

PREPARATION OF MIKVAH CANDIDATE

1. Directions to mikvah (UAHC can supply these).
2. Familiarize candidate with the two blessings.
3. Go over the physical preparation for mikvah and answer questions about what to expect from the bet din (see sheet).
4. Remind female candidate that she must arrange the appointment at a time when she is not menstruating.
5. Explain the process of immersion and the importance of three complete immersions and when to recite the blessings.

Suggested Mikvah Procedures

1. The sponsoring rabbi selects two possible morning dates (Monday-Friday or Sunday) that are convenient for the conversion candidate and him/herself as well as for the other two members of the bet din.
2. For Teaneck mikvah appointments, the sponsoring rabbi contacts Kathryn Kahn at the UAHC in Paramus, 201-599-0080. She will make the appointment and confirm it with the mikvah. Appointments at West Orange mikvah will be arranged by the sponsoring rabbi. **The conversion candidate should not arrange the appointment.**
3. On the morning of the mikvah, the rabbi or cantor and two witnesses arrive 10 minutes early in order to greet the candidate when s/he arrives.
4. Candidate is shown mikvah facilities, assigned dressing room, etc.
5. The bet din (consisting of rabbi or cantor and two witnesses) occurs before immersion and the questioning may last about 15 minutes. Questions are designed to be non-intimidating, to draw out the candidate's feelings towards conversion and Judaism and to inform the bet din of his/her sincerity and general knowledge. Atmosphere is informal and reassuring. (See enclosed suggested questions and topics).
6. When bet din discussion is completed, the candidate enters the dressing room, disrobes and showers, wrapping sheet around the body. Candidate indicates that s/he is ready by using buzzer in dressing room or knocking on door.
7. At this time, one of the witnesses joins candidate to supervise the three immersions and assist with the two blessings if necessary. The first blessing is recited after the first immersion; the second blessing is recited after the second immersion. The other members of the bet din listen outside the door to waiting room to hear the candidate recite the blessings. Door can be open an inch to insure that blessings are audible.
8. After three immersions, the candidate goes back to dressing room to dress and then rejoins the three witnesses in the waiting room.
9. Witnesses sign all certificates necessary and remain to greet the new Jew by Choice when s/he re-enters the waiting room. A final presentation, benediction or Shehecheyanu may then be recited to give closure to the ritual.

TEVILAH (IMMERSION)

The entire body should be immersed at one time and every part of the body should be in direct contact with the Mikvah water. Any separation between the skin and water renders the immersion invalid. Consequently, all dirt, cosmetics, nail polish, threads, hair pins, jewelry, dentures, contact lenses, band-aids, adhesions such as adhesive plaster, water repellent substances such as ointments, MUST BE REMOVED!

PREPARATION

- *Remove all hair pins, nail polish, cosmetics, jewelry, cotton plugs, dentures, contact lenses, band-aids, etc.
- *Bathe entire body with hot water and soap—pay special attention to hairy regions of the body.
- *Trim the finger and toe nails to remove all dirt, torn cuticles and dried/loose skin.
- *Clean nose and ears.
- *There must be no food particles in teeth—either brush, use tooth pick or dental floss and rinse mouth with water.
- *Remove any dried blood from skin wounds by soaking in warm soapy water.
- *Shower with warm water followed by careful combing and brushing of hair.
- *Make final inspection by tactile self-examination—pay special attention to removal of loose hair that may have fallen during the combing process.

IMMERSION

- *Body should be relaxed, limbs slightly separated, eyes and lips gently closed.
- *Avoid unnatural contortions.
- *Immerse in a semi-squatting position—arms held away from the body.
- *Immerse once, stand erect, eyes upward, arms folded beneath heart and recite the Blessing.
- *Immerse again.