

# *Confirmation Guide*

*Beth David  
Reform Congregation*



Rabbi Jim Egolf  
Cantor Lilia Kazansky  
Rabbi Emeritus Henry Cohen  
Rabbinic Intern Joysa Winter

Educator Susan Levey  
Teacher Virginia Kendall  
School Assistant Rebecca Freeman

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## From Rabbi Egolf



### **Confirmation-Kabbalat Ha-Torah**

In 1810 the Reform Movement began to wrestle with the issue of continuing Jewish education beyond the age of 13. The movement fashioned Confirmation as a way to continue the involvement and education of our emerging adults.

At Beth David, Confirmation has a long and proud history. When you walk through the religious school, you see the various photographs of our Confirmation classes from the inception of the congregation until now. Today our tenth grade, confirmation year, includes the RAC (Religious Action Center) trip to Washington, DC, where Reform Jewish teens from around the nation gather to learn about, and actually lobby on Capitol Hill for legislation related to social justice issues.

The Confirmation service is the celebration of the culmination of a religious education where our students receive instruction and is the beginning of their journeys into being adults in our community. Our greatest accomplishment as a congregation and as a community is seeing these dedicated youths become involved and informed Jewish adults. This is the transformative experience we want confirmation to be for your child.

## The RAC Trip (Religious Action Center)



The Bernard and Audre Rapoport *L'Taken* Social Justice Seminar is an intensive four-day study kallah in Washington, DC, focusing on Jewish values and social justice. Every year more than 100 congregations from across the country bring their high school students to participate in this exciting event. This unique opportunity enables students to hear from experts both inside and outside the Jewish community. Every *L'Taken* Seminar covers several different issue areas in a variety of interactive formats. Each seminar includes an opportunity for

students to tour the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and participate in Havdalah services at one of the memorials. Students also sample the vibrancy of Georgetown and other exciting areas of Washington, DC.

# Confirmation Planning Guide

Mazel Tov to confirmands and parents alike on reaching this significant communal and religious milestone. Confirmation promises to be a memorable and meaningful experience for everyone involved. The year culminates in the spring in a confirmation service usually on Erev Shavuot.

Parents of Confirmands are responsible for planning components of the Confirmation celebration, in coordination with the Temple Educator and the Temple Administrator. There are additional costs for the celebration that is not part of the Confirmation Fee that is assessed at the beginning of the 10<sup>th</sup> grade year.

This guide is offered to help you anticipate and plan for the Confirmation service. Keep in mind, though, that the specifics are flexible. Every group of parents is encouraged to personalize their event as they choose for their Confirmands.

Parents meet approximately three times prior to confirmation, usually in November, February, and April. The November meeting will be led by an advisor from the previous year's class, who may invite synagogue professionals to talk about Confirmation. At this meeting parents should select a coordinator or co-coordinators from the current class to supervise the planning process. Other tasks would be to read through this guide to become familiar with what is needed, and set the dates for the next meetings.

At a second meeting, led by the selected coordinators, parents should review all the components required for the service and celebration. Many decisions can be made as a group at this time. Individuals will be asked to volunteer for the various required tasks.

Following is a list of the components involved:

- Invitations - Beth David invites the entire congregation to attend Confirmation. In addition, families are encouraged to invite relatives and friends. Invitations will be provided by Beth David for this purpose. Parent input is welcomed in choosing, designing, and writing the invitations.
- Food - The synagogue arranges for a light supper prior to the service for the Confirmands and their immediate families, as well as an extended oneg for the congregation and guests afterwards. The oneg generally includes fruit trays, crudités, etc, as well as desserts. Parents may wish to contribute home-baked goods. Traditionally, parents also arrange for a sheet cake featuring a group photo (often from the RAC trip). In addition to the aforementioned synagogue events, some classes organize their own group celebration meal either before or after the date of Confirmation, and this is often held at a Confirmand's home.
- Décor - Traditionally, our confirmands each carry a single flower and the ushers wear boutonnieres. Parents choose these flowers, which are then provided by Beth David. Parents also select tablecloths (available at Beth David) and centerpieces.

- Robes - Confirmands wear robes during the service, which are provided by Beth David. Traditionally, boys wear blue robes and girls wear white. Parent volunteers are needed to help with fittings. Fitting times can be arranged with the Education Director but usually occur on a Tuesday evening during school.
- Ushers - It is a Beth David tradition for high school students to usher the Confirmation service. Thus they can see what awaits them the following year. Parents from the current confirmation class should suggest students to invite to serve as ushers. Five is the recommended number. We encourage the ushers to bring their family members to the service as well.
- Photography - Beth David secures a photographer, and each family is entitled to receive a photo of the entire confirmation class. Additional private packages will be available upon request through the Religious School. The group photograph will be added to the wall in the religious school.
- Publicity - A feature about the year's Confirmation class appears in the Beth David Bulletin and in the Religious School Etone. Parent volunteers are responsible for writing and submitting the article, which should include biographical information about each confirmand, and include a group photo. Using this information, a program will be created for use at the service
- Ways to honor the confirmation teacher – Previously, some classes have made donations to the synagogue in honor of their teacher. Others have chosen to give a personal gift, which included restaurant gift certificates, Judaica, etc. Parents take responsibility for organizing this task.

A third meeting is held in April. The main agenda items for this meeting are to review the above mentioned tasks to finalize that each is being addressed. In addition, invitations are distributed and parents discuss how they will handle the day of setting up for Confirmation.

# Planning Checklist

## **November Meeting** (led by a volunteer advisor from the previous confirmation class)

- Choose a coordinator(s) from the current year's class to oversee the planning process.
- Review this guide to get a sense of what needs to be done.
- Begin discussing options and task assignments.
- Set dates for two more meetings:
  - February \_\_\_\_\_
  - April \_\_\_\_\_

## **February Meeting** (led by current class coordinator[s])

Review the list of tasks. Make decisions and select volunteers.

### **Invitations**

*Required:*

- Be sure the Administrator has the Family Biography Sheets for correct spelling of names, etc.
- Determine how many invitations are required by each family.
- Give the number to the Administrator.

*Optional:*

- Discuss plans for the invitations with the Administrator. Add input as desired.

### **Food**

*Required:*

- Arrange with a bakery to have a photo cake at the oneg.

*Optional:*

- Choose someone to arrange/organize the contribution of home-baked goods.
- Decide if the group will have an additional celebration meal, either before or after Confirmation day.

### **Décor**

*Required:*

- Choose color scheme.
- Submit in writing to the Religious School office the preferred colors for boutineers and Confirmands' flowers.
- Select tablecloths (available at Beth David).
- Determine how centerpieces will be created or obtained.

## **Robes**

*Required:*

- Choose parents to do robe fittings with Confirmands.
- Contact the Educator to arrange a time and discuss the process.

## **Ushers**

*Required:*

- As a group, make a list of 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students to honor with the task of ushering.
- Choose volunteers to call these students.
- Call until you have five ushers.
- Encourage ushers' families to come to the service.

## **Photography**

*Required:*

- Get information from the Religious School office about individual photo packages.
- Families that want individual packages should communicate their requests to the school Office.

## **Publicity**

*Required:*

- Choose a volunteer to write the article.
- Ask the Educator and Administrator for deadline.
- Make sure the writer has copies of the Family Biography Sheets.
- The writer submits the article to the Administrator for the Bulletin and to the Educator for the Etone.
- The Administrator should also have a copy of the Family Biography Sheets as a resource for the program.

## **Teacher Gift** (*Optional but recommended*)

- Determine an appropriate gift.
- Choose a volunteer to coordinate the gift.

## **April Meeting**

- Review list and make sure all components are being addressed.
- Make a plan for setting up for Confirmation day.
- Distribute invitations.