

The liturgical assembly truly requires readers, even those not instituted. Proper measures must, therefore, be taken to ensure that there are certain suitable laypeople who have been trained to carry out this ministry (*Introduction to the Lection #52*).

What is a Lector? (This ministry may also be called reader or proclaimer of the word.)

A lector is the person who proclaims the first or second reading at Mass. This person also may lead the Prayers of the Faithful at Mass.

A lector must have the qualifications listed below and have a desire to minister in this capacity at the Eucharistic liturgy. This ministry in the Church requires a person who is of excellent character and serious about the practice of their faith.

The lector must believe that Sacred Scripture is the Word of God and have deep respect for God's presence in that Word.

How does a person become a Lector?

Parishioners may volunteer to the coordinator of lectors or make their desire known directly to the Rector. However, lectors will be selected after all other criteria have been established on the basis of objective pastoral need.

Lectors should be carefully chosen based on their skills in proclamation, their willingness to complete formation in this ministry and their evidence of a deep spirituality.

If you are an adult and feel you may have the gift of proclaiming, please contact our Lector's Coordinator, Robin Corner, at (250) 477-7333.

Who can be a Lector?

- man, woman or young person (grade 4 or older)
- a person in full communion with the Catholic Church
- a person serious about the practice of their faith

- a person who is willing to complete a parish or diocesan formation process

The two requirements for lectors listed in the *General Instruction* are that they are to be truly suited to perform this function and that they should receive careful preparation. The *General Introduction to the Lectionary* provides a more detailed description of the qualifications for non-instituted lectors:

The Liturgical Assembly truly requires readers, even those who are not instituted. Proper measures must, therefore, be taken to ensure that there are qualified laypersons who have been trained to carry out this ministry. Whenever there is more than one reading, it is better to assign the readings to different readers, if available. (#52)

Regarding what is necessary for an individual to be truly suited, it would seem that this involves being a fully initiated Catholic living in communion with the Church. Thus, a lector should have preferably received both First Holy Communion and Confirmation and should not be living in an invalid marriage or in any other state of grave sin. A lector should be free of any canonical penalty and be living a life that befits the ministry to be undertaken. Being truly suited also implies the necessary talents to serve as a lector. Thus, individuals who are not able to proclaim the readings in a clear manner that expresses the dignity of scripture may not be suited for this service in church.

What is required for formation?

All new candidates for lector must receive training, either from the Rector or his delegate (normally done in a parish workshop) or through a diocesan workshop. No person, no matter how well educated or trained, may be excused from formation for the ministry of lector.

The instruction must include the following:

- Scriptural spirituality for Ministers of the Word
- preparing the Scriptures prayerfully
- instruction in Liturgy of the Word
- proclaiming the Word: practicum and formation in public speaking

What happens upon completion of training?

- new lectors may be commissioned for publicly proclaiming the Word by the Rector or his delegate. The Order for the Blessing of Readers may be used.
- a letter mandating the lector will be presented at the time of commissioning
- lectors should consider advanced training in order to continue their spiritual and technical growth
- lectors are required to attend a retreat or time of directed spiritual reflection once a year; this may be a diocesan, parish (annual parish mission) or private directed reflection/retreat

Children as Lectors

While the ability of the lector to proclaim the readings is of primary importance, this does not exclude the possibility of children serving as lectors, especially in Masses for children even if they are not yet fully initiated into the church. In those Masses where the congregation consists entirely or primarily of young children, the "special norms for Masses with children" permit children to act as lectors. Specifically, they state:

Children should have special parts in the celebration: for example ...proclaiming the readings (*Directory for Masses with children, #22*)

In general, however, lectors should have received all the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist) and be chosen according to their competence at proclaiming the Word of God.

We have youth readers at our 9:30 am Mass on Sundays. If you are interested, feel you have a gift for proclaiming and are in Grade 4 or older, please contact Lillian Budac at (250) 383-8342 or by email at lrbudac@shaw.ca.

Non-Catholic Lectors

In certain circumstances, there is a desire to have a non-Catholic serve as a lector. These circumstances are governed by the *Directory for the Application and Norms on Ecumensim*. The directory states:

The reading of Scripture during a Eucharistic celebration in the Catholic Church is to be done by members of that church. On exceptional occasions and for a just cause, the Bishop of the diocese may permit a member of another church or ecclesial community to take on the task of reader. (#133)

Therefore, while non-Catholics are not prohibited from serving as lectors on exceptional occasions, such as a wedding with parties of mixed religion, or an ecumenical gathering, it is necessary to have the consent of the priest/deacon performing the wedding ceremony or the Rector if this is a larger ecumenical gathering before a non-Catholic serves as a lector.

In these circumstances, the same criteria will apply as for a Catholic lector; namely, the non-Catholic lector must be a Christian living in communion with his/her church or ecclesial community, that is actively attending Church; he/she should not be living in an invalid marriage or in any other state of grave sin and be living a life that befits the ministry to be undertaken.