

D'var Torah Preparation

D'var Torah means “a word of Torah”, and is the Hebrew term for a text-based sermon. On the Saturday morning of your service, through your *D'var Torah*, you will teach the congregation Torah through *your* interpretation of the Torah reading.

There are many different approaches to writing a *D'var Torah*, and you will have 4 meetings with a rabbi to help you prepare. Unlike school projects where the student operates independently, parents are encouraged to actively participate in this learning process (as long as it is productive for both parent and child).

Some Torah portions are more accessible than others, but the rabbi working with you and your family will guide you through this process. The *D'var Torah* can be written in the format similar to a subject report, a persuasive essay or even a book report. Your *D'var Torah* will start with an aspect of your Torah portion that you find interesting and will develop from there. When complete, your *D'var Torah* should be 3-7 pages, double-spaced, with a 14-point font.

The *D'var Torah* should accomplish the following:

- Gain a grasp of the context and content of your Torah portion.
- Teach about the Torah and Judaism.
- Explore a theme(s) or aspect(s) of interest – choose one, two, or three things which can be developed - teach the Congregation what you have learned.
- Share your personal reflection and part of yourself.

Below is a simple outline for creating your *D'var Torah* that has worked for many of our students over the years.

***D'var Torah* Outline**

What's in a *D'var Torah*?

1. **Summary:** Include the name of the Torah portion, the name of the book you are chanting from, the chapter and verses, and a summary of what happens in your reading.
 - Some context may also be helpful. For example: what has happened before and/or after your Torah portion?
2. **Transition/Focus:** The aspect(s) of the portion you are going to focus on.
 - Describe what you think your *parashah* is teaching.
 - KEY QUESTION: What kind of message are these ancient words saying to me? “The aspect of this portion I find most interesting is...”

3. **Exploration:** What does Jewish tradition have to say about your focus?
 - What other information can you bring to this subject that will bring it alive and make it relevant to the congregation?
4. **Your Opinion:** How do you relate to the issue(s) you raised?
 - An illustration from the *Bat/Bar mitzvah's* own experience is helpful here.
5. **Conclusion:** A summary of what you have learned and taught the congregation, and what you will walk away with as a *Bat/Bar mitzvah*.

Resources

We ask that you own a copy of:

- [The Torah: A Modern Commentary, by W.G. Plaut, revised edition](#), copyright 2005, 2006 by URJ Press, or equivalent.

You also may find these to be helpful resources:

- [A Torah Commentary for Our Times by Harvey J. Fields](#)
- [Teaching Torah by Sorel Loeb and Barbara Kadden](#)

Online sources, such as those listed below, can also be very helpful. Remember that everything is written through a specific lens, so please work with your child to help interpret the material.

- <http://www.aish.com/tp/pl/>
- http://www.chabad.org/parshah/otherparshas_cdo/aid/9175/jewish/All-Parshas.htm
- <http://www.hebcal.com/sedrot/>
- <http://www.myjewishlearning.com>
- <http://reformjudaism.com>