

Bar Mitzvahs and Bat Mitzvahs

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What Is a Bar Mitzvah?

Bar Mitzvah means “Son of Commandment”.

A Bar Mitzvah is a Jewish boy who has reached the age of 13.

Once he has turned 13 years old, he has the same rights as an adult Jewish man.

He is now responsible for his own decisions and actions.

Did you know?

Even though people use the name for the ceremony, it actually refers to the person who has come of age.



What Is a Bat Mitzvah?

A Bat Mitzvah is a Jewish girl who has turned 12 years old. She is now responsible for her own decisions and actions too.

Did you know?

Some Jews celebrate the Bat Mitzvah in a similar way to the Bar Mitzvah, whereas some hold a smaller, slightly different ceremony.



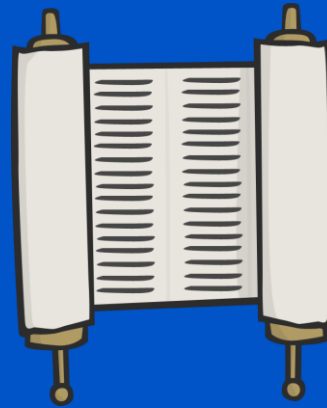
A Rite of Passage

Becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a 'rite of passage' in the life of a Jewish child. It is a part of growing up within the Jewish faith.

Young people must spend many months preparing for this by learning about the Jewish faith and reading the Torah in Hebrew.

Did you know?

Jewish people read the Torah, which is the law and teachings of God written in Hebrew.

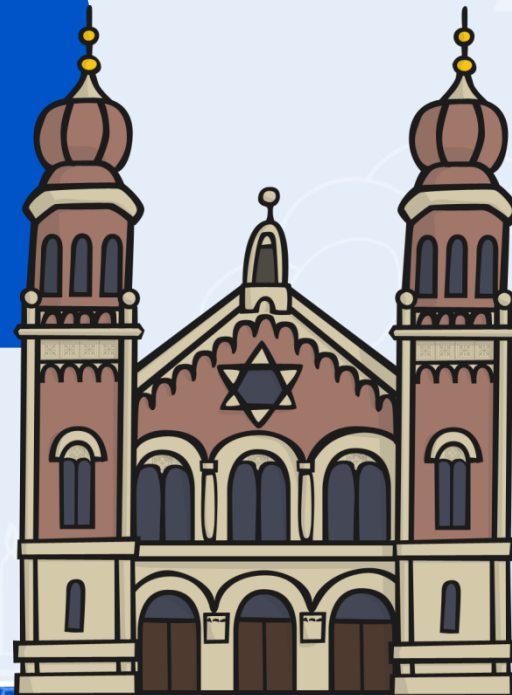


Getting Ready for the Bar Mitzvah Ceremony

Young boys often spend between 6 and 18 months having lessons with the Rabbi – the Jewish leader – before they can have the ceremony.

They have to learn how to:

- lead the prayers in the synagogue;
- read the Torah using the special chant;
- give a speech about the Torah to show how much they have learned;
- raise money for a chosen charity.



The Ceremony

Nowadays, there is often a party to celebrate this event, but the Bar Mitzvah ceremony is still the most important part of the whole day.

The Bar Mitzvah will be called up to read from the Torah. The part that he reads depends on where he was born and he has to sing it in a special way.

He has to give a speech to explain the parts of the Torah that he has learned about and how they apply to his life and future. He also thanks his parents.

He will also say the *aliyah* over the Torah, which is one of the special blessings.



Watch part of the ceremony here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/clips/zm7tfg8>

Bat Mitzvah Ceremony

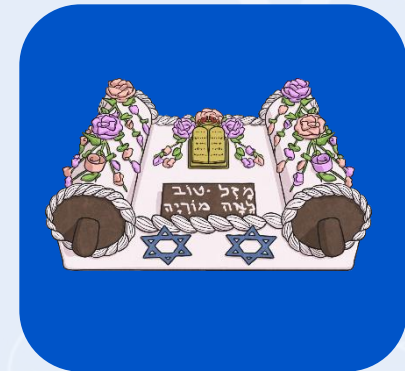
In an Orthodox synagogue, a Bat Mitzvah girl will not sing – she will speak.

She will normally speak about something important to her that she has learned about.

Unlike the boys, she doesn't read from the Torah. Instead, she chooses some prayers or a poem that is special to her.

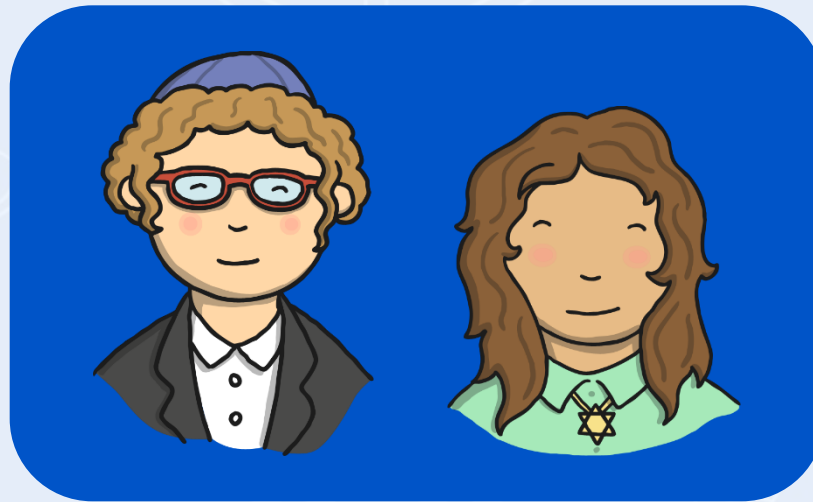
It is common for girls to read a prayer that men say to their wives every Friday night, which is called 'Eishet Chayil' meaning 'Woman of Worth'. It speaks about the importance of a woman and how they are worth more than rubies or diamonds.

In a Reform synagogue, the Bat Mitzvah ceremony can be very similar to the Bar Mitzvah ceremony.



After the Bar or Bat Mitzvah

The ceremony is not the end.



The Jewish young person must carry on learning about being a Jew and develop their understanding of God throughout their lives.



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