

As the congregation listens to our reading of God's Word, they are especially open to the message that, through our lips, will be passed on to them. The transmission of the Word is an event that we cannot know how it will be received or understood or how it might touch an emotion or event that has occurred in another person's life.

Some may come to worship with questions on their hearts and minds, "How can I deal with the problem I am facing this week? What has God to tell me? What do the events of the Bible mean to my life?"

We need the reality of the Word of God. We need to know, to feel, that the Bible story we hear is real, nourishing, relevant to our lives. At a wedding, we think of our responsibility to love all human beings. Will that love be exemplified in the presentation of the readings? When we gather at a funeral service to celebrate the life of a loved one, will the reading ease our own fear of death? We need the reassurances of the Word, as it speaks to the fullness of life, available in our every circumstance.

As Lectors, we are the transmitters of that Word. Our voice, our inflections, our very manner with the sacred Book, will nuance the reception of the Spirit of God for our hearers.

Every one of the writers – most of them unknown to us – burned with a passion to share their reflections on the human condition and on our relationship to the mystery of God. What we have today is the written word on dry ink across a lifeless page. The Bible at our lectern needs the human voice to transmit it, to infuse it with life, to bring home to those who hear it the immediacy that its messages had when the authors took pen in hand.

When we take our place at the lectern and open the Bible to read, then, we are no less actors – storytellers of God's Story. We strive to re-create, through their lines written thousands of years ago, to bring the Word of God alive to our world in the 21st century.

10 Tips for Reading

1. *Preparation.* Read over the your assignment – and its context – enough to find some meaning for yourself in it. Know what book of the Bible it comes from and what the idea of the passage is.
2. *Practice.* Read your lesson aloud. Hear it yourself. Try varying speeds. Vary stresses until it makes sense to you. Read it aloud to someone else.
3. At the lectern, control the *volume of your voice* so that you speak each word clearly, with special attention to sentence endings.
4. *Read loudly.* Even though we have a sound system (and make sure the mike is next to your mouth) the people in the last row need to hear you. Never shout, just read with intensity.
5. *Figure out the 'mental period.'* Drop your voice, either to isolate a thought, to conclude it, or emphasize it.
6. *Take your time reading.* Force yourself to be slow and deliberate, never hurried. Let no one have a problem understanding or following you.
7. *De-emphasize the words "said" or "saying."* These are often the least important words in a sentence. It is merely a connecting link between the speaker and the text.
8. *Know when to pause.* A slight pause after each sentence, sometimes more than once during a sentence, allows listeners to follow the passage more intelligently. Pauses also mark transitions – from a narrative to a quotation, or a change in the situation being described.
9. *Maintain as much eye contact* as you can with your hearers. Engage them with your eyes as well as your words.
10. *Arrive before the service begins* to make sure the Bible is on the correct page on the lectern and the "box" is down if you need more height – the congregation should be able to see you.

**Always begin with
"A Reading from"**

**Always conclude (after a pause) with
"The Word of the Lord."**

Websites to Help You Understand the Sunday Readings

The Text This Week
www.textweek.com

Pronunciation Guide
www.netministries.org/bbasics

The Prayer Book Guide to Christian Education
www.prayerbookguide.com

Readings for the Coming Week from Vanderbilt Divinity Library
<http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu>

The Lectionary Page
www.lectionarypage.net

The Bible & Worship in The Episcopal Church

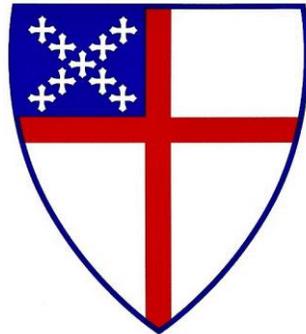
The Bible used in worship:
New Revised Standard Version

The First Reading usually comes from:
The Hebrew Scriptures
(Old Testament)

The Psalms are from:
Old Testament

The Second Reading comes from:
New Testament Letters (Epistles)

Gospel means:
"Good News" (of Jesus Christ)



The Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee

Lector's Prayer

May the Lord be in our heart, on our mind, and on our lips, that we may worthily proclaim God's Word.

Lector's Guide

Introducing the lessons:

Introduce readings confidently and loud enough for the congregation to hear. **Pause** between the introduction and the reading itself. Introduce readings this way:

OT readings:

- “A reading from the Book of _____” (Genesis, Exodus, etc.) OR “A reading from the First (or Second) Book of Samuel” (or King, Chronicles) OR “A reading from the Song of Solomon”
- For books of the prophets: “A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah” (Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc.)

NT readings:

- **Gospel** readings in Morning Prayer: “A reading from the Gospel According to Matthew” (or Luke, etc.)
- **Acts:** “A reading from The Acts of the Apostles”
- **Paul’s letters:** “A reading from Paul’s letter to the Galatians” (Ephesians, etc.) OR when there’s more than one letter, “A reading from the First (or Second) letter of Paul to the Corinthians” (the Thessalonians, etc.)
- **Other letters*:** “A reading from the Letter of James” (the First Letter of Peter, etc.)

****Please note: PAUL did NOT write Hebrews.** This is a common mistake, and many people attribute Hebrews to Paul in their introductions. The author of the letter to the Hebrews is unknown, and scholarly research is confident that it is **not** Paul, so we say, “A reading from the letter to the Hebrews.”

**If you are not absolutely sure who wrote the letter, then “A reading from the letter to _____) is fine.*

- **Revelation:** “A reading from the Revelation to John”
**Note: If your reading is in the NT and is not a gospel, or the book of Acts, or Revelation, then it is a letter/epistle, and should be introduced that way.*

- **PSALM**

If you’re leading the Psalm: You have two decisions to make before the service:

1. Decide whether you want the psalm recited in unison, antiphonally (2 groups), or responsively (leader + congregation).

2. Unless you’re reciting the psalm in unison, you need to decide whether you want the psalm divided by whole verse or half verse (breaking at the asterisk).

Here’s how you introduce the Psalm:

“The portion of the Psalter” (or “The Psalm”) “assigned for today” (or “for this Sunday” or “for the Third Sunday after the Epiphany”) “is Psalm 27, verse 1 and verses 5 through 13.”

“The psalm is printed in your bulletin insert and is also found on page ___ in the Book of Common Prayer.”

“We will read the psalm responsively” (or “in unison” or “antiphonally with the choir leading and the congregation following”) “by whole verse.” (or “by half verse, breaking at the asterisk”).

**If you are new to leading the psalm, it might be helpful to write out the introduction before you come forward.*

- Read **clearly and confidently, at about half your normal speaking speed.** Enunciate and project your voice. Pay special attention to verbs and action words. If you’re unsure what to emphasize, go with **verbs!** When reading from the Scriptures, try to look up from the page and make eye contact when possible. Pause at logical places in the reading—you will discover such places when you practice.
- **Pause** when you have finished reading a lesson. Then say loudly and clearly, “The Word of the Lord” or “Here ends the reading.” When your reading is from the Apocrypha, close with “Here ends the reading.”
- There is no “ending” for the Psalms during the Eucharist, so please say, “Please be seated.” At Morning Prayer, the Psalm is closed with the Gloria Patri (see p. 46 and 84)

Introducing the Prayers of the People:

“The Prayers of the People, Form I, are found on page 383, in the Book of Common Prayer (or the Prayer Book).” *Leave time for people to find the page. Be sure to leave enough silence during the prayers for people to add their own petitions.*

For more tips for Lay Reading visit

<http://www.greatlectors.com/proclaimingtips.html>.