

# Bat Mitzvah Club

2019-2020  
AT LOUGHTON SHUL

## **Mazal Tov on your daughter's Bat Mitzvah**

Rabbi Yanky and or Rebbetzen Rochel will be glad to officiate. At Loughton Shul our primary goal is assisting families to live Jewish lives with pride, with knowledge and with enthusiasm. When your daughter reaches the age of Bat Mitzvah, we share with your family the privilege and responsibility of welcoming her into the adult Jewish community. In reaching this goal, we feel that family participation and support are integral to your child's success in this process. We therefore ask for family involvement throughout. Together, we hope to instil the meaning and significance of the occasion, to celebrate appropriately, and to honour your child's place among the Jewish people.

## **What is a Bat Mitzvah?**

A Bat Mitzvah is the moment when a Jewish girl becomes a woman. In a sense it is an almost literal transition from being a caterpillar to becoming a glorious butterfly. It is cause for great celebration and immense gratitude to Hashem.

For a girl, her twelfth birthday is the time when her Divine soul, present from birth, becomes fully functional. The twelfth birthday obviously follows the Jewish (lunar) calendar. At this age, one reaches intellectual maturity. Therefore, on the day she turns 12, a girl becomes 'Bat Mitzvah' – 'a daughter of the commandment' – meaning that in the eyes of Jewish law she has now come of age. From now on she is subject to all the obligations as well as all the obligations as well as the privileges of an adult.

## **Is there a difference between a Bat Mitzvah and a Bat Chayil?**

There is no religious difference between a Bat Mitzvah and a Bat Chayil. As explained above, "Bat Mitzvah" is derived from the fact that when a girl reaches her twelfth birthday she becomes obligated to observe the mitzvot (commandments) of the Torah. "Bat Chayil" means "Daughter of Valour". This terminology developed from King Solomon's hymn "Eishet Chayil – A Woman of Valour" which describes the woman of valour as one who is energetic, righteous, and capable.

What are the Bat Mitzvah requirements in Jewish law?

It has become customary for parents to make a festive meal on the day their daughter becomes Bat Mitzvah. The welcoming of a new member to the Jewish community, to Torah observance, is indeed a cause for celebration.

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## Age and Dates

Bat Mitzvah is the day on which a girl becomes responsible for Mitzvot and accountable for both positive and negative behaviours under Jewish law. According to Jewish tradition, this takes place at age 12. This happens automatically on their Jewish birth date, regardless of the way the day is marked. The ceremony and celebration should take place as close to the Jewish birthday as possible. The Jewish calendar follows the lunar cycle and represents the years from creation. The secular calendar follows the solar cycle. Most often, the Jewish and secular birthdays end up being days or weeks apart. To determine your child's Jewish birthday, please consult with the Rabbi, or to look it up yourself please use this website <https://www.hebcal.com/converter/>. We recommend scheduling Bat Mitzvahs at least 18 months prior to your child's 12th birthday.

While planning and preparation takes about one year, it is important to get the date on the Loughton Shul to avoid any conflicts. To choose a date, set up an initial meeting with the Rabbi to determine your child's Jewish birthday. Your child's Bat Mitzvah must be in the year following that date, as close as possible to the date but not before it. A girl begins Bat Mitzvah preparation around 1 year prior to her Bat Mitzvah. This includes a bi-weekly class with other Bat Mitzvah girls participating in the Bat Mitzvah club from September 2019- June 2020. This will be preceded or followed by a few private lessons if you would like your daughter to say a D'var

Torah or Eishet Chayil. The Bat Mitzvah celebration is, after all, a Jewish celebration. We therefore have some guidelines which have been implemented to uphold the proper spirit and character of a Bat Mitzvah. Following are the Bat Mitzvah guidelines. **In order to hold your child's ceremony and celebration at Loughton shul, the following requirements must be met:**

1. Your child must be born to a Jewish mother or converted in accordance with the guidelines set by the Offices of the Federation of Synagogues. If the mother or maternal grandmother converted to Judaism, please set up an appointment with the Rabbi to determine if those conversions meet with the above stated guidelines. According to the Jewish tradition, solely the mother determines religious identity and an intermarried family where the father is not Jewish has no effect on the religious identity of the child.

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2. We require active family participation in Jewish community experiences beginning at least one year prior to the Bat Mitzvah. Active participation includes participation in holiday programs. This would show family participation and support to your daughter. It will also make your family and daughter familiar with Jewish community life.
3. The Bat Mitzvah club is designed especially for Bat Mitzvah girls who are approaching their special day. It is strongly encouraged for the Bat Mitzvah girl to attend this course which is instead of cheder classes.

## **Mitzvah Celebration**

Traditionally, in Loughton Shul the Bat Mitzvah girl said a D'var Torah after the services on a Shabbat Morning or on a Sunday, which was followed by a kiddush. But as a shul we are here to facilitate the type of celebration you want as long as it's done according to the Halacha. Here are some other options.

1. A Friday night candle lighting ceremony, where the Bat Mitzvah girl together with her female relatives and friends will light candles on a Friday night. Join in the Friday night services. After the service, the Bat Mitzvah girl can say a D'var Torah and have a kiddush (of your choice) or a sit down dinner for your family.
2. The Bat Mitzvah girl can choose to celebrate her Bat Mitzvah by inviting friends and family to do a "chessed project" for a Jewish charity of choice.
3. At a Kosher Bat Mitzvah Party the bat Mitzvah girl can say a D'var Torah. You can choose to have a separate or joint bat Mitzvah party with a friend from the bat Mitzvah group.
4. Havdalah Service: This service begins 1 hour after Shabbat is over. It includes the Bat Mitzvah girl can hold the havdalah candle. She can also share a speech. Songs, the parents blessing and/or speech and the throwing of candies are included in this service. This service is approximately 45 minutes. Photography, videography & microphones are welcome. This service is only practical during the fall/winter months when GMT is in effect as sundown is very early.

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## **Fees**

To book in the Bat Mitzvah celebration in shul is £300. And then a separate fee for the kiddush which is to be discussed directly with the chairlady of Ladies guild.

The Bat Mitzvah Club is £150 for Members and £175 for non-members.

Private lessons with the Rebbetzen or Rabbi is for speech writing is £25.

## **Kiddush**

If you have chosen the Saturday morning service option, the Bat Mitzvah families are encouraged to sponsor the kiddush (an informal light buffet lunch) immediately following a Shabbat services.

Please keep in mind that the kiddush is for the whole Congregation. You may opt to host a sitdown lunch. Prices for Kiddush vary based upon the number of people and choice of foods. Please Contact Ruth Leigh to discuss all your options.

If you want outside Catering, we only allow certain Caterers. Please contact the shul office for more details.

If you are planning an off-site party reception in honour of the Bat Mitzvah in addition to the service, we strongly encourage that it be a Kosher affair and held after the Shabbat. This would be the proper message for a "Bat Mitzvah". In the event you choose not to follow this suggestion, separate invitation cards must be prepared, one for the Service and another for the reception.

## **We have outlined some of the guidelines below:**

- a. The Shul has a "mechitza" (divider) between the men and women section during the services mentioned above.
- b. There is no mechitza needed for a candle lighting ceremony, Havdallah Service or chessed project.
- c. Photography shoots for a Shabbat service are allowed on a date prior to the Shabbat celebration.
- d. All items that will be delivered for a Shabbat service, whether food, flowers, kippot or anything else, must be delivered prior to Shabbat. All pick up of left over items must be done after Shabbat is over.
- e. Any printed materials (booklets, flyers, etc.) that you plan to distribute at the Bat Mitzvah must be reviewed and approved by the Rabbi prior to the event.
- f. All speeches must be pre-approved by the Rabbi.