

Altar Servers Manual

Dear Altar Server,

You are an important member of the team of parishioners who serve Mass. Always remember that it is an honour and a privilege to serve at Mass. Thank you for deciding to be an Altar Server.

The primary role of an altar server is to assist the priest in the celebration of the liturgy. This is done by helping the priest and setting an example to the congregation by really participating in the Mass (singing, saying the responses, etc.).

Altar Servers Prayer

Loving Father, Creator of the universe, you call your people to worship, to be with you and each other at Mass. Help me, for you have called me also. Keep me prayerful and alert. Help me to help others in prayer. Thank you for the trust you've placed in me. Keep me true to that trust. I make my prayer in Jesus' name, who is with us in the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Who may Serve?

Boys and girls, Year 3 and older who have received First Holy Communion are invited to assist the priest during the celebration of Mass and for other liturgical celebrations and devotions.

All people of good faith are welcome and those who think they may desire to serve are encouraged to do so.

Servers need to be participating in some form of ongoing religious education. Demonstrate an understanding, appreciation and reverence for the Liturgy.

A desire to serve God, attentiveness at Mass, a prayerful presence and reverence for the Eucharist

Please remember, when you are up on the sanctuary, you are seen and watched by all. With this in mind, please look like you want to be there. If you need to yawn, please cover your mouth. When you sneeze, please sneeze into the arm or elbow of you alb, not your hands. Also, please say all prayers and remember to have your hands folded in prayer when you are standing and kneeling at the altar.

Important Words to Think About:

Reverence: Respect somebody or something deeply

Honour: A special privilege that is cherished.

Responsibility: Accountability, You can be counted on to do what you commit to do

Vocabulary:

SANCTUARY: The raised area where the Altar, the Ambo and the Priest Chair are located

ALTAR: The table on which the offerings (the sacrifice) of the Mass are consecrated

AMBO/PULPIT/LECTURN: The place from where the Scriptures are proclaimed and the homily is given

CREDESCENCE TABLE: The table at the side of the Sanctuary on which the cups, plates, chalice and water bowl are placed before Mass begins

SACRISTY: The room where the priests, Altar servers and other ministers prepare for Mass

ALB: the white robe that the servers wear

CINCTURE: cord “belt” that is tied around the waist

STOLE: the thin “scarf-like” part of the priest’s vestment

CHASUBLE: the large coloured garment worn by the priest over his alb. (the different colours are for the different “Seasons” of the Church’s year)

CORPORAL: the square “place mat” placed on the Altar by the priest when preparing the gifts

CHALICE: a cup used for the distribution of the Blood of Christ (consecrated wine)

PATAN: a plate on which the host is placed during the mass

CIBORIUM: a cup with a top used for the distribution of the Body of Christ (the communion host)

PURIFICATOR: a small white cloth used to wipe off the chalices

CRUETS: small containers used for water and wine

MISSAL: the big, red book used by the priest for the various prayers

LECTIONARY: the large book used for the Scripture readings. This book is on the pulpit/ambo.

PROCESSIONAL CROSS: a cross or crucifix carried by the server in the procession in and out

THURIBLE: used for incense (looks like a decorated bowl on a long chain)

When do I genuflect?

When passing in front of the altar or tabernacle, you must bow or genuflect. The general rule is that you genuflect in front of a tabernacle and bow before an altar. However, since our tabernacle is directly behind the altar, there can be confusion about what to do when passing in front of the altar. Please observe the following guidelines:

During Mass: If you are not carrying a candle or the cross, you only genuflect when you come in with the priest at the beginning of Mass and when you leave with the priest at the end of Mass. At all other times during the Mass, you bow (since, during Mass, the altar is the primary focus of our attention). If you are carrying a candle or the cross, you bow.

Before and After Mass: You genuflect. This is because, outside Mass, the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle takes precedence over the altar.

Posture: You are very visible at Mass. At one point or another, every person at Mass will be looking at you – so be a great example for them! Pay attention to walking, standing, sitting, bowing, genuflecting, kneeling.

Serving

Don't look as if serving Mass is the worst punishment. During Mass, all Altar Servers stand up and sit down in unison. After Mass, process out reverently.

Before Mass:

Arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of Mass. Most Experienced or oldest server will assign duties.

Alb: Be sure that your alb is not too long or too short. The alb should come to the top of your shoes, not drag on the floor.

Say your Altar Server Prayer.

Entrance Procession:

As you process with the priest in church, fold your hands in front of you at chest level in respect. Be Prayerful!

Liturgy of the Word:

All servers are expected to participate in the liturgy. When the priest leads a prayer, say the prayers. Say the appropriate responses throughout the Mass. When the choir sings, join in and sing joyfully!

Liturgy of the Eucharist:

Servers bring the water and wine cruets to the priest. The cruet handle should be facing towards the priest. Hand the wine cruet first. After the priest hands the cruets back, bow to the priest (together) and return the cruets to the credence table.

Eucharistic Prayer:

During the Consecration, Altar Server: ring the bell, when the priest lifts the host, keep ringing until the host is lowered. Ring the bell again when the priest lifts the chalice, keep ringing until the chalice is lowered.

Communion:

After the priest distributes Communion to the Eucharistic Ministers, servers receive Communion. Servers return to their seats. Think about the great gift that God our Father has given us in the Body and blood of Christ.

After Mass:

All servers: Return to the sacristy.
Carefully hang up the albs

Thank you so much for Altar Serving!

ALTAR SERVER RULES AT A GLANCE

- Attend Altar Server Training Classes
- Arrive at least 15 minutes before the Mass starts to get dressed and make sure that the Altar is prepared
- Altar Servers should not leave the sanctuary after the start of Mass for any reason except bathroom emergencies, illness, or when directed to do so by the priest.
- Make sure the candles are lit, bread, wine, water, towels, bowl, prayer book, and any other sacramentals are in their proper place
- Perform the duties assigned during the mass in the prescribed orderly manner
- Maintain a prayerful posture during all times in the Sacristy
- After the mass, return to the Sacristy and ensure that everything is set up for the next mass
- Be quiet and respectful when on the Sanctuary, you are role models
- Be attentive and respond immediately when the priest asks for help
- Make sure that your alb and cincture are returned the way you found them
- **PAY ATTENTION**

ALTAR SERVER RECORDS FORM

NAME:

PARENT'S NAMES: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE (Parents): _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

SCHOOL: _____

SCHOOL YEAR: _____

MASS TIME: (Please Circle the mass you normally attend)

Saturday 6:00 pm

Sunday 9:00 am

Sunday 11:00 am

Sunday 5:00 pm

PARENT'S SIGNATURE: _____

DATE: _____