

Policies on Inclusion of Non-Jews in the SAMS Community

Background: Although non-Jews cannot be members of SAMS, we want to uphold an atmosphere and attitude that is as welcoming and inclusive as possible within the bounds of *halakhah* (Jewish practice.) To that end, the following guidelines are meant to provide a community standard which delineates the boundaries between Jews and non-Jews in the ritual and religious life of the synagogue:

I. Marriage

- A. In the event that a member is celebrating an interfaith wedding, either for themselves or their child, we will inform the synagogue community via the typical channels (email, announcements, etc.) using language which clearly differentiates the nature of the wedding, such as: "The family is happy to announce..."¹
- B. We cannot provide an *aufroF* or *shabbat chatan* for the Jewish partner of an interfaith partnership. However we will offer an *aliyah* to the Jewish partner (and/or their parents) in the week before or after their wedding without any special recognition.

II. Family Life

- A. The birth of a Jewish child born of an interfaith partnership should be announced and celebrated exactly the same as if both parents are Jewish.
- B. If the child is not Jewish, we will inform the synagogue community via the typical channels (email, announcements, etc.) using language which clearly differentiates the status of the child such as: "The family is happy to announce..."²
- C. At B'nei Mitzvah, a non-Jewish parent can stand with their child during the 'tallit ceremony', the parents' blessing, and the recitation of the *petarani* blessing (if applicable) by the Jewish parent.

III. Death and Mourning

- A. We will send out notices of deaths, funeral arrangements, and *shivah* times if the deceased is a non-Jewish relative of a community member.
- B. Our *chevra kadisha* (burial society) will fully support a community member mourning their non-Jewish relative including a complete *shivah* and arranging for evening services at

¹ As opposed to the typical language of "We, as a community, celebrate with..."

² As opposed to the typical language of "We, as a community, celebrate with..."



their home if wanted. In lieu of the typical memorial prayers (*hashkavot, el malei rachamim*) we would use an English interdenominational prayer.

- C. The mourner is encouraged to say *kaddish* regardless of whether their deceased relative was Jewish.
- D. Non-Jewish spouses should be encouraged to be 'Friends of SAMS' and/or pay the burial scheme fee and can be buried in the JJBS Woodland Cemetery.³

IV. Community

- A. Anyone is entitled to provide *kiddush* for the community, so long as it meets community standards.
- B. Non-Jewish children who are involved in the community are encouraged to attend Cheder as well as other youth and family events. Every inclusion of non-Jewish children should be seen as an opportunity to help them develop their connection to Judaism. At the conclusion of Cheder, the rabbi will consult with parents to consider whether the child wants to continue their Jewish education. At that point, and before they can begin training for B'nei Mitzvah, they will need to be converted by the European Masorti Beit Din.

V. Service Participation

- A. It is our community norm that non-Jews do not take a ritual role in services. This includes reading a poem or giving an address at B'nei Mitzvah.
- B. Only Jewish adults can be given the honour of opening the ark (*petichah*).
- C. All children prior to the age of B'nei Mitzvah can come up during *Anim Zemirot*.
- D. Non-Jews may be invited to address the congregation in the prayer hall or in other community facilities. However, this cannot take the place of the sermon and must be after the conclusion of services.

Rabbi Adam Zagoria-Moffet

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³ From JJBS's website: Jewish members and their non-Jewish partners can be buried in single, double-depth graves in either the woodland or the lawn sections of the Woodland Cemetery. Non-Jewish partners can become Burial Subscribers of participating synagogues and pay an annual fee towards their funeral costs; alternatively they can receive a non-member's funeral at a discounted rate.