



Congregation Beth El

SUDBURY, MA

Usher Guidelines for High Holidays 2022/5783

Your Role

- **Welcoming worshippers to the sanctuary**, with awareness of the anti-racism committee's guidelines for greeting Jews of Color and BIPOC.
- **Helping worshippers find seats**, especially those with special needs. There are designated seating sections for young families, those with hearing or vision impairments, and those with fragrance sensitivities.
- Politely making worshippers aware of current Covid-prevention measures, if any.
- **Distributing and collecting aids to worshippers with hearing and vision impairments.**
- **Serving as a point of contact for the Rabbi** for any issues or requests that may arise.
- **Being aware of possible safety and security risks** and notifying the greeters and the on-site police detail or security guard about any concerns, or directly calling 911 as the situation warrants.
- **Guiding worshippers to exit the building** after the service ends via the front doors.
- **Arriving 30 minutes before the service starts and departing at least 10 minutes after the service ends.**

Before You Leave Home

- **Recognize that some attendees have fragrance sensitivities. Do not wear perfume or cologne.** Please be aware that many grooming items such as shampoo, conditioner, and shaving products may be very strongly scented.
- **Collect your Beth El key fob, your high holidays tickets, and your Beth El nametag** if you previously left it at home **and bring them with you.**

When You Arrive

- **Put on your nametag.** If yours is unavailable, make a temporary one with the supplies provided on the table.
- **Get a SILK BOUTONNIERE** from the box just inside the coat closet, to the right of the sanctuary doors and put it on to identify yourself as an usher.
- **Meet with other ushers and designate a head usher.** The head usher should inform the Rabbi, the Greeters, and Josimar of this designation. You will be their point of contact for any requests or issues. Greeters are stationed in the parking lot outside the office entrance.
- **Prop open the sanctuary doors.**
- **Familiarize yourself with special seating sections** in the sanctuary, for families with young children, fragrance-free, and spaces for wheelchairs.

- **Walk around to familiarize yourself** with the locations of the fire extinguisher, and AED (automated external defibrillator) on the wall inside to the left of the sanctuary door.
- Check that there is a High Holidays prayer book (Machzor) on every seat.

When Congregants Arrive

At least one usher should remain near the sanctuary doors. The other usher(s) should either stand near the doors or help congregants find seating. As the sanctuary fills, one usher should roam the sanctuary looking for empty seats and keep the other ushers informed about the number and location of empty seats. This may be done silently by holding up fingers to designate the number of open seats nearby. The usher(s) near the doors should direct latecomers to other ushers around the room who will locate seats. Do not hesitate to ask people to slide over to fill empty seats, being sensitive to family/chevra groupings.

- **Greet congregants and guests as they arrive at the sanctuary doors with a “L’Shanah Tovah” and/or a “Nice to see you.”** These greetings are recommended by our anti-racism committee in their guidelines for greeting Jews of Color and BIPOC, which are included at the end of this document.
- **Answer questions about where to sit** and offer information about special seating sections for young families, fragrance-free, and wheelchairs and walkers.
- **Provide hearing assistance devices and large-print prayer books** when asked. Large-print prayer books will be stored on the cart near the sanctuary doors.
- **Observe name tags.** When possible, gently suggest to entering worshippers who are not wearing name tags that they can get theirs from the tables in the hallway or create a name tag using supplies on the tables.

During Services

- **Close the sanctuary doors just before services start.**
- **If the noise level in the hallway gets too loud,** politely ask people to move to a more distant area such as the library, classroom wing or foyer.
- **When someone enters the sanctuary during an address or sermon,** ask them to wait near the doors. Allow them to return to their seats when the speaker has finished.
- **If children in the sanctuary are creating a persistent disturbance,** politely suggest to the parent(s) that they could adjourn to the foyer where they can watch a live stream of the service.
- Periodically check that the live stream is still playing on the monitor in the foyer.
- Inform nursing mothers that they may use the Rabbi’s office.

When Services End

- **Prop open sanctuary doors.**
- **Ask departing worshippers to depart to their left, through the front doors of the building.**
- If a handout is being offered (e.g. adult education flier), remind departing worshippers that they can pick one up from the table outside the sanctuary.
- **Collect hearing assistive devices**, verifying with the worshiper that they worked as you do so. Turn off each device and place it in the docking station so it will charge.
- **Collect large-print prayer books** and store them on the cart near the doors.
- **Remove and return your silk boutonniere** to the box in the coat closet, or pass it on to an usher for the next session.

Guidelines for Greeting Jews of Color and BIPOC

The following suggestions recognize that Jews of Color and other BIPOC are often quizzed or challenged on their Jewish identity, or accorded unwanted special attention.

<p>Do Greet people as you wish to be greeted, recognizing that your words may land differently with BIPOC than with white people. Be warm, calm, and authentic.</p>	<p>Avoid Making assumptions about other people's racial or Jewish identity or whether they belong to Beth El. Being overly enthusiastic or solicitous.</p>	<p>Be aware That your words can be interpreted as "othering" even if that is not your intent.</p>
<p>Say "Shabbat Shalom," "L'Shana Tova," "Nice to see you"</p>	<p>Avoid saying "Are you a member?" "Have you been here before?" "Welcome!" "Where are you from?" "When/why did you convert to Judaism?" "You don't look Jewish"</p>	<p>Potential implications You think they are a guest rather than a member, or not Jewish; You belong and they don't. Even if you say "welcome" you are assuming they are guests and not members.</p>