

GUIDELINES FOR MINISTERS OF THE WORD

1. **A Serious Commitment**

This is a **ministry** which is a serious commitment and a privilege and should not be treated lightly. It is an opportunity to communicate the truth and beauty of the scriptures to others.

2. **Preparation**

- 1) Careful thought and prayer for guidance should be given before reading the scriptures (i.e. prayer to the Holy Spirit).
- 2) The passage should be read well beforehand in order to understand the full meaning of the readings and check on correct pronunciation of names and unusual terms.
- 3) Arrive early (at least 10 minutes before the beginning of Mass) in order to check the lectionary, the lectern, the microphone and liturgical procedures for that particular Mass.
- 4) Check that the Bidding Prayers are available and read carefully beforehand - they should be collected from the altar rails before the beginning of Mass.
- 5) Let the priest know that you are in attendance.

3. **Attendance**

Reliable attendance on the dates specified for your reading is crucial. An anticipated absence should be covered well in advance by arranging a swap; this should be notified to the priest if possible. Always remember to pick up the reading rota from the church porch or from the Internet immediately that it is circulated.

4. **Dress**

Dress does not have to be formal but should be smart out of respect for the Word of God, the priest and the congregation. Unsuitable attire should not be worn.

5. **Delivery**

The reader is the channel for communicating the truth and beauty of the Scriptures to the congregation. It is a **reading** and not an exercise in drama. Speak clearly, not too loudly, not too softly, not too slowly and especially not too fast. There is no need to rush!

6. **Introduction of Readings**

It is not correct to introduce the readings, the psalm or the Gospel Acclamation – just read what is in the lectionary.

7. **Bowing**

It is important to bow (not genuflect) to the altar before you walk on to the Sanctuary for your reading and also on the way back to your seat.

8. **Eye Contact**

There should be eye contact with the congregation when a significant passage is read in order to emphasise meaning and also when it is necessary to elicit responses from the congregation.

9. **On-going Commitment**

The conscientious reader should be prepared to attend days of recollection, training sessions and up-dating workshops whenever possible.

10. **Mentors**

It may be useful for experienced readers to help mentor those who are new to the ministry of the word and give advice and support to those who wish to receive it.