**Creating a D’var Torah**

**Introduction**

A *d’var Torah* literally translates as, ‘a word of Torah.’ Practically, a *d’var Torah* is a brief teaching about a section of Torah. This can be a single word, a single verse or several verses of Torah. For your Bat/Bar Mitzvah, you will teach a little bit about the Torah portion you are reading.

**Creating a *D’var Torah***

Step 1

Read the English translation of your portion. Read it as many times as it takes to understand the simple narrative e.g. who, what, where, when. This is a task you likely do in English class. Who are the main characters? What do they do? What is the plot?

Step 2

The idea of this d’var Torah is to connect your Torah portion to something relevant in your life. It could be something very personal or something connected to current events. Your goal should be to attempt to find a question, an issue, a contradiction or anything else in the text that piques your curiosity and that you think you could connect to your life or current events.

You can read the section called “Highlights of the Parashah” toward the back of your book, generally before the Haftarah. This section might give you some ideas for a subject.

The best *divrei Torah* (plural of *d’var Torah*) focus on one, very narrow, very personal topic. Discussing world peace generally doesn’t work. Discussing peace between you and your best friend usually does (just an example). As another example, women’s rights is a much better topic when you connect it to a woman who is a role model in your life or a woman you personally know who suffered discrimination.

Step 3

Begin writing. If you follow the format below, it should be easy:

* Section 1: Begin with ‘Shabbat Shalom.’ State the following: the name of your portion; the book of the Torah in which your portion is found; the exact chapters and verses you are reading. After this, you can offer a few words of thanks to those who have gathered for this great event.
* Section 2: Summarize, in your own words, what happens in your portion
* Section 3: Identify the problem or issue you will be solving/explaining
* Section 4: Connect this ‘issue’ to your life or modern life
* Section 5: Summarize/Conclusion

**Some of these “sections” actually might be more than one paragraph—that’s OK.**

**The *d’var Torah* should be between one and two typed pages in length.**

Some more helpful information:

* If you have questions call or email Rabbi Aaronson at his office 818-758-3800; [rabbiaaronson@templejudea.com](mailto:rabbiaaronson@templejudea.com). He loves to get questions. Don’t struggle by alone! Call!
* When you have a draft ready, email it to Rabbi Aaronson at [rabbiaaronson@templejudea.com](mailto:rabbiaaronson@templejudea.com). Please attach a file as a word document or include the text in the body of your email.
* Unless otherwise arranged, your first draft is due 10 days after you meet with Rabbi Aaronson; he will review your draft and respond within 24 hours.