

# Guidelines for Lectors

(revised October 2019)



## Lector's Prayer

*May the Lord be in our heart, on our mind,  
and on our lips, that we may worthily  
proclaim his Word.*



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Thank you for volunteering to serve the parish in this way. The ministry of lector is one of the most visible roles of service at liturgy. We appreciate all of you who are willing to take that ministry seriously, prepare well for it, and help the community's Scripture reading become the living Word of God.

## DRESS AND DECORUM

1. As public witnesses to the Eucharist, our behavior and dress should reflect a real respect for the role of service we perform. That is why the Church asks that those who are not living the Catholic faith not come forward for this ministry. This does not mean we have to be perfect, only that in general, our lives conform to Catholic principles. It is expected that you will be a registered parishioner as well. At times, for various personal reasons, one goes through a period of uncertainty as to one's relationship with the Church. If that occurs, it is best to take some time off from exercising this ministry of Lector.
2. Dress should be appropriate for Sunday: no tennis shoes, flip-flops, jeans, T-shirts, sweatshirts, shorts, and so on. For men, we ask that dress slacks, shirt and tie be worn, and if possible a coat or jacket. For women, we ask that modest dresses or skirts and blouses be worn, or **full-length** dress pants (no Capri-style) and blouse. The Lector should be dressed in a way that can be an example for others.

## RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES OF LECTORS

1. The lector has a responsibility to the whole community in a very clear way, since he/she will be the instrument through whom the people hear God's Word. Preparation and practice are to be as much a part of the lector's responsibility as they are for a cantor or choir.
2. There will be **two lectors** scheduled for every weekend Mass. Please do not presume the other lector will be there to do both roles, so it is good to prepare both readings.
3. Lectors should sign in and be in the sacristy area **at least 15 minutes before Mass**. The reason for getting there early is that there are names to read over, readings to review, as well as occasional special instructions. If there are optional readings or if there are long and short versions of a reading, check with the presider for the correct reading. A smaller red lectionary is in the sacristy for you to review the readings.

4. Any concerns about special schedules should be directed to Mary, who will forward them to the scheduler. Make a note of the times you are scheduled. **Get a substitute if you cannot make your scheduled assignment. If you have been called to substitute and have not talked to the caller, please return the call ASAP with a yes or no.**
5. The length of service for a lector volunteer is one year. We will annually have opportunities for you to indicate whether or not you wish to continue. This is to ensure that neither you nor those doing the scheduling presume that once you volunteer you do so forever. So each year you can make a determination about whether you want to continue with this service or move into other areas of service. We certainly need and appreciate veteran lectors, who volunteer every year. On the other hand, if you have missed your assignments with some regularity, please be confident that you can be faithful to your commitment before you volunteer for another year.
6. If you are also a Communion Minister, Greeter, Usher, Choir Member, Music Minister, or Cantor, the guidelines for the Archdiocese of Detroit ask that the various liturgical ministries be clearly distinguished at a Mass and that as many parishioners be invited to minister as possible. This means that we are to discourage the use of the same person in two different roles at one Mass. There can be exceptions to this at a given Mass, but, in general, if you have been assigned to be the Lector, you will not be serving in another capacity at the Mass. Thank you.

6. **Dress appropriately.** It adds to everyone's experience of prayer and praise, if the lector dresses well. It is distracting, when you do not.
7. **Watch the end of sentences and phrases.** It is very easy to both drop the voice and to speed up near the end of a sentence or phrase, thus making the words difficult for the people to understand. Keep the same pace and loudness, even at the end of a sentence/phrase.
8. **Practice names.** It works best if lectors do not read the names so much as "know" the name. Practice the proper pronunciation before Mass. Then try to simply say the name, without having to read it, when you come to it in the introduction or prayer of the faithful.

## MISCELLANEOUS

1. What if only one lector shows? Hopefully, an available lector will have offered his/her services prior to Mass. If you can see none, then simply put the Book of the Gospels on the altar before Mass and begin the Mass with introductions from the ambo.
2. **Substitutes:**  
**You are responsible for your own sub. Please do not presume that your partner will be there. We want two lectors, not one.** If you misplace your list of lectors or your schedule, please call the parish office 586-781-9010. Another will be sent to you.
3. Mary Greenway is the Worship Commission contact person for lectors. Questions and concerns can be directed through her by calling 586-781-6749. Schedules will be available either by email (at your request) or near the sacristy prior to the start of the new schedule. The schedule is also available online at [www.ssjohnandpaul.org](http://www.ssjohnandpaul.org). Please listen for the announcement.

Confirm that the large red Lectionary is on top of the ambo (not on the shelf in front), with a ribbon marking the proper readings, and open to the first reading.

4. **Placement of Lector #1 in Procession:** Lector #1, who does the first reading, is also the one who will process in as part of the entrance procession. The entrance procession is: Server with the cross, Lector #1 with the Book of Gospels, extra server(s) and then the presider. **Please hold the Book of the Gospels up (front forward) so that it can be seen, about head high or higher.** The focus is on the symbol, the Book of the Gospels, which calls attention to the meaning behind the symbol—God's Word.

When Lector #1 reaches the front, he/she should not stop, but continue to process **up the ramp**, around the ambo, and place the Book of the Gospels on the altar. Lector 1 then goes to his/her seat, by going back past the ambo and then either down the ramp or the steps by the handrail. On the way to their seat, Lector 1 needs to be aware of where the Lector binder has been placed by Lector 2.

5. **Lector 2:** will be responsible for making sure the correct introduction page is in the front of the binder. Each Mass has a specific intention for whom the Mass is offered. This is very important.

Often the Lector will be asked to add a name to the prayers for the sick or for someone who has died. If so, please remember to fill out the sheet attached to the intercessions so that a card can be sent to the family from our Card Ministry group.

Shortly before the beginning of Mass, after the Director of Liturgical Music rehearses the hymns, **Lector 2 will walk up to the cantor stand** and introduce the Mass, the Mass prayer requests and read the announcements for the day. **Lector 2** needs to be ready to go up, immediately after the music minister is done. After introducing the Mass, **Lector 2** places the binder where Lector 1 will see it and pick it up. **Lector 2** then returns to his/her seat.

6. After the Opening prayer, **Lector 1** waits for a moment so that everyone can get settled in place. He/she then moves toward the ambo, stopping at the base of the ramp. **Lector 1** bows toward the altar, and then proceeds up the ramp to the ambo, and then reads.

At the 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. Masses, from October 1 through Pentecost, the children will be called forward by the presider to be dismissed for Children's Liturgy of the Word. As the 2nd verse of the recessional hymn is sung, Lector #1 should approach the ambo to read Reading #1.

After the reading, **Lector 1** pauses slightly before saying "The Word of the Lord." It is easy to drop your voice at this point. Please keep the voice very strong. **Lector 1** leaves the Lectionary in place on the ambo. **There is no need to place it on the shelf below.**

**Lector 1** then returns to their seat by walking down the ramp or using the steps by the handrail. You do not bow to the altar as you leave.

7. Announce the Scripture reading simply as it is stated in the reading, i.e. "A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah," etc. Do not say something like, "the first (second) reading is...". Also, do not read the small red print at the start of a reading, which simply summarizes the whole reading.
8. The cantor then will come forward to lead the responsorial psalm. After that psalm, as the cantor passes the first row of chairs, **Lector 2** comes forward. He/she moves toward the ambo, stopping at the base of the ramp. **Lector 2** bows toward the altar, and then proceeds up the ramp, to the ambo, and reads the second reading. After the reading, again pause slightly before saying "The Word of the Lord." When done, he/she places the Lectionary on the interior top shelf of the ambo and returns to his/her chair, using the ramp or steps near the handrail.
9. After the homily and near the end of the Creed, when we pray "*We believe in the Holy Spirit...*" **Lector 1 will move to the Ambo to read the intercessions when the presider says, *Let us Pray*** ..that way there will be no delay from the Creed to the Intercessions. (NB: you do not need to stop and bow this time, just the first time when entering the sanctuary). Also, please do not close the binder or leave the ambo until after the presider's prayer is finished. This is less distracting.

10. After Mass is over, as a courtesy to lectors at the next Mass, **Lector #2 should remove the introduction sheet for their Mass and place it on the left side of the binder.** Then he/she should take the binder back to the sacristy. **Lector 1** should take the book of Gospels and put it on the gift table.

## TIPS FOR LECTORS

1. **Practice** each weeks readings even when not assigned. It is good to familiarize yourself with Scripture.
2. **Slow down!** Let people be seated and quiet down. Within the reading itself, do not rush through. Pause after the reading before saying "The Word of the Lord."
3. **Prepare!** It is so much richer and expressive if we have prepared well, looked up pronunciation of words and names, don't stumble over sentences, have taken time to really study the reading so that it makes some sense to us. All of us mess up occasionally—that is inevitable. But when the reason is our lack of preparation—that is wrong. The Lector Workbooks that you receive are not meant to dictate how you read a reading but to encourage you to prepare, look at where you place pauses and emphases. Please use it. **Practice aloud.**
4. Learn to read with a microphone. Microphones do not mean that we should speak softer or softly. **We should read above normal in volume** and let the microphones amplify even that. Some of the lectors currently read too softly and are not able to be heard easily in parts of the church. We have a good microphone. Do not stand too close to the microphone or else you'll "pop your p's". Adjust the angle of the microphone as well. There is no point in being a lector if we are not reading clearly, slowly and loudly enough so that people can understand the reading.
5. **Please try to get to Mass early.** It keeps you from rushing in, gives you time to greet people as they enter Church, you get a chance to look over the reading in the Lectionary we use.