

## Drash Writing Guidelines

Prior to the first study session with the Rabbi:

1. Read your Torah portion in English. This is not just the selection you are reading at your service, but rather the entire portion.
2. Outline the portion and as you read, look for any significant idea, theme, text, person, event, etc., that you find interesting.
3. Write down any questions that you have. Note things that you don't understand that you would like the Rabbi to explain.
4. At your first study with the Rabbi, you will go over the entire portion. The Rabbi will help you find some issue, idea, topic or theme for your drash.

After the first drash meeting and prior to your second study session with the Rabbi:

Write your first draft. This draft does not have to be perfect or even very good, but IT MUST BE DONE BY YOUR SECOND MEETING. The first draft should have the following paragraphs:

- a. A brief introduction to your Torah portion.
- b. An introduction to the idea, theme, text, person or event which is your focus.
- c. Some questions about the aspect upon which you are focusing.
- d. Answers to those questions, and your main teaching about the Torah portion.
- e. How all of this applies to your own life.

**As you write, you will go back and forth among the paragraphs as the ideas you are developing get clearer and clearer. This going back and forth as you write is called "reflective writing." It is a CRUCIAL ASPECT of the writing process. You must sit with the speech and try to figure out what you are trying to say. It doesn't come in an instant. You must start writing and give it time.**

Send the first draft to the Rabbi by fax or e-mail before the second meeting. Your draft will be the topic of the second meeting. (E-Mail: [rabbifinley@ohratorah.org](mailto:rabbifinley@ohratorah.org) & [rabbi\\_assist@ohratorah.org](mailto:rabbi_assist@ohratorah.org) - sending an attached document file is preferable, especially an attached Microsoft Word file; fax: (310) 915-5792. When you fax or e-mail, make sure to call the office and tell us that you sent it (310) 915-5200).

At the second meeting, the Rabbi will help you refine your drash, give you sources to make your point, and help you take your ideas to the next level.

After the second meeting, you will go home and write a final draft. Then send that to the Rabbi. Usually you and the Rabbi can finish the speech after the second meeting by exchanging e-mail, faxes and phone calls. The Rabbi is willing to try an instant message session in the evening where the two of you can conference about the drash. If you need additional meetings, the Rabbi will be glad to set them up.

When you send e-mail or fax, make sure you write your name and that you are sending a draft of your drash in the subject line so that we know who the e-mail is from and that it is your drash - we delete mail we can't identify. We will answer immediately that your e-mail or fax has been received. If you don't hear from us soon after you send it, make sure to call us to confirm that we have received your e-mail).