

A Guide For Leading a Lay Service at Congregation Beth El (Harrisonburg, VA)

[Summer 2013]

First of all, thank you for leading lay services for our congregation. We pride ourselves on having services every Shabbat, even when there are just a few people present. Given the broadest scope of Jewish history, we are truly blessed to have a beautiful sanctuary and three Torah scrolls with which to celebrate every week (and of course a Rabbi to lead us many weeks of the year). There is a great deal of flexibility in how lay services are led, but what follows is a suggested outline/sequence. You may use as much Hebrew and/or English as you feel comfortable. (God understands both languages). Singing is also up to you, although if you are uncomfortable singing but comfortable asking others to lead from the pews, ask away.

We usually use the thinner gray *Gates of Prayer*, where there are three Shabbat Evening Service options. The entire lay service takes between 30-45 minutes, give or take. The prayer book is generally set up with the Hebrew prayer first, followed (often) by the transliteration, and then followed by the English translation/version. *Italics* indicate portions read aloud by the entire congregation.

Pick any service, but what follows are the page numbers for service # 2.

(Microphone can be turned on using the power strips - please don't adjust any knobs. Light switch for the bimah is behind the American flag.)

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- 1 - Welcome everyone with a Shabbat Shalom and announce the page to start.
(We begin at 7:30ish.)
- 2 - Kindling the Shabbat candles. pg. 65 - (candles are either on the bimah, or in the freezer in the kitchen.) You may do this yourself or invite a congregant to do the honors.
- 3 - Selected readings/songs welcoming Shabbat pg. 66-68 - as you choose
- 4 - Readers Kaddish - pg. 69 (optional)
- 5 - Rise for Borchu pg. 70 - usually 1st two lines. Hebrew line 1 transliteration:
“ Borchu et Adonai Ha-m-vo-rach” (continues...), followed by English readings.
- 6- Shema Yisrael pg. 71, be seated, followed by V'Ahavta (Heb. or Eng.), pg. 72
followed by English readings (optional).
- 7 - Mi Camocha (Who is Like You...) (bottom 73-74 - Heb. or Eng, customarily sung or read)
- 8 - selected readings/songs pg. 74 - 75 (V'Shamru comes in this section) (optional)

- 9 - All rise for T'Filah (Amidah) (Heb. or Eng., sung or read) pg. 76 - 78 (be seated)
- 10 - Selected readings/songs/meditation pg. 78 - 81 (Yismachu, Shalom Rav and Oseh Shalom come in this section if desired) (all optional)
- 11 - MiShebayrach - prayer for healing. It is customary to ask for names to be mentioned by the congregants, then read or sing. (This prayer is inside the back cover of prayerbook.)
- 12 - No Torah Service when Rabbi is not present, however, you may include English reading from that weeks parsha (section) Look up on line at <http://www.reformjudaism.org/learning/torah-study> (OPTIONAL)
- 13 - Announce prayer and page number: Rise for Aleynu Pg. 148 and 149 (Heb. or Eng, read or sung)
- 14 - Mourners Kaddish - may choose a reading from pg. 151- 153. Then PLEASE read the names from the binder on the bimah, which is organized by yahrtzeit (memorial) date. Read the week before and the week after whatever day it is. Then, ask for mourners to rise, pause, and those who wish to support them to rise. Say prayer on 154.
- 15 - Kiddush - pg. 165 (Heb. or Eng., read or sung) Nice kiddush cup is on the back counter in the kitchen. Wine and /or juice is in the fridge - bring up both ahead of time. small plastic cups are on the bimah (or by the coffee in the kitchen) - offer to anyone who'd like to partake. say or sing prayer.
- 16- Ask if there are any announcements.
- 17 - Offer a heartfelt "Shabbat Shalom" - closing song if desired (Adon Olam 156, Ein Kelohaynu 159, often sung)

* - *Completely optional is to have a small oneg - set up ahead of time and announce, as this is not typical for a lay service, but schmoozing is certainly an option.*

***Please be sure to clean up and last one out, lock up before leaving.
Don't leave candles burning!***

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So, that's it...and when it says optional, it really means optional. You are encouraged to have your children assist in leading, particularly if they are in the older religious school classes or beyond. You are encouraged to partner up with another family and share the joy (really) of leading a service, and of course, it gets easier, the more often you do it.

* After reading this and looking at the prayer book, if you have ANY questions or would like any help, please contact Ron Ornstein (or the Rabbi, or another board member.)