

What is the lectionary and what is Year B?

The hymns, prayers, bible readings and rites you hear in any church on a Sunday are called the 'liturgy'. Different denominations (Church of England, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, URC etc) have different liturgies and public worship may have a different style and format in any church.

The 'lectionary' refers to the list of readings a church may use Sunday by Sunday or on each weekday. On this website you can find out more about the readings for the main service each Sunday according to the lectionaries of the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church which are similar (although not identical).

The list of readings starts on Advent Sunday, at the end of November or start of December which is the beginning of the Church's year. The Church has 'seasons' which lead up to major festivals. For example the season of Advent is a preparation time before Christmas and the season of Lent is a preparation time before Easter.

The cycle of readings takes place over three years A, B and C. There are typically four types of reading from Scripture (ie from the Christian Bible) at the main church service on a Sunday, although not all may be used. The first reading comes from the Old Testament (the Hebrew Scriptures). The second reading is usually a psalm (from the Book of Psalms in the Old Testament) which may be sung as well as read. The third reading comes from The New Testament and the final reading comes from one of the four gospels about the life and work of Jesus. The readings are designed to fit together and illustrate a particular theme. Often the person leading the service will preach a sermon or homily on the theme of the Sunday, or explain more about what the readings tell us.

In each of the three years A, B, C, the gospel reading is based on one of the first three 'synoptic' gospels, Matthew in year A, Mark in year B and Luke in year C. John's gospel is rather different, so this gospel is used on special occasions throughout each of the years.

On this website, if you are a regular or occasional churchgoer, or are going to church for the first time, you can use the lectionary pages to find out more about what you are going to hear in church about the theme and readings for the service. The pages tell you what the set readings are for the main service and something of what they are about.

If you want to know more you can find all the readings and liturgies for the Church of England services in the book Common Worship. If you paste this link into your browser you can find downloadable texts.

<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/liturgy/commonworship/>

The Roman Catholic services are found in the Sunday Missal.

There are many excellent resources available for studying the Bible if you want to read more or know more about what you hear in Church. There are many different Bible translations and you

might need to look at a few different ones before you find a translation you like. You can find online Bible versions at www.biblegateway.com. The version used on this site is the New Revised Standard Version (Anglicized) which you can also look at on www.bible.oremus.org.

You can find Bible readings and notes and a wealth of other resources at the Bible Reading Fellowship at www.brf.org.uk