

TIPS FOR LECTORS AND LITURGISTS (a cheat sheet)

Preparation

- Read the passage over several times, first quietly, then aloud.
- Develop an understanding of the passage. (What is the central theme? What are key words/concepts? What is the fulcrum/turning point?)
- Use a Bible commentary and/or dictionary to look up names, places, words, concepts with which you are unfamiliar (e.g., Harper's, New Jerome).
- Write an illumination which describes the central theme in 1 sentence.
- Make a copy of the text and mark it up (for emphasis, pauses, etc.).
- Get to church early, check for changes to lectionary or additions to prayer list..

Stance

- Read Scripture from lectern, Prayers of the People from pews.
- Open & balanced (feet shoulder-width apart; weight evenly distributed)
- Plant your feet (don't move while you talk).
- Place your hands at the edges of the Bible (not in pockets, etc.).

Binnings & Endings

- Begin Hebrew Scriptures with the words "A reading from the book of . . ." or "A reading from the book of the prophet . . ." End with "The Word of the Lord," or in the case of apocryphal books, "Here ends the reading."
- Begin Psalms with "The Psalm appointed for today is Psalm _____. We will sing it together." Then sit down at the chair by the lectern until the singing is done.
- Occasionally, in seasons such as Lent, we read rather than sing the Psalm. If this is the case, begin the Psalm with "The Psalm appointed for today is Psalm _____. We will read it in (unison, responsively by whole/half verse, antiphonally by whole/half verse, etc.)."
- Begin the Epistle with "A reading from (the, Paul's, Peter's, etc.) letter to the (Corinthians, Hebrews, etc.). End with "The Word of the Lord."

Eye Contact

- Make eye contact, during the entire introduction ("A reading from . . .") and at the end of each verse or idea (scoop & throw).
- Do not scan (lock eyes with one person during each verse).

Voice

- Project (speak 50% louder than your normal speaking voice)
- Speak from your diaphragm
- Inflect (vary volume, pitch, and tone)
- Vary pace (slower for important concepts; faster for others)
- Passion (enough to call attention to the text but not to yourself)

Narrative (NT: Gospels, Acts; OT: historical books, parts of Prophets, etc.)

- Use pitch and volume to differentiate between characters.
- De-emphasize transitional phrases ("and Noah said . . .") by increasing pace, decreasing volume, etc.

Letters (NT: everything after Acts)

- You only have one-half of the correspondence. A commentary may help you determine the questions & situations that the author is responding to.
- The Apostle Paul frequently uses run-ons, fragments, and colloquialisms. Rewrite these in modern English, then mark original text accordingly. Note omitted words which you will have to "think in".

Hebrew Poetry (OT: Psalms, Song of Songs, Job, portions of Prophets, etc.)

- Most Hebrew Poetry employs parallelism. Note of the type of parallelism in the your passage and read accordingly. A commentary is helpful.

NOTE: These tips are taken from the course *Read Like You Mean It: Communicating the Word of God in Worship*, by the Rev. Ken Howard.