

## HOW TO BE AN EXCEPTIONAL LECTOR/READER: GUIDELINES FOR PROCLAIMING THE WORD OF GOD

*(Note: These are guidelines written for a parish in the Diocese of Trenton. Some of the points may not apply to your parish. You are welcome to use this as a starting point for developing guidelines for your parish.)*

Your role as reader is extremely important -- you are proclaiming the Word of GOD as opposed to merely reading a novel or newspaper article, etc. therefore it must be read with dignity and honor. You are giving voice to the Word of God!!!

The most important points- summarized:

1. Always adjust the microphone first and be sure it is working so you can be heard.
2. Read slowly and deliberately (meditatively).
3. Read **louder** than conversational tone and project your voice right into the microphone.
4. Read with expression, understanding and conviction as if you wrote the passage yourself! Pay attention to the tone of your voice which is important to communicate the message effectively.
5. Use eye contact with congregation; do not merely look up at the ceiling or empty space.
6. Be present to the congregation from beginning to end.

### TIPS

- Read your reading over a few times ahead of time. If possible, find out whatever you can about the reading so you can read it convincingly.
- Check out any words you cannot pronounce or are unsure of, especially personal names.
- IT IS ALWAYS BETTER TO BE TOO SLOW THAN TOO FAST. Since it is the Word of God and not some other writing read slower than usual so people can meditate and pray on the Word as well as hear it. If the room echoes, you must read slower still.
- Always test the microphone ahead of time by speaking into it. Do not tap the mike:
- Before reading, take time to ADJUST THE MIKE WITHIN 3 INCHES OF YOUR MOUTH and project your voice into it, more loudly than your usual tone, otherwise the microphone will not work for you. The larger the crowd, the louder and the slower you must speak, so that the message reaches the entire crowd. IT IS BETTER TO BE TOO LOUD THAN TOO SOFT, TOO SLOW THAN TOO FAST.
- Before you begin to read, take a moment to pause in silence and look out at all the people, making eye contact. This brief moment of silence immediately gets everyone's attention.
- If you are able, make eye contact periodically with the Congregation during the rest of the reading. If you feel self-conscious, look at the peoples' foreheads or just over their heads.
- If it helps, use your hand to move down the page line by line (not word by word). Then, if you make eye contact, this will hold your place.
- Pause for a split second at commas, a full second at periods, two seconds at the end of a paragraph. One helpful hint is to say to yourself, "one" at each period or "one, two" after each paragraph.
- Use expression when you read and make the words "talk". Emphasize important words and phrases. Give attention to the tone of your voice; it will communicate a strong message. Not only will the reading become more interesting, it will help the listeners to absorb it better. You should not sound "sing-song".

At the end of your reading, after you have said, "The Word of the Lord", bow your head and pause (in silence) slowly counting to 10. This gives the Word a chance to sink in, so people can reflect on it.

## OTHER NOTES:

1. **BEFORE COMING TO CHURCH:** Read over (even out loud) and meditate on your reading. If you can, read a little commentary or background for fuller understanding. Also, check out the pronunciation of difficult words ahead of time and practice out loud.
2. Arrive at Church 15 minutes ahead, prepared and ready to go. Use the last few minutes to attend to technical details — if your reading is marked, check the petitions and other procedures.
2. When you cannot read, find a sub. If the other reader doesn't show up, you may be instructed to read both readings.
3. Don't be afraid. Pray for the God to guide you and speak through you. He will!

## 2. **DRESS FOR SUCCESS:**

Reading at Mass is a privilege. It is a ministry. You are marked as one of the leaders of the liturgy on that day. This requires that you dress up out of respect for your role and for the people who recognize you as a leader.

Do not wear any outfit that would draw attention to yourself and distract people from the reading

-- clothing that may be too tight or too short or too casual, etc. This will detract from you and from your special role as reader.

### ALL:

No wet hair. It appears as if you are last minute and unprepared.

No sneakers.

Underwear should not be visible.

No jeans.

### Women:

Dress or skirt and blouse or dress pants and jacket. Nothing too short or too tight. If you have to keep pulling a skirt down, it's probably too short.

No spaghetti straps. No cleavage. Your midriff should not be visible.

Dress shoes or nice sandals.

No dress shorts.

### Men:

1. Dress pants with belt. (no jeans). Shirt and tie or turtleneck and sweater.

2. Socks, shoes. No sneakers.