

#### **IV. PARENT'S D'VAR TORAH (OR PARENT'S PRAYER)**

This is an opportunity for you to model Torah study for your student. It shows your student that Torah study is life-long, and valuable for all. It also personalizes the Torah for your student in a way s/he may remember for years to come. The Rabbi will discuss this with you at the family meeting, and a Sunday program during the 6<sup>th</sup> grade year will focus on how to write a *d'var Torah*. Please share a draft at least 3 days before the Bar/Bat Mitzvah. If you would prefer, instead of a *d'var Torah*, you may recite the Parent's Prayer (following), or, with approval of the Rabbi, a prayer of your own choosing, or feel free to enjoy the service without speaking.

If you choose to write a *d'var Torah*, please remember these things:

- We feel it is important to focus on Torah, and its particular message to your student.
- Please consider your party to be the place to thank family and friends for sharing in your *simcha*, and keep your *d'var Torah* focused on a message of Torah. Your clergy and teachers already know you appreciate us, so there is no need to thank us publicly.
- Some people worry about “upstaging” their student, but delivering a good *d'var Torah* simply serves as a good example to your student.
- Either parent may write the *d'var Torah*, and either may present it. You may also write it together and/or split the presentation, but we ask that you do not write and present two separate *Divrei Torah*.
- Please give a draft of your *d'var Torah* to the rabbi at least three days before your student's Bar/Bat Mitzvah. If the rabbi recommends changes, please make those changes in your final *d'var Torah*, or discuss them with the rabbi.

#### **HOW TO PREPARE A D'VAR TORAH**

**Step One:** Study the portion. Read through the Torah Portion several times.

**Step Two:** Make Connections. Draw links between the Torah portion and the message you want to send to your student. It may be something that reflects his/her personality, or something you wish for your student or the world.

**Step Three:** Research. See if anybody before you (we have a long history of commentary) has discussed your topic. The rabbi or your student can guide you.

**Step Four:** Write. Be direct and simple in your writing. Tell us what the Portion says and how it is relevant to you and your student. You may address your *d'var Torah* to your student or to the congregation. Be brief (2 pages is generally a good length.)

Please think of this *d'var Torah* as an opportunity to take some message from the Torah portion and use it as a charge **to** your student. You are welcome and encouraged to be personal but to speak to your student as opposed to **about** your student.