

FAQ

Marriage

When life-cycle events occur, sometimes they are planned far in advance (B'nai Mitzvah; Marriage) and sometimes they are more sudden (Death). The clergy at B'nai Jehudah are here to help you navigate through these events so that they may be as meaningful as possible. In some instances, our goal is to ease trauma and provide comfort. At other times, we strive to support plans and increase joy. Know that we are here 24/7. To assist you in your life-cycle moment, we have prepared this brief FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions). We hope it will begin to answer some of your pressing questions. Please call us (913-663-4050) and we will do all we can to facilitate your family's life-cycle moment.

1. *My child/grandchild has become engaged. What's the first thing we should do?*

Hug your loved one and say, "mazel tov!" Then, they should call the rabbi's office and make an appointment to meet. While many families think the first thing they should do is scramble to find the right place (or caterer or photographer or florist), we suggest you start with the rabbi. Let us look at the calendar and find options for wedding dates (and let couples know when weddings are/are not traditionally held), as well as to clear possible dates on the rabbi's calendar. This process and the first meeting should be able to be accomplished within a week or two of first calling the rabbi.

2. *Will the rabbi officiate at my/my child's/my grandchild's wedding ceremony?*

One of the privileges of membership is to have our clergy assist with life-cycle events. Therefore, children and grandchildren of members have first access to the possibilities of being married by the clergy of the congregation. That said, one of our goals is to assist couples in making Jewish choices. So, we hope the couple (if they are in-town) will join the congregation and choose to be a part of the community.

3. *How does the rabbi decide for whom he will officiate?*

Whether the couple is intra- or interfaith, the most important factor is "chemistry." When a couple marries, that moment under the chuppah is a most intimate one. The rabbi standing with them should be one with whom they feel a deep mutual rapport.

In addition, with interfaith couples, a conversation about spiritual choices needs to be held. As rabbis, we are charged with nurturing Jewish choices. When couples, through their own dialogue and with the rabbi, choose to live a Jewish life, to embrace Jewish choices, and – if so blessed – to have Jewish children, then we are usually able to help sanctify that relationship through an interfaith wedding ceremony. We say "usually" because every couple is unique. What is most important, is the conversation. Thus, whether intra- or interfaith, our rabbis will only agree to officiate after a meet-

ing, hopefully in person, but – if necessary – over the phone.

Whether we are able to officiate or not, we can always help couples work through the process of decision-making and planning for the ceremony. We will always strive to embrace couples and help them feel connected to and appreciated by the Jewish community. Our goal is to make this the beginning of a wonderful relationship between the couple and the congregation.

4. *What fees are charged?*

When parents or children are members of the congregation, the rabbis work with the couple as part of their congregational duties. There are no fees for the hours spent in counseling and for planning the ceremony. Donations to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund are always appreciated.

Using our chapel, at no cost, is a privilege of membership and we hope many couples will walk down the aisle in our building. Use of other facilities, such as the Social Hall, do have rental fees, which are available from our administrative offices.

5. *How often does the rabbi meet with the couple?*

Each couple is unique and their interests/needs will help determine the exact number of meetings. Usually, though, the rabbi meets with a couple 4-5 times before the ceremony, with each meeting lasting about an hour.

For interfaith couples, we also require that they participate in our Introduction to Judaism class (15 weeks, 2 hours per week; offered in the fall and spring of each year), or participate in a comparable program agreed upon by the rabbi. At times, we may ask intrafaith couples to take the course, as well. The goal is to provide couples with the minimum tools needed to make positive Jewish choices.

6. *What else do we need to know?*

Just this: B'nai Jehudah is thrilled to help you and your family prepare for this celebratory moment. Thank you for letting us be a part of it.