

Your D'var Torah is a great chance for you to reflect on the meaning of becoming a bar or bat mitzvah and to learn your Torah portion in depth.

Below is a checklist to walk you through the process step by step!

This checklist was adapted from thebarmitzvahsite.com

Before you write

- ☐ Read your Torah portion in English. Jot down notes about any questions and comments that you have while reading. What sticks out to you? What do you want to learn more about?
- ☐ Discuss your thoughts and questions with your tutor and your parents.
- ☐ After these discussions, pick one phrase, section, story, character or other aspect that speaks to you. Think about why you found this part especially meaningful or interesting.
- ☐ Schedule a time to meet with Rabbi Hamilton to talk through your ideas. At that meeting you will have the chance to hear what other commentaries have to say about your topic/question of interest.
- ☐ Outline all of the points that you hope to include in your D'var Torah.

Writing the speech

- ☐ Briefly summarize the portion – no more than a few sentences.
- ☐ Discuss the part you chose that you liked. Spend a few paragraphs on this part and explain why you found this aspect of the portion meaningful.
- ☐ Talk about how this portion relates to you becoming a bar or bat mitzvah. Some key bar and bat mitzvah buzzwords to look out for include responsibility, community and adult. Discuss how you will act differently now that you have had your bar or bat mitzvah and what the ceremony means to you.
- ☐ Did you do a mitzvah project? Now's the time to tell us about it. Why did you choose this project, and what did you learn from it?
- ☐ And now, the final part: the thank-you section. Be sure to thank the rabbi, tutor or anyone else who helped you with your D'var Torah, Torah, Haftarah and services. You may want to thank your school teachers if they will be there. Thank your relatives for coming in from near and far. Thank your siblings and your parents – these are the big ones, so make these personal and heartfelt.

Formatting and practicing the speech

- ☐ Blow up the speech into a big font – size 18 or 20 at least – so you don't squint from the *Bimah*.
- ☐ Double- or triple-space your speech so you don't skip a line, and number your pages.
- ☐ Be sure your speech has paragraphs to keep it organized.
- ☐ Practice in front of a mirror, your parents, your friends, your teachers or even your stuffed animals. Practice speaking slowly, standing up straight and looking at the audience.