

A young girl with dark hair tied back, wearing a dark long-sleeved shirt and jeans, is sitting on a grassy field. She is holding an open book and looking down at it. The background is a soft-focus landscape with trees and a body of water.

Bat Mitzvah marks a very important milestone, a fundamental shift in life: The transition from young girl to responsible young adult. So, a Bat Mitzvah shouldn't just be a party; it's too important. A Bat Mitzvah needs a soul. Such an experience deserves a pivotal place in life's rhythm and a powerful sense of meaning. The young celebrant should certainly feel a sense of relevance and connectedness to this auspicious threshold in her life.

We want your daughter to take pride in her Jewish identity. We want her to feel anticipation, eager to take her place as a full fledged member of the Jewish nation. We want her to recognize her integral part in our beautiful traditions and rich heritage. We want to inspire a sense of responsibility to her self, to her fellow human beings and, above all, to G-d.

It's truly a special time, and our goal is to help your family realize the energy of this powerful moment.

- What is the deeper meaning to becoming a Bat Mitzvah?
- What is its significance?
- How has it been celebrated through history?
- How do we celebrate the Bat Mitzvah at Chabad?
- What does the preparation process entail?
- Where's my place as a parent in the Bat Mitzvah?
- Where does my family fit in?

Please remember: We want this event to meet your specific needs; if you'd like to taper the program for particular reasons, please feel free to consult our Rabbi.

Mazel Tov! Your daughter is growing up, and she'll be celebrating the biggest event of her adolescent life:
Her Bat Mitzvah.

What is a Bat Mitzvah.....

A Look at Bat Mitzvah Through the Lens of the DEVELOPMENTAL SPECTRUM



As you watch your child grow into an adult, you are observing the 'unfolding' of his persona. As time passes, developmental stages are reached and actualized, and a new level of identity blossoms. It's the natural flow of life. We can call it the developmental spectrum. At a certain point on this continuum, a child is ready to step beyond childhood. Still short of adulthood, the youth enters a 'post-childhood' phase. At this stage, she is ready to accept responsibility for her actions, and ready to 'step-up' as a reliable functionary in family and society.

In Jewish tradition, Bat Mitzvah is that stage; it's exiting childhood and crossing the threshold into 'post-childhood'. We want to make the most of this stage...

But, for thousands of years, we've seen it as more than the natural unfolding of the psyche. We see Bat Mitzvah as a time when the soul begins to 'blossom', allowing the individual to find 'moral maturity' within herself. It's seen as a point of time when we can begin to find a crystallization/awareness of our values which we know to

In Judaism, SPIRITUAL CELEBRATIONS

find PHYSICAL EXPRESSIONS

In Jewish thought, 'celebrations of the spirit' also need to be 'celebrations of the body'.

A Bat Mitzvah is a multi-dimensional event, celebrating a number of spiritual, psychological and emotional events in the child's and family's life. Therefore a Bat Mitzvah event needs to find

TANGIBLE ways to express all these facets. In planning a meaningful Bat Mitzvah, we need to identify the psycho-spiritual facets of celebration and then bring them to tangible expression in our celebration.



What are some spiritual CONCEPTS we are celebrating?

A Bat Mitzvah celebrates the first 12 years of a child's life; childhood is a formative stage and is a foundation for life.

A Bat Mitzvah celebrates the child's commitment to living her life as a Jewish adult.

A Bat Mitzvah celebrates our Torah, which gives us a world-view and guidance on how to lead a meaningful life.

A Bat Mitzvah celebrates the idea that this girl is now taking her rightful place as part of the Jewish community.

A Bat Mitzvah celebrates the new link in the chain of Jewish continuity.

To think about: How can we infuse these important

concepts into the design of the Bat Mitzvah celebration?

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How we celebrate at Chabad....

Rather than focus on a 'Bat Mitzvah product', or just the 'special day', we emphasize the 'process' of maturation, responsibility and Jewish identity. The readings and Mitzvah projects are direct expressions of this process.

YOUR DAUGHTER'S CEREMONY INCLUDES:

- Hebrew and English Torah readings
- A speech, with reflections on the meaning of this important milestone, her path in reaching it, etc.
- A representation of the Mitzvah Project that your daughter worked on over the course of her Bat Mitzvah preparation.
- The rabbi's explanation of the process, ceremony and respective readings
- As per your guidance, we call on family-members and friends for readings and/or personal reflections.
- A handout will be prepared for all the guests containing all the above readings and some additional prayers. The handout generally contains a personalized message/s from the family. If you like, you can also design your own cover.
- The parents (and grandparents if you choose) bless the Bat Mitzvah girl. They will also convey the continuity of tradition with a 'Judaic bestowal', e.g Shabbat candlestick, etc.
- A candy throw, in which we shower the Bat Mitzvah with sweetness.

12 TORAH

PASSAGES:

Twelve passages of Scripture, Talmud and Jewish Spirituality will form the core of your daughter's readings. We have selected these passages because they each articulate a developmentally-appropriate message for your child. They are not just religious texts for a Bat Mitzvah event; they are messages for life, and we hope that these values will become 'tools for a meaningful life' as your daughter matures into adult life.

Please see page 11 for more

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Ceremony Options.....

The celebration described above is not a formal prayer service per se; it's a free-standing, Judaic celebration of your daughter's Bat Mitzvah. We can schedule this ceremony and shape its schedule in a way which will maximize the Bat Mitzvah meaning and celebration. Families have typically chosen these times/models:

SUNDAY, MORNING, EARLY AFTERNOON or EVENING

The ceremony revolves around the Twelve Passages mentioned above and including other readings for family and friends. The ceremony will typically last under an hour.

If you choose to celebrate the Bat Mitzvah this way:

- ◆ The rabbi welcomes everyone and describes the Bat Mitzvah service.
- ◆ The Bat Mitzvah girl reads the 12 Passages mentioned above.
- ◆ You may invite family and friends to read prayers or share thoughts.
- ◆ The Bat Mitzvah girl addresses the audience, incorporating lessons from her readings and Mitzvah Project.



FRIDAY NIGHT CANDLE LIGHTING SERVICE

We launch the Shabbat on Friday evening with the women's/girls' traditional candle-lighting. The congregation then recites prayers to welcome the Shabbat. This service places great emphasis on the 'Shabbat Bride' (sometimes referred to as the Shabbat Queen), emphasizing the feminine dimension. Through the liturgy's sensitive eyes, we attempt to review the past week's events, struggles, successes and failures, to bring meaning to a hectic world. We then recite the Kiddush and partake in the traditional Shabbat Meal.

If you choose to celebrate the Bat Mitzvah this way:

- ◆ The Bat Mitzvah girl leads the women and girls in the candle lighting and blessing
- ◆ The Bat Mitzvah guests partake in the Bat Mitzvah ceremony (as detailed in the side bar and tailored to as per your discussions with the Rabbi)
- ◆ After the service, the Bat Mitzvah girl can recite the Kiddush
- ◆ The Bat Mitzvah girl reads the 12 Passages mentioned above.
- ◆ You may invite family and friends to read prayers or share thoughts.
- ◆ The Bat Mitzvah girl addresses the audience, incorporating lessons from her readings and Mitzvah Project.
- ◆ The family of the Bat Mitzvah girl may opt to host a dinner or dessert reception. The bat-mitzvah family sponsors the Shabbat dinner at Chabad, when the services takes place on the first Friday of the month.

NOTE: During the winter months the Bat Mitzvah celebration will begin with candle lighting, and then progress into the evening prayer service and ceremony. During the summer months, when sunset is later, the Bat Mitzvah celebration will begin with the Bat Mitzvah ceremony, followed by candle-lighting and the Shabbat prayer service.

Please bear in mind that videos and cameras are welcome **until** the Candle Lighting Service, which signals the beginning of the Shabbat.

SATURDAY EVENING - HAVDALA

Jewish tradition calls for a ceremony, known as Havdala, every Saturday evening. The Havdala serves as a transition between Shabbat and the weekdays, and incorporates blessings over wine, fragrances and candles, respectively. The ceremony typically lasts an hour. Separate seating is not necessary during this ceremony.

If you choose to celebrate the Bat Mitzvah this way:

- ◆ The rabbi welcomes everyone and describes the Havdala service.
- ◆ The Bat Mitzvah girl then begins her Bat Mitzvah ceremony, reciting the Havdala, honoring close family members by having them participate in parts of the service, and using various parts of the service on page (as per your discussions with the Rabbi).
- ◆ Guests can hold their own candles and spice packets, if desired.
- ◆ The Bat Mitzvah girl reads the 12 Passages mentioned above.
- ◆ You may invite family and friends to read prayers or share thoughts.
- ◆ The Bat Mitzvah girl addresses the audience, incorporating lessons from her readings and Mitzvah Project.

NOTE: This service only takes place after nightfall. Thus, this option only works practically speaking in the Fall and Winter months.

SUNDAY OR WEEKDAY MORNING OR EVENING CEREMONY

These are possible to arrange in consultation with the Rabbi.



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Preparation Time Line.....



PRELIMINARY MEETING:

When you are ready to begin planning your daughter's bat mitzvah (we recommend - 1 year prior to the service) please contact Rabbi Arik at Chabad to set up a preliminary meeting (rabbi@chabadbedford.com).

The primary objective of this first meeting is to get to know each other and for you to share what you envision the Bat Mitzvah journey to be like. Rabbi Arik Wolf will facilitate this discussion with you and your daughter.

We will also choose a date and discuss the possibilities for the ceremony and readings (as described in Part 2, 3) for the event. Your daughter will be assigned a **READING TUTOR** who will help her hone her Hebrew reading skills.

TEN MONTHS PRIOR TO THE BAT-MITZVAH SERVICE:

Your daughter will be meeting with her tutor and/or the rabbi once a week over the course of this preparation process. Each meeting will be approximately ½ hour.

The meetings will be devoted to perfecting your daughter's **diction/cadence** with regard to Bat Mitzvah ceremony's text(s).

- The tutor will also devote time to **study and discussions** about the lessons and meaning behind the readings.

During the appointments with the tutor, the Bat Mitzvah girl will discuss her choice of a **Mitzvah Project**. The Mitzvah Project has two dimensions: one of a 'social consciousness' nature and the other of a 'ritual' nature (e.g. Shabbat candles, Mezuzah).

We encourage parents to schedule a time with Rabbi Arik to learn about your daughter's Torah portion and studies, so that the journey of learning is one that you embark on together.

ONE MONTH BEFORE THE BAT MITZVAH:

One month before the event, when your daughter has absorbed the readings and their messages, the Rabbi and she will begin to chart her Bat Mitzvah **speech**.

- Rabbi Arik will **meet with your family** a second time to discuss the final details.

The template of the service booklet will be emailed to you so that you can send it off to be printed and bound.

ACTUAL DAY OF THE BAT MITZVAH:

Regardless of when you schedule your ceremony and party, the actual 'Bat Mitzvah day' is your daughter's twelfth birthday on the Jewish calendar. With your permission, the Rabbi will **visit your daughter at home** on that day - perhaps for just a few minutes - to celebrate the day's unique character.

