

TEACHING BAR MITZVAH BOYS

One of the requirements of my contract was that I teach the Bar Mitzvah boys of all members. In order to give each boy the maximum opportunity to do his best, I would start with each boy a year before his Bar Mitzvah. In this way, if the boy was capable of doing the entire perasha, it was a ‘feather in the boys’ cap’ and it made the family very proud. During the first several years of my tenure, there were no more than four or five boys per year becoming Bar Mitzvah. In later years, however, the average had been ten boys coming to my home each week to study for an hour each. This kept me very busy. When I was still working for Boeing, this did not leave much of a family life. However, my retirement from Boeing in July, 1995, allowed me more time for other things. In 1997, I gave notice of my intention to retire at the end of 1999. Although feeling physically fit for someone my age, being hazzan precluded any long vacations because I had to find people within the synagogue to read perasha in my absence. There was no one in the synagogue capable of reading an entire perasha unless they were given a few weeks’ notice, and, even then, it

would have been too much of a burden for them. Arranging for a weeks' vacation meant assigning the various sections of the perasha of the week I would be gone, to several people. It was a luxury when I was able to take more than one week at a time.