



Bar and Bat Mitzvah

A Bar Mitzvah (for boys) or Bat Mitzvah (for girls) is a very special celebration for many Jewish people. It happens when boys turn 13 and girls turn 12. It marks the time when they become more responsible for following Jewish rules and traditions.

Before the ceremony, they often go to lessons to learn how to read the Torah and to understand more about what it means to be Jewish. During the ceremony, they read a part of the Torah scroll in a special synagogue service. When reading, they might wear a kippah and tzitzit.

Afterwards, friends and family often celebrate with a party full of food, music and dancing. For many Jewish people, a Bar or Bat Mitzvah is an important part of their beliefs and culture.

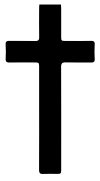
I chose to have a Bat Mitzvah for a few reasons: my parents wanted me to, I wanted to be seen as an 'adult' in my religions, I had worked hard towards it at Jewish school, I wanted to show commitment to my religion... and I wanted a party!



Looking back, I was quite young and really the main reason I did it was because it was expected of me as part of my religion and culture.



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Confirmation

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Confirmation is a special Christian ceremony that young people between 11 and 16 may choose to take part in. It shows that they have decided for themselves to commit to their beliefs and do more in their church community.

Before the ceremony, the young person learns more about the Bible and living a Christian life. During the ceremony, they say that they believe in Jesus and will follow Christian teachings.

A church leader places their hands on the person's head as a sign of asking God to help and guide them. It also symbolises that God is with them all the time. There are Bible readings and prayers and sometimes those being confirmed share why they believe in Jesus and want to be confirmed.

Some people also have a party or special meal afterwards with their family and friends to celebrate the special day.

Completing my first confirmation training and going through the ceremony felt important because it was a sign that I was growing up. At my church, it also means that I can now properly take part in church services.



I was confirmed when I was 14 because I wanted to make for myself the promises that my parents and godparents had made on my behalf when I was baptised.



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Upanayana

Upanayana is a special ceremony in some Hindu communities, also known as the sacred thread ceremony.

It is usually held for boys and marks the start of becoming an adult and beginning a commitment to learning more about Hindu beliefs.

Before the ceremony, the child often has their head shaved and is given new clothes to wear, representing a new beginning. During the ceremony, a leader or the child's father whispers a special prayer and places a sacred thread across the child's shoulders. The thread has three strands which represent duties to Brahman (God), to the child's family and to the child's guru (teacher).

The ceremony is usually performed near a sacred fire, which symbolises light and knowledge. Offerings are placed into the fire while prayers and special words are said.

Upanayana is a special, joyful occasion for the child and family and gifts may be given to celebrate the day.

I feel really grown up now that I've had my Upanayana ceremony. I'm excited to start learning more about our religious scriptures and traditions. It's a big responsibility to wear the sacred thread but I'm ready to start this new chapter in my life. I'm grateful to my family and guru for guiding me and supporting me.

