

St. Stephen the Martyr Lector Handbook



October 2022

“Lord God, be on my mind, on my lips and in my heart as I humbly proclaim your Word”

LECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

BEFORE MASS

Arrive 10-15 minutes early, go to the Narthex and sign-in the Liturgical Ministers book. Write your name to indicate that you are present for the Mass.

In the Sanctuary, it is OK to check to make sure the lectionary book with the readings for the day is properly situated on the ambo and that the sound system microphone is turned on (usually only the 5:00 pm & 8:30 am lectors need to check).

WHERE TO SIT

Please sit in the first row in the front of Church near the ambo, your family can be with you, just make sure you are sitting on the end close to the aisle. Please do not sit midway or in the rear of the church.

READING

When everyone sits, that is your cue to walk up into the Sanctuary to read. Bow before going up the steps and then go to the ambo to read. After the first reading, sit in the designated chair in the Sanctuary and listen to / participate in the Responsorial Psalm.

Note: If there is no music for the Responsorial Psalm (usually 5:00pm Saturday Vigil) do not sit down, but pause and read the Responsorial Psalm.

After the Responsorial Psalm, return to the ambo and start the second reading. If the Book of Gospels is used, put the Lectionary on the shelf of the ambo so when the Deacon/Father comes over to the ambo, he will have a place to set the Book of Gospels. Go down the steps, bow and return to seat.

(note: At this time, only Deacon Rich Kren uses the Book of Gospels, the other deacons read from the same Lectionary as the Lectors).

***If two lectors are scheduled, they must confirm between the two of them who will read the first reading. If there is no music, the first lector will also do the Responsorial Psalm. Additionally, whoever does the first reading may return to their seat (they do not wait for the second lector to read).

After the readings are completed, please walk down steps, bow, and return to your seat.

GUIDELINES FOR LECTORS

1. Those who serve in the role as a lector should realize that it is a ministerial function in the community, and should exercise it in a spirit of faith and service.
2. “All taking part in liturgical celebrations, whether ministers or members of the congregation, should do all that pertains to them, and no more, taking into account the rite and liturgical norms” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 28). Therefore, those serving as lectors, especially at the Sunday Eucharist, should not serve in any other capacity at that particular celebration.
3. This ministry is open to all who have been fully initiated. They should be practicing Catholics, in good standing with the parish community, and possess a love of the Scriptures.
4. The lector designated to proclaim the readings from Scripture should have both the perspective and the ability to understand the Word, and must proclaim the sacred texts from a standpoint of faith. Therefore, preparation for this ministry should include both study of the scriptures and prayerful reflection on the passages to be proclaimed.
5. Good communication skills are necessary for anyone who proclaims the Word of God. Pauses, enunciation, phrasing, and the speed with which one proclaims should be well practiced. Silence after the readings is essential. Readers use the text as written; they do not add their own words. A ‘Workbook for Lectors’ is published each year with all the Sunday readings. Individual copies are available (free of charge) for each lector to study and use to practice for their readings.
6. Lectors must be attired in such a way that shows respect for the dignity and solemnity of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.
7. The psalm is usually sung, and is the role of the cantor. The psalm as part of the Liturgy of the Word is proclaimed from the ambo. However, if there is no cantor, the psalm is read by the lector “in a way suited to fostering meditation on the word of God” (*GIRM 2000*, 61).

A Lector’s Prayer before Mass

*Almighty God, as I prepare myself to read, still my heart.
Help me immerse myself in the scriptures to hear your message
in them, that I may proclaim your message to others.
I ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How will I know when I am scheduled to read?

You will receive a lector schedule from the Scheduling Coordinator. Note the dates and the reading assigned. If you are unable to read on that date, you are responsible for finding a substitute. If a lector regularly fails to show up for their assigned dates and makes no attempt to find a substitute, they will not be scheduled for future lectoring.

What if I am at a Mass and there is no lector?

If you are aware before Mass that there seems to be no lector, then by all means go and speak with the Deacon or Priest and offer your services. Your help will be welcomed. If you make it a habit of always reading the upcoming Sunday readings in advance, you will be prepared to serve as lector at any Sunday Mass.

How do I prepare my assigned reading?

Practice reading ALOUD multiple times. Read slowly and clearly. Become very familiar with the text. When practicing, project your voice as if speaking to people in the back of the church. Read the workbook notes and the other readings for the day. If you read with a family member, it is always a good idea to prepare both readings. In the rare instance where the other lector is unable to read, you will be ready to fill in.

What should I wear?

Proper dress is requested. For men: a suit or dress shirt and tie. For women: a suit, dress, skirt and blouse, or pantsuit. For all: please, no tennis shoes or jeans. Your attire is a symbol of the importance you place on your ministry.

I am unable to find my schedule. Where can I get one?

The Lector Schedule will be distributed periodically. A hard copy is in the Sacristy and in the Liturgical Minister sign-in book in the Narthex. In the future, it may be posted on the parish website. If you are unsure about when you are scheduled, please contact the lector ministry leaders below to help determine when you are scheduled.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

Debbie DuPont (scheduling) goldenjnb@comcast.net 770-696-6216

*Thank you for volunteering to serve the parish as a lector.
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.*

