

Service Checklist

Readers are often asked to take services at churches other than their own, especially during vacancies or holiday times. It is courteous to respect or acknowledge local customs where possible, and to point out any intended variations. However, most congregations are grateful to visiting officiants and will understand if the service deviates from what they'd usually expect. Here is a Checklist to help to avoid pitfalls or embarrassing silences.

1. Church

Directions? What time will the church be opened? Who will be preparing the church for the service?

2. Church and Congregation

What size of congregation is expected? What is the likely makeup of the congregation - age groups? Are there any special considerations need to be made?

3. Order of Service

There are many different services that a Reader may be asked to lead, if possible enquire in advance for a copy of the order of service. Otherwise the Reader needs to enquire about options used according to the rubrics. The Reader needs to check which parts of the service are said or sung. If they are sung, which chants are used and is a cue note given?

4. Hymns

How many? Where in the service? What hymnbook? Who chooses them? If the Reader, who needs to be notified and when? Is there an organist, music group, or is another arrangement made (e.g. tapes, CDs, music machine)?

5. Lectionary

What are the readings? Or which lectionary and track are being used, and which lessons are normally read? Who reads them? Do page numbers for pew bibles need to be given?

6. The Lord's Prayer

What version of *The Lord's Prayer* is used?

7. Sermon

Is a particular theme required? Or a particular style or format?

8. Intercessions

Who leads the intercessions? If it is the Reader, enquiries need to be made about prayer needs for the ill and other local situations.

9. Robes

Are robes normally worn?

10. Procedure for coming-in and going-out.

Is there a vestry prayer before and/or after the service?

If there is a choir, do they process?

If there is a procession, what route does it take?

Is it customary to bow, pause, genuflect or proceed straight to seat?

What happens at the end of the service? Does the Reader retire to vestry or go to the church door?

11. How does the service proceed

From where is the service usually led - seat or lectern?

Are the hymns announced or does the music just start?

Are individual prayers announced (how?) or do the congregation join in after the first line?

Do the congregation stand, kneel or sit at prayer and do they need to be asked to do so?

Is the psalm said or sung, does every-one say it or is it said antiphonally. Do the congregation sit or stand?

If *The Peace* is shared during the service – what is the usual custom?

Is the sermon or talk given from the pulpit, the lectern, the chancel step or another place?

Do the minister and choir turn towards the altar or the cross during the Creed?

12. Offertory

When and how is the offertory/collection taken and how is it presented? Where is it usually received, chancel step or altar? Is the prayer silent during the hymn, or public after the hymn?

13. Notices

When are the notices given, and is there usually a list? Are there any Banns of marriage to be read? Do members of the congregation give out notices?