

Simcha Guidelines

The Library Minyan is an ongoing participatory community and welcomes the celebrations of *s'machot* by its members. These celebrations, while having unique meaning for the celebrants and their family, take place within the Library Minyan's ongoing *tefillot*, and thus incorporate the Minyan's traditions and practices.

There are separate, more detailed guidelines for those planning a Bar/Bat Mitzvah and an Aufruf; they are available at www.LibraryMinyan.org, the Library Minyan's website. Jewish tradition has evolved to give special, higher status to those becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah and getting married; for example, the presence of a *chatan* in the Beit K'nesset (synagogue) on a weekday was reason for the *kahal* not to say *Tachanun*, but if a Bar Mitzvah and a *chatan* were both in shul on the same day, the Bar Mitzvah would be given priority in having an *Aliyah*. (Yes, we know a birthday is important, but it's just not the same as becoming Bar/Bat Mitzvah.) These guidelines, therefore, are for other *s'machot* that can be planned for in advance, such as birthdays, anniversaries, professional career milestones, and other events of a possibly recurring nature.

We know that our members will want to celebrate other *s'machot* (such as baby naming) that do not readily lend themselves to advanced scheduling; for this reason, the Gabbaim try to reserve *Aliyot* for assignment each Shabbat to those for whom it would be particularly meaningful on that day; we appreciate your help in letting the Gabbai or another member of the Library Minyan leadership know about these occasions before Shabbat if possible.

Synagogue Honors

There are a variety of honors available during *tefillot*. No one honor is of greater status than another; after all, if nobody is given the honor of *P'ticha* at the end of the Torah Service, we will all be standing around waiting to put away the *Sefer Torah* well past the time for *Kiddush*!

Please note that since we try to make honors in the service available to all members marking *s'machot* and other events, the Library Minyan cannot guarantee that it will be possible to have an *Aliyah* – or any other honor - on any given week. Advance notice to the Simcha Coordinator and the Gabbai assigned to that week will, of course, allow us to plan in the way that is fairest to all. However, the Simcha Coordinator, in conjunction with the Library Minyan Chairperson, reserves the right to make final decisions on allocation of synagogue honors.

Each person receiving one of these honors must be Jewish in accordance with the standards of Conservative Judaism, as interpreted by the Senior Rabbi of Temple Beth Am.

Ark Openings (two people for each): The *Aron Kodesh* is opened to take out the Torah for reading, and to return the Torah after it is read. (Also, certain prayers are customarily said before an open *Aron Kodesh*, including *Anim Z'mirot* (which may be said on any Shabbat or Chag) and certain special holiday prayers.) The honor of *P'tikha* (opening and closing the *Aron Kodesh*) does not require prior skill or physical strength, other than the ability to stand in front of the congregation for 3-5 minutes. If there are people who wish to receive honor but who have little or no experience in traditional synagogue participation, this honor would be most appropriate.

Aliyah: The honor of making the blessings before and after the reading of part of the day's reading from the Torah is the most widely recognized honor.

Hagbah and Gelilah: The person honored with Hagbah must be able to lift the Torah from its position on the reader's table to a position above his or her head, in order to display the open scroll to the congregation. Out of respect to the Torah and the congregation, we cannot allow someone who has no previous experience doing Hagbah to take this honor. The person honored with Gelilah will help roll, tie and dress the Torah, but does not lift the scroll.

General Information about *Tefillot* at the Library Minyan

The Gabbai: Each Library Minyan service is arranged and coordinated by one of the Gabbaim of the Library Minyan. The Gabbai is responsible for selecting those who will be *sh'lichei tzibbur* (representatives of the community) by leading the *tefillot*, and for assigning all the honors during the service. The Gabbai is responsible for addressing any unforeseen situations that arise during the service. The list of Gabbaim, and their assignments during the current year, is online at www.libraryminyan.org/GabbaiSchedule.html.

Greeters: The Library Minyan has a “greeter” at the Chapel door to welcome newcomers who may not be familiar with our minyan, and help guests find *kippot* and *tallitot*, *Siddurim* and *Chumashim*, and seating. If you are expecting a large number of guests to celebrate your *simcha*, and many of them may be unfamiliar with the Minyan and its customs, please alert the Simcha Coordinator and suggest a friend of yours from the Minyan community to help the assigned “greeter” that week.

Prayer Leaders and Torah Readers: Those who are given the honor of leading a part of the service should be proficient in the correct *nusach* (prayer melody), and the Minyan’s ritual procedures (e.g., what is said out loud and/or silently, and whether the *Amidah* is a short version or full repetition; at least one *Amidah* should be said with a full repetition). Anyone reading Torah must know how to read with correct *trope* (melody) and pronunciation, and must be adequately prepared.

If a member of the Minyan wants to learn a new synagogue skill, we have a group of experienced volunteers who are willing to work with you to assure you that you will be properly prepared before you take on the responsibility of leading the *kahal*. Those who are new at a particular skill, or who have struggled in the past to show the required proficiency, will be required to demonstrate this preparation (either in person or by telephone) at least one week before the *simcha* so that a replacement can be available if the person is not ready.

Ritual Apparel and Attire

Attire: Although the Library Minyan does not have a formal dress code, we expect that all persons attending our services will dress with awareness of and respect for the congregation, the prayer service and (most importantly) the One to whom our prayers are directed. Please share this with your guests.

Headcovering and Tallit – For those receiving Honors: Anyone who comes before the congregation to lead any part of the service (prayer leaders, Torah readers, and those having aliyot) or receive an honor that includes carrying or holding the Torah must wear a head covering and tallit. This applies to both men and women. Please share this information with those who you would like to honor, since no exceptions will be made on the day of your *simcha*.

Tallit: The Library Minyan welcomes all Jewish adults to wear a *tallit* if it is their personal practice to do so; as noted, we require all those leading the service or taking an honor to do so. A limited number of *tallitot* are provided by Temple Beth Am.

Decorum

Each community has its own customs and standards of appropriate synagogue behavior. We hope that you will share this information on the Library Minyan’s customs and expectations with your guests.

Talking: We hope that all who attend services with us will respect the service and the leaders of the service through their attentive participation, and limit conversation to occasional quiet whispers.

Coming and Going: Traditionally, it is not appropriate to enter or leave the room during certain parts of the service: any time when the congregation is standing; any time when the Torah is being carried or read; during the recitation of *Kaddish*; and during the *d'var Torah*. We appreciate your cooperation.

Photography, Videography & Other Electronics: The Library Minyan does not allow the use of any sound or video recording devices, or any electronic devices other than the microphone system, on Shabbat or Chagim – either before or during services, or at a Kiddush/lunch afterwards. Guests who are not on-call medical professionals should silence cell phones, etc., before entering Temple Beth Am.

Throwing Candy: Temple Beth Am does not permit throwing candies and sweets at those celebrating *s'machot* with an *Aliyah*. Please ask your guests to respect this policy.

Flowers: The Minyan does not customarily decorate its davening space with flowers on Shabbat, so that we can allow as much room as possible for the people who join us at our services. Should you wish to provide a small floral piece, please coordinate it with the Simcha Coordinator and the TBA Facility Coordinator (Amy Rabin, ext. 213). In order to accommodate those who have allergies and asthma caused by pollen-bearing and strongly-scented flowers, all floral arrangements should be non-allergenic.

Kiddush

The Library Minyan is a *davening* community, but we also try to be a warm and friendly group of people. Part of the way we show that warmth is by lingering after services for *Kiddush*. The basic weekly *kiddush* is provided by Temple Beth Am; the Library Minyan maintains a small Kiddush fund to allow us to supplement that as often as possible.

As part of celebrating your *simcha* with the Library Minyan community, we hope that you will make a contribution to the Library Minyan's kiddush fund or share in the sponsorship of the congregational kiddush following the service on the week of your *simcha*. Please contact the Simcha Coordinator or Library Minyan Chairperson with questions about this.