

DRAFT Update to Havurah Bar/Bat Mitzvah Policy

Updated 9/28/10 by Debbie Zivan and Debbie Field

- **Havurah Membership** is a requirement for having a ceremony within the Havurah: minimum one year
- **Ceremony and preparation** for the ceremony should include these three parts:
 - Torah (study)
 - Avodah (prayer)
 - G'milut Hasadim (acts of lovingkindness).

Each family, in consultation with service leader and tutor, can decide how to fulfill these requirements. The ceremony at minimum should include recitation of Torah blessings.

- **Venue:** The event should be held at a location consistent with the Havurah's values and practice. Families are responsible for booking and fees associated with renting space at the JCC or another venue
- **Service leader:** Families are responsible for choosing a service leader and paying fees to the service leader
- **Prayerbooks:** Reconstructionist prayerbooks should be used.
- **Integrating non-Jewish friends and family members:** This is fundamentally a Jewish event. At the same time, every effort should be made to make the experience meaningful for non-Jews
- **Statement of simplicity:** Excessiveness in any guise, such as often happens with parties, violates our understanding of the spirit of Judaism and the values of our community and thus should be avoided.
- **Kiddush:** At minimum, the host family should provide challah and wine immediately following the service for everyone in attendance. Should the family be hosting an invitation-only event on site, every effort should be made to separate this event from the public one so as to minimize awkwardness and hurt feelings.
- **Tzeddakah:** We strongly encourage families to set aside a portion of their gifts and or expenses to a charity.
- **Gift to Havurah:** Gift to the Havurah: It is customary but not required for the family to give a gift to the Havurah in honor of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah - a donation to the Havurah's general fund or Torah Fund is suggested.
- **Presence of cameras:** If videotaping is to be done, it will be done as unobtrusively as possible. Guests should be told not to take pictures during the ceremony
- **Aliyot for members:** In keeping with our tradition, at least one Aliyah should be a group aliyah. A description of who is being called for the aliyah, the blessings over the torah and a blessing for those called up comprise the three parts of a group aliyah.
- **Questions** regarding the B'nai Mitzvot Policy: Contact the board of the Havurah via Debbie Zivan, djzivan@yahoo.com