

## Dvar Torah Checklist

Your Dvar Torah is a great chance for you to learn about your Torah portion, reflect on how it relates to your life, talk about the meaning of your bar mitzvah and thank the people who made this day possible.

Use this checklist to help keep your speech organized.

### Before you write

- Read your Torah portion in English a few times.
- Discuss what you think the portion means with your rabbi, your parents and your friends.
- Pick one phrase, section, story, character or other aspect that speaks to you. Think about why you found this part especially meaningful or interesting.

### 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 mitzvah buzzwords to look out for include responsibility, community and adult. Discuss how you will act differently now that you have had your bar 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, cantor, tutor or anyone else who helped you with your speech, 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.