



## PROTOCOLS FOR BBM HOME TORAH PROGRAM

1. Bar/Bat Mitzvah (BBM) Family's Decision:
  - a. A BBM family considering whether to take advantage of the BBM Home Torah Program should review these protocols. In addition, Rabbi Brusso or Cantor Ezring will explain to each family the religious significance of the Torah and provide a practical how-to on handling the Torah from start to finish.
  - b. After reviewing these protocols and the instruction from our clergy, the BBM family should contact Rabbi Brusso to discuss whether the BBM Home Torah Program is appropriate in their situation. There is no requirement or expectation that the BBM family will choose to utilize the program – it is entirely optional.
  - c. Cantor Ezring and Nili Ionascu will continue to vet all Torah readers (including those who are reading from the *chumash* rather than the Torah scroll) in accordance with longstanding Bet Torah policy.
2. Preparing Torah For Transit to BBM Home:
  - a. Bet Torah will roll the Torah scroll so it is set to the spot where the applicable Torah reading(s) will begin.
  - b. Bet Torah will email or text a picture of the applicable part of the Torah scroll, so the reader(s) can practice from the text as it will appear at the actual Shabbat service. It is anticipated the picture will be sent at least two days prior to the actual Shabbat service.
  - c. Bet Torah will place Post-its showing the starting point and ending point of each applicable reading to be read from the Torah scroll.
  - d. Bet Torah will pack the Torah in one of the travel cases we've acquired for this program. It will include the Torah, along with a belt, a *yad* (Torah pointer) and cover. For simplicity, no crown or breastplate will be included.
3. Transit to BBM Home:
  - a. The BBM family will pick up the Torah on **Friday morning, before noon**. The BBM family should call the Bet Torah office beforehand to set the specific pick-up time.
  - b. Pick-up will be in the parking circle just outside the Sanctuary, not in either of the two large parking lots.
  - c. At pick-up, the BBM family will sign for the Torah. That document will acknowledge, among other things, that the BBM family has reviewed these protocols and received the additional instruction (from Rabbi Brusso or Cantor Ezring), agrees to abide by them, and will be responsible for the Torah.

4. In the BBM Home:

- a. The Torah must be maintained on a sturdy table (no smaller than 4' x 6') dedicated for that purpose for the duration of the Torah's stay in the home, unless Rabbi Brusso approves a different arrangement. The Torah should not be stored in the travel case before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah.
- b. The room in which the Torah is located must be completely separated and protected from pets, smoking, kitchen fumes, food and liquids.
- c. Camera/microphone/lighting: The entire set-up must be done in a manner that assures the safety of the Torah itself. Beware of cables. A laptop or other Zoom-accessible device should be positioned on a table in front of the Torah to ensure that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah is visible on camera. Ideally, the table used for the Torah should be large enough for this without touching or interfering with the handling of the Torah. If not, however, a separate table should be placed in front of the table holding the Torah to give the Congregation a clear view of the service.
- d. The Torah should not be opened unless there is a tablecloth underneath it; and the Torah should be rolled up and put away as promptly as practicable once the Torah readings have been completed. (NO *hagbah* or *galilah!*) The Torah should be packed back into the travel case after Shabbat on Saturday and kept on a table or other elevated sturdy surface until the time for returning it the following Monday morning.
- e. Ideally, the BBM family should use its own *Yad* when reading the Torah. However, if the family does not own a *Yad*, Bet Torah will provide one to the family along with the Torah (as noted above).
- f. The BBM family will be given the name, cellphone number and email address of a *Gabbai*. The BBM family should feel free to phone, text or email the *Gabbai* in the days before the service and on the morning of the service itself with any questions or concerns regarding handling or reading from the Torah – think of it as a *Gabbai* help-line. However, the *Gabbai* will not be able to offer assistance to a reader during the reading itself.
- g. While the Torah is open, the family should have a book or other small object on either side of the Torah to ensure that the Torah does not roll open any further than is necessary.
- h. Each Torah reader or *Aliyah* honoree (those being called up to recite a blessing over the Torah) who is present in the BBM home, should:
  1. wear a *tallit* (prayer shawl). Men and women should be sure to wear a kippah or other head covering;
  2. follow along with the Torah readings and be prepared to read Torah or say the blessings at their assigned portion;
  3. for *Aliyah* honorees, have their Hebrew name in mind (the Cantor will know the Bar/Bat Mitzvah's Hebrew name);
  4. for *Aliyah* honorees, be familiar with and ready to recite the blessings.
- i. When an *Aliyah* honoree is called up to the Torah, he/she should recite the opening blessing. Once the Torah has been read for that portion, the *Aliyah* honoree should then recite the closing blessing.
- j. Given the pandemic, we are recommending that the *Aliyah* honoree not kiss the Torah parchment with the Tallit at the beginning or end of the *Aliyah*.
- k. The Torah should be covered when not being read (as explained by the Rabbi or Cantor).

1. After the Torah service, the BBM family should carefully dress the Torah (as explained by the Rabbi or Cantor, and detailed below).
5. Handling and Packing the Torah.
    - a. *Anyone handling the Torah should take great care **not** to touch the Torah parchment with bare hands.* Rather, use a tallit or other clean cloth if for some reason the Torah parchment needs to be touched or adjusted.
    - b. As the Torah should **never** touch the floor, the Torah bag should **not** be placed on the floor when packing the Torah for its return to Bet Torah or while it holds the Torah.
    - c. When packing up the Torah, the family should take great care to place the Torah gently in the protective bag or carrying case. First, the Torah should be closed by rolling together the *atzei chaim* (handles). Be sure to position the right handle above the left one. Ensure that the Torah is snugly rolled close, making sure that the parchment is evenly rolled up and not rubbing against the wooden edges of the *atzei chaim*. Then, secure the Torah with the belt provided and carefully cover the Torah with the Torah cover. Place the chain holding the *yad*/pointer over the right top handle of the Torah (the side that has *Beresheit*, the beginning portion of the Torah). Finally, carefully place the Torah in the protective case or bag and close it. If additional rubber foam has been provided, use the foam to cover the Torah before carefully closing the bag or case.
    - d. After placing the Torah back in the protective bag/case and before closing the bag or case, the BBM family should wipe the Torah's handles with a disinfectant cloth.
  6. Returning Torah:
    - a. "Bet Torah" means House of Torah. So, we want the Torah back!
    - b. The BBM family must return Torah on **Monday morning, before noon**. Call Bet Torah office beforehand to set the specific return time.
    - c. Return will be in the parking circle just outside the Sanctuary.
    - d. If there were any issues with the Torah, please email Rabbi Brusso directly. It is likely that Bet Torah will not unpack or inspect the Torah for several days after it has been returned.