

B'reishit

Joshua Graff

Shabbat Shalom! My torah portion is B'reishit, the first of the 5 books of Moses. In the beginning of Earth, G-d said, "Let there be light," and there was light. I think this is strange because when we walk in to a dark room, we can't say "I want light," and there is light. This means that this is something only G-d is capable of doing. Then G-d made the sky and land just by saying that he wanted them to exist. The land and light is critical in our lives today and we should be thankful to G-d for creating them. Without these basic resources, we wouldn't be able to live our lives as we have for thousands of years. G-d then made the fruits and vegetables. Without these, we wouldn't have nutritious food to give us strength and good health. G-d then created days and nights. He also created lights in the sky. These lights are the moon, stars and our big, bright, yellow sun. God also created all of our animals like cats, dogs, birds, and fish that we have as pets today. Lastly, G-d made people. We are here because of G-d's beautiful creations.

G-d created many beautiful things from nothing. I can relate this to a story I read called Something from Nothing. It is about a little boy named Joseph whose grandfather made him a blanket. His mother made him get rid of it when he was older. Then he went to his grandfather and asked him to

make another item for him. His grandfather made him a jacket and it got worn out. Again, he asked his grandfather to create another item of clothing. His grandfather made him a handkerchief, a vest, a tie and finally a button. The cycle continued as Joseph wore out the article of clothing and his grandfather made something new. His grandfather continued to create something of great value for Joseph using nothing more than scissors, needle and thread. When his grandfather couldn't make anything else, Joseph made a story about it. He wrote the story using his memory, his love for his grandfather, paper and ink. Joseph created something. G-d created life and nature from nothing and continued until the entire Earth was created. Then he rested on the final day of the week, which we call Shabbat.

This is important to me because if G-d did not make something from nothing, none of us would be here today. It is also important because we survive on the fruits and vegetables that grow on trees and plants. If G-d did not make these things, we would not have our strong and healthy bodies and I like having a strong and healthy body. Humans are also like G-d. Throughout our lives, we only have some materials and our minds. With those materials, we are able to create something new and help others just like G-d did.

Our world started out as nothing. Then G-d came and created land, animals, light, food, day and night, and humans. We are a big part of the world G-d made. Without us, the roads and bustling cities we have now would not be here. Our world became a beautiful place for humans and animals to live in together. We should thank G-d every day for creating our beautiful world.

For my B'nai Mitzvah project, I am doing community service projects to help clean the world I live in, such as participating in the Connecticut River Source to Sea clean-up project. I helped pick up the litter from humans that could contaminate this wonderful river. I can relate this to my portion, because G-d made something wonderful from nothing and I am helping to keep this creation wonderful. I am helping to keep it a beautiful place for the animals and people to enjoy. For my second project, I donated some pet supplies to a fundraiser. This shows community service because I am showing care for animals in need.

I would like to thank all of my Beth Hillel Synagogue and Emanuel Synagogue teachers for helping me prepare for this special day. I would also like to thank Rabbi Small and Mrs. Fox for helping me with my D'var Torah. I would especially like to thank Rhonda Holtman and Cantor Cohn for helping me to learn my Torah and service portions. Finally, I would also like to thank

my two sisters for sharing this wonderful day with me. Even though we get in fights and yell at each other, I will always love you, Jessica and Alanna. Most of all, I would like to thank my parents for being so supportive and all my family and friends for being here with me today.