

The Church of Saint James

Saint James Lector Guidelines

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Lector Guideline for Masses in the Church

Welcome,

Thank you for offering to serve as a Lector at Saint James! As Lectors, also referred to as Lay Readers, you play an important role in the celebration of the Mass, and are a valuable asset to the priest, Deacon and the Parish community. You are also a member of the community and act in a role of hospitality for the Parish community.

Duties and Responsibilities

The duties of the Lector are straightforward; to greet the congregation, to read the Word of the Lord, to occasionally lead the Prayer of the Faithful, and to read the Announcements. It is important to remember that the ministry you serve is also a part of your personal celebration of the Mass.

- The Lector must attend the Mass for which he or she has been scheduled. If for some reason the Lector cannot attend the assigned Mass, it is the Lector's responsibility to find a replacement.
- Please arrive 10-15 minutes before Mass begins
- Upon arrival, greet the Celebrant and Deacon (if one is scheduled). If a Deacon is present, your responsibilities are slightly different.
- Determine from the Celebrant if a Cantor will be present, again your responsibilities are slightly different if the Entrance and Psalms are sung. The 7:00 AM Mass on Sunday rarely has a Cantor/music ministry.
- Appropriate Attire: dress as if you were going somewhere important. The late Deacon Jim Bell's advice always rang true for me: "You are attending a great banquet, so dress with that in mind." Also, dress not to draw attention to yourself, but to compliment the simple, respectful structure of the celebration.

Terminology

Ambo-The lectern or pulpit from which the readings are proclaimed

Altar-The place where the Eucharistic Sacrifice takes place

Book of Gospels-The red Book that contains the Gospel used for the Liturgy of the Word used by the Priest or Deacon

Lectionary-The book of readings used for the Liturgy of the Word by the Lector

Sacristy-the room where the Priest and Altar Servers prepare for the Mass

Narthex-the large gathering space immediately outside the back doors of the Church.

Lector Responsibilities

Typically, the Lector will be a part of a six or seven-person group that is visible to the congregation; the Celebrant, a Deacon, three Altar Servers, the Cantor, and the Lector. The description below assumes that team structure, and exceptions that effect the Lector will be noted. Please also consult the Diocese of Metuchen “Guidelines for Readers” at www.diometuchen.org/media/files/worship/worship_diocese_of_Metuchen_guidelines_for_readers.pdf and the “Altar Server Manual for Masses in the Church” to familiarize yourself with the responsibilities of the Altar Servers.

The Order of the Mass

Before Mass

- The Lector should be fully prepared 5 minutes before the Mass. Quietly congregate with the Celebrant, Deacon and Altar Servers in the Sacristy.

Entrance Procession

- The procession forms at the main entrance in the rear of the Church near the Baptismal font.
- The order of the procession will consist of the following:
 1. Cross Server, and two Acolytes (Server #1 and #2) holding the candles – 3 across
 2. The Lector (*If there is no deacon, the Lector will carry the book of Gospels)
 3. The Deacon with the book of Gospels
 4. The Celebrant (Priest)
- Begin the procession as soon as the singing begins. Please do not walk too quickly or too slowly.
 - *if there is no choir or Cantor, the Lector will call the congregation to attention:
- **“Please rise”** is all that need be said
- **Proceed in silence.**
- After the Alter servers place the candles in their proper place at the altar, bow with the Priest and Deacon and go to your seat at or near the front of congregation, on the Ambo side of the Altar.
- The Deacon will place the Book of Gospels on the Altar. . *if a Deacon is not present, the Lector will carry the Book of Gospels to the Altar, and place it on the altar. Return to your seat in the congregation.

Opening Rite

- After the conclusion of the Opening Rite, the Lector will proceed to the altar, bow, ascend the stairs and go to the Ambo to begin the Liturgy of the Word.

The Liturgy of the Word

- The Lector opens the Lectionary, and begins the first reading with “**A reading from _____**”
- Read the First Reading
- Conclude the First Reading, after a brief pause, with “**The Word of the Lord**”
- The Lector steps from the Ambo, and off the Altar while the Cantor sings the Psalms
- *If there is no music at the Mass (normally only the 7:30 AM Sunday Mass) the Lector will read the Psalms:
- after the Psalms the Lector returns to the Ambo and introduces the Second Reading: “**A reading from _____**”
- Read the Second Reading
- Conclude the Second Reading, after a brief pause, with “**The Word of the Lord**”
- Close the Lectionary; place it in the sleeve in the side of the Ambo, being careful not to cover other materials in the sleeve (homily notes, announcements, etc.)
- Return to your seat in the congregation.
- The Priest or Deacon will read the Gospel
- The Homily

The Preparation of the Gifts

- The Lector has no responsibilities at this time

The Liturgy of the Eucharist

- The deacon will read the Intercessory Prayers
- It is not necessary to preview the prayer response if it is “**Lord, hear our prayer**”. If the response is different than “**Lord, hear our prayer**” preview it once by reading it verbatim.
- *If there is no deacon, the Lector will go to the Ambo and read the intercessions.
 - Step back from the Ambo, but do not leave the altar, while the Priest gives the blessing after the Intercessory prayers.
 - After the Priest finishes his prayer, return to your seat in the congregation.
- Receive the Eucharist as a part of the Congregation.

The End of Mass

- After the Tabernacle door is closed, proceed to the Ambo to read the Announcements
 - note: there may be, from time to time, special announcements made by other ministries, etc. After introducing them, return to your seat in the congregation for their announcement
- Return to your seat in the congregation.

Recessional

- The Deacon will carry the Book of Gospels from the Altar in the procession.
 - *If there is no Deacon, the Lector will carry the Book of Gospels in the procession.
- Proceed to the front of the Altar to wait for the Priest.
- The order of the closing procession will follow the same order as the Entrance procession.

Preparation checklist:

- ✓ Are you scheduled to read this week? Check for the schedule at <http://www.saintjamesbr.org/Ministries-LayReaders.aspx>
 - If you are unavailable to read as scheduled, did you get a substitute form the other Lectors?
- ✓ Did you receive the mailed copy of the Readings for the week you are scheduled? If not Contact the office, Jack McArtney, or go to the Parish office or Sacristy to view the reading guide. Please do not remove the Office or Sacristy Copy from it's proper location.
- ✓ Prepare for your reading by reading the guide, the first reading, psalm, second reading and Gospel to understand their content, context, and relationship to one another.
 - Resources include:
 - You personal Bible
 - Podcasts with readings for the day. Here is the USCCB's <http://www.usccb.org/nab/nabpodcast.shtml>
 - The USCCB web site with readings for the day <http://www.usccb.org/nab/>
- ✓ Dress properly
- ✓ Arrive 10-15 minutes early
- ✓ Greet the Celebrant for the Mass, let him know you are the Lector
- ✓ Is the Lectionary is at the Ambo, tabbed for the proper Mass?
- ✓ Are the Intercessory Prayers and Announcements at the Ambo?
- ✓ Pre-read the Intercessory Prayers and the Announcements in the Sacristy (ask the Priest or deacon for guidance for pronunciation of names for the deceased, if unsure)
- ✓ Pray for the grace to perform the ministry that day.

If you have any questions, please call Jack McArtney at 908-696-1829 (home) or 908-285-1852 (mobile) or via email jmca@verizon.net.

PRAYER FOR A SERVANT OF GOD

My Lord, God of Mystery and Awe,
Your choice of servants amazes us.
You could have chosen
from among those much more wise and talented,
yet You have called upon us.

We are honored by this opportunity to be Your servants
by being of service to our brothers and sisters.
In Your invitation to serve,
We realize that we are drawn
into a special relationship with You,
our Lord and my God.

May this act of ministry of Lector
be for us a means of grace
and of building up the Body of Christ.

May we serve with humility and honor,
seeking not our own advancement or self-acclaim
but rather to give glory to You
and to work for the coming of the Kingdom.

Help us, we pray, to do well-
to do Your will-
in this ministry with which You have gifted us.

Amen