



Tips for preparing and presenting Divrei Torah at Kahal

1. **Don't try to cover the waterfront.** We read 1/3 of the Torah portion annually. If possible, try to focus on something in the third we are reading that year. You can give a brief overview of the Torah portion if that helps to contextualize your comments, but focus on a theme you want to develop. Bringing in or focusing on the Haftarah is also possible.
2. **Have a theme.** Just like any well-written paper or presentation, you need a thesis to develop. Don't try to talk about everything. In Pirke Avot, Ben Bag Bag said this about Torah: Turn it over and over and everything is in it. This doesn't mean, however, that you need to cover everything the morning you are giving a dvar torah. Leave something for next year! Less is often more. A word, a phrase, a verse may be enough for a whole conversation.
3. **Develop your argument.** There are many ways to look at and understand Torah. Your job is not to find the "right" answer, but to support whatever contentions you are making. The wealth of commentaries written about the Torah might help you, but, if not used judiciously, they may also cause you to stray from the theme you are developing. Choose them wisely.
4. **Pose questions that help people delve further into the theme you are exploring.** As you facilitate conversation, people may stray in their comments. Your job is to keep them focused.
5. **Present closing remarks** at the end of the conversation to summarize and re-emphasize the theme you have developed. Don't leave people hanging at the end. Every good presentation needs a conclusion.
6. **Don't go it alone.** Run your ideas past others. Ask a person whose divrei torah you admire to work with you. We are here to help each other grow in our understanding of Torah.