

1: BBC Bitesize - KS3 Religious Studies - Bar Mitzvah

Bar and bat mitzvah mean, literally, "son and daughter of the commandment." Bat mitzvah is Hebrew, while bar mitzvah, historically a much earlier ceremony, is Aramaic. The word bar is the Aramaic equivalent of the Hebrew ben (son of).

It refers to the time from which a Jewish male is obliged to fulfil all the commandments prescribed to Jews and accept his religious responsibilities as an adult. The bar mitzvah is a momentous occasion in the life of every Jewish boy. It is a coming of age that has its roots in the sixth century, and remains one of the great milestones in Jewish life. A Jewish boy fulfils the obligations of bar mitzvah at the age of 13. On a designated day following his 13th birthday he is called upon to read a section of the Torah for the first time. As a man responsible for himself, he is now permitted to attend synagogue on his own and form part of a minyan, the group of ten or more men required to conduct a service. Before Bar Mitzvah age, the boy was not considered accountable for any religious short-comings on his part rather, his father was considered to be responsible for his conduct, but from Bar Mitzvah onwards the boy is considered accountable for his own actions. A procession in the Old City of Jerusalem escorting a Bar Mitzvah boy with singing to the Kotel Western Wall where he will be called to read from the Torah for the first time. Note that the participants are wearing tefillin which indicates that this is a weekday procession. Casual dress is typical of Israelis even for events such as a Bar Mitzvah. Two commandments have become associated with Bar Mitzvah. First and foremost is the privilege of being called to the Torah for the first time, accompanied by the congregation and reciting the prayer of thanking God. The other is the first act of binding of tefillin phylacteries on the head and round the arm during the morning prayers. It should be noted that a boy becomes Bar Mitzvah at 13 years of age that is, his 13th birthday according to the Hebrew calendar irrespective of whether or not he has a ceremony or party to celebrate the event. The ceremony which involves the boy being called to read from the Torah for the first time is merely a public recognition of that which has already come to pass the boy has reached an age where he may participate fully in the religious life of the community. Historical and modern traditions Studies have shown that the Bar Mitzvah ritual existed as early as the sixth century in Palestine. The tradition became more elaborate in the European Middle Ages, when the year-old boy was expected to deliver a lecture on a difficult point in rabbinical learning. This would most often take place in the home, amid a rich and festive banquet. Today in Western countries the Bar Mitzvah is celebrated by the boy reading a section from the Torah, generally the last section of the portion of the week Maftir. Afterwards he chants a selection from the prophets Haftarah. The ceremony generally takes place in the synagogue and most frequently on the Sabbath. However, it may take place on any other day of the week when the Torah is read a Monday, Thursday, New Moon Rosh Chodesh or other occasion such as Chanukah. After the Bar Mitzvah boy has been called up to read from the Torah, his father joins him on the altar to say a prayer. This prayer officially releases the father from his responsibility towards his son in matters pertaining to his religious life. This is called Baruch Sheptarani. While the Bar Mitzvah today is celebrated in much the same way as in ancient times, it is unfortunately now often hyped up with elaborate festivities. Celebrations are often continued into the night or the next day at a special dinner with family and friends. The ritual of the Bar Mitzvah has undergone many transformations throughout the centuries. People today rarely stop to bear in mind its original meaning: According to Jewish law, a girl reaches the age of bat mitzvah at 12 and from this time she is obliged to fulfil all the commandments prescribed to Jews and accept her religious responsibilities as an adult. From this time she is expected to fulfil the commandments pertaining to Jewish women, including lighting Shabbat candles and fasting on fast days. She is not required by Orthodox tradition to attend synagogue. Historical and modern traditions Unlike the Bar Mitzvah, the equivalent ceremony for boys, the Bat Mitzvah is not mentioned in the Bible. While the ceremony of Bar Mitzvah dates back to the sixth century, the observance of Bat Mitzvah was only introduced in by the Reconstructionist movement in the United States. Since then, other Jewish movements have adopted the ceremony. Among Orthodox congregations Bat Mitzvah ceremonies tended to be group events held annually and involving all girls who had recently turned 12 years of age; the ceremony would be something like a concert with the girls sang songs of a religious

nature and recited pertinent prose and poetry. Although a Bat Mitzvah ceremony is not required by Jewish law, it is used to recognise a Jewish girl as a woman and to define her as such in her community. It is generally followed by a private family celebration, where the girl has a chance to address her family and friends personally at her new stage of life. It is common for girls in these congregations to be called to read from the Torah in their synagogues. The ritual of the Bat Mitzvah has been evolving since its inception. It remains an issue of contention among the various movements in Judaism, although there can be no doubt that its importance is growing as the role of Jewish women changes. People today should bear in mind the intended meaning of Bat Mitzvah:

2: Bar and Bat Mitzvah â€“ Congregation Shir Tikvah

Education is a deeply embedded value in Jewish tradition. The most important prayer in all of Jewish liturgy, the Shema, features the injunction v'shinantam levanecha â€“ "and you shall teach your children."

For many families this is not feasible whether due to time constraints, finances or just the inability to transport a child to and from religious school. No Jewish child should be unable to have a ceremony that celebrates this important lifecycle event. Here is what I can provide: I will guide your child throughout the entire process and, of course, perform the service. This mission is to provide the Jewish community with a bone fide resource for life cycle ceremonies and education that otherwise would not be available. Unaffiliated families come to me often for this service I provide. Interfaith families, raising children in Judaism, feel comfortable with my style. Explanations at ceremonies make their non-Jewish guests feel welcome and understand the ceremony. Click Below to Learn More To schedule an interview with you and your child, contact me. There is no cost or obligation for this interview. My husband and I felt so lucky to have found Rabbi Ron for our July wedding. He allowed us to choose the text that we would prefer, and sent us a copy of what would be said on our special day. Our guests raved about the wonderful ceremony we had thanks to Rabbi Ron! He truly cares about what he is doing and is smart, kind, patient and musically inclined. He did an outstanding job preparing our son for his Bar Mitzvah. The ceremony was beautiful - very personal and unique. Rabbi Broden is also a cantor so he sang and played guitar during the ceremony which was lovely. He is very professional and flexible offering guidance and support throughout the entire process. We received many compliments from our family and friends. Ron not only listened to and delivered on everything we wanted, but WOW-ed us with his singing! He has a fantastic voice and it added an extra level of uniqueness to our ceremony, which made it that much more memorable. We would highly recommend Ron to other couples looking to make their day extra special! We are an interfaith couple and we had a Jewish ceremony. From our first meeting via Skype, Rabbi Broden was very personable and helpful. We spent a majority of this meeting talking about who we were individually and as a couple. We could tell that he was actually interested in us as people and he wanted to get to know us better. We liked his flexibility and his friendliness - we were very comfortable speaking with him. Over the next few months, Rabbi Broden was always very prompt in answering emails whenever we had a question or concern. On the wedding day, he delivered a wonderful and moving ceremony. Rabbi Broden is also an excellent cantor. We were very happy that we chose him for our wedding!

3: Bar and Bat Mitzvah - Wikipedia

While the traditional age to hold a Bar or Bat mitzvah is 13 for boys and 12 or 13 for girls, some adults choose to have a Bar or Bat Mitzvah if they were unable to have them as children. Since the s, the Adult Bar and Bat Mitzvah have been growing in popularity.

Thus bar mitzvah and bat mitzvah literally translate to "son of commandment" and "daughter of commandment". However, in rabbinical usage, the word bar means "under the category of" or "subject to". Bar mitzvah therefore translates to "an [agent] who is subject to the law". Although the term is commonly used to refer to the ritual itself, in fact the phrase originally refers to the person. Passages in the books of Exodus and Numbers note the age of majority for army service as twenty. This seems to imply that, at the time of the composition of the Midrash the bar mitzvah publicly pronounced a benediction on the occasion of his entrance upon maturity. Whosoever is of superiority in the town is expected to pray for him as he bows down to him to receive his blessing. Because it is thirteen years older than the good desire yetzer hatob. According to Pirke R. Many congregations require pre- bar mitzvah children to attend a minimum number of Shabbat prayer services at the synagogue, study at a Hebrew school, take on a charity or community service project, and maintain membership in good standing with the synagogue. In addition to study and preparation offered through the synagogue and Hebrew schools, bar mitzvah tutors may be hired to prepare the child through the study of Hebrew, Torah cantillation and basic Jewish concepts. At one time, this ceremony was on the verge of extinction in Reform congregations. In Orthodox circles, the occasion is sometimes celebrated during a weekday service that includes reading from the Torah, such as a Monday or Thursday morning service. Some communities or families may delay the celebration for reasons such as availability of a Shabbat during which no other celebration has been scheduled, or due to the desire to permit family to travel to the event. However, this does not delay the onset of rights and responsibilities of being a Jewish adult which comes about strictly by virtue of age. Bar mitzvah boy wearing tallit and tefillin Bar mitzvah boy wearing tallit and tefillin The obligation to lay tefillin begins when a boy reaches bar mitzvah age. The common custom is for the bar mitzvah boy to begin putting on tefillin one to three months before his bar mitzvah. This way, by the time he is obligated in the commandment, he will already know how to fulfill it properly. In many communities, the celebrant is given a certificate. According to the Orthodox view, the bar mitzvah boy is so happy to be commanded to do mitzvot and earn reward in the next world for his efforts, that he throws a party and has a festive meal. In the s, Rabbi Harold Saperstein of New York described them as too often being "more bar than mitzvah". Some of the efforts of early Reform in favor of confirmation against bar mitzvah were prompted by the extravagant celebration of bar mitzvah, which had removed its primary religious significance. Some very wealthy families spend tens, or even hundreds, of thousands of dollars on the party. All Reform and Reconstructionist , and most Conservative synagogues have egalitarian participation, in which women read from the Torah and lead services. In Orthodox communities, a Bat Mitzvah is celebrated when a girl reaches the age of The majority of Orthodox and some Conservative Jews reject the idea that a woman can publicly read from the Torah or lead prayer services whenever there is a minyan quorum of 10 males available to do so. However, the public celebration of a girl becoming bat mitzvah in other ways has made strong inroads into Modern Orthodox Judaism and also into some elements of Haredi Judaism. In these congregations, women do not read from the Torah or lead prayer services, but they occasionally lecture on a Jewish topic to mark their coming of age, learn a book of Tanakh , recite verses from the Book of Esther or the Book of Psalms , or say prayers from the siddur. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein , a prominent Orthodox posek , has ruled that bat mitzvah celebrations are permissible, but should not be held in a synagogue, because then they would be construed as imitating Reform and Conservative customs; in any case, they do not have the status of seudat mitzvah. The occasion was marked by a party without any ritual in the synagogue. The community recognized her as "being of age" and acknowledged her in a public fashion. This would support more modern documents that record an Orthodox Jewish Italian rite for becoming bat mitzvah which involved an "entrance into the minyan" ceremony, in which boys of thirteen and girls of twelve recited a blessing since the mid-19th century. Kaplan ,

who held the first public celebration of a bat mitzvah in the United States, for his daughter Judith, on March 18, 1882, at the Society for the Advancement of Judaism, his synagogue in New York City. At the time, most Orthodox rabbis strongly rejected the idea of a bat mitzvah ceremony. The kibbutz movement in Israel also encouraged the celebration of the bar mitzvah. All those coming of age in the community for that year would take on a project and research in a topic of Jewish or Zionist interest. Today many kibbutz children are opting for a more traditional bar mitzvah celebration. The term has been in use since at least as early as 1913, [36] and Bar Mitzvahs are sometimes held as an adjunct to the festival of Purim. Monetary gifts in multiples of 18 are considered to be particularly auspicious and have become very common for the bar and bat mitzvah. Jewelry is a common gift for girls at a bat mitzvah celebration. Another gift for the bat mitzvah girl are Shabbat candlesticks because it is the duty and honour of the woman to light the candles. Adult bar and bat mitzvah While the traditional age to hold a Bar or Bat mitzvah is 13 for boys and 12 or 13 for girls, some adults choose to have a Bar or Bat Mitzvah if they were unable to have them as children. Since the 1970s, the Adult Bar and Bat Mitzvah have been growing in popularity. In honour and recognition of Jewish traditions, including Zeved habat and Bar and Bat Mitzvah, some Christians have begun to conduct a Bar and Bat Barakah ceremony to pronounce blessings upon their children.

4: Bar & Bat Mitzvah Ceremonies - NSW Board Of Jewish Education

The process of preparing for the Bat Mitzvah or Bar Mitzvah takes place along two parallel plains. Classes are divided between Jewish tools and Jewish knowledge, the former consisting of the practicalities of the Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah ceremony, and the latter of an intellectual exploration of Judaism, stemming from the Torah portion.

Basic Jews become responsible for observing the commandments at the age of 13 for boys, 12 for girls. This age is marked by a celebration called bar or bat mitzvah. Some synagogues have an additional celebration called confirmation. Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah "Bar Mitzvah" literally means "son of the commandment." The Ashkenazic pronunciation is "bas". Technically, the term refers to the child who is coming of age, and it is strictly correct to refer to someone as "becoming a bar or bat mitzvah." Under Jewish Law, children are not obligated to observe the commandments, although they are encouraged to do so as much as possible to learn the obligations they will have as adults. At the age of 13 (12 for girls), children become obligated to observe the commandments. The bar mitzvah ceremony formally, publicly marks the assumption of that obligation, along with the corresponding right to take part in leading religious services, to count in a minyan (the minimum number of people needed to perform certain parts of religious services), to form binding contracts, to testify before religious courts and to marry. A Jewish boy automatically becomes a bar mitzvah upon reaching the age of 13 years, and a girl upon reaching the age of 12 years. No ceremony is needed to confer these rights and obligations. The popular bar mitzvah ceremony is not required, and does not fulfill any commandment. It is certainly not, as one episode of the Simpsons would have you believe, necessary to have a bar mitzvah in order to be considered a Jew! The bar or bat mitzvah is a relatively modern innovation, not mentioned in the Talmud, and the elaborate ceremonies and receptions that are commonplace today were unheard of as recently as a century ago. Today, it is common practice for the bar mitzvah celebrant to do much more than just say the blessing. It is most common for the celebrant to learn the entire haftarah portion, including its traditional chant, and recite that. In some congregations, the celebrant reads the entire weekly Torah portion, or leads part of the service, or leads the congregation in certain important prayers. The celebrant is also generally required to make a speech, which traditionally begins with the phrase "today I am a man." In modern times, the religious service is followed by a reception that is often as elaborate as a wedding reception. In Orthodox and Chasidic practice, women are not permitted to participate in religious services in these ways, so a bat mitzvah, if celebrated at all, is usually little more than a party. In other movements of Judaism, the girls do exactly the same thing as the boys. We are obligated to study Torah throughout our lives. To emphasize this point, some rabbis require a bar mitzvah student to sign an agreement promising to continue Jewish education after the bar mitzvah. Sadly, an alarming number of Jewish parents today view the bar or bat mitzvah as the sole purpose of Jewish education, and treat it almost as a Jewish hazing ritual: Confirmation. Confirmation is a somewhat less widespread coming of age ritual that occurs when a child is 16 or 17. Confirmation was originally developed by the Reform movement, which scorned the idea that a 13-year-old child was an adult (but see explanation below). They replaced bar and bat mitzvah with a confirmation ceremony at the age of 16 or 17. However, due to the overwhelming popularity of the bar or bat mitzvah, the Reform movement has revived the practice. Is 13 an Adult? Many people mock the idea that a 12 or 13-year-old child is an adult, claiming that it is an outdated notion based on the needs of an agricultural society. This criticism comes from a misunderstanding of the significance of becoming a bar mitzvah. Bar mitzvah is not about being a full adult in every sense of the word, ready to marry, go out on your own, earn a living and raise children. The Talmud makes this abundantly clear. In Pirkei Avot, it is said that while 13 is the proper age for fulfillment of the Commandments, 18 is the proper age for marriage and 20 is the proper age for earning a livelihood. Elsewhere in the Talmud, the proper age for marriage is said to be 18. Bar mitzvah is simply the age when a person is held responsible for his actions and minimally qualified to marry. In Anglo-American common law, a child of the age of 14 is old enough to assume many of the responsibilities of an adult, including minimal criminal liability. Under United States law, 14 is the minimum age of employment for most occupations though working hours are limited so as not to interfere with school. In many states, a fourteen

year old can marry with parental consent. Children of any age are permitted to testify in court, and children over the age of 14 are permitted to have significant input into custody decisions in cases of divorce. Certainly, a year-old child is capable of knowing the difference between right and wrong and of being held responsible for his actions, and that is all it really means to become a bar mitzvah. Gifts One of the most common questions I get on this site is: Yes, gifts are commonly given. They are ordinarily given at the reception, not at the service itself. Please keep in mind that a bar mitzvah is incorporated into an ordinary sabbath service, and many of the people present at the service may not be involved in the bar mitzvah. The nature of the gift varies significantly depending on the community. In many communities today, however, the gifts are the same sort that you would give any child for his 13th birthday. For example, you might want to give a book that is a biography of a Jewish person that the celebrant might admire. I hesitate to get into specifics, for fear that some poor celebrant might find himself with several copies of the same thing! [Click Here](#) for more details.

5: Bar and Bat Mitzvah Facts for Kids

In Jewish law and tradition, the age of thirteen marks the onset of adulthood and the obligation to follow the precepts of the Torah. At the age of thirteen, a boy's thirteenth birthday he becomes a "Bar Mitzvah," which literally means "one who is commanded."

Bar and Bat Mitzvah and Confirmation The bar mitzvah and the bat mitzvah, the twentieth century counterpart for girls and confirmation are essentially puberty rites. It is a communal acknowledgement that the child is maturing, and is an inclusive celebration for the entire family. Family members, no matter what their religious or cultural backgrounds, attachments, or beliefs, are invited to fully participate in the celebration. A Humanistic bar or bat mitzvah or confirmation ceremony is gender-neutral. Contact the SHJ Rabbi. When you write to Rabbi Jerris, please include your name, address, and phone number.

Bar and Bat Mitzvah The practice of calling a thirteen-year-old boy to read from the Torah is not prescribed in Jewish law and did not begin until the fifteenth century. Thirteen-year-old girls did not obtain this privilege in North America until the early part of the twentieth century since, in Rabbinic Judaism, participation in Torah reading was reserved for males. Just as this coming of age ceremony has changed through the centuries, Humanistic Judaism has adapted it to the conditions of contemporary Jewish life. Both the ceremony and its meaning are different. In classical Judaism, the bar mitzvah marked the time when a boy was expected to assume responsibility for observing the laws of Judaism. Thirteen year olds can respond to more challenging tasks than were expected of them as children; they can demonstrate greater independence and depth of thought, competence, and commitment. A Humanistic bar or bat mitzvah provides public encouragement and recognition of the development of these capacities on the road to maturity. One way is for the young person to choose a Torah portion not necessarily the prescribed portion of the week and to read it, along with an original interpretative address. A more radical departure, but one in keeping both with Humanistic principles and with the meaning of the occasion, is for the boy or girl to undertake a study of the life of a Humanist or Jewish role model, or another appropriate topic. The preparation for this presentation is often a program of study and community service undertaken by the child as part of their Jewish education. Preparation for a Humanistic bar or bat mitzvah gives a young person the opportunity to grow intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually; to develop skills and self confidence; and to experience a meaningful connection to the Jewish people and to humankind. The event provides an opportunity for family and community to join in celebrating and applauding those achievements and to reaffirm their own commitments. Families are encouraged to keep the party and gift giving secondary to the main event, the ceremony itself. Children sometimes request that guests at the celebration make donations to a charity that has meaning for the child or their family in lieu of bringing gifts to the celebration.

Confirmation Confirmation, originally introduced by Reform Judaism, offers an opportunity for more mature philosophical, ethical, and spiritual exploration and reflection on the part of young people approaching adulthood. Confirmation, which customarily takes place at Shavuot, in the late spring, is often a group ceremony marking the completion of Sunday school. The confirmant demonstrates his or her intellectual and emotional skills as an emerging adult by presenting a research paper on a subject of historical or ethical interest to Humanistic Jews. SHJ Rabbi Miriam Jerris may be able to assist you in connecting with a program that meets your needs.

6: Bar and Bat Mitzvah | Temple Israel

A Jewish boy at age 13 plus 1 day is considered a Bar Mitzvah, thus accepting the religious obligations of an adult. A girl is Bat Mitzvah at age 12 plus 1 day. The ceremony itself has great significance to the child, the family and the guests.

At the age of 13 12 for girls , children become obligated to observe the commandments. The Bar Mitzvah ceremony formally marks the assumption of that obligation, along with the corresponding right to take part in leading religious services , to count in a minyan the minimum number of people needed to perform certain parts of religious services , to form binding contracts, to testify before religious courts and to marry. A Jewish boy automatically becomes a Bar Mitzvah upon reaching the age of 13 years. No ceremony is needed to confer these rights and obligations. The popular bar mitzvah ceremony is not required, and does not fulfill any commandment. It is a relatively modern innovation, not mentioned in the Talmud , and the elaborate ceremonies and receptions that are commonplace today were unheard of as recently as a century ago. Today, it is common practice for the Bar Mitzvah celebrant to do much more than just say the blessing. It is most common for the celebrant to learn the entire haftarah portion, including its traditional chant, and recite that. In some congregations, the celebrant reads the entire weekly torah portion, or leads part of the service, or leads the congregation in certain important prayers. In modern times, the religious service is followed by a reception that is often as elaborate as a wedding reception. In Orthodox and Chasidic practice, women are not permitted to participate in religious services in these ways, so a bat mitzvah, if celebrated at all, is usually little more than a party. In other movements of Judaism, the girls do exactly the same thing as the boys. We are obligated to study Torah throughout our lives. To emphasize this point, some rabbis require a bar mitzvah student to sign an agreement promising to continue Jewish education after the bar mitzvah. The Reform movement tried to do away with the Bar Mitzvah for a while, scorning the idea that a 13 year old child was an adult. They replaced it with a confirmation at the age of 16 or However, due to the overwhelming popularity of the ceremonies, the Reform movement has revived the practice. In some Conservative synagogues, however, the confirmation practice continues as a way to keep children involved in Jewish education for a few more years. The age set for bar mitzvah is not an outdated notion based on the needs of an agricultural society, as some suggest. This criticism comes from a misunderstanding of the significance of the bar mitzvah. Bar mitzvah is not about being a full adult in every sense of the word, ready to marry, go out on your own, earn a living and raise children. The Talmud makes this abundantly clear. In Pirkei Avot, it is said that while 13 is the proper age for fulfillment of the Commandments, 18 is the proper age for marriage and 20 is the proper age for earning a livelihood. Elsewhere in the Talmud, the proper age for marriage is said to be Bar mitzvah is simply the age when a person is held responsible for his actions and minimally qualified to marry. In Anglo-American common law, a child of the age of 14 is old enough to assume many of the responsibilities of an adult, including minimal criminal liability. In many states, a fourteen year old can marry with parental consent. Children of any age are permitted to testify in court, and children over the age of 14 are permitted to have significant input into custody decisions in cases of divorce.

7: Bar Mitzvah School

Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah "Bar Mitzvah" literally means "son of the commandment." "Bar" is "son" in Aramaic, which used to be the vernacular of the Jewish people.

8: Bar and Bat Mitzvah | Shir Ami Website

Bar and bat mitzvah class teachers are professional educators and social workers with significant training and education in Jewish studies. Understanding what we say and saying what we mean Many of us in our own bar mitzvahs or bat mitzvahs read the Hebrew words of the liturgy without knowing what they meant.

9: Bar and Bat Mitzvah and Confirmation

To emphasize this point, some rabbis require a bar mitzvah student to sign an agreement promising to continue Jewish education after the bar mitzvah. The Reform movement tried to do away with the Bar Mitzvah for a while, scorning the idea that a 13 year old child was an adult.

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