

# MIDRASHA RETREAT HANDBOOK

2009/2010

5770

A Program of the Jewish Community Federation of the Greater East Bay Center for Jewish Living and Learning in cooperation with Midrasha in Berkeley, Contra Costa, Tri-Valley/Tri-City, and Oakland



# **An Introduction to CJLL's Midrasha Retreat Program**

As part of the Midrasha learning experience, the Center for Jewish Living and Learning (CJLL) offers your teen 3 outstanding weekend retreats designed to complement weekly classroom curriculum. These weekend retreats are the culmination of a unit of study which utilize creative approaches in informal education to further encourage the students to explore and enjoy their classroom studies and experiences. The staff for CJLL retreats includes Midrasha teachers from the varied campuses and Jewish educators from around the Bay Area and from Israel.

The **Etgar** retreat program for 9<sup>th</sup> graders provides an introduction to experiential learning for many of our teens. The focus of this program is a multi-faceted exploration of Jewish identity through text study, discussion, debate, games, simulations, and other activities.

### **Principal themes for Etgar:**

1. Who am I, Why am I? Students will be exploring the concept of identity.
2. My relationship *to* others and *with* others. Students will talk about relationships, and participate in “secrets” and “fishbowl” activities.
3. Jews in the world and the world of Jews. Students will discuss worldwide Jewry and the idea of Tikkun Olam.

The **Kesher** retreat program takes place in two tracks. Kesher Aleph, the 10<sup>th</sup> grade program, focuses on Israel in its historical, cultural, and political depth. This year, Kesher Bet, the 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade program, engages students in analyzing and exploring what it means to be a part of the American Jewish community. The Kesher Bet curriculum alternates themes each year. This year, Kesher Bet.

### **Principal themes for Kesher Aleph 2009-10:**

1. The history of the State of Israel. Students will explore the visions and creation of the State of Israel.
2. The Modern State of Israel today. Students will learn about the people, places and cultural diversity of Israel.
3. Israel of the future. Students will create their own meaningful relationship to the people, land and culture of Israel,.

### **Principal themes for Kesher Bet 2009-10:**

1. Where did we come from and who are we? Historical developments in the American Jewish community.
2. Challenges of the Day. Contemporary issues being discussed in the American Jewish community.
3. Who is in Charge? Evaluating the contemporary growth and analyzing the future of the American Jewish community.

As past and present students continue to tell us, the retreat weekends are a vital part of realizing the social and educational potential of the Midrasha program.

## Midrasha Retreat Calendar

Retreat	Retreat Date	RSVP Due Date
Etgar 1	October 23-25, 2009	October 14, 2009
Keshet 1	December 11-13, 2009	November 23, 2009
Etgar 2	January 29-31, 2010	January 11, 2010
Keshet 2	February 26-28, 2010	February 8, 2010
Etgar 3	April 23-25, 2010	April 5, 2010
Keshet 3	May 14-16, 2010	April 26, 2010

## About Midrasha Retreats

### Retreat Attendance Procedure

**You are required to RSVP for each individual retreat.** Several weeks before each retreat date, you will receive an informational email that links you to a web page requesting the information we need to get you signed up for the retreat. If you do not have email or require assistance with the system, please call Loal Isaacs, CJLL Program Director, at 510-839-2900 ext. 267 or email [loal@jfed.org](mailto:loal@jfed.org). **We cannot guarantee bus space unless we receive your RSVP by the due date, which is noted on the retreat calendar.**

### The Camp Site/ Emergency Contact

This year's retreats are held at Camp Newman, located in the beautiful hills off of Highway 101 near Santa Rosa. Camp Newman has a strong tradition with Jewish teens from the Bay Area and we are elated to be returning back to the facility.

### Getting to and from camp

To ensure the safety of our students, retreat transportation is provided by a professional bus charter company. All drivers undergo extensive background checks and training. In order to arrive at Camp Newman before the onset of Shabbat, buses must leave in the early afternoon. If this causes a conflict with teachers, coaches, or school administrators, you may contact the CJLL. We will provide you with a letter that explains the religious necessity of your child's absence from school. **Absolutely no student may drive to or from a retreat without prior approval from the CJLL.** If special concerns necessitate an early departure, late arrival, or student driving, parents must contact the CJLL at [loal@jfed.org](mailto:loal@jfed.org) in advance to make special arrangements and fill out the required paperwork.

## **Food at camp**

All food provided on retreats is Kosher Vegetarian. The Camp Newman commissary will be koshered for our retreats to uphold Jewish dietary laws. The kashrut of the commissary is overseen by Rabbinic authority.

As our country has begun to be more health conscious in the last few years, so have we. Our students are served healthy, fresh, and plentiful food that is prepared every day by the Camp Newman kitchen staff. Additionally, snacks and fresh fruit are available throughout the day. There is no need to supplement food with snacks from home. **We ask that students not bring food to retreat as it attracts and is harmful to the natural wildlife in the area, makes a mess in the cabins and on the grounds, and may compromise our kashrut standards.**

If your child has special dietary needs, please inform our office. We will convey these needs to the kitchen director at Camp Newman.

## **Medical Provisions at camp**

We have a full time EMT as part of our retreat staff. In the event of a medical emergency, emergency services will be called. You will be notified about any non-routine accident or medical incident that occurs. Please do not send a sick child to camp. If a student is too sick to participate in the organized programs, parents will be required to pick up the student.

**If your child is taking any kind of doctor-authorized prescription or over-the-counter medication (such as Tylenol or aspirin) while attending a retreat, please notify the CJLL in advance by email or phone. The EMT staff member will dispense medicine only if you have indicated that this is acceptable on the registration form.**

Please inform CJLL Program Director, Loal Isaacs, of any special medical or psychological conditions that may arise during retreats or over the course of the year. If for some reason you did not include important physical or psychological information about your child on the Midrasha registration form, please contact 510-839-2900 x267 or e-mail loal@jfed.org. All information will be kept confidential.

## **What to Bring**

A typical retreat weekend requires the following items:

- Comfortable, **warm** clothing for evenings (sweaters, jackets)
- Closed-toed shoes/sneakers
- Socks and undergarments
- Daytime apparel that can accommodate hot days
- Rain gear dependant on weather
- Pajamas
- **Sleeping bag & Pillow**
- **Water Bottle**
- **Towel and toiletries (tooth brush, tooth paste, bathing items, feminine products as applies, etc.)**

Please do not bring valuable items, and please remember that we aim to uphold a community standard of modesty.

**Inappropriate dress includes short skirts or shorts, revealing tops, or clothing which references (through slogans or imagery) drugs, alcohol, sex or violence.**

**For your safety, please do not bring flip-flops to camp. The terrain is uneven and it is easy to lose your footing. Staff members may ask students to change into more appropriate shoes or clothing if deemed necessary.**

### **Shabbat observance and practice**

Our Shabbat observance is designed to meet the needs of a pluralistic Jewish community. Given that our modes of observance might be different from what students are accustomed to at home, we ask students to approach Midrasha Shabbat practices with an open mind. Students will participate in traditional rituals including Kabbalat Shabbat and Shabbat morning services, and end Shabbat with an outdoor musical Havdallah service.

1. Buses are scheduled so that students arrive at the retreat site before the onset of Shabbat.
2. Shabbat begins with a community candle lighting service followed by Friday evening services. The Midrasha Shabbat experience includes educational activities, study, time with friends, community building, and prayer.
3. We require the following observances in public spaces:
  - ✓ No use of audio or visual devices (i.e. cd players, ipods, radios, MP3 players, cameras).
  - ✓ No activities involving the creation of art or writing.
  - ✓ No musical instruments may be played.
  - ✓ No microphones may be used.
  - ✓ No fires or candles lit.
4. We use a unique Midrasha *siddur* (prayer book) designed to engage the students in the spiritual and learning process of prayer.
5. Appropriate blessings are recited before and following each meal.

### **Payment procedure**

The three retreats are a complete package. Each retreat builds upon the prior one, both socially and educationally. **There are no refunds given for missed retreats.** Your fees support full-time staff and fixed operational costs. These obligations do not permit us to provide partial weekend payment options.

## Sample Midrasha Retreat Schedule

(Note: The italicized words are the Hebrew terms we use on retreats. New students will learn them quickly.)

### Friday:

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>
4:00	Bus arrival/check-in/snack.
5:30	Community welcome
6:00	<i>Kabbalat Shabbat</i> (Friday evening Shabbat services).
7:15	<i>Aruchat Erev</i> (dinner).
8:30	<i>Oneg Shabbat</i> (Friday evening activity).
9:45	Snack/late night rooms (variety of elective activities)/bunk time.
11:30	Lights out.

### Saturday:

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>
8:15	Wake-up/breakfast.
10:00	Community <i>T'filot</i> (Saturday morning Shabbat services).
12:00	<i>Aruchat Tzohorayim</i> (lunch).
1:00	<i>Peulah 1</i> (Saturday afternoon activity #1).
2:30	<i>Chugim</i> (optional activities)
4:00	<i>Peulah 2</i> (Saturday afternoon activity #2).
5:30	<i>Menucha</i> (rest or down time)
6:30	<i>Aruchat Erev</i> (dinner).
7:15	<i>Havdallah</i> (Outdoor song circle and candle service, followed by Israeli dancing).
9:00	Saturday Night Spectacular (dance, talent show, etc.).
11:30	Lights out.

### Sunday:

<u>TIME</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>
9:15	Wake-up/check-out/camp clean-up.
9:45	Sunday-morning brunch.
10:30	Sunday morning activities
11:15	Closing circle.
12:00	Buses depart.

This is a sample schedule. Times and components may change based on time of year, age of group, and programming requirements.

## Code of Conduct

Please review the enclosed Code of Conduct with your child. Note that both parent and student must sign, date, and return the enclosed copy of the code of conduct to:  
Center for Jewish Living and Learning - 300 Grand Avenue Oakland, CA 94610. Attn:  
Loal Isaacs Or fax: (510) 839-3996

## Code of Conduct

1. Our Midrasha learning community is guided by principles of respect and integrity that must be upheld at all times; disrespectful behavior or violence of any kind directed at staff or other students will not be tolerated.
2. Smoking of any kind on Midrasha retreats is prohibited.
3. Possession or use of illegal drugs or alcohol on Midrasha retreats is strictly forbidden and will result in immediate dismissal from the retreat and will jeopardize future participation in CJLL sponsored activities. The CJLL reserves the right to suspend students from participation in retreats and Midrasha/Teen School classes temporarily or permanently based on harmful or illegal behavior.
4. Maintaining safety for all participants is our priority. Students are not allowed to leave the boundaries of Camp Newman or the boundaries designated by CJLL staff without permission.
5. Students are expected to maintain community standards of personal behavior. Inappropriate sexual relations are prohibited. regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.
6. Matches, cigarettes, chewing tobacco, firearms of any sort, lighters, and firecrackers are not allowed at our camp site, and will be confiscated if found.

**A violation of the above will result in removal from the retreat community and program, immediate parent communication and can be grounds for immediate dismissal from the retreat .**

7. Your active presence throughout all of the retreat programming is essential for community building and success of the program. Attendance at all retreat activities and meals is mandatory. No one is allowed to leave activities or meals without the permission of your bunk staff. Evening curfews must be observed. Students must return to cabins at the designated times. Students may talk softly after curfew as long as their voices cannot be heard outside of the cabin and students who wish to sleep in their cabin are able to do so.
8. We expect students to be sensitive to the varying levels of Shabbat observance of their peers and to not take photographs, use hair dryers, play amplified music, radios, or play musical instruments in public spaces during Shabbat.
9. As guests of Camp Newman, we need to be responsible caretakers during our retreats. Property and facilities of the camp are not to be abused or defaced in any way. Students are responsible to pay for any damage they may cause to the retreat site. In cases of cabin damage for which no one student claims responsibility, common cabin inhabitants are jointly and severally responsible to pay for the damages as determined by the retreat site owners.
10. Food should not be brought to retreats as it attracts animals, makes a mess in the cabins, and may compromise our supervision of Kashrut.

**Note:** There are no refunds for students who are either suspended or expelled from the program.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Student Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Print Student Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Parent Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Print Parent Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## **Directions to Camp Newman**

**4088 Porter Creek Road**

**Santa Rosa, CA 95404**

**Phone: (707) 571-7657**

### **From the East Bay:**

Take Interstate 80 East (Sacramento) and stay to the left. Then take 580 West (San Rafael). After crossing the Richmond Bridge, follow the signs to 101 North. Take Interstate 101 North. Once you reach the city of Santa Rosa, **exit River Road Guernville**. Do not take the Guernville exit, rather take the River Road Guernville exit!! Bear right off of the ramp and follow Mark West Springs Road for approximately 7.5 miles, eventually the road will turn into Porter Creek Road. The Camp entrance will be on your right. Park at the bottom of the hill in the lot directly on the right as you enter camp.

### **From San Francisco:**

Take Interstate 101 North for about an hour. Once you reach the city of Santa Rosa, exit River Road Guernville. Bear right off of the ramp and follow Mark West Springs Road for approximately 7.5 miles, eventually the road will turn into Porter Creek Road. The Camp entrance will be on your right. Park at the bottom of the hill in the lot directly on the right as you enter camp.

### **From the Sacramento Area:**

Take Interstate 80 West (San Francisco). Then take Hwy 12 toward Napa/Sonoma. Turn right at Hwy 29 (North). Follow Hwy 29 for about 30-40 minutes through the wine country (Napa, Yountville, Oakville, Saint Helena). At the first stop sign after downtown Calistoga, turn left on Petrified Forest Road for approximately 4.7 miles, and turn right on Porter Creek Road. The camp entrance is about 1 mile down Porter Creek Road on the left-hand side. Park at the bottom of the hill in the lot directly on the right as you enter camp.