

Ideas for Planning a Conservation-Conscious Bar/Bat Mitzvah

“When God created the first human beings, God led them around the Garden of Eden and said: “Look at my works! See how beautiful they are – how excellent! For your sake I created them all. See to it that you do not spoil and destroy My world; for if you do, there will be no one else to repair it.” (Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:20)

Planning/General Considerations:

- Consider the various materials and items you need for the celebration. Many of them can probably be borrowed or rented or may not be necessary at all – sometimes less is more! If you have to buy, choose green products.
- Ask close friends and relatives if they would like to pitch in by bringing homemade food or a hand-made centerpiece.
- Buy green by choosing local, organic, recycled, or fair trade products.
- If you can't go completely green, try committing to two or three things that are most important to you and your family.

Invitations:

- Order your invitations from the Jewish National Fund (www.jnf.org). For each invitation you purchase, they will plant one tree in Israel.
- Send an electronic invitation (www.evite.com; www.paperlesspost.com) instead of a formal invitation and/or have your guests email you their response instead of including a response card.
- Print invitations on 100% post-consumer recycled paper processed without chlorine. Include a short line encouraging guests to recycle the invitations.
- Create a website for your event with all of the travel, lodging, directions and other details you would include in the invitation.

B'nai Mitzvah Service:

- Use kippot the synagogue offers instead of purchasing your own.
- Print your Shabbat flyer on 100% post-consumer recycled paper.

Kiddush or Party:

- Make home baked desserts for the Oneg/dessert table.
- Donate extra food from your event.
- Choose a caterer who serves food made from organic, local sources.
- Rent flatware, dishes and glasses in lieu of disposable plates and cups. Or choose biodegradable, compostable items.
- Serve local beer and wine instead of varieties that are shipped long distances.
- Avoid bottled water and have carafes of water at each table instead.

Flowers and Centerpieces:

- Look for a florist that uses local, organic flowers.
- Use potted plants instead of cut flowers. The plants can be given as gifts or can decorate your home after the party is over.
- Make centerpieces using recycled or reused items or items that can be donated after your event.

Giveaways:

- Limit prizes and giveaways.
- Donate the money you would have spent purchasing material items to your favorite organization. Let your guests know that their “giveaway” was a charitable donation.