

Dear Bayit Family Member,

Besha'ah tovah/Mazal tov on the arrival of your son! The brit milah is an emotional, powerful and meaningful experience. It can also be a little overwhelming preparing for a ritual and celebration taking place 8 days after having delivered a baby! Our rabbinic team is here to facilitate, personalize and enhance that experience however we can.

As you anticipate the brit milah, here are a few things to think about:

1) Preparatory Meeting

Our rabbinic team members are each happy to meet with you before the baby comes to talk about the upcoming life cycle event(s), the relevant halakhic, pastoral and practical preparations, and anything else on your mind. Don't hesitate to reach out to any of us at any time to make a meeting. Especially for first time parents, we encourage getting together for a broader conversation before the baby comes.

2) Mohel

Feel free to reach out to a member of our rabbinic team to discuss mohel recommendations and contact information. We have worked with many mohels in the Bayit. The Bayit does not allow any circumcision to take place in the building in which metzitzah b'peh (squeezing out circumcision blood with direct oral suction) takes place.

You can find excellent descriptions of a lot of the technical aspects of a brit and things families should know about the medical side of the circumcision and the mohel's technique on (Rav Steven's brother-in-law) mohel Rabbi Avi Billet's awesome blog at: <http://www.mohelinsouthflorida.com/>

It's important to contact the mohel soon after your son is born, as the mohel's schedule may fill up quickly.

There is no need to contact a mohel before your son is born, although you may wish to contact a few ahead of time to "interview" them or ask any questions that would help you decide whom to use. Some parents want to ask a mohel about how they prepare the baby, what kind of followup they do, whether they will use a numbing agent, how much they charge for their services, or other questions. If you want to do those interviews, we suggest doing them before the baby comes rather than after!

3) Milah

The milah is a medical procedure. Be vigilant in monitoring your baby's behavior and wellbeing in the hours and days following. If you have any concerns, contact your mohel as well as your pediatrician. The Bayit can recommend a pediatric urologist if you need.

Parents have wide-ranging feelings about performing this mitzvah upon their children. Our rabbinic team is available to listen and support you in any way, as well as share how different families have navigated this process and expressed their feelings in the ritual.

4) Ceremony

The ceremony is the heart of the brit milah. It is filled with opportunities to reflect, sing, pray, express gratitude, honor and include family and friends, and personalize the moment. You can find an explanation and review of the ceremony - with the liturgy, the honors, and ways to make it personal – in a document written by our rabbinic team [here](#).

Please note: if your son is not halakhically Jewish by birth, and the circumcision is towards a conversion (milah l'shem giyur), many of the customs can be practiced in the same way as a brit for a halakhically Jewish baby boy, and some liturgy and customs are done differently. Please feel free to reach out to a rabbinic team member to discuss.

5) Time of Brit

A brit at the Bayit typically takes place right after either the 6:40/6:45am Shaharit (around 7:30am) or after the 7:50am Shaharit (around 8:30 or 8:45am). You can also arrange your own tefillah or schedule the brit not attached to any tefillah (sometimes families do midday or late afternoon, although all other things being equal there is a preference for morning). Factors to consider in the timing are whether you have guests who want to get to work, or on the other side people traveling from far or with other circumstances who need a later start time. And what will work best for you!

6) Location of Brit

A brit at the Bayit (and the Shaharit that precedes it, if there is one) typically takes place in the Main Sanctuary. When Yeshivat Maharat is not in session (summer, and vacation times), or for special circumstances, the Lower Level Beit Midrash is also available.

7) Shabbat Brit

A Shabbat brit can pose special challenges and opportunities. Our rabbinic team can help you find accommodations for a mohel who needs and think through how to include the greater community economically or to maintain the more intimate feel that a weekday brit would be more likely to have.

8) Reception

A brit reception is a wonderful way to continue celebrating with friends and family over a seudah (festive meal). The Bayit encourages modest receptions. We have a wide range of caterers you can work with. Often, the family will have other friends or loved ones help organize this part in order to alleviate some of the responsibilities in the week before the brit.

9) Points of Contact

As emphasized above, our [rabbinic team](#) is available for you at any time on any of the above matters. If we haven't connected before the baby comes, please contact us after the baby is born. We can help review all of this material, and we are here to help you plan and facilitate the ceremony itself. Feel free to contact the clergy of your choice to plan and facilitate the ceremony with you.

Room usage and catering and other details are arranged with Richard Langer, our Executive Director (richard@thebayit.org and [718 796 4730 x104](tel:7187964730)).

Thank you for sharing your simhah with us!