

Although we are a pretty relaxed, informal synagogue, we do have rules and expectations for proper conduct, particularly in the sanctuary. Below you will find ten commandments of synagogue etiquette which we developed some years ago. I believe it is worthwhile to reprint them. Those of you who are celebrating b'nai mitzvah this year should feel free to include these rules with your invitations or program booklets so that our guests will understand what is expected in our house of worship.

1. Men and boys must wear kippot (skull caps) everywhere in the synagogue, not just the sanctuary, as a sign of respect. Even young boys are expected to wear kippot.
2. Women's and girls' shoulders and midriffs should be covered. Skirts should not be shorter than where the woman's or girl's hand reaches along her thigh. It is optional for women and girls to cover their heads; if they are on the bimah, however, they should wear a head covering.
3. Electronic devices (hand-held games, laser pointers, mp3 players, cell phones) should not be present in synagogue during Shabbat. If absolutely necessary, please set cell phones or beepers on silent mode.
4. Cameras (including cell phone cameras) should not be used at synagogue on Shabbat. This includes the synagogue grounds as well.
5. No applause in synagogue during Shabbat.
6. If candy is thrown for b'nai mitzvah or an aufruf, the candy should not be eaten in the sanctuary. No gum chewing in the sanctuary.
7. When the Ark is open, please stand. Do not enter or leave the sanctuary while anyone is speaking from the bimah or while the Torah is being read. A good rule of thumb is that it is inappropriate to enter or leave if people are standing.
8. Do not put your feet on the pews or chairs.
9. Sit quietly during services. Do not talk during services. If you must speak, use a whisper. There are several parts of the service where congregants expect to be able to pray without interruption, such as the Amidah. During that part of the service in particular, there is an expectation of silence.
10. Please be respectful of those around you.

- Rabbi Alan J. Iser