

Guidelines for Giving a D'var Torah With Selah Seattle Minyan

Thank you for partaking in the honor of giving the d'var torah and making kiddush at the upcoming Selah minyan.

The role of the darshan is three-fold:

1. To give a beautiful, succinct (**no more than five minutes**) **d'var torah**, which can be an expression of something beautiful in Torah, a call to action, or a practical lesson.
2. To lead the community in **Shalom Aleichem**
3. To make **kiddush** for the community

After we conclude services, someone on the leadership team will make announcements that include instructions for the next set of rituals. When they're done, you'll give the d'var torah and then go directly into starting off Shalom Aleichem, followed by kiddush.

Here are some guidelines to get you started:

What to talk about

A *d'var torah*, literally "a word of Torah", is a short lesson often given over in the form of a speech, that expounds upon an idea found in the Torah. This can be a brief word about *parshat ha'shavuah* (the weekly Torah reading), an upcoming or past Jewish holiday, or a Jewish value that is close to your heart. We ask that you base your *d'var* on a Jewish text or concept.

Choose something that is important to you and that you're passionate about; this is your chance to share "your Torah."

One way to go: What was the most powerful moment you've had this week? Find Jewish texts which relate to that point.

Another way to go: Read the parsha. What catches your eye? What doesn't make sense? What bothers you, excites you? *Bonus points*: Look at the commentaries and see what they say and if they touch on the questions that you have.

We ask that you please refrain from making any politically charged statements.

How to say it

You can say a lot in five minutes; be concise and focus on one strong, central takeaway. In order to most effectively engage the kahal, we recommend that you focus on them rather than keeping your eyes fixed on any notes you may have brought.

Asking members of the community to answer questions during the *d'var* will quickly put you beyond the five-minute limit, but rhetorical questions that people can discuss amongst themselves during dinner are encouraged.

Keep in mind that each member of the kahal has varying levels of Hebrew and Jewish knowledge. When you use a Hebrew term, give the translation for it as well.

Strong beginnings and endings

A good opening gets people's ears to perk up. Start with a provocative thought, a joke, or a question that each person can ask him/herself.

End with a take-away lesson, a question to discuss over dinner, or a *bracha* that articulates a theme that you touched on.

Rituals: Shalom Aleichem and Kiddush

After concluding the *d'var torah*, go straight into Shalom Aleichem, followed by Kiddush.

Kiddush should include *va'yekhulu*, the blessing for wine, and *asher kidshanu*. If you want to brush up on kiddush, check out our [resources page](#). If you have questions about making kiddush, please email gabbais@selahseattle.org