

**Congregation Kol Emeth**  
**B'nai Mitzvah Manual**





# **Congregation Kol Emeth B'nai Mitzvah Guide**

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## **PART I – HAVING A BAR/BAT MITZVAH AT KOL EMETH**

### **WELCOME FROM OUR RABBIS**

Dear B'nai Mitzvah Students and Families,

*Mazal Tov!* It is such a joy to welcome you into our Bar and Bat Mitzvah program. This is a special time for parents, as the children begin to take their first steps into adulthood. It is also important for the students; you are no longer a child in the eyes of the Jewish community! At 13, you become fully obligated in the *mitzvot*. This is why you are called *bar/bat mitzvah*, literally “son/daughter of the commandment.” You officially become responsible for your own actions: how you celebrate Judaism, how you treat people, or how you relate to God.

The B'nai Mitzvah program is just as much about learning a set of skills as it is about becoming a *mensch*. By the culmination of this process, there is a great knowledge of prayer, Hebrew and Judaism, as well as a whole new level of self-confidence. There is a concept in Judaism that one can only lead the community- in prayer and in other mitzvot- when one counts on an equal level with everyone else in the community. Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah is about announcing to the community that you COUNT. It's not about performing or getting every word and note just right. It's about connecting with and contributing to your Jewish community, starting right here at Kol Emeth.

We are always so impressed by the time and energy commitment that the families devote to making the learning process and the Shabbat service personally meaningful. We also appreciate having the chance to get to know you better as students, individuals and families. With Rabbi Booth's involvement with the 7<sup>th</sup> grade Religious School class, Rabbi Graff and Rabbi Booth's conversations with you during the *dvar Torah* process, and Rabbi Matzkin's guidance in your educational journey, we all feel that it is a highlight of our work as rabbis to spend time with you.

This B'nai Mitzvah manual will help you understand all of the “nooks and crannies” of your Bar/ Bat Mitzvah experience at Kol Emeth. Please read carefully and don't hesitate to come to us with questions. In order to help you achieve your goals, we count on you to be as involved in your Jewish community as you can. We feel confident that by participating in our educational programs and taking advantage of our individualized tutoring process, you will be excited and confident by time you reach your big day.

*B'Shalom,*

Rabbi David Booth  
Rabbi Sarah Graff  
Rabbi Laurie Matzkin



## **INTRODUCTION TO OUR STAFF**

**Rabbi Laurie Matzkin, Director of Lifelong Learning** -- Rabbi Matzkin oversees all of Kol Emeth's youth educational programs. She will support your experience in the religious school, whether your child participates in Kol Shabbat only or also our weekday afternoon program. Rabbi Matzkin also supervises "KEY: Kol Emeth Youth" and will help ensure a positive Jewish social experience for your child in our Kadima and USY programs.

**Jeff Schwarz, Mitzvah Director** -- Jeff keeps the Bnai Mitzvah calendar. He will work with you and your child to set up an ILP (Individual Learning Plan) and then choose a date, in coordination Yvonne. He teaches the Torah trope and Haftarah trope classes. Jeff also works with each student individually on the Shabbat morning service and his/her Torah and Haftarah readings. In addition, Jeff now coordinates our Mitzvah program, helping each bar/bat mitzvah find and accomplish their mitzvah project.

**Yvonne Boxerman, Executive Director** – You will meet with Yvonne to talk about fees and membership dues. She can also help with Kiddush arrangements.

**Rabbi David Booth and Rabbi Sarah Graff** – Both Rabbi Booth and Rabbi Graff look forward to getting to know your whole family better through the bar/bat mitzvah process. Four to five months before your simcha, you will get a letter from the office with a proposed schedule of 6 meetings with our rabbis. The first meeting is for both the student and the parents. The last meeting is a dress rehearsal for the whole family and others who would like to practice their parts in the service. The middle appointments offer an opportunity for the student to study 1-on-1 with one of our rabbis, to work on a Dvar Torah if the student wishes, and to build a deeper relationship.

To contact any of our rabbis or staff, please call the synagogue office: (650) 948-7498

## VISION AND EXPECTATIONS

Kol Emeth is deeply committed to Jewish learning and Jewish practice. At the same time, Kol Emeth is also a place that strives to help others to grow and to open Jewish doors for people. Our bar and bat mitzvah standards reflect these values and offer families ways in which they can create a deeply meaningful experience for their child around this unique life cycle moment. Our program is intentionally intimate, including one-on-one tutoring with Jeff Schwarz and time with both Rabbis. Students gain skills and self-confidence, as well as a comfort with and knowledge of prayer skills and Jewish tradition. Families at Kol Emeth come from a variety of backgrounds. We are united in our love of Judaism and desire to pass these sacred traditions on to our children.

Kol Emeth in particular has four key values that we strive to honor.

1. Jewish learning. The Rabbis teach that learning is greater than all the other commandments put together because it leads to the others. Learning has the ability to change us, to help us grow. Jewish learning in particular teaches about culture and language and also about bringing out the best in ourselves. Kol Emeth feels strongly that Jewish learning is a key value in the years leading up to and following bar and bat mitzvah.
2. Jewish prayer. Prayer is the means by which we express ourselves as spiritual beings to the Holy One Blessed be God. It is also the set of skills necessary for a bar or bat mitzvah service. For both of those reasons, Shabbat and Holiday prayer and practice is a second key value.
3. Jewish community. All Jews are responsible for one another, says our tradition. There is a strength gained from creating Jewish connections and friends. Part of the goal of the bar and bat mitzvah program is to help families and students make for themselves a home in the Jewish community that is Kol Emeth.
4. Mitzvah projects. A bar or bat mitzvah challenges a student to take stock of his/her blessings and to find ways of sharing those blessings with others. For this reason, Kol Emeth has a value of finding a way to help others as part of the bar or bat mitzvah.

We ask those celebrating a bar or bat mitzvah at Kol Emeth to find ways of honoring these values. For children attending a public school, our Religious School, combined with Kol Shabbat, would be an excellent way of honoring these values. For a Day School family, the day School education itself, combined with Kol Shabbat, would be another way to honor these values.

There are other possibilities. A student might attend a Day School and come with his/her family to Friday night or Shabbat morning services but not enroll in Kol Shabbat; a

family might choose to participate in Kol Shabbat and some of our family programming, and engage tutors.

For this reason, every family is invited to meet with Jeff Schwarz Mitzvah Director and Educator, to create an Individualized Learning Plan. That ILP is an opportunity to explore together ways that meet a family's unique situation and needs while honoring each of those key values.

We also ask families to join Kol Emeth at least 18 months prior to the bar or bat mitzvah.

Kol Emeth strives to be a true community. It is wonderful to have you step forward and begin to take an integral role.

## **PART II - EDUCATION**

### **B'NAI MITZVAH PREPARATION – GRADE BY GRADE**

#### **5<sup>th</sup> GRADE – SET THE DATE !!**

To best fit your family schedule and to provide sufficient time for preparation, we suggest that you set the date for your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah in the fall of 5<sup>th</sup> grade.

The process begins during the summer between 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade, when Jeff sends you a letter inviting you to set up a meeting with him to develop an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) with you and your child. Usually the ILP is done during the fall semester of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade year. He'll review our educational programs with you and ask you questions about you and your family's style of observance, involvement in Kol Emeth, and participation in the wider Jewish community. For some families, this is the first opportunity that Jeff has to meet and get to know you. A large part of the introductory meeting is spent gathering the information and perspective needed to create an ILP.

We welcome students of all educational backgrounds and learning styles, and it is important that Jeff gets to know each family individually. During the meeting, Jeff will assess your child's skills in Hebrew or other Jewish studies. While our B'nai Mitzvah program includes six months of private tutoring with Jeff, we may want to suggest early tutoring to ease the learning pressures.

This is also the time to begin to discuss the various options for Bar and Bat Mitzvah at Kol Emeth. While a Shabbat morning service is a perfect choice for many of our families, some may choose to celebrate on a Saturday afternoon or another alternate day. Our main goal at this meeting is to begin a discussion that will continue for the next several years. We meet early in the process in order to alleviate any stress you might feel about the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and to help you to begin your journey smoothly.

Before the ILP can be finalized and a date chosen, all dues and outstanding fees must be paid in the synagogue office. Our Executive Director, Yvonne Boxerman, can help you with these matters. Once this has been accomplished for any families that may need to, a date for the big day may be chosen with Jeff.

### **Expectations for 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Families**

- Student is strongly encouraged to attend our Kol Shabbat program
- Student attends a Jewish day school, Kol Emeth Religious School, or is engaged in another program of Jewish learning
- Family meets with Jeff Schwarz, Mitzvah Director, to start an ILP
- Family meets with Executive Director to discuss fees
- Family meets with Jeff Schwarz to set the date

## **6<sup>th</sup> GRADE – FAMILY LEARNING & MITZVAH PROJECT**

6<sup>th</sup> grade is a time of steady learning and engagement. Our programming for 6<sup>th</sup> graders and their families encompasses four learning formats:

- Weekday Jewish Learning – Kol Emeth Religious School, Day School, or Private Tutoring
- Kol Shabbat – Student participates in Torah Trope and/or Parasha Class, followed by Junior Congregation. Parents are invited to take part as well.
- Family Education Programs – Bnai Mitzvah Orientation, Friday Night Programs, Grade-level Havdalah service, Shavuot Torah Extravaganza
- Mitzvah Project

### **3 Special Programs for Your Family**

The 6<sup>th</sup> grade year includes several important events for your whole family, so mark these on your calendar! In the autumn, we will gather for our Bnai Mitzvah Orientation. This is an invaluable opportunity to get to know other Bnai Mitzvah families and to learn about all the nitty gritty of planning your simcha. Both Rabbis, our Director of Lifelong Learning, Rabbi Laurie Matzkin, and Jeff Schwarz will be there to explain important details and answer questions. You really don't want to miss it.

Throughout the year, we will have special Friday night services and dinners, specifically for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade families. The services are geared towards learning the melodies and structure of the Friday night service, and the dinner is a wonderful opportunity to get to know other families better and just enjoy Shabbat.

At the end of the year, on Erev Shavuot, we will hold our annual Pre-Bnai Mitzvah Torah Extravaganza, specifically for 6<sup>th</sup> graders and their parents. This program is part of our congregation's larger Tikkun Leil Shavuot, an all-night study marathon to celebrate this holiday of receiving the Torah. Usually about 200 people take part in this extraordinary feast of Jewish learning that culminates with sunrise services. Our Pre-Bnai Mitzvah Torah Extravaganza takes place from 9-11pm on Erev Shavuot.

### **The Mitzvah Project**

The Mitzvah Project is an important introduction to the world at large. It can be a beautiful experience, in which the child is both empowered ("I can make a difference!") and humbled ("I didn't know I had it is so good.") We have moved the Mitzvah Project to the 6<sup>th</sup> grade so that our staff can better help each family find a meaningful project and more fully learn from the experience.

Here is some initial information about the Mitzvah Project; more will be available at the Bnai Mitzvah Orientation:

- The project should involve some form of direct service or giving. It is different from allocating money to a worthy cause.
- The project can be done individually or with friends.
- The project should have the full support of the parents. (Sometimes kids want to do something that really doesn't fit into the family's schedule, so parent sign-off is needed!)
- The project should entail 20 hours or more of service.

We will provide you with a list of suggestions for Mitzvah Projects at the Bnai Mitzvah Orientation.

## **7<sup>th</sup> GRADE – LOTS OF LEARNING!!**

For most families, the big day is sometime during the 7<sup>th</sup> grade year or in the fall of 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Consequently, 7<sup>th</sup> grade is a busy year of learning and preparation. The schedule presented in this Guide assumes that your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah falls in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade year, but we recognize that for many children, the big day is in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Consequently, some preparations will start later in 7<sup>th</sup> grade than is described here.

During the 7<sup>th</sup> grade year your child will be learning in many settings:

- Students take the Haftarah Trope class taught by Jeff, 12:30pm – 1:30pm on Shabbat afternoons. (This class usually runs from September to June and students start the class 6-9 months before their simcha.)
- Six months before the bar/bat mitzvah, students begin weekly tutoring sessions with Jeff.
- Three months before the bar/bat mitzvah, students begin a series of six meetings with the rabbis.
- Students attend the main service when one of their classmates celebrates his/her simcha.

### **Tutoring with Jeff**

For many families, tutoring with Jeff is a special memory of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah year. Something special happens as your child receives one-on-one attention, tailored to his or her skills and learning style. Jeff has worked with our B'nai Mitzvah students at Kol Emeth for more than 25 years, and he adjusts pacing, material and expectations based on capability and desire of students and family.

Tutoring with Jeff begins six months before the simcha, on a weekly basis. This tutoring is included in your Bar/Bat Mitzvah fee. Additional sessions (starting early, or meeting with Jeff two times per week) can be scheduled as needed. An additional fee will apply. Jeff may also work in conjunction with an outside tutor your family has hired.

Please feel free to call Jeff with your questions at any time, particularly during the tutoring process. Jeff will give your family a call about six and one half months before the simcha to set up a tutoring schedule.

### **Meeting with the Rabbis**

Our rabbis look forward to getting to know your child and your whole family better through the bar/bat mitzvah process.

Three to four months before your simcha, you will get a letter from the office with a proposed schedule of six meetings with Rabbi Booth or Rabbi Graff. The first meeting is an hour-long appointment for both the student and the parents. This meeting is an opportunity to talk about what the bar/bat mitzvah means to each of you, to share your family's unique history, and to address several practical matters as well. The rabbi will go over our Shabbat morning honors form and review various policies for giving out

honors in the service to your family and friends. The rabbi will also ask about your child's mitzvah project.

The next four meetings are half-hour appointments for your child to meet one-on-one with the rabbi. If your child is interested in preparing a Dvar Torah (speech), s/he and the rabbi will focus the majority of these sessions on studying the Torah portion together. The rabbi will also give your child assignments from week to week (reading, writing an outline, writing a rough draft, etc.). If your child chooses not to write a Dvar Torah, s/he and the rabbi may use these sessions to explore a variety of Jewish topics of interest to your child, in addition to studying their Torah portion.

Both Rabbi Booth and Rabbi Graff want to spend time with your child during this wonderful time of preparation. Therefore, while your child will work predominantly with one rabbi, at least one of these middle appointments will be with the other rabbi. We hope this will enrich the preparation process for everyone.

The final meeting with the rabbi is a dress rehearsal in the main sanctuary. This is a wonderful opportunity for everyone in the family to practice their parts in the service, and for out-of-towners to gain greater comfort with the customs of Kol Emeth. If you would like your extended family to participate in the rehearsal, please encourage them to arrive by the Wednesday or Thursday before the bar/bat mitzvah. The rehearsal is generally scheduled for Thursday afternoon. Many families also choose to dress up and take pictures before the rehearsal, since photography is not allowed on Shabbat. You are also welcome to videotape the rehearsal if you wish.

If you need to adjust the appointments you are assigned, our office and rabbis will do their best to accommodate your needs. Please keep in mind, however, that our rabbis' schedules are very busy and it isn't always easy to reschedule.

In addition to these formal appointments, our rabbis look forward to many informal opportunities to get to know your child and your family as you prepare for the bar/bat mitzvah. Rabbi Graff leads our Pre-Bnai Mitzvah Torah Extravaganza on Shavuot, teaches in both our 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade classes and frequently leads Junior Congregation on Shabbat. Rabbi Booth teaches part of both our 7<sup>th</sup> grade Religious School curriculum and our 8<sup>th</sup> grade program. They also count on seeing you at the variety of special family programs they have planned – Orientation, a Bnai Mitzvah Family Barbecue, Friday night services and dinners, Sunday Morning Tefillin Minyan and Breakfast, the Shavuot Torah Extravaganza, and more. Our rabbis really prioritize these programs, as they cherish the opportunity to get to know your family during this precious bar/bat mitzvah year.

### **Experiencing the Shabbat Morning Service**

We hope you and your whole family will take the opportunity to pray in the main sanctuary on Shabbat morning many times over the course of the 7<sup>th</sup> grade year, whether there is a bar/bat mitzvah or not. It will help you feel comfortable and connected when your simcha arrives, and we hope you will find it spiritually meaningful as well.

## **8<sup>th</sup> GRADE – A LARGER JEWISH WORLD**

8<sup>th</sup> grade is a transition year. Quite a few students will have their upcoming simcha, and others will be over the milestone. To signal the transition, our 8<sup>th</sup> grade program meets on Tuesday nights, 6:15 – 8:30pm, instead of during the after-school hours. This program is designed for all of our 8<sup>th</sup> Grade students, whether they attend public school or day school.

The Tuesday night program begins with dinner and socializing, and then moves into classes. The class focuses on Mitzvot, Social Action as well as a “Jews in America” History segment . The students work on several class Mitzvah Projects throughout the year. 8<sup>th</sup> graders also help to lead Shabbat morning services in the main service several times during the year.

Finally, 8<sup>th</sup> grade students get a glimpse of all the Jewish activity that lies ahead in High School with our own Kol High program, which meets concurrently with the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade program on Tuesday nights. Our 8<sup>th</sup> graders meet other Kol High students and are of course invited the following year to participate in various classes with Rabbi Booth and Rabbi Matzkin. Beginning in their 9<sup>th</sup> grade year, they also have the option to become a madrich/a in our Kol Shabbat program. Kol Emeth high school students also come and talk about USY activities and Jewish teen trips to Poland, Israel, and around the world.

## **JEWISH ACTIVITIES FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

The Mid-Peninsula area is rich in Jewish activities for high school students, with activities ranging from the academic to tikkun olam to social events. We hope our Kol Emeth teens will stay connected with the Jewish community through some of the following activities. This is just a sampling, however. Please share additional programs that you know about, so that we can share them with others.

**Kol High** – our Tuesday night continuing Jewish Education program for teens. We begin with dinner and social time and then study in two 50 minute class sessions various topics such as Jewish ethics, Heschel using text study, Jewish meditation, Jews in America, Jewish Identity in Film and more. Our Kol Shabbat madrichim also meet and prepare lessons together. Rabbi Laurie Matzkin can also tell you more about what's planned or answer your questions.

**United Synagogue Youth (USY)** – Kol Emeth's award-winning chapter of this national youth organization is a great place to meet other synagogue teens. USY runs an active event calendar, including social, educational, and social action oriented programs. Lots of our teens attend regional and national conventions as well. Contact our new Youth Director, Sam Trachman, for more information. Also check out <http://www.uscj.org/ncalif//>.

**Kol Emeth Teen Madrichim Program** – Through this ambitious leadership program, Kol Emeth teenagers serve as teachers and role models for our younger children on Shabbat mornings. Madrichim meet with Rabbi Matzkin for weekly training and lesson planning. They then teach our 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders, using their own activities and lesson plans. Madrichim also help lead and inspire our younger students in Junior Congregation. Madrichim can count this program as community service hours, or they can be paid. Applications are available in the late spring for the following school year.

**Kol Emeth Madrichim for Making Room for Shabbat** – This leadership program is less time-intensive than the Shabbat Morning Madrichim Program, but still enables our teens to have an important Jewish impact on our younger children. These Madrichim serve as counselors in our monthly Friday night program for families with young children (ages 0-8). Madrichim mix with families during the service and dinner, and then take out different age groups of kids for fun Shabbat-oriented activities that the Madrichim plan themselves. Talk to Rabbi Matzkin for more information.

**Peninsula Jewish Community Teen Foundation** – Open to students in 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> grade, this group raises funds and awards grants to worthy causes. There are 22 student members on the grant making board. Applications must be submitted by October of each year, and are available at [www.sfjcf.org/grants/peninsulateenfoundation](http://www.sfjcf.org/grants/peninsulateenfoundation). More information is available from Sue Schwartzman, [tzedakahsue@aol.com](mailto:tzedakahsue@aol.com).

**Diller Teen Fellows** – The Diller Teen Fellows is a year-long leadership development program for high school juniors. The program uses community involvement and cross-cultural interaction to build young leaders, and culminates in a summer trip to Israel. Contact the Bureau of Jewish Education, 415-751-6983.

**Tsofim (Israeli Scouts)** – There is an active chapter in the Peninsula area. The url is: [http://www.israelscouts.org/scouts\\_tzabar\\_stories.html](http://www.israelscouts.org/scouts_tzabar_stories.html).

**BBYO (Bnai Brith Youth Organization)** – BBYO provides a context for teens to learn about Judaism and Jewish values as well as to build their own Jewish identity. BBYO is a non-denominational organization open to all Jewish teens. The Northern California, Central Region West BBYO serves approximately 400-500 youth annually through 18 chapters in the Greater Bay Area. All programs, fundraising events, and conventions are youth-planned and led, which provides the teens with practical experience in organizing, delegating, and motivating others. For more information see [www.crwbbyo.org](http://www.crwbbyo.org).

**Panim Washington Retreat** – Panim brings a diverse group of 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders to Washington DC to explore public policy and social activism through a Jewish lens. The seminars are generally four days in length. Panim meets during March of each year. Contact Rabbi Laurie Matzkin for more information.

**The New Jewish Film Project** – Students 15-19 years old write, direct, shoot, and edit a film that will premiere at the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival. For more information contact Sam Ball or Katrina Drabkin, 415-206-1880.

**USY on Wheels** – USY on Wheels, a 6 ½ -week cross-continental tour of North America, is a total experience in Jewish education and Jewish living. Participants have the unique opportunity to see the sights of the United States and Canada while living Jewishly and meeting new friends from across North America. Visit the website at [www.usy.org/escape/](http://www.usy.org/escape/).

**Camp Ramah** – The Conservative Movement’s celebrated camping system. Many Kol Emeth kids attend throughout their teen years, first as campers and then as counselors. California’s Camp Ramah is located in Ojai. See <http://www.campramah.org/Camps/California.html>.

**Camp Newman Swig** – Another local favorite, Camp Newman Swig is located in Santa Rosa and is sponsored by the Reform Movement. See [newmanswig@urj.org](mailto:newmanswig@urj.org) for more information.

## Overview of Kol Emeth Educational Programs, K-8

Kol Emeth offers a rich menu of programs for children, from tots to teens. Whether you attend one of the local public schools or a Jewish day school, Kol Emeth has a wealth of options for you and your family. We are continually expanding our programming and are always looking for ideas for new programs.

Please contact Rabbi Laurie Matzkin, Director of Lifelong Learning, for more information and enrollment forms.

### Shabbat Programs

*For children attending our Weekday Program and for children attending Jewish day school.*

**Torah for Tots:** A fun and interactive class for children ages 1.5 years to Kindergarten and their parents. Meets for 45 minutes most Shabbat mornings.

**Family Service:** A participatory and interactive service for children in Kindergarten through Second Grade, their siblings, and parents. Meets for 45 minutes during the school year and for special Shabbatot throughout the year.

**Kol Shabbat:** 60-minute classes for 3<sup>rd</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> graders covering prayer, Mishnah, the weekly Parasha and Torah Trope. Meets during the school year. 40 minute activity-based class focusing on the weekly Parsha for Kindergarten - 2<sup>nd</sup> grades. Classes are taught by both professional educators and teen madrichim.

**Junior Congregation:** A 60-minute Shabbat service for children grades 3 – 7, led by Rabbi Matzkin, teen madrichim and our students. Meets during the school year.

**Teen Madrichim:** Kol Emeth teenagers teach prayers, lead Junior Congregation, and assist in the Torah Trope class. This leadership program is open to students in 9<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Applications are available in the late spring for the following school year. There are currently three branches of varying commitment for teen madrichim. Contact Rabbi Laurie Matzkin for more information.

## **The Weekday Program**

*Kol Emeth is known for its excellent after-school program. We feature small classes and a dedicated, experienced teaching staff. This program is designed for children who do not attend a Jewish day school, grades K – 8. Children enrolled in the Weekday Program are expected to also attend our Shabbat programs.*

**Tuesdays & Thursdays, 4:15 – 6:00pm, grades 3 – 7.** Children attend grade-level Judaic Studies focusing on Hebrew, Judaica and Jewish holidays. Several festive events are held each year. Hebrew is taught by skill level in the middle grades through a unique curriculum in the style of Montessori schools.

**Thursdays, 4:15 – 6:00pm, grades K – 2.** Children in primary grades attend once a week for programs that are geared towards building a love of Jewish learning. By the end of the second grade, children know the Hebrew alphabet and can decode in Hebrew.

**Tuesdays & Thursdays, 4:15 – 6:00pm, grades K – 1 Hebrew Immersion.** Students attend grade-level Jewish studies in a Hebrew environment. They learn about Jewish holidays, Judaica while building a solid Hebrew foundation. Elementary reading and writing are components of this class.

## **Eighth Grade Program & Kol High**

*The eighth grade program is open to all 8<sup>th</sup> grade students at Kol Emeth. 8<sup>th</sup> grade is highly recommended to all Bnai Mitzvah students.*

**Tuesday evenings, 6:15 – 8:30pm.** The evening includes a fun dinner and class. Taught by our professional staff, the 8<sup>th</sup> grade focuses on learning and practicing mitzvot. Kol High is open to all 9<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> graders

## **Family Programs**

**Making Room for Shabbat.** Monthly Friday night program for young families through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Includes 40 minute Kabbalat Shabbat service followed by dinner and Madrichim-led activities for children.

**Friday Night Shabbat Programs and Havdalah Services.** Grade-level programs designed to bring families of similar aged children together for enriching experiences around Shabbat. Each Friday night program includes a service, dinner and a short program. Havdalah programs include singing, and a short family activity.

**7<sup>th</sup> grade Dinner / BBQ.** Yearly get-together hosted by a Bar/Bat Mitzvah family, inviting families to meet and socialize with others during the Bnai Mitzvah year.

**Havdalah in Pajamas.**

Rabbi Booth and his family celebrate Havdalah together with young families with songs, and storytelling. This is a great chance to get together to pray, sing, and share a feeling of family warmth. Families come dressed in their pajamas and Rabbi Booth always wears his gorilla slippers!

**Holiday Programs**

Kol Emeth sponsors a number of family holiday programs throughout the year including ice cream Tashlich services, dinners in the Sukkah, a Hanukkah party, community-wide Purim carnival and our all night Tikkun Leyl Shavuot.

## **PART III - PLANNING THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH**

### **WHEN SHOULD IT BE?**

#### **ALTERNATIVES TO SHABBAT MORNING CELEBRATIONS**

Families have a wider range of choices about the timing and form of the simcha than they might realize. Some families have found that a forum other than Shabbat morning is a better fit for their child and family.

The timing of the event is the first item of discretion. There is no obligation or expectation that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah take place immediately after the child's 13<sup>th</sup> birthday on the Jewish calendar. Any time after that date is fine. We have had Bar/Bat Mitzvahs of 14- and 15-year olds at Kol Emeth.. Set a date that feels comfortable for your child and family. Sometimes changing the date can reduce the stress and create a much more positive Jewish learning experience.

Second, families might wish to celebrate in an alternative forum. For example, several families have had Shabbat afternoon bnai mitzvah, centered around Mincha (the afternoon service), Maariv (the evening service) and Seudah Shlishit (the late afternoon meal that comes between them. The Torah is taken out at Minchah, and there is a short reading. Minchah is also a shorter service than the Shabbat morning service.

Some families have also chosen to have a Monday morning bar/bat mitzvah, as the Torah is traditionally read on Monday and Thursday mornings, in addition to Shabbat. One recent bar mitzvah was held on the Monday of Labor Day weekend. This non-Shabbat setting allowed the Bar Mitzvah to give a great talk – complete with Powerpoint slides – on a Mitzvah Project of great interest to him. Using Powerpoint gave

the student an extra dose of structure and confidence. There was also an opportunity for singing with guitar accompaniment. The family held a celebratory lunch in the courtyard afterwards, with entertainment for the kids in the social hall. Other families have had a celebration at Thursday morning minyan.

If you are interested in discussing options for an alternative service to Shabbat morning, please talk with one of the Rabbis or Jeff Schwarz.

## SHABBAT MORNING – PLANNING THE SERVICE

Shabbat morning services are a central part of Kol Emeth, and many families want their child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah to take place on a Shabbat morning. Here's how to set this up. (Don't forget to also organize the Shabbat morning Kiddush! See the Kiddush Guide).

### **Checklist of Preparations** *(Details for each item follow this list.)*

1. **Your Child's Participation** - Talk with Jeff, and figure out which parts of the service your child will be leading. There is no set program; Jeff will help you tailor your child's role.
2. **Torah Readings** – If you plan to give out Torah readings to family members or friends, Jeff Schwarz can help you find the right sized portion and get it to them several months in advance. A rabbi or member of the Religious Practices Committee will probably ask to listen to their reading, a few weeks before the bar/bat mitzvah. Any readings that you do not give out to guests will be covered by Kol Emeth congregants. Our Torah Reading Coordinator, a member of the Religious Practices Committee, will call you to find out which readings need to be filled. We have dozens of congregants who are happy to read at your simcha.
3. **Other Honors** - The rabbis and a designated member of the Religious Practices Committee can help you decide how to assign honors to friends and family members. We do have some restraints with regard to aliyot. Please look carefully at the "Aliyot" section of this guide. When you have completed your Shabbat Morning Honors Form, please submit it to Betty Fellows in the office, so that she

can give the appropriate information to everyone who needs it on Shabbat morning.

4. **Programs (optional)**– You may wish to put together a program to give your guests an overview of the Shabbat morning service and to list the people who will be participating in the service. This is not required. If you do choose to prepare a program, our rabbis are available to help you and would actually like to proofread it for you, before you print it.
5. **Kippot (optional)** – You may wish to order special kippot in advance. This is not required.
6. **Kiddush** – Please look at our Kiddush guide to help you in planning your kiddush. Our Executive Director will want to meet with you to discuss your plans and offer assistance.
7. **Invitations** –If you are sending out invitations, you may wish to include the Kol Emeth insert on Shabbat morning etiquette and driving directions.

## **THE STRUCTURE OF THE SHABBAT MORNING SERVICE**

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony itself takes place during the Shabbat morning service when the child is called to the Torah for the first time. At a minimum, the child is expected to read a short paragraph from the Torah (the Maftir portion) and to say the appropriate blessing.

Shabbat morning services begin at 9:15 and end at approximately 12:30. The elements of the Shabbat morning service are:

- ❖ P'Sukei D'Zimrah (preliminary prayers)
- ❖ Shacharit
- ❖ Hallel (only on holidays and Rosh Chodesh)
- ❖ Torah Service (the last reading is the Maftir)
- ❖ Haftarah
- ❖ Returning the Torah to the Ark
- ❖ Musaf

Family and special guests are often asked to read from the Torah, lead portions of the service or to have other honors, but there is no obligation to assign these activities.

The student's role in the Shabbat service almost always includes the Maftir portion; it also usually includes chanting the Haftarah and its blessings. However, there are no specific expectations, and each family should consult with Jeff Schwartz and Rabbi Laurie Matzkin. Each student is encouraged to do as much as they would like, but at the same time, it is widely recognized that there is a "right amount" for each child.

The general order of study priority for the Shabbat morning service is:

1. Chant the Maftir and brachot.
2. Chant the Haftarah and brachot.
3. Lead the Torah Service.
4. Conduct the Musaf Service.
5. Conduct the Shacharit Service.

*We encourage parents to collaborate with Jeff and their child, creating a positive learning experience. Our mission is to have each child learn as much as possible, but there is no need to demonstrate that learning in public at the Shabbat morning service.*

# HONORS FOR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Organizing the Honors can be a bit daunting, and the easiest way to see the big picture is to look at a sample listing. Here is one from the bat mitzvah of Aurelle Amram.

Use this sample as a rough guide to prepare for your first meeting with the rabbi (about three months before the simcha.) At that meeting, the rabbi will walk through the structure of the service and the honors with you to iron out any wrinkles well in advance of the simcha. The details of the honors are described below.

## Service Participants

### PRAYER LEADER

Officiating: Rabbi Sheldon Lewis, Rabbi Sarah Graff

Shacharit: Hersh Shefrin (*friend*)

Torah Service: Aurelle Amram (*Bat Mitzvah*)

Musaf: Aurelle Amram (*Bat Mitzvah*)

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### PORTION

Cohen (1st)

Levi (2nd)

Shlishi (3rd)

Revi'I (4th)

Chamishi (5th)

Shishi (6th)

Shvi'I (7th)

Maftir & Haftarah

### ALIYAH

Congregant

Congregant

Rob Shaya (*cousin*)

OPEN

Leah Rosengaus (*friend*)

Anna Stone (*friend*)

OPEN

Aurelle Amram (*Bat Mitzvah*)

### READER

Congregant

Itzhak Amram (*grandfather*)

Ezra Shaya (*grand-uncle*)

Congregant

Shaul Stone (*friend*)

Yosi Amram (*father*)

Martha Amram (*mother*)

Aurelle Amram

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### HONOR

Opening the Ark

Removing the Torah from the Ark

Lifing the Torah

Dressing the Torah

Second Opening of Ark

Returning the Torah to the Ark

Gabbai

Prayer for Our Country

Prayer for Israel

Prayer for Peace

Ein Kelohainu

Adon Olam

Anthony Shaya (*cousin*)

Greg Shaya (*cousin*)

Dennis Shaya (*cousin*)

Daphna Gross (*cousin*)

Uri Gross (*cousin*)

Shawn Shaya (*cousin*)

Jeff Schwartz (*teacher*)

Lior Abramson (*friend*)

Leah Gross (*cousin*)

Galit Yonai (*cousin*)

Oz Amram (*brother*)

Aurelle and classmates

## **LEADING THE SERVICE**

For this Bat Mitzvah, the P'Sukei D'Zimrah (preliminary prayers) were led by a congregant. This was arranged by the Religious Practices committee at the request of the family. The other service leaders were designated by the family and are listed in the top area of the program.

## **OTHER HONORS**

As you can see from the sample program, there are numerous opportunities to include family and friends in your child's simcha. Besides Aliyot and Torah Readings, guests can open the ark, lift and tie the Torah, and read additional prayers. The Prayer for our Country and Prayer for Peace are read in English and may be led by non-Jews. The prayer for Israel is read in Hebrew. Towards the end of the service, siblings often join the Bar or Bat Mitzvah in leading a rousing Ein Keloheinu. At the very end of the service, classmates from Kol Emeth and/or day schools are invited to join the Bar/Bat Mitzvah in leading Adon Olam. Generally, we ask that no one person be given more than one honor in the service. Parents or grandparents who are reading Torah and would also like an aliyah can be an exception. The bar/bat mitzvah is welcome to do as much of the service as s/he can and wants to do.

## **D'VAR TORAH**

There is no obligation at Kol Emeth for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah to give a D'var Torah (speech). If your child wishes to prepare a D'var Torah, the rabbis will work with him/her on it during their one-on-one meetings. One of the Rabbis will give an additional D'var Torah on Shabbat as well.

## **ALIYOT**

Kol Emeth follows the tradition of giving the first aliyah to a Kohen and the second to a Levi. A woman whose father is a Kohen or Levi (a “bat Kohen” or “bat Levi”) is now eligible for these aliyot as well. If the family has a Kohen or Levi to whom they can give these honors, they are encouraged to do so. Otherwise congregants perform these aliyot. Kol Emeth asks that the family leave two aliyot open for congregant needs. At least one of these open aliyot must be a yisrael aliyah (numbers 3-7). In other words, the two open aliyot cannot be limited to kohanim and levi'im. All other aliyot and all of the Torah readings can be given out as honors.

It is a halachic obligation to have the Torah blessing recited “in one clear voice.” The norm is to call one individual per aliyah. Couples may come up for an aliyah together, but we request that only one person recite the blessing.

Parents of the bar/bat mitzvah often like to come up together for the 7<sup>th</sup> aliyah. This enables them to remain at the Torah table when their child reads the Maftir portion that follows.

Those coming up for an aliyah are called by their Hebrew names, \_\_\_\_ ben/bat (son/daughter of) \_\_\_\_\_. Please make sure to get this information in advance and provide it on the Shabbat Morning Honors Form. This enables the Gabbai to call them up for their honor smoothly and efficiently. Also, please have your honored guests arrive at the synagogue by 9:45am, so that you can identify them to our usher, who will help them get where they need to be at the right time.

## **TORAH READINGS**

If you want to give out Torah readings to family members or friends, Jeff Schwarz can help you find the right sized portion and get it to them several months in advance. If the readings in your parasha are particularly long, you may ask Jeff about dividing an aliyah, so that family or friends may chant shorter Torah readings. In these cases, the blessings for the additional aliyot that are created are reserved for congregants.

Two to three months before your bar or bat mitzvah, our Torah Reading Coordinator will call you to see which readings you have given away, and which readings they should find congregants to fill. You should not feel pressure to give away Torah readings. We have dozens of congregants who would be delighted to read Torah at your simcha.

One of the functions of the Religious Practices Committee is to ensure that our lay-led services are of the quality appropriate to the honor of Shabbat. For this reason, we ask you to complete the Shabbat Morning Honors form well in advance and to provide a list of your Torah readers and their phone numbers to the Religious Practices Committee. This should be done about three months before the simcha, right after your first meeting with the rabbi. Two to three weeks before the simcha, a member of the Religious Practices Committee or Jeff Schwarz may contact the honoree and ask them to chant a bit of their portion. Thanks in advance for your cooperation in this matter.

## ETIQUETTE FOR SHABBAT MORNING HONORS

Shabbat is a special time, and the bimah is a special place. Please ask your family and friends who are participating in our service to be aware of the appropriate decorum and etiquette:

- All men should wear a kippah.
- Jewish men should wear a kippah and tallit on the bimah.
- Jewish women are strongly encouraged to wear a head covering and a tallit on the bimah.
- Please dress in a modest fashion for the honor. Women should have covered shoulders (no spaghetti straps) and a modest neckline. Shorts skirts are inappropriate. Men do not need to wear suits.

## OTHER ETIQUETTE TO KEEP IN MIND

The service begins promptly at 9:15 am. on Shabbat morning. The family should plan to arrive at the synagogue at 9:10 am, before the service begins. The front rows on the left side are reserved for the immediate family.

Although seen in some communities, it is NOT the custom at Kol Emeth to throw candy at the Bar or Bat Mitzvah.

At the conclusion of the service, the immediate family should exit as quickly as possible to the Kiddush table in the courtyard. Remember, no one can eat until you get there and your child chants the blessings!

There is no smoking or photography in the synagogue or on its premises on Shabbat. Photographs are often taken at the dress rehearsal and/or at the Thursday morning minyan preceding the Shabbat service.

Cell phones and pagers are for medical emergency use only and should be set on vibrate.

## INTERFAITH FAMILIES

Many of our congregants have immediate or extended interfaith families. When an interfaith family brings a child to bar/bat mitzvah, it is a particularly momentous event. We thank the non-Jewish parent and/or grandparents for supporting the growth and development of this new Jewish adult. We recognize that it is not a small matter.

A diverse group of guests is a frequent occurrence at Kol Emeth. To help your guests feel comfortable, you may want to explain the order of the service in your program. Please remind your guests that cell phones and cameras are not used on Shabbat at Kol Emeth. Further, you might want to include the invitation insert, which explains synagogue etiquette and decorum. (See below.)

The Prayer for Our Country and the Prayer for Peace are two opportunities for non-Jews to have honors on the bima. These prayers are both usually read in English. All other Shabbat morning honors are traditionally reserved for Jews.

We hope that Kol Emeth is a warm and welcoming place for friends and family members of all faiths.

## AN INSERT FOR YOUR INVITATION (OPTIONAL)

Kol Emeth provides elegant pre-printed inserts for your Bar or Bat Mitzvah invitations at a nominal charge of five cents per insert. If it is helpful for you, please make use of it.

We've prepared this insert for three reasons. First, we all keep reprinting the same driving and parking directions, so why not just do it once? Second, we want to make our guests from other faiths and cultures feel welcome, and part of that is knowing what to expect. Third, and more unfortunately, we have had some difficulties in recent years with inappropriate behavior by teen-age guests.

You may obtain the inserts from the synagogue office.

Here is the text of the insert:

*Dear Guest:*

*Congregation Kol Emeth welcomes you to our Shabbat morning service. We are glad you are joining us for this happy occasion, and we welcome guests of all faiths and countries. Please help us maintain an atmosphere that honors Shabbat:*

*Our services start at 9:15am and end at 12:30. This may be too long for many families, especially young children and teen-agers. Please use your judgment: you may arrive later; you may quietly leave the service for a break; or you may sit quietly in our sanctuary. Teen-agers should not congregate in the courtyard or parking lot.*

*Please dress for the dignity of our prayers: Girls and women should be in modest dress, covering shoulders, cleavage, midriff and thighs. (No mini skirts or spaghetti straps.) Boys should not wear pants that sag. Jeans and t-shirts are not appropriate.*

*All boys and men at Kol Emeth cover their head. You may pick up kippot at the door or bring one of your own. (Logo sportswear is not appropriate.) Head-covering is optional for women.*

*Parents: This is a very important day for your hosts. If your child will find the length of the service, or the quietness*

*of prayers a challenge, we encourage you to come with your child to help them through the morning.*

*Thank you, Congregation Kol Emeth*

*(driving directions on are the other side)*

## THURSDAY MORNING MINYAN

Kol Emeth, and the minyan regulars, warmly invite Bar/Bat Mitzvah families to join them at the morning minyan, 6:45 – 7:45 am, on the Thursday before your simcha. There is a short Torah reading, and thus your child has the opportunity to have his or her first aliyah in a smaller setting. Photos can be taken. As one of our Bar Mitzvah students said, “I really liked the Thursday Morning Minyan. I got to start my celebration early on Thursday, and it was fun to be on the bima without a big crowd.”

During the minyan, the men and some women wear tefillin. The rabbis are happy to help you and your guests with this tradition, if you would like it. The minyan concludes with a breakfast (a real one, not just doughnuts!) and Bar/Bat Mitzvah families are welcome to bring more celebratory food. Family members are also welcome to take part in leading the service and participating in other honors of the Torah service. Please contact Rabbi Booth or Rabbi Graff for more information.

## DRESS REHEARSAL AND PHOTO OPPORTUNITY

A full rehearsal with one of the rabbis is usually scheduled for the Wednesday or Thursday afternoon preceding the bar or bat mitzvah. This is a wonderful opportunity for everyone in the family to practice their parts in the service, and for out-of-towners to gain greater comfort with the customs of Kol Emeth. If you would like your extended family to participate in the rehearsal, please encourage them to arrive by the Wednesday or Thursday before the bar/bat mitzvah. The rehearsal generally takes an hour and a half.

Many families also choose to dress up and take pictures before the rehearsal, since photography is not allowed on Shabbat. You are also welcome to videotape the rehearsal if you wish.

## PROGRAMS, KIPPOT, AND FLOWERS FOR THE BIMAH

Programs are optional. To make their preparation easier, Betty Fellows has several program templates you may use. Please show your program to one of the rabbis before you print it, just to make sure everything is correct.

Plan on printing 80 - 90 copies. Often there are last-minute changes to the list of family and friends who are assigned honors, so save time for a last-minute printing during the week before the simcha. The programs should be placed in the program holders before 3pm on the Friday before the simcha.

Similarly, providing special kippot is optional. Kol Emeth has plenty for your guests. If you would like to place special kippot in the baskets, please do so before 3pm on the Friday before the simcha.

Flowers for the Bimah are also optional. You may want an arrangement that can be quickly broken down and taken into the courtyard for use as a centerpiece at the Kiddush. (If you plan to do this, please let the staff know, and they'll move the flowers right after the conclusion of services.) You may also want to contribute books, decoratively wrapped, to the synagogue. These can be used instead of flowers. Arrangements for these centerpieces can be made through the synagogue office.

## FEES

- The Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation fee is billed in two equal installments. The first installment is due six months before the simcha, and the second installment is due 3 months prior to the simcha.
- Religious school fees must be paid in full.
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah families provide Shabbat morning Kiddush for the congregation on the day of their simcha. You will receive the full Kiddush Guide from our Executive Director, Yvonne Boxerman at the “Kiddush for Families” meeting.