

Altar Server Guide

A Server should possess the following characteristics:

- Can merge into the background and thus become “invisible” to the congregation.
- Be able to facilitate the public expression of shared prayer.
- Don’t fumble and stumble.
- Don’t daydream, yawn or fall asleep.
- Anticipate what might happen next.
- Be able to work together as a team.



Before You Come to Church:

- Make sure you get a good night’s sleep. No one wants to watch a server keep yawning.
- Make sure you have had something to eat and drink.
- Make sure you have been to the Toilet.
- Make sure your shoes are the proper type for church. Sneakers should not be worn.
- Make sure your hands and fingernails are clean.

When You Come to Church:

Arrive at the church at least fifteen (15) minutes before Mass begins. If the weather is bad, you will probably have to leave home a bit earlier than usual.

When you arrive at the church, stop and think about what a special building you are entering. Your church is a place where God lives with his people in your parish, and a place where God's people come together to praise God.

Servers should come to church properly clothed. **See *Additional requirements* below.**

Be quiet in the sacristy and avoid making loud unnecessary noise.

Treat your vestments with care. Look at yourself in the mirror. Check to see if the vestment is too short or too long; if so, you will need a bigger size. *Please remember to hang them back up after using!!!* **Once you are vested, return to the main body of the church, and sit quietly together on the front pew.**

Get things ready according to your allocated role. Check the credence table. You should check to make sure all the proper items are set up for Mass. Ask those preparing for Mass if they need your help.

Be especially ready to help the priest if he is a visitor to your parish. He may ask you some questions about how Mass takes place in your church. If he does, try to answer them clearly. He wants to serve the people at Mass well, just as you should and you can be a big help to him.

Before Mass is scheduled to begin (5 minutes before), ***the SACRISTAN will light any candles that need to be lit. Once all the candles are lit, the servers should take the appropriate candles and the processional cross, and gather at the entrance.***

The cross bearer leads followed by the two candles, holding the cross high, followed by the lector and then the priest. Note: The cross and candles always lead the procession/recession. If incense is used, then the incense bearer (thurifer) leads. When you are processing to the altar remember this is not a race. We have plenty of time to get to our destination. **Walk slowly!!!**

Also, remember that during Mass people are watching you. They do make comments to the Celebrants and the Team Leaders about how well (or bad) the servers were at Mass. You are **not** supposed to be *laughing, playing, mugging, or waving* while serving. However, you are to respond to the priest and sing with the congregation throughout the Mass.

Servers can distract the congregation in their prayer because of the way servers are standing or sitting. Hands should be folded: locked together held at the chest or pressed together at the chest. If two servers need to move they are to move together. Don't move without your partner!

After Mass take everything to the sacristy, and extinguish the candles using the candles snuffers. Ask those cleaning after Mass if they need your help. *Finally, return your vestment to its hanger and place it in its right order and manner of hanging.*

WALKING

We do a lot of walking everyday and sometimes we get sloppy as we do it. Always walk with your back straight and your head held high. *Do not "bound" up or down the sanctuary steps.* **DO NOT** run, walk, or cross **in front of the priest/celebrant,** slowly walk or cross behind him.

When in procession/recession, remember, **WALK SLOWLY!!!**

BOWING

When you bow to someone or something at mass, it should be a smooth forward inclining of your head and shoulders. When you bow to the altar, bow deeply at the waist and bring yourself slowly to your full height. When you bow to the priest, bow your head slowly and gracefully. Never walk and bow at the same time: stop before bowing. NOTE that, if you are carrying something (such as the cross or a candle), you DO NOT BOW.

GENUFLECTING

When you genuflect, keep your hands in front of your chest while you go down on your right knee. Keep your body straight. Do not wobble back and forth, & be sure that your vestment isn't going to trip you on the way down or up.

Remember, we only genuflect to the tabernacle before and after Mass – other times we bow to the altar.

KNEELING

When you kneel, your body should be upright and your hands should be in front of your chest, well above your waist. *If you lean your body forwards or backwards you will hurt the muscles in your back or the ligaments in your knee.*

STANDING

Always stand up straight with both feet firmly on the floor six to eight inches apart. This will give you balance and comfort at the same time. ***Don't lean against the furniture or against the walls.***

SITTING

Sit down on your pew carefully and gracefully. Once you are seated, sit tall and don't slouch. Place your hands on your lap or flat on your thighs in a relaxed manner. Allow space between servers. Watch the celebrant, or whomever is reading, singing, etc. This indicates to those who are watching YOU who they SHOULD be watching!

HANDS

Unless you are sitting down or carrying something (like a candle); your hands should be kept joined in front of your chest; either locked together, or palm-to-palm, fingers pointing upward. Keep your hands high up on your chest. If you are carrying something in one hand *hold the other hand flat on your chest.*

EYES

During Mass always look towards the place where the action is happening: the celebrant's chair, the lectern or the altar. When a reader is reading the scriptures, you should be looking at the reader. When you are talking to someone you expect that person to look at you; the same is true at Mass. Never look at the people in the congregation, rather look just above their heads.

Know what you are to do while serving, and when you are to do it. Never fidget. Always do things smoothly. Pay attention and be alert!! *If you make a mistake, never get flustered.*

Additional requirements include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Arrive **at least 15 minutes prior** to the beginning of Mass each time when serving.
- Attend both Mass and Faith Formation (for Non-SPXS) each week when Faith Formation is in session.
- Provide email address to the Ministry and be willing to communicate via email on a regular basis.
- Pre-schedule posting by email with Scheduler. Email Team Leaders & substitutes to confirm any arrangements.
- Provide valid telephone number for call-out list to Ministry: **This must be used for contacting all replacements!**
- Find and confirm an appropriate replacement for the Masses to which assigned when unable to serve: *All servers are required to **CALL the Parent** for a replacement, getting Voice Confirmation.* Email should be an adjunct, putting the notice out. If you get a replacement by email, you should post it as a courtesy to others and even if not, you should give feedback to your Team Leader. Any problems should be addressed to the Team Leaders. REMEMBER that **VOICE CONFIRMATION**, meaning you call on phone and talk to server **and** their responsible parent about covering your Mass, is a **requirement.**
- All servers are expected to *fulfill their assigned times to serve.*
- Lead Servers must replace Lead Servers. Becoming a Lead Server is an assignment – not a personal choice.
- Be willing to serve as a replacement for another Server when available & qualified. Serve at the Masses where most needed regardless of Mass time preference.
- Servers should have a clean-cut hairstyle. There should be no hair hanging in front of the face.
- Gentlemen/Ladies should wear proper solid clothing (NO designs & lettering. that are visible through the alb).

- Gentlemen/Ladies should wear DRESS or SPX School SHOES. NO FLIP_FLOPS! AVOID Tennis Shoes, SANDLES/ SHOES OPEN AT THE TOE, SIDE, OR HEELS.
- Have no visible piercing, except for (ladies only) piercing to the ear lobe.
- Have no facial hair unless it can be kept trimmed very close to the face/neck.
- Wear no jewelry, or only a very limited amount of jewelry, make-up or very light make-up. **NO rings are to be worn.** They damage the finish on the candles.
- Clean hands immediately prior to serving.
- Follow instructions from the Ministry, Team Leaders, and Senior Servers and support rules of the program. Attend annual training sessions (as needed & required).

Should you ever have any question regarding your service at the altar, do not hesitate to ask the priest, Mark Hoggard, or the team leaders. Remember, that *you and your family* are a part of a Team: **The St. Pius X Altar Server Ministry.**

New contact is Mrs. Elizabeth Wainer: mylittlemamas@aol.com