

Select Bibliography of Resources for Writing a Dvar Torah

All the resources listed below are available at the Hebrew Educational Alliance. They are all also available at the Colorado Agency for Jewish Education library. This library is located in the building adjacent to the Jewish Community Center on Dahlia. Call 303321-3191 for library hours. Some of these resources may be available at your local library.

Eytz Chayim Chumash: The new Jewish Publication Society translation of the Torah, divided into weekly *parshiot* (sections), with commentary.

The Stone Chumash. The ArtScroll edition of the Chumash, divided into weekly parshiot, with commentary.

The Hertz Chumash: The Soncino Press edition of the Chumash, divided into weekly parshiot, with commentary.

A Torah Commentary For Our Times: by Harvey Fields, DARC Press. A retelling of the Torah, divided into weekly *parshiot*, with modern commentary. Geared towards 6 grade and up.

Zot Ha'Torah: Synopses of the weekly portions with commentary, for grades 6 and up.

Four Questions on the Weekly Sidra: Torah Aura Productions. Brief synopses of the weekly *parshiot*, this series is at a basic level but each section ends with questions that might lead to a good speech.

There are also many internet sites that offer commentary on the weekly portions. Try searching using GOOGLE and typing in either "*dvar* Torah" or "Torah Commentary". The Jewish Theological Seminary has an archive of Torah commentaries. The site address is:

www.JTSA.edu On their home page look under Chancellor's Commentaries.

SERVICE GUIDE INSERT FOR BAR AND BAT MITZVAH PROGRAMS

Below are some standards that can be incorporated into your bar/bat mitzvah programs for a more polished look. Many of our older programs, as well as programs that were not reviewed by the bar/bat mitzvah coordinator, do not incorporate these standards so if you are working from a past program it may not include these items.

1. It is traditional to put both the Hebrew and English dates on your cover, as well as your child's *parashah*. The *parashah* title can be named in two ways:

Parashat ___ or Shabbat ___ . Remember, if your child has a Shabbat *Mincha/Ma'ariv* service the title of their *parashah* is the following week's reading.

2. It is standard when using foreign words in English to italicize them. These words should not be capitalized unless they are a proper noun. The words bar or bat mitzvah do not need to be italicized, but if you are just using the word "*mitzvah*," such as "*'s mitzvah* project ... ," you would italicize it. Words that are commonly used and should be italicized are: *kippah*, *tallit/tallitot*, *tzitzit*, *Shacharit*, *Mincha*, *Ma'ariv*, *Havdalah*, *siddur*, *Haftarah*, *Amidah*, *Shema*, *Hagbah*, *Gelilah*, *Aliyah/Aliyot*, *mitzvah*, *tzedakah*, *Ner Tamid*, *Aron Kodesh*, *bimah*, *Shabbat*, *Kiddush*, and *yarmulke*. Torah and bar/bat mitzvah do not need to be italicized.

3. *The Five Books of Moses* is a book title. Since it is a book title, all main words are capitalized and the title is either underlined, placed in quotation marks, or italicized.

4. Standard transliterations for a Hebrew word ending in the "ah" sound are: if the word is spelled in Hebrew with the letter "hey" at the end, in English we spell it with an "h" at the end, e.g., *Amidah*.

5. At the HEA we have adopted the tradition of spelling the word *Haftarah* with an "a" as the second vowel, not *Haftarah*, with an "o" to avoid confusing the meaning of *Haftarah* (to conclude) with Torah (which means guide).

6. Here are the correct spellings of our clergies' names:

- a. Rabbi Bruce Dollin
- b. Rabbi Salomon Gruenwald
- c. Cantor Martin Goldstein

THE BARIBAT MITZVAH SPEECH:

GUIDELINES FROM RABBI DOLLIN

Presenting a speech or *d'var Torah* (explanation of the Torah or *haftorah* portion) is one of the highlights of the occasion for the bar/bat mitzvah, the family and guests. Gaining the experience of preparing and delivering a speech to the congregation is a valuable opportunity that certainly can serve a student well in other area of his/her education in the future.

In general, the speech should discuss the *parashah* (Torah portion) and how the themes of the *parashah* relate to your life.

- 1) My *parashah* is
 - What is the name of the *parashah*?
 - What book of the Torah?
 - What is the essential story or message of the *parashah*?
 - What are the essential themes?

- 2) These themes and this story relates to my life is this way ...
 - At home, I did, saw, or experienced this ...
 - At school or another activity, I did, saw, or experienced this ...
 - I learned from the *parashah* that I should/could do it this way, etc.

- 3) As I grow, through my teenage years, I hope to use what I learned from this *parashah* to ...
 - Guide me ?
 - Inspire me ?
 - Help me stay connected to the community?

- 4) I plan to remain connected to the Jewish community in the following ways
 - Continuing my education at Hebrew High / other
 - Kadima or USY youth groups
 - Summer trips to Israel
 - Jewish summer camps
 - Involvement at the synagogue: attending services, volunteering ...

- 5) BRIEF Thank you's to
 - Rabbi Dollin, Rabbi Gruenwald and Cantor Goldstein
 - Your tutor and teachers
 - Parents and grandparents
 - (Additional recognition's and thanks are inappropriate at this time)

Note: Please keep the speech to no more than four or five minutes in length.

Keep it focused on the topic.

In summary, make one point, illustrate it, and conclude.

Ask the rabbi for help.

Mitzvah Project Questions

1. What do I like or love to do? How might the world benefit from this activity?
2. What am I good at?
3. Do I like working indoors or outdoors?
4. Do I like working with people? If so what age?
5. What do I think the world needs most right now?

Mitzvah Projects

1. Buy children's books (paperbacks are fine), and record them on tape for Children's Hospital. This is a great project for a group of people to do.
2. **The Redistribution Center:** It has been more than 16 years since Ranya Kelly went searching for a box and discovered 500 pairs of brand-new shoes in a local dumpster. Since that time, Ranya has been an inspiration for untold numbers of people. Her dedication to retrieving and distributing millions of dollars worth of otherwise discarded goods from America's retailers and manufacturers is inspiring and overwhelming. Included in these millions of dollars of goods has been nearly 700,000 pairs of brand new shoes donated to people too poor to buy their own, and enough building supplies to complete three hogans on a Native American reservation. Ranya Kelly, c/o The Redistribution Center, 12681 West 49th Ave., Wheat Ridge, CO 80033, 303-431-0904, fax: 424-3368.
3. Pick a cause you believe in and follow it in the news, as well as state and federal legislation. Write letters to all appropriate officials regarding your position and why they should support it. Contact organizations that support your cause and find out how you can help them. I have some resources at the Alliance. One such cause might be support of Israel.
4. Help people who can no longer put up their sukkot perform this mitzvah (this will require substantial parent help).
5. Collect food, books, or other items for shelters, food banks, etc.
6. Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado: They have a number of outdoor projects that run during the summer. Find out more about them and their projects at www.voc.org
7. Special Olympics: Check with them about volunteer opportunities. Volunteers under 16 must be supervised and so would require more parent involvement than some of the other projects. Their website is www.specialolympicsco.org
8. You may check out the Denver City volunteer opportunities at www.denvergov.org
9. K'vod Catering is a group that meets two Sundays a month at Temple Emanuel. They prepare food for a downtown shelter, bring it there, and serve it. Different groups do the cooking and the serving. Contact Susie Sigman: 3/388-4013

For more ideas see:

Tell Me A Mitzvah by Danny Seigel. This book is a series of vignettes of different "mitzvah heroes" and their projects. The book also describes ways kids can perform similar mitzvot.

A Kid's Guide to Social Action: How to Solve Problems You Choose by Barbara Lewis, Pamela Espeland, and Caryn Pernu.

A Kid's Guide to Service Projects: Over 500 Ideas for Young People Who Want to Make a Difference by Barbara Lewis.

While most animal shelters do not allow anyone under the age of 16 to volunteer, Max Fund is the local animal shelter that allows volunteers under 16 years of age with an adult chaperone. 303-595-4917; www.maxfund.org.

Other ideas:

Winter Park and Breckenridge have adaptive ski programs for people with special needs. Perhaps they could use volunteers in some capacity. The Winter Park program is the National Sports Center for the Disabled (they run Summer Programs as well) Denver Office: 1801 Bryant St, Ste 1500, Denver, CO 80204 ph: 303.293.5711 fx: 303.293.5448 Email: info@nscd.org. Their website is www.nscd.org.

The Breckenridge program is the Breckenridge Outdoor Education Center, phone: 970-4536422; fax: 970-453-4676, [boec\(a\)boec.org](mailto:boec(a)boec.org)

There is a group called PHAMALy in Denver which uses volunteers. This organization utilizes the talents of individuals with special needs to produce plays and musicals.

Jewish Family Services may need volunteers either in the food bank or for other programs they run. The number is: 303-597-5000. Volunteer coordination is through Nancy Benyamin.

A website www.volunteermatch.org may be of help.

Encourage your children to think about what they enjoy doing and turn that into an act of *tikkun olam*, repairing the world.