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Chabad of Fremont Bar Mitzvah Handbook

Dear Parents,

WELCOME!

In Judaism, the Bar Mitzvah marks a most significant stage in the life of a young man. As he grows older, he will constantly reflect on this momentous occasion as a major part of his maturing process. It is this turning point at which a mere boy is suddenly transformed into a Jewish adult as he feels the pride of being a full-fledged member of the Jewish nation, he identifies with his essence in a strong and positive manner, and he realizes he is an integral part of our beautiful traditions and rich heritage.

At Chabad of the Fremont, the Bar Mitzvah celebrations are faithful to the beauty and authenticity of Jewish tradition and will serve to inspire a young man to constantly recognize his privilege and responsibilities to himself, his fellows, and above all to G-d.

OUR PHILOSOPHY

- *Personalized*
We believe that no two children are the same and no two families are the same. We therefore strive to personalize this lifecycle event to make it most meaningful, enjoyable and inspiring for your family.
- *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 Bar 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 Bar 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 his becoming a Bar Mitzvah.
- *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 his Bar 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. Making the Bar Mitzvah celebration a more communal event by inviting his Hebrew School classmates adds an important dimension to the experience.

STANDARDS & PROCEDURES

The following Bar Mitzvah information guide will outline the aspects, options and policies at Chabad.

1. YEAR OF BAR MITZVAH AT-A-GLANCE

- Acquire a kosher Tallit and Tefillin.
- Set up first Bar Mitzvah meeting to choose your date and ceremony
- Attend required services.
- Child attends Hebrew School
- Private training with Rabbi Fuss (duration of time depending on child's capabilities and what the ceremony includes)
- Optional - Choose and implement Chesed Project , Mitzvah undertaking, and write a Bar-Mitzvah address

2. TALIT AND TEFFILIN

One of the most special Mitzvot is the Mitzvah of Tallit and Tefillin. This Mitzvah helps instill self-control in your child, living a life full of purpose, being a better person and giving them a meaningful way to connect with G-d. Each family needs to purchase a new Tallit and Tefillin for their child. Having a new pair is very important for each child and teaches them the value of a mitzvah.

There is a special size and standard for Tallit and Tefillin. Not all that are on the market are Kosher. We will assist you in ordering them.

Additionally, you might want to purchase a special personalized bag for the Tallit and Tefillin with embroidery of your child's name

3. DATE & CEREMONY

Preparation for a Bar Mitzvah takes 8 - 12 months.

Types of ceremonies:

1. Shabbat Morning
2. Shabbat Afternoon/Mincha
3. Specific Sundays (Rosh Chodesh or Chanukah) or Monday & Thursday

This table will help you choose the ceremony that fits your family the best:

	Shabbat Morning	Shabbat afternoon (winter only)	Sunday- Rosh Chodesh/Chanukah or Mon./Thurs
Length of service	1/2 hours	1 hour	1½ hour
Time of day	10/11am-12pm	Begins 30 min. before sunset	Morning
# of Aliyas	8	3	3-4
Pictures /Music	N	Limited	Y
Hot Food	Limited to stew	Y (some limitations)	Y
Haftorah	Y	N	N
Havdalah	N	Y	N

The following list is some of what's available for a Bar Mitzvah boy to do as part of his service. This is not the minimum but the maximum:

- a. Lead services
- b. Haftorah
- c. Haftorah blessing
- d. Torah blessings
- e. Read from Torah
- f. Kiddush
- g. Hamotzie
- h. Havdalah

4. THE CEREMONY AND SERVICE

The services are warm and traditional. All prayer books are in both Hebrew and English. All announcements, speeches, and sermons are in English. Some families personalize a program

booklet for their guests. This describes and explains the main elements of the service. This booklet is on file at our office.

5. PICTURES AND MUSIC

If your ceremony is on Shabbat, there cannot be any music, or pictures taken at the ceremony itself. However, the weekday Tefillin ceremony provides the perfect opportunity for a photo and video session.

6. TEFFILIN CEREMONY

If your Bar mitzvah is on Shabbat, then on the Thursday morning prior to the Bar Mitzvah will be the Tefillin ceremony. Tefillin aren't worn on Shabbat and the putting on of the Tefillin is one of the most important parts of the Bar Mitzvah. This is usually a small intimate family service. The Thursday before the Bar mitzvah is a beautiful opportunity for photos, video, and a pleasurable intimate beginning of the Bar Mitzvah weekend.

7. SYNAGOGUE ATTENDANCE

Most Synagogues require two years of membership in order to perform a Bar Mitzvah. Chabad is open to the entire Jewish Community regardless of observance or affiliation. At the same time, we feel that a Bar Mitzvah is not a one-time event, rather an ongoing process of growth and learning. Therefore, the following synagogue attendance is required:

- During the 12 months leading up to the ceremony, the Bar Mitzvah boy is to attend 6 Shabbat Services at Chabad.
- The Bar Mitzvah boy is to attend High Holiday services at Chabad the year prior to and the year after the Bar Mitzvah.

8. PRIVATE TRAINING

In addition to Hebrew School, each boy will meet for private training with the Rabbi. During these sessions, he will receive an in-depth immersion into the basics of Judaism such as:

- Torah Blessings The boy will learn the meaning of the blessings before and after the reading of the Torah.
- Torah/Haftarah/Speech Preparation (if applicable) – In order to maximize time, a large portion of the training will be with audio files at home. At the private training sessions, the Rabbi will monitor the boy's progress.
- Special Mitzvot Connected with Bar Mitzvah - Understand the meaning and traditions connected with the Tallit and Tefillin, learn how they are made, why we wear them, what makes them Kosher. How to put them on and care for them.
- Ahavat Yisroel - Love for a Fellow - This unit will focus on and develop a sense of responsibility for the people around us.

Your son will meet with the Rabbi once a week, usually for about 6-12 sessions depending on the type of ceremony you have chosen.

9. MITZVAH UNDERTAKING & CHESED PROJECT

- As a way of implementing the lessons learned, each Bar-Mitzvah boy should choose a ritual mitzvah in honor of your Bar mitzvah to be observed for at least 1 week. Some ideas are, saying a blessing before eating, saying the Shema morning and evening, studying Torah for 15 minutes a day, observing Shabbat or giving charity.
- OPTIONAL - As part of becoming a responsible Jewish man, each Bar-Mitzvah boy may choose a Chesed - Kindness Project; e.g., Adopt a senior, raise money for poor families, volunteer for a non-profit organization, study with someone who needs help, befriend someone who needs a friend etc., and fill out the Chesed report.

10. BAR-MITZVAH PARTY

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

Many families choose to do a separate party to the ceremony which does not need to be Kosher.

11. HONORS LIST, PRAYERS & PROGRAMS.

We will provide you with an honors list that includes a list of honors and prayers to be given to various family members and friends.

12. YOUR INVESTMENT

Your investment in your son's Bar-Mitzvah experience is as follows:

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| □ Tefillin | \$375 |
| □ Tallit | \$26-40 |
| □ Siddur | \$25 |
| □ Private Weekly Training with Rabbi Fuss | \$45 per 45 Minute session |
| □ Bar Mitzvah Donation | \$1,000 (suggested amount) |
| □ Hebrew School Tuition | \$695 regular rate - \$450 Simcha Special
(applies to the Bar/Bat Mitzvah child and siblings) |

Optional:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------|
| □ Personalized Tallit/Tefillin Bag | \$40-80 |
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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.

14. CONTACT INFO

Should you have any questions please feel welcome to contact Rabbi Fuss at 510-300-4090 or rabbi@chabadfremont.com