



Newcomers' Guide to **THE JEWISH CENTER**

Welcome!

We're so happy you've decided to join us here at The Jewish Center. While much of what happens here will be familiar to anyone who's been to an Orthodox synagogue, we want you to feel at home in our Center. So we've prepared this short guide that we hope will answer some of the questions that may be on your mind. If you're a guest or a visitor – or even a semi-regular – please introduce yourself. We'd love to get to know you better.

THE JEWISH CENTER

The Modern Orthodox Center for Jewish Life and Learning

www.jewishcenter.org • 212-724-2700



WHO ARE THE PEOPLE IN THE TOP HATS AND WHY ARE THEY WEARING THEM?

Between Sukkot and Shavuot the rabbis and officers of The Jewish Center wear top hats and morning suits. Rabbi Leo Jung introduced this tradition to The Jewish Center around the time his colleague, Rabbi Joseph Lookstein, did the same in his synagogue, Kehilath Jeshurun, on the East Side. The idea was to endow the service with dignity. At a time when Traditional Judaism was waning, the hope was that the new American Jew would be attracted to and inspired by the beauty of the synagogue. Today, we maintain these traditions as a badge of honor and a tribute to the legacy of those who came before us. It is a reminder that dignity and decorum remain an important aspect of our service and that when combined with other elements of our synagogue, lead to a spiritually uplifting and intellectually stimulating davening experience.

THE SANCTUARY LOOKS SPECTACULAR. IS IT NEW?

Yes! And no. In honor of our centennial, we renovated our 100-year-old sanctuary in 2019. We preserved and restored the original design. At the same time, our new pews, carpet and lighting have given the room a fresh feel.

I NOTICED THAT THERE IS NOT MUCH TALKING IN SHUL. WHEN CAN I CHAT WITH MY FRIENDS?

We would love for you to chat with your friends and invite you to do so over refreshments at our Kiddush following services. The Jewish Center has always prided itself on our decorous service in which members and guests can concentrate on their Tefillot.

I NEED A LITTLE HELP. WHO DO I SPEAK TO?

Volunteers whom we call “ushers” are stationed at the entrance to the sanctuary. Their job is to make you feel at home. Just let them know what you need and they’ll be happy to help.

WHEN SHOULD I SIT OR STAND?

Listen for cues from the Rabbi. And as a general rule, follow the crowd.

WHAT TIME DOES THE SERVICE END?

We usually wrap up around 11:30AM. In the summer months, sometimes we finish a little early.

WHERE CAN I FIND THE KIDDUSH?

Kiddush is usually in two places: Either in our gym on the fifth floor or in the Max Stern Auditorium on the ground floor. Check the Shabbat Bulletin for today's location's or just follow the crowd.

HOW CAN I FIND OUT ABOUT HOME HOSPITALITY?

We would love to host you! We're especially good at hospitality when we have a little advance notice. So contact our Hospitality Committee at hospitality@jewishcenter.org. If you're in a pinch, please speak to one of our ushers or rabbis and we'll be happy to help.

WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING IN THE BUILDING TODAY?

The Jewish Center is always brimming with activity, particularly on Shabbat. There are multiple minyanim, classes, youth activities, Kiddushes, programs for beginners and lots more. Please consult the Shabbat Bulletin for current information on all the goings-on about the building.

KVETCHING IS VERY IMPORTANT TO ME. WITH WHOM CAN I LODGE MY COMPLAINTS?

Since the dissolution of our grievance committee in the 1950's, all complaints have been directed to the President of The Jewish Center: andrew@jewishcenter.org.

WHEN DO I REMOVE MY TALLIT?

At the end of services, congregants remain in their seats until the conclusion of Adon Olam. As the rabbi and cantor process down the aisles, the congregation rises. Following Adon Olam, you may remove your tallit. The rabbi and cantor look forward to greeting you on the receiving line on your way to Kiddush.

WHERE SHOULD MY CHILD(REN) BE?

Children are of course encouraged to daven alongside their parents in the main sanctuary. Rabbi Levine dispenses brachot and lollypops to our children every Friday night at the end of services. And children are invited to join the Chazzan for Adon Olam on the bimah at the conclusion of Mussaf. On Shabbat morning, we also offer a full array of Youth Groups where children daven, learn about the parsha and have loads of fun every week. Children in preschool and first grade meet in our Geller Youth Center on the lower level; older kids meet on the 7th floor. For more information on the Youth Department, please be in touch with our youth director, Sarah Goldstein at sarah@jewishcenter.org.

I HAVE TROUBLE WITH SMALL PRINT. ANY SUGGESTIONS?

Yes! We have large print Chumashim and Siddurim at the rear of the sanctuary. An usher will be happy to help you find them. We also keep a basket of reading glasses on hand opposite the entrance to the sanctuary. Please feel free to borrow a pair.

I WOULD LIKE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE JEWISH CENTER. IS THERE A MAXIMUM?

We accept donations of all shapes and sizes. Please speak directly to Rabbi Levine with your ideas about how to contribute. Visit our website at jewishcenter.org and donate directly online.

I'D LIKE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE JEWISH CENTER. KNOW ANY GOOD BOOKS?

Yes. Two good ones are *Reverence, Righteousness, and Rahamanut: Essays in Memory of Rabbi Dr. Leo Jung* and *A Modern Heretic and a Traditional Community* by Rabbi Jacob J. Schacter and Jeffrey Gurock. And in honor of our centennial, we produced a volume called *A Century at the Center: Orthodox Judaism & The Jewish Center* edited by Zev Eleff. It's available on Amazon or through our office.

THIS SEEMS LIKE THE RIGHT FIT FOR ME. HOW DO I JOIN?

There was a time when prospective members submitted an application to a membership committee. These days, you can join online.