



romemu

JEWISH LIFE, ELEVATED

B Mitzvah
HANDBOOK





Overview of a B Mitzvah at Romemu

Welcome to Romemu's B Mitzvah program. You and your family are on a meaningful, guided journey toward a sacred rite of passage.

A B Mitzvah at Romemu is called to the Torah not only as a student of Judaism, but as a teacher. By leading the congregation in song, by chanting and interpreting Torah, and by engaging in *tikkun olam*, the B Mitzvah becomes a teacher, a leader, and an "adult" member of the Romemu community and the larger Jewish community.

It goes without saying that this transformation does not happen overnight. The B Mitzvah experience is a journey, which takes hard work and dedication. This handbook is meant to help guide you through this process. We want this experience to be a meaningful and joyous spiritual journey for your whole family. *Mazal Tov!*

Booking a B Mitzvah

At Romemu B Mitzvahs happen at age 13 for all students. You may request your date up to 2 years in advance by emailing the Youth & Family Program Associate. We offer both Saturday morning Shabbat services and Saturday afternoon *mincha/havdallah* services for a B Mitzvah. We will do our best to accommodate your date request. If the date you requested cannot be accommodated, we will offer alternatives. If you choose to have a B Mitzvah at Romemu but not during a Shabbat morning service, such as mincha, there are some additional costs that need to be covered by you. These are estimated at approximately \$1200. You'll be asked to pay a \$250 B Mitzvah booking fee to hold the date.

Families must be members of Romemu for a full two years to participate in Romemu's B Mitzvah program. You'll need to maintain your membership from the time of the scheduling of the B Mitzvah through and including the full year of the B Mitzvah service. The current year's membership dues and any outstanding balance must be paid in full at least two months prior to the B Mitzvah.



Our Program

A B Mitzvah at Romemu includes the student leading a significant part of the worship service, chanting Torah, singing the blessings over the Torah reading and giving a *d'var Torah*, a speech about the meaning of the Torah portion. We facilitate this process of study over a minimum of two years of learning in our Seekers Holistic Hebrew school.

The cost of our two-year B Mitzvah program is \$1525 (including the \$250 booking fee) if the student is enrolled in Seekers, and \$1750 (including the \$250 booking fee) if the student is not enrolled in Seekers. If you require tuition assistance, please contact the Director of Youth and Family Education.

The B Mitzvah program at Romemu spans 6th and 7th grade. Seekers students switch into the B Mitzvah tutoring track about ten months from the date of their B Mitzvah. Students study prayers and Hebrew as a group in Seekers, and then have one-on-one sessions with our B Mitzvah tutors. Tutoring is arranged and paid for privately. Romemu has a list of tutors we work with that are trained in our B Mitzvah service. We will support and facilitate the tutoring with our tutors.

The program includes B Mitzvah family workshops, logistics and support from Romemu staff, *d'var Torah* writing with a Romemu rabbi, as well as assistance during the rehearsal and service. All B Mitzvahs will be held as hybrid services, both in person and on zoom. All logistical expenses for technological setup are included in the B Mitzvah tuition as long as the service is held onsite at West End Presbyterian Church. For more information about the *d'var Torah* writing process see the [D'var Torah Student Guidelines](#). Our program does not include Seekers tuition, nor private tutoring for learning Torah trope and chanting a specific *parshah*, nor *tefillah* skills not learned during Seekers classes.

Families are expected to attend monthly Family Shabbat services on Saturday mornings, as well as the B Mitzvah services of their classmates. **Regular attendance to Shabbat morning service is essential for understanding what it means to become a participating adult in the Jewish community and will help your child become comfortable with the service they will lead.** Being at Shabbat services on a regular basis



also allows you to get to know the Romemu community and those who will be celebrating with you on the day of your B Mitzvah.

Family workshops in 6th and 7th grade are a crucial part of Romemu's B Mitzvah preparation. We will gather 4-5 times a year for learning and connecting with other families.

Jewish day school students or those who have received a Jewish education through another means are not required to attend Seekers.

If you are unable to attend our Seekers Holistic Hebrew school in 6th and 7th grade, please contact the Director of Youth and Family Education as soon as possible to discuss your specific circumstances. You still need to attend Seekers Family Shabbats and the family workshops in 6th and 7th grades.

Our B Mitzvah Program includes a set of special Judaica gifts from the Romemu clergy, Board of Directors, and broader Romemu community. These gifts will be given at the B Mitzvah ceremony. They include a *Kiddush* cup, a Romemu *erev Shabbat siddur* with a custom bookplate and a framed, hand-customized B Mitzvah certificate.

Timeline | 12 Months from Your B Mitzvah Date

10-12 Months

Students receive a binder with all their B Mitzvah preparation materials. Students are assigned a tutor who will train them in Torah chanting and prayers and track their progress through their learning. Students switch over to the B Mitzvah preparation track at Seekers Holistic Hebrew School.

4-6 Months

Every B Mitzvah family will meet with the Youth & Family Director to go over the program and discuss their journey.

5 Months

We will pair each student with a Romemu rabbi who will work with the B Mitzvah student on their *d'var Torah*. This rabbi will work with your child to deep-dive into their *parshah* (Torah portion) and guide them as they explore



and build their own interpretation of their text. The rabbi will work with your child to develop a schedule for *d'var Torah* writing, revising, and practicing.

3-4 Months

Every B Mitzvah family will meet with Rabbi Ingber to establish a connection and frame the B Mitzvah.

If you would like to host a Kiddush (a festive meal following services) please contact the Youth & Family Associate.

1-3 Months

Each B Mitzvah will meet with the Cantor 2-3 times for 30 minutes in the months before the B Mitzvah to ensure preparations are complete and adequate.

1 Month

The family will be provided with the link to the Zoom registration form for virtual guests and an onsite registration form for in-person guests.

We provide you with a ceremony information form that will help you plan your B Mitzvah and designate special roles to family members or friends, such as offering the blessing before the Torah reading, opening the Ark, or dressing the Torah. This form will also have information that will be included in the pamphlet that will be distributed to your guests. Submit the *B Mitzvah Ceremony Information Form* to the Youth & Family Associate at least 2 weeks before the B Mitzvah.

We ask that you write a short parent blessing (no more than 3 minutes **total**) to offer your child after they conclude their Torah reading. We will happily provide past examples or resources for this upon request and invite you to use this as an intimate and celebratory moment to wish your child support as they embark on the next phase of their Jewish journey.

There is a slot at the end of the service for a brief photo slideshow to celebrate your child's accomplishments. If you'd like to show a slideshow, please email the final product to the Youth and Family Associate by the Wednesday before your child's B Mitzvah.



1 Week

You will meet with the lead rabbi for your B Mitzvah rehearsal, in the space where the service will take place, for an hour and a half on the Wednesday before the service. The rabbi will walk you through the choreography and your child will have a chance to practice leading the prayers, chanting their Torah portion, and reading their *d'var Torah*.

If you are having a *Kiddush* in person at Romemu, please confirm all the *Kiddush* arrangements.

On the Friday before the service, you are welcome to come to the West End Presbyterian Church with your photographer to take photos between 1-2pm. Please let the Youth and Family Associate know if you are planning on utilizing this time.

Day of the B Mitzvah in Person

Please arrive at 8:30am the morning of your child's B Mitzvah. Our staff will be there to greet you and answer any last-minute questions you may have.

A photographer using a still camera is allowed to work unobtrusively from the balcony during the service. No other photography is allowed during the service or the *Kiddush*.

Please make sure your guests know that prayer is a sacred experience and that there is **no cell phone usage in synagogue**.

Items to bring: *tallit*, *kippah* (with clips), *d'var Torah* (printed out), *B Mitzvah Binder*.



Key People

Rabbi David Ingber	Founder & Senior Rabbi	david@romemu.org
Rabbi Dianne Cohler-Esses	Associate Rabbi	dianne@romemu.org
Rabbi Mira Rivera	Assistant Rabbi	mira@romemu.org
Hazan Basya Schechter	Cantor	basya@romemu.org
Rabbi Janice Elster	Director of Youth & Family Education	janice@romemu.org
Avi Goldstein	Youth & Family Program Associate	avi@romemu.org