

# HOLY FAMILY CHURCH

## 2014-2015 Lector Expectations & Duties

*Congratulations. You are being renewed, educated and prepared for ministry as a Lector because you have felt the call to serve the faith community of Holy Family Church. You have had to think about the kind of person you are and the meaning of the actions you will perform. You have reflected on your faith, how good God has been to you, and what you have to offer back to the One who made you and blessed you.*

1. It is expected that every lector at Holy Family Church will respect the Word of God by living a faith-filled life. *Be doers of the word, and not hearers only.* (James 1:22)
2. All lectors will be educated and prepared for ministry by Holy Family Church at least once a year. *Lectors should be trained to proclaim the word clearly and well. Lectors become the mouthpiece of God.*

*Lectors should receive careful preparation and training so that the faithful by listening to the readings from the sacred texts may develop in their hearts a warm and living love for Sacred Scripture. – General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #101*

3. Each lector must be willing to read at Mass at least once each month. Each lector must be prepared to read both readings when attending Mass at Holy Family, even if you are not assigned to read at that Mass.
4. Once assigned a Mass, lectors are expected to serve that assignment or, as soon as a scheduling conflict is identified, find another lector to either swap assignments, or serve as a substitute. This swap/substitution may be accomplished by either calling an individual lector, or sending out a blast email. Whenever a blast email for swap/substitution request goes out and the request is filled, one more blast email must go out to let everyone know the request has been filled.
5. Well in advance, lectors will **prayerfully** prepare for their assigned reading using the Workbook for Lectors, Gospel Readers, and Proclaimers of the Word, published by Liturgy Training Publications or other suitable publication. *Understanding the speaker and the theme of the text will lead each lector to the voice or mood that the text conveys.* In the event that the other assigned lector becomes sick or has an emergency and cannot find a substitute, assigned lectors must prepare to read both Mass readings.
6. The Word of God deserves our respect. Suitable attire is very important.

**The focus at the liturgy is the Word.** Anything that detracts or calls attention to oneself and away from that central point, including one's dress, should be avoided.

Female lectors will either wear a dress, suit or pant suit (no jeans or shorts). Dresses and shirts must be either short or long-sleeved with modest necklines and length. Sandals, when worn, should have a back strap.

Male lectors will either wear a full suit and tie (preferable), or a dress shirt, jacket and slacks (no jeans or shorts).

T-shirts, especially shirts with information of any type (logos, pictures, writing, etc.) are inappropriate and should never be worn.

Joyfulness, appropriate dress, and reverent demeanor should be what clearly identifies Holy Family's lectors.

7. **Arrive early!** **At least a full half hour before Mass**, lectors are expected to arrive and sign in at the ministers' room. If you are a lector, are not assigned to read for the Mass, but are prepared to read, please remain in the ministers' room to assure that both assigned lectors have signed in and are ready to read. If one or both assigned lectors are not present 15 minutes before the beginning of Mass, please sign in and proceed as follows. If the entrance procession has begun and an assigned lector is not in the procession, he/she should have no expectation of proclaiming at that Mass.
8. After signing in:  
  
**The first lector** will locate the Book of the Gospels, make sure the ribbon is set for the proper Gospel reading, and place it in the nook (near the baptismal font). Note: Sacristans, priests and deacons should also check the Book of the Gospels – redundancy is a good thing.  
  
**The second lector** will locate and carefully review the prayers of the faithful and place them on the top of the ambo, under the opened Lectionary. Note: If a deacon is serving at Mass, prayers of the faithful will be read by the deacon. Further, a copy of the Prayers of the Faithful will be in the ministers' room for preview.  
  
**Both the first and second lectors** should make sure the Lectionary is on the ambo, opened to the correct first reading, and marked with the ribbon. Again, redundancy is important to making good liturgy. This is also a good time to ensure that the format for the reading is familiar to you.
9. Lectors should ask the priest or deacon if there is any part of the readings they would like emphasized. If there is any doubt, at this time, lectors should also use this time to confirm pronunciation of names and/or cities. *Names of people and places are critical for the assembly to hear correctly in order to understand the reading.*
10. So that the Word of God becomes present to the faithful when they enter Holy Family Church, lectors should greet the faithful entering the narthex (foyer) and welcome them with a friendly smile. Watch the priest and/or deacon and move to prayer before Mass when called to assemble for prayer.

11. **Regardless of whether a deacon is present, both lectors will participate in the opening procession**, walking side-by-side (*facing the altar, second lector on the right, first lector on the left*). If a deacon is not present, the first lector, with reverent awe, will elevate and carry in the Book of the Gospels. Unless you are carrying in the Book of the Gospels, each lector should be singing the Entrance Song in the procession.

*The faithful form one body, whether by hearing the word of God, or by joining in the prayers and the singing, or above all by the common offering of Sacrifice and by a common partaking at the Lord's table.* – General Instruction of the Roman Missal, #96

The opening procession is to process in this order: altar server with the incense (if it is used), then the cross bearer, followed by the candle bearers (walking side-by-side), acolytes, then the lectors, followed by the deacon (if present) and then the priest. Make sure there is **at least** a four-pew separation between the lectors and candle bearers.

Upon arriving at the steps of the sanctuary, if a deacon is present, both lectors should move to their right next to the altar server(s) and wait for the placement of the Book of the Gospels and the arrival of the celebrant. If a deacon is not present, the lector holding the Book of the Gospels, proceeds reverently, with good posture, up the sanctuary steps to the front and center of the altar. The Book of the Gospels is then slowly brought down to the top of the altar, and placed in the holder on the altar. Once the Book of the Gospels is placed, the lector returns to the bottom of the sanctuary steps and joins in a simultaneous deep bow of all procession participants. As the celebrant moves up the sanctuary steps, lectors should move to the pew reserved for lectors. **Note: Only priests and deacons move around behind the altar.**

12. **First lector –**

As soon as the priest is seated and while the assembly is still moving to their seats, move with reverent purpose, with hands reverently clasped, to the base of the sanctuary steps, **directly in front and center of the altar.** Make a deep bow and move carefully, with reverent purpose and good posture, up the steps to the ambo. Check the Lectionary and wait for all to be seated. Smile, and in a firm clear voice, proclaim what the Lectionary specifies, the ritual language that is **very important:** “*A reading from the...*” If at all possible, this should be done while looking at the faithful, and not at the Lectionary. After the reading is proclaimed, it is appropriate to pause slightly, look up, and address the faithful with the words: “*The word of the Lord.*” Wait for the assembly’s response, take a step back and make a deep bow. Again, move with careful reverent purpose and good posture, back down the sanctuary steps and stop at the base of the steps directly in front and center of the altar. If the cantor/Psalmist is moving to meet you at the base of the steps wait until you are side-by-side with that person and then make a deep bow and return to your pew, with hands reverently clasped, otherwise, make a deep bow and return to your pew.

**Second lector –**

As soon as the cantor/Psalmist is finished, move with reverent purpose, with hands reverently clasped, to the base of the sanctuary steps, directly in front and center of the altar. Make a deep bow (wait to bow with the cantor/Psalmist if moving from the ambo), and move carefully with reverent purpose and good posture, with hands reverently clasped, up the steps to the ambo. Check the Lectionary. Smile, and in a firm clear voice, proclaim what the Lectionary specifies, the ritual language that is very important: “*A reading from the...*” If at all possible, this should be done while looking at the faithful, and not at the Lectionary. After the reading is proclaimed, it is appropriate to pause slightly, look up, and address the faithful with the words: “*The word of the Lord.*” Wait for the assembly’s response, take a step back and make a deep bow and remove the Lectionary to the next shelf in the ambo. Again, move with careful reverent purpose and good posture, with hands reverently clasped, back down the sanctuary steps and stop at the base of the steps directly in front and center of the altar wait for the altar servers who will take part in the Gospel procession to come on either side of you, make a deep bow and return to your pew.

13. **Prayers of the Faithful.** In the absence of a deacon, this is a significant part of the ministry of lector. **Second lector:** Please practice these prayers in advance so that they do not sound like announcements, but the true expression of the people’s petitions. Please make every effort to be comfortable with the pronunciation of names. During the Creed, after the bow (for the Apostles’ Creed) or at the words, “We believe in the Holy Spirit...” (for the Nicene Creed), move with reverent purpose, with hands reverently clasped, to the base of the sanctuary steps, directly in front and center of the altar. Make a deep bow, and move carefully with reverent purpose and good posture, up the steps to the ambo. Locate the Prayers of the Faithful and place them on the ambo in front of you. Finish praying the Creed, listen to, and watch the priest; begin reading the prayers after the priest’s opening prayer. After the priest’s closing prayer, again move with careful reverent purpose and good posture, back down the sanctuary steps and stop at the base of the steps directly in front and center of the altar. Make a deep bow and return to your pew, with hands reverently clasped.

*The Table of the Word is now complete.*

Note: **The ambo microphone is omni-directional, meaning that it is so sensitive it will pick up sound from any direction around the microphone. There is no on or off switch for this microphone at the ambo or cantor stand. If at any time you want this microphone muted, you need to let the A/V coordinator in the booth know - *preferably in writing*. AT NO TIME is this microphone to be touched or adjusted.**

14. Holy Family's lectors are liturgical leaders. Your movements are important during Mass.

**To Bow or Not To Bow...** In liturgical language, a bow is a sign or gesture of reverence and is appropriate at certain points during the liturgy. Likewise, it can be inappropriate at other times. Some helpful hints on when to bow or not:

1. When the Lectors approach the sanctuary, it is appropriate to bow in front of the altar, before coming up the steps.
2. When serving in ministry during the liturgy, your actions can help to model for the congregation the actions and gestures they should also be using during the Mass. For example,
  - ✘ Bowing during the presentation of the Book of the Gospels as it is taken from the altar to the ambo.
  - ✘ Bowing during the creed at the words "*and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became Man.*"
  - ✘ Raising your hands in the prayer position in praying the "*Our Father*".
  - ✘ Singing during all parts of the Mass that call for the congregation to sing.
  - ✘ Bowing your head before receiving Communion in both species. "*When receiving Holy Communion, the communicant bows his or her head before the sacrament as a gesture of reverence and receives the Body of the Lord from the minister.*" (GIRM #160)

15. After you have been a lector for some time and feel you are fairly skilled in the ministry, you are responsible for ensuring you receive ongoing formation. You may want to: participate in biblical studies, take advanced public speaking courses, or attend prayer services. Above all, make sure you attend a required Holy Family sponsored refresher session at least once a year, and are also blessed at Holy Family (during Mass) at least once a year.

**You are a Holy Family treasure. May God bless your service!**

