

Q What should I do with my cell phone and pager?

A To honor the sanctity of Shabbat and show respect for the service and fellow congregants, all worshipers must turn off their cell phones and pagers before entering the sanctuary.

Q What happens after the service?

A At the conclusion of Shabbat worship, refreshments are usually served. On Friday evening, this gathering is called an *Oneg Shabbat*, which literally means “the joy of the Sabbath.” On Saturday morning, it is called *Kiddush*, which is also the term for the blessing over the Sabbath wine. Everyone is welcome to attend and enjoy both the *Oneg* and the *Kiddush*, both members and visitors. This is also an opportunity for you to meet the Rabbi and members of the congregation.

Q What is the raised area in the sanctuary called? What ritual objects should I be aware of?

A The raised area either in the center or on one side of the sanctuary, where services are conducted, is called the *bimah*. On the *bimah* is the most sacred place in the sanctuary, the *Aron HaKodesh* or holy ark, which houses the Torah scrolls. Either in front of or above the ark hangs the *ner tamid* or eternal light, which burns constantly as a reminder of God’s Eternal Presence.

Q What is a guideline for accepted dress at Shabbat services?

A We honor the separateness and sanctity of Shabbat by wearing appropriate attire. Each congregation has its own standard of dress for Shabbat services. Customarily, business attire such as a suit, dress, nice slacks or a skirt and shirt or sweater is suitable wear. Some congregations have a more casual approach. If you are unsure, you may want to contact the synagogue office and inquire as to what type of dress is appropriate before you attend your first Shabbat service there.

If you have other questions, please do not hesitate to speak to the rabbi of the congregation at which you picked up this brochure.

“Do not separate yourself from the community.”

(Pirkei Avot 2:5)

For more information, contact:

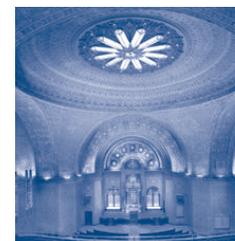
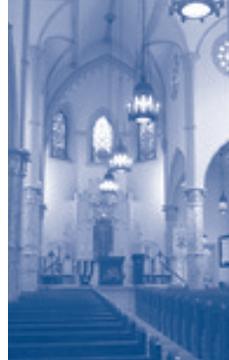


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An Introduction to Sanctuary Etiquette

*May this synagogue be,
for all who enter, the
doorway to a richer and
more meaningful life.*

Mishkan T’filah

Photos: Larchmont Temple, Larchmont, NY—Paul Warchol Photography; Temple Beth Tikvah, Roswell, GA—Ric Mershon Photography; Congregation Rodeph Shalom, Philadelphia, PA—Robert Benson Photographer; Congregation Mikve Israel, Savannah, GA—Carol Martling Photography; Orangetown Jewish Center, Orangetown, NY—Barry Halkin Photography; Society for the Advancement of Judaism, New York, NY—Elliott Kaufman Photography



SERVING REFORM CONGREGATIONS IN NORTH AMERICA



In order to make your first visit to a synagogue more enjoyable, we are providing the following information, which we hope you will find helpful.

Q When are Shabbat (Sabbath) services held?

A In Reform congregations, Shabbat services are customarily held on Friday night and Saturday morning. Check with your local congregation by using the phone book or the Union for Reform Judaism directory online at data.urj.org/conglist to find the congregation's website, phone number and information about Shabbat services. Service times may vary from week to week depending on the community and the occasion. You might ask the congregation you call if it is possible to add your name to the temple bulletin mailing list, which usually includes a schedule of all services and events.

Q How will I be greeted and how should I greet those I meet before and after services?

A When you enter the sanctuary, you may be welcomed with one of the traditional Sabbath greetings, either *Shabbat shalom*, which means "a peaceful Sabbath," or Good *Shabbes*, which means "a good Sabbath." It is appropriate to respond with either of these phrases.

Q Do I need a prayer book?

A All synagogues provide worshippers with a prayer book (siddur) on Shabbat. Some congregations offer worshippers a prayer book when they enter the sanctuary; others have prayer books in the bookracks at the seats. There are several different prayer books that the congregation may use. *Mishkan Tefilah* is a

recently introduced Reform prayer book, *Gates of Prayer* is an older Reform prayer book still in use and some congregations create their own prayer book. In addition, the *Chumash*, a book which contains the first five books of the Bible with commentary, is used by the congregants to follow the Torah and haftarah (prophetic) readings during the Friday night or Saturday morning service. Note that the congregation reads together all the italicized print in *Gates of Prayer*.

Q Should I wear a kippah? Should I wear a tallit?

A The tradition regarding the wearing of a *kippah* (head covering) and *tallit* (prayer shawl), while varying widely within the Reform Movement, applies equally to men and women. In most congregations, wearing a *kippah* is optional, and *kippot* (pl.) are provided at the entrance of the sanctuary. If it is the synagogue's custom for worshipers to wear a *tallit*, *tallitot* (pl.) will also be provided. It is important to note that a *tallit* is worn only by Jews during Shabbat morning services. In some congregations, those who recite the *aliyah* (blessings before and after the reading of the Torah) are expected to wear a *tallit*.

Q Will I be expected to participate in the service? How will I know what to do?

A Often, the rabbi or whoever is leading the services will announce the page you should be on and indicate when you are to stand or sit. You should follow that person's lead and stand or sit with the congregation. Read the prayers aloud and sing at your own comfort level.

During Shabbat services, congregants may be called to the *bimah* (pulpit) to assist in the service either by blessing the Shabbat candles and wine (only on Friday night), opening and closing the ark or reciting the *aliyah* (blessings

before and after the Torah reading). Do not be concerned that you might suddenly be invited to the *bimah* without warning. These honors are usually prearranged, and those who have them are notified in advance.

During the Saturday morning service, often before and/or after the reading of the Torah, there is a procession around the sanctuary with the Torah scroll called the *hakafah*. At that time, you may see congregants reaching out and touching the Torah scroll with either their prayer books, their hand or the corner of their prayer shawl as the Torah passes. This is a custom for Jews that conveys reverence for the Torah, although no one is obliged to participate in it.

Q When may I enter or exit the sanctuary?

A Every congregation has its own etiquette, which you can learn by observing or asking questions. Some common times when people avoid entering or leaving the sanctuary are when the ark is open, the Torah is being read, or the sermon or *d'var Torah* is delivered. Because our most reverential times occur when we are standing, you should not exit or enter the sanctuary at such times.



מה־טֹבו אֶהְלִיךָ יְעֻקֵב
מִשְׁכְּנֹתֶיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל:

How lovely are
your tents, O Jacob,
Your dwelling places,
O Israel!

Numbers 24:5