**SIMCHA GUIDE – WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

**WHO WE ARE**

Shira is an inclusive Orthodox community in Melbourne where both women and men are active participants. We embrace a commitment to Jewish law (halakha) and social action (tikkun olam).

A Shira simcha (celebration) is like no other. Our services are filled with song, meaningful sermons, and attention to the individual and family. We want the celebration of your simcha to be a meaningful and memorable occasion for you and those close to you.

**PREPARING FOR YOUR SIMCHA**

1. **Whom to contact**

To book a simcha at Shira, please contact Romy at **admin@shira.org.au**. She will be your central contact throughout the lead-up to your simcha, putting you in touch with all the necessary people along the way.

1. **Getting started**

To be Bnei Mitzvah, your child must be Jewish and over the age of 13 for boys and 12 for girls.

At Shira, we encourage you and other family members to participate in the formal side of your simcha. This can involve for example leading the service, reading from the Torah, reading the haftorah, giving the dvar torah (mini sermon). The Bar or Bat Mitzvah child can do as much (or as little) as they want. And if a teacher is needed, we can provide guidance.

About a month before the event, we will meet with you to fill out an ‘honour form’, assigning shul honours to as many of your friends and family as possible.

1. **How much does it cost to have a simcha at Shira?**

 ***Membership***

It is Shira’s policy that you be a shul member to hold your simcha at Shira. In the case of a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, we ask that the celebrating child be a member ($85) in addition to at least one parent ($405 + $25 security levy). These prices are for the 2018 - 2019 membership year. To purchase membership and for more information: [www.shira.org.au/membership](http://www.shira.org.au/membership).

***Kiddush***

As part of the simcha, it is customary for the family to sponsor a kiddush that includes the Shira community. The kiddush must be **vegetarian and certified kosher.** If you need any suggestions as to possible caterers, we are happy to help. Payment for the kiddush is made directly to the caterer. Please note: Shira does not provide lollies to throw during the service. All food supplies including drinks (whisky, grape juice etc) and lollies need to be delivered to Shira before Shabbat. The caterer is responsible for supplying all food and drink, as well as other utensils such as plates, cutlery, cups, tablecloths, serviettes, servers and any table décor. The caterer is also responsible for setting the room up for the kiddush

***Set-up and clean-up***

Additionally, there is a cost for setting up the kiddush room and the shul, and cleaning up afterwards. This cost depends on the size of your simcha. When you book, we ask for approximate numbers. Two weeks before your simcha, we need an indication of final numbers so that we can set up the shul and kiddush areas appropriately.

Set-up and clean-up costs:

fewer than 70 guests **$220**

70-150 guests\* **$350**

over 150 guests\*\* **$1200**

\*For a large kiddush with more than 70 guests, the caterer needs to provide staff.

\*\*With this number of guests, the large hall is needed for the kiddush. This entails an extra cost charged by Theodore Herzl Club and is therefore not a Shira charge.

Credit card payments can be made as a donation through our website: [www.shira.org.au/make-a-donation](http://www.shira.org.au/make-a-donation)

**Note:** These costs are subject to change. Additionally, we request payment two weeks before your simcha. When paying Shira by electronic transfer, please make sure to note your surname as a reference, to ensure funds are correctly credited.

1. **Coming to shul**

Shul attendance is strongly encouraged on a regular basis. As a minimum, we ask that in the two months before your child’s simcha, they attend shul fortnightly.

This makes the bar or bat mitzvah experience much more meaningful as it gives you and your child the chance to get to know the shul community. It is also an invaluable experience for your child to see how shul works and understand exactly what they are going to do when they stand at the bimah in celebration of their simcha.

We are happy to give families experience with aliyot (being called up to the Torah) and other roles so that they feel confident on the day of the simcha.

1. **Bnei Mitzvah Program**

A significant part of having your bar/bat mitzvah at Shira is the learning process that accompanies this milestone. At Shira we believe that this learning extends beyond reading from the Torah. Our program is a weekly meeting where participants are encouraged to engage with Jewish ideas, ask big questions and develop a strong Jewish identity, through the lens of a modern Orthodox inclusive community.

For more information contact Romy.

Warm regards,

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