

Congregation Beth Shalom

Gabbi Manual

The role of the gabbi in any synagogue is important for several reasons. The gabbi is most often the first person a congregant encounters when s/he enters the synagogue. The gabbi'im responsibility is to make congregants and guests feel welcome and to help them have a Shabbat Shalom. This is particularly significant for guests or new members at the synagogue who are there for the first time, and know few, if anyone, there.

The gabbi is like the choreographer and stage manager. S/he is responsible for assigning aliyot, and for assuring that the service goes smoothly from the perspective of protocol and decorum. It is the gabbi that congregants look to when they have a question or a concern during the service.

The gabbi is the shul's chief ambassador at Shabbat services, and by being warm and friendly, the gabbi reflects the image and philosophy of the shul as being a place of worship where everyone is welcome.

Attire for gabbi'im should be appropriate for a representative of the shul on Shabbat.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Gabbi'im

Preparation and Maintenance

Plan on arriving no later than 10 minutes prior to the start of the service in order to be sure the sanctuary is ready for services. When there is a Bar or Bat Mitzvah, it is helpful to get there a little earlier because there are frequently family members and guests that have arrived early.

If one gabbi knows in advance that s/he will be unable to arrive early, please communicate with the other to be sure one of you will be there.

Before every service:

1. Put on your name tag - they are in a box on the table near the elevator
2. Check the gabbi box to see if there are any special requests for aliyot. There is a clear envelope on the outside of the box;
3. Check the Luach in the gabbi box for any special information about services that day (e.g. extra Torah's). If there isn't one in the gabbi box, check on the bimah for another copy.

4. Check the weekly announcements for yartzeits
5. Check the bimah – there are often aliyah cards left there from the previous week.
6. If there is Bar or Bat Mitzvah be sure you have a copy of the list of honors. There is usually something printed up by the family. If not, there should be one on the bimah.

The two gabbi'im should discuss their roles and determine who will do what (greeting, books, assigning aliyot, monitoring the Torah service and the door, etc.). Someone should greet as much as possible and assist people who need help. This is also a good time for the more experienced gabbi'im to mentor the less experienced ones. If there is a big crowd, feel free to recruit a board member to help greet.

There is a custodian at shul during the services in case you need any thing like unlocking the door to the Beit Midrash. Feel free to ask.

First Kaddish (Kaddish de-Rabbanon)

There is a Mourners Kaddish early in the service and there are often not enough people (adults over B'nai Mitzvah age) in the sanctuary. Please try to encourage people lingering in the lobby to move into the sanctuary to have at least 10 people in the sanctuary. Sometimes some of the people in the sanctuary are not Jewish – we can't always know that – so do your best to have at least 10 people in the sanctuary as soon as possible. You may be asked at times to step into the sanctuary during that Kaddish to help have the 10 required people.

Siddurim and Chumashim

The siddurim and chumashim are on the bookshelves. Be sure the Russian siddurim and the transliterations are also available. When there is a large crowd, people may need to share books. This works especially well when there are non-Jews attending a Bnai Mitzvah. They are usually more than willing to share.

Irena, the custodian usually puts the books away at the end of services.

Some books are found to be torn, marked up, or otherwise in less than optimal condition. If you become aware of any of these books, have the custodian unlock the door to the office and put the book on one of the desks in the office.

If you notice that we are running short of either book, please let the coordinator know so the office can be notified. Also, sometimes you may notice damaged siddurim or chumashim or those w/ writing in

them. Please place them on one of the desks in the office, open to the damaged or written on page so the staff can take care of the problem.

Greeting

An important part of the gabbai's job is to help make congregants and guests feel welcomed and comfortable in our synagogue. Everyone should be greeted with a smile and a friendly "hello" or "Shabbat Shalom". This is especially true for visitors or first timers. If you see someone you don't recognize, introduce yourself, welcome them to the shul, etc. If you're not sure if they have been at Beth Shalom before, ask "Is this your first time here?", or "I don't remember meeting you before". It is also helpful to know if the guest is a Kohen or a Levi.

Recently one of our members spent the year in Israel and wrote of her synagogue experiences there:

"My observations as a newcomer at synagogues here is that shuls that have someone who greet me at the door, say "Shabbat Shalom", and hand me a siddur, really feel so significantly more welcoming. Basically, you shouldn't underestimate the importance of what you are doing. A smile, a hello; it really makes a huge difference. I now see that even a brief greeting makes a huge difference. We've been places where nobody has even said hello to us and it feels awful. Just a "hello" changes everything. Seems so simple. And an announcement from the bimah of welcome to newcomers is only meaningful if there is a personal hello by members of the congregation when you come in the door and when services end. It doesn't feel like the bimah welcome is sincere without the personal touch that can only come from the members."

Kippot and Tallisim

Kippot and tallisim should be worn by all men in the sanctuary. Women going on the bimah should wear kippot, and should wear tallisim for Torah reading, aliyot, gelilah, and hagbah. Women are NOT required to wear tallisim for opening and closing the ark or for the four special readings (peace, country, government, Israel).

The Bar or Bat Mitzvah family is responsible for informing participants of their responsibilities for wearing kippot and tallism. Since, at times, people still come up to the bimah without them, other monitoring must take place by the gabbi's and the gabbi shaini.

The gabbi's should be sure there are extra kippot and tallism on the bimah before services start so they are available if someone goes up without them on.

It is the responsibility of the gabbai's to prevent people having honors from going up on the bimah without their heads covered, and appropriately wearing tallism. **Since you know, almost 100% of the time, who has these honors, please check heads and shoulders when giving out the aliyahs and BEFORE they go up on the bimah.** Just go through the list of honors and check heads and shoulders. If anyone gets by, the gabbai shani should be the one to notice, and provide a kippah and/or a tallis from the bimah so you don't have to chase people once they're on the bimah.

Also, the aliyah cards have instructions on the back of them reminding people with those honors to be ready early, to wear kippot and tallism, and the pages for the opening and closing the ark, the aliyahs, and the readings.

Aliyahs

Aliyahs may be requested by members of the congregation by calling the office in advance. There is a clear envelope on the outside of the gabbai box with the requests. B'nai Mitzvah families are instructed to leave at least 2 aliyahs available for the congregation – at least one of which is a Yisroel. The other place to note when considering who to assign the aliyahs to is the Shavuon, which lists the people that have Yartzeit's in the coming week.

One must be beyond B'nai Mitzvah age in order to be eligible for an aliyah - even if the actual ceremony has not occurred. This is age 12 for girls and 13 for boys. Non-Jews are not eligible to have aliyahs - even non-Jewish parents of a Bar/t mitzvah. Both men and women should have their heads covered and wear a tallit during the aliyah and when on the bimah.

Please be sure that everyone that receives an aliyah is dressed appropriately – no jeans or inappropriate clothing (shorts, WAY too short skirts)

In order to keep the service moving smoothly, especially during a Bar/t Mitzvah, when distributing the aliyahs ask the individuals to be ready during the aliyah prior to his/hers. They may sit in the front row during the previous aliyah. The gabbi who has distributed the aliyahs should be in the sanctuary during

the Torah service to monitor the aliyahs and make sure people are going up as assigned. (Think of yourself as the choreographer or stage manager.) Be sure that everyone having an aliyah has his or her head covered and is wearing a tallis.

On Shabbat there are seven aliyot plus Maftir, unless additional aliyot are requested. Following the seventh aliyah, the Maftir aliyah is chanted by the individual who will be reading the Haftarah.

On weekdays there are three aliyot, and on festivals, not falling on Shabbat there are five aliyot. There is no Maftir on weekdays.

The seven aliyahs are:

- 1 Kohen
- 2 Levi
- 3 Shlishi
- 4 Rvi'i
- 5 Chamishi
- 6 Shishi
- 7 Shvi'i

Maftir

Aliyah FAQ's

- § Do you have to be Jewish to have an aliyah? You have to be Jewish to do everything during the service except recite one of the four additional readings (Country, Government, Israel, Peace) and to give a speech. This includes opening and closing the ark, having an aliyah, reading from the Torah, and doing Hagbah and Gelilah.
- § What aliyahs can Kohenim do? _Kohen/Bat Kohen - can do only the first aliyah, Maftir, Hagbah, Gellilah, or an added aliyah (Hosafah)
- § What aliyahs can Levi'im do? Levi/Bat Levi - can do only the second aliyah, Maftir, Hagbah, Gellilah, or an added aliyah (Hosafah)
- § What if you don't know who the Kohenim and Levi'im are? There is a list of Kohenim and Leviim in the Gabbi box

- § What happens if there is no Kohen? A Levi takes the first aliyah in place of the Kohen., then a Yisroel takes the second aliyah in place of the Levi.
- § What happens if there is no Levi? - A Yisroel takes the second aliyah in place of the Levi.
- § What happens if there is no Kohen or Levi? - Yisroels take all aliyahs
- § Can a child be a Kohen or Levi if the mother was a convert? If the father is a Kohen and the mother is a convert, the child CANNOT be a Kohen. If the father is a Levi, and the mother converted before the child was born, the child CAN be a Levi.
- § What if there are two Torahs – what else do we have to think about? If there are two Torahs (see below), there will be two Gellilahs and two Hagbah's AND an additional person to carry the extra Torah.
- § How do people request aliyahs? Requests for aliyahs come directly into the office. If made, requests for aliyahs are placed in the gabbi box on the table near the elevator. A letter goes out to people with upcoming Yahrzeits, instructing members to call the office if they want an aliyah. Frequently, congregants will inform the gabbi of a significant event for which they would like to have an aliyah. These may include recent conversions, travel to and from a distant location, recent recovery from an illness, etc. Please try to comply as much as possible, considering other requests, but, especially with B'nai Mitzvah you can't comply with the request.
- § What are special considerations in the order of priority for the aliyahs? - in addition to Kohen and Levi, there are several other issues of assignment and order:
- The 3rd aliyah is often given to someone who is a scholar, a rabbi, or a teacher if one is present
 - A parent and child do not have consecutive aliyot (in either direction – parent before child, child before parent)
 - People observing mourning do not receive an aliyah until the end of Sh'loshim (30 days following the burial. On the Shabbat following Sh'loshim, the person receives an aliyah.
 - When there are more people wanting or needing aliyahs than they are available, the order of priority is:

- Bride and groom - day of or Shabbat before wedding
 - Parents - birth of baby
 - Bride and bridegroom - Shabbat after wedding
 - Yartzeit of parent or child - day of
 - Parents - Shabbat before Bris
 - Yahrzeit of parent or child - during the upcoming week
 - Recovery from illness
 - Going on a journey
 - Visitor to shul
- If there are more requests than available aliyahs, and the list above has been applied, then do your best to give them out on a first come, first served basis.
 - What is required for individuals having an aliyah? All should wear head coverings and tallis. No jeans or shorts. You are encouraged to select individuals who are appropriately dressed - reasonable length skirts, neat slacks. Dress slacks are ok for women.
 - What about the other honors? There are other honors such as opening and closing the ark and the prayers following the Haftorah (Congregation, Peace, Israel, Country). Here are the requirements for the other honors:
 - ÿ Hagbah and Gellilah – tallis and kippah are required
 - ÿ Opening and closing the ark – kippah and tallism NOT required
 - ÿ Additional readings – kippah and tallism are NOT required

Some people are reluctant to take an aliyah because they haven't done it before. Offer to assist them as much as possible. Remind them that the bimah gabbi's are always willing to help.

Aliyah Cards There are several sets of cards, and they are kept in the gabbi box. If a card is lost, replace it from the extras. The coordinator will keep the cards stocked. Please notify the coordinator when cards are missing. Be sure to pick up the cards from the bimah after the service and return them to the card box.

B'nai Mitzvah – There is usually a list of aliyahs printed in a program by the family. If not, ask the parents of the B'nai Mitzvah, the Rabbi, or use the one from the bimah, but be sure to put it back

before the Torah service. There should be a minimum of two aliyot available for the congregation, at least one of which is a Yisroel.

Who can do what? There are lists in the gabbi box of Kohanim, and Leviim. Please let the coordinator know if there are names to add to or remove from the list. (Please do not write new names on the list on Shabbat.)

B’Nai Mitzvah

The gabbi'im role during a Bnai Mitzvah expands to assist the family in making the service very special, and to help assure that everything goes smoothly. Offer yourself to the family if they have any specific needs. Review the list of aliyah's with them, and ask them to help you identify the individuals as necessary. The families may have already arranged for kids to help pass out prayerbooks. Some gabbi'im have chosen to call the families prior to Shabbat to just touch base. The families really appreciate any added touch in making their day successful.

Decorum

Congregants and their children are expected to act respectfully during services. It is the gabbai's responsibility to assure that the environment is one that permits congregants to pray and to enjoy the spirituality of Shabbat and of being in shul. Older children who are making noise and disrupting the service should be asked to leave the sanctuary. With younger children, the gabbi may need to help the parents find an alternative location. Remember the children's services and child care programs that are available on Shabbat.

Parents frequently bring food for younger children. The effect of spilled food and drinks on the carpeting and upholstery must be considered. No food is to be eaten in the sanctuary during the Kiddush.

There are frequently guests in the congregation for B'nai Mitzvah or other celebrations who are not familiar with Shabbat observance or other practices, such as writing, using cameras and cell phones, and placing prayerbooks on the floor. Please note these occurrences and assist guests follow traditional practices in the shul.

Birckat haKodesh

Birckat ha Kodesh is said on the Shabbat before Rosh Hodesh when Rosh Hodesh occurs during the week. The Torah is held by the person saying the prayer. The Ruach indicates if Birckat ha Kodesh occurs on any Shabbat. Check with the Rabbi regarding who will do the blessing.

Traffic in the Sanctuary

There are several times during the service that we limit traffic in and out of the sanctuary for reasons of respect and consideration. During those times, one gabbai should be at the door inside the sanctuary, requesting that people do not come in and out. Those times are as follows:

- ÿ When the congregation is standing during the Amidah and Kedushah of Shacharit and Musaf
- ÿ During the Torah service while the Torah is actually being read
- ÿ During the D'var Torah
- ÿ During the charge of the Bar or Bat Mitzvah

Other Shabbat Activities

There are usually children's services downstairs in the education wing. Information on those services will be in the weekly Shavuon which is available to congregants in the sanctuary, and also in the most recent Ruach which is sitting on the information shelves in the lobby.

Kiddush

Kiddush is usually made in the sanctuary immediately preceding Adon Olam. When there is a sponsored meal, after Kiddush, there is washing and Ha Motzi is made. When there is no sponsored meal, after Kiddush the fruit or cake will be served following the appropriate prayer. Birkat HaMazon is said only when HaMotzi was made.

Chaggim and Rosh Chodesh

There are special days throughout the year where services are different than on Shabbat, and the gabbai needs to know what to expect and what to provide. All of these descriptions are found in the Luach, the book that provides information about all Shabbat and holiday services. The Luach is found in the gabbai box, and should be reviewed every Shabbat and festival, prior to services, to determine when something special is needed. Some things to remember:

Torah's - Two Torahs are used on all major festivals, high holidays, on Rosh Chodesh, and on four other designated Shabbatot. *On these days two Hagbah's and Gelilah's are needed, as well as an additional person to carry the Torah when it is taken out and placed back in the Ark.*

Hallel - Hallel (either full or abridged) is said on all major festivals and on Rosh Chodesh, not on the High Holidays. During Hallel the Torahs are held throughout, usually by the people selected to take them out and put them back in the Aron. (Take that into consideration when selecting those people)

Megillot - Specific Megillot are read on designated festivals:

Sukkot - Koheleth (Ecclesiastes)

Purim - Esther

Pesach - Sher Ha Sherim (Song of Songs)

Shavuot - Ruth

Tish'ah B'Av - Lamentations

The book of Megillot can be distributed either during the service and/or made available as people enter the sanctuary.

Yiskor - Yiskor is said on Yom Kippur, the second day of Shavuot, Sh'mini Atzeret, and on the last day of Pesach. It is said after the Torah service, prior to putting away the Torahs. Both Torahs are held during the Yiskor service. Yiskor is immediately followed by putting away the Torahs so the same people holding the Torahs for Yiskor can put them away. Select people who can hold the Torahs for a long period of time.

Summary of Special Services

	Torahs	Hallel	Megillah	Yiskor
Regular Shabbat	1			
Rosh Chodesh Shabbat	2	x - half		
“Special” Shabbatot	2	x		
Sukkot	2	x	Kohelet	
Sh’mini Atzeret	2	x	Kohelet	x
Purim	2		Esther	
Pesach	2	x, ½ days 2-8	Sher Ha Sherim	day 8
Shavuot	2	x	Ruth	day 2
Tish’ah B’Av	2	x	Lamentations	
Rosh Hashonah	2			
Yom Kippur	2			x

Scheduling

Two gabbi'im are usually scheduled together. A schedule is sent out around the 15th of each month to for the subsequent month. If there are schedule requests prior to the monthly schedule going out, please let the coordinator know so s/he can consider that in doing the schedule. I will request schedule information the month before, and the more info I have the fewer changes that have to be made. Schedule changes after the schedule comes out should be done among each other, but please let the coordinator know of the changes.

The schedule is listed on the Beth Shalom Web Site under Committees – Gabbai – schedule. You can put the site in your favorites and go to it at any time.

<http://www.bethshalomseattle.org/committees/gabbaim.php3?page=708>

Gabbi'im are scheduled to serve approximately once a month, depending on the number of available gabbi'im. However, on occasion, due to the numbers of Shabbatot and available gabbi'im, there may be a need to serve more than once in a month. There is an attempt to distribute this equally.

The Shabbat gabbi'im are not responsible for serving on Rosh Hashonah or Yom Kippur, but they are expected to serve on the festivals (Sukkot, Shavuot, Pesach). The months with festivals often require one additional day in the month per gabbi. These extra days are rotated to the extent possible.

Newer gabbi'im are paired up with experienced gabbi'im and work the same schedule for the first 3-4 months. The experienced gabbi'im will function as mentors. After the initial few months the newer ones will be added to the regular rotation.

Months off are rotated to assure an equal distribution throughout the year. There is an attempt to rotate pairing of gabbi'im, and to schedule several weeks between assigned dates. Anyone interested in reviewing the master schedule may feel free to ask for it.