



EMEK SHALOM
B'NAI MITZVAH HANDBOOK

This handbook has been prepared by the Emek Shalom Ritual Committee and is subject to changes.

Mazel Tov!

We are looking forward to working with you to plan this exciting *simcha*! Please reach out to any member of the B'nai Mitzvah Team for assistance, recommendations, or support during the days ahead...all questions are welcome!

Our B'nai Mitzvah Team includes:

Rabbi Bekah - rabbibekah@fvjc.org

President - president@fvjc.org

Ritual Chairperson - ritual@fvjc.org

Education Director - school@fvjc.org

B'nai Mitzvah Coordinator - mitzvahcoordinator@fvjc.org

Temple Administrator - admin@fvjc.org

Treasurer - treasurer@fvjc.org

Tutor - tutor@fvjc.org

Please let us know if you would like to be connected with a family who has been through this experience before and can offer insight to your questions.

We are looking forward to sharing this life event with your family.

Sincerely,

The Emek Shalom B'nai Mitzvah Team

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BEFORE YOU GET STARTED ON THE B'NAI MITZVAH JOURNEY, YOU SHOULD KNOW...

Throughout history, groups of people have had rituals to celebrate a boy becoming a man and a girl becoming a woman. For the Jewish people, these rituals are called Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah. Like most traditions, the ceremonies connected with becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at age thirteen evolved over time. During B'nai Mitzvah ceremonies, the child actively participates in the ceremony – reading prayers and giving his or her own personal speech. Family, friends, and members of the synagogue come to celebrate the young person's coming of age. It is a chance for the young people to express themselves as individuals. It has always been viewed as one moment in the process of spiritual growth and commitment to the Jewish people.

The establishment of becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah has several origins. The Talmud records that during the time of the Second Temple (520 B.C.E.–70 C.E.), it was traditional for Sages to bless a child who had completed his first fast day at the age of twelve or thirteen. In *Pirkei Avot* (“Ethics of the Fathers,” second century C.E.) it is written, “At thirteen one is ready to do mitzvot.” By the time the Talmud was completed in the sixth century C.E., boys of thirteen years had assumed full responsibility for performing the mitzvot, hence the term Bar Mitzvah, “son of the commandment.” This also had legal ramifications: These boys were now counted in a *minyán* (prayer congregation) and could act as witnesses. There was no formal rite, only a public blessing by the father that he was no longer responsible for the sins of the son.

The earliest Bar Mitzvah ceremony consisted of blessing and reading the last section of the weekly portion of the Torah, the *maftir*, meaning the extra reading, since the boy was not a Bar Mitzvah until after the service, and reading the Haftarah portion. The most important part of the rite was a *d'rashah* or *D'var Torah*, a discussion of the Torah or Haftarah portion. Since the Bar Mitzvah was assuming adult religious responsibilities, he was expected to show his understanding of those responsibilities to his family and, more importantly, to the community. Structurally, the Bar Mitzvah ceremony is essentially the same as it originally was. It wasn't until the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that we find records of a Bar Mitzvah being invited to lead part of the worship service.

A public ceremony in celebration of a girl becoming a Bat Mitzvah, “daughter of the commandment,” did not come into formal being in North America until 1922. Dr. Judith Kaplan-Eisenstein, the daughter of Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, the founder of Reconstructionist Judaism, blessed and read the Torah portion from a book “at a respectable distance” from the Torah scroll. The regular celebration of girls becoming Bat Mitzvah came into prominence in Reform congregations particularly in the second half of the 20th century and is generally identical in form to the celebration of a Bar Mitzvah.

It should be noted that the rite of confirmation originated in the Reform Movement in Germany in 1810 and included girls in 1817. Since it was felt that a thirteen-year-old was too young to understand the precepts of Judaism, the celebration of a boy becoming a Bar Mitzvah was dropped in favor of confirmation, which was held at age sixteen or seventeen because that was deemed a more mature age to assume the responsibilities of Judaism. Today, most congregations, including FVJC-ES, hold both ceremonies.

Historically, all joyous occasions were celebrated in some manner, and becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah was no exception. However, unlike weddings at which we are commanded to rejoice with the bride and groom, the Bar Mitzvah has no such mandate. In early years the celebrations varied from a simple *Kiddush* of wine, brandy, and cake following the service to more elaborate meals for the family and friends. The Rabbis urged families not to have elaborate celebrations and always to provide for the poor in order to fulfill the mitzvah. The *d'rashah* was delivered by the Bar Mitzvah some time during the celebration in order to emphasize its religious aspects.

Historically, Bar/Bat Mitzvah has been viewed as a first step in a young person's acceptance of the obligations to family and community as a responsible Jew. It was and should continue to be the beginning of a lifetime of the performance of mitzvot, study, prayer, and a commitment to share the destiny of the Jewish people.

KEEPING B'NAI MITZVAH IN PERSPECTIVE

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Is about the Acceptance of Responsibility. This is the bottom line of *becoming* a Bar and Bat Mitzvah. It is not about acquiring the skill of *k'riah*,—"the reading of the Torah." Rather, it's about acquiring the skill of responding to a challenge: a mitzvah. This is how Judaism defines maturity.

The Torah Is the Center of Judaism. Everything we do as Jews, everything we believe, everything we value revolves around the Torah. The Torah is the testimony of our people's encounter with G-d. However you interpret those events in the wilderness of Sinai some three millennia ago, what cannot be dismissed is the sacredness with which our ancestors have embraced this legacy. This is why the first mitzvah we expect our children to fulfill is to stand at the Torah.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah Is a Community Observance. It is not by coincidence that we choose to hold this initiation ceremony in public. To be a Jew means to live within a covenantal relationship—not only with G-d but with other Jews as well. Bar/Bat Mitzvah marks the entry of the child as a full-fledged member of the community. The awarding of an *aliyah*, ("being called to the Torah"), is a gift of the Jewish people. For this reason, the marking of the child's coming of age usually takes place in the synagogue—the communal home.

The Bar/Bat Mitzvah Ceremony Is Not a Performance: It's a Celebration. The synagogue is not a theater, and the *bimah* is not a stage, and the congregation is not an audience. More to the point, the only *mistake* one can make at a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is to lose sight of this truth.

Think of the Reception That Follows Not As a Separate Event but As a Continuation of the Celebration. In fact, Judaism has a formal name for the meal after a Bar/Bat Mitzvah: It is a *s'udat mitzvah*. This meal is in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. It, too, is a sacred gathering. This is not to say that it must be solemn; it *is* to say, however, that the spirit of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration should be perpetuated through the performance of mitzvot. The recitation of the blessings and the setting aside of a portion of one's bounty for the poor demonstrate that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration was not an isolated event but a standard from which to follow.

The Meaning of Becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah Is Enduring Only If It Takes Place within a Context of Continued Jewish Growth. Being a Bat or Bar Mitzvah is not the experience of a lifetime. It is a lifetime experience—a state of being that remains with us throughout our lives. Indeed, the true measure of performance comes not on the day one becomes a Bat or Bar Mitzvah but in the days that follow. In other words, becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah should be thought of as a Jewish "commencement," marking not an end point but a beginning—a beginning of a lifetime of mitzvot, a beginning of a lifetime of learning. As such, it is our firm belief that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration is validated and enhanced by a commitment to continue religious education to confirmation and participation in our synagogue.

INTRODUCTION

The B'nai Mitzvah process at Emek Shalom is the culmination of Jewish learning up to this point in the life of each student. We see this period as a transitional moment in the life of every Jewish child, where they are now able and expected to take responsibility for their Jewish identity, learning and practice. We expect this event to serve as a single, albeit large, map dot along their Jewish Journey, not an end point. Finally, this experience requires time, commitment and maturity on the part of your child, but it also requires support and engagement on your part. This process consists of three parts:

- Hebrew Instruction
- Cantillation of Torah, Haftarah and blessings
- Completion of *D'var Torah* with the support of the Rabbi

B'NAI MITZVAH DATE ASSIGNMENT POLICY

Dates will be assigned according to the Temple policy and reviewed and approved by the Ritual Committee. Date assignments are governed by the following rules:

- No July or August B'nai Mitzvah dates will be assigned.
- Students whose B'nai Mitzvah are postponed from the previous year will be assigned the first available dates.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) wishing to change their assigned dates may do so depending on availability. The Ritual Committee oversees the change process. All requests for change must be directed to the committee, and must be in writing, with the reason for the need to change clearly stated. The committee will review the request at the monthly meeting following receipt of the request and then the family will be contacted to discuss the available options.
- The Temple reserves the right to assign double B'nai Mitzvah if the number of students exceeds the open Shabbat dates. Should this happen, the first double assignment will be on the first open date in September, then the last open date in June, then alternating between the first and last open dates. A double may also be assigned at a later date if a new family joins the Temple and has a student of Bat/Bar Mitzvah age. If there are no open dates, that family will receive a double closest to the child's birthday.
- All Saturday morning services are scheduled for 10:00am and will take place at Emek Shalom. Families may request a change to a Havdalah service at Emek Shalom, based on availability. Requests for change must be in writing and sent to the Ritual Committee.
- Families interested in having a Bar/Bat Mitzvah service in Israel should communicate with the Rabbi.

TIMELINE AND PROCESS

Timeline	Event
3 - 4 years prior to event (4 th grade depending upon age)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dates are assigned in birthday order, not by grade. The oldest eligible Hebrew School student will be assigned the first available date in that year. • Planning Meeting with B'nai Mitzvah Team representation and parent(s)/guardian(s) where essential information is reviewed.
12 - 18 months prior to event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay-It-Forward Meeting - Discussion specific to the B'nai Mitzvah Project. This Shabbat Service and day of learning is for B'nai Mitzvah and parent(s)/guardian(s).
12 months prior to event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students receive information regarding attendance and participation in 10 Shabbat Services in the 12 months prior to the event. • Mitzvah Project proposal submitted by B'nai Mitzvah.
6 - 9 months prior to event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayers, Haftarah and Torah lessons begin.
6 weeks prior to event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rabbi works with B'nai Mitzvah on <i>D'var Torah</i>.
Tuesday prior to event	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dress Rehearsal of full service.

EXPECTATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

Hebrew School Enrollment: Students must be enrolled and actively participate in Hebrew School for a minimum of four years (grades 4-7).

For students/families that join the synagogue after 4th grade, the Rabbi will assess the student for readiness and communicate a plan with the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Lessons: B'nai Mitzvah lessons consist of 6 - 9 months of private study with the Rabbi and tutor. We will contact you to set up lessons. Students are expected to practice at home in between lessons for at least 30 minutes per day.

Mitzvah Project: Each student must be engaged in a sustained, year-long Mitzvah Project during the year preceding his or her B'nai Mitzvah. Projects are decided on an individual basis between the Rabbi, student, and their family. It is strongly encouraged for each student to take a hands-on approach, rather than collecting donations for a certain cause. This helps demonstrate to our students that any one of us can change the world if we put our all into a project.

Shabbat Service Attendance: Students are required to attend and participate in a minimum of 10 Shabbat Services within one-year leading up to their B'nai Mitzvah. Attendance at services, whether on Friday night or Saturday morning, is a worship opportunity, a wonderful learning experience as well as an opportunity for each student to create deeper connections within the Emek Shalom community.

Ushering: Parents are required to usher at two B'nai Mitzvah services. On the day of your *simcha* it is comforting and supportive to know that you will have ushers taking care of numerous service details. We know that you will want to offer the same comfort and support to others. Families will receive notification of date assignments, details of ushering duties. If the assigned dates are not convenient, please contact another family to switch and then notify the Temple Administrator. Ushering responsibilities can be found in the Appendix.

Financial Responsibilities: All families of B'nai Mitzvah students must be members in good standing of our congregation. This means being current with all financial obligations prior to the beginning of B'nai Mitzvah lessons and remaining current on all dues. In addition, 50% of the current B'nai Mitzvah fee is due prior to the start of B'nai Mitzvah lessons. The balance is due 60 days prior to the B'nai Mitzvah date. If there are questions or concerns, please contact our synagogue President.

REQUIRED B'NAI MITZVAH FAMILY COHORT EVENTS

Several group meetings will be held prior to the B'nai Mitzvah. They are structured as part of our commitment to provide a variety of experiences to deepen the significance of the special milestone of becoming B'nai Mitzvah. These events provide opportunities to create a strong, close-knit B'nai Mitzvah family community. Some meetings include:

Planning Meeting: At the Planning Meeting you will have the opportunity to meet with the Clergy to learn about all the practical, religious and social aspects of becoming a B'nai Mitzvah at Emek Shalom. This is a good meeting to have your questions answered regarding any aspect of the preparations leading up to this wonderful *simcha*.

Pay-It-Forward: Pay-It-Forward is intended for the B'nai Mitzvah and the parent(s)/guardian(s) to attend. It is a Shabbat Service and day of learning about the Mitzvah Project.

LESSONS

During lessons, at least one parent/guardian must be in the building with the B'nai Mitzvah and tutor.

Lessons will consist of weekly 30-minute sessions working on blessings, prayers, Haftarah, Torah and *D'var Torah* with the Rabbi and/or tutor. At the end of all sessions, a full dress rehearsal will be held with the family. The dress rehearsal will be scheduled on the Tuesday prior to the B'nai Mitzvah.

Scheduling of Lessons: Two to three weeks prior to the first lesson, you will be contacted to set up an initial meeting. The day and time for all subsequent lessons will be set during the initial meeting with the goal of having a consistent in-person (if possible) 30-minute session. If you know of vacations or other circumstances in which you will be away for any extended period of time, lessons will need to begin sooner, i.e. camp, etc. Make-up lessons can be scheduled due to illness or emergencies. If there is inclement weather, please call to confirm with the person with whom the student is scheduled to meet with. If a lesson must be cancelled, notification must be as early as possible and preferably one day in advance. Make-ups will be scheduled according to availability.

Parental Involvement: Parent(s)/guardian(s) are strongly encouraged to attend lessons periodically to observe and evaluate the B'nai Mitzvah's progress. This allows for an opportunity to communicate and review the learning process together as a Team. In addition, we strongly encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to listen at home to their child while they review the blessings, prayers, Haftarah and Torah. The performance of the B'nai Mitzvah hinges on consistent practicing as well as parental involvement.

Communication: Communication is an important aspect of the B'nai Mitzvah process. Students and parents should communicate as soon as a question or problem arises rather than wait until the next lesson. The tutor will review the progress with the Rabbi on a regular basis. Any concerns will be communicated out to the parent(s)/guardian(s).

Lessons with Rabbi: 6-weeks prior to the event will involve, when possible, rehearsals in the Sanctuary, reading from the Torah, delivering a *D'var Torah*, and practicing the blessings and prayers.

Lesson Planning and Timeline:

Lessons 1 - 6:

- Prayer review with the Rabbi

Lessons 7 - 28:

- Torah and Haftarah work

Lessons 29 - 35:

- *D'var Torah* with the Rabbi
- All materials polished and completed
- Service parts on Friday nights
- Confidence building
- Practice in the Sanctuary
- Full dress rehearsal

LESSON PLAN #	LESSON PLAN CONTENT
1-6	Prayer review with the Rabbi
7-28	Torah and Haftarah work
29-35	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>D'var Torah</i> with the Rabbi● All materials polished and completed● Service parts on Friday nights● Confidence building● Practice in the Sanctuary● Full dress rehearsal

RESPONSIBILITIES DURING THE B'NAI MITZVAH SERVICE

B'nai Mitzvah:

- Lead the congregation as the *shaliach tzibur*, “leader of worship”, in Hebrew prayers. This is one of the oldest and most prestigious roles in the synagogue. It literally means “messenger of the community”. Each B'nai Mitzvah student joins with the Clergy in this sacred role.
- Chanting the Torah and Haftarah portion. The B'nai Mitzvah assumes the role of the *baal(at) k'riah*, “Torah reader,” for the day. This entails the learning of four *parashiyot* or selections from the week's Torah portion. Torah is unvocalized (without vowels or accents); moreover, each student is expected to learn the trope or traditional cantillation melody. This skill is taught by the Clergy. The B'nai Mitzvah will chant the Torah blessings only for the fourth and final *aliyah*. (The previous *aliyot* are given out as honors to family members and friends.)
- Deliver a *D'var Torah*, a speech which teaches the congregation about some aspect of Torah, Haftarah or Judaism, and how it relates to his or her life.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s): Besides *kvelling*, the parental/guardian involvement in a B'nai Mitzvah Mitzvah celebration may include:

- Performing the candle lighting on Friday night.
- Participating in the ceremony of the handing down of the Torah (parents and grandparents).
- Having the third *aliyah*, which involves reciting the Torah blessings.
- Offering a personal blessing or speech to the B'nai Mitzvah.

HONORS AND ALIYOT

Honors are an important part of the B'nai Mitzvah ceremony. There are a variety of opportunities for family and friends to participate during the Shabbat morning service. Below is a basic guide to the B'nai Mitzvah honors. Approximately two months prior to the B'nai Mitzvah, the Rabbi will hold a meeting with you to discuss the honors.

Honors include:

- Passing the Torah down from elders in the family to the B'nai Mitzvah
- Opening/closing the ark (three separate honors)
- Dressing, lifting and returning the Torah (three separate honors)
- Reciting the Prayer for Our Country/Congregation/Israel (three separate honors)

Aliyot: Aliyot refers to being called to the Torah. Aliyot can be individual honors or group honors. In the case of a double B'nai Mitzvah, each child has their own Haftarah and Torah portions with 4 aliyah each including:

- One - two for family, friends and siblings
- One for parent(s)/guardian(s)
- One for the B'nai Mitzvah

How your friends or family of other faith backgrounds can participate: We welcome the participation of family and friends of other faith backgrounds. While there are some limitations, we very much want all of your guests to feel welcome and included. People of other faith backgrounds may participate in honors except dressing, lifting, or returning the Torah to the ark and the recitation of the Torah blessings. In the instance of an interfaith marriage, both parents come to the Torah while the Jewish parent recites the blessings.

The involvement of younger siblings and children: Siblings or other young children should be given age-appropriate honors, such as helping to dress the Torah or opening the ark. Siblings may also help in leading the Motzi, the blessing over the challah. Older siblings can be given an aliyah.

MISCELLANEOUS

Music: Music is an important part of worship, holidays and festivals. The inclusion of keyboard accompaniment for the student's B'nai Mitzvah service is encouraged, if desired. It is your responsibility to arrange this in consultation with the Temple Administrator and Clergy. Accompanist arrangements must be made by you in advance. The Clergy are available to answer any questions regarding the service music.

Oneg: Families are required to sponsor the Friday night Oneg. The food can be ordered through the Temple or brought in by the family. All food must be kosher style. More information on Oneg options and prices may be obtained by calling the Temple Administrator.

Flowers: Flowers are used to grace the Bima on Shabbat. B'nai Mitzvah families may rent the silk flowers or order fresh flowers from a florist. To rent flowers, contact the administrator, admin@fvjc.org. Fresh flowers must be delivered before **noon** on the Friday before your B'nai Mitzvah. Fresh flowers may be taken home by the family after the event or if left in the sanctuary, used or distributed by the Temple.

Mazon Baskets: Mazon, a Jewish Response to Hunger, is a charity that provides food to the needy. Mazon Baskets will be placed on the Bima instead of flowers by notifying the Temple office if a donation to Mazon will be made. Please Send your donation directly to Mazon.

Rental of FVJC Social Hall: If you intend to rent the Social Hall, please do so within one year of receiving the B'nai Mitzvah date, after that time, the Social Hall is rented on a first-come, first-served basis. Please contact the Temple Administrator to discuss the rental fee, secure your date and sign a contract.

Serving Food: *Kashrut of the FVJC kitchen is based on Kosher style.* You can use a Kosher caterer but it is not necessary. No pork products or shellfish will be permitted in the kitchen or the social hall and the serving of milk with meat products will not be permitted. If someone wishes to use a Kosher caterer, the Temple will sustain the cost of making the kitchen kosher and it will be done prior to the Kosher caterer placing any of his/her equipment in the kitchen. *All menus must be submitted to and approved by the Rabbi at least two months in advance of the B'nai Mitzvah.*

House Rules For Kosher-Style:

- Once the kitchen of FVJC-Emek Shalom is rendered non-kosher it can be koshered at any time by agents approved by the Rabbi. No congregant will be permitted to kasher the kitchen by him/herself.
- The kitchen may be utilized by any congregant or approved renter of the facility for food service and preparation during approved hours. Those hours will be designated by the Rabbi or Temple administrator.
- To maintain the integrity of a "kosher-style" kitchen, the following will be strictly enforced:
- No shellfish, pork products, insects, reptiles or any other biblically prohibited food will be prepared, utilized, combined, served or eaten in the Temple.
- Milk and meat products will not be mixed together in the Temple.
- Dairy desserts may be served after eating meat meals, but only after all the meat products have been removed from the tables and have been put away in the kitchen.
- Any and all wine, beer and liquor will be permitted to be utilized in the Temple at any function (age permitting).
- Any caterer with a catering license will be permitted to prepare and serve food in the Temple for any function pending approval of the Rabbi.
- All food deliveries for functions taking place on Shabbat must be delivered on Friday afternoon before 3:00 p.m.
- Food prepared in individual homes will be permitted to be brought into the kitchen and into the rest of the building as long as it conforms to the above specified conditions.
- It is always preferable when preparing food for use in the Temple that kosher ingredients be utilized as well as using disposable containers for transport of the food.

Program Booklet: A printed booklet for the B'nai Mitzvah ceremony is optional. If the family chooses to have a program booklet, it is their responsibility to create and print the booklet. A booklet is generally used to give insight into the service and ceremony. Clergy must proofread the booklet before printing has been completed.

For some guests, this may be their first time at a Bar or Bat Mitzvah. You may want to include some/all of the following information in the booklets to help them feel comfortable:

- Cell phones should be turned off or set to mute.
- No photographs or video may be taken during the service.
- Although *kippot* are not required, wearing one demonstrates respect.
- Stand when the congregation stands.
- Participate in whichever prayers they are comfortable reciting.
- Prayer books should be placed on the shelf under the seat in front of you, not on the floor.
- Do not leave or re-enter the Sanctuary when the congregation is standing, when the Ark is open, when the Torah is being carried or read or during the speeches.
- Although it is customary to applaud a fine speech or performance, we do not applaud during services.

Kippot (Yarmulkes): There will be kippot available, however, families may choose to order personalized kippot where family and friends can keep them as a memento.

Candy: Candy is *gently* tossed at the B'nai Mitzvah to extend our wish that they have a sweet life. The candy is provided by the synagogue and is given to the family/guests seated in the first few rows. It will be distributed by the Board Host for that service.

Photography: Photography is not allowed during services. Families may choose to have pictures before/after the dress rehearsal or before the service (8:30am on Saturday morning and 3:30pm on Saturday afternoon).

Videography: If you would like a video of the service, please contact the Rabbi.

FEE SCHEDULE

Timeline	Event
B'nai Mitzvah Fee Note: When multiple children from the same family will be sharing the same B'nai Mitzvah service, the fee for the first child will be \$1,000 which includes items such as utilities, administrative support, custodial help, and tutoring. Since each child will get individual tutoring and their own set of materials, <u>there will be an additional tutoring fee of \$700 for each additional child.</u> Finally, the family will be expected to have only one set of ushering duties and to sponsor only one Oneg. This is billed one year ahead of your service.	\$1,000
Tuition and Membership Fees	All must be current by the month prior to your service.
Additional Fee Information available	

WHAT COMES AFTER THE B'NAI MITZVAH



Join our Teen program which is led by JT Connect!

Social connection, Social action & Jewish learning!

Grades 8-12

There are a number of ways for a post-B'nai Mitzvah student to remain connected to Judaism and our synagogue. These opportunities foster growth in Jewish learning and values that are part of the B'nai Mitzvah process. Our 8th grade *Midrashei Chayim* program (Lifelong Learning) meets twice monthly on Sundays and Wednesdays, and encourages our students to participate in community service projects, to help within Religious School, build community and to expand their Judaic knowledge in a familiar atmosphere. It is a first step to continuing on to confirmation with our high school program. We are looking forward to working with you and your family. We hope that this *simcha* will foster a positive, cooperative learning experience that will be spiritually meaningful and fulfilling. In working together, the B'nai Mitzvah experience can truly be one of growth, sharing, pride and accomplishment, and a stepping-stone to continued Jewish living and learning.

Please visit the synagogue website for more information and registration: www.fvjc.org