

Hamblen Park Presbyterian Church

**Lay Assistant
Guide**

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Ministry Description

Lay Assistant

PURPOSE: To honor God and share His love by reading the First Scripture Lesson and receiving and dedicating the offering with prayer.

OBJECTIVE: To participate with the pastors as a Lay Worship Leader during Sunday morning services.

ACTIVITIES:

- Read the Lay Assistant Guide which is attached.
- Prepare a Prayer for Understanding to be offered before reading the First Scripture Lesson.
- Read the First Scripture Lesson. The church secretary or one of the pastors will call or email this information by Friday the week before you serve.
- Receive the Offering with a brief Prayer of Dedication.

HELPFUL GIFTS & ABILITIES: Public speaking and/or a desire to have each word clearly heard by the congregation

SUPPORTED BY: Lay Assistant Coordinator, Pastors and the Church Secretary

RESPONSIBLE TO: Worship Committee

TIME REQUIREMENTS: ½ - 1-hour preparation and 1-hour participation

LENGTH OF COMMITMENT: 1 Sunday Service

TRAINING and ORIENTATION: First-time Lay Assistants need to pick up the Lay Assistant Guide next to the Lay Assistant sign-up sheet from the information table. This guide

contains “scripted” Lay Assistant Directions, Tips for Reading Scripture in Worship and sample Prayers for Understanding and Prayers of Dedication.

Lay Assistant Directions

Before Sunday -

1. Practice reading the Scripture Lesson both silently and aloud. (See Tips for Reading Scripture in Worship).
2. Prepare, or have in mind, a Prayer for Understanding to be offered before the Scripture Reading. (Some examples are attached).
3. Prepare, or have in mind, a Prayer of Dedication to be offered when receiving the Offering. (Some examples are attached).

On Sunday -

1. If possible, practice reading the scripture from the Lectern.
2. When the choir is singing, meet with the pastor(s) in the choir room about ten minutes before the service begins for prayer.
3. Accompany the pastor(s) into the Sanctuary checking to see that the Lectern Bible is opened or bookmarked to the correct reading. During the service, you may sit in a pew or in one of the chairs on the chancel.
4. At the appropriate time, move to the lectern and offer a Prayer for Understanding which can be introduced by saying, “As we come to hear God’s Word for our lives, let us pray for understanding.”
5. Introduce the scripture by saying, “The First Scripture Lesson is from the Book of _____, Chapter _____, beginning with verse _____. It can be found in the pew Bibles on page _____.” Then, pause briefly before reading.
6. After reading the lesson say, “This is The Word of the Lord” and respond with the congregation saying, “Thanks be to God.”
7. After the offering as the Doxology is sung, pick up the handheld microphone from the ledge on the pulpit and move to the front steps.

8. Turn the microphone on and offer a Prayer of Dedication. After turning the microphone off, take the offering plates from the ushers and set them inside the pulpit.
9. At the end of the service, after the Benediction, accompany the pastor(s) to the Narthex.

Sample Prayers for Understanding

A Prayer for Understanding is a prayer said prior to the reading of the first Scripture lesson. It asks God to help us read and understand His Word.

- Gracious God, open the windows of our souls to the power of your Word. Grant us an understanding of what we hear that leads us to grow more and more into your likeness. Amen.
- Lord, open the eyes of our hearts, so that we will hear your Word with an understanding that reveals the path you want each of us to follow. Amen.
- Dear Lord, quiet the distractions in our hearts and minds as we read your Word. Give us an understanding that helps us live as Jesus lived. Give us an understanding that allows us to grow closer to you. Amen.
- Lord, open our hearts: Let Your Spirit speak to us as we read your Word. Amen.

Sample Prayers of Dedication

This prayer is said after the offering is brought forward and the Doxology has been sung.

- We dedicate this money, Lord, for the work of the church, and we ask you to use all that we have and all that we are in your service. Amen.
- Help us who have received so freely from you to give as freely in our turn, and so have the pleasure of giving as well as the happiness of receiving. Amen.
- We dedicate this money, Lord, for the work of the church, and we ask you to use all that we have and all that we are in your service. Amen.
- Lord Jesus Christ, you were rich, yet for our sake you became poor, so that through your poverty we might become rich. Accept this collection and offering as a token of our gratitude for all you have done. Amen.

- Dear Lord, Creator of all things, everything on earth is yours. We have nothing that can make you richer, for it all comes from you in the first place. But what we have we bring – the acknowledgment that we live thanks to you, and that without you we have nothing and can do nothing. Receive and bless these gifts for your holy work, and bless those who give offer them to you. Amen.

Tips for Reading Scripture in Worship

*Practice reading to yourself and aloud the Scripture you will be reading in worship.
Some Lay Assistants are more comfortable reading from a script they have prepared.*

As you speak and read, remember to:

- *read with proper phrasing so that units of speech go together.
- *use proper emphasis so that the major event/idea is communicated.
- *enunciate clearly so that the people can hear each word.
 - “carve” each word.
 - learn how to pronounce, and practice saying aloud, difficult words.
 - don’t let the ends of sentences drop in volume.
- *use inflection so that people can feel what is being said.
- *go slowly, use pauses
- * stand close to, and point the end of the microphone at your nose.
(If you have not used the sanctuary microphones before, you may want to come early to practice).