

Frequently Asked Questions + Packing List
Congregation Beth Shalom's Benei Mitzvah Retreat
at Camp Guyasuta
May 12-14, 2023

“Fire for Torah”

1. What will we be doing over the course of the weekend?

This weekend is about building relationships. Relationships with each other as individuals, as classes, as families, and as a community. As we connect with each other, we will explore what it means to your family to participate in the Bat/Bar Mitzvah process through the lens of “Fire for Torah.” We’re going to play games, eat meals, pray, learn, and relax together.

You will receive a detailed schedule of all programming shortly, but some highlights include: a Saturday night campfire, a ropes course, a walk through the camp grounds, and meaningful discussions.

The programming will be entirely run by Rabbi Mark Goodman, Rabbi Seth Adelson, Youth Director Marissa Tait, and JJEP Director Rabbi Larry Freedman.

2. Where will we be?

Camp Guyasuta is affiliated with Boy Scouts of America, and is located in a beautiful, wooded enclave in Sharpsburg, just over the Highland Park Bridge. It is about a 20-minute drive from Squirrel Hill. In addition to rustic, outdoor accommodations, it also includes a conference center with dorm rooms, where we will be staying.

PLEASE NOTE: Apple’s iPhone navigation app has had difficulty finding Camp Guyasuta. We suggest you use Google Maps or Waze or something else.

3. When do I have to get there? Must I stay the whole time?

We ask that you and your family arrive by 5 PM, so please make the appropriate arrangements. This will allow you plenty of time to prepare physically and spiritually for Shabbat. Registration will open at 4:30 PM. The weekend and its programming will continue until Sunday morning at 10:30 AM and it is our expectation that all participants will remain until the end, unless there is a serious emergency.



There is value in spending Shabbat and a weekend together. This 41-hour, immersive experience will help us build a sense of connection and community.

4. What are the expectations for Shabbat?

Shabbat is a time set apart from the rest of the week. From lighting candles on Friday evening until *havdalah* on Saturday night, we are granted special time for contemplation, *oneg* (enjoyment), and an opportunity for greater connection. We will be expressing this Shabbat spirit through our services, festive meals, singing, and relaxing. While you may be unaccustomed to some of these guidelines, we urge you to try on this immersive Shabbat experience!

In public spaces, we ask that everyone respects the group's Shabbat experience. In order for all of us to engage at our highest potential, we urge everybody to avoid using electronic devices and appliances in the common areas, this includes: mobile phones, cameras, flashlights, etc.

Books, board games, sports equipment, and so forth are all welcome and encouraged! Feel free to bring your favorites!

In case of emergency, we will have access to the outside, Camp Guyasuta has staff on-site at all times, and St. Margaret's Hospital is nearby.

5. What will the younger kids be doing?

While there will be opportunities for families to be together, we will be providing programming for younger siblings throughout the weekend. We expect that children who are not with their parents will be participating in our planned programs. Whenever children are not in programs, they are the responsibility of their parents.

6. Should I bring my teenager?

Yes! This retreat is for the whole family. While we will have programming for teens, we hope that the teens will be an example for everyone by assisting in running other activities for younger children as *madrikhim* (counselors).

7. What are the sleeping arrangements?

The conference center contains an adjacent building with dorm rooms that sleep eight people. It is our intention for each family to have their own room. We ask that you bring your own sleeping bags and/or bed linens. There are shared bathrooms, so we ask that you bring your own toiletries and towels. More information is available on the Camp Guyasuta website.

8. What about the food? When do we eat?



All food provided will be kosher. Throughout the weekend, snacks and coffee will be available in the common area. During Shabbat we will be having communal Friday night dinner, Shabbat Lunch, and Se'udah Shelishit (third meal). Breakfast on Shabbat and Sunday will also be available. We will ask that everyone takes a turn to help assist in setting up and cleaning after meals. According to Camp Guyasuta's rules, alcoholic beverages are not permitted.

If you have special food considerations, please let us know on the registration form.

9. How do I sign up?

The deadline for registration is May 1, and may be found at <https://bethshalompgh.org/pre-benei-mitzvah-retreat-2023/>.

We need a definite head count early to plan carefully for the retreat, hire extra staff, so please sign up as soon as possible.

Please note that there are a limited number of rooms in the Guyasuta conference center, so we strongly recommend that you sign up early.

10. How much will it cost?

\$360 per family. If you have any concern for covering this fee, please be in touch with Rabbi Adelson.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please contact Rabbi Goodman at mgoodman@bethshalompgh or 412-421-2288. We are excited for you to join us for the weekend!



Recommended Packing List - Beth Shalom Family Retreat

(not an exhaustive list)

General:

- Sweatshirts, sweaters, light jackets (it will be cool outside at night)
- Sports/outdoor clothes: shorts, t-shirts, sweatpants
- Sneakers/comfortable walking shoes
- Rain jackets/ponchos (We hope we won't need these, but just in case!)
- Hats (baseball type)
- Socks - we leave it up to you, but we note that there are tick warnings this year and they advise that ankles be covered whenever outdoors.
- Pajamas, slippers.

Shabbat dress (for Friday night and Saturday morning):

- Men: Khakis or other casual pants that are not jeans
 - Button down shirt
 - No ties! Jacket optional.
- Women: Casual skirt/or pants that are not jeans
- Comfortable walking shoes (avoid heels)

Non-clothing items:

- Bedding: Sleeping bags or sheets and blankets / pillows. (Bunk beds are provided; bedding is not.)
- Towels
- Basic toiletries, including soap (they say Irish Spring helps keep bugs away)
- Necessary medications
- *Tallit / tefillin / kippah* (*Tallit* and *tefillin* are expected for men who are *bar mitzvah*, and women are also encouraged to take on these *mitzvot*. If you do not have these things, please let Rabbi Adelson know; the synagogue has a few extra sets of *tefillin*.)
- Bug spray (not sure if we need this or not, but it couldn't hurt)
- Flashlight
- Sunblock (We hope we will need this!)
- Water bottle
- Baseball glove/Frisbee/tennis racquet and balls / board games; make sure your own personal stuff is labeled! (Camp does provide basic sports equipment, this would be to supplement, as you wish.)
- Camera (for Friday before Shabbat and at havdalah and afterward; not for use on Shabbat itself)
- Instrument (guitar / violin / accordion / trombone / maracas / kazoo etc.) for the Saturday night campfire sing-along

