

**Saint Patrick's Church  
Lector Training  
May 16, 2018**

It is our pleasure to work with the devoted lectors of Saint Patrick's church. Your commitment to improving your public speaking skills is a testament to your great love for the church and your fellow parishioners. We have prepared these notes to remind you of what we worked on together during our training session, and we hope you find them useful as you continue to work on your skills. May God bless you and the important work you do for His church.

***Is skill a gift or the result of work?***

It's both.

We aren't born knowing how to speak, walk or perform more complicated skills like driving a car or solving math problems.

We learned every important skill in our lives after someone showed us how to use it. We master the skills in our life by practicing them.

Natural talent for a particular skill can be a wonderful foundation for success if the skill is developed through deliberate practice. There are plenty of talented people who never realize the benefits of their gifts...as there are lots of un-talented successes; people who developed skills through work and practice.

***If you want to give readings parishioners can't wait to hear, you must master the following skills:***

- ***Managing your emotions (Lectern physicality and voice)***
- ***Proper breathing***
- ***Vocal melody, volume, pitch, pace and tone***
- ***Preparation of text***

**Messaging**

You are doing more than "reading" at the lectern; you are amplifying a message. Studies show that around 7% the emotional impact of the message comes from the actual words. The remaining 93% of that important human connection between speaker and audience comes from

managing voice and body movements. It is about imbuing emotion into the message you are giving. When you manage emotion in your reading, you make the end result more powerful and memorable.

## Breathing

Air powers speaking, Good breathing technique is crucial to effective public speaking.

Proper belly breathing optimizes control over your vocal cords and the sounds they make.

Shallow breathing, or panic breathing, makes your voice weak and unpleasant to listen to.

### **Keys to proper breathing:**

- **Relax your neck and shoulders—tension limits voice control**
- **Rock your hips back and stomach forward when you inhale to allow deeper breaths**
- **Allow your belly to expand outward (horizontal breathing) instead of allowing your shoulders to rise (vertical breathing)**
- **Remember, one proper deep breath is worth 6 shallow breaths**

Think of your diaphragm as a rubber band. You contract the diaphragm muscle to breath, when we can liken to either stretching or twisting a rubber band. When you exhale, you relax the muscle. In the rubber band example, you would either allow the band to shrink to normal size or untwist. Whether it's your diaphragm or the rubber band in your hand, you can control the timing of those movement; you can speed-up or slow-down the movements to suit your purposes.

Remember to warm up your vocal cords before speaking in a public setting. You can do this on the ride to church, in the privacy of your car.

### Quick Warm-up

- Arms up stretch
- BA BA...
- BRRRR...
- Open Wide
- LA LA LA...
- WE > AHH

### Long Warm Up (4 note scales)

- Goog...
- Gugg...
- Mum...
- No...
- Nea...
- Naa...

### Vocal Dynamics

Words spoken out loud are a performance, like music. Therefore, recognize musical characteristics in your readings and adjust them for optimal delivery.

### **Properties of spoken words:**

- **Melody- the overall variety of sound in words and phrases**
- **Volume- loud vs soft**
- **Pace- fast vs slow**
- **Pitch- high vs low**
- **Tone- emotional content (happy, sad, serious, angry, etc)**

### Body Language

The celebration of Mass is about connecting with God...and your brothers and sisters in Christ. It is important to physically display the correct emotion for the occasion. You want to walk to the lectern:

- *Calmly*
- *Confidently*
- *Standing straight*
- *Appropriate facial expression (not bored, scared, etc.)*
- *Hands and feet are still unless moving for a purpose*

To make a human connection with others, you need to make eye contact.

## Preparing text

Even the best performers/readers struggle with unfamiliar text. You need to be familiar with your readings if you want to make an impact at the lectern.

It is also helpful to mark your passages in advance, so you know what words to emphasize.

### **When preparing text, begin by underlining:**

- **Nouns**
- **Adjectives**
- **Verbs**
- **Phrases**

Practice your readings *out loud* to figure out the most effective delivery of the key words. Should you read them louder, softer, quickly, slowly, higher pitched or lower pitched? There is usually no right answer, so practice is key. Ideally, you will record yourself reading, review the recording and make adjustments base on what you hear.