

Helpful Hints for Lectors

- As a lector, you **show respect** by how you dress, what you do and especially what you say and how you say it.
 - Remember that you are representing our church as well as yourself and all of our lectors.
- Be prepared/rehearse – **practice, practice, practice**
 - Practice doesn't always make perfect, but you can get awful close to it. Practice reading to your family – it can help!
 - You should know the readings well enough to be comfortable with all the words and the message they convey.
- Make sure the **microphone** is adjusted for you
 - Speak directly into the microphone.
- Speak loud and clearly enough for **all to hear**
 - Everyone in church should be able to hear you.
- **Don't read too fast** (we often talk faster than we think we are)
 - Use a nice pace, not too fast, not too slow. This is where practice is important.
- Avoid the **monotone** syndrome (it can put people to sleep)
 - Vary the inflection, tone and emphasis. Again, you can practice this.
 - If there is a quote involved, make it sound like a quote and do it justice.
- Use **eye contact** – the real key to effective public speaking
 - Use it from the very beginning when you introduce the reading.
 - Divide the congregation into sections and make sure to pay attention to each section. Make eye contact with someone in that section.
 - Talk to the congregation, not to the book
- Try not to look up in the **middle of a sentence** (you can lose your place). Look up as you finish the sentence. Remember that a sentence is a complete thought.
 - Combine the very short sentences before looking up. Many of the very short sentences go together in a natural flow.
 - Exceptionally long sentences can be broken up, usually where the semi-colons appear, or use your best judgment.

- **Turn the page** when finishing the first reading so as to be ready for the second reading
 - Any page turning should be done quietly and smoothly.
- **First reading . . . second reading** – not necessary to say so – congregation knows which is which.
 - It's more or less redundant.
- Review **prayers of the faithful (petitions)** in advance so you are better prepared (best surprise is no surprise, particularly names)
 - If you are not sure about a name, find out how to pronounce it.
- Remind the congregation what the **response** is. Assume there is always someone who is new to the parish who doesn't know what the response is. It varies from church to church.
 - And make sure that you also give the response.
 - Remember that you are inviting the congregation to give the response.
- Pause before saying "**The Word of the Lord**" and look at the congregation when saying it.
 - You close the reading in a respectful manner when you do this.
 - Try not to rush it.
- For the second reading, when saying **Brothers and Sisters or Beloved** – look at the congregation and say it like you mean it.
- **Distractions** occur when the lector reads too fast, doesn't make eye contact, doesn't speak loud enough, reads without any change in inflection or without any emphasis, or makes quick head movements.
- Use the **lector workbook** as an aid – it can be very helpful and is a great resource
 - Information in the columns and on the bottom of the page will help you with pronunciations and pacing as well as background.

Do the best you can! If you are nervous, just say a little prayer in advance. It always helps!