

## THE “HOW TO....” SEMINARS

*Our premise: “to grow the community of faith in confidence and trust.”*

### **A book of disturbance**

“The Bible is a book of disturbance. Throughout its history, the holy scriptures have told the story of desire, pain, loss, joy and hope. The writers of the word of God were, we understand, divinely inspired. They told the story of God through revelation and their own limitation. This is why scripture is so profoundly human, so utterly earthed and rooted. Without understanding these key characteristics in the authorship of the Bible, the modern-day reader is unable to grasp the full significance of the writing.” (Disturbed by Mind & Spirit: Mental Health and Healing in Parish Ministry, Continuum, 2009, p.75)

### **For optimum preparation for reading the scriptures, it is advisable to:**

- Read through the passage as many times as it takes you to understand the meaning, sometimes obscure in O.T. tracts.
- Consult Church Times/Readings web sites, which give the readings for each Sunday plus helpful commentary.
- When you have extracted the meaning look for places to pause a little, so that the congregation has time to think and wonder. Mark the pauses with a // . Don't be afraid to 'sing' the text; remember you are telling a story, conveying a message and trying to engage the congregation in it. Don't bore them!
- Underline words you would like to stress i.e. **key words** to bring out the meaning. Look for contrasts, opposites. Are there important verbs, adjectives or adverbs to stress? When saying these words that often contrast the 'darkness' of the text with 'light and joy' alter the tone of your voice accordingly. Sound final consonants of words. Avoid saying the piece in the same monotone throughout.
- On the day, arrive 20 minutes before service to compose yourself, check height of microphone etc. The microphone doesn't amplify the voice, it only supports it, so project your voice to back of church.

- If you are using lectern Bible, check position of your reading. If you are using the Bible on the lectern, it will be open at the first reading. Please turn page if necessary, for the second reader.
- As you read, try to look up once or twice, at least (depending on length of reading) when you pause. There is no hurry, especially with the reverberating acoustic! Leave time for the meaning to 'sink in'. .
- Pause when the reading is finished. Look up and say joyfully and smile 'This is the word of the Lord.' (Write it on your sheet so as not to forget it) Wait for the response, and then leave the lectern. WELL DONE!

### **The encounter of God's story and our story**

The Liturgy of the Word is very much a dialogue between the word that is God and the one made in God's image: 'From the waters of chaos you drew forth the world, and in your great love, fashioned us in your image'  
(*Celebrating Common Prayer*, 1992, p. 13).

At a symbolic level, these stories describe something of the relationship between God and his people... Could we dare to believe in the midst of all that life presents that God not only relates to our story, but that he owns it? (*Disturbed by Mind & Spirit: Mental Health and Healing in Parish Ministry*, Continuum, 2009, pp.77, 79)

### **A prayer of the Word**

Incarnate Word,  
you share your life with all humanity.  
You are God's eternal presence in his creation.  
As we respond to the scriptures past,  
so too we cry for your saving help today.  
In our poverty, feed us with your wisdom;  
teach us, affirm us, pray for us,  
now and evermore. Amen.