



Etiquette for Services at Congregation Shearith Israel

Dear Friend,

We hope you find these guidelines to etiquette at Shearith Israel helpful, especially on those occasions when you invite guests, including, and perhaps especially, youngsters to join our distinctive services. Some of these guidelines are typical at most synagogues while others are standard at orthodox synagogues. Shearith Israel is a particularly traditional congregation, which takes pride in its dignified service.

If you are inviting guests to our services – and we very much encourage you to do so – especially when inviting groups of youngsters to a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, we suggest you share these guidelines with them or their parents in advance. Some people send a personalized version by email shortly before their event.

Dos:

- Head covering: Kippah for men and boys (some of our men enjoy wearing a dapper hat), a head covering for married women (kipot and doilies are available at our front door);
- Modest attire: Suits/business attire for men (hats optional), appropriate length dresses or skirts with sleeved tops for women;
- Tallitot are available for men at the entrance to the sanctuary. Feel free to quietly ask our helpful shamash for assistance;
- Take notice when the congregation stands or sits during service.

Don'ts:

- Large bags: Avoid bringing large bags or backpacks with you. Our security personnel will inspect them and as they may not be brought into the sanctuary, you will need to leave them in our unattended coatroom;
- Men's section: Do not walk in the open center area of the sanctuary. If you need to step out during services, please walk around the back of the pews and not in front of them;
- Cell phones: We ask that you leave cell phones and all electronic devices at home. But if you do have one with you, please be discreet. Make sure to have it turned off (or at least on silent) and leave it in your purse or pocket for the duration of services;
- Absolutely no checking of emails or any other smartphone programs in the sanctuary or elsewhere in the building on Sabbath or holidays;
- Absolutely no photographs/selfies may be taken any time in any location in the sanctuary or elsewhere in the building on Sabbath or holidays;
- Talking: Please keep any talking to a minimum or step outside the sanctuary;
- No chewing gum, smoking, eating, or drinking during services.

We look forward to welcoming you to Shearith Israel and hope you enjoy the experience and come often.