



Bedeken and Ketubah Signing

Before the wedding can take place, the *ketubah*, the Jewish wedding contract must be completed. Bride and groom, immediate family and close friends join with the Rabbi a few minutes before the wedding for the signing. After the *ketubah* is signed, the groom places the veil over the bride's face as each recites a prayer appropriate for the occasion. The custom of bride and groom remaining apart the day of the wedding ends at the signing, the first part of the wedding.

The Ceremony

There are no Jewish rules concerning the order of the procession. However, parents should accompany their children down the aisle and be on the *bimah* during the ceremony, not to "give them away," but to escort them to their new home. Once the bridal party is in place, the bride and groom stand under the *huppah* with the bride at the groom's right.

The wedding ceremony has two parts: *kiddushin* (betrothal) and *nissuin* (marriage). The bride and groom share a cup of wine after the blessings which accompany both parts of the ceremony. The *kiddushin* portion includes the recitation of the *birkat erusin*, and the giving of the ring or rings.

The rabbi reads selections from the *ketubah* and gives it to the bride. The *nissuin* ceremony consists of the recitation of the *sheva brakhot*, the seven wedding blessings. These blessings celebrate God's creation of the world, humanity and the happiness of bride and groom. Following a benediction, the ceremony concludes with the breaking of a glass.

Questions? Call the Congregation!

Mazel Tov at this happy time in your lives. Our entire staff is ready to help as you make your plans for this special day. Feel free to call us to answer questions you might have.

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Publication

prepared by Rabbi Paul Drazen

Planning a Wedding

Mazel Tov!

Planning a wedding is a marvelous, happy time. All of us at the synagogue look forward to helping you make your wedding special. There are many details which need attention before the ceremony. This guide has been prepared to help you as you make your plans and to explain some of the customs which are observed at our congregation.

Wedding Application

To aid in assembling the information needed for the wedding, we have a **Wedding Application**. Please call the office to get an application if you have not yet received one.

Setting the Date and Time

Weddings can be held almost any day of the year. The exceptions include: *Shabbat*, major Jewish Holidays, the days between the 17th of *Tammuz* and the 9th of *Av*; and a portion of the *Omer* period (between Passover and *Shavuot*).

Our congregation **does not** schedule weddings to take place when regularly scheduled services are in progress.

Saturday night weddings may be scheduled to begin **no earlier than** two hours after the end of *Shabbat*.

The date and time of a wedding **are not** considered final until approved by the Rabbi.

Officers

Weddings at Beth El are conducted by our Rabbi and Cantor. They may invite additional clergy to co-officiate, if you desire.

Music

Music is a beautiful addition to a wedding, before, during and after the ceremony. Jewish music should be played at those times. There is a wide variety of music available. Musicians may play during a wedding ceremony at the congregation only with prior consultation with the Cantor who is happy to discuss all music with you.

Wedding Rehearsal

A wedding rehearsal is **not** mandatory. The □ Rabbi and Cantor normally do not attend the rehearsal. The time for the rehearsals are set through the office. Rehearsals are **not** held immediately before or after Shabbat, or on Shabbat.

Flowers

You may use any florist of your choice. The florist is required to clear all plans, including placement, delivery and pick up dates and times, with our Executive Director at least *one month* before the wedding.

Photography and Video

Photography and video taping are permitted during the wedding ceremony as long as those doing the work "remain invisible." Flash pictures and photography in conspicuous locations are **not** permitted during the ceremony. Contact our Executive Director for complete information.

Rings

You may have a one or two ring ceremony. Rings should be bands of pure metal with no stones. If your band has stones, please contact Rabbi Drazen.

Ketubah

The *ketubah*, the Jewish wedding contract, is an integral part of the wedding celebration. It is signed by two male witnesses, who may not be related to each other or to either bride or groom. For complete information about selecting witnesses, please contact the Rabbi.

You may use one of the standard Rabbinical Assembly *ketubot* or, if you prefer, a custom *ketubah*. If you plan to use a custom *ketubah*, please have the calligrapher contact the Rabbi for the proper text, as soon as possible. Some calligraphers need **six months** lead time!

Of course, a marriage license from the State is required!

Huppah

The *huppah*, the bridal canopy, symbolizes the couple's new home. The synagogue has a beautiful *huppah* available for use and poles for a hand-held *huppah*. If you would like to make other plans, please contact our Executive Director at least two months in advance of the wedding.

The Wedding Celebration

The meal which follows the wedding is a *Se'udah Shel Mitzvah*, a meal in celebration of a *mitzvah*, and is a part of the wedding itself. Our beautiful facility can easily be decorated to compliment your plans. A *kosher* meal is as the most appropriate conclusion for a Jewish wedding. As well, holding your wedding celebration at the Synagogue is most convenient for you and your guests. Many caterers are approved to prepare meals at the Synagogue; our Executive Director has a list of approved caterers.

If the meal is kosher, all members of our clergy may attend. Only when the meal is kosher may *Birkat Hamazon*, the blessing after meals, and the *Sheva Brakhot*, the seven wedding blessings, be recited.

Wedding-Ceremony Director

The wedding-ceremony director helps manage all the myriad details which are part of any wedding. Having a wedding-ceremony director is not mandatory, but it is wise to have one. The additional enjoyment you will have at the wedding because of the help of a qualified wedding director is well worth the small fee involved. Our office maintains a list of names of qualified directors.

Some Wedding Customs

Auf Rufin

The *auf rufin*, an *aliyah* and pre-marriage blessing for the bride and groom, usually takes place on Shabbat morning before the wedding, although it can be held whenever the Torah is read. After the blessing, a shower of candy may be thrown on the bride and groom, symbolizing our hope that the couple will have a sweet life.