

Minyan Leader's Guide

Jewish Reconstructionist Congregation

Evanston, Illinois



These notes: The outline on the following pages reflects the classic JRC Shabbat morning Minyan service. Every Minyan service is a unique mix of leader, Torah reader, d'var Torah, and Oneg host. Make these pages your own, mark them up with pen and highlighter, and share a few words and melodies from your Jewish learning and experience.

Timing: Start on-time at 10:00 AM – no later than 10:05, no matter how many people are there – to ensure sufficient time for the d'var and to finish the service by 12:00 noon. Respectfully limit additions, interruptions, and digressions to keep things on track.

Co-Leading: Consider co-leading with someone who can help with the singing or explanations, or just to ease the experience.

Microphone: Use the microphone, whether you think you need it or not, to enhance sound quality for all and to make for a more Shabbat like discussion tone.

Italics: Note the “stage directions” in *italics* alongside many of the prayers in these notes. The word *stand* is short for “Those who are able, please rise.” *Optional* means that this prayer may be skipped; this can help you to stay on schedule, especially on those days of the Jewish calendar that come with additional readings.

Active participation: Vary who does the readings: yourself, individual members, all together or responsively. Sing the first few words of familiar songs and everybody will join in. Announce page numbers periodically. These refer to our [Kol HaNeshamah: Shabbat Vehagim Reconstructionist Prayer Book](#).

Photography: Tactfully enforce Minyan practice prohibiting photography or video during service.

Inclusiveness: Ensure a kid-friendly atmosphere; make all families and individuals feel welcome.

BIRHOT HASHAHAR / MORNING BLESSINGS (pp. 140-161)

We acknowledge the miracle of life and the beginning of a new day – blessings that we may otherwise take for granted. A minyan is not required to get started. In fact, these blessings were originally intended to be said privately at home prior to the synagogue service. Create a communal feeling and engage people as they arrive.

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| 535 | Hiney mah tov | <i>...or a niggun (wordless melody) to set the tone; optional</i> |
| 141 | Mah tovu | |
| 142-143 | Donning the Tallit | <i>Optional</i> |
| 152-161 | Birchot Hashachar – Morning Blessings | <i>Chant the first line of each in Hebrew and the second in English</i> |
| 162 | The Architect | <i>Optional: Read responsively, top of p. 162</i> |
| 164-165 | Elohay neshamah | <i>Optional: English and Hebrew</i> |

PESUKEY DEZIMRAH / VERSES OF PRAISE (pp. 176-245)

Now we sing ancient songs of praise to help prepare ourselves spiritually for the Shema and Amidah. Chant from three or more of the Psalms in this section, and (optionally) finish with the Kaddish.

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| 177-179 | Baruch she'amar | |
| 181 | Closing paragraph of Baruch she'amar | <i>Optional: Read in Hebrew</i> |
| 187 | Torat adonay (Psalm 19) | <i>Optional</i> |
| 188 | Might there be a person... (Psalm 34) | <i>Last 6 lines in English</i> |
| 189 | Mi ha'ish (Psalm 34) | <i>Last three lines in Hebrew</i> |
| 190-208 | More Psalms | <i>Optional: Read privately</i> |
| 209 | Tov lehodot (Psalm 92) | <i>First three lines</i> |
| 209 | Mah Gadlu (Psalm 92) | <i>Optional</i> |
| 211 | Tzadik katamar (Psalm 92) | <i>Optional: Last four lines</i> |
| 214-215 | Esa eynay (Psalm 121) | <i>First stanza in English, then Hebrew</i> |
| 231 | Halleluyah (Psalm 150) | |
| 234-237 | Nishmat kol hay | <i>Optional: 1st line, English & Hebrew, then continue individually</i> |
| 429-431 | Ashrey (Psalm 145) | <i>Optional</i> |
| 241 | Shohen ad | <i>Allow for additional davening</i> |
| 243 | Yishtabach shimchah | <i>Second paragraph, in Hebrew</i> |
| 245 | Hatzi Kaddish | <i>Optional</i> |

We take a brief "Meet & Greet" break before calling the minyan to formal worship with the Barechu.

SHEMA AND ITS BLESSINGS (pp. 246-291)

The Shoharim (morning) service formally begins with the Barechu – the call to worship. Traditionally, a minyan (10 adults) is needed by this time. We sing of Creation (Yotzer / God in Nature, pp. 247-271) and Revelation (Ahavah Rabah / Love and Torah, pp. 272-275). We proclaim the Shema (pp. 277-285) and affirm it (Emet Veyatziv / True and Established, pp. 286-289). We close this section singing Redemption songs (Mi chamochah and Tzur yisra'el, p. 291).

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| 247 | Barechu (<i>stand</i>) Yotzer Or | <i>Optionally chant the Kavanah on p. 246</i> |
| 253/255 | El Adon | <i>Transliteration on p. 255</i> |
| 268 | Every day, Creation is renewed... | <i>Optional</i> |
| 269 | Or Hadash | <i>Optional</i> |
| 272/273 | Ahavah rabah: "God loves us" | <i>English and/or Hebrew</i> |
| 275 275 | Veha'er eyneynu Vahavieynu | <i>Optional: Hatikva melody works well for Vahavieynu</i> |
| 277 | Shema, Ve'ahavta | |
| 278-283 | Biblical Selection I or II | <i>Optional: Read together a paragraph from one of these, in English</i> |
| 285 | Vayomer adonay el moshe leymor | <i>Read together in Hebrew</i> |
| 288 | True it is... | <i>Optional</i> |
| 291 | Mi hamochah, Tzur yisra'el (<i>stand</i>) | |

AMIDAH (pp. 292-323)

We chant the "standing prayer" – the central prayer of our service – aloud, daven it privately, or most often a combination of the two. Members are encouraged, if they prefer, to use this time for their own private meditation, reflection, or prayer.

The seven blessings of the Shabbat Amidah are listed below. (Weekday services have 19! On Shabbat we set aside those containing petitions or requests, focusing instead on the joy and holiness of the day.) Hallel is recited only on pilgrimage festivals and new moons, as noted below. We (optionally) mark the completion of the Amidah by reciting the Kaddish.

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| 292 | Introduction to the Amidah | <i>Optional</i> |
| 295 | Adonai sefatai tiftah | <i>Optional</i> |
| 295-297 | 1. Avot ve'Imot / Ancestors | <i>First 3 sections of Amidah are chanted aloud, standing</i> |
| 299 | 2. Gevurot / Divine Power | |
| 303-305 | 3. Kedushat Hashem / Hallowing God's Name | |
| 306-319 | The Silent Amidah: 4. Kedushat Hayom / The Day's Holiness 5. Avodah / Worship 6. Hoda'ah / Thanks 7. Birkat Hashalom / Blessing for Peace | <i>Encourage members to daven privately, reminding them of any Rosh Hodesh or holiday-specific inclusions.</i> <i>Optionally introduce a few of the traditional or modern melodies associated with these sections.</i> |

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| 321/323 | Sim Shalom -or- Oseh Shalom | <i>Optional: Ribono Shel Olam or Yehi l'ratzon (3rd line from bottom) on p. 323</i> |
| 356-379 | Hallel: Chant selections from Psalms of Praise | <i>On festivals and Rosh Hodesh <u>only</u> - see note at top of p. 356. Choose from among the transliterated Psalms to sing.</i> |
| 381 | Kaddish for the completion of prayer | <i>Optional</i> |
| <p>TORAH SERVICE (pp. 382-441) <i>Reading and discussing the Torah is the most ancient part of the synagogue service. We chant verses celebrating the Torah and reach out to touch it with a tallit or prayerbook as it is carried in meandering procession from the Ark to the reader's table. Minyan tradition is to take the first aliyah as a group, chanting together the blessings before and after the reading.</i></p> <p><i>After the Torah reading, we offer prayers for those who are ill and vulnerable. Then a member shares a d'var Torah (a "word of Torah") and facilitates a discussion. Finally, the Torah is returned to the Ark.</i></p> <p><i>Identify 5 "volunteers" to receive honors: 2 to open the ark, and 1 to carry, 1 to lift, and 1 to dress the Torah. (Torah reader and d'var Torah will have been previously assigned. Torah reader will have chosen the Gabay.)</i></p> | | |
| 383 | Eyn kamocho Av harachamim | |
| <i>Stand. Ark is opened.</i> | | |
| 385 | Vayhi binso'a ha'aron -or- Pithu li | |
| 387 | Bey ana rachetz | <i>Optional</i> |
| <i>Torah is removed from Ark; Ark is closed</i> | | |
| 393 | Shema; Echad; Gadelu | <i>Minyan style: all together</i> |
| 393 | Lecha adonay | <i>Sung during Torah procession</i> |
| 385 | Ki mitziyon tetzey Torah | <i>Sung while Torah is being unwrapped. (No need to call out p. 385 – the words will come "automatically")</i> |
| 399 | Blessings before Torah reading Torah reading Blessings after Torah reading | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>First Aliyah (for entire Minyan)</i> • <i>Repeat if there are additional Aliyot</i> • <i>Torah is rolled closed and covered with a tallit</i> |
| 400 | Birkat Hagomel | <i>Optional, if requested</i> |
| 686 | Mi Sheberah for those who are ill | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Read names from JRC Refuah Sheleymah list; ask members for additional names</i> • <i>Lead prayer in English at top of page.</i> • <i>Optional: Mi Sheberah song by Debbie Friedman</i> |
| 684-693 | Mi Sheberah for other occasions | <i>Optional, if requested</i> |
| 407 | Hagbah & Gelilah (<i>stand</i>) Vezot HaTorah (<i>choose one</i>) | <i>Torah is lifted and tied, mantel and yod replaced, Torah returned to reader's table (Optional: cover Torah with a tallit)</i> |
| 409-410 | Haftarah | <i>Optional</i> |

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| | D'var Torah | <i>Usually 20-25 minutes, finishing by about 11:45. Leader watches the time and gives a "2-minute warning"</i> |
| 420 | Prayer for State of Israel (<i>stand</i>) | <i>Optional</i> |
| 422 | Prayer for Peace | <i>Optional</i> |
| 424-427 | Birkat Hahodesh (<i>stand</i>) | <i>If Rosh Chodesh occurs in the coming week, then Torah is lifted and Birchat Hachodesh is recited in English or in Hebrew and English</i> |
| 433 | Yehalelu (<i>stand</i>) Hodo al eretz | |
| 435 | Havu ladonay (Psalm 29) | <i>Optional procession Place Torah in Ark, leave Ark open</i> |
| 441 | Etz chayim hi (<i>1st line</i>) | <i>Close Ark</i> |
| <p>CONCLUDING PRAYERS (pp. 443-465) <i>This section includes closing hymns, the Mourner's Kaddish, thanks to all who participated, sharing of nachas (joyous news or blessings), announcements, and blessings over wine and chalah as we transition to the Oneg Shabbat.</i></p> | | |
| 443 | Eyn keyloheynu | <i>Optional</i> |
| 445-449 | Aleynu (<i>stand</i>) | |
| 450 | Intro to Mourners' Kaddish | <i>Read names from JRC Yahrzeit list; ask for additional names.</i> |
| 451 | Mourners' Kaddish (<i>stand</i>) | <i>Minyan custom: All rise and all recite to support mourners.</i> |
| 451 | Oseh Shalom | <i>"Minyan style," tallitot wrapped around one another</i> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Thank Torah chanter, d'var leader, and oneg hosts.</i> • <i>Welcome visitors</i> • <i>Ask for brief announcements, nachas to share, etc.</i> | | |
| 459 | Adon Olam | <i>...or leader's choice of closing hymn</i> |
| 465 | Veshameru, Kiddush & HaMotzi | <i>Typically led by Oneg hosts</i> |
| <i>Oneg Shabbat</i> | | |