

PERSONAL PARENT'S PRAYER

We, at Congregation Beth Am, would like to offer families the opportunity to address your child with a personal Parent's Prayer at the beginning of the *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* ceremony. The rabbi will invite you to the *bimah* to speak to your child. The purpose of this personal Parent's Prayer is to briefly communicate with your child your Jewish hopes and dreams and the significance of this day in their life. It is not meant to review their academics or sports achievements or relate "inside family anecdotes".

We respectfully request that parents limit their remarks to no more than 150 words per parent. We encourage parents to offer words of Torah or even a D'var Torah to their child within these words. The rabbi or cantor would be happy to meet with you to help you with these remarks and to guide you in preparing for them.

The Parent's Prayer must be submitted to the clergy for review at least 3 months prior to your service.

If you are not comfortable writing your own prayer, you may use the Parent's Prayer that is on the front page of your child's *B'nei Mitzvah* service packet or borrow from examples listed below. These are also posted on our temple's website.

1. A Blessing

Danny Siegel, inspired by Talmud Berachot 17a

May your eyes sparkle with the light of Torah,
And your ears hear the music of its words.
May the space between each letter of the scrolls
Bring warmth and comfort to your soul.
May the syllables draw holiness from your heart,
And may this holiness be gentle and soothing to the world.
May your study be passionate,
And meanings bear more meanings
Until life itself arrays itself to you
As a dazzling wedding feast.
And may your conversation,
Even of the commonplace,
Be a blessing to all who listen to your words
And see the Torah glowing on your face.

2. We pray that this service may long echo in our child's memory. May it engrave on the table of his/her heart the understanding that this day initiates a life more firmly dedicated to the study of Torah and the fulfillment of mitzvot, to deeds of justice and kindness and support for the People of Israel.

O God, make each of us a worthy example to our children. Let nothing estrange us from them and from You, the Source of all goodness and compassion. Help us again and again to renew our attachment to the Covenant of Israel, to walk hand in hand with our child in the ways of righteousness and truth. Amen.

3. (Insert Child's name), you have brought great joy to our lives. We give thanks for the privilege of seeing you grow day-by-day and year-by-year. You are growing up to be an incredible **young man/young woman**. You are intelligent and compassionate. You have a strong sense of right and wrong and the courage to stand up for your beliefs.

You are very creative and we hope you will continue to be an independent thinker. Remember that when someone comes up with an idea that others think is impossible, they may be on to something really important. We hope that you find something you are passionate about, follow your own path, and use your talents to do something remarkable that will make a difference.

Remember to live each day to the fullest. Get the most from each day of your life - then you can look forward with confidence and look back without regrets. Time is a non-renewable resource. Take time to appreciate the moment, to find peace and faith within you.

Continue to use your great sense of humor to keep things in perspective. Look for something good in each day and each person. Remember to laugh and enjoy life.

May you grow to be strong in body and mind, to love what is good and true, and may you never forget how much we love you.

4. For A Daughter/Son

We are very proud of the person that you are becoming. On this, your Bat/Bar Mitzvah day, we have special hopes for you:

We hope that you always remember that you are part of a wonderful heritage that has been passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years. You are connected to the Jewish people, to God and to Torah. You need the Jewish community, and the Jewish community needs you.

We hope that you will continue to learn and mature. You will find that the world is not always a fair place, but do what you can to make it better. Do not let others sway you from what you know to be right and just. Always believe in your own abilities. Remember you are a unique individual. The most important thing is to be the best that you can be.

We hope that you always know that no matter what problems you face you will always have the help, the support and the love of your parents. You have brought more joy and happiness to your mother and me (or your father and me) than you will ever know, just in being yourself and giving us the pleasure of watching you blossom into the beautiful young lady/man who stands before us today.

5.

We are so proud of you today. How joyful it is for us to see you set these wonderful goals and do whatever it takes to achieve them. What an incredible young woman you are!

You were our destiny — the daughter we always envisioned and prayed for in every way, and yet we are constantly amazed by your continual devotion as a daughter, granddaughter, great-granddaughter, niece, cousin, friend, and citizen – not just of the community, but of the world.

You are thoroughly intelligent, creative, genuine and full of optimism. As one of your teachers once said, you only see through to the good in others.

We pray that you will hold on to you innate understanding of right and wrong. You possess a powerful trait – the courage to stand up for you beliefs.

We pray you will continue to be an independent thinker, regardless of the temptations that you will encounter.

We pray that you will never lose sight of your passions and that you will always follow the bliss that will carry you to your dreams and make them real.

Most of all, we pray that you use your talents to do something remarkable so that you will make a difference in this world. And yet, we have no doubt that you will do just that. May you never forget how much we love you.

6.

Dear God,

There are no words for the depth of my love for this child.

Please bless this beautiful young woman and surround her always.

I pray for her protection.

I surrender her into your hands.

May she be protected from the darkness of our times.

May she have the strength to remember that those who have gone...have not gone far.

May she always see you at the center of her life.

May her heart grow strong to love and serve You.

Show me to love most patiently, to be there for her most fully, to understand profoundly who she is and what she needs.

May the spirit of this family be a blessing unto her now and forever.

May she continue to learn values and principles of love and righteousness.

May she learn from me kindness.

May she learn from me strength.

May she live most fully and love most deeply.

That is my wish.

That is my prayer for her.

7.

_____,
Today is one of the most significant days of your life, whether you realize it or not. As you become a Bar mitzvah, you join the many generations of Israel who have been called to the Torah before you. You are now a link in the chain that connects our past with our future, and you represent all that is promising and possible. Let this day be a reminder to you that your place in the universe is unique because you are a Jew.

What a privilege it is today for me to publicly tell this congregation of our family and friends what a wonderful human being that you have been since the day you were born. You are a kind and gentle person whose compassion for others is remarkable for someone your age. I have always been truly moved by your capacity to make people feel better just by your presence. Your smile has the power to brighten any room you walk into. You, _____, are an extraordinary person, and we are so proud and honored to be your parents.

I have written a blessing that I would like to say for you today, as you become a bar mitzvah.

May the light in your eyes shine upon the path that you choose to follow.

May the kindness in your heart radiate to those around you.

May the caring that you show to others help to heal the world, one person at a time.

May your awareness of God be a constant source of wonder and amazement and always bring you comfort and strength.

May you always know peace in your soul and carry it with you through the journey of your days.

8.

My beautiful darling, I pray for you....

That one day, you will know the boundless love, pride and joy for a child, as I have with you.

That your dreams and wishes are on their way.

That you never take away a piece of yourself to fit in.

That you share your many gifts with the world, which is in need of much healing.

That you continue to learn the importance and value of integrity.

That in pursuits both personal and professional, you use your head, but follow your heart.

That you continue to draw to you all the love that you give.

That you manifest the divine in your deeds.

When you move away to a university, a new city or new town---that you always remember three small, but important words – *call your mother*.

9.

As you are about to read the Torah and become a Bat Mitzvah I wanted to express what a blessing you are in our lives and how grateful I am to have a daughter like you. You have taught me so much – especially lately. This ceremony marks your transition from child to adult. In modern America this rite of passage must wait until your 18th birthday, but in the eyes of the Jewish people you are now spiritually mature. You have so many natural God-given gifts, and now, the gift of Torah. It is time for you to develop your own personal relationship with God. I pray that you develop a connection that is meaningful and helpful to you and that you may feel his peace and love throughout your life. I love you very much! God bless you!

10. For A Son

We give thanks for the wondrous privilege of seeing our son grow day by day, week by week, year by year. For the health and strength You have given him, for the mind and spirit with which You endowed him, for his ability to elicit and return love - for all these precious gifts, we thank You.

Watch over him, O God, on this special day and every day. Grant him a growing understanding of the true significance of this occasion and deepening loyalty to everything which it represents. May the teachings of our heritage guide him throughout life, and may he lead a life worthy of Your blessings. Amen.

11. For A Son

O God, gratefully I thank You for the joyous privilege of seeing my son attain this milestone. On this day cherished dreams and hopes are fulfilled. On this day new dreams and new hopes are born. I pray that Your protecting and loving care will accompany him wherever he goes and in all that he does. Help him to become all that he is capable of being. Give him strength to do all the good things that are within his reach. Keep him loyal to the best that he has been shown and to the noblest Jewish teachings he has been taught. May his deeds find favor in the eyes of all and be worthy of Your blessings.

12. For A Daughter

Lord our God, gratefully we thank You for the joyous privilege of seeing our daughter attain this milestone. On this day cherished dreams and hopes are fulfilled. On this day new dreams and new hopes are born.

We pray that Your protection and loving care will accompany her wherever she goes and in all that she does. Help her to become all that she is capable of being. Give her strength to do all the good things that are within her reach. Keep her loyal to the best that she has been shown and to the noblest Jewish teachings she has been taught. May her deeds find favor in the eyes of her fellow creatures and be worthy of Your blessing. Amen

13. For A Daughter

On this Shabbat when our daughter becomes a Bat Mitzvah, we have come with her and our loved ones to join in worship and to offer our prayer of thanksgiving.

We are grateful, O God, for the privilege of passing along the gift of life which You gave us, that we might share with You in the miracle of creation. We are grateful also for the thirteen years of nurturing this life, for the unnumbered joys and challenges which these years have brought us.

Bless our daughter, O God; watch over her, protect her, guide her. Help her to continue to grow in body and mind, in soul and character. Keep her loyal to our people and to the teachings of our Torah. May her life be rich and rewarding. May all her deeds bring pride to us, honor to the house of Israel, and glory to Your name.

14. For A Daughter/Son

What I wish for my daughter/son, I wish for all our children. I wish for you to be a person of character, strong but not tough, gentle but not weak.

I wish for you to be righteous but not self-righteous, honest but not unforgiving.

Wherever your journey, may your steps be firm and may you walk in just paths and not be afraid.

Whenever you speak, may your words be words of wisdom and friendship.

May your hands build and your heart preserve what is good and beautiful in our world.

May the voices of the generations of our people move through you, and may the God of our ancestors be your God as well.

May you know that there is a people, a rich heritage, to which you belong, and from that sacred place you are connected to all who dwell on the earth.

May the stories of our people be upon your heart and the rhythm of the Torah dance in your soul.

15. For A Daughter/Son

In gratitude and joy we celebrate our child's Bat/Bar Mitzvah. We thank you for the blessing of parenthood and for reaching this moment we dreamed of many years ago. May it signal a life of Jewish commitment for our daughter/son.

Lead our daughter/son to live the values of Torah and guide her/him in the path of faithfulness to our people. May she/he enjoy a life of health and accomplishment, fulfillment and peace.

May God make you like Efrayim and Menasseh (or May God make you like Sarah, Rebeca Rachel and Leah), a Jew of wisdom and strength, compassion and peace. Amen.

16. For a Daughter/Son

We are very proud of the person that you are becoming. On this, your Bat/Bar Mitzvah day, we have special hopes for you:

We hope that you always remember that you are part of a wonderful heritage that has been passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years. You are connected to the Jewish people, to God and to Torah. You need the Jewish community and the Jewish community needs you.

We hope that you will continue to learn and mature. You will find that the world is not always a fair place, but do what you can to make it better. Do not let others sway you from what you know to be right and just, and always believe in your own abilities. Remember you are a unique individual and the most important thing is to be the best that you can be.

17. For Parents of a Bar Mitzvah

On this Shabbat when our son becomes a Bar Mitzvah, we have come with him and our loved ones to join in worship and to offer our prayer of thanksgiving.

O God, gratefully we thank you for the joyous privilege of seeing our son attain this milestone. On this day cherished dreams and hopes are fulfilled. On this day new dreams and new hopes are born.

We pray that Your protecting and loving care will accompany him wherever he goes and in all that he does. Help him to become all that he is capable of being. Give him strength to do all the good things that are within his reach. Keep him loyal to the best that he has been shown and to the noblest Jewish teachings he has been taught.

May his deeds find favor in the eyes of others and be worthy of Your blessing. Amen

18. For Parents of a Bar Mitzvah

"This is the day the Lord has made;
Let us rejoice and celebrate on it."

With gladness and thanksgiving we praise You, O Lord our God, for having kept us alive, and sustained us, and enabled us to reach this day.

We give thanks for the wondrous privilege of seeing our son grow day by day, week by week, and year by year. For the health and strength You have given him, for the mind and spirit with which You endowed him, for his ability to elicit and return love – for all these precious gifts, we thank You.

Watch over him, O God, on this special day and every day. Grant him a growing understanding of the true significance of this occasion and a deepening loyalty to everything which it represents.

May the teachings of our heritage guide him throughout life; and may he lead a life worth of Your blessings.

Amen

19. For Parents of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah

With gladness and thanksgiving we praise You, O Lord our God, for having kept us alive, and sustained us, and enabled us to reach this day.

We give thanks for the wondrous privilege of seeing our son/daughter grow day by day, week by week, year by year. For the health and strength You have given him/her, for the mind and spirit with which You endowed him/her for his/her ability to elicit and return love – for all these precious gifts we thank You.

Watch over our son/daughter, O God, on this special day and every day. Grant him/her a growing understanding of the true significance of this occasion and a deepening loyalty to everything which it represents. May the teachings of our heritage guide our son/daughter throughout life; and may he/she lead a life worthy of Your blessings. Amen

20. For Parents of a Bat Mitzvah

“This is the day the Lord has made;
Let us rejoice and celebrate on it.”

On this Shabbat when our daughter becomes a Bat Mitzvah, we have come with her and our loved ones to join in worship and to offer our prayer of thanksgiving.

We are grateful, O God, for the privilege of passing along the gift of life which You gave us, thus sharing with You in the miracle of creation. We are grateful for the thirteen years of nurturing this life, for the unnumbered joys and challenges which these years have brought us. Praise to You, O Lord, for keeping us alive, for sustaining us, and for enabling us to reach this day.

Bless our daughter, O God; watch over her, protect her, guide her. Help her to continue to grow in body and mind, in soul and character. Keep her loyal to our people and to the teaching of our Torah. May her life be rich and rewarding. May all her deeds bring pride to us, honor to the house of Israel, and glory to Your name. Amen.

21. Parents' Prayer for Bat Mitzvah (written by Amy & Eric Weinstock)

For you, our daughter, upon reaching this important milestone in your life, we pray that you always remember your Jewish heritage, and live your life in a way that reflects the attributes of the men and women of the Torah:

Be like Sarah – never lose your sense of humor, and always find reasons to laugh at least a little every day.

Be like King David, striving to achieve balance in your life. Just as David balanced strength and poetry, may you always fight for what you believe is right while pursuing what you find to be beautiful and meaningful.

Be like Rachel and Jacob – find a soulmate to share your life and your love with, even if you have to wait years and work hard to do so.

Be like Deborah – be a strong woman, and treat all people with fairness and justice. Do not be silent if you recognize injustice in the world. Rather, take action to correct injustice and engage, as you already do, in Tikkun Olam – efforts to continue making our world a more perfect place.

Be like Betzalel, the artist chosen by G-d to create the Ark of the Covenant, using the talents and gifts that G-d has given you to always find the beauty that surrounds you in the world, to recognize the miraculous place that this world is, and to make the world a more beautiful and wondrous place for others.

Be like Moses – a leader of people and a follower of G-d. Find a trail that is the right trail for you to blaze through this world. Know the paths of your ancestors, but never be afraid to step off the path and make footprints of your own that others may follow.

Be like Joseph -- be a dreamer, and never be afraid to dream of things that can be. Don't walk through life asking "why". Rather, ask "why not". Never stop dreaming of the brightest future, and may all of your dreams come true.

And finally, we pray that you continue to be yourself – a loving person, a loyal friend, and a proud Jew. Stay true to who you are, embrace your heritage, and follow your dreams, May today mark for you the completion of one important stage of your life and the beginning of the rest of your life. Just as the Torah continues to be written by each Jew who embraces it, we pray for you that the story of your life is one that you will write proudly, and one filled with many, many happily ever afters.

We are just as proud of you today as we are of you everyday.

22. For Parents of a Bat Mitzvah

We thank You, O God, for the joyous fulfillment we feel as our daughter reaches the threshold of womanhood.

How privileged we feel that she is our daughter, and that she is bound to us by bonds of love, of memory, and of hope!

Praise to You, O Lord our God, who kept us alive, and sustained us, and enabled us to reach this day.

O God, accept our thankfulness for the thirteen years that have come and gone; bless our hope for the years that are yet to be. May Your mercy and guidance accompany this Bat Mitzvah at all times, in a life marked by reference for the Torah and love of all Your children. Amen.

23. For Parents of Twin Boys

Michael and Zachary, this is our prayer and our blessing for you. May you always love your lives and believe in the power of your potential, which is limitless.

May you always follow the path of your own goodness and may you meet many along the way who will appreciate it as much as we do.

Never be afraid to admit you are less than perfect. This is the essence of your humility and your humanity.

Let those who love you help you along life's journey and may you be privileged to do the same for others. As you know, life is not always easy... May you continue to meet life's challenges with strength and pride, and bravery. Keep your heads held high and smiles on your faces.

Zachary and Michael – twins – different in so many ways, yet similar where it counts. May you each continue to be blessed with a beautiful spirit, a sense of humor, optimism and fairness to others. May you always be secure in the love and admiration of your family and friends.

On this day, along with every other day, we feel truly blessed for the love you have given us and the examples you provide for us. You have taught us to be more loving, more patient, and more understanding. We are so proud of who you are and the men you are turning into.

May God watch over you always.

24. For Parents of a Twin Girls

Brigitte and Jackie, this is our prayer and our blessing for you. May you always love what you do, believe in the power of your potential, and remain considerate and loving to others.

May you always follow the path of your own goodness and may you meet others along the way who will appreciate it as much as we do.

Never be afraid to admit you are less than perfect. This is the essence of your humility and your humanity.

Let those who love you help along life's journey and may you be privileged to do the same for others. May you always remember to be empathetic towards all and appreciative of what you have.

You will encounter many obstacles throughout your lives. May you continue to meet life's challenges head on, with strength, pride and confidence.

As an identical twin, I understand the unique relationship that you have with your sibling. We only hope that you and your sister continue to nurture this special bond and never allow anyone or anything to weaken it.

May you each continue to be blessed with a beautiful spirit, a sense of humor, optimism, and fairness to others.

May you always be secure in the love and admiration of you family and friends. May you always continue to grow and learn and be your own individual persons.

On this day, along with every other day, we feel truly blessed for the love you have given us and examples you provide for us. You have taught us to be more loving, more patient, and more understanding.

We are so very proud of who you are today and young women you are becoming.

May God watch over you always and allow you to mature into beautiful women who will strive for success in all your endeavors, find happiness and joy in your life, and remain compassionate and thoughtful to all.

25. Bar/Bat Mitzvah Prayer

By Shelley Niceley Groff

My Daughter / Son

As you travel along the path that will be your life, may you walk on firm ground, with the wind at your back and the sun shining gently on your face.

May your mind, body and hands be strong, and may their work be guided by both the wisdom of your soul and the compassion of your heart.

May you draw from the strength and wisdom of our tradition, and those who came before you, and make them your own.

May you have beautiful dreams which inspire you, and may your pursuit of those dreams be fulfilling.

May your successes be many, and when you don't succeed, may you learn and grow from the experience, and go on.

May you always give yourself the gift of learning something new.

May you have the courage of conviction and patience to fight for what you know to be right.

May you always have good friends.

May you always feel the love of family and friends that embraces you today.

As you take your place among the Jewish people of your generation,

May G-d grant you a long, healthy, happy, and peaceful life, and may G-d help you to be the change you want to see in the world.

Know that we love you...and that wherever life takes you, we are always here for you.

Modah ani lefaneha meleh hay vekayam she'asane eemech.

We give thanks before You, G-d, who lives and who endures, for making us your parents

26. From the book, Putting God on the Guest List by Rabbi Jeffrey K. Salkin

What I wish for my daughter/son

I wish for all children.

I wish for you to be a

Person of character

Strong but not tough,

Gentle but not weak.

I wish for you to be

Righteous but not self-righteous

Honest but not unforgiving.

Wherever you journey, may your steps be firm

And may you walk in just paths

And not be afraid.

Whenever you speak, may your words

Be words of wisdom and friendship.

May your hands build

And your heart preserve what is good

And beautiful in our world.

May the voices of the generations of our people

Move through you

And may the God of our ancestors

Be your God as well.

May you know that there is a people,

A rich heritage, to which you belong

And from that sacred place

You are connected to all who dwell on the earth.

May the stories of our people

Be upon your heart

And the grace of the Torah rhythm

Dance in your soul

27. Parent Prayer

_____ (name) May you see the world each day with fresh eyes.

May your every step be on firm ground.

May you draw from the strength and wisdom of our tradition, and those who came before you, and make them your own.

May you always know what it is to live in freedom.

May you have beautiful dreams which inspire you, and may your pursuit of those dreams be fulfilling.

May you laugh often.

May you be a support to those who have fallen.

May your needs be fulfilled.

May you draw strength from your community and remember to give back.

May you always have good friends and be a good friend to others.

May you find true, enduring love, and be blessed with children as wonderful as you.

May you always feel the love of family and friends that embraces you today.

May you remember in whose image you are created.

And as you take your place among the Jewish people of your generation, may G-d grant you a long, happy, healthy and peaceful life. Mazel Tov!!!