

HIWP Women's Tefillah / Bat Mitzvah Guidelines –Family Planning Booklet

The HIWP Women's Tefillah was established as a place for the women of the synagogue to join together as a community of women in a halachik service, allowing for both prayer and Torah reading. The Women of our congregation want to have a strong personal involvement in prayer, and throughout the year, **Women's Tefillah Services** are scheduled for a number of Shabbatot as well as other occasions. It was recognized early on that the Women's Tefillah provided a wonderful context for our young women to celebrate their coming of age as b'not mitzvah. Within Women's Tefillah, women lead Tefillah, read from the Torah and Haftarah portions, and give D'verei Torah (speeches on the weekly portion).

HIWP encourages our Bat Mitzvah girls to participate in Women's Tefillah, if desired. If not, the Bat Mitzvah is invited to share a D'var Torah on Shabbat in coordination with the Rabbi.

As our community grows, Women's Tefillah has maintained an important role within our community. Over the years, many girls have become B'not Mitzvah with our Women's Tefillah, but the structure and process had never been clearly outlined. We have created this booklet specifically to help with the planning of a Bat Mitzvah service with the HIWP Women's Tefillah, and to help families understand the expectations of participation. This booklet is meant to be used in conjunction with the HIWP Policy Booklet. There, you will find information that applies to the celebration of both Bar and Bat Mitzvahs at the Hebrew Institute. In particular, you will find information regarding the financial obligations of the Bat Mitzvah family.

Hebrew Institute and Women's Tefillah Expectations for Participation: (See Policy Book for additional information.)

In order to celebrate a Bar/Bat Mitzvah at HIWP, a young man or woman must be involved in ongoing Jewish education. Each candidate's course of studies must meet the approval of the Rabbi.

Additionally, all of the B'nai Mitzvah must participate in a special program with the Rabbi. Each Bar/Bat Mitzvah is also encouraged to participate in some chesed (community service) project.

Women's Tefillah has the following additional expectation: We strongly encourage the families and girls, who plan a Bat Mitzvah with Women's Tefillah, to attend WT services at least 6 months to 1 year in advance of their simcha so that they can become familiar with our services, and become part of our women's prayer community. We see the Bat Mitzvah as a major milestone in a girls' life, but it is also the beginning of a more mature relationship with Judaism. As such, we encourage further involvement post simcha.

Women's Tefillah Leadership:

The Bat Mitzvah and her family will work closely with the Women's Tefillah leadership. Over the years, the structure of WT leadership has changed. Currently, we have two significant leadership roles; co-coordinators, and gabbayot. We have split these roles in order to have clear realms of responsibility, and to allow for more people to share the work of running our ever-growing Women's Tefillah. Both a coordinator and a gabbait will work with the family.

Co-Coordiators: The role of the coordinators involves most of the administrative functions, as they will be the ones to work with the Rabbi, to coordinate the calendar, and to coordinate the other volunteers needed within our community. The co-coordinators are the working face of our Women's Tefillah community. As such, they will work with the Bat Mitzvah families as they plan and prepare for their simcha. (Note: Each Bat Mitzvah family will be assigned a "WT Point Person", who will be one of the co-coordinators.) If you have any initial questions they are the people to speak with!

Gabbayot: The role of the gabbayot is to lead services. We have many women who have acted as gabbai over the years, and we continue to thrive by the fact that more women get involved each year. Currently, we have a team of rotating gabbayot who may be available to lead services. Two gabbayot will be assigned to each Bat Mitzvah and at least one of them will attend a run-through with the Bat Mitzvah in the weeks immediately preceding the service.

Volunteer Coordinator: The role of the volunteer coordinator is to ensure that for each service, we have women assigned for Torah reading and D'vrei Torah. She will help fill in any roles that the Bat Mitzvah family is not filling.

Men's Participation

A women's tefillah bat mitzvah is, at its name connotes, a women's service. We seek to preserve the special women's prayer environment that it was created to be. To that end, we ask that your simcha's invitations note that men are invited to join the main shul for services while the women attend the women's tefillah. Following the service, the women will join the men in the main sanctuary where the Bat Mitzvah will share a dvar Torah with the entire congregation. Informally, a small number of male immediate family members may be present for the bat mitzvah's reading of Torah. Families are asked to create a special early minyan so that these immediate family members will have participated in their own Torah reading prior to listening in on the bat mitzvah's reading.

Bat Mitzvah Planning Calendar:

1. (Two Years Before Simcha) Call the Rabbi. Make first contact with HIWP regarding your simcha. Action items include:
 - a. (Family) Make contact – review and set a date.
 - b. (Rabbi) Confirm and coordinate date with the office, and with the WT Coordinators.
 - c. (Family) Recommendation to coordinate and clear the date with your school.
2. (One Year Before Simcha) Family Meets with the Rabbi. Face to face meeting with the Rabbi. Possible follow up with WT coordinator. Action items include:
 - a. Review the Bat Mitzvah options in order to establish the venue and the vision for the simcha.
 - b. Establish learning goals.
 - c. Assign a WT Point person. (After this, all planning shall be done and coordinated with the WT Point Person.)
 - d. Contact teacher and discuss course of study and learning schedule – begin learning (Note that our Chazzan is available to teach the girls to layn.)
3. (6 Months Before the Simcha) Family Meets with Rabbi and WT point person. Action items include:
 - a. Check in with Family/ Girl/ Laying teacher to see if all learning is on track.
 - b. Review original goals and revise if necessary.
 - c. Review the organization of the simcha, and discuss invitation directives (ie: expectations for men, etc.)
4. (3 Months Before the Simcha) Family/ Girl meets with Rabbi Marder (D'var Torah). Action items include:
 - a. Establish learning schedule for the girl's D'var Torah (Rabbi Marder)
5. (2 Months Before the Simcha) Family/ Girl/ WT Point Person. Action items include:
 - a. Assess laying capacity in order to do recruiting if necessary.
 - b. WT Point person delivers and reviews the "Program for the Service" document with the family – Family to fill in the template. *see appendix for template
 - c. WT Point person to contact the volunteer coordinator if required.
6. (2 Weeks Before the Simcha) Family / Girl/ WT Leadership for the simcha. Action items include:
 - a. (WT Leadership) "Dry run" of the service at shul with the specific gabbayot, the Bat Mitzvah and any participating family members or those who may want or need extra direction.
 - b. (Family) Finalize and Deliver the "Program for the Service" document to WT leadership.

- c. (WT Leadership) Review all expectations for attending the service (ie: all participants shall arrive to shul at the beginning of the service)

Service Options:

There are many different WT services, throughout the year, where a family can celebrate a Bat Mitzvah. When establishing a date and venue, we encourage you to think about which would be the best environment for your particular child. (Note: Non-Shabbat dates should be linked to a HIWP Shabbat to allow the shul to recognize the simchah , and to enable the Bat Mitzvah to give a D'var Torah to the community. At that time, a parent may also share very brief comments/ words of blessing (1-2 minutes). Because of time constraints (in staying on schedule with the main service) we recommend no speeches or addresses to the bat mitzvah girl during the tefillah, and that parents find the opportunity to further address their daughter in more personal venue.

For the shabbat options, services will be scheduled at the discretion of the WT leadership and the Rabbi, with regard to the yearly calendar. For the weekday/holiday option, in addition to the above consideration, scheduling will be based on the availability of volunteer gabbayot to run the service.

Possible WT Services:

(Shabbat)

- A. Shabbat Morning – options include
 - a. Full service (shacharit, Torah service and Mussaf)
 - b. Shacharit and Torah service only (join main service for Mussaf)
- B. Shabbat Minchah
 - a. Winter early right after Kiddush
 - b. Early – spring – about 1:30pm earliest
 - c. Late – spring/ summer includes Ma'ariv – 1 hour before sunset with or without Havdalah
- C. Kabbalat Shabbat

(Weekday/ Holiday)

- A. Any Torah Reading Day – Legal Holiday/ Monday version
- B. Sukkot
- C. Chanukah

- D. Rosh Chodesh
- E. Purim Morning

General ideas and expectations for participation:

- A. As a minimum level of participation, we encourage the Bat Mitzvah to take a role leading the WT service, and to share a D'var Torah.
- B. Parent can introduce the parsha before the Torah reading.
- C. In the main shul, women can choose to carry the Torah (coordinate w/ the WT Leadership and the Rabbi.)
- D. Parent can recite Birchat Shepetarani either during the service or after the speech.
- E. Honors can be assigned for the service – see the “Program of the Service” template.

Resources:

In addition to the Rabbi, there are a number of other resources available to the family to help in planning the service.

The Women's Tefillah Co-coordinator who will serve as the point person for the event can be a sounding board for ideas and will help the family to shape the service. Chazzan Spinner is available to teach the Bat Mitzvah all elements of leading a service including: the Haftorah and its brachot, the brachot of the Torah, Torah reading, Shachrit, Musaf and concluding prayers (including Anim Zmirot). What a candidate actually does should be decided based on a discussion among the bar mitzvah, parents and the Chazzan. The initial discussion should occur at least one year before the bar/bat mitzvah date. It is customary to offer the Chazzan an honorarium. The suggested honorarium is \$100 per month and is paid directly to the Chazzan. Finally, the Hebrew Institute has a female congregational intern on staff who can serve as a wonderful role model and teacher for the Bat Mitzvah and her family.

Conclusion:

A Women's Tefillah Bat Mitzvah celebration is truly a special event. We look forward to working with your family in order to create a service that fits your needs and desires.

Appendix:

Program of Service Template: Please note that we have included many different opportunities for participation so that the family can choose from many options. There is no requirement to include all of these roles, or that they must all be filled by the family

Bat Mitzvah of

Shabbat Parshat _____

Date: _____

Gabaiyot

Pesukei D'zmirah

Ashrei (young girls to lead)

Sacharit

Peticha(open Aron for Torah reading)

Calling up Bat Mitzvah to the Torah

Torah Reading

	Aliyot	Leiner
Cohen		
Levi		
Shlishi		
Revii		
Chamishi		
Shishi		
Shvii		
Maftir		

Hagbah -----

Glila -----

Mi Sheberach for the Bat Mizvah -----

Haftorah-----

Prayer for the Government-----

Prayer for the State of Israel (Hebrew)-----

Mi Sheberach for Soldiers (Hebrew)-----

Close Aron after Torah reading-----

Mussaf-----

Peticha(open Aron for conclusion)-----

Shir Hakavod, -----

Ein Kelokein, Adon Olam-----

The Women's Tefillah group was formed at the HIWP by a dedicated group of women who saw it as an important part of the Hebrew Institute's mission as a leader in open Orthodoxy. The Women's Tefillah now meets about once a month.