

BET AM SHALOM DISCOVERY SURVEY RESULTS

December 2022

WHAT WE DID AND WHAT WE LEARNED IN OUR SURVEY OF BAS

- Premise
- Methods
 - How we conducted the survey
 - Demographics and measuring the “magnitude of importance”
- Findings
 - Who answered the survey
 - What did the congregants think was important
 - How did the magnitude of importance vary by key characteristics – (1) Whether a member had a minor child in the household, and (2) how long they have been members

PREMISE OF THE SURVEY

- Prior to the formation of a rabbinic search committee, the Discovery Committee has been tasked with setting the stage for the search by first gaining a better understanding of the Bet Am Shalom congregation: ***who we are, what is important to us, and where we would like to go as a community.***
- The **BAS Discovery Survey** is the first step in that process. The survey focuses on the first two questions enumerated above: who we are, and what is important to us. This slide presentation describes how we conducted the survey and what we learned.
- The next step in the process will be a series of small group meetings, forums and workshops with Bet Am Shalom members.

METHODS I: HOW WE CONDUCTED THE SURVEY

- Congregants received emails or letters introducing the survey from Board Chair Harry Waizer and BAS President Jon Gerstel.
- 618 members received a follow-up email with a survey link, and 34 members received a hard-copy letter with a printed version of the survey and a self-addressed stamped envelope.
- Four reminder emails were sent to congregants who had not completed the survey. Additional communication stressing the importance of the survey was sent to all congregants by Rabbi Bronstein, Discovery Committee co-chairs Susan Roth and Rachel Halperin, committee member Jay Siegelau, and to BAS families by education director Lisa Jacobs.
- Data collection for the survey opened on July 11, 2022 and was closed to data collection on August 18, 2022. 462 of 652 individual members responded, a 71% response rate

SURVEY RESPONSE

- Among the 462 respondents:
 - 257 represented two or more people from the same household, reflecting a total of 128 unique households
 - 185 represented the only respondent from a household
 - 20 had missing data on the household ID
 - There were a total of at least 313 households represented in the survey (128 + 185)

- Response rates
 - For individuals: $462 / 652 = 70.9\%$
 - For households: $313 / 388 = 80.7\%$
- Representativeness of survey responses

Tenure at BAS	BAS Membership (as of June 2022)	Survey Responses
Less than 10 years	26.9%	21.2%
11 – 20 years	21.8%	21.7%
21+ years	51.2%	51.5%
Missing data	na	5.6%

METHODS 2: DEMOGRAPHICS

- As part of the description of “who we are,” the survey asked respondents to characterize themselves in the following ways:
 - Age
 - Tenure as BAS members
 - Whether or not they have minor children living in the household
 - Their marital or partnership status
 - Several diversity factors: whether the member is in an inter-faith marriage or partnership, and whether any member of the household identifies as LGBTQIA, Black, or as a Person of Color

WHO ANSWERED THE SURVEY?

		N = 462	%
Tenure at BAS			
	0 - 5 years	38	8.2
	6 - 10 years	60	13.0
	11 - 20 years	100	21.7
	21+ years	238	51.5
	Missing	26	5.6
Children living in household			
	Minor children living in the household	140	30.3
	No minor children living in the household	322	69.7
Current marital status			
	Married or partnered	377	81.6
	Single	7	1.5
	Separated or Divorced	21	4.6
	Widowed	32	6.9
	Missing	25	5.4
Diversity (may add to more than 100% since each item asked separately)			
	In an inter-faith partnership	31	6.7
	Household member identifies as LGBTQIA	70	15.2
	Household member identifies as Black or Person of Color	17	3.7
Age			
	Less than or equal to 40 years old	4	0.9
	41 – 64 years old	174	37.7
	65+ years old	257	55.6
	Missing	27	5.8

Findings:

- Half of respondents have been members for 21 or more years
- Over 80% are married or partnered. 30% have minor children living in the household
- Diversity: 7% in inter-faith partnership, 15% in member households identify as LGBTQ
- Most respondents are over 65 years old

METHODS 3: MEASURING WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO BET AM SHALOM CONGREGANTS

The survey enumerated 21 aspects of Bet Am Shalom's community life. These aspects have been grouped into 6 overarching themes for this analysis of what is important to our congregants. *The following six slides illustrate the survey items within each of the themes, including the percentage who reported that the aspect was very important to them.*

- Question: How IMPORTANT are various aspects of Bet Am Shalom's community life to you?
 - Are they **VERY IMPORTANT**
 - **SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT**
 - **NOT IMPORTANT?**

- Themes:

- **RITUAL, PRAYER, & SPIRITUAL INSPIRATION**
- **FAMILY PROGRAMMING AND CHILDREN'S EDUCATION**
- **SOCIAL PROGRAMMING AND ADULT EDUCATION**
- **PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**
- **LIFE EVENTS & PASTORAL CARE**
- **ISRAEL & AMERICAN JEWRY**

RITUAL, PRAYER, AND SPIRITUAL INSPIRATION

- BAS is very important to me as a place to **observe the High Holidays** (84.0%)
- BAS is very important to me as a place to **observe Shabbat and celebrate holidays** in addition to the High Holidays (57.1%)
- BAS is very important to me as a place to **learn and practice Jewish customs** (56.7%)
- BAS is very important to me as a place to **become spiritually inspired** (53.5%)
- BAS is very important to me as a **place to pray** (39.0%)

FAMILY PROGRAMMING AND CHILDREN'S EDUCATION

- BAS is very important to me as a place to **educate children about Jewish practice**, history, and identity (64.3%)
- BAS is very important to me as a place with **programming for young families** (41.6%)
- BAS is very important to me as a place to **participate in inter-generational programs** (27.7%)

SOCIAL PROGRAMMING AND ADULT EDUCATION

- BAS is very important to me as a place **to grow and develop ethically**, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually (52.4%)
- BAS is very important to me as a place to **engage in Tikkun Olam** through social action and pursuit of social justice (44.4%)
- BAS is very important to me as a place to **attend lectures, classes**, and special events (39.0%)
- BAS is very important to me as a place to **learn Torah** and other sacred texts (36.2%)

PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- BAS is very important to me as a place that is **inclusive of all**, including LGBTQIA+, interfaith families, and Jews of color (72.1%)
- BAS is very important to me as a place to **meet, befriend, and socialize** with others who are interested in being part of a Jewish community (65.4%)
- BAS is very important to me as a place to **receive support and offer support** to others in times of need (61.0%)
- BAS is very important to me as a place to be **inspired by and filled with music** and song (49.4%)
- BAS is very important to me as a place to **maintain connection to my family and ancestors** (35.7%)

LIFE EVENTS & PASTORAL CARE

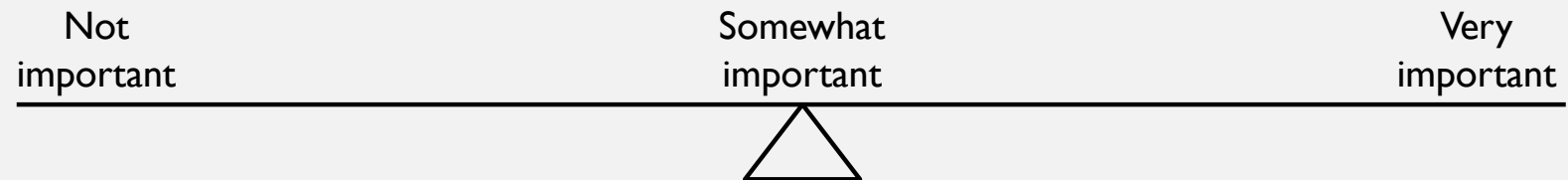
- BAS is very important to me as a community to provide **support for life cycle events** such as births, marriage, B'nai Mitzvahs, and funerals (73.8%)
- BAS is very important to me as place to receive **pastoral care and counseling** (22.3%)

ISRAEL & AMERICAN JEWRY

- BAS is very important to me as a place to **strengthen ties to Israel** (35.3%)
- BAS is very important to me as a place to discuss the **relationship between American Jews and Israel** (31.2%)

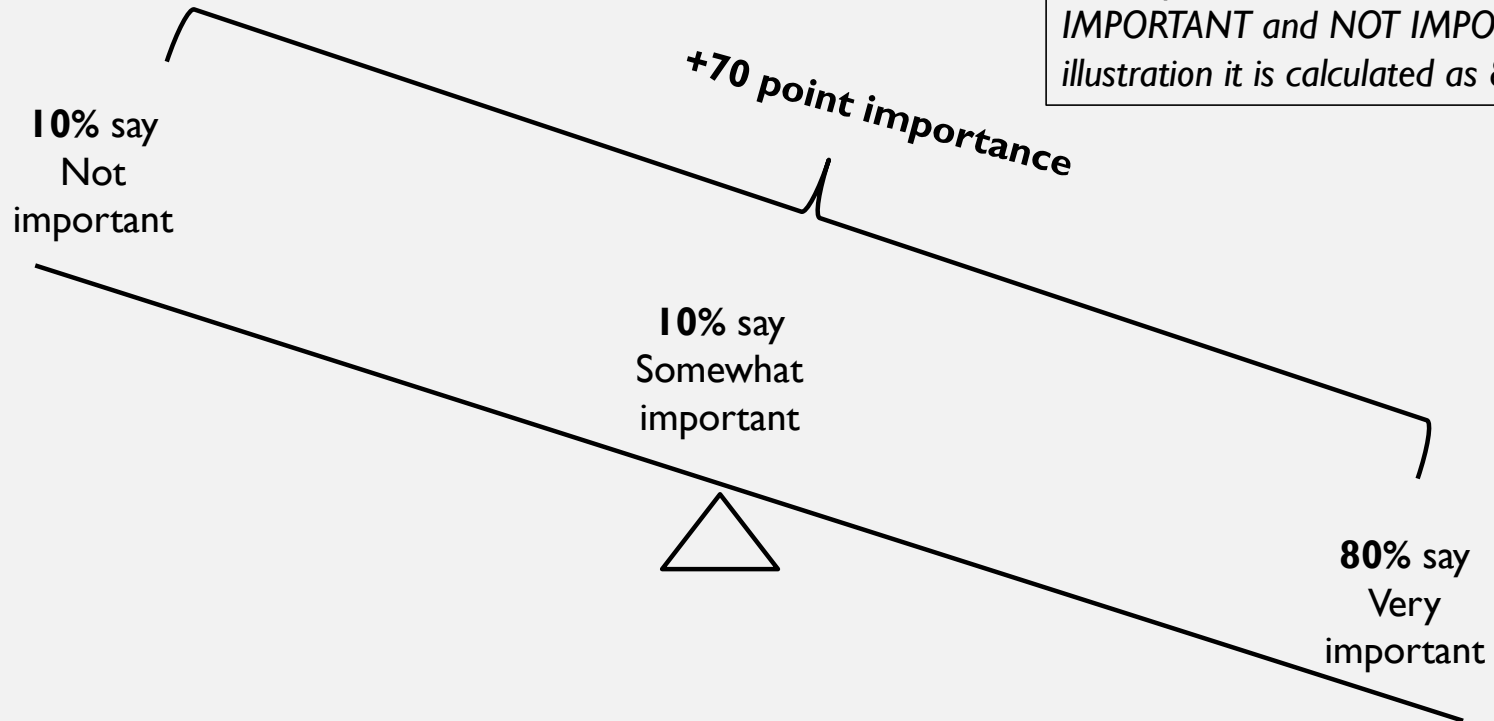
MEASURING THE MAGNITUDE OF IMPORTANCE

Another way that we have analyzed congregant responses to what is important to them is by examining the magnitude of importance that they have ascribed to the 21 aspects of communal life. This allows us to consider the weight of the importance of each aspect, particularly by contrasting the proportions of congregant who considered an aspect “very important” as opposed to the proportion who considered it “not important” to them. The images on the next several slides illustrate the metric we have employed for this magnitude of importance.



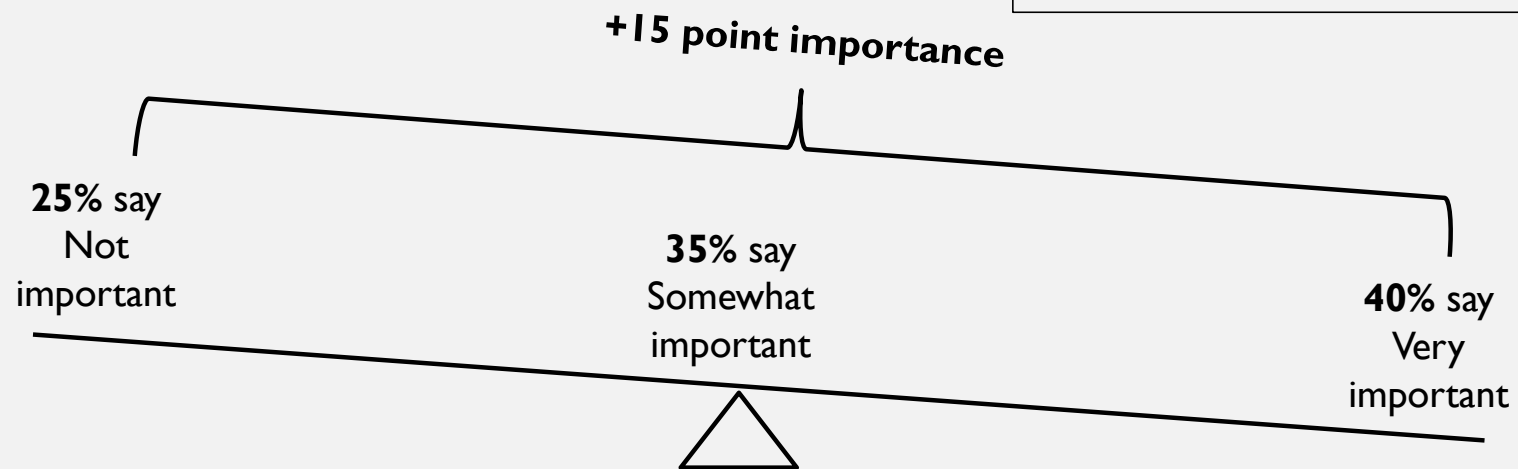
MEASURING THE MAGNITUDE OF IMPORTANCE

The **magnitude of importance** is calculated as the point difference between **VERY IMPORTANT** and **NOT IMPORTANT**. In this illustration it is calculated as $80 - 10 = 70$.



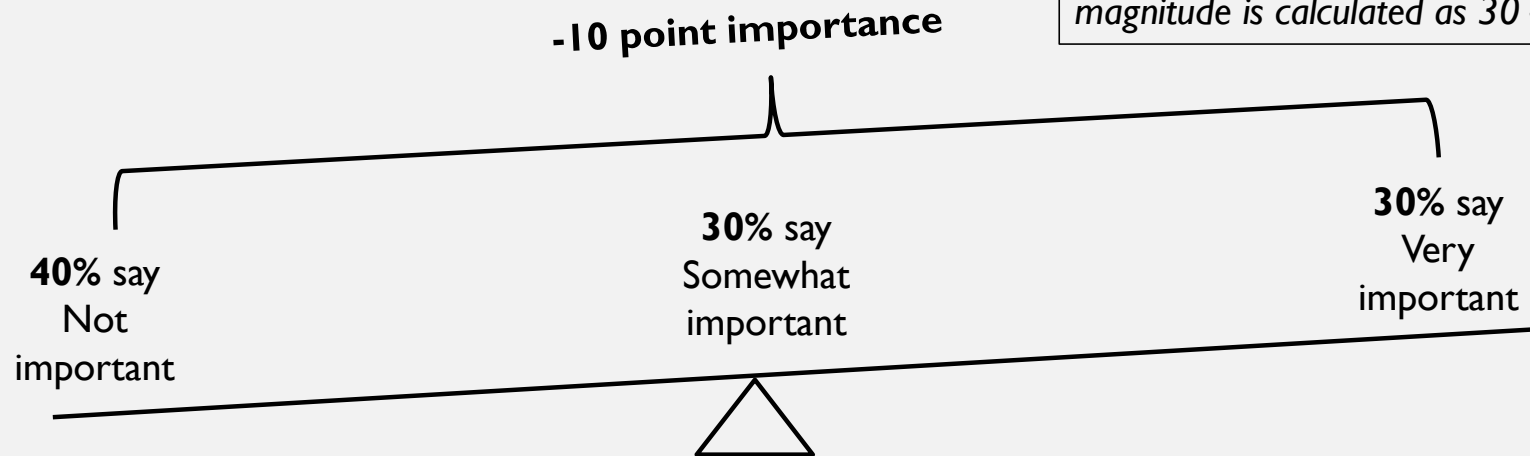
MEASURING THE MAGNITUDE OF IMPORTANCE

The more evenly spread the distribution, the lower the absolute magnitude of importance of any particular theme. In this illustration the calculation is $40 - 25 = 15$.



MEASURING THE MAGNITUDE OF IMPORTANCE

If more people say an issue is NOT IMPORTANT to them than say that it is VERY IMPORTANT there can be a negative point difference in the magnitude of importance. In this illustration, the magnitude is calculated as $30 - 40 = -10$.



DIFFERENCES BASED ON HAVING MINOR CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD

This next set of slides explores how the Bet Am Shalom community values each of the 21 aspects of synagogue life when they are split into two groups: 140 **households with minor children** and 322 **households without minor children**. As a rough rule of thumb, a difference of 10 or more points in the magnitude of importance may be considered significant.

MAGNITUDE OF IMPORTANCE BASED ON CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD: RITUAL, PRAYER, & SPIRITUAL INSPIRATION

ASPECT	Households with minor children			Households without minor children		
	Very important	Not Important	Magnitude	Very important	Not Important	Magnitude
Place to observe High Holidays	73.6	1.4	72.2	88.5	0.6	87.9
Place to observe Shabbat and celebrate holidays	47.1	3.6	43.5	61.5	5.6	55.9
Place to learn and practice Jewish customs	55.7	2.1	53.6	57.1	6.5	50.6
Place to become spiritually inspired	50.7	7.1	43.6	54.7	10.3	44.4
Place to pray	32.9	20.0	12.9	41.6	15.8	25.8

**MAGNITUDE OF IMPORTANCE BASED ON
CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD: FAMILY
PROGRAMMING AND CHILDREN'S EDUCATION**

ASPECT	Households with minor children			Households without minor children		
	Very important	Not Important	Magnitude	Very important	Not Important	Magnitude
Place to educate children about Jewish practice, history, and identity	72.9	2.1	70.8	60.6	9.9	50.7
Place with programming for young families	45.7	10.0	35.7	39.8	23.9	15.9
Place to participate in inter-generational programs	25.0	16.4	8.6	28.9	22.4	6.5

MAGNITUDE OF IMPORTANCE BASED ON CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD: SOCIAL PROGRAMMING AND ADULT EDUCATION

ASPECT	Households with minor children			Households without minor children		
	Very important	Not Important	Magnitude	Very important	Not Important	Magnitude
Place to grow and develop ethically & spiritually	42.9	9.3	33.6	56.5	7.5	49.0
Place to engage in Tikkun Olam	41.4	7.9	33.5	45.7	9.0	36.7
Place to attend lectures, classes, and events	22.1	15.0	7.1	46.3	8.7	37.6
Place to learn Torah	25.7	15.7	10.0	40.7	17.7	23.0

MAGNITUDE OF IMPORTANCE BASED ON CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD: PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

ASPECT	Households with minor children			Households without minor children		
	Very important	Not Important	Magnitude	Very important	Not Important	Magnitude
Place inclusive of LGBTQIA+, interfaith families, and Jews of color	65.0	5.0	60.0	75.2	6.8	68.4
Place to meet, befriend, and socialize	60.7	2.1	58.6	67.4	3.4	64.0
Place to receive support and offer support	44.3	4.3	40.0	68.3	2.2	66.1
Place to be inspired by and filled with music	41.4	12.9	28.5	52.8	10.3	42.5
Place to maintain connection to my family and ancestors	40.0	13.6	26.4	33.9	20.8	13.1

MAGNITUDE OF IMPORTANCE BASED ON CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD: LIFE EVENTS & PASTORAL CARE

ASPECT	Households with minor children			Households without minor children		
	Very important	Not Important	Magnitude	Very important	Not Important	Magnitude
Place to provide support for life cycle events	66.4	2.1	64.3	77.0	1.6	75.4
Place to receive pastoral care and counseling	17.1	21.4	-4.3	24.5	25.5	-1.0

MAGNITUDE OF IMPORTANCE BASED ON CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD: ISRAEL & AMERICAN JEWRY

ASPECT	Households with minor children			Households without minor children		
	Very important	Not Important	Magnitude	Very important	Not Important	Magnitude
Place to strengthen ties to Israel	28.6	15.7	12.9	41.6	15.8	25.8
Place to discuss the relationship between American Jews and Israel	23.6	18.6	5.0	34.5	17.7	16.8

DIFFERENCES BASED ON TENURE AT BET AM SHALOM

This next set of slides splits respondents into three groups, based on how long they reported being members of BAS: 98 respondents who have been members for ten years or less, 100 respondents who have been members for 11 – 20 years, and 238 respondents who have been members for 21 or more years. Again, a difference of 10 or more points in the magnitude of importance may be considered significant.

MAGNITUDE OF IMPORTANCE BASED ON TENURE AT BAS: RITUAL, PRAYER, & SPIRITUAL INSPIRATION

	0-10 years	11-20 years	21+ years
ASPECT	Magnitude	Magnitude	Magnitude
Place to observe High Holidays	86.7	85.0	89.5
Place to observe Shabbat and celebrate holidays	58.2	50.0	55.5
Place to learn and practice Jewish customs	60.2	57.0	51.7
Place to become spiritually inspired	52.0	55.0	40.8
Place to pray	25.5	29.0	18.9

**MAGNITUDE OF IMPORTANCE BASED ON TENURE
AT BAS: FAMILY PROGRAMMING AND CHILDREN'S
EDUCATION**

	0-10 years	11-20 years	21+ years
ASPECT	Magnitude	Magnitude	Magnitude
Place to educate children about Jewish practice, history, and identity	55.1	66.0	60.5
Place with programming for young families	24.5	20.0	25.2
Place to participate in inter-generational programs	5.1	8.0	8.8

MAGNITUDE OF IMPORTANCE BASED ON TENURE AT BAS: SOCIAL PROGRAMMING AND ADULT EDUCATION

	0-10 years	11-20 years	21+ years
ASPECT	Magnitude	Magnitude	Magnitude
Place to grow and develop ethically & spiritually	49.0	46.0	46.2
Place to engage in Tikkun Olam	38.8	40.0	36.6
Place to attend lectures, classes, and events	27.6	25.0	32.8
Place to learn Torah	20.4	19.0	20.6

MAGNITUDE OF IMPORTANCE BASED ON TENURE AT BAS: PERSONAL AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

	0-10 years	11-20 years	21+ years
ASPECT	Magnitude	Magnitude	Magnitude
Place inclusive of LGBTQIA+, interfaith families, and Jews of color	72.5	74.0	66.4
Place to meet, befriend, and socialize	71.4	69.0	62.2
Place to receive support and offer support	48.0	59.0	68.1
Place to be inspired by and filled with music	40.8	40.0	39.9
Place to maintain connection to my family and ancestors	19.4	15.0	18.9

**MAGNITUDE OF IMPORTANCE BASED ON
TENURE AT BAS: LIFE EVENTS & PASTORAL
CARE**

	0-10 years	11-20 years	21+ years
ASPECT	Magnitude	Magnitude	Magnitude
Place to provide support for life cycle events	72.5	73.0	78.6
Place to receive pastoral care and counseling	-7.1	1.0	-1.3

MAGNITUDE OF IMPORTANCE BASED ON TENURE AT BAS: ISRAEL & AMERICAN JEWRY

	0-10 years	11-20 years	21+ years
ASPECT	Magnitude	Magnitude	Magnitude
Place to strengthen ties to Israel	5.1	22.0	26.9
Place to discuss the relationship between American Jews and Israel	-7.1	20.0	19.7

OPEN-ENDED RESPONSES: GENERAL THEMES

- Survey respondents had the option of adding comments to the survey. Approximately 200 open-ended comments were received.
- All of the responses to the open-ended questions were read and categorized by a sub-group of the Discovery Committee. The major themes that were identified included **building community, services**, and issues around **interfaith marriage and the role of interfaith spouses and partners**. These topics will be further discussed in our upcoming Focus on the Future Groups.

OVERALL FINDINGS #1

1. What ranks highly as **very** important to all congregants: ***high holidays, diversity, life-cycle event support, a place to befriend other Jews;***
2. What is **moderately** important to all congregants: Shabbat, place to learn and practice Jewish customs, educating children, a place to be inspired, mutual support of one another, the role of music, spiritual and ethical growth, and a platform for Tikkun Olam;
3. What is **less** important about BAS to all congregants: connecting with ancestors, pastoral care, using the synagogue as a forum to discuss Israel and American Jewry, family programming, lectures and classes, inter-generational opportunities, a place to pray.

OVERALL FINDINGS #2

There are few differences in what is important to congregants when they are distinguished by how long they have been BAS members. The few things that differ by tenure of membership include:

- The longer you are a member, the more you look to BAS for mutual support;
- Members for fewer than 10 years are much less likely to be interested in using BAS as a venue to discuss Israel and American Jewry;
- Long-time members are not as likely as newer members to regard BAS as a place for being spiritually inspired as very important to them.

OVERALL FINDINGS #3

More differences are evident when comparing members with or without minor children living in the household:

- Those **without** minor children find the following significantly more important aspects of BAS than those with minor children – observing high holidays, observing Shabbat, life-cycle events, mutual support, ethical + intellectual + spiritual growth, attending classes and lectures, the inspiration of music and song, BAS as a place to pray or learn sacred texts, and BAS as a space to discuss Israel and American Jewry;
- Whereas those **with** minor children in the household find the following more important to them: educating children, family programming, and connecting to families and ancestors.

ANALYSIS OF NEWER MEMBERS WITH AND WITHOUT MINOR CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD

- The Discovery Committee explored the differences expressed by smaller sub-groups as well: newer members (less than 10 years at BAS) with or without minor children in the household, in terms of what aspects of the synagogue community were important to them.
- There were five aspects of BAS life in which these groups differed:
 - Those newer members **with** minor children in the household felt that, (1) making connections with ancestors, (2) education for children, and (3) family programming were very important to them;
 - Those newer members **without** minor children in the household felt that, (1) attending lectures, and (2) viewing BAS as a place for ethical, spiritual, and intellectual growth were very important to them.

MAGNITUDE OF IMPORTANCE BASED ON TENURE AT BAS AND PRESENCE OF MINOR CHILDREN IN THE HOUSEHOLD

	Members 0-10 years, WITH Children (n=55)	Members 0-10 years, WITHOUT Children (n=43)	All others (n=364)
ASPECT	Magnitude	Magnitude	Magnitude
Place to maintain connection to my family and ancestors	27.3	9.3	16.5
Place to educate children about Jewish practice, history, and identity	85.5	16.3	57.1
Place with programming for young families	45.5	-2.3	21.2
Place to attend lectures, classes, and events	7.3	53.5	28.6
Place to grow and develop ethically & spiritually	36.4	65.1	43.1

DISCUSSION

While it may seem as though we have two congregations – one for those without minor children living in their household and one for those with children in the house – the data suggest how each group views institutional engagement with Bet Am Shalom a bit differently.

Those **without** children have the time and space to be more introspective, more focused on personal growth, and more attentive to others. In turn, they view institutions such as BAS as one place where they can meet those needs.

Those **with** minor children are obviously more focused on child-rearing and the internal demands of family life, and they view the synagogue more “practically” – as a place to meet specific family needs. It is entirely likely that these members with minor children will evolve (in terms of their outlook) in to a group more similar to those without minor children over time, as their social roles as direct caregivers change.

DISCOVERY COMMITTEE

David Aftergood
David Badain
Rebecca Blackman
Rachel Halperin, co-chair
Cynthia Ehrenkrantz
Suzi Eisman
Jon Gerstel
Robin Gibbs

Jennifer Meyer
Loren Napoli
Robin Rattner
Joan Rosen
Susan Roth, co-chair
Roni Sarig
Alan Septimus
Jay Siegelaub

David Abramson, Survey Manager