

Congregation Beth Israel
Scottsdale, Arizona

Ritual Observances
Lifecycle

Policies, Procedures and Fees
For Lifecycle Celebrations

Introduction

One of the great privileges our Rabbis have is being present at lifecycle events and rituals for families who are part of our community. We pride ourselves on officiating at these milestone events in your life with great care and sensitivity.

The clergy and Board of Directors of Congregation Beth Israel present these guidelines and policies for all life cycle events which take place either inside the congregation or off site. The policies and procedures are meant to give you and your family an understanding of how we can best serve our congregation and community for all of your ritual needs in accordance with Jewish tradition.

Baby Naming for Girls (*Simchat Bat*) & Circumcision (*Brit Milah*)

General Information

Both baby naming ceremonies and circumcision by definition are rituals which “enter” both girls and boys into the Covenant of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah. Our movement and Synagogue define a “Jewish” boy or girl as a child with at least one Jewish parent. Furthermore, both parents must have agreed to raise the child in the Jewish faith. In cases of mixed faith upbringings (that is when a child will also be baptized or christened) our clergy will perform a “non-covenantal” blessing for your child privately.

Parents must meet with one of our clergy personally to make arrangements for both baby namings and circumcision ceremonies. Our clergy are available to work closely with a family on picking an appropriate Hebrew name for their child/ren, along with sharing insights on many traditional Jewish symbols and customs which might take place during the ceremony.

Girls

While traditional Jews make every attempt to give a baby girl her Hebrew name on the first Shabbat of her life, members of our congregation typically will bring a baby girl into the covenant within the first year. Baby naming ceremonies may take place in the Synagogue on the bima either during a Shabbat (evening or morning) worship Service or in a private Service which does not coincide with a Shabbat or holiday observance. All ceremonies must be arranged ahead of time with our clergy.

If a family decides to host a private naming ceremony off site and wishes to have a member of our clergy officiate we ask you to please make arrangements with the clergy member of your choosing by contacting the Clergy Executive Assistant, Coleen Fisher in the CBI office ahead of time.

Boys

A *brit Milah (bris)* is required of all Jewish boys at the age of eight days (calculated as day one being the date of birth unless your son is born after sundown). Boys should not be circumcised at eight days old for health related reasons such as premature birth, jaundice and other complications. Please consult with your child's pediatrician before the *bris* to answer any questions.

A certified *Mohel/Mohelet* (typically a Medical Doctor who has experience with performing the ritual of *brit millah*) should be contacted well before your due/delivery date. Our clergy are happy to make recommendations of physicians we have worked with in the past. While you do not need a member of our clergy at a *brit millah* since *Mohelim* (plural for *Mohel/Mohelet*) are certified to perform both the surgical procedure and the Jewish rituals, we would be thrilled to be there to officiate with the *Mohel*.

Fees

- There are no fees for members of CBI. Ceremonies can be held both on site (schedule permitting) as well as off site.
- Rabbi Keller is available for off site naming and circumcision ceremonies for non members. Non members must pay an honorarium of \$250 directly to the officiating clergy person as well as a minimum donation of \$125 to Congregation Beth Israel.

Bar and Bat Mitzvah

For all information regarding Bar and Bat Mitzvah Services please review the "Guidelines for Celebrating Your Bar/Bat Mitzvah at Congregation Beth Israel," which can be found on our website or by calling our office.

Weddings

General Information

Our clergy are all available for wedding ceremonies either at Congregation Beth Israel or off site for members of the Synagogue or their children.

Weddings can be held on any day of the week with the exception of Shabbat and Jewish Holy Days. Weddings which take place on Saturday evenings cannot begin until at least fifteen minutes before sunset according to the Jewish calendar.

Both brides and grooms are asked to meet with the officiating clergy at least three times prior to their wedding date (fewer if they are out of town).

Interfaith Weddings

Rabbi Kahn will officiate at weddings where one of the participants is not Jewish. Please contact them individually to discuss their individual criteria for officiation of interfaith weddings.

Wedding Times

Our Rabbi's would be happy to officiate at wedding ceremonies on Saturday evenings throughout the year. We cannot begin earlier than 15 minutes before sunset (in Phoenix) according to the Jewish calendar when a Saturday evening wedding is planned.

Fees

- There are no fees for members of CBI and their children. Ceremonies can be held both on site (schedule permitting) as well as off site.
- Rabbi Keller is available for offsite wedding ceremonies for non members. Non members must pay an honorarium of \$1,000 directly to the officiating clergy person as well as a minimum donation of \$500 to Congregation Beth Israel.

Funerals

General Information

Our clergy are always responsive to the needs of families regarding funeral services for their loved ones. While Sinai Mortuary in Phoenix is our preferred funeral home, we understand that families may from time-to-time make arrangements with other mortuaries in the Valley.

Upon the death of a loved one, members of the congregation are asked to contact the Clergy Executive Assistant, Coleen Fisher as soon as possible so that we can make all the appropriate arrangements with your family and the funeral home.

Dates, Times and Locations

Our clergy will officiate at all funeral Services on any day with the exception of Shabbat or Jewish Holy Days where funerals are prohibited. Before scheduling a Service time with the funeral home please call our office or have the funeral home do so on your behalf before submitting the time to family, friends and creating an obituary so that we can ensure that a member of our clergy are available for you. Our clergy will officiate at funeral Services throughout the Valley as long as the internment will be made in a consecrated Jewish section of a cemetery (with the exception of the National Memorial Cemetery in Phoenix).

In order for a member of Congregation Beth Israel's clergy to officiate at a funeral Service, the family must be affiliated with the congregation. Affiliation is defined as one of the "seven immediate mourners," of the deceased including their spouses. The seven are: father, mother, brother, sister, spouse, son or daughter.

Non Jewish Spouse Burial

When the deceased is not Jewish but will be buried at the grave site of a Jewish spouse please contact Rabbi Stephen Kahn for guidance in making arrangements.

Fees

- There are no fees for members of CBI.
- Rabbi Keller will officiate at funeral Services for non members. If the deceased is not a member of the congregation and has no immediate family who are affiliated with Congregation Beth Israel (as defined above). The honorarium in both cases is \$500 paid directly to the officiating clergy as well as a minimum donation of \$250 to Congregation Beth Israel.

Conversion

All of our clergy members are qualified to oversee individuals who desire to become part of the People of Israel. Conversion candidates must enroll in the Union for Reform Judaism's Introduction to Judaism course which is offered semi annually in the Valley of the Sun. Outside readings, individual counseling and participation in the life of the synagogue are all required by our clergy. Additionally candidates for conversion are required to fulfill the obligations of Beit Din and Mikveh – ritual immersion in water – which is at the conclusion of the conversion process.

The conversion process is of the utmost importance to our clergy and candidates. Please consider that this journey will take patience and time for

you. To begin the process, candidates must arrange to meet a member of our clergy.

Fees

There are no fees associated with conversion to Judaism.