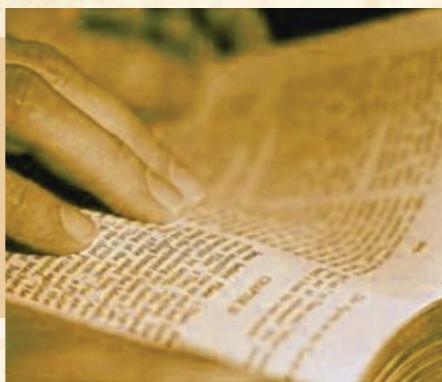


Practical Suggestions for Preparation:

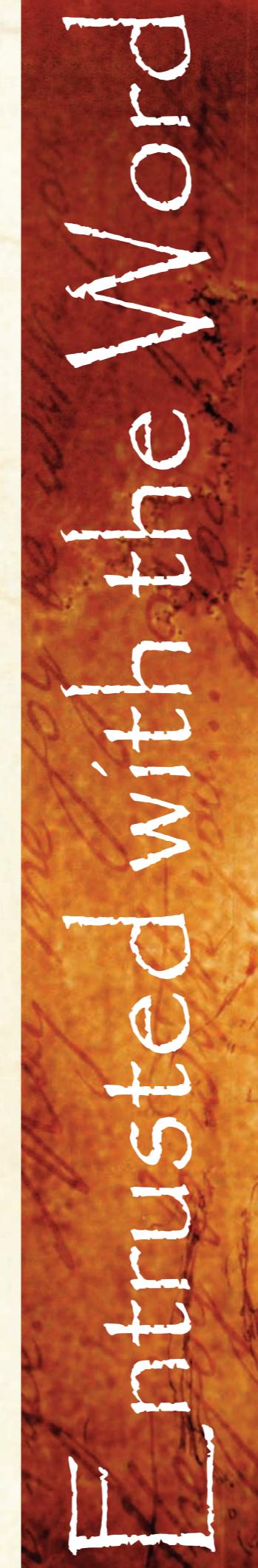
- Read through the text a number of times.
- Go to a copy of the bible and see what comes before and after the particular text.
- Read a commentary to the passage.
- Think about and reflect upon the Church season in which the reading is being proclaimed.
- Look to the other readings of the day for connection/links/common themes.
- Pray with the text.
- Write out in your own style what you think are the key points of the passage.
- Look to the style of the text: is it a narrative, poetic in style, a letter to a community, is there dialogue within the text, are there highpoints and low points in the text...
- Look at the layout of the text in the lectionary and be familiar with it.
- Proclaim the text aloud.
- Practice reading the text at the microphone in the Church. Be careful of plosive sounds – b's & p's- for which you may have to pull back a little from the microphone.
- Invite feedback from others.
- Avail of opportunities in the parish for scripture sharing and on-going formation in your ministry.

The word is near you, on your lips
and in your heart - that is,
the word of faith that we proclaim
(Romans 10)



The Moment of Proclamation:

- When the Opening Prayer has finished and people are sitting down leave your place and come forward to the ambo/lectern.
- Before you begin, pause and acknowledge the presence of the congregation with eye contact and openness in your posture.
- Proclaim from the lectionary - the book of readings that the church has provided - rather than from a missalette.
- Remember that this liturgy is something we do week in and week out. You know its rhythm and so does the congregation. Therefore, there is no need to say "The first reading...a reading from ..." The congregation needs you to tell them the source of the reading, i.e. "A Reading from the prophet Isaiah".
- There is no need to read the theme that appears in red in the lectionary. This is only an aid for preparation.
- Always take great care with the opening and closing of the reading. They deserve and call for the same deliberation as the text itself.
- Maintain good communication with the congregation throughout the reading. A good reader will entice the assembly away from their missalette, to hear the word of God alive in their surroundings.
- Think of the vocal elements of your task. A good reader will speak slowly enough, loudly enough, clearly enough and directly enough without going overboard in any of these elements.
- Allow the silences between readings to have their place. They are valuable moments for the congregation as they receive the word of God.
- Part of your responsibility may be to read the Prayer of the Faithful. Although in their style they are different to reading Scripture, good communication of them is important.



A Guide for Readers

KILDARE & LEIGHLIN FAITH DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Sharing the Word of God



It is impossible to think of the Church without the sharing of the Word of God that has been handed down to us in the Scriptures. This is more than a great tradition. When we listen to God's word, we encounter the Risen Lord for today, here and now. As St Paul said the Lord's teaching is always alive and active. We are converted anew each time we accept God's word into our hearts.

We believe that the Holy Scriptures nourishes our faith and at the same time carries with it the command to proclaim the Good News to all the nations. Faith and mission go hand in hand.

This guide is intended to assist those who undertake the ministry of reader (or lector to use another term). Proclaiming the Word of God is challenging and rewarding. It is about far more than simply reading out the words. It involves preparation, prayer and a willingness to communicate fully. It is a true service to God's people.

We hope that readers will find this resource useful. Along with the insights contained here, people undertaking this ministry are encouraged to attend one of the regular courses for readers that take place around the diocese. You can find details on same on the diocesan website – www.kandle.ie



The Lord has given me a disciple's tongue.
So that I may know how to reply to the
wearied, he provides me with speech.

(Isaiah 50)

*From the Introduction
to the Lectionary:*

"When in celebrating the liturgy the Church proclaims both the Old and New Testament, it is proclaiming one and the same mystery of Christ.

The New Testament lies hidden in the Old; the Old Testament comes fully to light in the New."

*From the Constitution
on the Liturgy:*

"Christ is present in his word, since it is he himself who speaks when the holy Scriptures are read in the Church..."

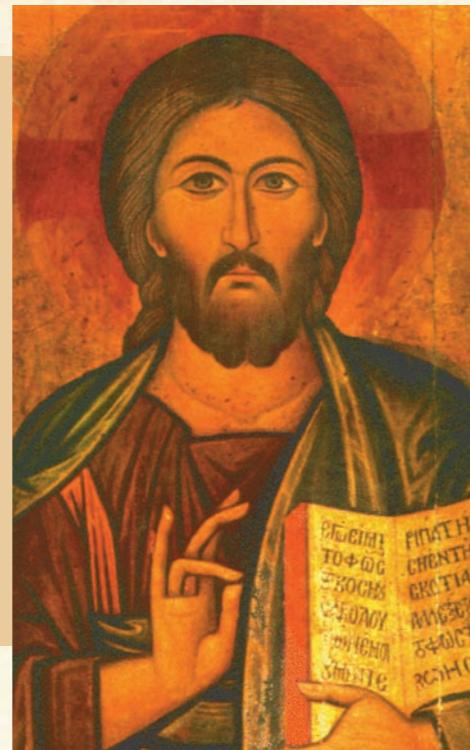
What does a Reader do?

The role of the reader is to stand before the congregation in a liturgical celebration and proclaim to them the assigned reading, aside from the Gospel. This may mean that a reader will read an Old Testament reading and/or a New Testament reading. A reader might also be asked to lead the Prayer of the Faithful during Mass.

Proclaiming is a very different activity to simply reading along with the congregation. The one who reads puts the word of God out into the midst of the congregation. As St. Paul said, this word is alive and active. The reader's task is to draw people's eyes up from their missalette in order to listen to the word of God that is now among them.

The reader speaks a message from God and as such is God's instrument. This requires of the reader a living relationship with God and God's word. It further requires that a reader understands his/her task as a communicator. Good communication begins with the basic presumption that a reader has prepared the text, believes it and wants to share it with others.

Good communication further demands that a reader can actually deliver the particular text to the congregation - engaging them and drawing them into its central messages. This implies a relationship between reader and the congregation. A reader's care for and attitude to the congregation will influence the quality of proclamation. Focusing on the elements of delivery – projection, articulation, pace, phrasing, eye contact, openness in bodily posture - will also enhance the quality.



The Three Moments of Ministry

PREPARATION

To come to a deeper sense of a particular text the reader must be prepared to sit with the reading ahead of time – to pray with it, to explore it and to seek to draw out its core message.

PROCLAMATION

The actual moment of proclaiming God's word is a moment of ministry. At this time the reader serves the congregation by sharing God's word with them.

WITNESS

Every member of the Church, reader and otherwise, is called to not only hear the word of God in the liturgy but also to respond to it in their life. We are all called, as St. James said, to "be doers of the word".

As the rain and the snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth... so the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.

(Isaiah 50)

The Reader & the Lectionary

The **lectionary** is the book of readings from which the reader proclaims. The Church uses three lectionary books:

Lectioary I Contains all the readings for the seasons of Advent-Christmas; Lent-Triduum-Easter; Feasts in Ordinary Time and the Sundays of Ordinary Time.

Lectioary II Includes the readings for weekdays in Ordinary Time.

Lectioary III Includes readings for Ritual Celebrations, for example Marriage, and Masses for Various Needs and Occasions.

The Sunday Cycle of Readings

The Lectionary for Sundays is organised in a three year cycle, in which a particular Gospel takes precedence in each year:

Year A – Matthew; Year B – Mark; Year C – Luke

John's gospel appears every year, having a special place during the seasons of Lent and Easter while it is also used in some of the Sunday's in Ordinary time during Year B which uses the shorter Gospel of Mark.

Your word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path.

(Psalm 119)



The structure of the Liturgy of the Word

FIRST READING: Usually from the Old Testament (though in the Easter season this reading will come from the Acts of the Apostles). This reading is typically chosen to link into the Gospel. When preparing the readings it is helpful to read all the readings of the day to see possible links.

Silence

PSALM:

This song was written to be sung! Music ministers are encouraged to lead this text as one of their duties in the liturgy. However, sometimes a reader may find this as part of his/her ministry.

SECOND READING:

Taken from the New Testament. In the strong seasons of Advent-Christmas & Lent-Easter it will normally link into the other two readings. In other seasons it may represent a semi-continuous reading of a particular book of the New Testament.

Silence

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:

This sung piece joyfully welcomes the Gospel that is about to be proclaimed. A reader may be called upon to read the gospel verse if there is no cantor.

GOSPEL:

In the Gospel we encounter once again the presence of the Risen Christ speaking to his people. It is in this reading that the liturgy of the word reaches its climax – hence the movement to a standing posture.

HOMILY:

The function of the homily is to literally break open the word that has been proclaimed into the life context of the community who have gathered. It may also draw on other texts in the Mass and the season of the Church year.

Silence

CREED:

Having heard and welcomed God's word the community gives its assent and proclaims its faith in this prayer.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL:

As a community we remember and pray for the needs of humankind. This prayer will often be led by a reader.