

# St Cecilia's Parish

## Ministry of Readers

### **TRAINING OUTLINE**

<p><b>THE READER MINISTRY</b></p>	<p>All Christians are, by definition, proclaimers of the good news, Because we were baptized into Christ's life, mission, death, resurrection and ascension, we announce to the world by our very existence that "Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again". Even as sinners- especially as repentant sinners- we proclaim the mercy of God and the truth of God's promise: "My word will not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11). Some among us are called to minister that work directly-to ensure that the faithful, as well as those who are not yet faith-filled, will continue to hear God's love spoken anew each time the sacred book is opened, These special people are called Readers.</p> <p>When you answer the call to be a minister of the word, you enter into a deeper relationship with God revealed in sacred scripture. In short, you become a prophet, one who speaks for God. You join yourself to the Jewish tradition, which sees prayerful study of God's word as the worthiest of all endeavors. And, as a Christian you believe that God's words find their fullest expression in that one perfect Word- Jesus, the Word made flesh.</p> <p>So just as Our Lord transforms himself though Bread and Wine into his own Body and Blood, so took we become the vessel by which He speaks to His people.</p>
<p><b>THE PROCLAIMER'S BOOK - THE LECTIONARY</b></p>	<p>As a proclaimer of God's word, your best friend is a book called the lectionary (from the Latin word lectio, which means reading or lesson). It is a collection of Bible texts arranged for proclamation according to the Church's liturgical calendar. The committed readers respect this book as the medium through which God's word is lavished upon the people of God for the comfort and inspiration, and as an invitation to respond to God's love more fully.</p> <p>For centuries, we had lived with one set of Bible readings that were the same each year and for every day of the year. After the Second Vatican Council ended in 1965, all books for the liturgy were revised. Our exposure to the Bible nearly tripled with a collection of readings (Volume I) over at three-year cycle for the Sunday liturgy and a two-year cycle for weekdays (Volume II). The three year cycle – determined by dividing the calendar year by 3 giving a remainder of 0,1,2; Year A is 1, Year B – 2 and Year C – 0. Example:</p>

2003/3= 667 remainder of 2 (B)  
2004 /3 = 668 Remainder of (C)  
2005/3= 668 Remainder of 1 (A)

The Sunday liturgy of the word was expanded from two readings (epistle and gospel) to include an additional selection, what we now know as the first reading, almost always from the Old Testament, except Easter season, and chosen with the gospel of the day in mind. The second reading is taken from the New Testament books other than the gospels.

The first volume which contains the readings for Sunday and Solemnities is divided into Year A, B and C. The gospels of Mathew, Mark and Luke were assigned for each year, respectively. The gospel of John, very different in character and purpose, fills in occasionally but is primarily reserved for the Easter season all three years. The readings begin with the seasons of Advent and Christmas and continue with Lent, Easter and Pentecost. Between the seasons are the Sundays in Ordinary time, divided into two parts. Ordinary does not mean common or plain, but comes from the word “ordinal” referring to those Sundays that we number consecutively. These are the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (the first Sunday being the feast of the Lord’s baptism) to the Thirty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time (the Solemnity of Christ the King).

Each group of readings is numbered uniquely in the Lectionary for easy reference. Previously all the gospel readings appeared in the Lectionary Book. Recent changes, however, now have the Gospel readings in the Book of Gospels

**PROCLAIMER'S  
INSTRUMENTS AND  
TOOLS**

All of sacred scripture is written in exalted language in an effort to communicate more than the actual words. Even what appears to be the most straightforward narrative has a deeper purpose. While the ministry itself may appear to be a simple one, that does not mean it is easy to do well or requires little energy of effort. It is not presumed that the reader is particularly holy, exceptionally gifted or highly skilled in communication techniques. Basic abilities are required and as Readers, we need to become more aware of the power of our speech. The proclamation of the word is never without effect. When the reader proclaims the Good News in the liturgy, the word goes from within the reader and is fulfilled in the hearing of the assembly. As a reader, you must remain aware of how your listeners are responding. A brief moment of silence before and after a reading is an appropriate technique to gain or maintain attention and focus on the importance of God’s word.

What listeners find most difficult to listen to is a voice that lacks color, variations of pitch, animation and warmth. The tone in one’s voice should correspond to the genre of the reading, i.e., prayer, instruction, acclamation, liturgical song, etc. Vocal variety is an umbrella term that includes

	<p>characteristics of speech including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Melody/modulation</li> <li>• Rate</li> <li>• Pause</li> <li>• Volume</li> <li>• Articulation</li> </ul> <p>As you experiment with the individual components, keep in mind that they are interdependent and cannot be considered or experience in isolation. Likewise, other factors can impact your credibility with the congregation. Everything from your conduct as a member of the parish community to the way you dress for the liturgy can be important. Mispronounced words, such as biblical names are intolerable. Use the Workbook for Lectors to see the phonetic pronunciations. Likewise the Workbook should be used in preparation for a given Sunday's readings by understanding the meaning of the readings and practicing them aloud at home. The more that one prepares and practices, the better one delivers the word and the better it can work its miracle of transforming individual lives to transform in turn the world we live in.</p>
<b>READER LITURGICAL GUIDELINES</b>	<p>The attached Guidelines is an explanation how, in keeping with liturgical documents, the liturgy of the word should be celebrated at Sunday Mass. While we carry the Book of Gospels, containing God's word, into the Church with us, it is not carried out, since the Word is carried within the hearts of all in the congregation as they go forth into the community!</p>
<b>EXERCISE AND CRITIQUE</b>	<p>An actual reading from the pulpit will be performed and critiqued.</p>

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