

*“Ministers of word proclaim the scriptures in the midst of the assembly.  
“They exercise a true liturgical function.  
They ought, therefore, to discharge their office  
with the sincere piety and decorum  
demanded by so exalted a ministry  
and rightly expected of them by God’s people.*

*Consequently they must all be imbued with the spirit of the liturgy  
. . . and they must be trained to perform their functions  
in a correct and orderly manner.”*

*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (CSL), 29*

## ST. JOSEPH CHURCH GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR LECTORS/PROCLAIMERS OF THE WORD

**A well-prepared lector can do much  
to enhance the celebration of the liturgy  
by a prayerful and powerful proclamation  
of the Word of God.**

**Such a proclamation can touch  
and move the whole assembly,  
serving as an instrument of God’s grace.**

*(Workbook for lectors and gospel readers, North American Edition 1998, LTP)*

### PROCEDURES

1. **Never read publicly what you have not read privately.** Readers are asked to spend a great deal of time with the scripture text to be proclaimed. They pour over it again and again. They practice it out loud. They are charged to make every effort in helping the church to hear this scripture. That means they live with it and wrestle with it all week long so that on Sunday they can let our scriptures come to us from one convinced of their worth and truth. (Preaching about the Mass, LTP, Chicago, 1992)
2. **Always read all three scriptures.** First, Second and Gospel readings. The First Reading has been chosen because of its connection with the Gospel reading.
3. **Check the pronunciation of unfamiliar names.**
4. **Prepare well.** Practice reading aloud in front of a mirror or for others.
5. If you need a ‘stool’ so that you can reach the lectern, please be sure that it is out in the sanctuary before Mass begins.

6. **Dealing with anxiety.** Breathe deeply and slowly. Pay special attention to the liturgical environment. Know that you are a vessel for the Word of God.
7. **Formation and Development.** Take advantage of any scripture/bible study, liturgical formation and spiritual formation, to have the ability to understand the readings in context and based on the Gospel and Paschal Mystery and grow in a liturgical spirituality.
8. **Attire.** In remembering that you are proclaiming the Word of God, dress appropriately to the occasion. Sunday best is always appropriate.

## Ministry of Lector – Procedures at Mass

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1. **Arrive 15 minutes before the time of the liturgy/prayer service. Check in with the Coordinator, located on the West Transept in front/Mary's statue side, then go to the Sacristy**  
Check on any variations in the liturgy due to the season or feast or special circumstances that day.
2. **Be sure to look at the Lectionary [and the Lector's Liturgical Binder] before Mass.** Check the markers, the location of the readings, any changes from the text you practiced. The scripture readings are always done from the Lectionary. The well-bound book communicates the permanence, the weight, the importance of the Liturgy of the Word.
3. **Both Lectors will come down the aisle in procession.** You will come down directly before the presider/priest. If the Deacon is not present, LECTOR TWO will carry down the BOOK OF GOSPELS. The book is carried high above your head, or if that is awkward for you, it can be carried chest-high with both hands supporting the book from the bottom.
4. **Upon reaching the front of the altar, move off to the left, directly in front of the ambo, bow your head slightly as the priest bows,** then go to your seat. You can have your family sit with you in the pew if you wish.
5. **BOOK OF GOSPELS** is placed into the plastic stand on the altar, standing with cover facing the main church; by either the Deacon or the Second Lector. Those ministers who are carrying articles used for celebration do not make a profound bow as the priest does.
6. After the opening prayer, the FIRST LECTOR goes to the ambo for the **First Reading**. Approach reverently; remembering that Christ is present in God's Word and Eucharist, the 'two tables' of the liturgy.  
  
Walk upright and with confidence as you approach, standing up straight at the lectern. Don't give in to the tendency to lean in towards the microphone. Projecting your voice allows the microphone to pick up the sound it needs to amplify your voice. **Adjust the microphone**, if necessary.
7. Do not begin the reading until the people in the pews/assembly have been seated completely and are quiet and ready to hear the Word of God. At the liturgies when we dismiss the children for the Liturgy of the Word, you will wait until most of the children have exited the space before approaching the lectern and as they are all gone, you will begin the proclamation.

8. **After all are seated and quiet, you look at the community and begin, as you introduce the reading, look at the people.** Please do NOT say: *'The First reading is.....'* Simply begin: *'A Reading from. . .'* Pause after you introduce that reading. Then continue with the actual words from Scripture.
9. **Read slowly and clearly with reverence and conviction.** You will need to be very distinct with beginnings and ends of words as well as remembering that you are 'proclaiming' and not just 'reading'. This has a different sort of measure of attentiveness to the pace of your reading and especially the volume and projection of your voice. The microphone will pick up, and then amplify exactly what you produce by way of sound.
10. **Pause after the proclamation of the Scripture [4 slow counts] , look at the people (not at the book), then say distinctly, 'The Word of the Lord'.** The assembly should be able to tell when the actual scripture begins and ends by your silence in the beginning and at the end of the scripture reading before you say 'The Word of the Lord'.
11. **The responsorial psalm will follow.** This is always sung at the Sunday Liturgy, Prayer Services and Holy Days. [If you read at the Daily Mass, you will most likely be reading this psalm. Remember that it is poetry and needs an appropriate reading style. You might lift your hand slightly to invite the assembly to respond at the proper time.]
12. **Following the singing of the Responsorial Psalm, the SECOND LECTOR approaches the lectern immediately to proclaim the Second Reading.** The above procedures for looking at the assembly, proclaiming the introduction, the scripture and the ending with appropriate pauses are followed.
13. **LECTIONARY IS REMOVED FROM THE AMBO** following the second reading. It is then placed on the side table near your pew.
14. **In Masses without a deacon, the function of the announcing the intentions for the General Intercessions is assigned to the SECOND LECTOR.** This occurs directly following the CREED (*When there is a baptism and during Easter Season and occasional other times, we do the creed with questions followed by the assembly answering 'I DO'.* The CREED is then omitted and the General Intercessions follow the silence after the Homily.) Occasionally, the Cantor will sing the intentions.

Look at the intentions before the Mass begins to be sure of any pronunciations you might need to have help with from the Pastoral Staff. Remember that the 'response' to the intentions is always sung. There are different musical arrangements used from time to time. Since you are a regular member of the assembly, you will be familiar with these. If you ever have a question, feel free to ask the Music Director or the Cantor how the General Intercessions will be done that day.

15. **Both Lectors are in the procession the end of the liturgy.** As you see the priest leave the presider chair, this is your cue and the cue for the Altar Servers to meet him in the front of the altar area. **Return the Lectionary and the Book of the Gospels to the Sacristy** after the song is completed and prepare it for the Lectors at the next Liturgy. Prepare the Lector Binder, as well, placing it beside the Lectionary.