

TO LECTORS: A guide for introducing each book of the Bible

Please refer to this guide as you rehearse your reading for the week.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Torah

Book	Lector's Introduction
Genesis	"A reading from the Book of Genesis."
Exodus	"A reading from the Book of Exodus."
Leviticus	"A reading from the Book of Leviticus."
Numbers	"A reading from the Book of Numbers."
Deuteronomy	"A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy."

History/Corporate Memory

Book	Lector's Introduction
Joshua	"A reading from the Book of Joshua."
Judges	"A reading from the Book of Judges."
Ruth	"A reading from the Book of Ruth."
1 Samuel	"A reading from the First Book of Samuel."
2 Samuel	"A reading from the Second Book of Samuel."
1 Kings	"A reading from the First Book of Kings."
2 Kings	"A reading from the Second Book of Kings."
1 Chronicles	"A reading from the First Book of Chronicles."
2 Chronicles	"A reading from the Second Book of Chronicles."
Ezra	"A reading from the Book of Ezra."
Nehemiah	"A reading from the Book of Nehemiah."
Esther	"A reading from the Book of Esther."

Wisdom

Book	Lector's Introduction
Job	"A reading from the Book of Job."
Psalms	<i>(Not typically announced; we sing or read it together.)</i>
Proverbs	"A reading from the Book of Proverbs."
Ecclesiastes	"A reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes."
Song of Solomon	"A reading from the Song of Solomon."

Major Prophets

Book	Lector's Introduction
Isaiah	"A reading from the Prophet Isaiah."
Jeremiah	"A reading from the Prophet Jeremiah."
Lamentations	"A reading from the Lamentations of Jeremiah."
Ezekiel	"A reading from the Prophet Ezekiel."
Daniel	"A reading from the Prophet Daniel."

Minor Prophets (Hebrew: Book of the Twelve)

Book	Lector's Introduction
Hosea	"A reading from the Prophet Hosea."
Joel	"A reading from the Prophet Joel."
Amos	"A reading from the Prophet Amos."
Obadiah	"A reading from the Prophet Obadiah."
Jonah	"A reading from the Prophet Jonah."
Micah	"A reading from the Prophet Micah."
Nahum	"A reading from the Prophet Nahum."
Habakkuk	"A reading from the Prophet Habakkuk."
Zephaniah	"A reading from the Prophet Zephaniah."
Haggai	"A reading from the Prophet Haggai."
Zechariah	"A reading from the Prophet Zechariah."
Malachi	"A reading from the Prophet Malachi."

The Apocrypha

(Shown here are only the books in the Apocrypha which we occasionally come across in our daily or weekly lectionary.)

Book	Lector's Introduction
Tobit	"A reading from the Book of Tobit."
Wisdom	"A reading from the Wisdom of Solomon."
Sirach, a/k/a Ecclesiasticus	"A reading from Ecclesiasticus." -or- "A reading from the Wisdom of Jesus, Son of Sirach." <i>(Please note that this is different from Ecclesiastes.)</i>
Baruch	"A reading from the Book of Baruch."
1 Maccabees	"A reading from the First Book of Maccabees."
2 Maccabees	"A reading from the Second Book of Maccabees."
2 Esdras	"A reading from the Second Book of Esdras."

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Gospels

(Lay lectors don't typically read the Gospel during Holy Eucharist, but on other occasions. Note that this introduction is different from the one used in Holy Eucharist.)

Book	Lector's Introduction
Matthew	"A reading from the Gospel according to Matthew."
Mark	"A reading from the Gospel according to Mark."
Luke	"A reading from the Gospel according to Luke."
John	"A reading from the Gospel according to John."
Acts	"A reading from the Acts of the Apostles."

The Epistles

(These introductions assume Pauline authorship only of those seven letters scholars agree are his. Scholars are of wide-ranging opinions on the literal authorship of Ephesians, Colossians, 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, and Titus, but church tradition would allow for putting Paul's name to them. Older tradition ascribing Hebrews to Paul clearly does not hold water.)

Book	Lector's Introduction
Romans	"A reading from Paul's letter to the Romans."
1 Corinthians	"A reading from Paul's first letter to the Corinthians."
2 Corinthians	"A reading from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians."
Galatians	"A reading from Paul's letter to the Galatians."
Ephesians	"A reading from the letter to the Ephesians."
Philippians	"A reading from Paul's letter to the Philippians."
Colossians	"A reading from the letter to the Colossians."
1 Thessalonians	"A reading from Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians."
2 Thessalonians	"A reading from the second letter to the Thessalonians."
1 Timothy	"A reading from the first letter to Timothy."
2 Timothy	"A reading from the second letter to Timothy."
Titus	"A reading from the letter to Titus."
Philemon	"A reading from Paul's letter to Philemon."
Hebrews	"A reading from the letter to the Hebrews."
James	"A reading from the letter of James."
1 Peter	"A reading from the first letter of Peter."
2 Peter	"A reading from the second letter of Peter."
1 John	"A reading from the first letter of John."
2 John	"A reading from the second letter of John."
3 John	"A reading from the third letter of John."
Jude	"A reading from the letter of Jude."

An Apocalypse

Book	Lector's Introduction
Revelation	"A reading from the Revelation to John."

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR READERS.

PREPARING FOR READING.

Preparing for this ministry is ESSENTIAL. Too often readers who have been chosen do not check the rota until they arrive at church! These people are not prepared to read the Word of God. This can lead to the reader fumbling through the readings, leaving the assembly confused and even bored. It can also lead to a lack of confidence in readers due to not being able to feel competent in reading. Preparation will bear fruit, both in good readings and also more confident readers.

PREPARE EARLY IN THE WEEK.

(20 - 30 minutes at first, less as you consider yourself more comfortable with the process).

1. Read the passage out loud to understand it
2. Go to the Bible, read the four verses before and after the reading to get the larger context.
3. Read the passage out loud again, placing thoughts/ideas or sequences together.
4. Read it out loud, listening to yourself to hear if YOU are reproducing the author's intention. Note if your reading of the passage makes sense, shows emotion if indicated, reveals character if noted, shows parenthetical ideas, comes alive as if you were the living author or character.
5. Read the passage aloud in front of a mirror, delivering the thoughts/emotions of each section.
6. Sit down and read it out loud in a relaxed way, becoming familiar with WHAT the words mean to communicate.
7. Read it out aloud one last time, focusing upon the thoughts and intentions of the passage.
8. Pronunciation: Be sure that any difficult words are sufficiently practiced so the muscles in your 'vocal apparatus' are used to saying the words correctly and easily. Familiarity keeps you from having to think about it later!
9. PRAYER. Before and after the Scriptures, pray. Ask God to help you to be an effective proclaimer of His Word and to help you to understand

the reading. What you believe about the scriptures will say more than the technique you use.

PRACTICAL POINTS.

1. Please be faithful to the rota. What sign is given when a reader does not turn up and someone has to be recruited to read unprepared at the last moment? If you cannot be present, then please inform the readers' coordinator.
2. Sit near to the front of the church when you are reading, do not rush to the Altar. Be ready to move to the lectern.
3. Move with dignity. Always read from the lectionary.
4. Bow at the altar step and make sure you have the attention of the assembly before starting to read. Try to look at the whole assembly on reaching the lectern. Pause. Announce the reading. (see Effective Reading)
5. After the reading, pause a moment, look at the assembly and then say "The Word of the Lord". Periods of silence are an integral part of the liturgy.
6. It is not necessary to introduce the psalm with words like "Our response is" Everyone knows that the psalm begins with an antiphon. Begin the psalm simply by reciting the Antiphon and letting the assembly repeat it. Remember that when reading the psalm, you are reading poetry - it should flow. When the verse is finished, look at the assembly, inviting their response
7. If the psalm is sung by a Cantor, then step aside after the first reading and participate in the responsorial psalm from the side.
8. After the psalm, introduce the Second Reading as written. After the reading pause again and leave the altar to the right as the Gospel Acclamation (alleluias) are sung. Bow and return to place. (*Replace the Lectionary under the shelf*)
9. At the end of the Creed make your way to the altar again to pray the Prayers of the Faithful. Pray them-Don't simply read them. Pause after each bidding. The Priest will begin and conclude these prayers.

EFFECTIVE READING

1. SLOWLY. Reading fast is the biggest mistake beginners make. Read slowly. Ask someone to judge your speed when you are preparing for the reading.

2. CLEARLY. Good diction and enunciation is important, especially for those who have hearing difficulties. Often people complain about the volume of reading but in reality it is often the lack of clarity. If the words are unusual consult the CTS booklet “Readers at Mass” for a full list of pronunciations.
3. USING THE MICROPHONE. Practice using the microphone before worship time. There is no need to touch the microphone during the reading as it will have been set before the Mass begins. Although there is a microphone in place that does not mean that you should not project your voice to the back of the church.
4. EXPRESSIVE. Be expressive with the tone and mood of the text. Let the text guide you for the tone. If you have prepared then you will have some sense of the tone of the text. Monotone speaking will create boring readings. Worship should be lively and that begins with lively readings. Yet too exuberant reading can take the focus away from scripture and take it into the realms of the playhouse! Read to the punctuation and if it does not make cogent sense then use your own pausing to ensure clarity.
5. DECORUM. Since the focus should be on the Word of God, Readers’ clothing should be appropriate - not too excessively flamboyant or too casual.
6. MISTAKES. We are never perfect. If a mistake is made stop and reread the verse. It is NOT necessary to say “Sorry” or “Excuse me”. Continue with the reading with confidence, knowing that God expects faithful worship. If you accept that it is all right to make mistakes, this will lessen any feelings of nervousness. You may well find that it is a considerable help to follow the text with a finger so that when you look up you can be sure of finding your place again.
7. At the end of the reading pause for 5-10 seconds and then say “The word of the Lord” The emphasis should be on the WORD and LORD.

CONCLUSION.

This guide will set new Readers on the right track for an effective ministry. It may even provide a few ideas for more experienced readers. Whether new or experienced, the proclamation of scripture in the assembly is a vital ministry in the life of the church. Learning how to read better will enrich the liturgy and will give the reader the opportunity to learn more about our Faith.

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