Chomer Lidrush

Some ideas to turn your gears heading into Parshas Toldos.

This Is What My Parents Taught Me

"*V'eileh toldos Yitzchak ben Avraham, Avraham holid es Yitzchak*" (25:19). The parsha named for *toldos* opens on what passes from a father to a son, and a recent episode of Rabbi David Fine's podcast, "Defining Moments", offers a rabbi a moving way in. Rabbi Fine interviews Nurit Leon, mother of Staff Sergeant Adi Leon, a twenty-year-old Givati soldier who fell in northern Gaza. Before going in, Adi wrote in a notebook marked to be read in the event of his death, with words for his parents, his sisters and his friends, and he closed: "This is the education my parents gave me, and this is what I believe in. I hope you remember me." Every parent wonders what our children actually absorb from us. Adi answered that question in writing, and his family now teaches eight values drawn from his letter to students around the world.

Toldos does not hide that parents love their children, and it says so out loud: "*vaye'ehav Yitzchak es Esav… v'Rivka oheves es Yaakov*" (25:28). A rabbi can take the episode in two directions. One is to parents: our children should not have to wonder whether we love them or what we stand for, so tell them, in words, now. The other is to children of every age: if your parents gave you something you believe in, do not leave it for a notebook. Say "I love you," and say "this is what you taught me," while everyone is still here to hear it.