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ROLE OF LECTORS

KEY POINTS SUMMARY

1. **PREPARE AND PRACTICE:** Get the Workbook for Lectors; read the side and bottom notes, guides and suggestions in the workbook; practice out loud to yourself or family members; identify correct pronunciations [most are in the workbook, others can be found online]

2. **DRESS THE PART:** Sunday best or business casual is appropriate; jeans, sweatshirts, shorts, casual, etc. is not

3. **SIT AT THE END OF A ROW**

4. **APPROACH THE LECTERN [AMBO] PROMPTLY:** Do not delay but start as the congregation sits for the first reading or as the music from the psalm is ending; never pass between the ambo and altar

5. **WAIT FOR THE CONGREGATION TO SETTLE AND THERE ARE NO MOVEMENTS OR OTHER DISTRACTIONS:** Example, let all children leave the sanctuary for class before you begin the first reading

6. **TELL THE STORY AND COMMUNICATE; DO NOT JUST "READ"**
 - a. Hold the book in both hands or elevate the book if you cannot lift and hold it
 - b. Make eye contact
 - c. Speak to the entire congregation

7. **WHEN FINISHED, STEP BACK FROM THE LECTERN IN REVERANCE, DO NOT LEAVE UNTIL THE MUSIC STARTS**

8. **GET FEEDBACK, HINTS FOR IMPROVEMENT FROM FRIENDS, FAMILY, OR OTHER LECTORS**

INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Lector has matured from a mere reader of biblical words to a Proclaimer of faith and revealer of our stories of faith. Quite naturally, Lectors have experienced their own growth of faith through this ministry. Saint Luke Church will seek to increasingly provide opportunities to further enrich the Lectors and thus, the entire parish, in this fashion.

Since the homily is rooted in the biblical text of the Liturgy, the Lector's roll is heightened in importance. Truly, you prepare the way of the Lord by your deepening your awareness of the significance of the Lector's Proclamation of the Word at each Eucharist.

The place of Proclamation is a significant space, i.e., the Table of the Word. The Church word is Ambo (also referred to as the Lectern). Each Lector must learn to adapt their personal style to proclaim God's Word with maximum effectiveness from this space. A basic uniformity of Proclamation by Lectors (rather than a highly personalized and stylized manner) will tend to enhance the community's understanding of God's Word.

Each Minister should perceive a strong relationship with the rest of the celebrating assembly and other liturgical Ministers. Liturgical celebration is a cooperative Ministerial effort, and thus the model desired at Saint Luke Church.

The Lector should be advised that the command of your voice, pitch, enunciation and understanding of the text will embrace the community in a manner that technology cannot provide.

Holding and cradling or supporting the Lectionary during the Proclamation with both hands, as well as making eye contact, will increase your presence to the community. Simply reading, without looking up, tend to inhibit the effectiveness of the reader. A cure for this dependency will be increased with preparation, practice and experience.

Reflection, critique, exploration of style and overall effectiveness are areas ripe for further growth, development, and on going evaluation in the Ministry of Lector.

PREPARATION

Familiarize yourself with the readings at home during the week. Study their context, style, meaning, etc. The parish will make commentaries available to you through "The Lector's Workbook." The Lector Workbook and on-line sites provide name pronunciation guides. Please feel free to call other experienced Lectors (or Father) to verify the pronunciation of any other words/terms/phrases with which you are not familiar. See Practical Hint #13 on page 5.

Being a Lector is more than just reading. PRAY over the texts for greater clarity and understanding so that you might be able to proclaim and share the Word in a more meaningful way.

With the exception of the epistles in the New Testament, our scriptures originate from an oral tradition of passing God's message from person to person. They are meant to be spoken to the congregation, not merely read. We are **not** expected to memorize the readings, but as nearly as possible, to have our Proclamation reflect this traditional method of speaking God's Word.

If you are listed on the Mass Minister Schedule **first**, you will, 1) open the Mass with the greeting and announcements and, 2) proclaim the first reading.

PREPARATION (Continued)

If you are listed **second**, you will, 1) proclaim the second the reading and, 2) read the petitions (usually immediately after the creed). Before Mass, please check in with the celebrant for any last minute changes to this “usual” order.

Recite the readings aloud to hear yourself. **PREPARE**. Preparation is half the ministry. A successful Proclamation is almost always a sign and fruit of preparation. In your preparation, please be mindful of the needs of the congregation. Most assuredly, there are persons who need to hear and be comforted or inspired by God's Word. There may a person in the congregation, hearing **your** Proclamation, for whom this could be the first or last time they hear God's Word. Please keep those persons in mind.

PRIOR TO MASS

Come 15-20 minutes before Mass is to begin. Identify yourself to the Mass Coordinator and Celebrant. All Ministers, including Lectors, **must** sign in at the reception desk and review any final preparations with the Celebrant. Changes could include, but are not limited to, changing to short reading where short or long versions are allowed, baptisms taking place at Mass for which the second reader may not be required to read petitions, announcements added or deleted, etc.

Please select a seat on the outside of the row to facilitate ease of getting to the ambo without causing uncomfortable delays in the Mass. (We want, above all, for the attention to be on God's Word, not on us.)

There are two Lectors. Lector 1 provides the introductory words of welcome/opening announcements and proclaims the first reading.* Lector 2 proclaims the New Testament reading and the petitions.

*Note: If you are the first Lector at a Mass where there is no musician or cantor, you will also read the responsorial psalm. This is listed in the lectionary between the first and second readings. Please familiarize yourself with this prior to Mass.

Take a look at the Lectionary to finalize your preparation. Lector 1 should review the welcoming introduction to Mass. Lector 2 should review the prayers of petition for Proclamation.

BEGINNING OF MASS

In the spirit of a hospitable gathering, we encourage you to welcome others as they come to Mass. All Ministers should be Greeters.

All Lectors, please do NOT approach the ambo by walking between the ambo and the altar. **Go around the front of the ambo and come in behind it (from the side of the seats in front of the baptismal font).** Also do not approach from the side on which the musicians stand and behind the altar.

Approximately 5 minutes before the hour, Lector 1 will go to the Ambo (lectern) to read the introduction and opening announcements. The introduction will always end with the community rising to greet one another. By word or gesture invite them to do so. Allow yourself to feel the spirit of the moment and greet others as you return to your seat.

LITURGY OF THE WORD

BOTH READERS

All your movements should be graceful and dignified. Do not rush. No bowing or genuflection is required because our tabernacle (with consecrated host) is in the chapel, not on or behind the altar.

It is strongly suggested to pick up the book and hold or support it in both hands. This gesture gives visual impact and maximizes eye contact.

Begin by saying, "a Reading from the Book of___."** No commentary is needed. **Never** give editorial or personal comments.

** Note: When saying, "A Reading From", use the "uh" pronunciation for "A", **not** the long "A" as it would sound in the word "say".

At the conclusion of the reading, you should pause for a moment. Look at the community. Hold the book in front of you slightly raised but not in any exaggerated manner, and say. "The Word of the Lord." (No longer do we use "This is...")

Remain quietly at the Ambo as you place the book to rest. Your cue to move will be the music that begins the Responsorial Psalm or Alleluia/Gospel Acclamation. Do **NOT** move until the music begins. (The obvious exception is at those Masses that do not have a musician or cantor. The first reader will also read the psalm. But do pause reverently at the end of the reading before starting the responsorial psalm. Pause again after the last response. The second reader will pause reverently after the reading before stepping down from the Lectern). Then walk gracefully to your seat.

FIRST READING

Upon conclusion of the Opening Prayer all will be seated except the Reader. Observing the silence of the community, the Reader will proceed to the Ambo from the left side to commence with the reading. Delay/wait until the entire community is still and quiet. If people are being seated or seating themselves, begin reading only when they stop and the coordinator has moved away from eyesight. This is important when we are crowded. Rule of thumb: If anyone is doing anything anywhere during the Proclamation, they will not be paying attention to you, the Proclaimer.

SECOND READING

After the Responsorial Psalm is sung, silence is observed. Lector 2 will rise and walk without hurry and with grace to the Ambo and also enter from the left side. As with the first Lector, no bowing or genuflection is required because our tabernacle (with consecrated host) is in the chapel, not on or behind the altar.

During the Lectionary Cycles B and C, **and** during Lent, there are occasions when two different readings are provided in the Lector Workbook (and the church Lectionary). One of the readings is from Cycle A for that Sunday in Lent. The A cycle reading is used if the Mass at which you are proclaiming is also the Mass at which the RCIA Candidates are being presented for the Scrutinies.

PRACTICAL HINTS

1. Please arrange for a substitute when you cannot make a scheduled Sunday. It is helpful to notify the scheduled Mass Coordinator if possible. If you cannot find a substitute, call the Lector coordinator for assistance.
2. You may sit anywhere, but try to be relatively accessible by being at the end of the row of chairs.
3. Hold book up. Wait to gain the attention of the community by using silence and eye contact effectively. Do not try to compete with people moving about; you will lose every time.
4. Remember to dress in a manner befitting public worship. Some form of "Sunday Best" or "Business Casual" attire is expected. Inappropriate or distracting attire detracts from our effectiveness when the congregation is focused on the Lector and not God's Word.
5. You will be expected to participate in training/enrichment sessions for Lectors that are scheduled occasionally during the year. Suggestions for additional kinds of skills training are welcome.
6. Take initiative to affirm other Lectors when they have been particularly effective. Gently and lovingly identify issues for Lectors when a Proclamation was not as effective as it could have been. Solicit feedback from peers, experienced Lectors and/or family members on the effectiveness of our Proclamations.
7. Be ready to ask questions, make suggestions to improve the ministry, and remain open to further growth and development in the liturgical life at St. Luke.
8. You must project with confidence and energy. You can rarely be too loud in Proclamation, but you can be too soft and monotonal. Remember that Proclamation of scripture is vastly different than reading from a book or any other kind of speaking in public.
9. It would seem that any Lector would be a year-round student of the Lectionary cycle of the readings. Please be aware of the readings through preparation and reflection throughout the Church year.
10. Special sign-up sheets are posted several times during the liturgical year. These include holidays and special Masses. Please take note of these and volunteer if you are able to do so. Some of these special Masses may require meeting for assignment and practices of special readings, particularly for Holy Week (Triduum) Masses.
11. The parish provides a "Lector's Workbook" for a small donation and can well offer other materials in the future to assist you in your ministry. Please utilize these helps in your ministry.
12. The sound system, while enhancing the reader, will not overcome dull, lifeless Proclamation, only make it louder. Remember you bring the "Word of God" to life.
13. Prophecy/prophecy is an example of a pronunciation difference that often confuses Lectors. **Prophesy** is a verb and the last syllable is pronounced as "**sigh**". **Prophecy** is a noun and the last syllable is pronounced as "**see**". Be alert for others in your reading that could be difficult for parishioners to understand if not read correctly.

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