

St. James

Altar Server Guidelines

Age and Requirements:

You should be in the 4th grade or above and have completed the Sacrament of First Communion. You should love Jesus and want to serve him and that should be your driving principle in serving at Mass.

General Notes:

It is your responsibility to show up to serve when you are assigned. If you cannot show up on your assigned day, it is your responsibility to call and get a substitute to serve for you.

Substitutes can be found on the phone list.

Altar Servers are expected to be positive role models, faithful Catholics and in a position to receive communion. This means that your actions inside and outside of church reflect your love for Jesus and your willingness to live according to his teachings.

Servers Attitudes:

When you are serving make sure you are not messing around or doing things that are distracting such as unnecessary talking or fidgeting. Before, during and after Mass, a server's body language and manner should show respect and reverence, not only for themselves but for the community and our Lord. It is a privilege and an honor to be called to serve the Lord, our parish, and our community.

We are active participants in the Mass, not just passive.

During Mass servers need to participate in the prayers, responses and music. When we are singing – sing. When we are praying – pray. When we are listening – listen. Know the Mass and your role, and don't panic if you don't know or remember something – just quietly ask the other server or look at the priest for direction. In the beginning you will have an experienced server with you, but if you find you are the only one, again, just look to the priest for direction. The instructions are not that difficult. Study them, watch other servers and be aware of your role in the Mass. Lastly, enjoy your ministry. Your service is very much appreciated.

Posture:

Proper standing, and sitting should always be done respectfully. Sit upright and straight – feet on the floor, hands on lap. Don't slouch or cross legs. Don't be joking, messing around, laughing, and looking out at community making faces with family/friends. If at all possible wait for the other server(s), before sitting, standing etc. Do this together and in unison. Be attentive and think ahead.

Dress Code and Attire:

Dress respectable and modest in dress – Prefer darker shoes (applies to color of socks also). Tennis shoes are fine as long as they are clean and tied. Sandals with socks and jeans are acceptable as long as they are neat and clean. Also prefer collared shirts light in color with no graffiti. Long pants: prefer solid colors, beige, brown, black – No bright colors

Not acceptable Dress: Shorts, low cut tops, t-shirts w/ graffiti, sloppy t-shirts, halter or tube tops, spaghetti strap tops, midriffs exposed. No ugly, dirty tennis shoes, flip-flops, sparkly, sloppy, or torn shoes, no flip-flops, no high-heels, no sweat pants/shirt, low-riding pants or mini-skirts.

Server Albs:

The white alb should fit correctly (bottom of alb rests just over top of shoes.)
Cincture (rope), is looped thru and the knot is on the right side.
Put on Server medallion.

Set Up:

Arrive 15 minutes before the start of Mass.
Let the Lead Person know you have arrived.
Make sure your name is put on bulletin board.
Make sure your music books are on or under your chairs.
Check to make sure all items are out for Mass: Chalice stack, cruet w/ water washing bowl, finger towel, Roman Missal (red book), cups, bowls, purificators.

The above items should be done already by the Lead person, but you will still want to make sure all items are there for the Mass.

Five minutes before Mass begins, light the Altar candles. Walk up to the front of the Altar, bow then light the Altar candles. The other servers get the cross and candles and go to the back of the church wait for the procession to start.

Entrance Procession

Processional Order:

The following order is the proper order. If unsure ask your lead person.

Server – Cross first, then candles

Deacon or Lector (first) carrying the Lectionary

Presider, (Con-celebrants, Deacons, & Seminarians if present)

Note: *If there are others that are going to process in, they go after the servers.*

Hold the cross up high and steady facing out, and if possible above most people's head. (The community should be able to see the cross coming into the Church).

Walk calmly and smoothly, don't run anywhere – keep a steady pace. Those who do not have something in their hands need to fold them, as in a prayerful manner.

Upon reaching the front of the Altar, cross bearer goes straight over to the stand, puts the cross in the stand, and goes over to the seat. The candle bearers wait for the priest (leaving room for priest, deacon, and/or lector). When the priest genuflects the candle bearers bow their heads, then they put their candles on their stands and go to stand in front of their seats singing with community.

Introductory Rites:

Presider will make the sign of the cross, greet the congregation, penitential rite, Gloria (omitted during Advent and Lent), then he will say:
"Let us Pray...."

When you hear these words take the Roman Missal (red book) to the Priest, (unless he already has it) and stand on the step closest to him. The priest will open the book. Hold it open until the prayer is finished. Then, bring the Roman Missal back and return to your chair.

Liturgy of the Word:

Remain seated for the readings, responsorial Psalm, stand for the Gospel. If there is a Gospel procession, candle bearers go get their candles from the side of the altar and stand in front of the altar. When the priest arrives in front, servers move to the side and go to stand on both sides of the ambo facing each other. After the Gospel reading, return candles and go to seats.

Homily:

Sit for the Homily

Creed & Prayer of the Faithful:

Stand for the Creed and the Universal Prayers

PREPARING THE ALTAR:

[See Drawing of Altar and Credence Table](#)

After Prayer of the Faithful and choir has started singing:

Server(s) dress the Altar

1. Roman Missal (place forward on the corporal)
2. Chalice stack (in the middle)
3. Cups: 4 Saturday or 6 Sunday Mass

(Place them lined up in two rows on the right upper side of the corporal)

4. Purificators: (place them stacked up to the right side of the cups)

Return to your chair

OFFERTORY GIFTS

When the priest stands, servers stand also. When the priest starts to go to the front of the Altar to receive the gifts, servers go to stand next to him (two on his right and one on his left). The priest will receive the gifts and hand them to the servers.

Bring the bread and wine to the side of the altar where the priest will take them from you. Put the basket and prayers in its place as well.

Candle server 1 gets the water cruet without the stopper and stands by the Altar.

The priest will take it, use it, and hand it back.

Candle server 2 gestures the washing bowl and towel and comes up when it is time to wash the hands. Pour water over the priest's hands into the bowl. The priest will wipe his hands and hand back the towel. Place everything back on the table. Both servers return to their seats and remain standing.

*NOTE: If there is only 1 server, same procedures apply with the exception of:
To receive gifts, stand on his right. Move basket and folder to their places.
Then, get water for the main chalice. Afterwards, go get the bowl and towel. Drape the finger towel over your forearm holding the bowl with the same hand. Pour water over his hands with the other hand and return items.*

OUR FATHER:

Stay in front of your chairs and pray the Our Father.
Stand at the side of the Altar for the rite of peace.

SIGN OF PEACE

After exchanging peace with the Priest, you may extend this to a few people in the nearby area. Don't be going all over the church or up and down aisles. You should remain close to the sanctuary. Return to your chair and remain standing.

COMMUNION

As soon as the Priest has received communion (he is putting his chalice down), come forward and stand on the choir side to receive host from the Priest. Then, if you are receiving the cup, receive it from the Eucharistic Minister. Return to your chairs, sit and pray.

AFTER COMMUNION

Remain sitting until the Priest has finished distributing communion. After communion, help the priest to start clearing the altar of all items until nothing is left on the Altar but the corporal & Altar cloth.

CLOSING PRAYER:

When the Priest says: "Let us Pray" take the Roman Missal (red book) to him, hold the book, and wait for the closing of the book. Return the book to the table, receive the final blessing. Prepare for the Recessional.

RECESSIONAL

When music starts, get the cross and wait. After Priest reverences the Altar proceed to the front of the Altar, pick up candles, stand a little behind and on both sides of the Priest.

When the priest genuflects, all bow. Turn and exit, keeping a steady pace.

Return the items to their places once the people have left.

Clean Up After Mass:

Cross is placed in the stand, blow out the candles. Take the cruet and washing bowl to the kitchen empty the water in the bowl, dry the bowl, fill the cruet w/ water, take them all back to the credence table. Replace the hand towel if it is too wet. Put the hymnals back on the chairs.

Hang your medallion back on the hook. Hang up your alb properly (do not just throw it on the floor of the closet). If the alb needs repair or to be cleaned, put a note on it and fold it up and place in the laundry basket at the bottom of the closet.

Proper Reverence and Respect:

Remember that the Lord is present in the Word, Eucharist, Tabernacle, people, and throughout the Mass. Show respect and reverence before, during, and after serving.

FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions):

1. What if I get sick or dizzy?

If you find yourself in this situation, if possible get up go to the foyer, by going out the side door. The Lead Person should meet you there to make sure all is OK.

2. What if I make a mistake?

If you make a mistake, do not panic. Most people will never notice so don't panic or make it obvious. Simply respond the best you can and ask for help if you need it. Be reverent, cool, and smooth and you will get through just fine.

Altar Server Guidelines Summary:

Arrive at least 15 minutes early

Go into workroom, check in, put on server alb, medal and cincture.

Discuss who will be cross, book, dress altar etc.

Go together to front of Altar. Cross continues and puts it in the holder. Candle bearers bow heads when priest genuflects and puts them in holders.

Go to seats and remain standing.

When Priest says "Let us Pray" take him the red book.

When singing begins for the collection, one server dresses the Altar, the other hands them the items, when complete go sit down.

When Priest goes to the front of the Altar to receive the gifts, servers join him, stand on the same sides as when you did the entrance procession.

Receive the gifts from the priest, go over to the server side of the Altar, hand him the gifts.

One server gets the water cruet without the stopper, hands it to him, takes it back.

The other server gets the water bowl and towel and stands by the step of the altar.

The other server waits with the water until he washes his hands, dries them, and hands the towel back to you.

At the "Our Father" stay in front of your chairs and pray.

At communion, go receive communion and afterwards return to sit down and pray.

After communion and after the Priest has put the hosts in the tabernacle, help him clear items off the altar.

When you hear priest say "Let us Pray", take him the red book, when done place it on the table.

After the final blessing when you hear the music start, get the cross and be ready.

Candle bearers wait for the priest to reverence the altar and then go to the front of the Altar.

Stand with Priest facing the Altar, bow heads when the priest genuflects, turn around and cross leads out, with the candle bearers behind.

Wait till the music stops, then replace the cross, blow out the candles, get the water bowl, cruet and hand towel (if very wet-otherwise leave it on the table for the next Mass) take them to the kitchen, clean, dry and refill – return them to the table. Take off the server alb, cross, cincture, put them back where they belong.

**St. James Catholic Church
ALTAR SERVER
INFORMATION SHEET**

(Please print)

Name _____

Grade in School _____

Age _____

Birthday _____

Parents' Names _____

Address _____

City - State - Zip Code _____

Telephone _____ - (May we publish on our roster?) Y N

Cell Phone _____ - (May we publish on our roster?) Y N

E-mail address (for Mass Scheduling only)

Preferred Mass (please check the one/ones you prefer)

___ **Sat 5:00 PM**

___ **Sat 7:00 PM**

___ **Sun 9:00 AM**

___ **Sun 12:00 PM**

Baptism - Yes

First Holy Communion - Yes

Size Alb: _____