



## B'Mitzvah *D'var Torah* Guidelines

### What is a *D'var Torah*?

The *d'var Torah*, which means “words of Torah,” is your opportunity to teach the congregation an important value from your Torah portion. You will deliver your *d'var Torah* after we put the Torah away in the ark.

### Timeline for meetings with the rabbi – four meetings

1. Discuss Torah portion, get to know each other, talk about the importance of *bmitzvah*.
  - a. Homework: Read your entire *parashah* and write the answers to the following questions (no longer than 1 paragraph each):
    - i. Summarize your *parashah* – you will read this to introduce your Torah portion on the bima.
    - ii. What lessons can you learn from your *parasha*?
    - iii. What are your core values?
    - iv. What values or social justice issues are you passionate about? Is there a life-transforming experience you have had that you want to share?
    - v. You are going to teach the congregation about your *parashah*. What do you think is the **most important value** in your *parashah* – one you would like to teach the congregation?
2. Further discuss Torah portion, decide what value you will teach, write thesis statement and outline your *d'var Torah*.
  - a. Homework: Write a full draft of your *d'var Torah*, edit it, and bring two copies double spaced. If you can't print it, please email it to Rabbi Immerman.
3. Go over draft with Rabbi, make small edits and changes.
  - a. Homework:
    - i. Make the changes and write acknowledgments,
    - ii. Read Haftara Translation and write 1 paragraph summary for introduction.
4. Go over near final draft with Rabbi, talk about process and get excited!
  - a. Make final changes, print the *d'var Torah* in 14pt double spaced with page numbers. and practice, practice practice!

### Outline of a *D'var Torah*:

1. Intro paragraph
  - a. This will look similar to the paragraph you will write for the summary of your *d'var Torah* but will only include the parts relevant to the value you are teaching.
  - b. Thesis
    - i. In one sentence – why is your value important?
2. Example of Value A
  - a. This paragraph, like the next two, will include your own examples of following (or not following) the value. These examples can come from a variety of sources, though at least one if not all three should be personal stories that help us get to know you better. Remember to tell stories and include lots of detail rather than simply “telling” the congregation why we should apply the value to this situation.
3. Example of Value B
4. Example of Value C
5. Conclusion
  - a. Restate your thesis
  - b. Summarize each of the three body paragraphs in one sentence each
  - c. Amazing concluding sentence
6. Acknowledgements: See the other side.

### **Jewish Values and Identity Questions to answer as a family:**

1. How is Judaism part of your everyday life?
2. What Jewish values do you consider to be most important to you?
3. What responsibilities does becoming BMitzvah lead you to have as a Jew at Mishkan Israel and the greater Jewish community? How does becoming a BMitzvah connect you to the community? To other Jewish communities around the world? To the State of Israel?
4. How does your Jewish Education at Mishkan Israel impact your life? How will you continue with your Jewish studies throughout your life?
5. The BMitzvah certificate speaks of *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world). Do you have some idea of how you want to make a difference in our world? Explain how your mitzvah project is a part of this.
6. What are some of the important lessons and experiences that your BMitzvah preparation have taught you?

### **Acknowledgements:**

1. This is a very important sacred event. Whom would you like to recognize as having helped you achieve your goals?
2. This is **NOT** a thank you speech. Recognizing parents, immediate family members, teachers and mentors may be included. Appropriate for later in the day: thanking out of town guests, extended family and friends.

You will conclude your *D'var Torah* concluded with the recitation of the *Shehechyanu*, a prayer of gratitude which we recite on special occasions or when we have done something for the first time. You can print the next page as your last page of your d'var Torah.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שְׁהַחַיְנוּ, וְקַמְנוּ, וְהַגִּיעַנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה

Baruch atah Adonai, eloheinu melech haolam shehechyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higi-anu, lazman hazeh.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who has given us life, sustained us, and brought us to this joyous time.

I now conclude with a prayer of gratitude.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיָּמְנוּ  
וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמַן הַזֶּה :

Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam,  
shehecheyanu v'kiy'manu v'higianu laz'man hazeh.

Praise to You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe,  
for giving us life, sustaining us, and enabling us to reach this  
season.

AMEN!