

Bar and bat mitzvah parties – accommodating all three generations

Most bar and bat mitzvah parties are attended by three distinct groups. The bar/bat mitzvah kid and his/her peers, the parents and their peers and the grandparents and their peers.

Needless to say, their tastes (in relation to food, music and entertainment – among other things) will often differ.

So how do you create an event that works for them all?

It's actually not difficult – you just need to get the following basic things right.

What to eat

Of course it goes without saying that food needs to be good and plentiful. However, there's no harm in serving the kids a different menu or even a completely different catering option. Your child may well be a gourmet in the making, but his or her mates won't be passing critical judgement on whether the *beurre blanc* – although excellent with the sea bass - had sufficient acidity. They'll be delighted with burgers, pizza, goujons and the like. Mini fish 'n' chips, nicely presented in newspaper or fabulous American style hot-dogs – perhaps from a hot-dog cart – that's the kind of thing that'll go down a treat. A little gimmick like that makes them feel their food is special.

Also, remember that while your adults might be happy to sit for an hour and a half at the table, the kids will have munched their way through main course and dessert in 20 minutes – all the more reason to tailor things accordingly and then get the kids involved in some other activity while the adults enjoy their meal.

What to do

Typically a bar/bat mitzvah party will involve a bit of side entertainment (mainly for the kids) before the meal, speeches during or just after the meal and a disco for the remainder of the evening.

Entertainment, however, comes in all shapes and sizes and you need to make sure that everyone is indeed entertained and engaged by what you offer. Equally, nobody should be forced to endure something that may, quite simply, just not be their cup of tea.

Prior to the meal, your adults will generally be happy to mix 'n' mingle, provided they have a drink in their hand and the occasional nibble. Your kids on the other hand will need some kind of distraction or activity. If the kids are occupied with something, your adults can relax and enjoy that first part of the evening. There are of course all kinds of activities one can choose from and depending on the venue, you may opt to locate them away from where your adults are. If they share a room, go for options that are not overly loud as that will impact your other guests. Remember – a loud activity may not be one which is intrinsically loud, but one that stirs up the volume around it through cheering etc. Table football is a prime example.

Although we suggest segregating certain activities, let's not forget that one of the most moving things about these occasions is the very fact that there are three generations present. And it is possible to capitalise on that fact by incorporating a communal activity into the event. We once organised a drumming workshop which worked brilliantly and drew everyone together. It only lasted just over half an hour so wasn't too intrusive in the overall scheme of things.

What to listen to

Another way in which we try to create those magical three-generation moments is on the dance floor. Our DJs are adept at that and there is nothing more satisfying than seeing our clients boogying away on the dance floor with their kids on one side and parents on the other.

Getting the play list right is of course vital, and again, this is where the expertise of our DJs reaps rewards. Get it wrong and your party has ended prematurely. The music has to be balanced so there is something for the 'oldies' and something for the kids ... but having said that, the kids do love dancing to a lot of the old standards. They may of course be dancing 'ironically', but either way, they're having a great time! YMCA, I Will Survive and any ABBA song – they all work.

Naturally there'll be a few among your guests who will have already hung up their dancing shoes – so they need somewhere comfy, away from the PA, where they can see out the remainder of the evening, glass in hand and within earshot of their friends. The last thing you want is the 70+ exodus as the disco kicks in.

Where to sit

Whatever format your event takes, you need to ensure there is plenty of seating for your older guests (and that's not just the grandparents' generation – no-one likes standing all evening with plate in one hand, and a precarious fork-glass combination in the other). Even if you have stand-up buffet / bowl food catering, some seating options must be available throughout the event – from the drinks reception through the meal and during the disco or other post event entertainment. And, as mentioned above, the seating needs to be a good distance from the PA.

Where to park

It may seem trivial, but if you plan to have a good contingent from the the grandparent generation, you'll need a venue that's easily accessible and that offers parking on site. It is a small thing, but an awkward journey and the possibility of parking issues will create unnecessary anxiety – and you don't need that!

So it's not about compromise – it's about balance. You don't have to water everything down to the lowest common denominator – that'll just ensure you end up with a very ordinary and average event. Be bold, be brave but do it wisely and the result will be something spectacular that everybody enjoys.

For further information or help with your simcha, contact KP Events – 020 8883 7411 or via www.kpevents.co.uk