

# Bar and Bat Mitzvah

Judaism  
Practices

**Bar Mitzvah:** celebration of a boy coming of age at 13; means 'son of the commandment'

**Bat Mitzvah:** celebration of a girl coming of age at 12; means 'daughter of the commandment'

## Celebrating a Bar Mitzvah

- Happens at the first opportunity after his thirteenth birthday (usually the first shabbat) the boy is called up to read from the Torah at Synagogue.
- Many synagogues hold classes to prepare for this
- He will wear a tallit for the first time and make a speech
- His father thanks God for bringing his son to maturity and declares he is responsible for his own actions.
- There is usually a celebration afterwards where the boy may receive gifts

## Celebrating a Bat Mitzvah

- Similar to boys but usually only **reform** Jews
- The girl will read from the Torah at the Synagogue and give a speech, she may also lead part of the service.
- There is usually a celebration afterwards where the girl may receive gifts
- **Orthodox Jews** mark the Bat Mitzvah with a family meal and small religious gifts.

*In the Tanakh it says... 'Train up a child in the way he should go and even when he is old he will not depart from it'*

*In the Tanakh it says... 'My son, forget not my teaching; but let your heart keep my commandments'*

*In the Tanakh it says... 'And the boy grew up and the Lord blessed him'*

*In the Talmud it says... 'Whoever teaches his son teaches not only his son, but also his son's son - and so on to the end of generations'*

In Judaism you are considered an adult at 12 (if you are female) and 13 (if you are male). This means you are fully responsible for your actions after this point.

Tefillin: two black leather boxes (singular: 'tefillah') with straps which are put on by adult Jews for weekday morning prayers, and are worn on the forehead and upper arm.

**Rites of passage:** Ceremonies that mark important transitional periods in a person's life, including marriage.

## Past Exam Questions

**2018** Give two things that happen as part of a Bar Mitzvah ceremony (2)

**2020** Explain two ways in which the Bar Mitzvah ceremony is important for Jews. (5)

## Possible Questions

Give two things that happen as part of a Bat Mitzvah ceremony (2)

Explain two customs that happens as part of a Bat Mitzvah ceremony . (5)

'Bar Mitzvah is the most important rite of passage.' (12)

## Rites of passage Influences

- **influences** Jews to uphold traditional and strive to fulfil each rite of passage
- **influences** Jews to believe it is their duty from God to uphold the Torah laws
- **influences** Jews to take responsibility for their actions now they are considered adults
- **influences** Jews to raise their children to be morally responsible and to have a bar/bat mitzvah ceremony