

St. Timothy's Guidelines for Lectors

Revised August 2019

Through our lips, God's word is spoken. As a Lector you have the privilege to speak directly to the faithful. They may not verbalize it, but they often bring questions like: Can God actually speak to me today? What do the events of the Bible mean to my life right now?

As Lectors, we are the transmitters of this living Word. Our voice and our inflections matter. It matters less that you can pronounce Obadiah correctly, and more that your engagement with the text is for those who come to worship on your day.

Every one of the biblical writers had a passion to share their experience of God. The Bible at our lectern needs the human voice to transmit this passion, to infuse it with life, and bring home to those who can hear the immediacy of this message. When we take our place at the lectern to read we are the storytellers of God. We strive to bring Word of God alive to our world today.

Logistics

You will receive a reminder via email during the weekday before your Sunday. Please arrive 15 mins before church. ***Practice the text.*** And the end of this document there are some best practice for great results.

The Regular Cycle on a Sunday

- The First Reading usually comes from the Old Testament
- The Psalms are from the Old Testament (at 8:30 only). They come from a psalter called St. Helena so it won't be in your regular lectionary page. But just look at the electronic copy of the bulletin you get mid-week from the office.
- The Second Reading comes from the New Testament Letters (Epistles)
- The Gospel means "Good News" (of Jesus Christ) and is read by the priest.

On your day before church

Arrive 15 minutes early, find your spot in the bulletin and then find your favorite spot to sit. Right before your reading, as soon as it is your time, make your way to the lectern quickly, but not rushed

When introducing your reading

Introduce readings confidently and loud enough for the congregation to hear. Pause between the introduction and the reading itself. Introduce readings this way:

Always begin with "A Reading from"

OT readings:

- A reading from the Book of _____ (Genesis, Exodus, etc.)
- A reading from the First (or Second) Book of Samuel (or King, Chronicles)
- A reading from the Song of Solomon

- For books of the prophets: “A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah“ (Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc.)

The Psalm at 8:30am

The psalm is usually broken down into “half verse responsive” form. You as the lector would say a half of verse followed by the congregation finished the last half of the verse --until the end. *You can decide to do unison regardless of what the bulletin says.*

Here’s how you introduce the Psalm:

“We will read psalm _____ responsively as printed in your bulletin” or in unison if you choose.

New Testament readings:

- Acts: “A reading from The Acts of the Apostles”
- Paul’s letters: “A reading from Galatians” (Ephesians, etc.)
- When there’s more than one letter: “A reading from First (or Second) Corinthians” (Thessalonians, etc.)
- Other letters*: “A reading from James” (the First Letter of Peter, etc.)
- Revelation: “A reading from the Revelation to John”

Common mistakes -

1. It is a reading from Revelation **not** Revelations. **Singular not plural**
2. It is a reading from First Corinthians not One Corinthians. 1st not 1.
3. Paul did **not** write Hebrews. “A reading from Paul’s letter to the Hebrews.” is incorrect.

Conclusion of Reading

Always conclude OT and NT (after a pause)

with “Hear what the Spirit is saying to God’s people”

Don’t say anything at the end of the Psalm just stop.

An Uncommon mistake

- At 15 points in the three year lectionary cycle you will read from Sirach, Wisdom, Judith or Baruch. These readings have the confusing ending: “Here ends the reading”. This is because they are part of the Apocrypha. Ask someone who really knows Episcopal details if you want to know more.

General good practice

Read clearly and confidently, at about half your normal speaking speed. Enunciate and project your voice. Pay special attention to verbs and action words. If you’re unsure what to emphasize, go with verbs! When reading from the Scriptures, try to look up from the page and make eye contact when possible. Pause for effect that is meaningful to you. Pause when you have finished reading a lesson. Then say loudly and clearly, “Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church” or “Here ends the Reading.”

The Bible used our worship: New Revised Standard Version

Helpful websites

Pronunciation Guide

<https://thebibleworkshop.com/name-pronunciation/>

The Lectionary Page

www.lectionarypage.net

Lector Tips

<http://www.greatlectors.com/proclaimingtips.html>

10 Tips for Reading (From Diocese of Milwaukee)

1. **Read** over the your assignment – and its context – enough to find some meaning for yourself in it. Know what book of the Bible it comes from and what the idea of the passage is.
2. **Practice.** Read your lesson aloud. Hear it yourself. Try varying speeds. Vary stresses until it makes sense to you. Read it aloud to someone else.
3. At the lectern, **control the volume** of your voice so that you speak each word clearly, with special attention to sentence endings.
4. Read **clearly** - you don't need to shout, but speak a normal speed with a focus on pronunciation.
5. Get familiar with **our soundsystem**. If you are not sure how you sound, grab a parishioner to sit in the back row and tell you.
6. Take your time reading. *Force yourself* to be **slow and deliberate**, never hurried. Let no one have a problem understanding or following you.
7. **De-emphasize** the words “said” or “saying.” These are often the least important words in a sentence. It is merely a connecting link between the speaker and the text.
8. Know when to **pause**. A slight pause after each sentence, sometimes more than once during a sentence, allows listeners to follow the passage more intelligently. Pauses also mark transitions – from a narrative to a quotation, or a change in the situation being described.
9. Maintain as much **eye contact** as you can with your hearers. Engage them with your eyes as well as your words.
10. **Arrive 15 mins before the service** begins to make sure you know you can find you place on bulletin that is on the lectern.