

## PRACTICAL TIPS FOR READERS.

### PREPARING FOR READING.

Preparing for this ministry is ESSENTIAL. Too often readers who have been chosen do not check the rota until they arrive at church! These people are not prepared to read the Word of God. This can lead to the reader fumbling through the readings, leaving the assembly confused and even bored. It can also lead to a lack of confidence in readers due to not being able to feel competent in reading. Preparation will bear fruit, both in good readings and also more confident readers.

### PREPARE EARLY IN THE WEEK.

(20 - 30 minutes at first, less as you consider yourself more comfortable with the process).

1. Read the passage out loud to understand it
2. Go to the Bible, read the four verses before and after the reading to get the larger context.
3. Read the passage out loud again, placing thoughts/ideas or sequences together.
4. Read it out loud, listening to yourself to hear if YOU are reproducing the author's intention. Note if your reading of the passage makes sense, shows emotion if indicated, reveals character if noted, shows parenthetical ideas, comes alive as if you were the living author or character.
5. Read the passage aloud in front of a mirror, delivering the thoughts/emotions of each section.
6. Sit down and read it out loud in a relaxed way, becoming familiar with WHAT the words mean to communicate.
7. Read it out aloud one last time, focusing upon the thoughts and intentions of the passage.
8. Pronunciation: Be sure that any difficult words are sufficiently practiced so the muscles in your 'vocal apparatus' are used to saying the words correctly and easily. Familiarity keeps you from having to think about it later!
9. PRAYER. Before and after the Scriptures, pray. Ask God to help you to be an effective proclaimer of His Word and to help you to understand

the reading. What you believe about the scriptures will say more than the technique you use.

### **PRACTICAL POINTS.**

1. Please be faithful to the rota. What sign is given when a reader does not turn up and someone has to be recruited to read unprepared at the last moment? If you cannot be present, then please inform the readers' coordinator.
2. Sit near to the front of the church when you are reading, do not rush to the Altar. Be ready to move to the lectern.
3. Move with dignity. Always read from the lectionary.
4. Bow at the altar step and make sure you have the attention of the assembly before starting to read. Try to look at the whole assembly on reaching the lectern. Pause. Announce the reading. (see Effective Reading)
5. After the reading, pause a moment, look at the assembly and then say "The Word of the Lord". Periods of silence are an integral part of the liturgy.
6. It is not necessary to introduce the psalm with words like "Our response is" Everyone knows that the psalm begins with an antiphon. Begin the psalm simply by reciting the Antiphon and letting the assembly repeat it. Remember that when reading the psalm, you are reading poetry - it should flow. When the verse is finished, look at the assembly, inviting their response
7. If the psalm is sung by a Cantor, then step aside after the first reading and participate in the responsorial psalm from the side.
8. After the psalm, introduce the Second Reading as written. After the reading pause again and leave the altar to the right as the Gospel Acclamation (alleluias) are sung. Bow and return to place. (*Replace the Lectionary under the shelf*)
9. At the end of the Creed make your way to the altar again to pray the Prayers of the Faithful. Pray them-Don't simply read them. Pause after each bidding. The Priest will begin and conclude these prayers.

### **EFFECTIVE READING**

1. SLOWLY. Reading fast is the biggest mistake beginners make. Read slowly. Ask someone to judge your speed when you are preparing for the reading.

2. CLEARLY. Good diction and enunciation is important, especially for those who have hearing difficulties. Often people complain about the volume of reading but in reality it is often the lack of clarity. If the words are unusual consult the CTS booklet “Readers at Mass” for a full list of pronunciations.
3. USING THE MICROPHONE. Practice using the microphone before worship time. There is no need to touch the microphone during the reading as it will have been set before the Mass begins. Although there is a microphone in place that does not mean that you should not project your voice to the back of the church.
4. EXPRESSIVE. Be expressive with the tone and mood of the text. Let the text guide you for the tone. If you have prepared then you will have some sense of the tone of the text. Monotone speaking will create boring readings. Worship should be lively and that begins with lively readings. Yet too exuberant reading can take the focus away from scripture and take it into the realms of the playhouse! Read to the punctuation and if it does not make cogent sense then use your own pausing to ensure clarity.
5. DECORUM. Since the focus should be on the Word of God, Readers’ clothing should be appropriate - not too excessively flamboyant or too casual.
6. MISTAKES. We are never perfect. If a mistake is made stop and reread the verse. It is NOT necessary to say “Sorry” or “Excuse me”. Continue with the reading with confidence, knowing that God expects faithful worship. If you accept that it is all right to make mistakes, this will lessen any feelings of nervousness. You may well find that it is a considerable help to follow the text with a finger so that when you look up you can be sure of finding your place again.
7. At the end of the reading pause for 5-10 seconds and then say “The word of the Lord” The emphasis should be on the WORD and LORD.

## CONCLUSION.

This guide will set new Readers on the right track for an effective ministry. It may even provide a few ideas for more experienced readers. Whether new or experienced, the proclamation of scripture in the assembly is a vital ministry in the life of the church. Learning how to read better will enrich the liturgy and will give the reader the opportunity to learn more about our Faith.

Pwhs/svs/September 2011.