

TEMPLE ALIYAH Community Retreat
at Camp Avoda – May 24 – 26 2019
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. What are accommodations like?

Camp Avoda is a beautiful rustic setting. Most families will be assigned to cabins that are divided into two main sleeping areas and one shared living room space. In the shared space there is a bathroom with four separate toilets and sinks. The living space makes it comfortable for parents and older children to enjoy social time while younger children sleep. Showers are located in a separate central location. They are clean, private, and close to all cabins. In addition to these cozy cabins, there are a very limited number of private bedroom/bath options available. These private housing options will be held in reserve and assigned by special request. Sleeping spaces are not heated but are very comfortable. Everyone must bring their own linens. Sleeping bags are an easy option that will work on all mattresses regardless of size.

2. How will we observe Shabbat and Jewish rituals as a community?

We work hard to make this retreat a comfortable one for everyone. In general, we will be following the traditions of Conservative Judaism during the weekend. Wherever possible we will be involving all those attending, adults and kids and drawing on our knowledge base in our services and rituals whether it is during tefillot (prayer services) or for birkat hamazon (grace after meals), and zemirot (songs). Tefillot (prayer services) are egalitarian and very family friendly. There will be plenty of delicious meals and snacks served so please do not bring any food into camp. We are asking families to observe Shabbat in all public areas. Please do not plan to drive into, out of or around camp on Shabbat. Please do not use phones, Ipods, CD or MP3 players or electronic games on Shabbat. We will be observing Shabbat in a casual camp setting. We suggest clothing that is **comfortable and casual**, appropriate for a rustic setting as well as for Shabbat. Use your own discretion.

3. What sports facilities are available for use?

Sports and outdoor activities are very much a part of the recreational and free time during Shabbat at our retreat. We will be able to use all of Avoda's sports facilities including the softball field, tennis courts, volleyball court, basketball court, hockey court and soccer field. Camp Avoda will loan us volleyballs, bats, basketballs, soccer balls, and some hockey equipment. Feel free to bring your own sports equipment, including your own gloves, bats, tennis rackets and balls, soccer equipment, etc.

4. Is there a beach? Where can we swim?

Camp Avoda is adjacent to a beautiful lake. There is a beach with sand. We will use the lake for swimming and boating **if it is warm enough**. Remember, it will still be May and the water may not have warmed up sufficiently for swimming. We will be the first group using the camp after the winter. This means that the beach may not have been prepared yet for summer use and the docks will not be in place. The beachfront and lake are certainly usable if it's warm. There will be lifeguards on duty when the waterfront is open on Shabbat afternoon. There will be boats and canoes available for use. Although there will be lifeguards on duty, we are asking that one parent per family accompany their child(ren) to the lake at all times. Please tell your child(ren) that they may not go near the lake unless they are accompanied by a supervising adult, and only when the lakefront is "open" (lifeguard on duty).

5. What supervision and programming is available for the children?

High school / college students will be working as counselors (madrachim) for portions of the weekend. Most are our very own Temple Aliyah teens/staff. The children will be divided into age-appropriate groups and assigned to madrichim who will be with the kids whenever there are planned group time activities during the weekend. Age appropriate activities will be planned for each group. Parents are ultimately responsible for their own child(ren) during the weekend. Children will not, of course, be required to participate in their group's activities but we hope they will choose to be involved. Should your child be unwilling or unable to participate in his/her group, you will be responsible for supervision of your own child.

6. What is Shmirah?

Shmirah or "staff patrol" is a real value for families with young children. There will be either adults or counselor staff on "patrol" checking on the areas where children are sleeping from 9 p.m. until 11:30 pm on both Friday and Saturday night. There will be a "**shmirah request**" sign in your retreat folder (which you will receive upon arrival Friday afternoon) to place on the outside of your bunk door indicating that children are asleep and no adult is present. This "**shmirah request**" sign will alert the shmirah patrol to enter the room to check on the child(ren) inside. When parents return, they will be asked remove this sign to end this shmirah patrol service.

7. Communication with the "outside world"?

While we request that cell phones be kept out of all public areas on Shabbat, rest assured that there is excellent cell phone service at Camp Avoda in case of emergency. There is wireless internet in some of the buildings.

8. What if someone needs to reach me in an emergency?

So that you can feel secure without your cell phone in public areas on Shabbat, and in case of a true emergency only, here is the cell phone of Ronni Guttin, our local retreat coordinator for the camp: 401-465-1516. Ronni will get any emergency message to you as quickly as possible. If absolutely needed, the direct line into the office at camp is 508-947-3800.

9. What if there is an emergency at camp?

We have the name and phone number of a local physician, as well as directions to the closest hospitals (Beth Israel Deaconess in Plymouth).

10. What if I need access to a refrigerator/freezer?

There will be access to a refrigerator/freezer for anyone that needs. Ronni Guttin, our Avoda retreat coordinator will be happy to assist and accommodate those who require access.