

Havurah Shalom

Portland's Reconstructionist Community

www.havurahshalom.org

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503-248-4662

B'nai Mitzvah FAQs

Q. How much is my son or daughter expected to learn for their bar/bat mitzvah?

A. There is a great deal of room for individuality at Havurah Shalom, so the amount that your son or daughter will participate will depend largely upon their aptitude and motivation. With few exceptions, all of our bar/bat mitzvah students will be called up to the Torah to receive an aliyah. This involves making the Torah blessing in Hebrew. Havurah will also ask the student to give a drash on how the Torah portion can have a modern application in their personal life. Many young people will venture as far as leading the liturgy from the beginning of the Torah Service through the Torah processional. Students who are up to the challenge will learn how to chant one or more readings from their Torah portion. While it is rare, we have had some young people who not only learn to chant the Torah, but add the Haftarah as well, and/or parts of the shacharit (morning) service, or closing service. So you can see there is a broad spectrum of achievement that is acceptable at Havurah Shalom. Your private tutor, along the Rabbi and your music person, will help guide you and your son or daughter in setting their own individual goals for participation.

Q. Do you have table linens I can use? If so, do I also need to reserve them ahead of time, or should I assume they'll be available for my use on the Bar Mitzvah day?

A. Yes, Havurah owns linens that were purchased for use with High School/Middle school, and for Passover seders. We own 12 white rectangular cloths that fit on our 6' tables, 12 of the 90"-diameter royal blue round cloths, and 24 of the 90" diameter white round cloths. The risk with using our linens is that we cannot promise all of them will be on the premises at any given time. Volunteers take them home to wash them, and don't necessarily return them promptly. Also, they don't necessarily check them carefully when they wash them, therefore, there is a risk that some of the linens may be stained. So, as long as you are a flexible person, you can use the linens. You must also take responsibility to see that they are washed and returned to Havurah ASAP.

Because of all this, it really doesn't work to reserve the tablecloths. Instead, any time after the Saturday before your event, you can come to Havurah and inspect the linens we have on the premises. You can select all the linens you want to use and set them aside, with the exception of making sure there are linens available for High School/Middle School if they are meeting that week. After your event, you should wash and return them as promptly as possible, so other families may use them. If you are not a flexible person, or you are worried about the stress of it, we

recommend using a linen service or rent them from a local party rental service, see the yellow pages under "rentals".

Q. How many tables are available for us to use? What sizes are they?

A. Havurah owns 12 round tables that are 66" in diameter (each seats 9), 5 round tables that are 60" in diameter (each seats 8), and 13 rectangular tables that are 6' long and 30" wide. How many of them you decide to use is up to you. Our sanctuary can fit a possibility of 12 round tables, and the Social Hall can accommodate up to 6 round tables along with a buffet line. If you move the buffet line to the gallery between the social hall and sanctuary, then you can fit up to 8 round tables in the Social Hall. Most people will use 6 rectangular tables to create 2 parallel buffet spreads (18-ft. long), accessible by 4 lines of people. They use 2 rectangular tables for beverages (1 hot, 1 cold), and 2-3 rectangular tables for desserts/cookies.

Q. When should I give the rabbi my list of Torah readers, Aliyah honors, and Hagbah/Gililah people? How soon in advance does he need it?

A. Unless you have questions or potential problems, you can wait until the last week before your event to show the Rabbi your list of service participants. That being said, you should give people plenty of notice if they are taking a part in services, no less than 30 days, and up to 90 days for Torah readers. Please remember to keep one aliyah open for the congregation. You should bring to services a printed sheet listing the honorees for the aliyot (Torah blessing) as well as hagbah (lifting the Torah), and gililah (dressing the Torah). Include both their English & Hebrew names. Make sure to note who is responsible for reading each Torah section (only English names are needed for Torah readers). This list will help Rabbi Joey or the Gabbi call the correct person to the Torah.

Q. I would like to announce my child's event in the Hakol. When would the office need the announcement for that to happen?

A. We automatically will list the bar mitzvah in the Hakol. People will see it in the blue pages, because all year we list the current year's schedule of b'nai mitzvah.

Q. What procedures do we follow if we want use Havurah's containers for our two floral arrangements around the Bima?

A. Any time after the Saturday preceding your event, you can pick up the containers for the flower arrangements and bring them to your florist, if they need to have the containers. The containers are strictly decorative, and do not hold water, so the florist will need to provide an inner pot or liner. Our containers will hold an arrangement contained in a 3-5 gallon bucket. We have 2 box-type wooden containers, 2 sculpted faux granite (sandstone in color) containers made of some kind of dense foam, 2 plastic "terra cotta" style planters, and 2 large baskets. The containers that are not being currently used are stored in our basement.

Q. Does Havurah have flower vases?

A. Yes. We have an assortment of vases, some with a quantity that actually match. You'll need to come by Havurah to see what will work for you. We have no matching

bud vases, but we do have 10 small classic-shaped vases with a 2" diameter neck, 11 small "fluted fish bowl" shaped vases with a 2.5" diameter neck, and 12 classic-shaped medium size vases with a 3" diameter neck. Additionally, there are 5 boxes of non-matching assorted vases in the basement, next to the flower-arranging supplies.

Q. We're having a caterer who regularly serves at Havurah Shalom. Does she need to sign the caterer's agreement form?

A. Not if we have one on file in the Havurah Office. Call Debbi Nadell to check on their status. Even regular caterers need to update their agreement annually. We also need to have a copy of their liability insurance, and to know that their employees are covered under workers' compensation.

Q. We are not using a professional caterer. What do we need to do for insurance?

A. You need to contact the agent for your homeowners' insurance policy. Tell the agent you are having an off-site event that needs to be covered on your policy. They should give you a "special event endorsement" that needs to be faxed to the Havurah office 503-248-4668. On this certificate of liability insurance, it should list Havurah Shalom as an additional insured, and also list the date of the event. We recommend that the coverage be 100-300 thousand, depending on your policy. Your insurance company may charge a nominal fee for this endorsement, usually around \$25-\$50.

Q. How many chumashim (Bibles) are available for use? Will we have to make copies of the Torah portion?

A. In the past, members have had to make copies of the Torah portion due to a lack of chumashim. However, Havurah Shalom now owns 100 copies of the JPS Tanakh. We also have 35 copies of Stone's Chumash, and about a dozen copies of "The Living Torah" edited by Aryeh Kaplan.

For those who don't know the difference, a Chumash is the Torah, the 5 books of Moses: Genesis (Beresheet), Exodus (Shemot), Leviticus (Vayikra), Numbers (Bamidbar), and Deuteronomy (Devarim). The Tanakh is the entire Hebrew Bible, which is composed of the Torah, the Prophets (Nevi'im), and the Writings (Ketuvim). Since the 3 sections start with T, N, K, that is what the word "TaNaKh" represents.

Q. How do I know how much challah, juice, and wine to buy?

A. A safe rule of thumb is one challah per 30 people and 1 oz.(30 ml.) of juice for 60% of the people and 1 oz. of wine for 60% of the people. For example, for 120 guests, get 4 challot, 72 oz. of juice, and 72 oz. of wine (check the bottle for how many ounces, since bottles come in various sizes - the average wine bottle is 750 ml/25 oz). If you're worried there won't be enough, round up by 1 or 2 extra challot or bottles of juice/wine, just to be sure.

Q. Are there lodgings close to Havurah Shalom for my guests from out-of-town?

A. Yes, there is the Northrup Station at 2025 NW Northrup 503-224-0543, the La Quinta Inn at 4319 NW Yeon 503 497 9044 and the Silver Cloud at NW 23rd and Vaughn. We recommend using an online hotel locator service (like hotels.com) to discover other locations nearby.