

Altar Server HANDBOOK



Prayer for Altar Servers

Father in heaven,
your Son, Jesus Christ showed his love for you
by serving his needy brother and sisters.
I now ask you to give me your help
as I serve you and your people.
Open my mouth to praise you in word and song.
Open my ears to hear your Word.
Open my hands to do your work well.
Take from my heart all distracting thoughts.
Help me know what I should do, and do it well.
Help me to serve reverently at your holy altar,
and so give you praise and glory,
now and forever.
Amen.

Altar Server Manual

Requirements

- Must have received the Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Communion.
- Must have completed the 4th grade
- Must have a desire to serve in this very important role

Expectations

- All servers are expected to be in the sacristy 15 minutes before Mass begins
- All server are expected to fulfill their assigned time to serve. If you are unable to serve you are responsible for arranging a substitute. Unexcused absences are unacceptable., it causes an inconvenience to your fellow servers and the priest.
- It is expect that once you submit your contract to serve, you will do so for one calendar year. If you decided that you longer wish to be a server, it is required that you fulfill or find replacements for the rest of your scheduled Masses for the calendar period.
- All servers must sign in when they serve, even if they are a sub
- Servers who carry out their duties with precision and accuracy may be asked to serve funerals, weddings and Holy Days. This is an honor and should not be taken lightly.
- All server are expected to dress appropriately when serving Mass:
 - Pants or Skirt (no jeans!)
 - White shirts
 - Black or Brown Shoes (no sneakers!)

Before Mass

- Altar servers should arrive **15 minutes** before the start of Mass.
- Go to the sacristy, which is the room behind the altar (the altar server sacristy is the one closest to Sharpley Rd), put on your alb, cincture (rope) and cross.
- Sign in on the sign-in sheet
- Take a moment to say the Altar Server prayer (found on the cork board)
- Use the brass candle lighter to light the altar candles.
- At least 5 minutes before the start of Mass the altar servers should go to the rear of the church to prepare for the start of Mass and procession. Bring the processional cross with you.

Gathering Rite

Procession:

The altar servers walk slowly up the center aisle with the cross bearer in front and the other servers follow. When you reach the altar you will follow Father's lead and either bow or genuflect if you are not carrying anything. If you are carrying something you simply bow you head. After bowing, the server with the cross proceeds to the sacristy to put the cross away. The other server proceeds to their chair.

Opening Prayer:

Father will usually signal for the server to get the book. However, if he does not signal you to come, as soon as he lifts the book from the table you should be making your way over to take possession of the book.

Liturgy of the Word

- Altar servers should sit and listen attentively to the readings and homily.
- Servers should sing the responsorial psalm and gospel acclamation along with everyone else.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

After the General Intercessions have been prayed, there are three functions the altar servers needs to perform.

Preparation Rite:**1. Preparation of the Altar**

As soon as everyone sits, both servers immediately go to the credence table. It is the table where the chalice(s), ciborium, pillow, water and wine are kept. The credence table has numbers on the top of it that tell you the order in which each item comes up.

One server brings up the Sacramentary (the book) (it will be on the chair next to Father) while the other server brings up the chalice, which has a purificator and corporal on top of it. The chalices are to be placed on the left side of the altar. DO NOT bring up the cerborium (the bowls). They are brought up right before communion.

2. Presentation of the Gifts

During the collection, when you see Father go to the front of the Altar to receive the gifts from the gift bearers both servers go and stand on each side of Father. He will hands you the gifts. Bring them to the Altar and place them on the left side, on the glass.

3. Preparation of the Gifts

After the gifts have been delivered to the altar one server will need to get the wine cruet, the other server should get the water cruet. Both servers should stand next to the altar on the right side. Father will mix the water and wine. When he is finished he will give you the empty wine cruet. Return it to the credence table and get the bowl and towel in preparation to wash Father's hands. When he is finished, both servers return items to credence table and return to your seats.

Eucharistic Prayer**This is the most important prayer during mass.**

This is the time when the bread and wine are offered and become the Body and Blood of Jesus. Father will recite the Eucharistic prayers. It is very important to pay attention

to Father's actions during this part of the Mass to ensure you ring the bells at the proper time. When Father raises both hands over the Chalice (1st Elevation) the bells are rung once. When Father raises the ciborium (the bread) into the air (2nd Elevation) you ring the bells in 3 short bursts. When Father raises the Chalice (3rd Elevation) the bells are once again rung in 3 short bursts. After the Our Father is said, go and stand in the front of the kneelers.

At the Sign of Peace exchange peace with the other server. Father will most likely come over to shake your hand. As soon as Father is done shaking your hand go over to the credence table and take the ciborium (bowls) and place them on the left hand side of the Altar. Then go and stand in front of the kneelers again.

Communion

Father will come over and offer you communion. If you do not wish to receive the Blood of Christ, when it is offered to you just give Father a small shake of your head. When the congregation begins to receive communion clear the Altar of the pillow and the book (put it on the table next to Father's chair). Do not touch the cloths on the Altar (Father will need them). Once the Altar is clear return to your seats and wait for communion to be finished.

When Father returns to the Altar, after communion go to meet him at the Altar with the water cruet. He will clean the Chalice and then present you with the Chalice and other articles. Carry it to the credence table with one hand on top and the other on the bottom. Return to your seat when done.

Prayer after Communion

After the silent prayer that comes after communion, the priest says, "*Let us pray.*" Immediately, a server should go to Father to hold the book.

Concluding Rite

After the presider gives the final blessing, the altar server who brought the cross in goes to the sacristy and gets the cross. Wait for Father before you begin to proceed to the front of the Altar.

Once Father bows or genuflects, the server should do the same (unless holding the cross). Then the servers should turn around and process out to the back of the Church. Wait at the back of the Church for a moment because Father usually likes to thank you for your service. Once Father thanks you, return to the sacristy. The cross should be put away, the Altar candles should be extinguished with the snuffer (while still in your alb), and your Alb should be hung on the hanger.