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# ANSCHES CHESD GUIDE TO BAR AND BAT MITZVAH CEREMONIES AND CELEBRATIONS

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Dear Parents,

As your child nears the age of Bar or Bat Mitzvah, Ansche Chesed's professional and lay leaders are here to help you plan for this significant event. We hope that the attached guide will provide you with answers to many of your questions, and will help reduce the undeniable stress associated with Bnai Mitzvah.

We will work with you to plan an event that both works for your family and helps you feel a deep connection with the Ansche Chesed community. Planning involves practical questions, like catering choices and delivery schedules; educational questions, like guidance in tutoring; and religious questions, like how to make the process meaningful and enhance your child's Jewish identity.

Most important of all — congratulations on your upcoming *simchah*! We are here to answer your questions today and going forward. Do not hesitate to ask us.

Jeremy Kalmanofsky  
Rabbi

Joshua Hanft  
Executive Director

## **Membership and Date Assignments**

To become a Bar Mitzvah (literally, *Subject to the Commandments*), a Jewish boy must be at least 13 years plus one day old, according to the Hebrew calendar. To become a Bat Mitzvah (literally, *Daughter of the Commandment*), a Jewish girl must be at least 12 years plus one day old, according to the Hebrew calendar.

The children of Ansche Chesed members are assigned dates for their Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremonies based on the dates of birth and on the family's preference. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony takes place on days when the Torah is read as part of the prayer service, either at a Saturday morning service, at a Monday or Thursday morning service, or at a Saturday afternoon service. Other Torah-reading days include Rosh Hodesh (the first day of the Hebrew month), Hanukkah, and hol *hamoed* Sukkot (the intermediary days of the holiday of Sukkot).

Ansche Chesed always asks families for their preferred dates or their preferred Torah portions, and the office tries to give all families their first choice. Because of the complexity of synagogue life, families are asked to choose two or three acceptable dates. When Ansche Chesed receives multiple requests for the same date, the earliest received request is always given priority.

Members of Ansche Chesed may choose a date as early as three years in advance. In December of every year, the Ansche Chesed office sends a letter to families with children ages 9 and 10, asking them to select possible dates. After the Ansche Chesed members have selected two or three dates, they return the "date choice" form to the Ansche Chesed office, and the office schedules a date. At that point, the members are sent a letter stating the date assignment, and they are also sent a date confirmation form. The family is asked to complete that form and return it to the Ansche Chesed office as quickly as possible. Families who join Ansche Chesed when their children are already ages 11 or 12 are encouraged to contact Michelle Daniels in the Ansche Chesed office to choose an available date.

Families who have questions about Ansche Chesed membership are encouraged to call Josh Hanft, the Executive Director.

## **Shabbat Begins on Friday**

The Shabbat on which your child celebrates becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah begins at sundown on Friday afternoon. Please start this special Shabbat by joining Ansche Chesed's Friday night services, held either at 5:30 pm (during Eastern Standard Time) or 6:30 pm (during Daylight Saving Time). The approximately 60-minute service is joyful and spirited, and will start your Shabbat in a holy way. The Bar or Bat Mitzvah child or another representative of your family will be invited to lead Kiddush. (Your child's tutor can help with this easily acquired skill!) A child who is capable and interested could also take a larger role in the Friday night services. Speak to Rabbi Kalmanofsky for more information.

### **The Child's Role in the Service**

No standard Bar or Bat Mitzvah role exists. All of the different prayer services that are held at Ansche Chesed follow the guidelines of Conservative Judaism. Those guidelines, though, encompass an extremely wide variety of options. The different Ansche Chesed *minyanim* have their own policies about what children may or must do at a Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony, and families should explore their options with representatives from their minyan. Some children may be called for an *aliyah* — that is, the recital of prayers before and after the public Torah reading — but they will not publicly read the Torah. Other children may lead large sections of the prayer service or chant the entire Torah portion.

Typically, in the Sanctuary on Saturday morning, the Bar and Bat Mitzvah children are called to:

- Recite the blessings over the Torah;
- Chant the *maftir* portion from the Torah scroll (the final public reading from the Torah, usually five verses or less);
- Recite the blessings over the *Haftarah* (reading from the Prophets);
- Chant the *Haftarah*;
- Deliver a three-to-five minute *dvar Torah* (comment on the Torah reading).

Many children, however, choose to do less, and many children choose to do more. Families are free to make the decisions that are best for their own children, and no parent or child should feel like a failure because of choosing to read fewer Torah or *Haftarah* verses!

Children who are capable of doing more typically choose to read additional aliyot or even to read all seven aliyot, but many other choices are also possible. Families seeking greater involvement in the prayer service are advised to consult with Rabbi Kalmanofsky and with the leaders of their minyan.

### **Tutoring**

Much of the energy and anticipation of a Bar or Bat Mitzvah centers on training and preparation, which generally begins about eight months before the event. Families seeking tutors are advised to consult with Rabbi Jeremy Kalmanofsky.

Ansche Chesed kids prepare for their ceremonies in many different ways, and no single way is the “standard” way. Parents of students at the Ansche Chesed Hebrew School frequently hire teachers with whom their children have established close relationships. Most students in the Havurah School ask its principal, Jerry Raik, to help them. Hazzan Natasha Hirschhorn, Ansche Chesed’s music director, accepts a small number of private students. In addition, the leaders of Ansche Chesed Shabbat children’s services also occasionally accept private students. Bar and Bat Mitzvah tutors are generally paid an hourly rate by the child’s parents. The parents may

choose to interview a few tutors to find the one who works best for their son or daughter, as the tutor and the child will be working closely together for many months.

A note to tutors: Except for the West Side Minyan, all Ansche Chesed *minyanim* read Torah on an annual cycle. Tutors unfamiliar with Ansche Chesed customs should consult with Rabbi Kalmanofsky before beginning their work with students.

### **Other Faiths**

At Ansche Chesed, we know that life is enriched when we learn from cultures and faiths different from our own. Still, religions are like languages: you can only speak one at a time. Our community is dedicated to Jewish identity, in richness, depth and commitment. While we can learn from other religions – including from family members who may practice those faiths – Jews cannot practice anything but Judaism.

At Ansche Chesed, therefore, children cannot celebrate *b'nai mitzvah* in our community or attend the Ansche Chesed Hebrew School if they regularly attend services in another faith, or receive education in another faith. This statement is not intended to exclude enrollment at secular private schools (e.g. Trinity or Cathedral) that have chapel components, but does exclude enrollment in formal religious training (e.g. Bible study, catechism, training in worship) analogous to that received in Jewish day schools or supplemental schools.

We concur with the 1995 recommendation of the Union for Reform Judaism, and subsequently reaffirmed, that dual faith education is harmful and unfair to children and their families. (Our Conservative movement has no formal policy statement, but would surely take the same position.) Rather than broadening perspective, this approach undermines a person's ability to enter a spiritual community wholeheartedly.

### **Meeting with the Rabbi**

Rabbi Kalmanofsky meets with every student and family individually, regardless of the family's minyan affiliation. Rabbi Kalmanofsky tries to schedule a first meeting about three months before the Bar or Bat Mitzvah so that he and the student can get to know each other and develop a relationship. At that time, he also likes to meet with the parents and siblings to talk about the family's experiences as they prepare for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah. Then, as the date approaches, Rabbi Kalmanofsky also meets with the student at least one more time to review the child's reading and to hear and discuss the *dvar Torah*.

## Feeling at Home in Synagogue

Different synagogues around the world have different social styles and different standards of decorum. Many guests and relations of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah child will not be accustomed to services at Anshe Chesed, so this guide will devote a few words to preparing both the families and their guests.

Anshe Chesed is a relatively informal synagogue, especially in clothing styles. Some people come to services dressed in clothes that would be out of place in other synagogues. At the same time, the synagogue is a sacred space, devoted to worship and reflection, and the congregation attempts to behave in ways that befit the holiness of worship services, including the following:

Public spaces and ritual services at Anshe Chesed are traditional in observing Shabbat customs. In the public spaces of the synagogue, Shabbat restrictions are observed from sundown on Friday to nightfall on Saturday. That means that everyone in the building refrains from using electronic devices like phones, PDAs, Blackberries, and music players; from taking photos and videos; from writing; and from smoking. Families are asked to advise their guests to turn off cell phones and pagers before entering the building or to set them to "silent" mode. Also, observant Jews do not handle money on Shabbat; because Bar and Bat Mitzvah gifts often include money, guests are asked to give their gifts outside the synagogue.

Families are asked to sensitize their guests — especially the teens — to the need for decorum during prayers. Anshe Chesed's prayers are in some ways informal and are, we hope, joyful, but they remain prayers! Therefore, talking during services, unnecessary walking around, and repeatedly entering and leaving, will probably disrupt other congregants. The books used in the prayer services — the Bibles (*Humashim*) and prayer books (*siddurim*) — are holy texts. Families are asked to treat these books with reverence by handling them gently. In addition, religious Jews do not place holy texts on the floor.

All men and boys are asked to wear *kippot* (head coverings, known as *yarmulkes* in Yiddish) while in the synagogue. *Kippot* are placed near the entrance to the prayer space. Covering the head is considered a gesture of reverence and respect, not a formal ritual duty, and so wearing a *kippah* is appropriate for both Jews and non-Jews. *Tallitot* (prayer shawls or *talleisim* in Yiddish) are also available upon entering the prayer space. Wearing a *tallit* is a formal ritual practice, and as such is incumbent only upon Jews. At Anshe Chesed, Jewish men, Jewish women, and Jewish teenagers are encouraged to wear a *tallit*. Non-Jewish guests, however, should not wear a *tallit*.

Families with questions are advised to speak with Rabbi Kalmanofsky.

Prayer services on Saturday mornings are long, typically about two and a half hours. Therefore, guests who are unaccustomed to Jewish prayer may choose to arrive after services have begun. All Shabbat morning services at Anshe Chesed begin at 9:45am, but guests who arrive by 10:30am will certainly be sufficiently early to participate in the "highlights" of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremonies.

We request that parents of Hebrew School students invite all the students in their child's class to their child's bar/bat mitzvah, as a courtesy.

### **Throwing Candy and Wishing Well**

Ansche Chesed considers Shabbat a joyful day, and the Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony a wonderful event. In most Ansche Chesed prayer services, at a designated moment, the congregants throw candy at the Bar or Bat Mitzvah child; the candy expresses the wish for a sweet life. Ansche Chesed provides soft, wrapped candies for throwing. Afterwards, kids (usually the younger ones) come forward to pick up the candies and enjoy them. Older children should remember to throw candy in a gentle manner.

The standard expression of appreciation for a well-done religious ritual is to say: *yasher ko'ah* (literally, *may you always be strong!*). When the Bar or Bat Mitzvah child finishes reading the Torah and the *Haftarah*, the best way to show appreciation is to call out *yasher ko'ah*. Another Hebrew expression, *kol hakavod* (*all the honor!*), is also appropriate, rather than applauding.

### **Flowers**

Families usually provide flowers or plants to decorate the prayer space. Some families visit flower markets and create their own arrangements; others prefer to hire a florist. A list of florists is included in the appendix to this guide, but any florist or any friend can provide flower arrangements. A good way to choose a florist is to ask families who have used flower arrangements that appealed to you. Families are advised to call the Ansche Chesed office to arrange for flower delivery. Note: When choosing flowers or plants for the sanctuary, the arrangements should be as tall as possible.

Families may also elect to purchase gift baskets of packaged food (Fairway is a good vendor for this) which can be donated the following week to the West Side Campaign Against Hunger. Please note that it is the family's responsibility to pick up the baskets from Ansche Chesed early the following week and take them to the food pantry.

### **Kiddush**

After Shabbat morning services, the members of each Ansche Chesed minyan gather together to recite blessings over wine (*kiddush*), over ritual hand-washing (*netilat yadayim*), and over bread (*motzi*). Then, everyone together enjoys a meal, which is called the Kiddush, after the name of the Shabbat blessing said over wine. The meal could range from modest, say platter of hummus, tuna and egg salad, to a fully catered lunch.

Families who are celebrating a life-cycle event customarily sponsor Kiddush for the congregation. At Ansche Chesed, there are many ways to sponsor kiddush. One can purchase kosher food and arrange it in the Ansche Chesed kitchen, but this is labor intensive for families. Some families purchase platters from an approved caterer, and

other families hire a caterer to provide a luncheon with wait staff. Speak to Michelle Daniels in the Ansche Chesed office to discuss arrangement for Kiddush.

A number of Ansche Chesed families have a reception outside of the synagogue after Shabbat services. If your family chooses this option, please do plan to stay with us in the synagogue long enough to participate in the communal Kiddush. Synagogue members want to celebrate with you!

### **Sharing Your Joy**

By tradition, when Jews celebrate, they always share their joy with those who suffer. As your family and guests enjoy plenty of good food after the Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony, please do consider the scope of hunger in America and the world, and please do contribute 3% of the cost of your party (or more, if appropriate) to an organization fighting hunger. Some excellent suggestions include:

*Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger* (funds programs for Jews and non-Jews throughout the world)

1990 South Bundy Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90025

West Side Campaign Against Hunger (our neighborhood's best food pantry)

263 West 86th Street

New York, NY 10024

Meir Panim (funds soup kitchens and meals-on-wheels programs in Israel)

USA office, 5314 New Utrecht Avenue

Brooklyn, NY 11219

### **Synagogue Attendance**

Your child's appreciation for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony will be greatly enhanced by his or her comfort in the synagogue. Conversely, if the prayers and rituals are unfamiliar, feeling moved by the synagogue service will be difficult. (The same is true for adults!) Therefore, we ask you and your family to become regular synagogue attenders in the months prior to your special event. We believe that weekly or every-other-weekly attendance over the six months prior to the event will help you and your child to become part of the community, and will give you enough familiarity with the Shabbat services to enable you to find meaning in them. Rabbi Kalmanofsky would be happy to speak with you about synagogue rituals and their significance. Also, please be aware that Ansche Chesed offers learners' services suitable for adults and teens, as well as adult Hebrew classes. In the year preceding your child's Bar or Bat Mitzvah, you may wish to attend the learners' services or other classes.



### **Emphasis on the *Mitzvah***

The terms Bar and Bat Mitzvah mean "subject to the commandments." A Bar or Bat Mitzvah is responsible for both ritual and ethical *mitzvot* — commandments. In other words, the boy or girl is responsible for his or her Jewish life and moral choices, as he or she matures. Ansche Chesed expects and hopes that your children will grow in their exploration and performance of Judaism.

Therefore, Ansche Chesed has begun a program to help Bnai Mitzvah children, as a group, consider their ethical and social obligations. This program is the Ansche Chesed Tzedakah — or the ACT — Foundation, which is a grant-making foundation that is run by the Bnai Mitzvah students. Participation is voluntary, and each ACT Foundation participant contributes \$234 (18, symbolizing life, times 13, symbolizing Bar and Bat Mitzvah age). The ACT Foundation then meets once a month, from November through June, to learn about and choose the projects or the organizations to which the Foundation will make grants. Ansche Chesed believes that thinking and acting together with their peers will help young teens to understand about charitable donations, and to become committed to creating social justice.

Ansche Chesed also encourages each child to perform a specific project as part of Bar or Bat Mitzvah preparation. Ideas include: volunteering at the Ansche Chesed homeless shelter; visiting shut-in elderly (through Dorot); visiting nursing home residents; collecting food or volunteering at a food pantry. Rabbi Kalmanofsky would be pleased to help your family find an appropriate project.

### **Financial Matters**

Ansche Chesed members are expected to be in good financial standing at the time Bar and Bat Mitzvah dates are assigned. All members are encouraged to fulfill their financial obligations to the synagogue as early as possible. At the latest, all fees and annual membership dues **must be paid in full two weeks in advance of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah date.**

Families who are in difficult financial circumstances are encouraged to speak with Rabbi Kalmanofsky or with Joshua Hanft, the Executive Director, if special arrangements are necessary.

### **A Celebration at Ansche Chesed**

Many families choose to hold a large celebration at Ansche Chesed following the prayer service. A large Kiddush or a luncheon in Hirsch Hall that is open to everyone who has attended services is a wonderful way to celebrate — and Ansche Chesed encourages this kind of celebration! Consequently, the fee to use Hirsch Hall for a community-wide celebration is very significantly reduced from Ansche Chesed's ordinary space use fees. Please speak to the Ansche Chesed office to make arrangements.

If your family would like to make a party for invited guests only, or if you choose a Saturday afternoon service or another private service, Ansche Chesed's space rental fees apply. The Ansche Chesed office will ask families to sign a space use agreement, and will ask families to pay half of the space use fees at least six months before the date of the celebration. Space use fees change from time to time, but once a contract has been signed, the specific dollar amount in the contract will be the total amount due (assuming that the family's plans remain the same). Space use charges include the use of the space, setup and cleanup time (if applicable), chairs and tables (if applicable), and security at Ansche Chesed's 100th Street entrance. Charges for Hirsch Hall also include the use of Ansche Chesed's kitchen (either by the family or by the family's kosher caterer).

### **West End Avenue Doors**

Families sometimes choose to pay for an additional guard so that the West End Avenue doors can be opened. **Please note that we need at least two weeks' notice for the West End Avenue doors to be opened.** Since it is not always easy to find volunteers to welcome guests at the West End Avenue entrance, all those requesting that the doors be open for their simchah will be **put on a list and asked to be "welcomers" at future smachot** where the doors will be open.

In addition, all arrangements with caterers, florists, entertainment, photographers, balloons, etc, must be cleared with the Ansche Chesed office. Families who are celebrating on Saturday must inform everyone who is delivering food, flowers — or any other supplies — that all deliveries must be made either between 12 noon and 3 pm on Friday, or after Shabbat ends on Saturday night (check with the Ansche Chesed office for the specific time on the date of your event).

### **Food**

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Chef's Table is Ansche Chesed's non-exclusive in-house caterer, and we ask all families to consider using them, but families may use almost any kosher caterer at Ansche Chesed. The caterer must send the Ansche Chesed office a copy of the certificate of kashrut, a copy of the certificate of insurance (listing Ansche Chesed as the additional insured), and a refundable \$500 deposit for the use of the Ansche Chesed kitchen. A list of approved caterers who have experience working in the Ansche Chesed kitchen can be found on the website. *If you choose a caterer with whom Ansche Chesed has no experience, you must discuss your plans with Rabbi Kalmanofsky.*

Alternatively, families may do the catering themselves, as long as Ansche Chesed's kashrut policies are followed. The policy is available online, and the policy is appended to this guide. **If you wish to self-cater, you must discuss your plans with**

**Rabbi Kalmanofsky.** In any case, the Ansche Chesed office must know your plans at least four weeks in advance of the use of the kitchen.

### **Music**

At private gatherings at Ansche Chesed on Shabbat and Jewish holidays, music may be played — provided that the music is appropriate to the spirit of the day. Volume and selection of music should be carefully considered. Please speak to Rabbi Kalmanofsky in advance if you are considering music for a private celebration on Shabbat afternoons. Many observant Jews regard the playing of music on Shabbat and festivals as a violation of Jewish law; families should be aware that music on Shabbat may offend some of their guests.

Families holding private parties on Saturday night (or other non-Shabbat times) may hire any musicians or may play any instruments of their choice. All plans, though, must be cleared by the Ansche Chesed office, and all sound equipment must be delivered in accordance with Ansche Chesed’s delivery policy.

### **Photography**

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No photography or videography is permitted in Ansche Chesed’s public spaces on Shabbat or Jewish holidays. In addition, no professional photography or videography is permitted in Ansche Chesed on those days. However, **non-professional** photography and videography is permitted in private luncheons or private parties on Shabbat and holidays. Families should be aware, though, that some guests may object.

Ansche Chesed encourages families to call the office, and arrange a “dress rehearsal” for photographs during the week before the Bar or Bat Mitzvah ceremony. Many families do this on Friday when they come to Ansche Chesed to bring flower arrangements or table decorations.

### **Not a Graduation**

A Bar or Bat Mitzvah should not be the end of anyone’s Jewish education. The Torah is “wider than the sea,” and can provide a lifetime of deepening, enriching, spiritual, and intellectual sustenance. What we learn as children is wonderful, but is not enough to sustain us through our lifetimes.

Please consider the next steps for your child’s Jewish growth — and perhaps your family’s growth as well. In addition to the ACT Foundation, Ansche Chesed offers several programs for teens who have recently celebrated becoming a bar/bat Mitzvah. The Hebrew School at Ansche Chesed has an 8th grade class called Halutzim which meets throughout the school year. The class offers a focus on the study and practice of g’millut chesed – acts of loving-kindness - and is open to 8th graders regardless of background. We also offer a monthly Teen Dinner and Discussions with Rabbi Kalmanofsky during the school year for 9th-12th graders. For further

information, contact the Hebrew School office at 212-865-0600 ext 208, or check the Anshe Chesed website.

Another excellent option is Prozdor, a Wednesday and Sunday educational program for 7th-12th graders at the Jewish Theological Seminary at Broadway at 122nd Street ([www.jtsa.edu/davidson/prozdor](http://www.jtsa.edu/davidson/prozdor)). Many Anshe Chesed teens study there, learning Hebrew, Bible, history, art, philosophy, and a range of other topics and at the same time get to meet Jewish kids from around the New York metropolitan area.

Jewish summer camp can be another powerful Jewish experience. Many wonderful Jewish camps operate in the New York area, including the Conservative movement's Camp Ramah system. Please consider the nearby Ramah-Berkshires ([www.ramahberkshires.org](http://www.ramahberkshires.org)) or another camp. Rabbi Kalmanofsky and our education staff will be happy to help with recommendations.

### **Call on Us for Help!**

Most families have many questions as they navigate this life-cycle event. Anshe Chesed is here to help you and to assure you that your ceremony and your celebration will be beautiful, appropriate, and full of meaning.

To schedule an appointment with Rabbi Jeremy Kalmanofsky, for questions of a religious or ritual nature, call Rabbi Kalmanofsky at 212-865-0600 x210, or email [rjk@anshecheded.org](mailto:rjk@anshecheded.org).

For logistical questions, billing, and financial matters, or to request a date for a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, speak with Michelle Daniels, Assistant Executive Director, at x201, or email [mdaniels@anshecheded.org](mailto:mdaniels@anshecheded.org).

We look forward to celebrating with you!

## **APPENDIX**

### **Bar/Bat Mitzvah Kiddush and Celebration Policies and Costs**

#### **Shabbat Kiddush Spaces**

On most Saturday mornings, the Sanctuary Service uses the Sanctuary for services and Hirsch Hall or Upper Hirsch Hall Lobby for Kiddush; Minyan M'at uses the 5th floor for services and for Kiddush; the West Side Minyan uses the 6th floor for services and the 2nd floor for Kiddush on the second and fourth Saturdays of the

month, and Minyan Rimonim uses the 6th floor for services and the 2nd floor for Kiddush on the first and third Saturdays on the month.

If there is a change in location of services because of a Bar or Bat Mitzvah or other celebration, and if Ansche Chesed's maintenance staff must arrange the set-up and breakdown of religious articles and equipment (platforms, bookcases, etc.), then the Bar or Bat Mitzvah family is charged a \$120.00 fee.

### **Open Kiddush in Hirsch Hall on Shabbat**

A Kiddush in Hirsch Hall open to everyone who has attended Shabbat services is a wonderful way to celebrate, and Ansche Chesed very much wants to encourage it! Consequently, the space use fees for Hirsch Hall are sharply reduced when the reception is open to the community. Families are asked to cover the costs, as follows:

If the family purchases platters for the congregation and their guests (up to 200 people total), there will be no fee. Ansche Chesed will provide tablecloths, paper goods, plastic cutlery, tea, coffee and one case of seltzer water. For a Kiddush for over 200 people, there will be a \$150 fee to defray the costs of additional tablecloths, cutlery, cups and plates. The family should consider purchasing additional beverages. We will provide buffet tables for the food, and five round tables with ten chairs at each table for seating. **This is considered a cold plattered "drop-off" Kiddush and does not include the use of the Ansche Chesed ovens for any hot food.**

If the reception requires additional tables and seating, the fee is \$150.00. (Ansche Chesed has about 300 chairs and 22 sixty-inch round tables, as well as 20 rectangular tables.)

If the reception has on-site, paid catering staff or paid wait staff, an additional fee of \$150.00 is charged. (The fee is charged, because Ansche Chesed maintenance staff must spend time orienting, helping, and troubleshooting for the caterers). **We will also need a certificate of insurance and a \$500 deposit from the caterer and/or any outside wait staff.**

### **Reservation of Hirsch Hall for Shabbat**

Ansche Chesed members of at least one year may reserve Hirsch Hall on a "first come, first served" basis up to three years in advance of their event. Non-members may not reserve or rent space on Shabbat.

When Hirsch Hall is used for a member's private party, Hirsch Hall Lobby must remain available for the Sanctuary Service's Kiddush.

As a general rule, Ansche Chesed cannot accommodate private parties during Jewish holidays or during other periods of heavy use.

### **Fees for Private Party in Hirsch Hall**

Any event that is open only to invited guests is subject to a space use fee, as follows:

- Afternoon reception: 2 hours – \$800.00
- Afternoon reception: More than 2 hours, up to 4 hours – \$1,320.00
- Evening receptions: 4 hours – \$1,750.00

### **Fees for Gym Use**

A large luncheon or party that requires the use of the gym space adjacent to Hirsch Hall will incur a fee of \$880.00. **Please note that the gym is only available for rental in addition to Hirsch Hall and cannot be rented by itself as a separate space.**

### **Other Fees**

For opening the West End Avenue doors (in addition to the handicapped-accessible entrance on 100th Street), the fee is \$110.00.

The cost for a **Havdalah Bar/Bat Mitzvah Service** is as follows:

- Sanctuary Service: \$660 if no reception held at Ansche Chesed
- Sanctuary Service: \$440 if reception follows service
- Chapel Service: \$330 if no reception held at Ansche Chesed
- Chapel Service: \$250 if reception follows service

### **General Notes**

If the celebration incurs costs in multiple categories, please add the costs to arrive at the total due. All fees must be paid in advance of the date of the celebration. For private luncheons or other parties, half of the fee is due six months in advance of the event.

Families who cannot afford these costs are asked to speak with the Executive Director.

All fees are subject to change. However, once a contract has been signed, Ansche Chesed will honor the dollar amount specified in the contract.

Every caterer, and every family who sponsors a luncheon or party, is expected to leave the kitchen clean, so that it is ready for the next user. (Refer to Kitchen Protocol).

### **Kitchen Protocol for Caterers at Ansche Chesed**

It is expected that every caterer will treat the Ansche Chesed premises professionally and leave the kitchen in an immaculately clean condition. At a minimum, all caterers must follow the instructions below. Failure to do so may require Ansche Chesed to withhold part or all of the caterer's \$500 deposit. Repeated failure to follow these instructions may result in the caterer's business being barred from Ansche Chesed.

After each event

- Floors must be swept and mopped (even when the floor appears clean).
- Tables and tabletops must be cleaned, with no sticky residue left on them.
- Refrigerators and other appliances must be left clean. Any items that the caterer or anyone else will return to pick up must be marked, "Property of \_\_\_\_\_, will be picked up on \_\_\_\_\_." Items not marked or remaining after marked date may be removed at the caterer's expense or forfeited.
- Ansche Chesed is extremely serious about the disposal of trash. All trash must be bagged according to New York City guidelines for recycling, and must be removed according to the instructions of Ansche Chesed's maintenance staff. When catering a Saturday event, please remember that the garbage will sit uncollected until Monday; it must be packaged extremely securely. If improper trash handling by the catering staff creates extra work for Ansche Chesed's maintenance staff, the caterer will be charged for Ansche Chesed's staff time.
- Garbage, dirt, and leaks must be swept and mopped as they occur.
- Ansche Chesed's trash cans must be left clean and empty.
- Caterers may not store anything at Ansche Chesed, except as directly related to a Shabbat event. For Shabbat events, food and supplies may be stored from Friday until Sunday or until Monday at 8:00 am. All items must be picked up the next business day after the event. *All items belonging to the caterer must be clearly labeled; Ansche Chesed premises are in constant use and labeling is the best way to insure that a caterer's supplies are not used by others.*

If, upon entering the kitchen, the catering staff finds conditions unsatisfactory, the catering staff must immediately notify the Anshe Chesed office or the Anshe Chesed maintenance staff to help clean up. On Saturdays, find Tony Vicioso, the maintenance supervisor, for assistance.

## **Anshe Chesed Policies for Smachot and Space Rentals**

1. Deliveries and pick-ups will be permitted ONLY during the hours approved by Anshe Chesed staff. **ABSOLUTELY NO DELIVERIES OR PICK-UPS ON THE SABBATH.** This includes food, flowers, wine, rental equipment, and anything at all.
2. Your caterer must send a copy of the **proof of liability insurance coverage plus a \$500 deposit check** to the Anshe Chesed office before the caterer uses the Anshe Chesed kitchen.
3. All garbage and trash must be bagged according to New York City regulations. Bagged garbage must be brought out through the kitchen door onto West End Avenue, following the instructions of the maintenance staff.
4. Kitchen sinks, counters, and ranges must be left clean.
5. Kitchen floor must be swept clean and mopped.
6. KASHRUT MUST BE OBSERVED. For information about Anshe Chesed kashrut policies, please call the Anshe Chesed office or Rabbi Jeremy Kalmanofsky.
7. Anshe Chesed's rules governing photography and music on Shabbat must be observed:

**Music:** At private gatherings held at Anshe Chesed, music may be played, provided that the music is appropriate to the spirit of Shabbat or holiday. Volume and selection of music should be carefully considered. If there is any question, please contact Rabbi Kalmanofsky. Party hosts should be aware that many Jews regard the playing of music on Shabbat and holidays as a violation of Jewish law; playing music on holy days may offend some of their guests.

**Photography:** Under traditional definitions, photography is a more serious infraction of Shabbat than playing music. Accordingly:

- a) No professional photography is permitted in Anshe Chesed on Shabbat or festivals.



- b) No photography is permitted in locations used for public gatherings on Shabbat and festivals.
- c) Non-professional photography is permitted in private gatherings held at Ansche Chesed on Shabbat and festivals, but hosts should be aware that some guests may object.

**8. Candle lighting is NOT permitted on Shabbat.**

## **Ansche Chesed Kashrut Policy, April 2010**

### **SCOPE**

Ansche Chesed's *Kashrut* policy applies to all individuals and groups in the synagogue, including all synagogue employees. The policy applies everywhere in the synagogue's premises, including the Sukkot. It applies both to food to be shared communally, and to food individuals will eat themselves.

It does not apply to the long-term tenants in the spaces they rent on an annual basis, or those who use those programs.

### **WHEN QUESTIONS ARISE**

As local Halakhic authority [*mara d'atra*], Ansche Chesed's rabbi rules on *Kashrut* questions for our facility.

Should there be a time when Ansche Chesed does not have a rabbi who serves as *mara d'atra*, the Board of Trustees should appoint a *Va'ad HaKashrut* of knowledgeable members to fill that role.

### **ANY MEAT MUST BE PREPARED UNDER RABBINIC SUPERVISION**

Any meat meal in AC must be prepared in its entirety (including bread, side dishes, dessert and condiments) by a commercial establishment under rabbinic supervision. Prior approval of the caterer by Ansche Chesed and on-site supervision by a *mashgiach* is required. (We have a list of approved caterers we are glad to provide.) Members can make arrangements to use the kitchen in Hirsch Hall to cook meat themselves, for which they must provide rabbinic supervision, either through AC's own rabbi or another supervisor acceptable to him/her. In no circumstances may anyone bring meat cooked at home into the synagogue.

### **KOSHER HOMES MAY PROVIDE COOKED DAIRY AND PAREVE FOOD**

In homes that keep kosher according to Ansche Chesed's definition (see below), one may cook dairy or *pareve* food and bring it to Ansche Chesed for private or group consumption.

### **NON-KOSHER HOMES MAY PROVIDE UNCOOKED FOOD OR PURCHASE KOSHER FOOD**

In homes which do not keep kosher according to Ansche Chesed's definition (see below), one may prepare cut raw fruits & vegetables, or salads, including tuna salad, with all kosher ingredients, for private or group consumption at Ansche Chesed. Those who live in non-kosher homes may also purchase and bring packaged certified kosher foods.

(Note that canned tuna requires *Kashrut* certification, since certain brands cook their tuna in chicken broth. Non-certified brands might also not be "dolphin-safe." Such brands by definition include a non-kosher animal in their product.)

### **COMMERCIAL ESTABLISHMENTS**

The rules articulated above apply to private homes, and are designed to enhance all community members' sense of belonging, and their ability to contribute to communal meals. They do not apply to restaurants, delis and caterers.

Since no non-kosher restaurant or caterer would meet Ansche Chesed's standards for *Kashrut*, it is impermissible to bring in any cooked food from a non-kosher restaurant or caterer – for example, cheese pizza from non-kosher establishments, and fish or vegetarian food cooked at an otherwise non-kosher restaurant. This applies also to non-certified bagels and breads purchased from restaurants that also sell non-kosher meat or shell fish.

**In summary: Commercially prepared cooked food may be brought into Ansche Chesed only if it is prepared under rabbinic supervision.**

### **BAKED GOODS**

Ideally, breads and other baked goods should be purchased from a bakery under rabbinic supervision. (In our day, these are abundant. Most Hot & Crusty and Zaro's locations are clear about which of their products are under supervision. Fairway's baked goods are under supervision.

Also, one may bring un-certified baked goods into Ansche Chesed if the bakery sells or uses no meat or shell fish products; if it uses no pre-mixed dough, icings or other products; and if it uses only kosher products (butter, vegetable oils) to grease its pans. Note that Halakha frowns on, but does not forbid, the use of dairy breads, since bread is so often eaten with meat. If you purchase commercially baked bread without *Kashrut* certification, please ascertain whether it is *pareve* or dairy.

Obviously, all Ansche Chesed communal meals will be *pareve* or dairy, but participants may wish to know, as they may have eaten meat earlier.

### **WHEN IS KASHRUT CERTIFICATION REQUIRED?**

Many different foods brought to Ansche Chesed to be shared for communal meals require a recognized *Kashrut* symbol, such as the O-U, Star-K, Kaf-K, Triangle-K or any number of others. (A non-exhaustive list of common certification symbols can be found at [www.kashrut.com/agencies/](http://www.kashrut.com/agencies/).) A simple “K” usually is not sufficient. (However for some companies, like Kellogg’s cereals, a “K” is backed up by a recognized supervisor.) Similarly many types of ingredients that go into home-cooked food brought from kosher kitchens to Ansche Chesed require certification.

In general, processed and cooked foods, those with additives and those whose ingredients are unclear need certification. Raw and single ingredients foods generally do not.

The following foods require no certification:

- Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables (including those cut up by grocery stores)
- Pure fruit juices, including those with grape sweeteners (Though traditional Halakha bans unsupervised grape products, our policy is to permit these, which are often used as ingredients in other juices.)
- Dry grains, legumes and beans
- Dried fruit
- Dry roasted nuts and nuts still in the shell. (Oil roasted nuts should be certified.)
- Honey
- Olives
- Extra Virgin olive oil
- Milk
- Coffee and tea are acceptable from any restaurant (This applies both to purchasing coffee and tea for your own preparation, and to purchasing prepared coffee from an otherwise non-Kosher restaurant, since the urns used for hot water and coffee handle only this item)
- Cheeses and wines need no certification, as discussed below.

This list is not exhaustive. When uncertain about whether a food needs certification, please consult the rabbi.

What about certified Vegan processed foods, such as those bearing the “V” symbol of Vegan Action, or [Vegan.org](http://Vegan.org)? While *Kashrut* laws are not the same as Vegan

strictures, and therefore it is unwise to confuse these eating systems; in practice, these products are probably acceptable to every Anshe Chesed member, and may be brought to share with others.

### **FISH**

Fresh or smoked fish of a kosher species (fins and scales, no shell fish) may be purchased at any market. If the fish must be sliced, please ensure that the knife used is wiped clean first. Many stores have kosher tables, which are preferred. A list of kosher species can be found on the internet [www.kashrut.com/articles/fish/](http://www.kashrut.com/articles/fish/).

Raw fish, like Sashimi (i.e. fish only) is acceptable from a kosher species. When accompanied by cooked rice, it should not be brought into the synagogue without certification.

Conservative practice permits the eating of swordfish and sturgeon; however, because many Conservative kosher-keeping people do not follow this ruling, if you contribute these fish to any communal meal, please place a sign on the dish, so people can choose accordingly.

### **WINE AND CHEESE**

In keeping with common Conservative practice, all domestic cheeses and all wines are permitted for consumption at Anshe Chesed.

One should not use wine without rabbinic supervision for rituals and blessings. Non-certified domestic cheeses may be permitted on two grounds: 1. the USDA may be relied upon when it certifies that the milk in a cheese comes only from kosher animals; and 2. coagulants used in cheese production are themselves kosher ingredients. Some authorities in previous eras argued that even animal-derived coagulants should be considered kosher. But in our era, almost all industrial cheese production in America uses microbial coagulants, and thus should be considered kosher by all.

Please note that some in the Anshe Chesed community do not eat non-certified cheese. If you are making a dairy dish with cheese and you have the choice to use a brand with a *hekhsher*, it would satisfy a larger number of people and therefore is preferable. The popular brands Cabot and Sorrento are certified kosher. Here, too, those cooking with non-certified cheeses might put a sign on the dish to allow others to choose accordingly.

## **FOOD MUST BE NOT PURCHASED OR PREPARED IN VIOLATION OF SHABBAT AND HOLIDAYS**

Food brought into Anshe Chesed may not be cooked on Shabbat, and may not have been purchased on Shabbat or the *Yom Tov* days of major holidays.

It is permissible in Jewish law to cook on *Yom Tov* days – the first two and final days of *Pesach* or *Sukkot*, as well as *Rosh HaShanna* or *Shavuot*, when they do not fall on Shabbat. Thus, one may cook – though not shop – on a *Yom Tov* morning and bring the food to share that day.

This is to be stressed in particular with respect to food brought to eat in the *Sukkot*. It is not permissible to purchase food on the first two or final two days of major holidays or on Shabbat and bring it to Anshe Chesed.

## **PASSOVER RULES**

On Passover, no food cooked in any private homes may be brought in to Anshe Chesed. Only sealed, packaged food and drink, bearing certification from a rabbinical supervisor may be brought anywhere in the building. This applies to our staff and annual tenants as well.

## **DEFINITION OF A KOSHER HOME**

Different households will practice *kashrut* as they determine. For purposes of Anshe Chesed's communal *Kashrut*, the following practices constitute having a Kosher home.

Exclusively kosher foods are brought into the home:

- All meat and poultry is purchased from a kosher butcher or is prepackaged and has Rabbinic certification.
- Only kosher fish – that is, those with fins and scales – are used. Shell fish and eels are not used. A list of kosher and non-kosher species can be found on the internet [www.kashrut.com/articles/fish/](http://www.kashrut.com/articles/fish/). Conservative practice permits the eating of swordfish and sturgeon, although many people do not follow this ruling. (Some Orthodox authorities also eat swordfish.)
- All packaged, canned, or frozen products are certified kosher, or are checked to be sure they contain no non-kosher ingredients. (As noted above, it is preferable not to rely on a kosher-by-ingredient approach, but such a home may still be regarded as kosher.)
- Commercially cooked food must come from establishments that are under Rabbinic supervision.
- Commercially baked goods must come from establishments described.
- All wines and cheeses are permitted.
- Eggs are checked for blood spots and spotted eggs are discarded. (Checking is especially necessary for “free-range” and organic eggs. For regular “factory

eggs” this practice is not necessary, but a blessing alights on the scrupulous). In all events, if blood is found, the eggs must be discarded.)

Meat and dairy dishes are completely separated in the kitchen:

Separate dishes, pots, pans, utensils and flatware are used for meat and dairy foods. Utensils that become non-kosher are properly koshered. (Kashering processes should be discussed with Rabbi Kalmanofsky.)

These dishes, pots, utensils, etc. are washed separately. Separate sponges, cloths, towels are used. Meat and dairy dishes are not washed together in the dishwasher. Products (including those labeled "non-dairy") are checked for milk derivatives, such as casein, sodium caseinate and lactose, if they are to be used with meat.

## **Ansche Chesed Sanctuary Service Bar/Bat Mitzvah**

### **HONORS CHECKLIST**

***Mazal tov!*** We look forward to celebrating your child’s bar/bat mitzvah in the Ansche Chesed Sanctuary.

It is customary to honor members of the bar/bat mitzvah family with roles in the service, from opening and closing the Ark to having an aliyah. This sheet describes the honors that you may assign to family members and friends. Once you have decided whom to honor, please fill in the form below and either drop it off at the Ansche Chesed office or email it to the Sanctuary Service Committee at [SSC@AnsheChesed.org](mailto:SSC@AnsheChesed.org). If you have questions about honors or about any other aspect of the bar/bat mitzvah, please do not hesitate to contact Josh Hanft at [jhanft@AnsheChesed.org](mailto:jhanft@AnsheChesed.org) or 212.865-0600, x209.

#### **Ark Opening and Closing**

When the Torah is brought out of the ark for reading, and again when it is returned after reading, we give people the honor of opening and closing the ark doors. Please designate two to four people for each of the two occurrences of this honor. Young children may accompany adults for this honor. (Non-Jews may also be invited to take this honor).

## **Aliyot**

An *aliyah* is the honor of being called to the *bimah* to recite blessings before and after the Torah is read. The weekly Torah reading is divided into seven sections (*aliyot*) plus an aliyah for the person who will chant the haftarah (usually the bar/bat mitzvah). The bar/bat mitzvah family is entitled to assign up to four *aliyot* in addition to the one for the bar/bat mitzvah. You may group people to share an *aliyah* if you like, although the *bimah* can get crowded if more than three people are called together. *Please note that we ask men who are given an aliyah to wear a tallit and kippah, and we encourage women to do the same. Both kippot and tallitot are available at the synagogue.*

On the form, please list the people you would like to have *aliyot* in the order in which you would like them called. Usually the parents of the bar/bat mitzvah take the last of the family aliyot. Please list the honorees' Hebrew and English names, for example, *Yitzchak ben Abraham v'Sarah, Dina bat Ya'akov v'Leah.*

Please note: only Jews may be called for an aliyah. Non-Jewish parents (or other close relatives) of the bar/bat mitzvah may accompany their Jewish relatives and stand beside them at the Torah. We have an English blessing non-Jewish parents can say at that time.

## **Hagbaha/Gelilah**

At the end of the Torah reading, one person lifts and displays (*hagbaha*) the Torah and another person ties it and dresses it (*gelilah*). The Torah weighs 20-25 pounds; the one who lifts it needs some strength and experience. If the person you designate to lift the Torah has never done it before, we recommend that he (or she) arrive before the service to practice. *Note: these honors must be taken by Jews.*

## **Candy**

Ansche Chesed provides soft candies for members of the congregation to toss at the bar/bat mitzvah after the haftarah reading, symbolically wishing him/her a sweet life. You may designate people – usually children – to distribute the candy to congregants.

## **Kiddush/Motzi**

The bar/bat mitzvah family sponsors Kiddush following services. We ask that Kiddush (blessing over wine) and Motzi (blessing over challah) be made in the sanctuary at the end of services. Often families have the bar/bat mitzvah child, a parent, grandparent or tutor do this. The synagogue provides a challah for the Motzi. Note that we say the full Kiddush for Shabbat afternoon, not only the *borei p'ri ha-gafen*. The rabbi or hazzan can give you a copy of the Kiddush if you need it to practice in advance.

**BAR/BAT MITZVAH HONORS** for

Bar/Bat Mitzvah's

Date of

English Name \_\_\_\_\_ BMtz: \_\_\_\_\_

**Opening/Closing the Ark before the Torah reading (2-4 people):**

ENGLISH NAME

RELATIONSHIP

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

**Aliyot** (up to 4, not including the Bar/Bat Mitzvah). Please list the people to be called in the order they will be called. The parents usually take the last of the family aliyot. Typically families take aliyot #4-#7, as indicated. If for some reason – such as to correspond to the Torah sections being read by other family members – you'd like your family members or friends to take a different number aliyah, please let us know by writing that number in the chart below.

Aliyah #	Hebrew Name(s)	English Name(s)	Relationship
<b>4</b>			
<b>5</b>			
<b>6</b>			
<b>7</b>			



**Bar/Bat Mitzvah's Hebrew Name:**

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**Hagbaha (Lifting Torah):**

English name

---

Relationship

---

**G'lilah (Dressing Torah):**

English name

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Relationship

---

**Opening/Closing the Ark after the Torah reading (2-4 people)**

ENGLISH NAME

RELATIONSHIP

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**Kiddush/Motzi:**

Who is sponsoring Kiddush?

---

Who will say the blessings?

**Kiddush** (over wine)

---

**Motzi** (over challah)

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**Who will distribute the candy? (2-4 kids)**

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## **Hotels, Florists and Locations of Parking Garages**

### **Parking Garage Locations**

West 96th Street (between West End Avenue & Riverside Drive)

West 101st Street (between Amsterdam Avenue & Broadway)

West 97th Street (between Broadway & West End Avenue)

### **Hotels**

#### **Amsterdam Inn**

340 Amsterdam (at 76th Street)

212-579-7500

#### **Days Hotel Broadway**

215 West 94th Street (between Broadway & Amsterdam Avenue)

212-866-6400

#### **Beacon Hotel**

2130 Broadway (between 74th & 75th Streets)

212-787-1100

#### **Hotel Lucerne**

201 West 79th Street (between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue)

212-875-1000

#### **Newton Hotel**

2528 Broadway (between 94th & 95th Streets)

212-678-6500

#### **Hotel Riverside**

350 West 88th Street (between West End Avenue & Riverside Drive)

212-724-6100

### **Florists**

#### **Surroundings Flowers - Steven Buckwald, President**

2675 Broadway (at 102nd Street)

New York, NY 10025

212-580-8982

steven@surroundingsflowers.com

www.surroundingsflowers.com

*\*Mention you are from Anshe Chesed to get a 10% discount*

#### **Roni Bennevat**

514 West End Avenue, #16C

New York, NY 10024

212-729-6859  
ronib@nyc.rr.com

**Embassy Florist**

2458 Broadway (at 91st Street)  
New York, NY 10024  
212-724-8604  
212-724-8253

**Flowers By Special Arrangement**

575 Amsterdam Avenue (at 87th Street)  
New York, NY 10024  
212-595-0200

**Harlem Flo**

Louis Gagliano  
2292 Frederick Douglas Blvd (@123rd Street)  
New York, NY 10027  
212-316-3031  
[www.harlemflo.com](http://www.harlemflo.com)  
info@harlemflo.com

**Plant Shed**

209 West 96th Street (between Broadway and Amsterdam Avenue)  
New York, NY 10025  
1-800-753-9595  
212-662-4400  
email: [info@plantshed.com](mailto:info@plantshed.com)

**Note: This list is for information only. Ansche Chesed does not have enough specific information about the parking garages, hotels, and florists listed on these two pages to make recommendations.**