



## ISRAEL CONGREGATION OF MANCHESTER

### THE ROLE OF NON-JEWS AT ISRAEL CONGREGATION OF MANCHESTER

*Revised July 2016*

*(Prior Policy Approved September 2005)*

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The involvement of non-Jews in congregational life allows the congregation to be welcoming while simultaneously preserving its role as a house of Jewish worship.

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#### **1 | Congregational Membership for Non-Jews**

- A. A non-Jew who is married to a Jewish member, or divorced/widowed/separated from a Jewish member, or is the custodial guardian of a Jewish child, may be a member of Israel Congregation.
- B. The Board of Directors has the discretion to confer non-voting honorary memberships upon deserving recipients, irrespective of religious affiliation.

#### **2 | Religious School Participation**

Children of interfaith relationships may enroll in the Israel Congregation Religious School provided that they are not receiving formal instruction in another religion.

#### **3 | Holding Office and Chairing Committees**

Board positions, including board leadership and chairing of permanent committees are open only to Jewish congregants. Non-Jews may be appointed to chair non-permanent “special” committees at the president’s discretion.

#### **4 | Counting Toward Minyan**

Non-Jews are welcome to attend worship at Israel Congregation, however, their presence does not count toward the required ten adult Jews that constitute a minyan.

#### **5 | Leading Worship**

All worship at ICM is led by a Jewish person; appropriate opportunities to participate in the prayer service are always available to non-Jews.

## 6 | **Torah Rituals**

Non-Jewish congregants may accompany a Jewish family member to the bimah when they are honored with an *aliyah*, *bagbab* (lifting the Torah), *gelilah* (wrapping the Torah), or carrying the Torah. Non-Jewish congregants are welcome to participate in ark openings and closings.

## 7 | **Synagogue Use for Interfaith Weddings**

The synagogue may be used for interfaith weddings, in accordance with the congregation's Building Use Policy.

## 8 | ***Brit Milah* (Covenant of Circumcision) & *Brit B'not* (Ceremony for Baby Girls)**

Interfaith couples are welcome to participate in covenant rituals for their children that include:

- In addition to the non-Jewish spouse, inviting non-Jewish family member(s) (supportive of the family's Jewish involvement) to the bimah
- Saying the *Shehecheyanu* blessing
- Offering personal prayers and supplementary readings
- Speaking about why the child's name was chosen

## 9 | **B'nai Mitzvah**

Interfaith couples are welcome to participate in their child's *bar/ bat mitzvah* in the following ways:

- Being present on the bimah when Jewish family members are honored with reciting a blessing
- Saying the *Shehecheyanu* blessing
- Offering personal prayers and supplementary readings
- Presenting the *tallit* to their child
- Participating in the "Torah Passing"
- Opening and closing the Ark
- Addressing personal remarks to their child
- Conferring with the rabbi to plan the service and other details of the *bar/ bat mitzvah*
- Working on social action and/or study projects

## 10 | **Aufruf**

ICM honors couples becoming married with an *aufruf*, an *aliyah* to the Torah. The interfaith partner is welcome to participate in:

- Being present on the bimah when the Jewish spouse is honored with reciting the *aliyah* blessing
- Saying the *Shehecheyanu* blessing

## 11 | **Marriage**

Please discuss with the rabbi