



Self Assessment Tool Section: Worship and Ritual

We are all created in the image of God.

Guided by Jewish values and traditions, this section explores the attitudinal and structural changes needed so that all will feel welcome attending services and engaging in Jewish learning. In this section you will find questions about awareness, communication, lay and staff training, accommodations and physical access.

- To facilitate communication with multiple team members, print out a full list of questions.
- Please be sure to save your work periodically. If you do not save routinely, work may be lost. To save, click “Save and continue later” bar at the top of the page. You will be prompted to write your email twice. Wait 5-10 minutes, then check your inbox for a link to continue.
- Don’t use the back button on your browser page. Information may be lost by navigating with your browser controls. If you need to go back to a previous page use directional buttons at the bottom of the tool.
- Please contact Lisa Handelman at 301-230-7278 or by email lisa.handelman@shalomdc.org for questions or to share additional resources.

Contact Information

1. What is the name of your organization?

2. Please enter your contact information.

First Name Last Name
Title
Email Address
Phone Number

Communication & Awareness

3. Is disability inclusion talked about from the bimah by clergy and lay leadership?
4. Have the spiritual needs of individuals with disabilities, family members, siblings, and caregivers been explored?
5. Have you asked if individuals with disabilities feel welcome at worship services, including if the accommodations they need are provided (or if they would benefit from additional accommodations)?
6. Has the congregation been sensitized to behaviors and noise tolerance during services?
7. Are individuals with disabilities invited to participate in services?
8. Are individuals with disabilities called up to the Torah for an aliyah or permitted to read Torah?
9. Do individuals with disabilities attend service such that approximately 20% of those who attend service are individuals with disabilities?
10. Do individuals with disabilities celebrate life-cycle events integrated within the congregation's annual calendar?
11. Are individuals with disabilities invited to participate in services in the same or similar ways as those without disabilities?
12. Do individuals with disabilities participate in leadership roles, leading prayer and services?

Training

13. Are ushers and greeters ready and willing to welcome all to services?
14. Does training for all those involved in services (such as ushers/greeters and lay leaders) include how to welcome individuals with a range of disabilities (including individuals with visible and hidden disabilities, as well as individuals with mental health conditions)?
15. Does training for ushers/greeters and all those involved in services include sensitivity to caregivers or support personnel who may accompany an individual with a disability?

Accommodations and Physical Access

16. Is there reserved seating for those who need this accommodation?
17. Are *tallitot* and *kippot* easily reachable for everyone?
18. Is the Torah accessible or made accessible to people with physical challenges and/or people of short stature?

19. If lighting is decreased (using candle light or dimming the lights during the program), is additional support provided to individuals with limited sight?
20. If food is included in the program, have specific dietary needs and allergies been taken into account so all can participate?
21. Are there comfortable places to which people can easily retreat if sitting still or staying quiet becomes difficult during worship services, where they can still follow along?
22. Are alternative prayer books (large-print, braille, explanation guides) readily available for those who need them?
23. Are there accommodations for people who need assistance handling books and other materials (e.g. sections provided in lightweight copies or reading stands provided)?
24. Are there prayer books that include picture communication symbols for individuals overcoming speech, language and learning challenges?
25. Are assistive listening devices and an amplification system provided for all who need them at services, special events, and educational programs?
26. Is there a seamless way to request sign language interpreters when this accommodation is needed?
27. When worship includes visual activities and movement, is there a procedure for communicating this information to individuals who are blind or partially sighted?
28. Is the bimah physically accessible?
29. To prepare for or engage in programs and services, is there a way for an individual who is blind or partially sighted to access audio versions of material (including bulletins, prayer books and songs)?
30. Are there accommodations for life-cycle events (*B'nai Mitzvah*, etc.) so all can celebrate these important rituals?

Budget

31. When planning worship/ritual programs with associated costs are the planners required to demonstrate how a proposed program supports meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities?
32. When creating a strategic budget is there a clear timetable to provide the changes necessary to support ongoing accommodations so that worship and ritual can be fully inclusive without additional personal costs to individuals or families?
33. Does the budget cover accommodations necessary so everyone can participate without additional cost to individuals or families (including guests for life cycle events or other special programs)?