

St James

Usher/Greeter Guidelines

Ushers are the ministers of welcome, hospitality, and order. Their primary responsibility is to help people feel welcome in our parish celebrations and take care of their needs.

ARRIVAL TIME

At least ½ hour before Mass starts. This allows plenty of time to complete duties, and make sure the church is a warm, neat and inviting place of prayer and worship.

Notify the Lead person and the Head Usher you have arrived. They may have to find a sub if you are not on time, or checked in.

If you are not scheduled – When you arrive, dressed appropriately, notify the Lead person and the Head Usher you are available.

DRESS CODE

You are the first person people meet as they arrive, so you are an example of our parish and appropriate dress is key to a welcoming environment.

Dress Code Preference: Respectful, Professional, looking nice, neat and clean, Modest is the key. Jeans are acceptable as long as they are neat and clean.

NOT Acceptable Dress: Shorts (knee length or higher), low cut tops, t-shirts w/ graffiti, sloppy t-shirts, halter or tube tops, spaghetti strap tops, midriffs exposed, flip-flops, sweat shirts & pants, low-riding pants and mini-skirts.

DUTIES BEFORE MASS

Notify Lead person and Head Usher you have checked in, check your name off the schedule in the sacristy.

Put on Usher badge.

Make sure all counter tops are neat. Throw away trash, get rid of old papers, bulletins etc.

Make sure the kneelers are in upright position (before Mass and after)

Make sure Baskets are out and accessible for ushers.

Check the hymnals, Missalettes, and Mass prayer cards, so they are available in the holders within each pew.

Check the holy water fonts. Fill if necessary, or notify the Head Usher or Lead person (should have been done already)

Check the restrooms for neatness and supplies (TP etc.). If supplies are needed notify the Head Usher or Lead person.

Make sure current bulletins are accessible.

Make sure that mats are straight, lights are on.

PROCEDURES

Stand by the entrance doors to greet people as they arrive. Adults & children alike.

Don't converse in a lengthy conversation with just one person. Your primary responsibility is to greet everyone that comes to our doors. Be especially attentive and welcoming to anyone new or visiting.

As the church begins to fill, help people find seats, asking people to move if necessary.

Encourage people to move forward and sit up front.

Please be very conscious of how we welcome people, our personal opinions and unhappy greeters undermine our goals.

Acquire your gift people *before* Mass begins. Remind them to come back for the gifts during the collection, not after but during. Instruction cards for them to read are in the usher storage closet with the badges. Try to get 3 people. ASK DIFFERENT PEOPLE EACH WEEK.

Remember helping someone with a particular need, i.e. moving some items or people to accommodate a wheel chair are far more important than staying at your station.

Also find out if they would like communion brought to them, and remember where that person is located. Later you will be bringing the Priest or EM to them for communion.

If the Church fills up, please keep the aisle ways & doors clear, it is a violation of the fire code to block any escape routes.

DURING MASS

Seat people who arrive during Mass in available seats at appropriate times.

NOTE: The readings include the 1st, psalm, 2nd reading, gospel, homily & Universal Prayers.

Pauses between the readings are good times to seat people.

Seating people while the congregation is standing is difficult wait till all sit, i.e. just before the readings, at the collection.

Be sensitive to peoples' needs during the Mass, individuals needing to leave (open the door for them). Be sure to assist those with canes, wheelchairs, and walkers etc. to the ramps and sidewalks that are most accessible to them.

If someone is ill or faints respond with care and comfort, request medical assistance, without disrupting the Mass if possible. There is usually a nurse or doctor at most of the Masses. (You can be attentive to the person and send someone else to get the medical help – use discretion).

COLLECTION

During the Universal Prayers, get the collection baskets and stand at the back of the center and side aisles in preparation for the collection.

After the Prayers and the Priest sits down, come forward together to the front row, and pass one basket down the 1st row. Pickup basket at the end of the row and keep passing it back down the rows. If there are people in the overflow (day chapel), be sure they get a basket and wait for it to take to the back.

After collection, take the baskets to the back and combine into 1 or 2 baskets, and send the gift bearers forward (pitcher of wine and host bowl together and collection basket(s) behind them.)

If you can only find 2 people then an usher can take the collection basket(s), but do your best to find someone from the community.

After presenting the gifts, they bow and return to their seats. Be sure and thank them.

OUR FATHER AND SIGN OF PEACE

At the Our Father please don't try to get back to friends or family, you have a ministry to perform this particular Sunday, and you need to stay close to your station.

At the sign of peace mingle with the people around you and offer a sign of peace, handshake, hug etc. Again don't try to pass by people to get to your friends and family, your responsibility is to the people around you or those we don't know and make them feel welcomed.

After the sign of peace go to your assigned positions, (such as side aisle, or middle aisle) and wait there for communion to begin.

COMMUNION

At communion time (when the EM's are being served communion) walk forward together, the usher(s) on the choir side have the people wait till the EM's give communion to the choir, once the EM's are at their stations, start the people coming forward.

Ushers receive communion last, if you have someone that needs communion brought to them, escort an EM or priest back to that person after you have received your communion. Please don't just tell them and then leave, they need to be escorted to that person(s). A Eucharist Minister with a cup will also go with the Host EM.

Visiting, chatting, and greeting people as they are coming out of the pew for communion should be done after the Mass not during communion.

When people are coming forward for Communion it is not the time to shake their hands and converse with them. So please let the people receiving communion be in their thoughts as they prepare to receive Jesus, and be with him after they receive. If the people extend a handshake etc. to you, respond accordingly. Just don't be the one who instigates the first move.

After communion return to your stations, get the bulletins and wait for the recessional.

RECESSIONAL

When the closing song begins, get the bulletins, open the doors. Stand by the doors on the vestibule side and hand a bulletin or possibly a Catholic Sentinel out to people as they exit. Same procedures as when people were arriving, we smile, extend a greeting, hand out a bulletin, wish them well, and see them next week. Again, be looking for newcomers and make sure they are welcomed or invited back.

Convey the friendliness of our parish to all. Remember; don't stop to have long conversations.

DUTIES AFTER MASS

After everyone has left the church, offer some bulletins/Catholic Sentinels to the choir members. Return any extras to the appropriate tables.

It is your responsibility to clean up the church after your Mass and return all things to their proper places.

The ushers need to straighten up the church area, remove any papers and put the kneelers in the upright position. Put the hymnals, Missalettes, Mass prayer cards, inside the pew racks, and arrange the tops of counters neatly. Make sure ALL the collection baskets are back where

they belong. If the last Mass, lock the doors, don't assume someone else is doing it. The doors should be checked from the outside.

If any purses or other found items leave them in the sacristy and let someone know it is there.

Return Usher badge to the usher storage closet off the vestibule drawer.

Take the time to make sure the church is a welcoming, inviting, and clean place of worship, for the next Mass.

Please do not take any directives from anyone but the Lead person or Head Usher.

Please ask questions relating to the procedures to the Head Usher, all other questions please direct to the Lead person.

Remember to get a substitute if the schedule is already done, and notify the Head Usher and Lead person for that Mass. If the schedule is not done, notify the scheduler of your unavailability.