program

310.889.2270
ELutz@WiseLA.org

*(General inquiries relating to
B'nai Mitzvah services and our clergy)*



SAMANTHA REMENY
Lifecycle Coordinator

310.889.2265
SRemeny@WiseLA.org

*(contact person for securing
your child's b'nai mitzvah date)*



MALCOLM J. MCELHENEY
Program Director, B'nai Mitzvah
& Hebrew Studies

310.889.2205
MMcElheney@WiseLA.org

*(contact person for Hebrew
and service assessment, mentoring
assignments, D'var Torah information
and chanting rehearsals)*



RABBI JOSH KNOBEL
Director, Center for Youth Engagement

310.889.2211
JKnobel@WiseLA.org

*(contact person for learning more about
registration dates for our
teen WTY Program through the Center for
Youth Engagement)*



RABBI RON STERN
Title

310.889.2269
RStern@WiseLA.org

*(contact person to discuss
Tikkun Olam Projects)*



ALICIA COHEN
Director of Membership

310.889.2242
ACohen@WiseLA.org

*(contact person to learn more
about our Temple Membership)*



STACEY ROSENTHAL
Senior Director of Community Events

310.889.2247
SRosenthal@WiseLA.org

*(contact person for reserving event dates/
venues, reception/party information,
catering, flowers, works with your party
planners and outside vendors)*

PARENT CHECKLIST

Welcome to the B'nai Mitzvah Program at Stephen Wise Temple.
For your convenience, we are providing you this checklist of items that you will need.

- Make appointment for assessment with Program Director, Malcolm McElheney
- Register my child for 7th grade WTY program
- Contact the Director of Special Events, Stacey Rosenthal, to discuss reception/party
- Start Tikkun Olam project worksheet
- Start Tikkun Olam Project
- One year prior to service date, confirm clergy requests and service location
- Get information on when BM parents attend the Family Journey meeting
- Schedule Initial Family Meeting with clergy office (one year out from service date)
- One year prior to service date, confirm BM balance is paid in full, and Temple account is in good standing (i.e., past due balances are paid (if any), as well as current year's membership)
- Begin drafting parent speeches to review/discuss with rabbi
- Get mentor assignment and schedule mentor meetings for my child (9 months out)
- Schedule Family Review meeting and discuss speech preparations (3 months out)
- Schedule and begin D'var Torah (speech) meetings with clergy office (3 months out)
- Schedule a Tefillin ceremony, if desired (3 months out)
- Invitations are sent and event details confirmed
- Fill out Honors Form online PRIOR to rehearsal
- Schedule meeting with cantor's office to review and practice chanting
- Confirm rehearsal date and time with clergy office (bring Torah portion binder)
- Relax... and get ready for the BIG DAY! Mazel Tov!!!

B'NAI MITZVAH SERVICE TIMES AND VENUE PARAMETERS

10 a.m.

- Luncheon in ZH* venue is only available when there is no 12 p.m. service in the Sanctuary
- service in the Sanctuary
- Luncheon in Katz Pavilion (*subject to availability and time limits may apply*)

12 p.m.

- Service can be in Plotkin Chapel or Sanctuary (*subject to availability*)
- Reception in ZH* (*subject to availability and time limits may apply*)
- Reception may be held in Katz Pavilion (*subject to availability*)

5 p.m.

- Service can be in Plotkin Chapel or Sanctuary
- Party in ZH* with end time of 12 a.m. midnight
- Party may be held in Katz Pavilion, **IF** available (*and with no other conflicts*)

PLEASE NOTE:

- Reservations for ALL our venues will be on a **first-come-first-serve basis**.
- Kiddush, Luncheon and Reception reservations **MUST** be made in advance (at least one year prior to the service date) and have a signed contract with our Wise Events department.
- To inquire and/or reserve a space, please contact Stacey Rosenthal at 310.889.2247 or by email at SRosenthal@WiseLA.org.
- Stephen Wise Temple Member B'nai Mitzvah are given priority over all external events.

*ZH = Zeldin-Hershenson Hall

CLERGY GUIDELINES FOR PARENT BLESSINGS AT BAR/BAT MITZVAH

Dear Parents,

Mazal tov! We look forward to sharing your family's *Simcha* as your child is called to the Torah as a bar/bat mitzvah.

On that day you will have the opportunity to offer your child a blessing, as all gathered are standing. The Ark will be open, and the congregation will be facing our *sifrei Torah*. It will be, we hope, a moment of exaltation and great sanctity.

In our tradition, a blessing is a chance to offer gratitude and wonder for the moment in which we find ourselves, and to express our hopes for the future.

While at your celebration after the service you may wish to thank your guests or address your spouse or other children, this is not the appropriate setting for those sentiments. Instead, at this time of kedusha (holiness), we ask you to focus your remarks solely on your child becoming bat/bar mitzvah that day. The guidelines below will help you to fashion a fitting blessing for such an elevated moment:

- It is natural to want to celebrate our child's accomplishments. We encourage, however, your blessing to speak to their - and your - values. As above, a blessing typically expresses gratitude, as well as a request. (i.e. "We appreciate your loving, giving nature and pray that you will always treat others with kindness and respect.")
- It is especially appropriate to share a Jewish message and to speak about the meaning of the day.
- Mindful that everyone will be standing, the blessing should take no more than a total of 3 minutes. That is, it should be no longer than 2 pages, double spaced. You may choose to divide it between parents or have one parent read on behalf of the family. Of course, if you are having a celebration following your ceremony, there is ample opportunity to share more thoughts at that time.
- Even as you may wish to express gratitude to God, we ask that you not use this moment of blessing to thank clergy, tutors, family members (including your spouse, parents, or other children), or guests.
- We ask that you write out your blessing in advance and email it to the officiating rabbi at least one week before the service for approval.

If you would like help in formulating your blessings, we would be delighted to be of assistance. Again, Mazel Tov on your upcoming *Simcha*.

L'shalom,

Your Stephen Wise Temple Clergy

P.S. We have attached some samples of parent blessings that may be helpful to you.

SAMPLE #1

_____, we are so proud of you. You are an amazing person, and while you are a man in the eyes of our community, you will always be our little “bubbies”. As we approach the end of your Bar Mitzvah, we offer you this blessing with our deepest love: May you be kind and enjoy the kindness of others; May you achieve all of your dreams (even being a professional video game player, if that is meant to be); May you enjoy a lifetime of summers on Lake Michigan; May you find joy in doing good deeds simply because they are good; May you believe that you can make a difference in the world and in the lives of others; May you follow your inner voice and do not let others lead you astray; May you swim through life with the strength and confidence that you have shown in hundreds of races (even beating Dad two weeks ago); May you always have enough food to eat, especially Kabob, schnitzel and pot roast; May you be proud of yourself, because you are very special and G-d made you exactly who you are. May you enjoy great friendships and understand that relationships require give and take.

May you take care of your sister, and may she take care of you, and may you both walk through life together. May you hold onto your childhood, even as you become an adult. You are never too old to do anything. May you find and develop your passions (in addition to video games); May you understand that there are many ways to climb a mountain and have the confidence to blaze your own trail; May you strive for greatness and forgive your failings; May you stay close to family, find love and, one day, build a family of your own; May you get a dog one day after you move out (Dad is allergic); May you have the wisdom to listen and the bravery to speak your mind; May you always remember that you are a Jew, and that your family escaped from the holocaust and the fall of the Shah so that you can live free; And may you always remember this day, and that we all love you very much.

SAMPLE #2

To our beloved son Steve. We pray that you will have the strength of character and the determination to face life's challenges. We hope that you will choose to be an optimist and that you will guard against cynicism. The Jewish people have thrived on hope and sheer perseverance. Human progress and achievement rests on the belief that each of us can make a difference, on the principle that people can change, and on faith that “this too will pass.” Open your mind. Pursue your dreams. Look for miracles – they are everywhere.

We pray that you will seek the companionship of family and friends. As you become an adult Jew and a full-fledged member of this congregation, may you too be blessed with the satisfaction of active involvement and the opportunity to build the Jewish community.

We pray that you will take the teachings of our tradition into your heart and that the Torah and mitzvot will be the guiding principles in your life and that goodness will be among your lifelong pursuits. May God bless you and all our loved ones as we share this journey alongside you.

SAMPLE #3

(Parent 1) Today we stand here with you – knowing that we are at a threshold, a new passage. Your becoming a bat/bar mitzvah is the beginning of a journey. It may in many ways feel like the culmination of much effort and preparation. But, in fact, you are about to depart on an exploration into all that life has to offer – both sweet and bitter. We live in an extraordinary time and place. You have freedom to choose and many paths to take. We offer you our counsel and our blessing.

(Parent 2) We pray that you will make wise choices. We pray that you choose Judaism, not simply because it is our heritage, but because it cherishes life and goodness above all else. Judaism teaches us that in order to partner with God, we must seek to continue God's work by repairing the world. Judaism values study and learning because these lead to action and doing. Judaism says be a mensch, a person who seeks to find what is holy and God-like in others. Choose Judaism for all these reasons AND because it connects you to an extraordinary history and people.

(Parents together): Our hearts are full of love and pride on this very special day and we pray that God will bless you with a future filled with goodness and kindness.

SAMPLE #4

(Parent 1) In the Sephardic tradition, you are named Chaim, in honor of my father, and I can't think of a more fitting name. Since you were an infant, you have brought life into the lives of everyone around you. From your huge smile, to your hearty laugh (especially at slap stick humor), to your love of learning, to your incredible gift with numbers, you have brightened all of our lives.

(Parent 2) When you were in second grade, we brought you to the Ecumenical Hunger Program to volunteer during their annual holiday food distribution. While you were packing boxes, you bumped into Rabbi Schwartz. He asked you why you were there and you looked up at him and without skipping a beat said, "Because Torah tells me to." When he asked why else, you tapped your heart and said, "because this tells me to, as well." Your father just stared at me and was at a loss as to how to respond and I told him, "that's what you get from a Jewish day school education."

(Parents Together): May you continue to brighten our lives, inspired by our Torah, our tradition, and the teachings of your big heart.

WTY (WISE TEMPLE YOUTH) PROGRAMS

Teen Experiences

Wise Temple Youth (WTY) provides teens with a vast array of opportunities to develop leadership talents, build relationship skills, and help them discover where they fit socially and spiritually through engaging and meaningful experiences that are relevant to them.

Sundays with Wise Temple Youth (WTY)

At the core of our teen opportunities is our Sundays with Wise Temple Youth. This program is for students in grades 7-12. These gatherings are a chance to hang out, connect with peers, our clergy, and our educators, and make a difference in their lives and the world in small and bigger ways. 7-12 grade meets at a minimum bi-monthly on Sunday afternoon or evenings. Students also participate in Tikkun Olam field trips designed to broaden their perspective about topics of importance to them as Jewish teens.

WTY (Grades 7-12)

Join other Wise high school students for a traditional youth group experience to explore teen life, Jewish identity, and social action – all while making connections to Wise peers, educators, and clergy. No two Sundays will be the same, and sessions will range from facilitated conversations, to visiting a food bank, to playing broomball, all while making friends, building confidence, and learning leadership skills. Grade 12 culminates in a beautiful community Shabbat celebration in the Spring.

Wise Temple Youth Events

WTY also provides special opportunities for Jewish teens to interact with their peers from around the United States and the world, providing them with valuable insights into the ways Judaism can influence their lives.

NFTY: North American Federation of Temple Youth (Grades 9-12)

Join us during any of our six annual, transformative, teen retreats that partner our teens with Jewish teens from across Southern California and the United States. NFTY provides sacred opportunities for teens to see where their Judaism can take them as young adults.

Wise Temple Youth Leadership Opportunities

In addition to providing a myriad of opportunities for peer leadership through our teen programs, WTY also provides many chances for teens to hone their leadership skills and techniques through regular practice.

Wise Temple Youth (WTY) Board (Grades 8-12)

The WTY Board organizes Jewish teen social events, develops and implements community building programs at WTY on Sundays, and represents WTY at NFTY retreats throughout the year, developing invaluable peer leadership skills and providing meaningful experiences for their fellow teens.

Religious School Madrichim (Grades 9-12)

Participants assist Religious School teachers in the classroom every Sunday morning and meet with their coordinator weekly to develop their teaching skills, discuss classroom experiences, and collaborate on projects. Students receive community service hours or hourly pay (*some restrictions apply*).

CIT: Counselor-in-Training at Camp Wise (Grades 10-12)

In four (4) weeks at Camp Wise, teens discover how to design and lead informal educational programs, build and organize teams, and manage junior leaders. This opportunity rewards participants with personal growth, professional development, and 150 community service hours.

Junior Literacy Leader (Grade 9-12)

A perfect opportunity for high school age teens (9th grade and older) to be involved in a summer volunteer opportunity where they can make a difference in the lives of children from low income backgrounds. JLLs assist our Literacy Leaders (college-age teachers) in the classrooms as well as with the overall program, helping with reading time, assisting with afternoon camp-like activities, etc. Find out more [here](#).

TIKKUN OLAM PROJECT

Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) is an essential part of living an active Jewish life. Stephen Wise Temple makes repairing our community and the world around us a priority and you can be a big part of that effort. Every teen who is becoming a B'nai Mitzvah at Wise creates a Tikkun Olam Project. By creating a Tikkun Olam project you will learn how to find a cause that you are passionate about, find or build a hands-on experience where you and your family can make a difference, and then be able to show the work you've done to the community.

At Wise we follow three easy steps to create your Tikkun Olam Project: *Cause, Action, and Advocacy.*

CAUSE - How can you help your community?

It's sometimes hard to figure out what you're passionate about or how to turn your skills into a useful tool for helping others, but everyone can meaningfully affect their community. Below are examples of how teens at Wise are using their passion for a cause to make a difference:

- Kyle recently noticed at his local skate park that many kids were visiting the park, but had no skateboard, pads, or helmets. After inquiring about the kids, he found out that they couldn't afford their own equipment. Kyle organized an equipment drive with his friends, school, WTY, and local businesses that helped supply new or gently used skateboards, pads, and helmets. Kyle was able to give the equipment to the kids in need while also instructing them on proper skating, safety, and equipment care techniques.
- Emma has a passion for cooking and baking but wasn't sure how to turn that skill into something that can help others. Emma connected with Meals on Wheels and arranged for her and her mother to deliver meals on Friday afternoon to people in her community that are homebound. Emma is baking Shabbat treats that she will add to the meals as her own personal touch.
- Max, a talented pianist, wanted to use music to help people in his community. Max partnered with The Los Angeles Jewish Home, a home for Jewish senior citizens, and created a concert series where visited the residents, played his favorite classical and popular songs, and brought music and joy to others.

ACTION - How do I find a place to volunteer?

There are so many areas of action you can take to help the community and resources that help you figure out what works for your busy schedule, where you live, and time you have available.

We recommend that you start with the WiseLA Tikkun Olam Website. This is the best place to find up to date resources to help you select a meaningful project.

If you are having trouble connecting with a specific organization, contact Rabbi Ron Stern, RonStern@WiseLA.org about your issue and he will help you get connected.

Visit our [Tikkun Olam website](#) for a complete listing.

ADVOCACY (Social Justice) – Telling others about my project!

Going out and volunteering is a great way to help the community, but just as important is informing your community about the work you did so can learn about your cause, how they can get involved and be part of Tikkun Olam themselves. There are three main opportunities to present your project to friends, family, and the Wise community.

Your B'nai Mitzvah service – Two ways to bring your Tikkun Olam project into your service is by connecting it with your Torah portion and including it in your speech and creating a “Science Fair” tri-board and displaying it on a table in the foyer of the Sanctuary. Your speech mentor can help you connect your work with your parsha. When you do your project take lots of photos and small mementos (brochures from the non-profit organization, an example of the item you’ve created, or stories from those whom you met) to include in your presentation.

Wise Temple Youth – the WTY teens that meet on Sundays at the Temple are always interested to hear about Tikkun Olam projects their peers are doing. You are invited to present your project to the youth community or come during your project and ask for their help. For example, when Chad was organizing care packages to be sent to soldiers overseas he had WTY teens write letters, bring supplies, and organize the care packages.

We love to publish descriptions and pictures of our B-Mitzvah project on our WiseLA website so others can be inspired by the work that you do. Send Rabbi Stern a brief paragraph describing your project along with pictures of you in action. Examples are [here](#).



PHOTOGRAPHY/VIDEOGRAPHY RULES FOR BAR/BAT MITZVAH SERVICES

All video and photo equipment must be completely removed from the main sanctuary or chapel floor 10 minutes prior to the start time of service. Please note that photographers and videographers are not allowed to “walk the room” during the service - they must take photos and/or video from the photo booth in the back of the room or through the room partition in the sanctuary. Absolutely NO flash photography (by guests or the hired photographer) is permitted during the service/ceremony and all aisles/walkways should remain clear for clergy and guests.

The Torah may be removed from the ark for B’nai Mitzvah photos. Please make certain that the Torah is not set down anywhere other than the bima podium or held by someone in a chair. The Torah is sacred, and it should be treated with the utmost respect. Great care should be exercised when adjusting the parchment, and you should never touch the letters. After use, it should be closed at the location (Torah portion) where it was originally opened and carefully returned to the ark.

We ask that you please be mindful of where you (or any members of your team) leave your equipment, bags, lenses, etc. as we will not be held responsible or liable for any lost, misplaced or damaged equipment you may encounter while on our campus.

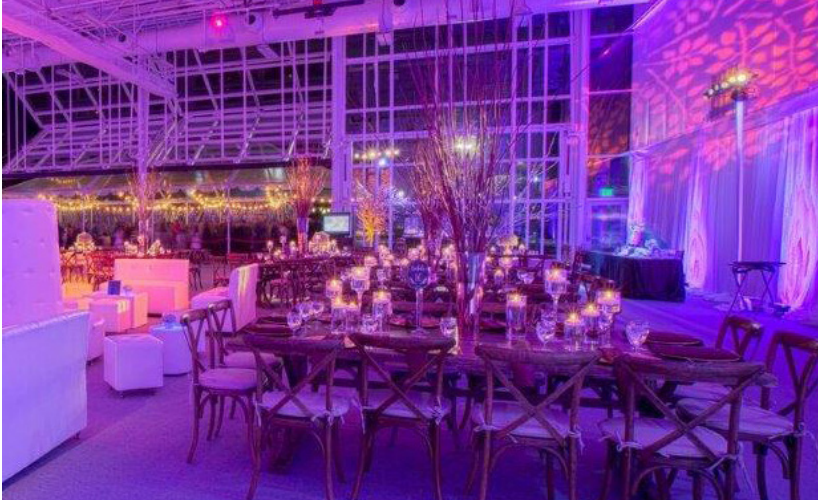
Please note that if you plan on taking pictures before or after your service, you must coordinate the timing in advance with the B’nai Mitzvah Coordinator as there may be other celebrations taking place that would limit time/space availability.

We would appreciate you giving a copy of these rules to your photographer and/or videographer in advance of your service date. If you would like to schedule a separate day and time to take family photos, please email your request to BMitzvah@WiseLA.org.

STEPHEN
WISE TEMPLE

Guide to

B'nai Mitzvah Events



Capacities

Award-Winning

Katz Family Pavilion and Shalom Garden

500 (indoor), 800 (outdoor/indoor)

Zeldin-Hershenson Hall

Seats up to 275 guests

Nahmias Plaza

Seats up to 350 guests

Feintech-Shapell Plaza

Seats up to 250 guests

Guidelines

You are required to choose from one of our preferred caterers

Alcohol may be brought in by client or purchased directly through caterer

All outside Vendors are required to show certificate of insurance

Events to end no later than 11 p.m. (subject to additional fees after hours)

Parking available at no extra charge unless over 200 cars

Day of coordinator required for weddings and any events over 100 people

What Wise Provides

Included in fee:

- Round tables: 60" or 72" Guest Tables
- Banquet tables: 6' or 8'
- Seated Cocktail Tables and High Boys
- Wooden bars: 2 large, 2 small
- Black Mesh or Gray banquet chairs

Contact Stacey Rosenthal for more info.