

“Training Manual” for Altar Servers

Parents we need your help – helping your child to serve. Please review with them the following pages so they can do their best.

Being there when you are scheduled is HUGE. We depend on you to check the schedule or to find a substitute if you cannot make it.

Training and Refresher for Altar Servers

Candle Servers: for the Gospel- when coming to the Altar come up to the right side to lead, do not split and go to each side.

Communion Rite: When the Priest elevates the Host- STOP. no walking around or discussion. devote your focus on the consecration.

If only one candle -- then that person stands to the outside of the Ambo.

ALTAR SERVERS – Must Read

- IF you are scheduled – you serve first as long as you are here **10 minutes before Mass starts.**
- Need only FOUR (4) servers , unless there is incense. Those who are scheduled – serve first.
- **IF you are not scheduled- you can be a substitute.** You can fill in for someone who does not show up.

MASTER SERVER:

- The one who is scheduled – will be the Master server for this Mass
- When you go out to get help- make sure that:
 - The person must have already been trained by either
Jim Pasker or Deacon Mike Lowe

IF they have not attended training by the above they cannot serve until they do.

To be an Altar Server is a special honor and a great privilege in the Catholic Church. Altar Servers today can trace their roots or genealogy to the order of Acolyte, a ministry that once was reserved only for those who were going to be ordained Priests. One can look upon being an Altar Server as a special and unique ministry by which you, a young person, can help to spread the word and the love of Christ through your actions and words. It is not difficult to be an Altar Server, but there are some things that you must know and remember.

You must be alert to what is needed and when you are to do things.

Cloths worn under an alb should be such that they so not have patterns, pictures, stripes, checks or any other design which will show through the alb. [Hands are held together above the waist at all times except when the Altar Server is carrying something.](#)

Five minutes before Mass, light candles (NO PLAYING with the lighter), all servers go to the vestibule with the two candles and the cross for the entrance procession. Wait to join in the prayer.

If there is to be incense the server CANNOT light the charcoal.

Etiquette:

You are leaders, set the proper example.

- Proper dress is important
 - Be aware of highly contrasting colors or pictures on your T-Shirt that will be visible through your alb.
 - **No shoes with flashing lights!**
- When in the Sanctuary do not cut between people and the Altar.
- **During the consecration, especially during the elevation of the Body and Blood of Jesus, no movement, focus on the sacrament and the Priest.**
- **Never run.**

Procedure:

- Work as a team walk together and be aware of the others with whom you are serving.
- During the Gospel procession let the tallest server take the outside position, i.e. the farthest from the Altar.
- There is a red star in the pictures that follow. If a closed book is placed on this part (the very end) of the Altar, take it to the Priests chair. If an empty vessel is placed here take it to the Sacristy.
- ASK QUESTIONS of the Priest, Deacon, or the Master Server. You will be much more comfortable if you know what to expect.

Know the Mass:

“Cross/Book” Server:

Is the senior server (if there are four servers this role can be split)

- Carries the cross at the beginning and conclusion of the Mass-
- Holds Book for the Priest for the opening and closing prayers.

Be there as he starts. ANTICIPATE!

- Opening prayer is after the Gloria ("for you alone are the Holy One") or after the Kyrie (Advent & Lent) and starts with "**Let us pray ...**"
- Closing prayer is after communion when the Priest stands and starts with "**Let us pray...'**

If incense gets the incense and the boat right after the second reading for Priest/Deacon to incense the Gospel

- During Offertory
 - stands on Deacon's side to receive Gifts from Offertory Procession
 - Takes both empty Wine Flagon and water cruet from Deacon and brings to Sacristy

If incense, server would get the incense and the boat and wait facing the Altar to the left of the Priest- PRIOR to the Lavabo- washing of hands

- After the sign of peace comes forward to remove the Missal during the communion rite and place it on the Priest's chair.

“Candle Bearer” Servers:

There are two and they follow the lead of the “Cross/Book” Server.

- Carries a candle
 - At the beginning
 - During the Gospel Procession
 - After communion
(stand back away from Altar then lead the procession into the chapel)
 - At the conclusion of the Mass
- During Offertory
 - Stands on Deacon's side to receive Gifts from Offertory Procession
 - Prepares the Water Bowl and Finger Towel then waits between Ambo and Altar
 - Comes forward to remove the “Main” ciborium during the communion rite and takes it to the Sacristy

1. When it is time to begin Mass:

“Cross/Book” Server: Carrying the cross, slowly leads the procession up the center aisle. When you reach the front of the church go to the left side as close as possible to the baptismal font.

If there is incense the incense always leads the procession, before the book.

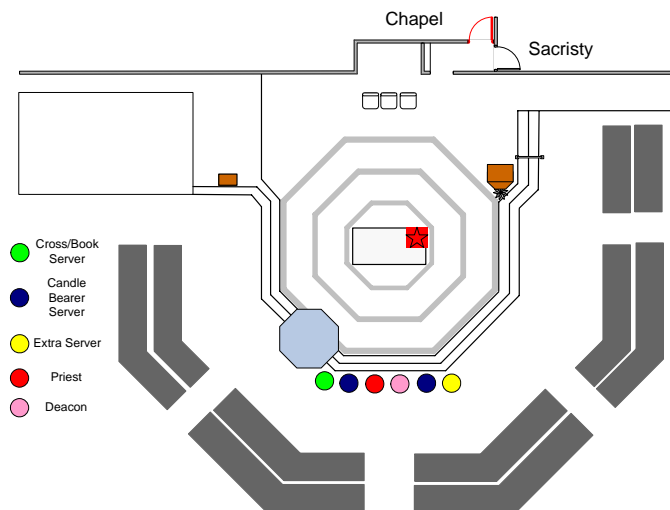
“Candle Bearer” Servers: Carry the candles about two pews behind the “Cross/Book” Server. Both candles should be at the same level.

When you reach the front of the church, **one** “Candle Bearer” Server goes to the right side to stand at the corner of the step.

The **other** “Candle Bearer” Server goes to the left side with the “Cross/Book” Server.

All Servers: Wait for the Priest and Deacon to bow, but the “Candle Bearer” Servers and the “Cross/Book” Server do not bow¹. Then precede **TOGETHER AS A TEAM** to the side and place the candles and cross in the hall by the Sacristy then return as a team to Altar Servers’ pew.

If the Altar is to be incensed at the beginning of Mass, the “Incense Bearer” waits behind the Altar to give the incense to the Priest. The server waits there until the Priest finishes incensing the Altar. The server then takes the incense and returns it to the stand and goes to their seat.



¹ In this case anyone carrying something is not expected to bow. To nod the head would be appropriate but not expected.

2. *Gloria and Opening Prayer:*

“**Cross/Book**” Server: At the end of the “Gloria”, the Priest will be ready for the Opening Prayer. **Anticipate the end of the Gloria** (listen for the words “*For you alone are the Holy One*”), the Priest begins by saying “**Let us Pray**”.

The Cross /Book Bearer should already be in place with the Missal open.

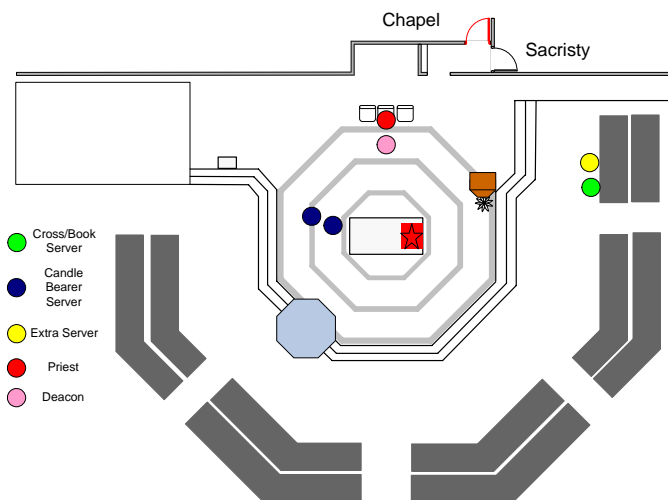
Hold the book at the bottom (you can rest the book on the forehead or chest.) The height should be at least chest high of the Priest.

(During Lent and Advent, there is no Gloria so the Missal is brought immediately to the Priest, during the penitential Rite.)

When the Priest finishes, hand the book to the Deacon and return to your chair.

3. *Liturgy of the Word:*

“**Candle Bearer**” Servers: First Reading – Responsorial- Second Reading



- After the end of the second reading, **when the Lectors come down from the Altar and bow, the two “Candle Bearer” Servers WALK to get their candles and move as a TEAM to the Altar.**

Both servers wait for the Deacon -- at the right side of the Altar.

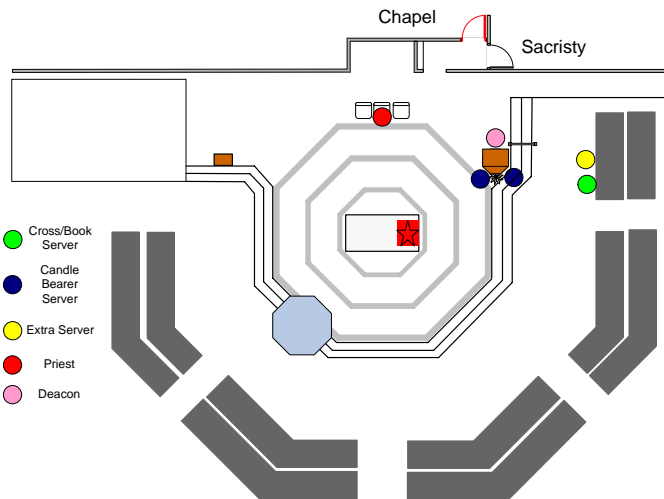
- **Gospel:** When the Deacon picks up the **Book of Gospels**, walk side-by-

side as a TEAM and lead the Deacon in the procession. Hold the candles as same height.

Procession – keep a distance of 5 feet in front of the Deacon.

Observe! Each Deacon has their own pace!

You may have to adjust your speed as you go. Stand side-by-side at your spot in front of the ambo.



On Sunday: process out into the pews and around the Church.

On weekdays: there is no procession, so go immediately to the front of the Ambo.

Incense may be used at the reading of the Gospel. If so, the incense server gets the incense and the boat right after the second reading and brings it to the Priest/deacon at this time)

After the Gospel is read, walk side-by-side as a TEAM to place the candles in the hall.

4. **Preparing the ALTAR:**

Following the Intercessions, the Ushers begin the collection. When the Priest sits, the Deacon prepares the Altar.

All Servers: When the Deacon starts to the front of the Altar,

- Three servers should immediately follow the Deacon, and join him in front of the Altar to receive the gifts.
 - The ciborium with the hosts should be handed to the Priest if he is standing by the Altar
 - If the Priest is still seated, place the ciborium on the Altar in the center in front of the Bible between the cups.
 - One flagon (pitcher) of wine should be placed on each side of the ciborium near the cups. Place them on the colored cloth next to the white cloth.

Then return to the side of the Altar.

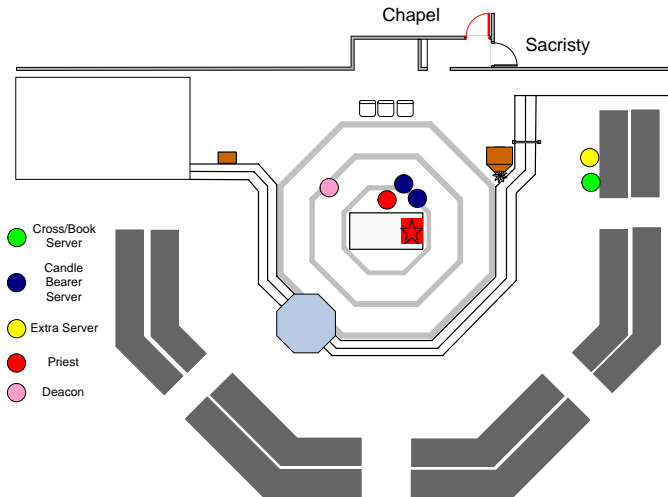
“Cross/Book” Server: When the Deacon/Priest is finished pouring the wine:

Come up immediately and receive the empty flagons and take them to the Sacristy.

If incense is to be used at the preparation of the gifts, the “Cross/Book” Server would get the incense and the boat and wait facing the Altar to the left of the Priest- PRIOR to the lavabo-washing of hands

“Candle Bearer” Servers: Prepare to wash the Priest’s hands.

Bring the washing bowl. Remember to unfold the towel.



When the Priest turns to wash his hands, step forward to meet him.

Hold the wash bowl "below" the level of Priest's waist, when finished the Priest places the towel back across your arm.

BOTH SERVERS give a slight head bow to the Priest² and return TOGETHER as a TEAM to the credence table.

Place the bowl and towel neatly on the credence table and return the side of the Altar.

5. ***EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER***

Eucharistic Prayer – part of this is the consecration of the bread and wine to become the Body and Blood of Jesus. All parts of the Mass require your undivided attention but the consecration, especially during the elevation of the Body and Blood of Jesus, requires your utmost attention. Please no movement, talking, or any other form of distraction from this holy moment.

All Servers: Go to the Altar when the people stand for the “Our Father”.

“Cross/Book” Server stands beside the Deacon

“Candle Bearer” Servers stand beside the Priest.

After the Sign of Peace the “Cross/Book” Server removes the book from the Altar and places it on the Priests chair and all servers return to the Altar Servers’ chairs.

6. ***COMMUNION***

Communion Rite - This part begins with the Our Father and ends with the prayer after communion. When the Priest starts to distribute the host among the ciborium, he will lay the Missal to the side of the Altar.

“Cross/Book” Server: Comes forward to remove the Missal and place it on the Priest’s chair.

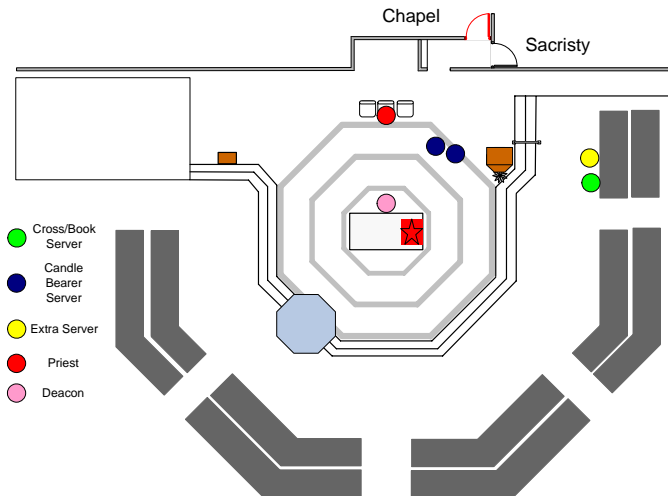
When the Priest is finished with the large ciborium, he will set it to the side of the Altar.

² The reason we bow to the Priest is because he acts in the person of Christ during the consecration of the Mass.

“Candle Bearer” Servers: One comes forward to take the large ciborium back the Sacristy.

All Servers: When the Eucharistic Ministers go up to the Altar, all Servers that want to receive the Eucharist will stand near the Altar by the Ambo then return to the Altar Servers’ pew for a brief prayer.

7. **AS COMMUNION IS ENDING**



“Candle Bearer” Servers: When the Deacon returns to the Altar after distributing communion, get candles and stand next to the Ambo waiting to lead the procession into the chapel. Please note the red door shown in the picture. Be sure to put the door stop down so you won’t be locked out of the church.

When in the Chapel stand to the left and right side of the tabernacle where the Deacon will place the remaining consecrated hosts. When finished then return to the Altar Servers’ pew.

8. **PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

When the Priest returns to his chair after distributing communion, he and everyone will be seated for a few moments of quiet prayer.

“Cross/Book” Server: When the Priest stands the “Cross/Book” Server comes up immediately! As the Priest says “Let Us Pray”, hold the Missal (prayer book) for him. When the Priest finishes, he will close the book and the Server returns to the Altar Servers’ pew.

9. **CONCLUDING RITE & RECESSIONAL PROCESSION**

Greeting and Blessing - The Priest blesses the people.

Dismissal - The Priest and Deacon send the people out to love and serve the Lord and all people.

All Servers: The Deacon saying “Go in Peace” signals all Servers to go get the cross and candles and return to the main aisle TOGETHER.

The “Cross/Book” Server stands in front of the Altar on the Ambo side.

The “Candle Bearer” Servers stand in their spot in front of the Altar.

All servers face the Altar.

When the Priest and Deacon turn away from the Altar, this signals that all Servers should turn and precede slowly TOGETHER AS A TEAM to the back of the church.

10. *Duties after Mass*

Hand out bulletins

RITUAL PROCEDURE FOR THURIFER AT MASS

OPENING RITE:

- Thurifer carrying thurible and boat leads the procession.
- Before procession starts: The Priest will come to you, (adds incense) and then incense the Altar.
- Once at the steps of the sanctuary, step to the right, in front of the first pew.
- The Priest will come to you, (he may add more incense). He then incenses the Altar.
- Return the thurible to the stand (note the placement of the stand.)
- Take your place in the pew.

LITURGY OF THE WORD:

- Once the second reading is completed, bring the thurible to the Priest.
- The Priest will place incense in the thurible.
- Stand next to the ambo after the Priest places the incense in the thurible.
- Lead (in front of the candle bearers) the Gospel procession.
- After the Priest/Deacon announces the Gospel and incenses the Gospel, take your place in front of the ambo for the reading of the Gospel.
- When the reading is complete, return the thurible to the stand and return to your seat.

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST:

- When the gifts are received, bring the thurible and boat to the sanctuary.
- Incense will be added and the Priest will incense the Altar before the washing of hands.
- The Priest will then hand the incense back to the server and the server should bring the thurible and boat to the stand.

DISMISSAL:

- Lead the procession up the center aisle.