D’var Torah: Bar/Bat Mitzvah Speech Outline

*Or Chadash*

The following outline is meant to help you in creating a D’var Torah, the speech you will give as part of the Shabbat service. Please do not feel limited by what’s on this page, as we hope you will include any personal thoughts that are appropriate for the occasion.

**Paragraph 1**

As part of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah I take on the responsibilities of being a Jew.  This morning/afternoon I would like to share with you what those responsibilities are, how I have begun fulfilling them, and how I plan on continuing to meet them throughout my life.

The first responsibility is Lifelong Torah Study. Lifelong Torah study means to be able to interpret the Torah and understand how Jewish learning relates to me and my life.   As part of becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah I learned how to chant in Hebrew from the Torah. I was given a Torah portion, which is a reading from one of the Five Books of Moses.   The Torah portion for this Shabbat is known as: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. It comes from the book of: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, chapter/verse: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

1. Let me share with you some background on my Torah portion:

You might want to include important characters…

You might want to mention some important events that happened to them…

You might want to explain some unusual words or ideas mentioned in your portion…

1. Some of the important ideas and subjects discussed in my Torah portion are:\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. One lesson from my Torah portion that is important to me as I become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah and relates to my life is: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Something I learned in Religious School that relates to this is:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

You might include a story….a text…an experience…a program you attended….

**Paragraph 2**

1. Another responsibility of becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is observing Shabbat, celebrating Jewish holidays and life-cycle events – like a Bar or Bat Mitzvah celebration, and participating in the life of the Jewish community. One of my favorite Jewish family activities is:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

2. My favorite Jewish holiday is:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ because: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

3. One of the most memorable Jewish moments in my life was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

What made it so memorable and meaningful was: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Paragraph 3**

Community is also a very important value in Jewish life. That means being involved with Or Chadash, the people who are a part of our congregation, and Jews in Israel and all over the world.

1. It also means understanding that each one of us is important to keeping the community going.

2. The reason I chose to invite my entire class to my service (and celebration) is: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. At Or Chadash, rather than exchange gifts with one another for each of our celebrations, our class gives a gift to the congregation. Some of the gifts given in the past have been the basketball hoop, the benches, the patio, the shed and the stained-glass window. I look forward to being a part of my class’s gift.

4. I am also looking forward to visiting Israel one day because: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Paragraph 4**

1. Judaism teaches us that we are all responsible for helping to repair whatever needs fixing in our world. This is called Tikkun Olam – repairing the world.

2. One of the greatest challenges facing our country and/or our world is:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. One thing I would do to solve this problem is:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

4. In preparation for this day I completed a Mitzvah project, my way of doing Tikkun Olam. My mitzvah project was \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I chose this project because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

5. Select a community or service organization of your choice - like a facility for the developmentally disabled, a program or residence for the elderly, an environmental group, or an animal shelter - and arrange to participate in a program or project for at least 10 weeks or visits [10 hours total]. Please mention any other mitzvah projects you have been involved with such as MAZON, Jewish Family Service Bimah Baskets, IHN volunteer work, Food Pantry, and the Or Chadash Mitzvah Day.

6. Keep a journal/record of your regular/weekly visits in a diary form. Write some notes after each visit. Take photographs of your project or site, or collect pamphlets and literature about it.

Consider answering questions like:

- What were today’s activities or events?

- Was this day’s visit unique or special? How?

- What made this visit difficult?

- What made this visit positive?

7. After your visits are over, or during the project, answer the following:

a. Describe the institution where you did your mitzvah project.

What are its goals?

How long has it served the community?

Who started it, and what kind of staff does it have?

b. What were your expectations of the project, your goals?

Were your expectations met?

Were there things you learned that you didn’t expect to learn?

What was the most satisfying part of the project?

Was anything about it disappointing, or frightening?

c. How did things change as a result of your volunteer work?

How did you make a difference?

Have you changed as a result of your experience? How?

d. What was Jewish about your project? What is the connection between your project and the meaning of Bar/Bat Mitzvah?

e. From doing this project I really enjoyed\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and learned \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

8. The most important thing I learned about myself while preparing for my Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebration was:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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