

WRITING THE BAR/BAT MITZVAH D'VAR TORAH (SPEECH)

1. We write the d'var Torah/speech about the weekly Torah portion that falls on the Bar/Bat Mitzvah day, or the Torah reading that falls on the Bar/Bat Mitzvah day.
2. We take part of the story, a theme, or idea from the Torah portion and develop it into the speech.
3. The speech can be, approximately, from 1-½ pages to 2 ½ pages.
4. The speech ends with "Thank You".

Outline for the Speech:

- I. **Summary of the story, theme, or idea from the Torah portion.** This section is an introduction that helps the congregation to understand the main idea of the speech.

Example 1: My Torah portion is parashat Bray'sheet. In my Torah portion, God creates the world. God creates the world over 7 days, and then rests on Shabbat. We can learn from God's example about why taking a day of rest each week is important for the Jewish people.

Example 2: My Torah portion is parashat Vayikra. In this Torah portion, the first Torah portion in the Book of Vayikra (Leviticus), we learn about the various sacrifices that ancient Jews offered in the Temple. Even though we do not give sacrifices anymore, we do make sacrifices in our lives. When we choose to do one thing instead of another, we make a sacrifice. I want to tell you today about how Jewish tradition teaches us to make good choices.

- II. **Connecting the story, theme, or idea to you, the Bar/Bat Mitzvah and to Jewish tradition.**

Example 1: During a regular school week, I have after-school activities every day. They are all important to me. But it is also important to me, and to my family, that we have time together without scheduled activities. Sunday afternoon is our time together. We choose something to do as a family. God did not have to rest, and we do not have to rest either. We choose to take a break from our regular schedules and as a result we all feel closer to one another. Shabbat is a time when the Jewish people take a break and feel closer, like a family.

Example 2: There are many different volunteer projects that I would like to do, but I can only choose one. Last month I had to give up working with animals at the shelter because I had to focus more on my schoolwork. Unfortunately, I had to make a sacrifice. The sacrifice I made was like the sacrifices the Jews made in the Temple. They gave up something valuable to them to show they were making a change in their lives, a change for the better.

III. **Conclusion (followed by Thank-Yous)**

Example 1: I learned from my Torah portion that rest is not always just to make us feel less tired. We rest so that we can take a break from our busy lives to focus on family and friends and what is most important to us in our lives.

Example 2: Even though the kinds of sacrifices we make today are different from the ones we made in the days of the Temple, we still try to keep in mind that sometimes we have to give things up so that we can learn and grow. It is hard to make sacrifices, but I always have the support of my family with the all the tough choices I have to make.