

What is a D'var Torah?

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* that are acceptable, and you will have help along the way. You will have meetings with a rabbi to help you prepare. Also, unlike school projects where the child 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. A *D'var Torah* should encourage people to think or feel differently after hearing it. 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.

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

1. Summary:

Include the name of the Torah portion, the name of the book you are chanting from 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:

Decide which 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 Bet Mitzvah's own experience is helpful here.

5. Conclusion:

Summarize what you have learned and taught the congregation, and what you will walk away with as a Bet Mitzvah.

Optional:

Write a short prayer (in English, beginning with “Dear God ...”) to complete your *D’var* Torah. What do you hope/wish for, regarding the ideas you have presented for yourself, your family, friends, and the world?