



Cathedral of the Sacred Heart Guidelines for Lectors

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The entire assembly is called to active participation in the liturgy. Liturgy is the source and font of parish life. It is not an end in itself. It is our human way of getting in touch with who we are in relation to God and one another. Yes, the liturgy should be done well. But it must be more than just a “good show.” Active participation on the part of the Lector results in excellent proclamation of the Word. And, good proclamation commands the attention of the listener. The ministry of Lector is extremely important.

God’s spoken words become empowered for us through the Lector. We have lectors, not to help us read, but to be the “word-bearers” for us. Language at liturgy communicates more than just words.

To hear the Scriptures proclaimed is to hear the voice of God speaking right now to the people gathered together for worship. The Lector does not just pronounce words. The Lector communicates a divine message.

As a Lector, your ministry helps to facilitate the public prayer of the Church in the Liturgy of the Word. The role of the lector is a privilege. To be true “word-bearers” one must take ownership and be responsible for the appropriate actions in fulfilling the role of Lector. The way we speak, dress and conduct ourselves should draw attention to the reading, not to the Lector.

Before the Liturgy:

- Prepare for the reading by going over it several times at home prior to coming to church.
- Please arrive at the church at least fifteen (15) minutes before the liturgy begins. Place a check mark by your name on the list of ministers posted on the south sacristy bulletin

board. It is important that we know if you are present.

- You will want to find out if there are any additional rites or changes taking place during the Mass.
- While in the sacristy, locate your reading in the Lectionary. Take a moment to review it and then leave the sacristy. Do not linger unnecessarily.
- The second Lector should read through the Universal Prayer (intercessions) in the event no Deacon is present. If needed for that Mass, the binder with the intercessions should be placed on the shelf of the ambo. Be sure that you have the proper page on intercessions for your mass.
- Be sure that both lectors have checked in before taking the books out to the ambo. Open the lectionary to the first reading. The first Lector, after finishing their reading, should turn the page to the second reading. Likewise, if you are the second Lector and have finished the second reading, turn the page to the Gospel (this is unnecessary if there is a Deacon present. He will use the Gospel Book).

During the Liturgy of the Word:

- ✓ After the Collect is completed and the assembly begins to be seated, the first Lector proceeds to the bottom of the sanctuary steps, makes a simple bow to the tabernacle, then goes up the stairs to the ambo.
- ✓ If there is **CLOW** (Children’s Liturgy of the Word), you may go up to the ambo as the Presider is dismissing the children.

- ✓ Upon finishing the reading, the Lector pauses after the text, then proclaims: **The Word of the Lord**. Make a pause following the reading. Do not rush.
- ✓ Remain at the ambo in quiet reflection until the music of the Responsorial Psalm begins and the cantor(s) stand. Then proceed to the bottom of the sanctuary steps. Once there, turn toward the tabernacle and again make a simple bow. Return to your seat in the pew.
- ✓ After the Responsorial Psalm is finished, the second lector proceeds to the ambo as did the first lector, again making a simple bow to the tabernacle. The lector, upon finishing the second reading, pauses after the text, then proclaims: **The Word of the Lord**.
- ✓ When the Gospel Acclamation begins, the second lector leaves the ambo in the same manner as the first lector.
- ✓ **When there is no Deacon**, the second lector returns to the ambo during the recitation of the Nicene Creed (Profession of Faith). The cue words for movement are "...I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church..."
- ✓ The second lector should return to the ambo in the same manner as for the second reading. The Presider will introduce the Universal Prayer (intercessions). After the Presider says the summary prayer, the second lector returns to the assembly in the same manner as upon completing upon completing the second reading.

Helpful Hints for Lectors:

- * Practice your reading well in advance so you are familiar with it. If you are familiar with the reading and understand its meaning, you will be more effective and better able to emphasize the important words. You may want to purchase a Lector Workbook resource book through the Director of Music and Liturgy to aid you in your preparation.
- * Always pay attention to punctuation so you pause at the appropriate places. Be careful not to drop your voice at the end of sentences.
- * Be sure the books are returned to the sacristy following Mass so they are there for the other lectors to review prior to their Masses.
- * **You must find your own replacement**, if for some reason you cannot fulfill your obligation to read. Use the Minister List provided with your schedule.
- * Be mindful of picking up your schedules each month in the sacristy when they are put out. This saves a great deal of postage not having to mail them to you.
- * Be conservative in your attire when you are at church. Dress accordingly so as not to draw attention to yourself.
- * Be considerate and refrain from wearing any strong scents (perfumes, colognes, lotions and potent deodorants, etc.) that could cause an allergic reaction from those with respiratory health issues. Cigarette smoke does linger on clothes, so please, if you are a smoker, do not smoke prior to coming into church.

Some lectors will want to sit in silence and pray in the church before the celebration of the liturgy begins. Others will want to be greeting members of the assembly or welcoming other liturgical ministers. For some, this sense of community enables them to remember that the faith we profess and God we worship in the liturgy is present among us, in each other. Find a method of immediate preparation that works best for you and lets you center yourself before the liturgy. No matter the method of immediate preparation you choose, you'll want to be focused once the liturgy begins.

Your posture and demeanor is very important, both when you are proclaiming the word of God and during the rest of the liturgy. As you approach the ambo, make sure you are standing tall and erect. You want to exude a reverent confidence, but not appear overconfident or arrogant. The manner in which you carry yourself will let the assembly know you have something important to share with them.

If you make a mistake when you are proclaiming, keep your composure. You do not want to draw attention to yourself. Depending on the mistake, you may want to return to the beginning of the sentence. Because we're human beings, we all make mistakes. Your ability to maintain your composure in itself reverences the word of God.

Through your ministry, you will offer praise to God and draw others to that same praise in the liturgy and in the ordinary events of their lives. You will have helped to lead the assembly to the "full, active, and conscious participation" that the Church desires. You and the assembly will have "become prayer" and God will have been glorified because of the ministry you do.

(Excerpts taken from Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers) Used with permission.

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