



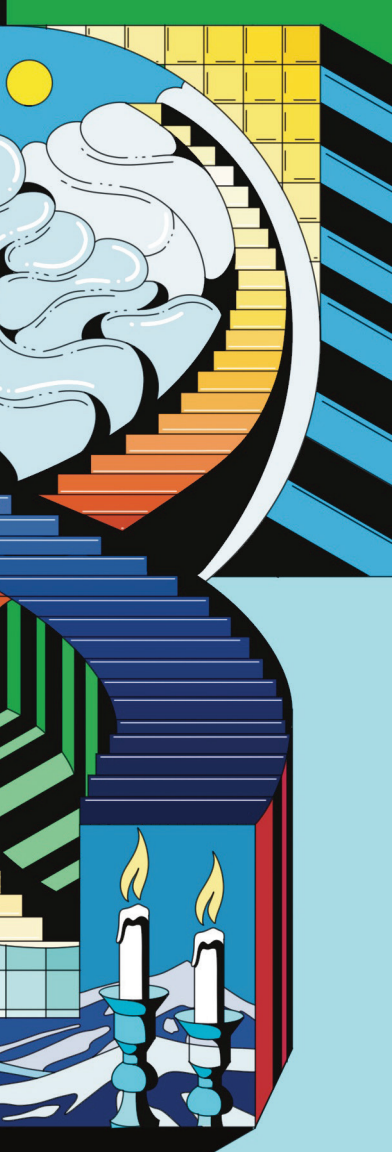
Everything you
wanted to *know*
about *Shul* but were
afraid to *ask*

The **SHUL** Guide

Welcome to *Shabbat* morning services! You'll find these services similar to those you may have attended on the High Holidays, but there are some distinct differences. Unlike the High Holidays, there won't be the sound of the *shofar*, it will be notably quicker, and if you make it to the end, you will be treated to a delightful *kiddush* buffet!

Let this pamphlet guide you through the classic *Shabbat* morning service. If you've still got questions, please don't hesitate to reach out. We're more than happy to help!





Why should I pray?

There is richness that comes along with being a part of a congregation.

Jews for millennia have strived to build a community by praying together. By simply showing up to services, you're already supporting your community. Your fellow shulgoers will benefit from your prayers, and you will from theirs! When Jewish songs are sung together, there is an uplifting quality that even the most intense private prayer cannot replicate. Plus, it's a pleasure to sit with community members to eat, drink, and talk about everything and anything. Most importantly, though, it's a *mitzvah*, and there is nothing more worthwhile than that.

What do I need to know before I enter the sanctuary?

Before you enter a synagogue, please consider modest attire, and if you're a man, kindly ensure that your head is covered. Don't worry; there's a basket of *kippahs* at the entrance for your convenience.

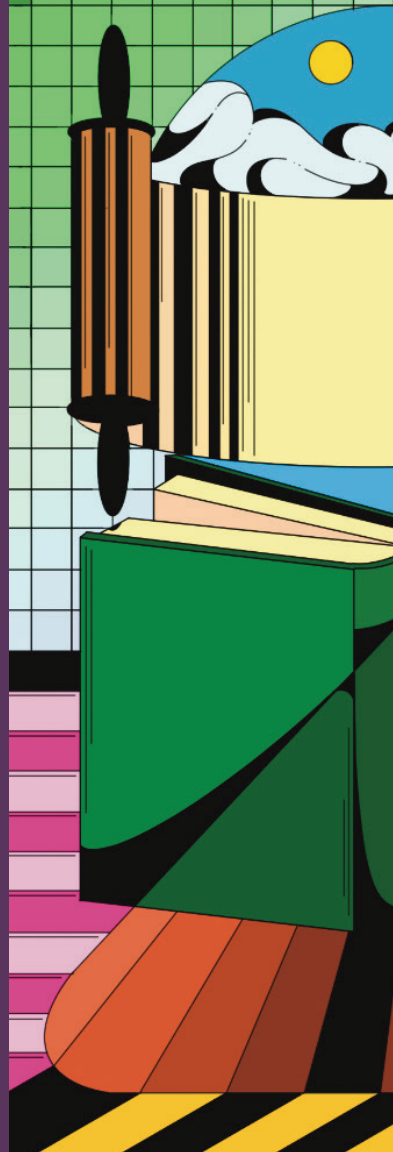
During the service, we'll be using two books—a *siddur* containing all the prayers and a *Chumash* to follow along with the *Torah* reading.

Now that you've got your gear, it's a good time to point out that Chabad observes the tradition of separate seating for men and women. We recognize that this can be challenging and are happy to engage in discussion about it.

What should I expect once I've sat down?

The prayers will be led by the cantor, also known as the *chazzan*, who will start and conclude each paragraph aloud in Hebrew.

We'll announce page numbers as we go, so you'll be able to easily follow along.





What if I don't speak/ read Hebrew? Can I pray in English?

Don't fret if you don't speak or read Hebrew; we have translated *siddurim* available, so you can understand the words and meaning. The texts were formulated in Hebrew, but prayer is about your dialogue with G-d. Tell Him how you feel, chat about your worries and needs, tell Him why you're happy today. Like any meaningful relationship, regular and sincere conversation keeps the connection and intimacy alive.

Whether you are reading the original Hebrew text, a translation, or a prayer of your own creation, audibly whisper the words. Allow yourself and G-d to hear you, even if your neighbor can't.

The ancient tunes are catchy and you'll find yourself humming along in no time!

What if I need to get up to use the bathroom?

You are free to come and go as you please. If you need to use the restroom or take a break, please feel comfortable doing so.

What happens during the Torah reading?

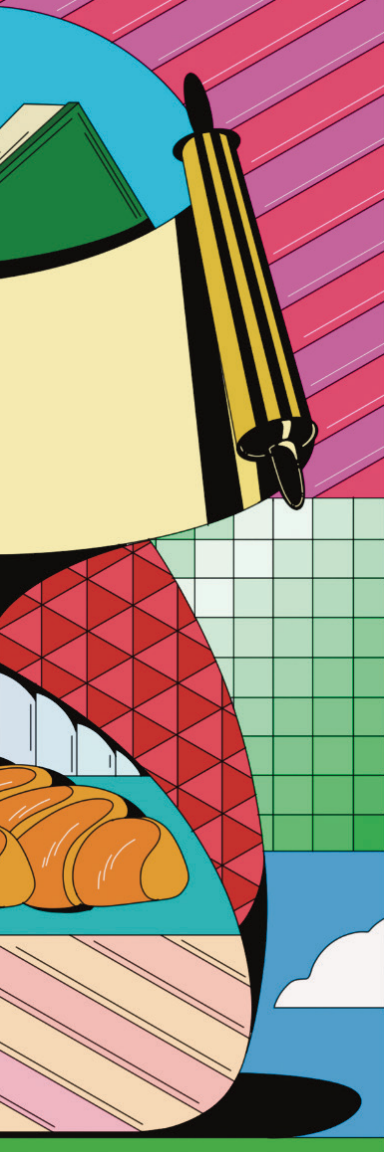
An integral part of the *Shabbat* morning service is the *Torah* reading. At the front of the sanctuary, you'll notice the ark [or *aron hakodesh*], which is a large cabinet with a curtain draped over the front. It contains the *Torah* scrolls used during services.

When the *Torah* is brought out from the ark, it will be passed around so that the congregation can gently touch it. Then, the *Torah*-reader will read the weekly *Torah* portion for all to hear.

What should I expect to get out of my time in shul?

Our hope for your time in shul is that it becomes an opportunity to connect deeply with yourself, the community, and G-d. Just as you eat to nourish your body, prayer nourishes your soul. The soul is a spiritual thing, existing in a material space. It finds comfort when you spend time in prayer—its natural habitat.





What parting thoughts do you have?

Visiting a synagogue isn't a lifelong commitment; you can stop by just to try it out. If it feels out of your comfort zone, you're not alone. We warmly encourage stretching yourself a little. It's an important *Torah* value and truly precious to G-d.

We are thrilled that you are here, and hope this pamphlet helps you feel more comfortable.



Don't forget to stay for the delightful *kiddush*, a gourmet buffet featuring traditional *Shabbat* foods.

It's often sponsored by a community member celebrating a joyous occasion or *yartzeit*.



Community is only possible with the input of all. We'd love to hear your honest feedback! What did you like, what did you dislike, and how can we better serve you?

If there is anything on your mind, please reach out!

Visit us at chabadwestvillage.com,
shoot us an email at office@chabadwestvillage.com,
or give us a call at [212] 518-3122.

We'd love to meet at the synagogue or even a coffee shop to discuss this or any other topic.

L'Chaim!



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