



FAQ's from Parents with Very Young Children

Are my children welcome at the Emanuel?

Yes! The Emanuel Synagogue thrives on the mix of generations among its congregants. We warm to the sight of little ones in strollers, toddling along and cruising our halls. The laughter, cries and even screeches are music to the ears of a congregation that looks forward to a healthy Jewish future. Each Shabbat morning, all the children are called up to the *bimah* at the end of the service for *Adon Olan*, *kiddush*, hand washing and *motzi*. We have an Early Childhood Center especially designed by our Early Childhood committee. This is a place where parents and young children can hang out any time they want. We also have a play room close to the sanctuary.

Can we bring strollers into the sanctuary? Is the Emanuel accessible for strollers?

Yes, strollers are definitely welcome in the sanctuary. We suggest you sit on a side aisle with your stroller so it does not interfere with the Torah parade. Unfortunately, only part of the school wing is accessible to strollers. It is a long term goal to make the entire building accessible to strollers and wheel chairs.

Can my children sit with me during the High Holy Days?

Yes! During the High Holidays, we open the back doors to the sanctuary so we have room to put chairs to the back of the auditorium and even onto the stage if we need to. There is room for all family members to sit together.

Is there a place to change diapers at Emanuel?

Yes! Both the men's and women's rooms near the auditorium have a counter on which you can change diapers.

Is there a private place to nurse a baby at Emanuel?

Yes! The Bridal Room and the women's room near the auditorium are available for nursing. There is also comfortable seating and changing area in the Early Childhood Center.

Do our children have to dress up to come to synagogue?

In our dream-of-dreams, yes. Is it worth a big fight with your children? No. On *Shabbat* and holidays we would love to see everyone dressed in nice clothing befitting respect for the day and place. But, we would rather have your family join us than stay home because of clothing fights. Neat, clean, casual clothing will do.

Shabbat services are too long for my children to sit. Am I rude to come late or leave early?

We want you to come to services for as long as your family can sit comfortably. Coming for short periods of time is a good way to get your children used to the routine and atmosphere of services. Our monthly Challahpaloozah program is especially designed to introduce *Shabbat* prayer and service routine to our littlest congregants. For the adult service in the Sanctuary, you may want to bring your children for the end Torah service at 10 am so they can see the Torah parade then stay for *Kiddush* with the congregation around 11:45. This service is full of music. There are books and quiet activities for children to do in the sanctuary.

What should I do if my children make noise at services?

It depends upon the noise. We know that children cannot stay quiet for long periods of time. Short bursts of enthusiasm from little ones are encouraged. If they are loudly crying or talking for a continuous period of time, we ask that you take them into the hallway for a while so that other congregants are not disturbed especially, during *kaddish* or the Rabbi's sermon. Many parents bring quiet toys or books to occupy their children during services, or you can use ours! Please do not bring toys that make noise.

Can we bring in snacks for our children?

Yes, (as long as they are kosher) and no (in the sanctuary on *Yom Kippur*). Kosher snacks are fine to bring into Emanuel for your children. If you need help in knowing what brands are kosher, please ask one of our staff. However on the High Holy Days, we prefer the snacks to be provided in the babysitting rooms. Especially on *Yom*

Kippur, in respect to those who are fasting, we do not want snacks in the sanctuary. If you have special needs regarding food for your children, please see one of our staff.



The Emanuel Synagogue, West Hartford, Frequently Asked Questions

Does the Emanuel offer child care for times when I want to have an adult prayer experience or attend an adult meeting?

Yes! On the High Holy Days we offer babysitting. Advanced sign up is required so we may be prepared for the proper number of children.

What programs do you offer that are aimed specifically for parents of very young children?

The Emanuel is a family oriented congregation, so the programs we offer, tend to be for the whole family. Challahpaloozah is a service geared to preschoolers. Bagels, Blocks and Beyond is a Family Education program for preschoolers and their parents. Programs are about 5 times a year and focus on *Shabbat* and holidays. In the past, we have had groups for mothers-with-babies and mommy-and-me programs on a weekly basis.

How can I meet other parents with very young children?

The best way to meet other families like you is to attend Challahpaloozah, Bagels Blocks and Beyond, and other activities which the synagogue offers. Let us know if you have a little time to get involved in planning these activities. Sisterhood, Brotherhood, Minyanaires, Choir and synagogue committees are adult groups in which you can meet people of all ages.

Are dues lower for young families?

Yes! We realize that parents that are just starting families may also be just starting careers. Our dues structure accounts for this. Speak with Joyce Hyde, our Executive Director, about all dues questions.

If we have more questions, who do we call?

For all education questions: Barbara Fink –860 233-2774, principal@emanuelsynagogue.org

For dues and general questions – Joyce Hyde –860- 236-1275, joyce@emanuelsynagogue.org

Rabbi David J. Small – 860-236-1275 rabbismall@emanuelsynagogue.org

Cantor Sanford Cohn – 860-236-1275, cantorcohn@emanuelsynagogue.org