

Saint Peter Church

Guidelines for Altar Servers

BEFORE MASS

1. Please arrive 15 minutes before Mass and check your name off on the ministers' list at the Ushers' table by the Baptismal Font.
 - If you are substituting for someone, please write your name on the ministers' list so that we know you are a substitute. Write your name by the name of the server you are substituting for.
 - If you are late and someone has already dressed to take your place, that person will serve.
 - If the Mass has already started and the priest has no server or only one server on the altar with him, please dress and assist.

2. Dressing to serve (in the Servers' Sacristy):
 - Servers who are boys will wear a black cassock and a white surplice, which hang together in matching sizes. First, put on the cassock and button it from top to bottom. Choose a size which doesn't drag as you walk, and covers your legs, except your shoes. Then put the matching surplice on and check to make sure that it is centered on your shoulders. After Mass, hang the cassock neatly on its hanger and button the top button. Then hang the surplice neatly over the cassock.
 - Servers who are girls will wear an alb – a white, full length garment. Make sure the alb fits you well – that is, it is not dragging and only the tops of your shoes are showing below the alb. Tie alb with a cord. Flax colored cords are worn for most Sundays, white cords for special feasts – Christmas, Easter, etc. After Mass, hang the alb neatly on its hanger and fasten the alb at the top. Hang the cord on the door with the other cords.
 - Flip-flops and tennis shoes are not permitted. Please wear black or brown dress shoes with dark socks or nylons. Dress sandals permitted for girls only.

3. Preparing for Mass:
 - About 10 Minutes before Mass time, light the on either side of the tabernacle and the two on the altar. If it is the Easter Season or a funeral, please light the Easter candle also. If you need help lighting the candles, you can ask for help.
 - Check with the priest to see if he needs assistance.
 - Check the credence table:
 - Clean lavabo (clear bowl)
 - Finger towel
 - Make sure the water cruet is filled
 - Main Chalice, with purificator, paten on top with a large host, pall on top of the paten, and chalice veil draped over.
 - Two side chalices with two small purificators
 - Ciborium (containing the unconsecrated hosts) – normally at the credence table for weekday Masses, but at the back of the church for Sunday Masses to be brought forward.
 - Container of wine - normally at the credence table for weekday Masses, but at the back of the church for Sunday Masses to be brought forward.
 - Two patens under the lower shelf for Sunday Mass – one for weekday Mass.
 - Check the Sanctuary:
 - Bells in place

- Kneeling pad in place for each server.
- Roman Missal (large red book used by the priest) is where Server 1 sits.
- ***Always remember*** - whenever you cross the center of the sanctuary, you should show some kind of reverence to the tabernacle (either bowing or genuflecting). This is true when setting up before Mass and when cleaning up after Mass. When entering or exiting the sanctuary you should *genuflect* to the tabernacle.
- Determine who is Server 1, 2, and 3. Normally, this is the order in which the names appear in the ministers' list for each Saturday Vigil or Sunday Mass.

PROCESSION

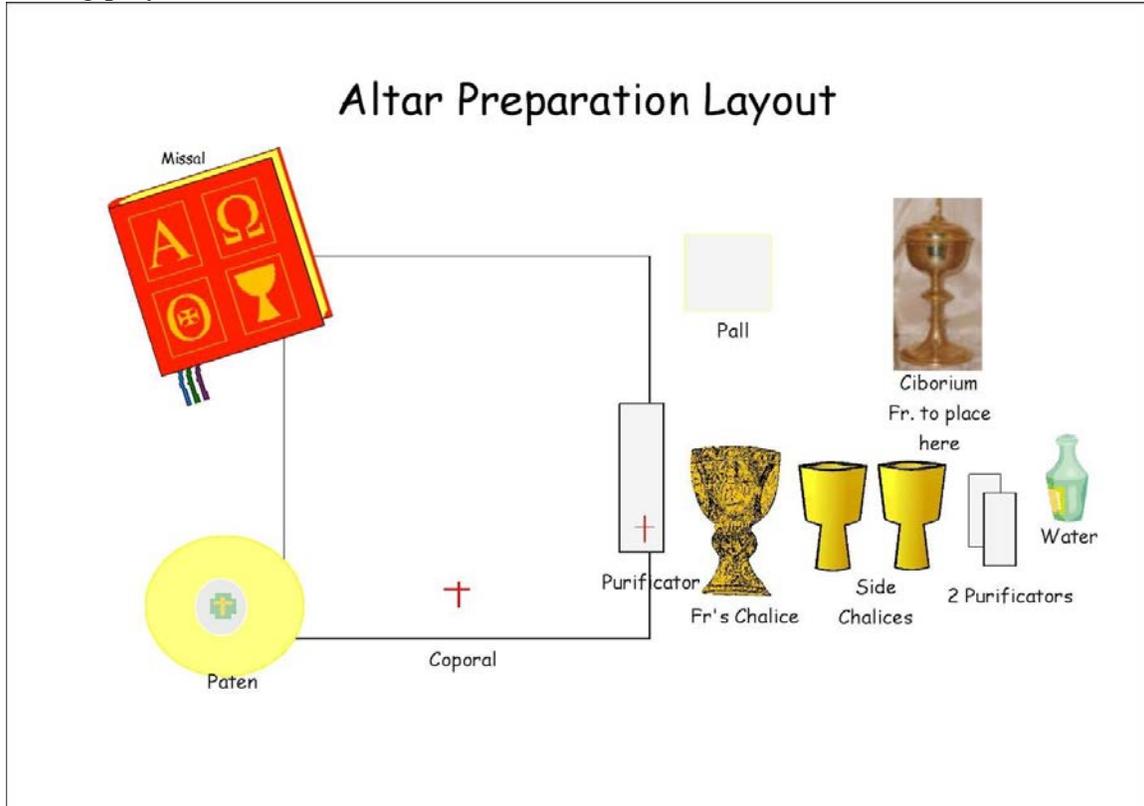
1. Server 1 will bring the processional cross to the back. Servers 2 and 3 will carry the processional candles out of the Priest's Sacristy to the back of the church. If the priest invites you to pray with him before the Mass, do so, otherwise say a quick prayer of your own asking the Lord the grace to serve Him with dignity today.
2. Unless incense is used, the Cross always leads the procession.
3. Cross-bearer holds the Cross so that the Corpus (Jesus' body on the Cross) is higher than the servers' head. Servers 2 and 3 hold the candles so that the flame is at eye level.
4. Proceed up the aisle at a slow pace. When you reach the first step of the sanctuary do not step up on the step. Stop and bow together in front of the first step. The servers proceed up the steps and to the right side of the altar, into the sacristy, and place the cross in its stand and the candles on the table. Blow the candles out (you will re-light them at the end of Mass).
5. Proceed to your places - Server 1 sits on the priest's left and Server 2 and 3 sit on the wooden bench.
6. When the priest looks to Server 1, Server 1 will present the Missal directly in front of the priest (directly in a line between the priest and the Altar of Sacrifice). This takes place immediately at the beginning of Mass and then always after the Gloria, so be alert. When Priest is finished with the "Collect" (the opening prayer after "LET US PRAY"), Server 1 places the Missal on the Missal stand on the left side of the altar.
7. When standing at your chair or while walking in the sanctuary, when you are not carrying anything, please keep your hands folded, at chest level.



LITURGY OF THE WORD

1. Be attentive to the readings. Have your hands palms open, face down, resting on your knees, backs straight. Do not fidget or slump - this can be distracting to the congregation.
2. When praying the Creed with the congregation remember to **bow** at the words "by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man." – if you bow along with the priest, it helps remind the people that everyone should bow at these words as we commemorate the fact that are Lord humbled himself to become a man.
3. At the Prayers of the Faithful, Server 1, will pick up the binder that has the Intercessions in it, or the priest will hand it to him. Hold it directly in front of the priest, just as with the Missal. The priest

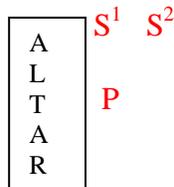
will read the opening prayer, the lector or deacon will read the petitions; the priest will finish with the closing prayer.



LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

1. As the Ushers take up the collection, when they are making their way down the aisle, Server 1 goes behind the altar and Server 2 joins him, both bow to the tabernacle and then proceed to the credence table and get the necessary items.
2. Server 1 brings the Chalice which is veiled to the altar and sets it down on the right side of the altar.
3. There he removes the veil and neatly folds it, placing it off to the side. He then unfolds the corporal [the folded white cloth on top of chalice] in the center of the altar. **Do not pick it up and wave or flip it over – the purpose of the corporal is to catch the particles that fall from the host and so if you flip it over – there flies the fragments that may have been there from the previous Mass.** Next he removes the *pall* [the stiff square that covers the chalice], placing it to the right of the corporal towards the top, the *paten* with host on it, placing it on the left bottom hand of the corporal, and the *purificator* [the oblong cloth used to wipe the chalice. He then places the chalice at the bottom right side. Note: If the deacon is present at the altar, Server 1 will bring the items to the altar and the deacon will position them on the altar.
4. During this time, Server 2 brings the side chalices along with their smaller purificators to the altar. He places the side chalices in a line to the right of the main chalice, and places the small purificators next to the last side chalice. Note: If the deacon is present at the altar, Server 2 will bring the items to the altar and the deacon will position them on the altar.
5. Server 1 returns the folded chalice veil to the credence table and Server 1 or 2 brings back the water. Placing the water on the far right side of the altar.

6. Both servers wait, Server 1 on the right of the Altar and Server 2 on the left of the Altar facing toward the Altar.
7. When the priest is ready, both servers (and the deacon, if present) accompany him to the first step of the Sanctuary to receive the gifts. **Hands should be folded.** The priest will hand the wine to the deacon, (or Server 1 if the deacon is not present) and the collection basket to Server 2. After placing collection basket in front of the altar, Server 2 goes around behind Altar and joins Server 1.



8. The servers stand back one step from the side of the Altar and face toward the Rectory-side of the Church. The wine is handed to the priest, do not set the wine on the Altar.
7. When the priest (or deacon) hands the water and the wine cruets back to the servers, both servers return them to the credence table. From there, Server 1 will bring back the water and lavabo (dish used to catch the water during the washing of fingers) and Server 2 will bring the hand towel. After the priest washes his fingers, he will make a slight bow of the head towards you and you return the bow.
8. After the priest washes his fingers, return the items to the credence table.

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER

1. Server one stands at the steps to the high altar on the credence table side, Server 2 goes to the middle and bows to the tabernacle, and then continues around to stand at the steps to the high altar opposite server 1, standing closest to the bells. Server 3 then comes up and stands next to Server 2. Note – if there is a Server 4, he or she will also come to the middle, bow with Server 2 and then continue over to stand next to Server 1. When the Preface is finished all servers kneel on the first step for the Eucharistic Prayer (after the Sanctus - “Holy, Holy, Holy”).
2. During the Eucharistic Prayer, Server 2 will ring the bells once during the epiclesis - when the priest places his hands over the bread and wine. Prior to this time, his hands are extended outward and open as at the Our Father. He won’t pause - the bells are meant to be rung while he is speaking – a long ring.
3. When the Consecration occurs and the priest lifts the host – Server 2 will ring the bells three, strong, loud, long rings (enough to say “My Lord and My God” slowly on each ring). When the wine is consecrated and the priest lifts the chalice – Server 2 will again ring the bells three, strong, loud, long rings.
4. Stand for the Lord’s Prayer.
5. At the Rite of Peace, shake the hand of the priest (and deacon) and then the hand of the other server if one is next to you.
6. After shaking hands, Server 1 goes to the credence table and brings back the two patens [metal plate with handle], placing them on the altar. He returns to his spot.
7. When the Congregation kneels after singing the “Lamb of God,” servers also kneel.
8. When the priest is finished *drinking* from the chalice, servers stand and walk straight forward towards the people, staying in line with the line of the steps. You will stop so that you are in line

with the altar of sacrifice, and yet far enough away, so that you are still in line with where you knelt. There you will be joined by the extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion.

RITE OF COMMUNION

1. Before receiving Communion, make a small head bow, and also before receiving the Precious Blood. If a server is not receiving the Eucharist, the server will make a bow to the Body of Christ and the Precious Blood, and briefly cross their arms across their chest to indicate he or she is not receiving.
2. After receiving the Eucharist, as the priest and extraordinary ministers go to distribute Communion, Servers 1 and 2 each take a paten from the altar and go down to stand on either side of the priest and other minister distributing the hosts. Thus Server 2 stands on the priest's left and Server 1 stands on the other minister's right. As the priest/minister extends his hand to give communion, you are to keep the paten following the host so that if any fragments drop they will be caught on the paten. The paten should be kept at least six to eight inches below the minister's hand.
3. Server 3 then removes the Missal from the altar and places it where Server 1 sits, Server 3 should then return to kneeling in his previous spot or return to his seat.
4. Once all have received Communion, bring patens back to the altar – **keeping them level**- remember the point of the paten is to catch any small fragments, so if you drop it to your side, you've just put them all on the floor. Stand where you stood for the washing of hands (on the right side of the altar facing towards the rectory side of the church), hold the paten so that the handle is towards the priest. The priest will clean them off into the chalice and then hand them back.
5. As priest and servers are returning to the altar directly after distributing Communion, Server 3 will go to the credence table and bring the water to the altar. He will then join servers 1 and 2 next to the altar.
6. The priest will purify all of the vessels and will hand them to the servers. *Note: If the deacon is present, he will purify the side chalices at the credence table.* As the priest hands you something, bring it back to the credence table. It is better to make several trips than to try to bring too much at once.
7. Server 1 will return from the credence table with the chalice veil. During Sunday Masses, the priest or deacon will call forward those who are taking the Eucharist to the homebound. Once the priest or deacon leaves the altar and goes toward the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and to the tabernacle to put away the Blessed Sacrament, Server 1 will place the veil back on chalice and bring it back to the credence table.

POST COMMUNION

1. The priest will then stand and say or sing "Let us Pray". Server 1 will hold the Missal directly in front of the priest again. When the prayer is finished Server 1 will put the Missal back on the seat.
2. As soon as the closing hymn begins, the servers will move to the Priest's Sacristy to light and pick up either a candle or the cross, whatever each carried in. Exit the sacristy, right-side candle leading, followed by Cross, followed by left-side candle.
3. Proceed to the main aisle. At the first pew, stop and face the altar.
4. When the priest gets to the first step he will turn and face the altar. All bow the head when the priest genuflects. The cross-bearer again leads the procession with the candle-bearers on each side.

AFTER MASS

Please leave cassock/surplice or alb on, until finished with the following jobs:

1. Return candles and Cross to the Priest's Sacristy.
2. Extinguish all altar with the bell shaped extinguisher on the side of the candle lighter.
3. **Never extinguish the wick of the candle lighter by pulling the hot, melted wick inside the barrel.** It melts and clogs the barrel. Always blow out the wick and leave about an inch of the wick extended outside of the barrel.
4. Make sure the candle lighter has a secure, long wick for the next Mass (replacement wicks are in a box in the right side cabinet of the servers' sacristy).
5. Bring chalice (veil and all), side chalices (with purificators), and patens into the Priest's Sacristy.
6. Unfold veil and place next to chalice.
7. Take and place tabernacle key next to chalice.
8. Check with the priest to see if he needs help.
9. Neatly hang up your cassock/surplice or alb.

FURTHER DETAILS OF SERVING

- I. How to Carry the Cross in a Procession:
 - Carry the cross pole at a right angle to the floor and keep it from swaying in any direction
 - The Cross-bearer sets the pace of the procession – moderate solemnity, neither too fast nor too slow
 - The bottom of the pole should be between knee and waist level
 - Your hands should be about one foot apart

- II. How to Hold Candles in a Procession:
 - **The *outside* hand goes at the middle of the candlestick, the *inside* hand under the base** (imagine yourself protecting the candle from the people in the pews-your hand closest to them is the one gripped around the candlestick, your other hand is under the base).
 - The flame should then be at about eye level. If one candle bearer is taller, make sure that you agree to **hold the candles at an equal level.**
 - Candles should be held at a right angle to the floor. It is important to **keep them straight so that melted wax does not drip on the floor – or you.**

- III. How to walk in Procession:
 - When you arrive at the foot of the sanctuary – the first step - stop and in unison bow your heads towards the altar.
 - Then all walk around the *right side of the altar* to the sacristy. Right-side candle leading, followed by Cross, followed by left-side candle.

- IV. How to Stand Properly:
 - Do not slouch
 - Stand erect with hands properly folded

- V. How to Fold Hands Properly:

- Hands should be folded whenever the server is not carrying something and not sitting down. At all other times, hands should be folded as follows:
 1. Put palm against palm with fingers straight
 2. Put the right thumb over the left thumb to form an X
 3. Keep the elbows near the body
 4. Make sure that the hands are held in front of the breast with fingers pointing up at a 45-degree angle.
- Hands should be folded in this manner whenever you are walking, genuflecting, or kneeling.
- When carrying small items in one hand (i.e., holding a paten), carry them in one hand while holding the other hand over the heart.

VI. How to Make the Sign of the Cross Properly:

1. Begin with folded hands
2. Place the left hand on the breast. As you say:
3. “*In the name of the Father*” with right hand straight, touch your forehead with the fingers of the right hand;
4. “*and of the Son*” with your right hand touch your breast just above your left hand;
5. “*and of the Holy...*” touch your fingers to your left shoulder.
6. “*...Spirit*” Touch your right shoulder with the fingers of your right hand.
7. “*Amen.*” Return your hands to the folded position.

REMEMBER – The Sign of the Cross is *not* made if you are carrying something

VII. How To Sit Properly:

- Sit erect with your back straight and with the palms of your hands flat against your legs and the edge of your fingers close to your knees.

VIII. How to Kneel Properly:

- Kneel with your backs straight, hands properly folded in front of you.

IX. If you find yourself having trouble keeping your back straight while kneeling, practice by praying at home in a kneeling position

- Exit the sacristy, right-side candle leading, followed by Cross, followed by left-side candle.
- Proceed to the main aisle. At the first pew, stop and complete your turn towards the altar
- When the priest genuflects, you bow your head, then turn *towards your right* to recess out in unison.

X. Final reminders:

1. In the Sanctuary

- Whenever you enter or exit the sanctuary to set up, light candles, extinguish candles, etc., **always bow or genuflect** towards the Lord’s Presence in the Tabernacle.
- Genuflect, down on one knee, with **back straight** – not bent, hands folded, taking the time to do correctly.
- Whenever you pass in front of the tabernacle while working in the sanctuary, always bow or genuflect to the Lord’s Presence in the Tabernacle.

2. LEAD – you are meant to lead the people in the responses of the Mass. Sing or say the responses, lead people by your involvement and reverence
3. SILENCE – no unnecessary talking **from beginning of procession until end of the recessional.**
4. NO TALKING DURING THE CONSECRATION - Only One exception: if you need to tell Server 2 to ring the bell, because they had forgotten to.
5. DRESS - Tennis shoes, sandals, flip-flops are not permitted. Please wear black or brown dress shoes with dark socks or nylons.
6. TIME - Be at church 10-15 minutes early.
7. ALWAYS FIND A REPLACEMENT if you cannot be there as scheduled.
8. ALWAYS TAKE CARE OF CHURCH PROPERTY. Your liturgical vestments – cassocks, surplices and albs - must *always* be treated with respect and hung up neatly after Mass. *Never* throw them on the floor. Treat the things of the Church as those of the House of God, for that is what they are.