

GUIDELINES FOR THE ESSAY

The purpose of the Essay is to address a theme or idea suggested by the Torah Portion (and Haftarah Portion if you desire) and apply this lesson to modern life, our world, and to the Bar or Bat Mitzvah personally.

The essay should begin, “Dear Rabbi, Cantor, Family, and Friends...”

For example, a Torah Portion concerning the *Plagues* on Egypt might stimulate an essay on the modern afflictions that beset today’s world and how the Bar/Bat Mitzvah student responds to those conditions. Similarly, a Torah Portion concerning *Passover* might lead to thoughts about Heritage, Family, Tradition, Freedom, and Responsibility. A Torah Portion that features verses of *blessing and curse* might prompt reflections on Free Will and the opportunity to choose our moral values and make our own ethical decisions.

After this thought has been concluded, there is to be mention of the Mitzvah Project and then the offering of words of appreciation to G-d for the gift of life, family for their love, teachers for their instruction, and friends for their support.

Points to include:

- Introduction
- Message from the Torah portion and/or Haftarah
- A word about becoming a Bar/Bat Mitzvah
- A word about your mitzvah project
- Thank you