

Diocese of Leeds

Vicariate for Education



Practical Advice for Readers

Before you begin

- Practice the reading beforehand – check any difficult words
- Practice standing in the place where you will be reading. If using a microphone, it should normally be positioned about 12” (30cm) from your mouth

How to position yourself and use your voice

- Position yourself at the lectern so that you are comfortable and relaxed: the text should be at a comfortable reading distance
- If you put your hands on the lectern, avoid leaning into the lectern
- Aim your voice about two-thirds of the way to the back to be sure you are heard. *Listen*: you should be able to *hear your voice* as you read

How to read well

- **Do not start reading immediately**: pause, look at the people to whom you will be reading, then look down, pause and begin
- Read what is in front of you (see below: *Different Kinds of Reading*)
- Do not worry if you make a mistake: just continue with the reading
- From time to time, look at the people to whom you are reading*: let your voice carry so that you feel you are speaking to them
- Speak slowly and clearly. If you are nervous, you will probably think you are speaking slowly when in fact you are not
- You may need to adapt *how* you are reading to *what* you are reading

*TIP: If possible, follow the text with your finger as you read so that you feel confident looking up

Different kinds of reading

The **First (and Second) Readings** are from either the Old or New Testament. They might be history, law or prophecy, or a story or a letter. Think about the *kind* of text it is. End the reading with 'The word of the Lord'.

The **Responsorial Psalm** is a song or a poem expressing sorrow or joy, or perhaps some other feeling: let your voice *communicate* what it means. Begin by reading out the Response (Do not say 'The response to the psalm is...') and then repeat the response with the congregation after each verse.

The **Gospel Acclamation** is a chant of praise: let your voice communicate the joy of welcoming the Gospel. Do not say '*Please stand for the Gospel Acclamation...*': simply begin the Acclamation. Return to your seat at the *end* of the Acclamation.

The **Prayer of the Faithful** (on Sundays and Holydays of Obligation) is **prayer**. Do not rush: allow time before saying 'Lord hear us' (or similar). Remain at the lectern until after the priest has prayed the Concluding Prayer.

Remember that you are proclaiming God's Word.

A most important aspect of your ministry is to **read and reflect** on the readings before you read them in public. This will help you to read more easily, will help you – and your voice – to be more relaxed, and help you to communicate the meaning of the reading naturally through the way you speak. If you understand and have prayed and reflected on what you are reading, you will communicate it far better to the listeners who may be approaching it for the first time.

Finally...

Remember to check that all your readings are ready for you on the lectern, or in your hand if you are reading from another place.

Remember always to move in a dignified way: if you are seated in the congregation or in the sanctuary, move from your seat once the priest is seated following the Collect (Opening Prayer), and walk steadily; bow to the altar before going to the lectern. As you return to your seat, bow to the altar again.