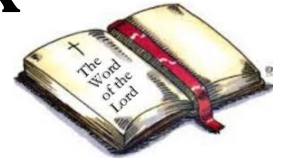


Handbook for Lectors



Introduction

The ministry of the lector is one of the most important ministries restored to the laity during Vatican II. The responsibility of proclaiming God's Word for the Christian assembly is a humbling and deeply rewarding experience. The purpose of this handbook is to help all lectors understand the various responsibilities associated with this ministry. In addition, this handbook enumerates the many resources available to lectors to assist them in the performance of their duties.

Diocesan Requirements for the Ministry of Lector

1. Must be fully initiated into the Church, in current good standing in the Church and a registered parishioner of a parish.
2. The minimum age for the commissioning as a Lector is usually high school age (around 16).
3. Must participate in a preparation process offered by the parish, cluster of parishes, vicariate or the Worship Office.
4. There should be additional opportunities for preparation and on-going formation.
5. No one should exercise more than one ministry at the same Eucharistic liturgy.
6. The lector should be commissioned at Mass using the Book of Blessings.
7. Has participated in a Lector training program.

Responsibilities of the Lector

Preparation Before the Liturgy



1. Lectors should familiarize themselves with their respective readings during the week prior to their designated duty. They should pray over, read, and practice proclaiming the scriptures that they will be reading. The Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers is an especially useful resource.
2. Be sure you have the correct pronunciation of the words in the passage you will proclaim. Practice audibly until you can speak them naturally.
3. Practice reading aloud. When possible, have someone listen to you.

IMMEDIATELY Before the Liturgy

1. Lectors should arrive no later than 15 minutes before Mass begins. The first lector to arrive should verify that the Lectionary is placed on the ambo and open to the correct reading. Insure that the ambo microphone is on, adjusted for Lector's head position when reading, and functioning properly. Make sure the Book of Gospels has been returned to the vestry.
2. When the second lector arrives, he or she should confirm with the other lector to verify that the necessary actions have been accomplished.
3. Confirm which lector is: reading the 1st and 2nd readings, the Intercessions and carrying the Book of the Gospels (if the Deacon is not present.)
4. Review your reading and the intentions to double check pronunciation of words and names.
5. Line up with the procession.

Glossary



Ambo	A sacred place from which the Word of God is proclaimed. It is reserved for Reading Scriptures, the Psalm, and the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet), but may also be used for the homily and Universal Prayers, and at times, during parts of other rites of the Church.
Assembly	The people of God, Catholic and otherwise, gathered for prayer and worship.
Credence Table	A small table placed in the sanctuary that holds items used during Mass.
Lectionary	The four-volume book containing the Scripture Readings used on Sundays and weekdays.
Liturgical Minister	Someone who meets certain requirements and has been trained and formed who serves in a special role during a liturgical celebration.
Missal	The book containing the prayers used by the priest during Mass (Formerly called the Sacramentary)
Parts of Mass	<p>The Mass is divided into four main parts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introductory Rites: Used to form one praying community. The parts of the Mass before the Scripture reading; entrance song through the opening prayer.2. Liturgy of the Word: From the first reading through the prayers of the faithful.3. Liturgy of the Eucharist: From preparation of the altar and presentation of the gifts through the prayer after communion.4. Concluding Rite: Priest's greeting/blessing/dismissal of the assembly.
Sanctuary	The sacred space around the altar usually set apart in some way from the rest of the church building.
Vestry	Room used for priests to change into their vestments.



9. Read intelligently, in a lively manner, and when indicated, conversationally.
10. Vary your treatment of any text parishioners know well (Christmas texts are among the most familiar.); that way your proclamation won't fall flat or become hackneyed.
11. Articulate deliberately the consonants at the ends of words – the d's and t's, for example, as in God (rather than Gaw) and not (rather than naw). Sometimes the whole meaning rests on such words.
12. Learn to stress a phrase or word in various ways: a hushed voice often works better than a raised voice.
13. Rehearse several times any Bible passages with run-on sentences (typically in Paul's letters) or any text where the meaning is apt to be lost to listeners. Your task is to communicate meaning.
14. Consider yourself a "proclaimer of the word of God." It is the skills of a proclaimer that you will be developing and using, not those of an actor, radio announcer, or toastmaster.
15. Consider nonverbal communication. Let your body language and facial expressions help you express the message of the reading. Posture, gesture, and facial expression should complement your words.
16. Observe and learn from other lectors when you are not scheduled to lector.
17. Ask several people to give you honest feedback on your lecturing skills. Use these constructive feedbacks to improve your skills.
18. Allow the Scriptures, more and more, to influence your daily life. This is the best part of being a lector; the Scriptures begin to form you...

Responsibilities of the Lector



DURING the Liturgy

The lectors will take the Book of Gospels and line up for the procession. If there is a deacon present, he will carry the Book of Gospels.

Once the procession begins, carry the Book of Gospels in a dignified manner, processing up the steps and setting the book in the middle of the altar. You may then move to your seat.

Lectors should sit on the same side of the church as the ambo.

As Father sits after the Gloria/Opening Prayer, walk up for the first reading.

1st Reading

As you approach the ambo, make a profound bow to the altar as the altar is a symbol of Christ during Mass.

When you proclaim the Word please concentrate on speaking in a clear and distinct manner, pausing when appropriate, and not rushing through the reading. Please turn the page in the Lectionary to the 2nd reading.

Once again on the main floor of the worship space, the lector makes a profound bow to the altar before turning away and going to his or her place.

** If there is only 1 lector, sit in the front pew to the side of the ambo while the Psalm is being proclaimed. Do not go back to your seat in the congregation.*

Responsibilities of the Lector - cont'd



2nd Reading

After the cantor sings the Responsorial and exits the sanctuary, Lector #2 moves to the ambo, making a profound bow before approaching.

When finished proclaiming the second reading, close the Lectionary and place it in the ambo to be ready to receive the Book of the Gospels. Once finished, the lector makes a profound bow to the altar before turning away and going to his or her place.

Intercessions

If there is a Deacon standing with the priest, he will read the general intercessions. If there is no Deacon, then a lector will read them.

As we near the end of the Creed (*we believe in one holy, catholic, apostolic church*), walk up to the ambo.

At the invitation of the priest, you begin to read the intercessions, being sure to put a pause before "We pray to the Lord." No hand or arm gestures are needed to invite the people to answer, "Lord, hear our prayer."

Remain at the ambo until the priest finishes the prayer; sit down when the congregation sits.

Prayer of Lectors

Dear Jesus, thank you for calling me to be a lector at Your Eucharistic celebrations. Let me take this role seriously and diligently prepare myself for it by studying the sacred texts before Mass, and by striving to be a better Catholic Christian.

By my physical action of reading, I am the instrument through whom You become present to the assembly in Your word and through whom You impart Your teachings. Let nothing in my manner disturb Your people or close their hearts to the action of Your spirit.

Cleanse my heart and my mind and open my lips that I may worthily proclaim Your word.

Amen

Preparation at home/tips:

1. Always read all three scripture readings. The first reading has been chosen according to its relationship with the gospel. You will be able to see what ideas or themes connect the gospel with the reading from the Old Testament. You can see when there are (and when there are not) connections with the second reading as well.
2. Identify the type of passage you are to read. Is it a story? Is it a dialogue between different characters or voices? Is it a prophecy, a letter, a series of laws, a parable, a witty saying, or a song? The depth of your understanding will be visible to the congregation.
3. Ask yourself a few questions about the meaning of the passage, such as: What lies behind the writing of this passage? Where is its climax? What is the tone – comforting, scolding, warning, informative, or intimate?
4. Use your imagination to visualize action passages and narratives. See in your mind's eye what is taking place. Imagine how those involved are feeling, why they act the way they do.
5. Pick out the most important sentence or phrase. Try to communicate it above all else.
6. Check the pronunciation of unfamiliar names in the scriptures or intentions in the workbook. If you happen to trip over one while proclaiming, move on; your job is to convey the meaning of the passage as a whole. A good pronunciation web-site to use is found at <http://netministries.org/Bbasics/bwords.htm>. You will be able to hear the pronunciation of the word in question.
7. Pray with the text, letting a given phrase or admonition sink slowly inside you. (—The Lord is my shepherd, can become —Lord, be my shepherd...) Some texts are especially appropriate for this, while not all will be as accommodating.
8. After you understand the essence of the passage, practice reading aloud in front of a mirror or for family or friends. Notice how often you look up and make eye contact as you read.