

Introduction

We are grateful for your decision/commitment to serve in this important ministry. Perhaps on the day you are scheduled there will be someone in the congregation who is finding the world just too much to deal with, or perhaps there is someone who has just had their first child and is working their way back into the Church. The happy and joyous, the sad and despondent will probably be in the congregation to which you minister. That to which you are called is important, and in some peoples' lives is vital. We encourage you not to let this ministry be taken for granted.

This guide is an attempt to outline for you the things you need to know in order to carry out your responsibilities.

Preparation for Reading

It may sound a bit redundant to talk about preparation especially for those who have been lectors. Sometimes seasoned lectors need to review the guidelines, too.

Each time we look at a passage of scripture, there usually is something that will grab us, something we just didn't pick up the last time we read or heard it. It is important that we realize that as we read the scriptures, our God is speaking to us as well as to those to whom we are reading. It is important to our own spirituality that we prepare, and prepare well. Merely looking over the reading at the lector stand before Liturgy is not enough no matter how well we read.

Here are some recommendations to consider in preparing to read. In order to prepare well it is necessary to prepare at home. We may begin by reading the passage once or twice to ourselves, then aloud. Try to get a sense of the flow of the reading, hear what is being said. Read the passage as a listener and let the words sink into your heart and

mind. Try to imagine yourself there as the writers of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel or John sat down with their oil lamp, using a quill and parchment to write the words you are looking at, trying in their way to convey the message God has inspired them to share. Try to envision St. Paul sitting in a cell dictating his letters, unaware of what his personal fate will be, but still, while he has breath in him, trying to encourage these struggling new Christians. You may want to try reading the passages as a prayer, reading slowly, and then stopping to allow the words to speak to you. Look for those words, which may be troublesome for you or are hard to pronounce. Most of us have those words that seem to hang on that "back tooth" and just do not want to come out the way they should. Practice pronouncing them. Use the Lector's Workbook for help in pronouncing those words that are unfamiliar or go online to sites such as <http://www.usccb.org/nab/>.

Preparation for Liturgy

Please be ready to serve each week; you may be asked to substitute at the last minute. If you are unable to serve at one of your scheduled times, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO SECURE A SUBSTITUTE. Use the Lector Contact List, if you don't have a copy please contact the lector coordinator. If you cannot find a substitute, call the other lector, so that he/she will know that they will have to serve alone. If another lector is not scheduled, then call the Lector Coordinator for assistance.

Arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start of Liturgy. Go to the sacristy to let the celebrant and other participants know that you are present. Check to see if there are any special activities that you need to be aware of such as a baptism, first communion, or confirmation. Check and make sure the correct readings are marked in the Lectionary and Book of the Gospels. Review the information in the Lector's Binder. Practice the Announcements

(B) and the Prayers of the Faithful (A) especially on the pronunciations of people's names. Deacon will do the Prayers of the Faithful when he is present.

Once both lectors have had the opportunity to look over the material the person designated, as Lector B will take the Lector's Binder and the Lectionary to the pulpit. A few minutes prior to the start of Mass Lector B will stand near pulpit and wait for the signal from the celebrant to begin. Once the signal is given, Lector B will read the greeting and introduction; then will invite the congregation to stand for the opening song and entrance procession. He/She will then leave the sanctuary by the rear stairs and return to their seat. Lector A will proceed to the rear of the church with the Book of the Gospels when Deacon is not present, otherwise they may take their seat in the congregation.

Procedures during Liturgy

When the procession begins, Lector A or the deacon will proceed in front of the celebrant, carry the Book of the Gospels in a comfortable position raised just slightly below eye level during the procession.

Once the procession reaches the front of the church, Lector A or Deacon will continue up into the Sanctuary. Proceed to the altar, place the Book centered facing forward toward the congregation, and bow at the altar. Lector A should move to the chairs at the rear of the pulpit.

After the Opening Prayer, Lector A will step up to the lectern for the First Reading. Begin reading as soon as you are ready. Pause when you finish the reading; make sure you are looking up as you give the closing, "The Word of the Lord." **NOTE:** If the responsorial psalm is not sung, Lector A should lead and read it. Do not raise your hand during the reading of the Responsorial Psalm. This is a cantor gesture. Look up and make eye contact with the congregation to elicit their response. Once you have completed your reading

leave the sanctuary by the front steps. At the bottom of the steps near the center stop, reverence the altar with a bow and return to your seat in the congregation.

After the responsorial psalm, Lector B proceeds up to altar, bows, continues to the lectern, and follows the same procedure as Lector A for the Second Reading. At the conclusion of the Second Reading, and after having said, "The Word of the Lord," **Lector B should remove the Lectionary from the lectern**, so that the Book of the Gospels may be placed there. Lector B then leaves the altar as did Lector A and returns to his/her seat.

At the conclusion of the Creed, in the absence of the deacon, Lector A returns for the Prayers of the Faithful. The celebrant will introduce the prayers; Lector A then reads and leads them. At the conclusion, the lector should wait in place until the celebrant concludes the prayers. Then Lector A leaves the sanctuary in the same manner as before. **REMINDER:** if there is a special activity, Lector A may need to read at a different point; follow instructions in the Lector's Binder.

At the conclusion of the Liturgy, the Lectors need to make sure the Book of the Gospels is returned to the sacristy and the Lectionary and the Lector's notebook are returned to the Lector's stand.

Sign-up

The Sign-Up Sheet will be in the notebook at the Lector's stand. There should normally be an announcement to inform you when the sheet is available. You should check the notebook each time you attend liturgy. Sign up for 2-3 slots.

The newest schedule will be e-mailed prior to the first weekend of the month. Additionally, a copy will be in the Lector's notebook and on the church's website. A copy for those lectors without computer capability will be in the back of the notebook. Once the final list is published, you can fill in any of the empty slots.

Dress Code

First, let me remind everyone that we are serving our community in a ministry. We are present to proclaim God's word. Everyone should dress accordingly. We are not at a picnic or a casual affair we are in church. Lectors are visible to the community in this ministry and need to be prudent when dressing for the Liturgy. Although you are not asked to wear ties or dresses, jeans and sneakers would not be appropriate.

Barbara E Morrison, Lector Coordinator
Phone: 587-6989; email: airdale00@msn.com

LECTOR'S GUIDELINES

