



Why should I join a synagogue?

1. **Community:** The synagogue is so often the place where we discover people who share in the same interests and values. In truth, our best friends come from the synagogue. In Anne Arundel County, especially, it is difficult to feel a sense of Jewish community for there is no Jewish Federation and no Jewish Community Center. It is so easy to feel lost as a Jew. The synagogue is the place to feel like we are part of a Jewish community.
2. **Connection:** While there is great joy in being part of a large Jewish community, there is also great value in connecting with other people within a similar demographic. Temple Beth Shalom sponsors groups for women, men, young professionals, empty nesters, singles, young couples, and youth. And, a beautiful aspect of being part of these groups is that your presence not only benefits you, but it also benefits the community as well.
3. **Education:** Indeed, educating our children is very important. Still, just as important is continuing our own education. Where else can you get such a varied blend of thought provoking discussions, fascinating speakers, and text exploration? Temple Beth Shalom offers ongoing weekly classes as well as special programs. The lectures and classes are all taught on a stimulating level and challenge those who attend with new ideas and thoughts.
4. **Spiritual Expression:** While there is no exact formula for creating an atmosphere conducive to spiritual expression, the sanctuary of a synagogue is most certainly a good place to consider. Within our sanctuary are beautiful music, inspirational sermons, and valuable readings. While the services may not necessarily remind you of your synagogue as a youth, we maintain a responsible adherence to Jewish tradition within the context of liberal Judaism.

What do I get for my membership?

1. **Life Cycle:** From birth to death and from *b'nei mitzvah* to marriage the synagogue provides the venue, the community and the enthusiasm to mark these moments in your life properly. While it is true that you can always find a rabbi to perform the various life cycle ceremonies for your family, the ceremony is cheapened because there is no prior relationship. When your children stand beneath the *chuppah* on their wedding day, do you want to know the rabbi and the cantor? When you are standing at the gravesite of a loved one, do you want the rabbi to also know the person who has passed away?
2. **Social Action:** The synagogue serves as the conduit for a person to do *mitzvot*. The synagogue helps to organize people interested in acts of kindness. Feeding the hungry, comforting the homeless, educating the underprivileged, helping our fellow congregants in times of need. All these can be done in partnership with the temple.

3. Social Events: In addition to our educational programs, we also offer an array of social programs. Movie nights and receptions, art fairs, book signings and dinners. All of these occur over the course of a typical year at Temple Beth Shalom.
4. Perpetual Memory: There are very few places that memorialize in perpetuity your loved ones. So long as the synagogue stands, your loved ones are remembered. You give them the gift of eternal life.

Please know, however, that membership at a synagogue is not like membership at a country club. It is not goods for services. We join a synagogue because we believe in supporting Jewish institutions. We join a synagogue because we care about the future of Judaism in our community. Temple Beth Shalom understands that you may not come to the synagogue much during the course of the year. It is during such years that your membership truly supports the institution. However, there will come a time when you need the synagogue. Perhaps not this year, but the next. Temple Beth Shalom will be there for you. We hope and pray that we can provide the same support for you in your time of need.

How can I afford the cost of membership?

1. Synagogue dues are used to keep the institution running on a daily basis. Without the dues, we could not keep our doors open. However, we understand that not everyone can so easily afford membership at the synagogue and as a result we operate on a sliding scale membership rate.
2. If the sliding scale membership rate still places you in an difficult financial position, we welcome you to contact the Treasurer or Financial Secretary of the synagogue to have an exceedingly private conversation about dues reduction.

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