

Milestones and Meaning: How does Bar/Bat Mitzvah affect the life of a Jewish child and their family?

Bar and Bat Mitzvah

Ceremonies are significant because they are seen as the time of coming of age, when a child becomes an adult.

Key Questions :

What rights and responsibilities does getting older bring?

What happens at Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

How does a Jewish boy feel about Bar Mitzvah?

How does coming of age in Judaism compare with another religion?

Bat Mitzvah ceremony

The Bat Mitzvah is only practised by Reform and liberal Jewish communities. The ceremony follows a similar pattern to the Bar Mitzvah and happens around a girl's 12th birthday.

During her Bat Mitzvah, a girl may read from the Torah or she may instead read a prayer from the **siddur**. Traditionally, within Judaism, males and females are not thought to have the same responsibilities. As a result, in some Jewish communities, some rules (such as the requirement to read from the Torah) are less strict for girls than they are for boys.

Bat Chayil

means 'daughter of valour'. It is an Orthodox Jewish ceremony for girls. The ceremony takes place close to a girl's 12th birthday in the synagogue, but not as part of Shabbat services.



Jewish Symbols		
		
A tallit is a special prayer shawl used by Jewish men to pray.	A kippah is a special cap worn by Jewish men and boys to show respect to God.	The Star of David is the symbol of the Jewish community.



A Tefillin or phylacteries, is a set of small black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with verses from the Torah. Tefillin is worn by observant adult Jews during weekday morning prayers.



Bar Mitzvah ceremony

A Bar Mitzvah happens around a boy's 13th birthday and is part of a service in the synagogue. The boy prepares by spending a lot of time studying the Torah, and then reads from the Torah during the ceremony. The boy also puts on the tefillin for the first time.

The rabbi gives a talk, speaking to both the boy and his family and to the rest of the community. The boy might also give a talk to the people gathered. It is traditional for the boy's father to recite a prayer of thanks to God for bringing his son to maturity. The boy receives gifts and there is a celebratory meal.

Main beliefs

Jews believe in one God. They also try to live by the **Ten Commandments**. They include using God's name with respect, remembering **the Sabbath**, respecting your parents and not lying or stealing. Jews believe God gave the **Ten Commandments** to Moses.



Jewdaism

Judaism began around 4000 years ago in the Middle East. Jerusalem is a place where many Jews go to on **pilgrimage**.



Key Vocabulary

Hebrew	A language used by Jewish people
Ark	The place where the Torah is kept in the synagogue
Torah	The Jewish holy book
rabbi	Jewish religion leader and teacher
synagogue	Place of worship for Jewish people
minyan	the ten men who are needed for worship to proceed within the synagogue.

Hebrew

Hebrew is a special language for Jews. Jews believe God gave the **Ten Commandments** to Moses in **Hebrew**. The **Torah** is written in **Hebrew** and Jews learn to read it.

Special Places for Jews

Jewish people go to a **synagogue** to worship. Men and women sit separately in some **synagogues**. The most important part of the **synagogue** is the **Ark**. This is where the **Torah** is kept. The **Torah** is treated with great respect. Jews are not allowed to touch it.

The Sabbath

The **Sabbath** lasts from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday. Jews celebrate as a family. They enjoy a special meal with prayers and songs.



Key Vocabulary

Ner tamid (Hebrew- eternal light)	lamp that burns perpetually in Jewish synagogues before or near the ark.
The bimah (pronounced BEE-ma)	the raised platform in the synagogue from which the Torah is read and services led.
siddur	A prayer book
Yad	a Jewish ritual pointer, used to follow the text during the Torah reading
The Shabbat (Sabbath)	The holy day for Jews
The ten commandments	The important life rules for Jews given to Moses by god
Passover	When Jews remember being led out of slavery by Moses