

St. James

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTER

GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES

Arrival Time:

At least 15 minutes before Mass starts.

The Lead Person may have to find a sub if you are not on time.

Dress and Hygiene Code:

Respectful, Professional, looking nice, neat and clean, and modest. Jeans are acceptable as long as they are neat and clean.

NOT Acceptable Dress: Shorts, low cut tops, t-shirts w/ graffiti, sloppy t-shirts, halter or tube tops, spaghetti strap tops, midriffs exposed, flip-flops, sweatshirts or sweatpants, low-riding pants or mini-skirts.

Your hands should be cleansed thoroughly prior to the start of Mass. Be well groomed (brush teeth, etc.) and go light on perfumes because of allergic persons. As a general note, try to be as sanitary as possible.

Arrival Procedure:

After you arrive, go to the sacristy, put on an EM medallion (if available). The Lead Person or you will check your name on the schedule. Sign your name for cups and host bowls on the board. The Lead person will also notify you of anything happening out of the ordinary.

During Mass:

After checking in, go to pew. If possible, sit on the side (left, right or middle) you will be serving from so there is minimal confusion on positions.

Immediately after the priest has consumed from his chalice, all the EM's come forward and line up behind the altar and priest (and deacon). Cup ministers get purificators before lining up.

Only the Host EM's need to disinfect their hands before taking their positions behind the Priest.

A bow of the head is the proper sign of reverence to give before receiving communion.

A bow to the altar is made when entering or leaving the sanctuary or passing by altar.

Visiting Priests should be advised of Non Gluten host receivers before Mass begins (Lead Person), and if possible those individuals pointed out to the Priest.

After receiving the host, the Priest (and deacon if present) will hand you a cup or host bowl.

Take the cup, consume, wipe area, turn cup then proceed to your station.

If you are next to the servers, after you receive the cup, offer it to the server(s) and then proceed to your station. If you are next to a host EM offer the cup to them, then proceed to your station.

All other hosts and cups proceed to your stations.

If you are host and cup on the choir side, proceed over to them first, distribute communion, and then go to your pre-assigned stations. Be sure to leave room for the pianist not to be distracted when you offer communion to the congregation.

If there are people who cannot come forward for communion and they are in the front row, the host and cup ministers offer communion to them first and then return to their stations. If they are seated in the back of the church, wait till communion line is finished then go out to them.

Distribute communion using only this formula:
“The body of Christ” or “The blood of Christ”

Communicants should always receive host first and then the cup (cup is optional).

When presenting the host, hold it over the bowl and if possible directly across from the communicant’s eyes. Not way up in the air, or low. (They should be saying Amen after presenting, so you want to visibly present the host so they acknowledge what they are seeing.)

HOST Ministers:

If someone comes up with their arms crossed in front of them (this includes little children, adults or babies in parents arms) put the host back in the bowl and extend your hand offering them a blessing “May Jesus bless you”. The blessing should take no longer than it does to distribute the host.

When there is a baby being held by a parent who will be receiving communion, bless the baby first if you haven’t yet presented the host. If you have presented the host already, bless the baby after giving communion to the adult.

If someone requires a non-gluten host, step up to the altar, trade host bowl for non-gluten container (pyx), return to distribute non-gluten hosts, return to the altar, exchange containers, then return to your station and continue with communion line.

When blessing, do not use the sign of the cross, or touch them, or use the host to bless them.

Communicants should receive, step to the side and consume. If someone is obviously confused or walks away with the host, you may request the host be consumed or returned. Always be polite, kind and presume ignorance or confusion. Return host to the altar if returned and place it on the corporal. Return to your position if there are more communicants. If not, return host bowl to Priest and briefly notify Priest the reason why the host was either on the corporal or returned to him.

Watch for children or babies in parents’ arms for grabbing of the bowl or cup.

If you run out of hosts and you still have many communicants:

1. Excuse yourself, go to the Altar and see if there are any hosts left in the ciborium (gold bowl w/ lid), if so set your bowl down on the altar take the lid off other bowl and go back to your station, continue with distribution.
2. If there are only a few left in your communion line, or no hosts left on the altar, just return the bowl to the credence table, the Priest or other EM’s will finish.
3. Extreme case of running out of hosts: Begin to break the hosts to finish communion.

All EM’s need to be aware of other EM’s running out of hosts or the blood of Christ. If communion is still taking place, help other EMs before returning hosts to the altar.

After the last person has received, look around to be sure no one needs communion brought to them.

Then return the host bowl to the Priest or deacon (hand it to him do not place it on the Altar). Wait there he will return an empty bowl to you, go place it on the credence table. He may also hand you another item just take them to the table. Return to your pew.

Note: Individuals may present a pyx (a small communion holder) before they receive. Just put a host(s) in the pyx and then offer them communion.

Cup Ministers:

Offer the cup and after each person, wipe the area with the purificator and turn the cup. Be sure and use different areas of the purificator, not the same location. Hold it by the fold over one finger, when the cup is passed slide the purificator to a new spot.

When your cup is empty, return it and the purificator to the credence table and wait for a break in the flow of communicants and return to your pew.

If any blood remains in the cup, consume the remainder or have others help if you cannot consume it all yourself and then place it and the purificator on the credence table.

Place purificators to the side of the cups, not in it.

NOTE: Intinction (dipping the host into the cup) is not permitted. Be kind and simply say, "I'm sorry, but we can't do that."

After Mass, EM's are responsible for final cleaning of the vessels, drying them thoroughly and setting up for the next Mass, or putting everything away. Do not clean the main chalice and paten of the priest. These are sufficiently cleansed and purified by the priest or deacon.

General Instructions for Eucharistic Ministers

(Shorter Version)

Arrive early, dressed appropriately (refer to guidelines).

Notify Lead Person you are present or available.

Leadperson will let you know your assigned positions or check the board

Return to your pew.

As soon as the Presider receives from his cup, get purificators (cup ministers) and all EMs come forward and stand in pre-assigned positions behind the altar and Priest

Receive communion, go to your stations.

After communion, return cups to the credence table, place the purificator next to the cup, and return to your pew.

If you are host minister, stand at the side of the Altar and wait for the Presider to take the hosts from you, he will put those hosts in the ciborium, hand the bowl and perhaps another item back to you, go place them on the credence table, then return to your pew.

Do not take items from or off the altar and do not place hosts back on the altar – wait for the priest or deacon to take them from you.

When a person approaches you with their arms crossed, give them a blessing, such as “May Jesus bless you”. *Do not touch them or make the sign of the cross on them or with the hosts.* Don’t forget to give the children a blessing and babies in the arms of parents.

After Mass clean the items used in communion, except the Priest’s chalice and paten.

Assist in cleaning and replacing items for the next Mass. (see cleaning vessels guidelines)

Hang up your medallion and check schedule for your next assignment and you are finished.

If there are any changes or something different, the Leadperson will notify you.

They may have to rearrange positions etc in order to accommodate the Liturgy, Priest, and community.

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

CLEANING VESSELS

EM's bring all vessels from credence table into the sacristy for washing/drying
PLEASE DRY VESSELS THOROUGHLY BEFORE SETTING UP FOR THE NEXT MASS

It is not necessary to wash the priest's chalice and paten. Just be sure they are dry and replace the purificator.

Wash vessels using soap & hot water, rinse well, and thoroughly dry the vessels. (If vessels are not dried completely, putting hosts back in a wet bowl will make the hosts soggy and not proper for consumption.)

Put used linens in the laundry container under the sink.

If appropriate set out vessels and other items for the next Mass, if no other Mass put vessels on the shelf in the room with the safe.

Take off your medallion, hang on the hook, make sure the sacristy is clean, items picked up and put away and then you are finished.

What to do in certain circumstances:

DROP A HOST

If you drop a host, or it has been dropped by the communicant, request the person to wait and you retrieve the host and return it to the Altar on the corporal. Do this immediately and do not place the host back in the bowl or give to another person. Resume your position and continue with distribution. After communion, notify the Presider, he will decide what to do with the returned host.

SPILL THE PRECIOUS BLOOD

If you spill the Precious Blood, request the line to wait and depending on the quantity of the spill ask them to move back. Immediately soak up and cover the spot with the purificator. Tell the communicants "please wait" or go to another EM with a cup. Go to the Altar for another purificator (there is usually one remaining), return, and continue distributing. After Mass, take a small bowl of water and rinse the area. Leave the purificator on the spot until the area dries (esp. if another Mass follows). This should be a signal to all not to walk on the spot. Once the area is dry, rinse the purificators, let them dry and then put in the laundry.

NON-CATHOLIC

Sometimes non-Catholics will come forward to receive Holy Communion. This happens often at funerals and weddings. If you know that the person is a non-Catholic or that one obviously does not know or understand what they are doing, you may ask them if they are Catholic. If not, say something such as, "I am sorry but I cannot give you communion but, let me give you a blessing before you return to your place". Remember these people are coming up in good faith, usually out of respect for the deceased or the newly married couple.

SMALL CHILD

If the communicant is a small child and you are not sure that they have received First Holy Communion, simply ask if they have (sometimes the parent is with them and they will tell you yes or no). If they have not yet received FHC, give them a blessing instead of communion. Be pleasant and courteous.