

Quick Reference for Altar Servers

Before Mass

Sign in
Light candles
Check credence table

Opening Procession

Process in with cross and candle
Stop on third row of tiles and reverence altar with everyone
Place cross and candle appropriately
Proceed together to seats

Opening Prayer

Hold book for Father
Be seated with congregation

Assist with Baptism

Prepare the Oil of Salvation (OS) for the anointing of the chest
Hold prayer book
Prepare the Sacred Chrism (SC) oil for the anointing of the head
Wipe up spilled water

Preparation of the Altar

Light altar candles
Place book, large chalice and purificator on altar
Provide water to Deacon/Father and place remaining purificators near communion cups

Washing of Hands

Pour water over Father's hands into bowl
Provide hand towel
Return items to table and return to seats

Before/After Communion

Remove sacramentary book (if Father desires)
Go to communion with your section
Place extra empty ciborium on altar (if needed)
Clear altar after everyone has left altar (Remove book and stand first)

Final Prayer and Blessing

Hold book (if necessary)
Retrieve cross and candle when recessional music begins
Join Father in front of altar
Reverence altar and process out of church

After Mass

Replace cross in stand and extinguish candles

Detailed Guidelines for Altar Servers

General Guidance

1. Minister with a prayerful attitude.
2. Minister together as a team.
3. Dress appropriately. Modest attire is preferred. Shorts, jeans and tennis shoes should be avoided. If requested to substitute and you do not feel you are properly dressed, please decline the invitation.
4. Arrive approximately 15 minutes before Mass begins.

Before Mass

Go to the ministry room and sign in on the master schedule so the mass coordinator knows you are present. Check the mass activity sheet on the bulletin board. If a baptism is scheduled (usually the 1st Sunday of the month) or it is a Sunday during the Easter season, light the Easter candle. If there is only one server, light the candle next to the ambo. Check the credence table to make sure you have the candle lighter, water, bowl, towel and one purificator (white linen cloth) for each chalice/communion cup. Check with the presider to determine if they would like the sacramentary stand on the altar during the Eucharistic prayer.

Opening Procession

Notes: - Cues are italicized and bolded below.

- Reference to Altar Server #1 and #2 are for explanation purposes only; they do not refer to the numbering system noted on the weekly schedule. It is up to the altar servers to determine who will perform which task/duty.

Father will motion when he is ready to begin the procession. Altar Server #1 carries the cross and leads the procession, followed by Altar Server #2 who carries the ambo candle. The procession will begin near the baptismal font and process around the perimeter until you reach the Good Shepherd Statue. Turn down the aisle at the statue and proceed toward the altar. Once you reach the altar area, Altar Server #1 goes to the left and stops on the third row of stones back from the altar. Altar Server #2 goes to the right an equal distance. Both servers wait there until everyone in the procession reaches the altar.

When Father reaches the altar, the entire group bows to the altar, then Altar Server #1 goes around the left side of the altar and places the cross in the holder on the floor next to the ambo platform. Altar Server #2 proceeds around the right side of the altar, up the ambo steps and places the candle in the stand next to the ambo. Both servers then meet in front of the ambo and proceed to their chairs next to Father. Altar Server #1 picks up the sacramentary book on the table and holds it reverently.

Opening Prayer

At the end of the Gloria (or penitential rite when there is no Gloria), ***Father will say, "Let us pray."*** Altar Server #1 steps out in front of Father and holds the book up for Father to read the "Opening Prayer." (Note: Whenever Father says, "Let us pray," the book will be needed.)

After the "Opening Prayer" is completed, the server closes the book; returns to his/her seat and the servers are seated with the rest of the congregation. The book is returned to the table. Servers then stand or sit with the congregation throughout mass.

Detailed Guidelines for Altar Servers

Assist Priest/Deacon with Baptism

After the prayers of the faithful, *as the Deacon moves to the baptismal font*, an altar server should proceed with the Deacon and stand in front of the sacred oils. Be prepared to present the Oil of Salvation (OS) for the anointing of the chest if the deacon so chooses. Return the oil to its place and pick up the washcloth and hand it to the Deacon after the blessing of the water, so the Deacon can dry his hands. When the Deacon is ready to baptize the child, the altar server can hold the prayer book. After the baptism(s), you can return the book to the Deacon. With the washcloth in hand, the altar server should retrieve the Sacred Chrism (SC) oil decanter. Remove the top and leave it where the oil was sitting and return to the Deacon with the oil. When the Deacon turns to the altar server, the server will hand the oil decanter to the Deacon and take the prayer book. Once the Deacon has finished the anointing, hand the towel and prayer book to the Deacon and take the oil and return it to its place. As the baptism(s) completes, if there is any water on the floor, the altar server should dry the floor with the large towel, fold the towel and place it back at the foot of the baptismal font and then return to his/her duties.

Preparation of the Altar

As soon as the offertory begins, Server #2 retrieves the candle lighter from the credence table, lights it from the ambo candle and then lights the two candles next to the altar. Be careful, because the air conditioner makes the altar area very breezy. Server #2 then returns the lighter to the credence table. While Server #2 is lighting the candles, Server #1 places the Sacramentary book and stand (if appropriate) on the altar. Server #1 returns to the credence table and picks up the larger chalice and a purificator and takes them to the altar and places them on the corporal cloth and returns to the credence table.

With both servers now present at the credence table, Server #2 picks up the water cruet and Server #1 picks up the 12 purificators for the Eucharistic Ministers. The servers return to the altar and Server #2 presents the water to the Deacon/Father so he can pour it into the wine. Server #1 places six purificators to the right and six purificators to the left of the front corporal cloth. After the Deacon/Father has poured water into the wine, Server #2 takes the water, reverences the Deacon/Father, and together the servers return to the credence table. Server #2 picks up the bowl and Server #1 picks up the hand towel, the servers take a few steps forward and face Father in preparation for the washing of the hands. If necessary, the servers can assist in the placement of chalices on the front of the altar on the corporal cloth.

Washing of Hands

When Father bows his head to pray silently, the altar servers advance to the altar. When Father turns towards the altar servers, the altar servers raise the bowl to Father, and Father places his hands over the bowl. Altar Server #2 pours water on Father's fingers and hands. Altar Server #1 holds the towel up and open for Father to take. When Father has finished, he hands the towel back to Altar Server #1, the altar servers bow reverently and return to the credence table. They place all items back on the table, return to their appropriate chairs and remain standing. If desired, the servers may take a place where kneelers are available.

Detailed Guidelines for Altar Servers

Before Communion

After the sign of peace is exchanged, Altar Server #1 asks Father if the sacramentary book and stand should be removed from the altar. The book should be placed on the presider's table. The altar servers go to communion with their section. After receiving communion, the servers should be seated.

After Communion

After all Eucharistic ministers have started distributing communion, if the sacramentary book is still on the altar, one of the altar servers should proceed to the altar and remove the book and stand, and return them to the presider's table (do not remove any other items at this time). Additionally, if the altar server realizes that there will be excess bread, the server can take an empty ciborium from the credence table and place it on the altar. The altar server then returns to his/her seat. ***Once the remaining consecrated bread has been retired to the tabernacle***, if any vessels, trays or purificators remain on the altar, the server(s) proceed to the altar and remove the remaining items and place them neatly on the credence table. After the altar is cleared of the vessels, trays and purificators, the server(s) should be seated.

Final Prayer and Blessing

Father may take the sacramentary book in his lap, say the prayer after communion, and then return the book to the table. If Father does not read the prayer from his chair, when he rises and says ***“Let us pray,”*** Altar Server #1 picks up the Sacramentary, steps out in front of Father and holds the Sacramentary book up so he can read the final prayer(s). The book is then returned to the table. In some cases, additional prayers may be read from the book and Altar Server #1 should be prepared to continue holding the book.

After the final blessing, ***once the recessional music has started***, Altar Server #1 and #2 proceed to the cross and candle and retrieve them for the recessional. They meet in front of the ambo and then proceed together around their respective sides of the altar to join Father in the same positions as the beginning of mass. When ready to proceed from the altar, Father bows to the altar and all ministers do likewise. Altar Server #1 (the cross) leads the recessional, followed by Altar Server #2 (the candle). When you reach the back of the aisle, turn left and continue around the church until you reach the area near the baptismal font. Turn and face the congregation and stand reverently until the music has stopped. You can then place the cross in the holder, extinguish the candle and return it to the ambo stand. Be careful not to spill the hot wax.

After Mass

When the congregation begins to leave, extinguish all candles in the church (do not forget about the Easter candle if it has been lit). When everything has been placed appropriately and all candles are safely extinguished, you are free to leave.