



PARTICIPANT'S GUIDE

The Church describes the reader's task with striking simplicity: "It is Christ who speaks when the Bible is read at the liturgy." In this video, host Aelred Rosser, OSB, author of *Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers*, 2002, 2003, and 2004 explores with experienced readers the spiritual foundation and skills needed in this ministry. Readers are the troubling, comforting, rousing presence of Christ speaking to the Church.

Use this guide to capture your reactions to what you see and hear. You may want to view the entire video and then watch it a segment at a time. Discuss your comments with other readers.

Part One—The Faith of the Reader

Discussion Period 1—Introduction

The Church says, "Christ is present in his word since it is he himself who speaks when the holy scriptures are read in the Church." What does that mean to you? What affect might that have on your ministry?

What is the lectionary? How are the readings arranged? (If you have not looked closely at the lectionary, take time later to do so. Also, read the introduction.)

What kind of formation do we need for the ministry of reader?

How is that different from information?

Discussion Period 2—Who Is the Reader

Vatican II had this to say about readers:

Readers exercise a genuine liturgical function. They ought to discharge their office, therefore, with the sincere devotion and decorum demanded by so exalted a ministry and rightly expected of them by God's people. Consequently, they must all be deeply imbued with the spirit of the liturgy, in the measure proper to each one. And they must be trained to perform their functions in a correct and orderly manner. (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, #29)

Circle the words or phrases that are important to you. What do they mean to you?

How and why did you become a reader?

How has your understanding of your role as a reader changed over time?

What does Father Bob mean when he says, "I allow the word of God to be sown in me"?

What are some things you wrestle with when you read the scriptures?

How has reading scripture helped you find where God is in your life?

What parts of scripture do you use to help you pray?

How is your life changing because of the scriptures and this ministry?

Discussion Period 3—Proclaiming

What did you notice about how the readers proclaimed?

What did you hear? What did you feel? What new insights did you get into the meaning of the word?

Was anything done differently from what you do in your church?

Notice how the readers announced the readings and how they said, “The word of the Lord.” How do you feel about the pauses? The tone of voice used? Note: These are not ideals. You may have very legitimate criticisms and alternatives.

What are the graceful movements and posture required of the reader?

In what ways is your church hungry and thirsty for the word?

How is the ministry of reader different from being a good public speaker, teacher, or news anchor?

Part Two—The Work of the Reader

Discussion Period 1 - Where We Proclaim

Do you understand the “hardware” in your church? How resonant is the room? Do you know how to operate the public-address system? Is the mike adjustable? Is there a switch on it? How is the lighting at the lectern? Is the lectern the right distance from your eyes? What do you need to do or learn about the hardware?

What is your relationship to the members of the assembly as you proclaim the scriptures?

In what way do you depend on the people—their attentiveness, their eyes?

How does your ministry relate to the rest of the liturgy? To the other ministries? Has your understanding of the liturgy changed since you became a reader?

Discussion Period 2—When We Proclaim

What is the relationship between your daily life and your ministry as reader?

How does the season of the year or the specific liturgy affect how you proclaim the word?

Discussion Period 3—How We Proclaim

What gives confidence to the readers in the video?

What is a “voice that is large enough and strong enough to be heard”? What is the purpose of a microphone? How dependent should we be on a microphone?

The Bible contains a wide range of literature—both prose and poetry. Which books of the Bible do you enjoy the most? Which are most difficult for you to proclaim? Why?

Why does a reader have to love the experience of public communication? Does that mean calling attention to yourself?

Discussion Period 4—Preparing to Proclaim

How can scripture study/prayer groups help you to understand the scriptures? What are such groups in your parish?

How can a coach help you improve your skill as a reader? Who would be a good coach for you? Could you be a coach to someone else? What are the difficulties in this?

What other resources are available to you to help you improve your natural gifts?

What impressed you about how the readers in the video prepare for proclaiming? What might you add? How do you prepare? How do you probe the words, phrases, images? What might you do differently? (See *Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers* for other ideas.)

Discussion Period 5—Important Hints

Art mentioned a prayer for readers:

The Lord be in my mind, on my lips, and in my heart that I may worthily proclaim the words of salvation.

What does this prayer say about the ministry of reader?

Karen said readers should have a “willingness to listen to what the scripture says to you.” How can you learn to listen?

Why is faith an important quality for the reader?

How does the word of God change us, just as the eucharist changes us?

What will you do differently as a result of watching this video?

Other Materials Available from Liturgy Training Publications

Workbook for Lectors and Gospel Readers. A guide to proclaiming the scriptures for Sundays, holy days and the Triduum. Available in Spanish: *Manual para proclamadores de la palabra.*

At Home with the Word. The Sunday scriptures with reflections for use by individuals or groups.

Pastoral Liturgy. Published six times a year, each issue contains helpful articles on the background and practical implementation on the reformed rites for Mass and the sacraments.

The Liturgy Documents, Volume 1, Fourth Edition, and Liturgy Documents, Volume Two. Handy references with helpful introductions to each document. See especially chapter 4.



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