

# BET AM SHALOM SYNAGOGUE

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Dear B'nai Mitzvah Parents,

As we look forward to your family *simcha* this coming semester, we offer this letter as a way of clarifying some of our “*simcha* guidelines.” These guidelines, prepared and revised over the years by our Ritual Committee, rabbi, staff, and Board of Trustees, attempt to balance individual families’ needs with the practices of the Bet Am Shalom Shabbat community as a whole.

During the *kiddush* that follows the service, we strive to maintain the atmosphere already created in the service itself. We want congregants (including your family and guests) to *schmooze* with one another over a bagel. We want everyone to have the strong sense that a peaceful Shabbat spirit prevails; that regular congregants are not suddenly uninvited guests; and that conversation can go on without the disruption of music, noise, photography, etc.

Up until 1:30 PM, we prohibit any elements of a private affair. Some examples are: personal decorations, programs, sign boards, musical performances (plugged or unplugged), toasts and speeches, candle lightings, photography.

After 1:30 PM, we offer our b'nai mitzvah families two choices.

The first is a private space (which you would rent at the lowered member’s rate), in which you can do any and all of the things listed above. Set-up of these items (e.g., musicians arriving with equipment) must go through the service entrance so as not to change the atmosphere of the service or the *kiddush*.

The second choice is to extend the *kiddush* itself past 1:30 PM. In this case, the added fees are nominal. Photography would be allowed, as would *hora* dancing, toasts, speeches, and musicians with UN-plugged equipment. Any setup for these things should NOT BEGIN until 1:30 PM. Candle lighting, decorations, or signboards are not permitted in an extended *kiddush*.

The arbitrary time of 1:30 PM allows congregants a full hour following the service for visiting and noshing.

Again, these steps give us a way of balancing the “public” and the “private,” all the while maintaining a liberal Shabbat atmosphere for all at Bet Am Shalom.

Please feel free to consult us with any and all questions. We look forward to working with you to create a cherished moment for your family, and for our entire community.

Sincerely,



Lester Bronstein