

# Lector Training Worksheet

## Ministry of Lector

- The lector is a minister of the Word who assists in making Christ present.
- The lectors most basic purpose is to keep alive and proclaim the Scriptures during the liturgy of the Word.
- Lectors need to be prepared physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually, linguistically, articulately, etc.
- Lectors need to be shaped, formed and molded by the Spirit to be the best Lectors God has called us to be.

## Scripture as the Word of God (Matthew 4: 18-23, 25)

- The word of God is captivating, inviting, life changing.
- As a lector you are an agent of that word – Christ speaks through you.
- *“Christ is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the Church.”* Constitution of the Sacred Liturgy (Vat II) (n. 7).
- To be a lector is a great privilege, a great honor, and a great responsibility.
- The ministry of Lector is a ministry of love and service in which you offer yourself as a vessel and allow God to speak through you for the sake of those who are listening.
- The lector must be prepared, knowledgeable, comfortable, and articulate.

## Preparation

### 1. Immerse yourself in the Word of God.

- If the word of God is to become alive through us, it first has to be alive within us.
- To be affective the lector must be knowledgeable of and familiar with the Word of God.
- Read, pray with, and reflect on the Scriptures on a regular basis.
- Become familiar with the nature and structure of the Scriptures.
- Immerse yourself in the readings during the week. Be familiar with the language, the pronunciation of words, the context, audience, overall meaning....
- See the Resources For Lectors page for a list of resources.

## 2. Practice

- Practice reading silently and out loud throughout the week.
- Typical problems
  - Lector speaking too low, too fast, monotone
  - No eye contact
  - No expression
  - Mispronunciation
  - Lack of interest
  - Unprepared

## 3. Factors to be Aware Of

- **Rate** – The goal of being a lector is to effectively proclaim the Word of God, not to finish as fast as we can. Generally speaking, it is better to read more slowly, but the rate will be dictated by the nature of the text.

- **Pause** - Don't be afraid of silence!

A brief pause between words or phrases gives the listener the opportunity in what is being proclaimed.

Pausing gives the listener an opportunity to receive God's grace.

- **Emphasis/Inflection** - Emphasis involves changing the tone of our voice to add meaning or to draw attention to a particular word or phrase. We're telling our listeners to pay attention to them because they are important.
- **Tone** A monotone voice is bland and boring, and turns the listener off.
- **Articulation** - Words should be pronounced clearly and properly so that their meaning and the meaning of the text is not lost to the listener. Some words are pronounced differently depending on their type and context. E.G. prophecy, blessed, Annas vs annus.
- **Volume** - The lector's voice should be projected so they can be heard and understood.

Positioning at the ambo and microphone is critical.

Adjust the mic to our height, speak into the mic, and raise the sound of our voice a notch or two above our normal speaking level. Test the mic ahead of time.

## **IV Nonverbal Communication Skills**

- **Posture** (the way we present ourselves when standing at the ambo).

It is recommended to stand straight up with hands in front of us on the lectionary. Follow the text with a finger if necessary.

- **Eye Contact**

Making eye contact from time to time lets the listener know he/she is important, and helps the lector be more engaging. It's OK to place your hand on the text as you're reading so you always know your place in the text.

- **Lector's Dress**

Proper dress shows the lectors respect for the Word of God and the dignity of the ministry.

### **Effective Preparation for the Lector**

1. Keep company with the Scriptures on a regular basis.
2. Read and reread the passages, reflect on and pray with them throughout the week.
  - Use the Lector Workbook or the resources below to provide context and understanding to texts.
  - Try to connect the text with your life experiences.
  - Connect the readings with the liturgical season, e.g., Lent, Advent, etc.
  - Identify the structure/nature of the texts to help with its proclamation, e.g., story, parable, poetry, etc.
  - Use Resources For Lectors to help definition and pronunciation of words.
  - Decide important phrases or words to emphasize.
  - Take advantage of the Daily Mass Reading Podcasts offered by the USCCB. v
3. Practice reading the texts aloud. Several times!
  - Use effective communication skills of rate, pausing, articulation, tone quality. Plan and practice where to emphasize words or phrases and where you might make eye contact.
  - Perhaps read to another person or tape/video record yourself.

- Record/video yourself
  - Listen with your eyes closed, can you understand what you're saying?
  - Are you saying the words as they appear? Can you understand everything clearly?
  - Watch the video. What do you think of your appearance, eye contact, body language?

4. Take advantage of our livestreaming videos. Critique yourself.

- Appearance
- Posture (Erect with hands on the book)
- Eye Contact (Too much, little)
- Volume (Can everyone hear me)
- Rate (Too fast, too slow)
- Articulation/Pronunciation (Are words pronounced correctly/clearly)
- Expression (Did I give proper meaning/emphasis to words, did I pause appropriately)

Pray with the texts throughout the week. Invoke the Holy Spirit to aid you in your ministry, remembering that you are a vessel through which the Word of God is proclaimed. Thank God for the gift of this ministry.

## **It's your turn to Lector!**

**Please Arrive at Church 15 minutes ahead of time. This is important not only for the lector but for all the other ministers serving at the Mass.**

- Get settled into your seat to the left of the Ambo.
- Look over the opening dialogue, the announcements, and the Universal Prayers.
- Verify that a cantor is present to sing the Responsorial Psalm. If not, be prepared.
- Verify that the Deacon is present in case you need to process with the Book of the Gospels. (See below)
- Verify that the Lectionary is placed on the ambo and the readings are correct.
- Ensure that the ambo microphone is turned on and working properly. Adjust the mic for your body height and head position.
- Go over the readings one final time and make sure you are comfortable with pronunciations.
- Give yourself a few minutes to relax, pray, and recite the lector's prayer.
  
- If you are to process with the Book of the Gospels, position yourself between the servers and the presider. Process with the book held reverently, raised slightly above the forehead. When arriving at the sanctuary proceed solely to the altar and position the Book of the Gospels on the altar (or stand), then bow reverently to the altar and proceed to your seat.

**When reading** the opening dialogue, the announcements, and the Universal Prayers do so with the same reverence and respect as in proclaiming the Word. Check for proper pronunciation of words, especially formal names in the Universal prayers. When proclaiming the Universal prayers pause after each prayer for a few seconds before invoking "we pray to the Lord." This allows the listener a moment to rest with the prayer.

## **Approaching and leaving the Ambo**

It is permissible to offer a reverent bow to the altar (not the Tabernacle) when approaching the ambo for the:

- Opening dialogue prior to the Procession
- First Reading
  - Bow to the Altar. Announce the first reading. Pause.  
Do not start with, “Our first reading today is...”
  - Complete the reading of the text. Pause deliberately before saying, “The word of the Lord.”
  - Wait for the congregation’s response, “Thanks be to God.”  
Pause - Return to your seat. (It’s OK to gently bow to the Lectionary)
- Second Reading (Unless reading the Psalm, then remain at the ambo)
  - Exactly the same as above for the first reading.
- Universal Prayers:
- Announcements:

**Scheduling:** Lector schedules are mailed on a quarterly basis and are posted on the bulletin board and in the bulletin for the following week.

**Substitutes:** Lectors are responsible for finding their own substitutes via email or phone.