

Altar Servers Training

What is Mass?

The way I think of Mass is that it is like going to visit a friend's house. If we think of the sequence of events that happen when we go to a friend's house we can see that there are equivalents to each in our Mass.

If we look at the column directly under the heading "Invited to a Friend's House" we see that when we arrive at the friend's house we will probably walk up to the front door and knock or ring the door bell. When the door is answered you will greet each other and walk in.

If we now look at the column directly under the heading "Invited to the Lord's House" we see that at church this arrival is called the Introductory Rite. You can follow the next section and note that everything in the mass setting has a similar entry to that which we experience when we visit a friend. So therefore we could say that God is our friend.

Invited to a Friend's House

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|------------------------------|---|
| Arrival | Knock on the door Greet each other |
| Conversation | Talk and Play together |
| Prepare and cook food | Set the table Wash/cook food Wash hands |
| Eat Meal | Say thanks for the food Eat and drink Relax |
| Depart for home | Say Goodbye Leave for home |

Invited to the Lord's House

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|---------------------------------|--|
| Introductory Rite | Entry song Greeting Penitential Rite Gloria Opening Prayer |
| Liturgy of the word | Readings Responsorial Psalm Gospel Acclamation Homily Apostles Creed Prayer of the Faithful |
| Liturgy of the Eucharist | Preparation of the gifts Eucharistic prayer |
| Communion Rite | Lord's Prayer Sign of peace Communion |
| Concluding Rite | Concluding Prayer Blessing Dismissal |

Different jobs that altar servers carry out

Bell ringer - This server will ring the bells at the epiclesis and consecration. Care is required to ring them at the appropriate moment and to ring them at the correct volume and duration.

Boat Bearer - The boat contains incense that is used in the thurible. It is the boat bearer's job to make sure that the boat is available when required by the thurifer. Many times the boat is carried by the thurifer.

Book bearer - This server has the job of holding the book of prayer for the priest at the beginning and end of the service. It is this server's responsibility to make sure that the book is open on the correct page and is held in such a way that the priest can read it with ease.

Candle Bearer - serve in pairs, and carry candles at the beginning and end of the Mass, as well as at the gospel.

Candle Bearers - Lead the procession of the gifts into the church.

Cross Bearer - The server who carries the processional cross at the beginning and end of the service.

MC - Master of ceremonies. This is the most experienced server who is able to take charge of the whole ceremony. This server will also deal with problems as they arise in the Mass. If done well then no one will know that any problems have occurred.

Thurifer - This is a server who will carry the thurible. The thurible will be required during the service and it is the job of the thurifer to have it ready as required. Care must always be taken as a burning charcoal is used in the thurible which can burn.

Church Colours

There are six different colors used for the different seasons and feasts and they are:

White, Violet, Red, Black, Green, and Rose

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| White is used | During the Christmas and Easter season. Celebration of Christ the King. Feasts of our Lord (except The Passion). Feasts of our Lady, angels and saints who are not martyrs. Conversation of St. Paul (25 January). The Chair of St. Peter (22 February). John the Baptist (24 June). All Saints (1 November). John the Evangelist (27 December). Sometimes used on Masses for the dead. |
| Red is used on | Palm Sunday. Good Friday and for the Feast of the Passion of Our Lord. Pentecost and for Masses of the Holy Spirit. Feasts of Apostles, Evangelists and Martyrs such as St. Stephen. |
| Green is used in | Ordinary time. |
| Violet is used in | Advent. Lent. Sometimes used in Masses for the Dead. |
| Black is used | Sometimes in Masses for the Dead. |
| Rose is used on | Gaudete Sunday (3rd Sunday of Lent). Laetare Sunday (4th Sunday of Lent). |

Church Year

The church year starts on the **First Sunday of Advent** and ends at **The Celebration of Christ the King**.

The year is divided up as follows:

Advent - This season lasts 4 weeks. This season begins the Church year. It is a time for us to prepare for the coming of Jesus at Christmas. It is customary to light the candles of an Advent wreath, to mark these weeks of preparation.

Christmas - This season lasts 3 weeks. This season commemorates the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. It runs from the first Mass of Christmas until the Sunday after the Epiphany.

Ordinary Time - This is the first part and it varies in length due to Easter being a movable feast. The Ordinary weeks of the year begin with the Baptism of the Lord (the Sunday after the Epiphany) and take us through the life of Christ as recorded in one of the synoptic gospels: Matthew, Mark or Luke.

Lent - This season lasts 6 weeks. In this season the Church prepares for the great celebration of Easter. We who are baptised reflect on how well we are living our faith and we help those approaching baptism at Easter to prepare themselves. Lent lasts from Ash Wednesday until the Mass of the Last Supper. The last Sunday of Lent celebrates Passion (Palm) Sunday, which recalls Christ's triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

The Easter Triduum - These three days are the climax of our whole year. They last from the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday until Easter Sunday, while the Church celebrates the passion, death and resurrection of our Lord. Christ redeemed all of us by this paschal mystery.

- **Thursday** - At the Mass of the Lord's Supper, we recall his perfect love for his disciples and his command to celebrate the Eucharist as a memorial of his life, death and resurrection. This Mass is the institution of the Eucharist and the priesthood.
- **Friday** - On Good Friday, we celebrate the Lord's passion and death.
- **Saturday** - Apart from the Liturgy of the Hours, which is celebrated every day in the Church, on Holy Saturday there are no other liturgical celebrations within the Church, recalling the time spent by Jesus in the tomb. In the evening the community gathers to celebrate the Easter Vigil. The Easter Vigil is regarded as the mother of all vigils and recalls Christ's victory over sin and death and his resurrection from the dead. The lighting of the paschal candle proclaims Jesus as the light of the world.

Easter - This season lasts 9 weeks. This season lasts from Easter Sunday to Pentecost when we commemorate the descent of the Holy Spirit. The Church prays earnestly, throughout this season, for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to renew the Church.

Ordinary Time - This is the second part and it varies in length due to Easter being a movable feast.

Christ the King - This is the final season and lasts for 1 week.

The Gospel's used in Ordinary Time

Year A - The Gospel according to Matthew.

Year B - The Gospel according to Mark.

Year C - The Gospel according to Luke.

Where do we fit into the world?

The world is made up of many different people. Those who believe that Jesus saved us are called Christians. We are part of this Catholic world. Jesus founded the Catholic church. It was Jesus who appointed St. Peter as the first pope and Pope Benedict is our current pope.

The Catholic world is itself made up of various different types of Catholics.

- There are lapsed Catholics. They still think of themselves as Catholic but do not attend church. Some of these Catholics still find the need to attend church at Christmas, Easter, Baptism, Marriages, etc.
- Then there are the non-church attending Catholics that include the homebound and those who are prevented from attending church due to their circumstances.
- Finally we have those who go to Mass at a Catholic parish.

Catholic Parish

This is made up of a wide variety of people. The whole of the assembly we call the congregation. Some people within this congregation feel that while being part of the family they would want to be active and feel the calling to serve in a role. These roles are many and varied and include Readers, Flower arrangers, Cleaners and so on. Serving at the Altar is one of these. Sometimes those in these roles feel an even greater calling and take up a vocation such as religious sister/brother, deacon, or priest.

An altar server should:

Have a strong desire to serve at the Altar of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

Be an active member of OLMC and believe in the teachings of the Catholic Church,

Have already made their First Confession and First Communion,

Are in the fifth grade or above,

Know all the prayers of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, from memory,

Know how to properly genuflect and bow,

Know how to make the Sign of the Cross,

Know how to receive Holy Communion in the approved manner,

Know how to do all the different roles require of any altar server.

Be properly dressed - Dark pants, dark skirt/slacks, shirt/blouse with no pictures or words and preferably of a dark color. Black shoes preferred, but no flip flops or tennis shoes. Sandals are OK,

Arrive at least 15 minutes before Mass. If it is a special Mass, then 30 minutes is preferred,

When standing and not carrying anything, fold hands flat and hold next to chest,

When sitting, sit at ease with hands on knees paying attention, especially for any needs from priest or deacon during the Mass,

Respond with the congregation at all parts of the Mass,

Help our parishioners have a holy mass by seeing holy altar servers serving our Lord.

This is the altar server prayer that will be in the room where you get ready for Mass. You should pray it as a group just before you leave the room to assist the priest:

*Open my mouth, O Lord, to bless your Holy Name.
Cleanse my heart from all evil and distracting thoughts.
Enlighten my understanding and inflame my will that I
may serve more worthily at your holy altar.
O Mary, Queen of Peace, Mother of Christ the High
Priest, obtain for me the most important grace of
knowing my vocation in life.
Grant me a true spirit of faith and humble obedience so
that I may ever behold the priest as a servant of God and
willingly follow him in the Way, the Truth, and the Life.
Amen.*

I. Parts of the Mass

A. Introductory Rites (Including the Entrance Procession)

1. Procession path
2. Spacing
3. Where to stand when arriving at the altar
4. Genuflect/Bow with the priest (when not carrying anything)
5. Where to place cross/candles and seating
6. Participate in the penitential rite
7. Sing the Gloria
8. "Let us pray" - Sacramentary and posture and holding a book

B. Liturgy of the Word

1. Remain seated for OT, Responsorial Psalm, NT
2. Immediately after NT Reading get candles and stand in proper place
3. Lead the procession to the ambo
4. "The Gospel of the Lord" - immediately replace candles and sit

C. Liturgy of the Eucharist

1. Creed - profound bow during, "... by the power of the Holy Spirit, He was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man"
2. Intercessory Prayers - remain standing when they are done
3. Assist in setting the altar - presider's chalice first, wine chalices, then the sacramentary
4. After the altar is set, candle bearers proceed down the center aisle to escort the gifts - approach the priest after he leaves his chair to come down in front of the altar, one on either side of priest
5. Replace candles after priest starts back to the altar
6. Altar servers stand next to credence table - do not sit down
7. As soon as priest picks up chalice to present the wine, pick up cruet with water, lavabo bowl, and finger towel and then proceed to the side of the altar
8. Hold the lavabo bowl with both hands and other server pours the water
9. Bow to priest when done and return to credence table
10. As Sanctus begins, all altar servers move into position - hands folded against chest
11. Ring the bells - 1 time during Epiclesis (Lord, let your Spirit come upon these gifts) Look for priest moving his hands to call down the Holy Spirit
12. Ring the bells - 3 times during consecration of bread in the Body of Christ and, during the consecration of the wine into the Blood of Christ

D. The Great Amen / Sign of Peace

1. Remain standing - hands folded against chest
2. Offer sign of peace to fellow altar servers and if appropriate with the priest/deacon
3. Bring ciboria to altar and hand to priest/deacon
4. Stand in position with EMHC at side of altar

E. Communion

1. After priest, deacon, EMHC move to their position, take book off of altar - Fr. John prefers having altar cleared; Fr. Craig prefers only the book being removed
2. Return to credence table and remain standing or kneel with hands folded against chest
3. After communion, priest/deacon needs cruet of water at altar to purify chalice
4. A second server stands next to altar to take vessels from priest/deacon to the credence table
5. Altar servers sit down when deacon and priest are both seated

F. Concluding Rites

1. "Let us pray" - Sacramentary and posture and holding a book
2. As soon as priest/deacon approach altar, get processional cross and candles and move into position
3. Genuflect/bow with the priest/deacon if you are not carrying anything
4. Procession path - remember to use proper spacing