

SHEPHERD OF THE VALLEY  
LECTOR  
GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES

Overview:

Lectors are proclaimers of the Word of God. They should both have perspective and the ability to understand the Word and must proclaim the sacred texts from a standpoint of faith. Therefore, preparation should include study and prayerful reflection of the Biblical texts. Good communication skills such as pauses, inflections, annunciation, phrasing, speed, and proper use of silence after the readings are essential.

Preparation:

Prepare your readings more than once and be very comfortable with the words as well as the sentence structure and meaning.

Prepare yourself for the ministry through prayer and reflection. This means keeping the readings in your thoughts and prayers from the first time you practice reading them.

While at home, read and be familiar with all of the Sunday readings since it is also possible that you could be the only reader.

To gain context, read before and after your particular section.

Your tools are the Lector's Handbook and your own personal Bible.

Continue to learn about and pray with Scripture as part of your daily devotional habits.

Look at all the words and proper names for correct pronunciation and use the pronunciation guide or the notes in the Lector's Handbook for reference.

Visualize the readings and picture them coming to life for you as a tool to help you to help them come alive for the hearers at Mass when you read.

Practice reading out loud. Again, articulate, slow down, speak loudly. As a rule of thumb, articulate more than you think necessary, read slower than you think is needed, put more emotion into it than you should be there, and speak louder than you are comfortable with. For most people, this is where they should be.

Even when you are not assigned, it is a good practice to be prepared to read and dressed appropriately in case you are needed.

Dress and Attire:

**Acceptable Dress:** Respectful, professional, neat, clean, modest, and professional dress is key. Jeans are acceptable as long as they are neat and clean. In addition, be well groomed and clean.

**Not Acceptable Dress:** shorts, low cut tops, t-shirts, graffiti writing on clothes, halter tops, tube tops, spaghetti string tops, midriffs exposed, sweat shirts or pants, low riding pants or mini skirts. Again, use good judgment and be well dressed and groomed.

### Arrival Time:

You should be in the church no later than 15 minutes before Mass begins.

There are two lectors. The first Lector listed carries in the Book of Gospels\* during the procession and reads the first reading and the Universal Prayers (Unless a deacon is present. In that case he would carry in the Book\* and read the Universal Prayers). The second Lector reads the second reading and the short announcement five minutes before Mass. All books and binders will be found in the sacristy before and after Mass for practice.

1. Notify the lead person you have arrived. Let the lead person know if you are on the list or subbing for someone else.
2. Check the Lectionary, make sure everything is out and ready, make sure that the readings are marked correctly, and note how they are arranged in the book.
3. Check to make sure that the Universal Prayers are in the binder and you are familiar with them.
4. Put on a medallion for Lectors which are in the workroom.
5. Sit close to where the readings will take place. Usually this is directly in front of the ambo.
6. If you are the second lector, bring the Lectionary and the Binder to the Ambo. Read the "5 minute before Mass announcement" and then afterwards put the Lectionary on top with the correct page open and the binder underneath on the shelf of the ambo.
7. If you are the first Lector, bring the Book of the Gospels to the back of the church where the gifts are and be ready for the procession.

### During Mass:

1. If there is no music the first reader also proclaims the Responsorial Psalm. After the first reading, pause and then proceed with the Psalm. Do not announce the verse, just read it and when the verse is to be repeated, raise your hand for the community to join in. After the Psalm, pause and then return to your seat.
2. If you are the only reader, you will read all readings and announcements and prayers. Please remember to pause between the readings. If the Psalm is sung, step to the side and back during the singing of the Psalm and return for the second reading.
- 3\*. If you are processing in with the Book of the Gospels, elevate it and have the front of the book facing ahead of you. When you reach the altar don't stop, but keep walking and place the book on the back side of the altar face down.
4. The first reading takes place after the dismissal of the Children's liturgy of the Word or after the opening prayer. In both cases, the priest will sit down. At that time, come up for the first reading.
5. The second reading takes place after the Psalm is completed.
6. For the Universal Prayers, approach the ambo during the Creed when you hear the words, "I believe in the Holy Spirit..." Once at the ambo, wait for the priests' introduction to the Universal Prayers and begin after he is done. After the concluding prayer by the priest, place the binder on the shelf on the ambo, and return to your seat.
7. At the end of each reading, pause and then say only, "The Word of the Lord."
8. Do not carry the Book of the Gospels out at the end of Mass.
9. After Mass make sure the Book of the Gospels, Lectionary, and Binder are back in the sacristy.

### Notes:

1. BEFORE AND AFTER MASS, the proper reverence is to bow to the altar and genuflect towards the tabernacle when crossing in front of them. DURING MASS, however, there is no need to genuflect or bow in front of the altar or tabernacle. In addition, there is no need to bow to the priest during Mass.
2. Keep movements simple and direct. Don't run or panic and be careful to avoid nervous twitches and habits.
3. Approach and leave the ambo in the most direct line, either on the left or right side of the ambo.
4. After Mass, make sure the Book of the Gospels, Lectionary, and binder are put back and your medallion is put back on the hook.
5. There are times when regularly scheduled lectors don't or can't make it. Therefore, even if you aren't scheduled, it is a good idea to be dressed appropriately and potentially ready to read if the need should arise.
6. If you feel sick, notify the lead person. If during Mass, discreetly have the other reader take over or notify the Lead Person.
7. If you have questions or are confused about something, ask the Lead Person. Remember that the Lead Person is the only one who makes decisions and changes things before and after Mass.
8. If at all possible, you should not do double duty such as being a Lector and Eucharistic minister at the same Mass. If it is necessary, however, let the Lead Person know.
9. Let Jan Plunkett or the Lead Person know if you have address or phone number changes.

### Things to do:

1. Take care of the books. If one is tattered or torn notify the lead person.
2. Check the equipment before Mass. Make sure the books and binders are ready, the microphone is working, and things are in place.
3. Take your time and do things smoothly and with purpose. Avoid panicked movements or distracting behaviors.
4. Be prayerful in appearance and in fact. It's not enough to "look" as if we are prayerfully aware of our ministry. "Be" prayerfully aware of what God is doing. In addition, be present and welcoming to those around you before, during, and after Mass.
5. Keep the focus on God's Word.

### Things not to do:

1. Do not read from the Missalettes.
2. Don't read without checking the Lectionary or binder for proper working, punctuation, names, and page turning.
3. Don't carry the Book of the Gospels out at the end of Mass. The "Word" was proclaimed and received and therefore remains in the people to be sent out.
4. Don't change words in or add words to the Lectionary. Don't say anything at the end of a reading other than "The Word of the Lord".
5. Don't add additional words or commentary. There is no need to say things such as, "Today's first reading..." If you make a mistake, correct it if necessary and continue reading. There is no need to say, "Excuse me" or "I'm sorry", etc.

## **Lector Guidelines Outline**

Lectors should arrive early and be dressed appropriately (refer to guidelines). Check in, get a medallion, check both readings in the Lectionary (in case the other Lector is absent and also for page turning, etc.), read over the Universal Prayers in the binder, place the Lectionary and Binder on the ambo. Carry the Book of the Gospels toward the back of the church where the gifts are.

The second Lector will read the Mass Introduction exactly 5 minutes before Mass begins, (don't wait for servers) then return to your pew.

The first Lector will be in the entrance procession carrying the Book of the Gospels unless a deacon is assisting with Mass. In that case, the Deacon would carry the Book of the Gospels and also read the Universal Prayers.

Proceed behind servers in the procession carrying the Book of the Gospels holding it elevated. With no bow, go straight to the back side of the altar, place the Book of the Gospels down flat on the altar (from the back side), and then go straight back to your seat (with no need to bow).

After the opening prayer and the Priest has sat down, the first Lector comes forward (no need to bow to the altar or priest), goes straight to the ambo, and proclaims the first reading. When finished, go back to your pew (again, no need for bows).

The choir will usually do the Responsorial Psalm. In not, refer to the procedures in the guidelines.

The second Lector comes forward, goes straight to the ambo, and proclaims the second reading. When done, close the Lectionary and place it on the shelf within the ambo, then return to your pew (again, no need for bows before or after reading).

Towards the end of the creed, the first Lector comes forward and waits until the Priest has done the introduction prayer for the Universal Prayers, then begins doing the prayers. Stay up there facing the people until the Priest finishes the conclusion prayer and all respond, "Amen", then return to your seat.

After Mass you are responsible to make sure that the Book of the Gospels, the Lectionary, and the binder are back in the sacristy for the Next Mass.

Take off the medallion and check the schedule for your next assignment and you are finished.

# The Ministry of Lectors

By: Austin Fleming

Yours is a share in the work of the Lord's Spirit who opens our hearts to God's holy word. Yours is the task of telling our family story, the story of salvation. Yours is to proclaim the true and saving word of God. You are the messenger of God's love for us.

Your task is to proclaim a word that challenges, confronts and captures our hearts. You proclaim a word that heals, comforts and consoles. Yours is the ministry of the table of God's word, which feeds the hunger and the longing of our hearts for truth. Yours is to offer the story of the "great things the Lord has done for us" that we might turn to the table of Eucharist with good cause to give thanks and praise.

Yours is nothing less than the ministry of the Lord's voice calling out in the midst of God's people. Come to your work from your personal prayer, praying that the spirit will open your heart to what you proclaim. Prepare the word which is yours to speak, study the scriptures, understand the passage, let it dwell deep within you. Come to your work in awesome reverence of the word you proclaim. It is the Lord's word. Come to your ministry as one judged and saved by the word you speak. Anyone can read the scriptures in public, only the believer can proclaim them. Approach the Ambo, the table of the Lord's word, as you would the Lord himself: with reverence and awe. Handle the book of the Lord's word with great care; it is the tabernacle of the Lord's presence. Let your eyes fall often on the faces of the assembly: they are the body of the Lord whose word you proclaim. Let the Lord's peace settle in your heart, that your voice may be clear and steady. Let your voice echo the sound of the word with conviction, with gentleness, with strength, and with wonder. Remember that the story you tell is filled with a drama you need not supply but must always convey.

Like the prophet, you will sometimes proclaim what no one wants to hear; remember always your own need to hear the hard sayings and never imagine that your ministry places you above what you proclaim. If you are the best of the parish lectors, be gentle in helping others to improve. If you are the least of the parish lectors, seek out that help which others can give. If you do not know how well you read--- ask: be grateful for constructive criticism and humbled by any praise you receive. Every lector wants to read at the Easter Vigil but not all will be assigned: Be patient in waiting your turn and be nourished by the word that others proclaim. Let no minister of the word think that there is nothing left to learn: another commentary and another workshop cannot but help the open mind and heart.

## **GUIDELINES for ALL MINISTRIES at the MASS**

First and foremost we all need to have a basic understanding of "THE LITURGY ". We also need to know and understand what we have accepted as a particular ministry, the requirements and responsibilities that go along with that acceptance. We also need to have a firm conviction in our hearts that we are performing a service to our CHURCH, COMMUNITY, & OURSELVES.

MASS IS A PRAYER..... Not just parts of it but the *whole* Mass.  
From the Entrance procession to the Exit recessional..

### MASS IS A PRAYER.

From this basic understanding we start to see how we as community and also as lay ministers fit into the bigger picture...

### "THE MASS"

Whether you are functioning in your ministerial duties or being a part of the community, MASS is a prayer and a prayerful time and as part of the body of Christ we hold the Mass with reverence and awe!!

### Remember we are all One Body - One Body in Christ.

As members of the Christian community, we are all called to participate actively in the liturgical prayer of the Church. The parish community takes on new dimension and vitality from our participation in the Mass. The community, young and elderly, is influenced by the example we show, and we all grow spiritually by that example.

The Mass, the Church's "greatest prayer," is the highest, most noble form of the Church's liturgy. Effective instruction will therefore help everyone participate fully and actively in the celebration.

It is important that these guidelines are followed in order to assure a smooth transition into the Liturgy.

# ORDER OF THE MASS

## I Introductory Rites

- a) Entrance Song - sung / spoken / read in silence
- b) Greeting - Penitential Rite (I confess...) - Kyrie
- c) Gloria - omitted in Advent & Lent
- d) Opening Prayer

## II LITURGY OF THE WORD

- a) First Reading  
Responsorial Psalm  
Second Reading  
Gospel Acclamation - sung or omitted  
Gospel
- b) Homily
- c) Profession of Faith ( Creed ) - (Sundays & Holy Days only)
- d) Universal Prayers

## III LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

- a) Collection, preparation of the Altar & presentation of the Gifts
- b) Preparation of the Gifts
- c) Prayer over the Gifts
- d) EUCHARISTIC PRAYER  
Preface  
Preface Acclamation - (Holy, Holy, Holy)  
Eucharistic Prayer  
Memorial Acclamation (When we eat this bread...)  
Eucharistic Prayer  
Doxology - (Through him, with him, in him...)  
Great Amen

## e) COMMUNION RITE

- The Lord's Prayer
- Rite of Peace
- Breaking of the Bread -(Agnus Dei/Lamb of God)
- Communion
- Communion Song - sung / spoken / read in silence
- Meditation / Reflection
- Prayer after Communion

## IV Concluding Rite

- a) Blessing, Dismissal
- b) Recessional (Song or Silence)

# STRUCTURE and FORMAT of the MASS

## Introductory Rites

Entrance Procession - We enter the house of the Lord in praise!  
Penitential Rite - We approach the Lord in humility!  
The Gloria - We praise the Lord!

## Liturgy of the Word

Scripture Readings - We listen to the Word of God  
Responsorial Psalm - We respond to the Word in Faith  
Gospel - We hear the Good News proclaimed  
Homily - We are encouraged to lead a Christian life  
Creed - We profess our beliefs  
Universal Prayers - We pray for the needs of all peoples

## Liturgy of the Eucharist

Presentation of the Gifts, Prayer over the Gifts - We bring gifts  
"Holy, Holy..." We praise the Lord  
Eucharistic Prayer  
Consecration - We welcome Jesus in his sacramental presence  
We proclaim the mystery of faith  
We remember our loved ones, living and dead  
Amen - We affirm our faith  
The Lords Prayer - We unite in prayer  
Sign of Peace - We extend the peace of Christ to fellow believers  
Lamb of God - We express our unworthiness and beg for peace  
Communion - We receive Jesus in the Eucharist and give thanks

## Concluding Rite

Final Blessing - We receive the blessing that the Spirit be with us  
Go in Peace to love and serve the Lord - We are challenged to live the Mass and the Gospel message.  
Thanks be to God - We respond generously



## Training:

1. The “big picture”
2. Overall idea of ministry being “service”
3. The welcoming of people by those who do public ministry
4. What a Lector is truly doing (Hilkiah found during Josiah’s reign 623 BC)
5. Reading vs. proclaiming
6. Clear, slow, articulate, eye contact?, legitimate emotion. (human and divine)
7. Pray, practice, know the context, read before and after, be comfortable
8. Catholics in good standing
9. Behavior in and outside of church
10. Microphones
11. Dress
12. Stick to the script (no “excuse me”)
13. Reverence (before and during Mass)
14. Lead Person’s role
15. Golden Rule of Liturgy: be smooth and deliberate

## Lector Guidelines