



SAINT EDWARD
CHURCH & SCHOOL

MANUAL FOR



LECTORS

Table of Contents

A Lector's Prayer	1
Pastoral Norms	2
What is a Lector?	2
Qualifications	2
Selection	2
Commissioning	2
Formation, Training, and Development	3
Coordination of Liturgical Ministers	3
Liturgical Norms	4
General Expectations in Brief	4
Role	4
Proper Attire	4
General Guidelines	5
Procedures for Mass	6
The Week Before Mass	6
Arriving at Church	7
The Liturgy of the Word	8
Appendix: Scripture Passages for Reflection	10
Ezekiel 3:1-4	10
Luke 4:17-21	10

A Lector's Prayer

Lord -

Invest me with your power
as I prepare to proclaim the marvel of your message
As I prepare the readings, I try to take within me
the meaning of what I am to proclaim.
Help me to proclaim, not just with my lips,
but with my entire heart and soul.

Lord, make me a hollow reed
so that your voice will be heard by all who hear me.
Free me of excessive concern over my performance.
Convert my feeling of nervousness and
turn all my apprehension into an energy
for proclaiming your word with power and authority.
May your Spirit live in me and
fill the holy word that I proclaim.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Pastoral Norms

What is a Lector?

Lectors are commissioned to the ministry of proclaiming the Word of God at the Mass and other Liturgies. Lector's are the prophets of the Liturgy, those who speak the Word of God to the people. They are called to proclaim God's Word, not simply read or recite it; they do not perform a dramatic reading, but a proclamation.

The Word of God is alive, and it is through the voice of the Lector that it is heard in the Sacred Liturgy.

Qualifications

A suitable candidate should have a devotion to the Word of God in the Scriptures and possess the ability, time, and willingness to serve in this capacity. The individual must have received their First Communion and be a registered member of St Edward Parish. Not only do they share their faith with others in the Word they proclaim, but by their reverence for God and His Word, they call forth faith and invite others to a deeper relationship with the Lord.

Selection

Prospective candidates volunteer to be Lectors for the parish. All candidates are required to attend a training session and familiarize themselves with this manual. At the pastor's discretion, a candidate may be admitted to begin serving during the course of the year before attending the training session. In that case, the candidate will be expected to attend the next training session available.

Commissioning

The formal commissioning and re-commissioning of our Lectors takes place as needed to serve the needs of Saint Edward Parish.

Formation, Training, and Development

Formation of Lectors, as with any liturgical ministry, is an ongoing process. For those beginning their ministry and for those continuing their service, instruction and training in the following areas will be provided:

- Reflections on Sacred Scripture
- Procedures for Lectors in the Ministry

Coordination of Liturgical Ministers

The pastor determines the number of ministers required in order to provide for the liturgical needs of the weekend Masses and other parish liturgical celebrations. A member of the parish staff is responsible for scheduling, maintains a current roster of Lectors, and communicates information to the various liturgical ministers in a timely fashion. These tasks may also be delegated to a member of the community.

Schedules will be sent out periodically by email. Copies of the schedules will also be located in the sacristy and may be picked up at the parish offices during business hours.

If a liturgical minister is unable to serve at his/her assigned Mass, it is the minister's responsibility to call someone to substitute. If possible, please allow for ample time to find a replacement—if you send an email only a day before or hours before you are scheduled to serve, it is highly unlikely you will find a substitute. Also, if you are unable to find a replacement, please inform the coordinator and parish office by email or phone. If it is already the weekend, you may need to ask someone to tell the priest before Mass so something can be arranged. Contact information for all liturgical ministers will be provided when each schedule is sent.

Liturgical Norms

General Expectations in Brief

- Familiarize yourself in advance with the reading(s) you are to proclaim.
- If there are multiple options for the readings of the day, ask the priest celebrant or homilist which reading should be used.
- Arrive at the church ready to proclaim God's Word before Mass begins. Check that the Lectionary on the ambo is open to the correct page.

Role

The Lector has a distinct role in the liturgical celebration. Even though the minister may serve in other liturgical ministries, he or she should serve in only one ministry at a particular Mass.

Proper Attire

The ministers should dress neatly, in a way consonant with the dignity of their role. Since the focus should be on Scripture, readers clothing should be neither excessively flamboyant nor too casual. If people are shocked, distracted, or disturbed by what we are wearing, then this will be a distraction from the reading of Scripture. Readers should be humble enough to dress appropriately for reading. Good taste and common sense are the best guides in this area. Shorts or tank tops are never acceptable.

General Guidelines

Prepare

Read the readings in advance. You should be VERY familiar with what you are to read before you come to Mass. If a Mass has multiple reading options, you may need to contact the parish office to find out which reading to prepare.

Read Slowly

Reading too fast is the biggest mistake readers make. Read slowly but not so slow that the reading drags on. Ask someone to judge your speed in reading.

Read Clearly

Good diction and enunciation are important, especially for those who have difficulty hearing. Often people complain about the volume of reading, but in reality it is the lack of clarity in the voice of the speaker.

Microphones

Practice using the microphone before worship time. Have someone test your volume. Be loud enough, but do not blast the congregation. It is better to be a bit too loud than too quiet. Remember that some folks have hearing difficulties. Enunciate each word. Microphones are great, but they garble your words if you run them together. You may need to find a time to visit the parish during the week to practice. Once you are used to using a microphone, it will become natural.

Be Expressive

Be expressive with the tone and mood of the text. Let the text guide you for the tone. If you have prepared then you will have some sense of the tone of the text. Monotone speaking will create boring readings. Worship should be lively, and that begins with the readings. However, a note of caution to the overly expressive: too exuberant reading can take the focus off the Scripture and put it on the theatrics of the reader. Scripture is the focus not the reader.

Decorum

Remember to remain reverent during the Mass. People look to the liturgical ministers for an example. There is no need to rush to and from the sanctuary. Any time you enter or leave the sanctuary, you should bow to the altar.

Mistakes

Since we are not God, we are not perfect. If a mistake is made, stop and reread the verse. It is not necessary to say “Sorry” or “Excuse Me.” Continue reading with confidence, knowing that God expects faithful worship, not perfect worship. Faithfulness will include mistakes at times.

Pauses

It is appropriate to pause between the reading and “The Word of the Lord” or between readings and the responsorial psalm if you are doing multiple readings or the reading and the responsorial psalm. A good rule of thumb is to step back from the ambo and say a silent Hail Mary. That will give you a reasonable pause.

Procedures for Mass

The Week Before Mass

Lectors have a very visible ministry in the Mass, and preparation is important. It is a good idea to prepare over the week before the Mass at which you are to read. This approach has the added benefit of giving you extra time with Sacred Scripture and deepening your communion with the Lord.

Here is a sample plan to prepare over the course of the week.

Monday

Read through the reading. Just read it and let God say what He wants. Do not study this time, just rest in God’s word.

Tuesday

Read the content in your lector workbooks on the reading and look on the internet for reflections on it. Study the meaning of the words themselves. You want to know the story that's happening so you can share the story. It is often helpful to read a little before or after your actual reading. One handy internet source can be found at lectorprep.org.

Wednesday

Make sure you know all the pronunciations and you are comfortable with them. Scripture can include some complex names and words. You should be able to say them without stumbling.

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday

Read the reading aloud. It can be helpful to stand in front of a mirror to do so or ask a friend or family member to listen to you read and offer comments.

Before Mass on the day you read

Say the prayer for Lectors from this manual.

Arriving at Church

Please arrive well before Mass is to begin. It is important that we know in advance if someone is missing so we can make sure that their job is covered by a substitute. When you arrive, sign in on the Mass book outside the sacristy. It is also a good idea to quickly check the Lectionary on the ambo to make sure it is opened to the correct readings.

If there are options for the readings of the day, ask the priest or homilist which reading you should proclaim.

The Liturgy of the Word

If you are reading the first reading, at the conclusion of the Collect (the Opening Prayer) walk up to the sanctuary. If you are seated along the aisle on the ambo side of the church, just walk up that aisle and bow on the side of the sanctuary before ascending the steps. If you are seated on the center aisle or the opposite side of the church, walk to the middle in front of the sanctuary, bow to the altar, and walk up the middle then over to the ambo.

If you are reading only the second reading, follow the same instructions, but approach the sanctuary at the end of the Responsorial Psalm. It is fine if there is a short pause in the Liturgy as you make your way to the Ambo. There is no need to rush, but the pause should not be excessive, either. We need break the habit of rushing through the liturgy.

Remember, your bow when you enter or leave the sanctuary is directed to the altar, not the priest or tabernacle.

The First Reading

Take your place at the ambo and proclaim the reading you are assigned. When you begin the reading, there is no need to add to the liturgical introduction. Simply begin by saying “A reading from...” exactly as written in the Lectionary. Do not add “The First Reading is...” or any other introductory phrases. When you come to the end of the reading, pause briefly before “The Word of the Lord.” Remember, that is an acclamation after the reading. It is not part of the reading.

On a Mass for a Sunday or Solemnity (when there are two readings), if a psalmist is to sing the Responsorial Psalm and you are assigned to the second reading as well, sit in one of the chairs immediately behind the

ambo. If you are not assigned to the second reading, return to your seat, remembering to bow to the altar when you leave the sanctuary.

The Responsorial Psalm

If you are reading the Responsorial Psalm, step back from the ambo and wait about the length of a slow “Glory Be...” to let everyone rest and contemplate the meaning of the reading they have just heard. Then step forward again and announce the response. There is no need to introduce it in any way. Just say the response.

The Second Reading

Follow the same instructions as those given for the First Reading. After the reading, return to your seat, remembering to bow to the altar when you leave the sanctuary.

Thank you for your service to God and to St. Edward’s parish!

Appendix: Scripture Passages for Reflection

Ezekiel 3:1-4

He said to me: Son of man, eat what is before you; eat this scroll, then go, speak to the house of Israel.

So I opened my mouth and he gave me the scroll to eat.

Son of man, he then said to me, feed your belly and fill your stomach with this scroll I am giving you. I ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. He said:

Son of man, go now to the house of Israel, and speak my words to them.

Luke 4:17-21

Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom into the synagogue on the sabbath day. He stood up to read

and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free,

and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord."

Rolling up the scroll, he handed it back to the attendant and sat down, and the eyes of all in the synagogue looked intently at him.

He said to them, "Today this scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."