



Shabbat Morning Service Guide

Welcome to Temple Beth Israel!

We are so glad you are joining us for our Shabbat services. Shabbat is a sacred time. Beginning at sundown on Friday and lasting until nightfall (three stars) on Saturday, it is a time for rest, mindfulness and connection in community. The practices we observe during Shabbat here at Temple Beth Israel are designed to facilitate that spirit of connection. We hope you will enjoy observing Shabbat with us.

If you are not familiar with our Shabbat morning services, we hope this guide will help orient you to what is happening here. But please do not use this to the exclusion of human connection! Our regulars are happy to help you find your page, or a drink of water, or explain what is going on. Please do not be shy!

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Ritual Items

Outside of the entrance of the sanctuary, there is an array of items you might want to use:

Our *siddur*, or prayer book, is the maroon book on the rack with the words *Kol Haneshamah: Shabbat V'Chaggim*, written on its spine. Most of the songs and prayers we will recite throughout the service are found in this book. It has most of what we do in Hebrew, English translation, and English transliteration (Hebrew words spelled out in English characters).

The *chumash*, or Torah Book, is on a different rack. These books contain the full text of the **Torah**, the Five Books of Moses that begin the Hebrew Bible, and from which we read a selection each week. We have two different editions of *chumashim*: the *Etz Chayyim* (maroon) edition and the Hertz *Pentateuch and Haftarahs* (navy blue). You are welcome to use either one to follow along in our **Torah service** (see further on).

We encourage but don't require everyone to wear a *kippa* (Hebrew) or *yarmulke* (Yiddish), one of the small, colorful head coverings in the box outside the sanctuary. The head covering is a sign of respect and acknowledgement of the Divine presence above us.

If you are a Jewish adult, we encourage you to wear a *tallit*, a fringed prayer shawl, especially if you plan to approach the Torah. The *tallit* derives from a commandment in Numbers 14, and is a ritual object only worn by adult Jews.

Children's Participation

At Temple Beth Israel, children are an important part of our community and are welcome at services, either in the main sanctuary or the family room.

We have parts of our service that we specifically welcome children's leadership and energy. In most services, we invite young children to join the *Shaliach Tzibur* (prayer leader) for:

- Singing Halleluyah (Psalm 150) during P'sukei D'zimra
- Opening the Torah Service, including the Torah Processional
- Returning the Torah to the ark, including the Torah Processional

In most services, we invite older children to join the *Shaliach Tzibur* for:

- Opening and Closing Torah Service
- Eyn Keloheyenu and Aleinu

There are also parts of our tradition and community that are times of deep introspection and prayer. **During the *Barchu/Call to Prayer*, the entirety of the *Amidah*, and the *Mourner's Kaddish*, we thus ask everyone, regardless of age, to remain quiet and to avoid moving about the space to the extent possible.**

If you (or a child for whom you are responsible) cannot remain still and attentive during those prayers, please leave the sanctuary prior to the beginning of the prayers, though if an urgent need comes up, we understand that happens sometimes. The Family Room (with a window into the sanctuary and the sound system piped in, just beyond the sanctuary) is a welcoming alternative for children during this time.

Practices for the Sanctuary

Once you have the ritual items you'll be using, how shall you engage with the space?

First of all, we hope you will be comfortable! You are welcome to sing along or be silent, to move about for most of the service if you feel restless, head out to use the bathroom or get a drink of water, and attend to the needs of any small children with you.

You will generally behave appropriately if you sit when the rest of the community is seated and stand when everyone else is standing. If you have challenges with prolonged standing, however, you are welcome to sit as needed. For more details on the choreography, see the “Order of the Service.”

We do request that you observe these practices:

- Because of our **Shabbat** practices, we ask that you respect the sacred space of the sanctuary by:
 - Turning off your phone while you are in the building
 - Refraining from writing while in the sanctuary
 - Refraining from use of any electronics (such as photography or other kinds of recorders)
- Because the **Siddur** and the **Chumash** both contain sacred text, we ask that you treat them reverentially, placing them in the back of the seats in front of you or on the seat beside you when you are not using them, rather than on the floor.
- Because this is a communal prayer experience rather than a performance, we do not applaud, even when a leader has led something beautifully. The traditional appreciative response to service leadership is the phrase “**Yishar koach**,” loosely meaning, “done in strength.”

Order of the Service

On a typical Shabbat, our service lasts about two hours and fifteen minutes, and moves through the following elements. On a day when we celebrate a lifecycle, such as a baby naming or bat/bar mitzvah, the service can take more than half an hour longer.

Below is the flow of a typical service:

- **Birkot haShachar**, or “Blessings of the Dawn” (selections from pages 141-175) include a series of prayers designed to help us arrive, present and grounded in our own bodies and souls to greet the day, as we give thanks for awakening, for our working bodies and for the little things.

- ***P'sukei D'zimra***, or “Verses of Song” (selections from pages 177-245) include Psalms and other hymns designed to widen our perspective as we open to the blessings and grandeur of Creation.
- ***Bar'chu*** (“Bless!”) on page 247 is the official call to worship and beginning of communal prayer, after the soul “warm-up” described above. It is a call-and-response affirmation that we are gathered in a community of at least 10 adult Jews, praying together. The community typically bows as we make our response.
- ***Shema u'Virchoteha***, or “Shema and her blessings” (selections from page 248-291) includes two long prayers, one (“*Yotzer Or*”) describing the vastness of creation and the cosmos, and the other (“*Ahavah Rabbah*”) naming that despite how small we are, we are loved eternally by the Divine.

Those prayers culminate with ***Shema*** (literally, “Hear!”), our core statement of affirmation of the unity of Divinity and of all of reality. You will notice that some members choose to stand for ***Shema***, while others follow the more traditional practice of staying seated. You may do whichever feels comfortable. It is followed by ***Mi Chamocha***, a reminder of the redemption our ancestors have experienced from the time of the Exodus onwards.

- The ***Amidah***, or “Standing” (pages 295-323) is the core section of the service, based on both personal and communal prayer. Sometimes this prayer opens communally and then transitions to silence after the first three blessings. Sometimes the leader will choose to do the somewhat more traditional and lengthier silent, individual recitation followed by a full repetition out loud.

Some notes for the Amidah:

- We begin by taking three steps back, then three steps forward, symbolizing an entry into the Holy of Holies.
 - We request that you do not move about the space during this focused prayer time.
 - We encourage you to focus fully on your prayer experience. When you are finished, you are encouraged to take three steps back and then you are welcome to sit. If there is a silent prayer followed by out loud repetition, it is customary to stand again for the beginning of the repetition, and be seated after the third prayer (end of page 305).
- During the **Torah Service**, beginning on page 383, we remove the sacred Torah (a parchment scroll containing the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, handwritten by a scribe) from the ark, parade it around the room and read a weekly selection from it.

Some notes for the Torah service:

- It is customary and respectful to stand and face the Torah at any point in the service when the Torah is lifted or being carried.
- While a congregant reads from the text, you may want to follow along in the **Chumash**.
- We invite different groups of people to approach the Torah for an **Aliyah** (lit. “ascension”), for the honor of blessing. If you feel the invitation applies to you (for example, if the leader invites anyone who is praying for healing, and you are praying for healing), you are welcome to approach, even if this is your first time here.
- We ask Jews who approach for an **aliyah** to wear a **tallit** (see above). We ask non-Jews who approach for an **aliyah** to refrain from verbalizing the blessing out loud, as it particularly gives thanks for the gift of Torah to the Jewish people.

On special occasions, such as a baby naming or bar/bat mitzvah, the **Torah Service** may include extra singing, blessings, and a speech about the lessons of the weekly **Torah** reading.

The **Torah Service** closes with a second parade of the scroll around the room, before it is returned to the ark.

The service closes with a few closing prayers, found in the **siddur** on pages 443-459.

After the services close and you have returned the books to the cart, please stay for **Kiddush** (lit. “Sanctification”) in the Social Hall. We make blessings over wine/grape juice, ritual handwashing, and bread, and then enjoy lunch together. If there is a celebratory lifecycle, there might be a more elaborate luncheon provided. No matter whether you were officially invited, you are welcome to stay, eat, and get to know the community.

**We hope you have a meaningful spiritual experience
at Temple Beth Israel.**

**Please do not hesitate to introduce yourself
and ask questions!**