

Temple Beth El Welcomes Interfaith Families

Membership

Temple Beth El warmly welcomes adults into its membership who meet the following criteria:

- a. An adult born to a Jewish birth mother
- b. An adult who has become a Jew-by-choice in accordance with the principles set forth by the Conservative Movement.

Religious School

The E.G. Scoblionko Religious School imbues in our children a love of Judaism, Jewish traditions and rituals. All children of Interfaith families who are members of Temple Beth El are welcome in our religious school and may participate in its many activities through grade six with the understanding that there is a commitment that the child will undergo a conversion to Judaism before a Bar/Bat Mitzvah date is assigned.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah

Temple Beth El follows the Conservative Movement in that matrilineal descent determines a child's religious identity.

- While non-Jewish children are welcome in our religious school through grade six, they must be Jewish in order to have a Bar/Bat Mitzvah, which affirms the commitment and responsibility to following the laws and the mitzvot (good deeds and obligations) of the Torah.
- Bar/Bat Mitzvah dates will only be assigned to those students who are Jewish in accordance with the principles set forth by the Conservative Movement.
- The clergy welcome the opportunity to meet with families whose children do not meet this criterion, to provide guidance and support to determine if conversion and bar/bat mitzvah is desired.

Throughout the service several honors will be given to those in attendance. As these are ritual honors, they recognize the covenant between God and the Jewish people. Thus, all honors are reserved for those who are members of the Jewish faith. We respect the life choices and faith of others who are not Jewish, and do not ask them to make this affirmation.

- Only Jewish adults may be called to the Torah for an Aliyah. However, the non-Jewish parent may join the Jewish parent on the Bimah as the Jewish parent recites the blessing over the Torah during the Bar or Bat Mitzvah of their child.
- In families where one parent of the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is not Jewish, the non-Jewish parent may accompany the Jewish parent on the Bimah as the Jewish parent chants the Aliyah. We especially encourage this participation as recognition for

the special commitment and gift made by parents who may have different faith traditions themselves, but have chosen to share in raising their child as a Jew.

- Families may assign honors only to those of the Jewish faith. This is to include all honors: opening the Ark, Aliyot or leading the congregation in prayer.
- For the Shabbat bulletin for the Bar or Bat Mitzvah service, if a family chooses to create a service program, the non-Jewish parent may be mentioned as accompanying the Jewish parent for an Aliyah.
- The non-Jewish parent or other non-Jewish relatives may make a speech to the child at the Bar or Bat Mitzvah service following the singing of Adon Olom.

Sisterhood Affiliation

- Any adult Jewish woman is welcome to join the Temple Beth El Sisterhood.

Men's Club Affiliation

- Any adult Jewish man is welcome to join the Temple Beth El Men's Club

Lay Positions

- Any member of the Congregation, who is in good standing, may serve as a Director on Temple Beth El's Board of Directors or as an Officer of the synagogue. A member is defined at the beginning of this document.

Professional Positions

- The following professional positions may be filled only by someone who is Jewish, and if in a marital relationship, both partners are Jewish: Rabbi, Cantor, Education Director, religious school teachers, and youth directors.

Publicity

As a synagogue community we look forward to sharing in your families milestones.

- Announcements, congratulations and/or recognition for contributions in regards to interfaith marriages are welcomed to be announced within the Temple newsletter.
- Announcements, congratulations and/or recognition for contributions in honor of a child from an interfaith marriage (e.g. birth, Bar or Bat Mitzvah, scholastic achievement, or sporting achievement) are welcomed to be announced within the Temple newsletter with corresponding congratulations to the parents and grandparents.

Wedding

- The Temple Beth El clergy welcome all prospective interfaith couples for pre-and/or post-marriage consultation.
- At the present time the Conservative Movement does not permit interfaith ceremonies or receptions within its synagogues.

- At the present time our Rabbi and Cantor may not officiate at or attend an interfaith wedding ceremony, nor may either attend the wedding reception.

Burial

- Only members of the Jewish faith may be interred within Beth El Memorial Park.
- A non-Jewish spouse cannot be a certificate holder of a burial plot at Beth El memorial Park, nor can they inherit these rights upon the death of their Jewish spouse. These rights pass to the Jewish children if any. If none, the rights pass to the Jewish spouse's siblings.
- Symbols of any religion other than Judaism are not permitted in Beth El Memorial Park, including but not limited to etching or affixing of same on foot markers or monuments.

If you have any questions regarding our Interfaith policies, please contact our Rabbi or Cantor and they will happy to assist you.

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