

Guidelines for Lesson Readers and Intercession Leaders at Great Chart

A. Intercessions

1. This part of the service should focus on intercession, since there are opportunities for praise, confession and thanksgiving elsewhere in the service. However, any intercession can start with a sentence of thanks or confession if appropriate to the rest of the prayer.
2. Keep an eye on the clock! Intercessions should normally last 5-6 minutes. That probably means focusing on 4 to 5 topics, and if your prayers are written out, should be about 1 page of A4 – try to leave spaces for silence.
3. Being reverent doesn't mean speaking quietly – ensure the mic is positioned close to your mouth and speak loudly enough to be heard by all.
4. It is common to include in intercessions the local “inner ring” – parish events, church activities, people who are sick etc – and the global “outer ring” – disasters, wars and other world events, the persecuted church etc – but often it's the “middle ring” which members of the congregation relate to best: ie topics related to work, school and families etc. For example a focus on carers, or parents of young children / teens; or people doing certain types of job.
5. Remember that it is important to pray for church members in significant secular roles – don't only pray for people in terms of what they do “in the church”.
6. Keep alert to the sermon and the Notices, or a “This Time Tomorrow” interview, as you might feel prompted to include an extra prayer (or to modify a pre-prepared prayer) which is relevant. (It is recognised, however, that some people feel less comfortable than others in praying spontaneously)
7. Normally, after each section, the response to “Lord in Your mercy” is “Hear our prayer”. If you wish to use a different response, explain clearly to the congregation before you start.
8. You don't have to make up all your own prayers; using good, appropriate prayers written by other people can be very effective. Tim and Catherine have various anthologies of prayers.
9. It can be good occasionally to involve children in helping to lead prayers.
10. Sometimes images can help – consider using appropriate slides to display on the screen (eg the map of where members spend their week)
11. Occasionally the lighting of a candle might be helpful.

B. Lesson Reading at Great Chart

1. Before Sunday: read the passage through one or more times, so that you understand what the passage is saying and therefore how to phrase the sentences, which words to stress etc.
2. Decide in advance how you are going to pronounce any difficult names. If you feel you need guidance, speak to Tim or one of the Readers.
3. Make sure the mic is close to your mouth and try to project clearly.
4. State which passage you are reading. It is not necessary to read out the heading printed above the passage, as this is not part of Scripture, but you might choose to read it if it describes the part you are actually reading. Never read a section heading if it comes in the middle of the passage you are reading.
5. Speak more slowly than you would in normal conversation. This helps with clarity.
6. Try to vary your tone, to keep the interest of the listeners engaged
7. Leave a pause before the closing sentence (8 below) for people to absorb what has been read.
8. Finish with "This is the Word of the Lord" or, if it is the Gospel reading "This is the Gospel of Christ".