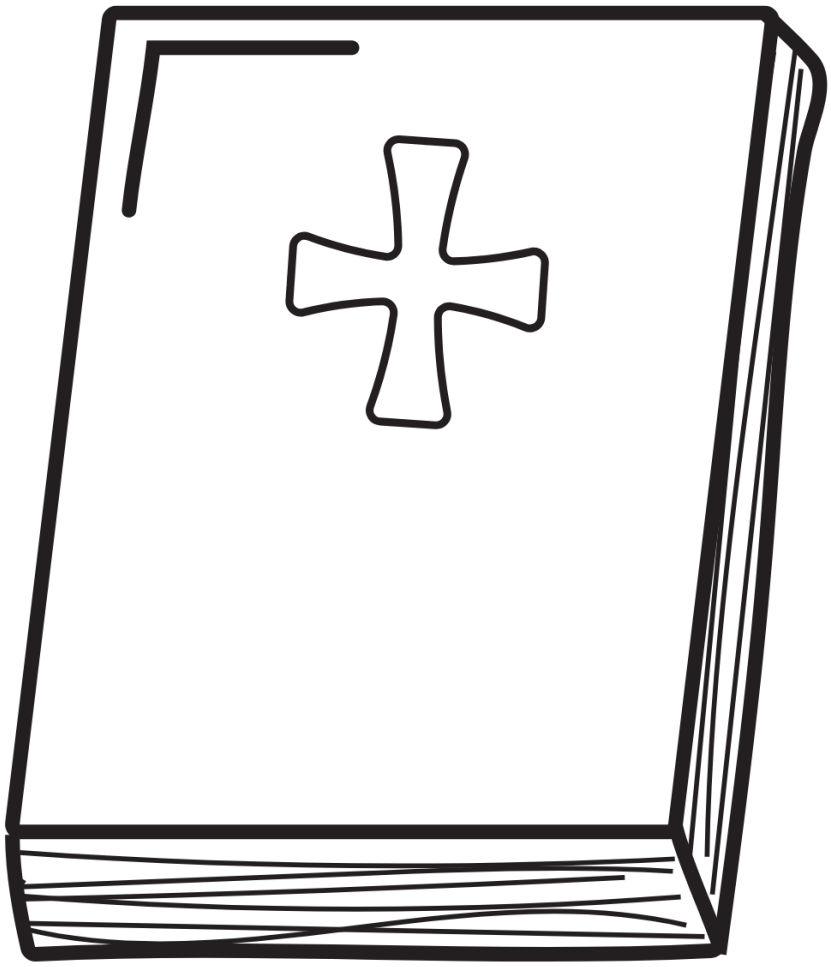
Updated 31st October 2026



Suggested Guidance For Readers

A prayer for Readers

As I proclaim the words of Holy Scripture which challenges, confronts, and captures our hearts; which heals, comforts and consoles; which feeds the hungers and the longing of our hearts for truth; let me offer the story of the great things the Lord has done for us that we might turn to the table of Holy Eucharist with good cause to give thanks and praise.

St Bede, Patron Saint of Lectors.
Pray for me.

(adapted from the writings of Austin Fleming)

Useful Apps and Links

Universalis – Also available on the web https://universalis.com/mass.htm

Free version shows the Readings up to a week in advance without Psalms until the day of due to copyright. The £10 version unlocks everything year-round.

Howjsay - https://howjsay.com/

Website that allows you to search most words, hear someone pronounce them in audio and also has a button to click for the definition of the word.

Please remember:

The suggested dos and don'ts for reading are not a checklist with which to beat yourself or other readers up. It is not meant to be a measuring stick.

People sitting in the pews are probably **not** judging you when you read. A lot of them will be thinking you are very brave for standing up there at the microphone as they '*couldn't do that*'.

This is suggested guidance to help you find out how to be the best reader you can be. Not every style, or suggestion will work for you.

The role of a reader is **vital to the parish** as you are proclaiming the Word of God. You do something extraordinary and are called to bring the Word of Christ to people. **It is a ministry.** Some people are not called to be readers. It does not mean you are not important it means you have a different role in the Church.

The role of reader as a ministry is **revolutionary** in the Church. It is there in front of us and we don't notice it. The Church is saying the reader is ministering the Word to **both the priest and congregation**. It is so revolutionary we are almost oblivious to it.

If you make a mistake:

Try not to worry or dwell on it. This happens to **every** reader.

Suggestions to help mistakes happen less: -

- Research unfamiliar words before you read them in public. Look up the meaning and the pronunciation. Practice unfamiliar words and reading until you have it down.
- If you stumble on a word don't apologise. It will only draw attention to the mistake. Don't let it rattle you or lose your concentration. Calmly move onto the next line UNLESS the line is crucial to the understanding of the reading. Simply go back to the beginning of the sentence and read again.
- If you read confidently most people will accept your pronunciation of unfamiliar names and places as they probably won't know them either!

Suggested Dos and Don'ts for Reading at Mass

As you prepare

DO	DON'T
✓ Prepare the reading before you come to church	! Imagine that short readings are easier than long ones
✓ Practise reading the passage aloud	! Imagine that you know familiar readings.
✓ Make sure you understand the reading	
✓ Try to work out the message and structure of the reading	
✓ Check on difficult names in the passage	
✓ Look for traps in the text and in the page layout	

As you read at Mass

DO	DON'T
✓ Check the lectionary is open at the right page before Mass begins	! Perform multiple bows and genuflections
✓ Check if the Psalm/Gospel Acclamation is being sung or if you need to recite it.	! Clear your throat at the microphone
✓ Make sure that the microphone is in the best position	! Say "The first/second reading is a reading from…." Or "The responsorial psalm, the response is…"
✓ Take a breath/pause before beginning to read	! Read out the italics theme of the reading
✓ Leave a pause before the introduction and the reading	! Read with a flat, unemotional voice
✓ Take time to read slowly and clearly	! Let the pitch of your voice slide ever downwards through the reading
✓ Leave a pause between the reading and 'The Word of the Lord'	! Indulge in histrionics (be over dramatic)
✓ Be careful of consonants such as d's and t's	! Lose your place
✓ Stop at full stops and commas as the meaning suggests	! Trail or dip your voice at the end of a sentence.
✓ Make sure that you breathe while you read	
✓ Readjust the microphone if you have to return to the ambo	

Consider having a **"Positively Critical Friend"** who can give you feedback on your reading at Mass **WHEN YOU ASK FOR IT.**

Taken and adapted from the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle handouts at Reflection days.

We **DO NOT** need to read this. This tells us as readers the theme of the reading.

This introduces the reading. We **DO NOT** need to say "The first /second reading. The First/second reading is…."

First reading

A Reading from the book of Jeremiah **33:14-16**

'I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David.'

Pause

Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD,
when I will fulfil the promise I made to the house of Israel
and the house of Judah.
In those days and at that time
I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David,
and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land.
In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely.
And this is the name by which it will be called:
'The LORD is our righteousness.'

There is no "This is…"

Pause

The Word of the Lord.

Second reading

We do the same for the Second Reading as we do for the first.

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians **4:4-7**

'The Lord is at hand.'

We **DO NOT** need to read the Bible verse numbers.

Brothers and sisters:
Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.
Let your reasonableness be known to everyone.
The Lord is at hand;
Do not be anxious about anything,
But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving
Let your requests be made known to God.
And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

The Word of the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 25(24):4-5b. 8-9. 10, 14. ± 1b

We **DO NOT** need to say "The responsorial Psalm, the response is…."

We just start with the Response.

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

O LORD, make me know your ways.

Teach me your paths.

Guide me in your truth, and teach me;

for you are the God of my salvation.

LOOK UP WHEN YOU GET TO THE RESPONSE, so the congregation know when to join in.

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

Good and upright is the LORD;

therefore he shows the way to sinners.

He guides the humble in right judgement;

to the humble he teaches his way.

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

All the LORD's paths are mercy and faithfulness,

for those who keep his covenant and commands.

The LORD's secret is for those who fear him;

to them he reveals his covenant.

To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.

Psalm taken from the Abbey Psalms and Canticles

We **DO NOT** need to say "Please stand to greet the Gospel."

Alleluia usually sung. If **not** Reader says it. **Note – There is no Alleluia said or sung during Lent.** There is just the Gospel Acclamation to say. **Readers stay and read the Gospel Acclamation UNLESS it is being sung.**

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

Show us, O LORD, your mercy,

and grant us your salvation.

Alleluia.

WHEN TWO READERS ARE READING AT MASS

(THE PROCESS IS EXACTLY THE SAME IF ONLY ONE PERSON IS READING AT MASS)

Coming up to Read

Both readers come up to the front **together AFTER** the **COLLECT** (Opening prayer) has **finished.**

Bow to the **ALTAR together**. If reading at **ST JOSEPH'S CHURCH,** please go up to the ambo(lectern) via **THE RAMP.** Do not cut across the front of the altar.

Whilst the **FIRST** reader is reading the **1ST READING AND PSALM** the **SECOND** reader is to sit on a chair at the side of the sanctuary near where the Altar servers sit. They then switch for the **2ND READING.**

When both Readers have finished reading, **DURING THE FINAL ALLELUIA**, we come down from the ambo (via **THE RAMP** in **ST JOSEPH'S**) and bow to the **ALTAR**. We **DO NOT** need to bow or genuflect to the priest celebrating Mass. We then return to our seats.

Reading the Bidding Prayers

The **SECOND READER** goes up **ALONE** to read the Bidding Prayers**.** When reading the Bidding Prayers please **count to five slowly in your head** between reading the prayer and the response. This allows people time to pray for the intention.

Example

For our own intentions and the intentions of those who have asked for our prayers.

(COUNT TO 5)

Lord, in your mercy.

We stay at the lectern **UNTIL THE PRIEST FINISHES THE PRAYERS**. Then come down from the ambo

(if in **ST JOSEPH'S** come down **THE RAMP)** and bow to the **ALTAR** and return to our seat.

Nine Steps to becoming a better Lector

Adapted from "Nine Steps to becoming a better Lector" by Nick Wagner

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"As lectors we are artists, sculptures of the silence. Our craft is to find the voice of God in the sheer silence and then, using our words as sculptors use their tools, to chisel and shape the silence into the proclaimed Word of God."



1: Pray

- Read the assigned Gospel/Readings as your Morning or Night Prayer
- Read slowly
- Imagine yourself in the scene
- Pray for the congregation listening to you read that they will hear/recognise Jesus in the Word
- Pray for yourself that God's Spirit will be upon you as you proclaim the Word, and you will be gentle with yourself if you make a mistake.

Examples of Prayer Mantras as you approach the Ambo

+ *Lord, be on my lips and in my heart, that I may worthily proclaim your Word.*
+ *O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth that I shall declare Your praise.*
+ *Create in me a clean heart, O Lord.*
+ *My mouth and my hands shall praise you O God.*
+ *Lord, touch my lips. Place Your words in my mouth.*
+ *I give thanks to Your name for Your love and Faithfulness.*
+ *Lord be on my lips and in my heart as I proclaim Your Word, may I read clearly and confidently and let Your people hear what You want them to hear today.*



2: Read Scripture

- Read the Gospel as well as your Readings it will help you see and emphasise any links.
- Read your reading in context. Look at the readings from the week before and the week after yours.
- Intimately familiarise yourself with scripture.

IMPORTANT!

3: Find the most important phrase

- Find the most important phrase in your reading you will emphasise.
- Look for the key element in the Gospel
- Read your reading again and see what sticks out to you. This is usually the phrase to emphasise when proclaiming the Word.



4: Find the emotion

- Give emphasis to the strongest emotion in the reading.
- Use the Psalm to help you discern the emotion of your reading.
- As you practice recall a time you felt that emotion. Read in a way that the feeling comes through in your voice.



5: Practice

- Read the passage silently several times.
- Look up any unfamiliar words for definition and pronunciation.
- Practice aloud if comfortable and get feedback
- Re-read again at the lectionary before Mass begins.



6: Use eye contact

- Using strong eye contact is an effective way to engage the assembly in the proclamation.
- Suggestions for moments of eye contact are - before you say “A reading from….”, words and phrases that deliver key emotions, foreshadowing phrases, the most important phrase and when you say “The word of the Lord.” at the end.



7: Project

- The most important thing a lector can do is also the most difficult to teach. To project does not
  necessarily mean to speak louder, although that is often the result.
- Humans are built with two air cavities. If you inhale in such a way that your stomach pushes out, you are filling your lower air cavity. If you try to make your chest bigger, you are filling your upper cavity. To project your words effectively, fill you lower air cavity first, then your upper air cavity. As you read, use the air from the lower cavity first. Keep in mind that you want to use your diaphragm instead of your throat.
- Good projection allows the Word to be heard better, it adds depth and colour to our voices. It allows you to add drama and interest to what you are reading. It adds power and confidence to what is being proclaimed. It allows you to read longer without pausing for breath.
- Imagine you have no microphone and proclaim as if you are trying to let the people in the back pew hear you.
- Do not rely solely on the microphone. It is an aid.



8: Vary your pace

- Identify the different speeds in your reading – fast, medium, slow as well as the loud and quiet parts.
- Some readings call for a fast, clipped pace or rhythm whilst others are slower.
- Find the best pace that works for you in reading.



9: Vary your style

- Scripture contains broadly four categories of style – Stories, prophesies, news and poetry.
- Be aware of what type of scripture you are reading and vary your style accordingly.
- Be aware of the Church season we are in and who is attending the Mass you are reading at, for example children versus adults.