

# Faith Formation Reading Scripture with the Church

S t . I g n a t i u s L o y o l a P a r i s h

### Planning your Biblical Journey

- The Lectionary Cycle
- How readings are chosen for Sundays and Weekdays.
- Lectionary Calendar from USCCB (US Catholic Bishops)
- Schedule/plans for reading the whole bible.
- Reading with others.
- Daily Bible Readings/Reflections Online

## Lectionary Cycle – Sundays

The Lectionary is arranged in two cycles, one for Sundays and one for weekdays.

The Sunday cycle follows a 3-year rotation, Year A, B and C. Year A reads mostly from the Gospel of Matthew, B from Mark (with John 6 supplementing) and C from Luke..

The Gospel of John is read during the Easter season in all three years.

The first reading, usually from the Old Testament, reflects important themes from the Gospel reading. The second reading is usually from one of the epistles, a letter written to an early church community. These letters are read semi-continuously. Each Sunday, we pick up close to

where we left off the Sunday before, though some passages are never read.

So if you only followed the Sunday readings you would see most of the Gospels, the early epistles and themes from the Old Testament in three years time. However, the weekday cycle has more days with all the gospels covered in a single year.

You can follow both the Sunday and weekday readings online at <https://bible.usccb.org/>, select the day's date on the calendar on the right side.

The 2021 Calendar of feasts and readings can be found at <https://www.usccb.org/resources/2021cal.pdf>. Note: the 2021 liturgical year begins with the First Sunday of Advent, November 29, 2020.

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## Lectionary Cycle – Weekdays

The weekday cycle is divided into two years, Year I and Year II. Year I is read in odd-numbered years (2009, 2011, etc.) and Year II is used in even-numbered years (2010, 2012, etc.) The Gospels for both years are the same. During the year, the Gospels are read semi-continuously, beginning with Mark, then moving on to Matthew and

Luke. The Gospel of John is read during the Easter season. For Advent, Christmas, and Lent, readings are chosen that are appropriate to the season. The first reading on weekdays may be taken from the Old or the New Testament. Typically, a single book is read semi-continuously (i.e., some passages are not read) until it is finished and then a new book is started.

In addition to the Sunday and weekday cycles, the Lectionary provides readings for feasts of the saints, for common celebrations such as Marian feasts, for ritual Masses (weddings, funerals, etc.), for votive Masses, and for various needs. These readings have been selected to reflect the themes of these celebrations.

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Finding God in All Things

**Weekday Cycle:** I chose the First Week of Ordinary Time as typical of cycle of readings for weekdays.

***February 2020 Year II***

- 13 Mon 1 Sm 1:1-8/Mk 1:14-20
- 14 Tue 1 Sm 1:9-20/Mk 1:21-28
- 15 Wed 1 Sm 3:1-10, 19-20/Mk 1:29-39
- 16 Thu 1 Sm 4:1-11/Mk 1:40-45
- 17 Fri 1 Sm 8:4-7, 10-22a/Mk 2:1-12
- 18 Sat 1 Sm 9:1-4, 17-19; 10:1a/Mk 2:13-17

As you can see the first reading follows the First Book of Samuel, skipping sections of the passages. The second readings (Gospel), follows the Gospel of Mark with a closer inclusion of all text.

**Sunday Cycle:** I chose the Sundays of July as a typical cycle of readings for Sundays.

***July 2020 Year A***

- 5 FOURTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
Zec 9:9-10/Rom 8:9, 11-13/Mt 11:25-30
- 12 FIFTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
Is 55:10-11/Rom 8:18-23/Mt 13:1-23 or 13:1-9
- 19 SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
Wis 12:13, 16-19/Rom 8:26-27/Mt 13:24-43 or 13:24-30
- 26 SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME  
1 Kgs 3:5, 7-12/Rom 8:28-30/Mt 13:44-52 or 13:44-46

As you can see, the Old Testament readings are not sequential but the second readings follow selected passages from Romans and the Gospel tracks Matthew exactly.

## Reflecting on the Readings

There are a number of publishers that provide booklets with copies of the readings for Sunday and Weekdays. Typical of these is the Magnificat published by the Magnificat Foundation. In addition to the daily readings they include reflections and insights from various authors. They currently offer both a printed version as well as a digital version. <https://www.magnificat.net/>

Similar features are offered by The Word Among Us, <https://wau.org/>, Give Us This Day, <https://giveusthisday.org/>, and others. You may subscribe to the USCCB (US Catholic Bishops) for an email copy of the daily readings at <https://bible.usccb.org>, complete the form at the bottom of the page.

The Jesuits of Britain have a daily podcast (Pray-As-You-Go)

connected with the readings of the day although they only use one of the readings. Their program was designed for those who would be traveling public transit and would want to listen to the readings. Their podcasts can be found on Apple and Google Podcasts as well as at <https://pray-as-you-go.org/>.

Whether you choose a printed version of the readings, one online or an audio podcast it is important to consider setting up a regular time and place for reading/listening. The regularity of time/place is the heart of the Catholic tradition of the Liturgy of the Hours. While one cannot constrain the Spirit, many follow this kind of a regular pattern to help them maintain the practice of daily reading and reflection.

Reading along with the Church is one way to become attuned to the liturgical year, especially the

seasons of Advent and Lent, Christmas and Easter. Following the readings during the week as well as on Sundays again reinforces this.

And, of course, there are the companion Saints and Feast days. One can also follow along with them through websites like Saint of the Day at <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/source/saint-of-the-day/>.

There's a story that former president Jimmy Carter and his wife Rosalynn (<https://onbeing.org/programs/the-private-faith-of-jimmy-carter/>) would read the same scripture passage at night when the couple was apart. They felt this kept them "together in the Lord."

Consider how following the Church's lectionary cycle would keep you in touch with the rest of the Church community.