

The Experience

Hebrew Words and Phrases to Guide You on the Journey

The Texts

Tanach תנ"ך

The Hebrew word for Jewish sacred texts, made up of these three parts:

T: Torah

N: Nevi'im, Prophets

K: Ketuvim, Writings

Torah תורה

The first five books of the Jewish Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. They may be printed in a book or hand-written in the Torah scroll. Bar and bat mitzvah students read from the Torah scroll.

Haftarah הפטרה

Selection from one of the books of the Prophets, thematically connected to the week's Torah portion.

Torah Decorations

Yad יד

Pointer used for reading the Torah, means "hand" in Hebrew.

Rimonim רמונים

Torah crowns, which are used for decorating the Torah.

Physical Spaces

Bimah בימה

The platform (literally "stage") from which the service is led.

Aron Hakodesh ארון הקודש

The ark which holds Torah scrolls.

About the Service

Aliyah עליה

Based on the Hebrew word for "ascend," this honor means being called up to the Torah to recite the blessings before and after the Torah reading. It is also used to refer to each section of the Torah that is being chanted by the reader. Our *b'nai mitzvah* commonly chant 3-4 *aliyot*, and the bar or bat mitzvah will recite the blessings before and after the final section of Torah.



Parashah פָּרָשָׁה

The weekly portion of the Torah read in the synagogue.

Service Descriptions

Shacharit שַׁחֲרִית

One of three daily prayer services, the term refers to the morning service. It is held at 10:30AM.

Minchah מִנְחָה

One of three daily prayer services, referring to the afternoon service. At Temple Emanu-El, Mincha begins at 4:30PM.

Maariv מַעְרִיב

One of three daily prayer services, referring to the evening service. *B'nai mitzvah* and their families are invited to light the Shabbat candles in the evening service preceding the *b'nai mitzvah* services.

Havdalah הַבְּדָלָה

Shabbat ends on Saturday evening with this beautiful ceremony, in which blessings are sung over wine, spices and a special multi-wicked candle. Afternoon *b'nai mitzvah* ceremonies conclude with a *Havdalah* ceremony.

Jewish Life

Tzedakah צְדָקָה

Meaning "justice" or "righteousness" in Hebrew, this word refers to the ethical obligation to do what is right and just.

Mitzvah מִצְוָה

Commandment, or Jewish obligation. The plural, *mitzvot*, are considered pathways to holiness, to becoming a better person and for creating a better world.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah בָּר/בַּת מִצְוָה

Son of the commandment, or daughter of the commandment: A person of bar or bat mitzvah age is considered to be an adult in the Jewish community and obligated to fulfill commandments.

Ritual Attire

Tallit טָלִית

Prayer shawl that is worn during morning services. The most important feature is the presence of fringes on the four corners. They represent the 613 commandments, or *mitzvot*, of the Torah. *B'nai mitzvah* families often choose to have a parent or a close relative present the tallit at the ceremony.

Kippah כִּפָּה

Traditional head covering. In Reform Judaism, the practice is optional and open to men and women. *Kippot* are available at Temple for those who would like to wear one during the service.