

Prince of Peace Catholic Church **Altar Server Guidelines**

I. Basic guidelines

- A. Being an altar server is a privilege and an honor. Remember you are serving God by:
 - 1. Prayerful and reverent participation in the Mass.
 - 2. Prayerful and reverent assistance of the priest and the people of God
- B. Positions
 - 1. *Cross bearer* (1): 7th grade or older
 - a. The cross bearer carries the cross at the front of the procession.
 - b. The cross bearer also ring the bells at the consecration.
 - c. The cross bearer also holds the book for father at the opening and closing prayer.
 - 2. *Servers* (2): 5th – 6th grade
 - a. The two servers process in and out with the two candles.
 - b. They also assist father at the offertory.

II. Before Mass

- A. Arrival
 - 1. You should be well groomed and appropriately dressed for mass.
 - 1. No shorts or t-shirts, and no tennis shoes or sandals.
 - 2. Shoulders must be covered.
 - 3. See dress code handout for more details.
 - 2. Make sure you arrive at church at least 15 minutes before Mass is scheduled to start.
 - 3. Check your name off the list in the sacristy.
 - 4. Dress with a white alb (robe) and cincture (rope) – make sure the alb is ankle length.
- B. Preparation:
 - 1. *Cross bearer*: check in with Father, see if there is anything that needs to be done or if there is anything different about mass
 - a. *Make sure the bells are in their proper place*
 - 2. *Servers*: Make sure everything is out for mass and light **all** candles in the sanctuary.
 - 3. Go to the weekday chapel to pray before mass and ask God for the grace to serve this mass well. Be in the weekday chapel no later than five minutes before mass.

III. Posture, genuflections, and bowing at Mass

- A. Posture
1. The church is a sacred space, where God is truly present. The sanctuary is the most sacred part of the whole Church. You should likewise maintain a reverent and prayerful posture on the altar.
 2. *Walking* – Do not walk too fast, but do not walk noticeably slower than usual. Keep your hands folded appropriately, your back straight and your head up.
 3. When sitting keep your hands in your lap or on your sides. Don't slouch and don't fidget.
 4. *Hands* – should be folded and in front of your chest. If you are carrying something with one hand, hold the other hand flat on your chest.
 5. *Eyes* – During mass, always look towards the place where the action is happening. For example, when the lector is reading the petitions, look at the lector.
- B. Bows
1. Only bow to the Altar when in procession. Do not bow to the priest, this is not necessary.

IV. Procession

- A. Order for Procession:
1. Spacing: leave ½ aisle between each “group”.
 2. Thurifer (or “incense bearer”) when needed goes first.
 3. Cross bearer leads the procession (begin when singing starts).
 4. Two Servers, one on either side, carry the processional candlesticks.
 5. Deacon or Lector (if no deacon is present).
 6. Priest/concelebrants.
- B. Cross bearer:
1. Hold the processional cross with both hands, and hold the cross as high as you can without wobbling.
 2. Slowly walk down the aisle in the procession.
 3. Keep your eyes focused ahead towards the altar.
 4. When you arrive at the base of the sanctuary steps, turn to the far right where the bottom step turns and wait until the priest arrives.
 5. When the priest genuflects, make a simple bow of the head.
 6. Then go to right side of sanctuary and place the cross in its stand to the right.
 7. Lastly, reverently walk (with your hands folded) to your place on the right side of the sanctuary.
- C. Servers:
1. Carrying the processional candlesticks, walk at the same pace as the other candle bearer, holding the candle at or near the same height.
 2. Keep your eyes focused on the altar.
 3. When you arrive at the base of sanctuary steps wait until the priest arrives.
 4. Make sure there is enough room for the priest to stand in the middle.
 5. When the priest genuflects, make a simple bow of the head.
 6. Remain at the foot of the sanctuary, once the priest and Deacon/Lector are out of the way, walk to the right and place candles in the stands.
 7. After the lector has put the book on the altar and turns to leave the sanctuary, the servers turn and exit the sanctuary to place the processional candlesticks on the small table close to the credence table.
 8. Lastly, reverently walk (with your hands folded) to your place on the right side of the sanctuary.

V. Liturgy of the Word

- A. Opening Prayer
 - 1. The cross bearer will bring the Missal to the priest for the Collect (opening prayer) after the Gloria. When we begin singing the Gloria, pick up the Missal and open to the Red ribbon. When “Amen” is sung, take the Missal to the priest and hold it at shoulder level while the priest reads the Opening prayer.
 - 2. After the congregation responds “Amen”, take the book and return to your place.
- B. Readings
 - 1. Stand when the congregation stands, sit when they sit. Pay attention, look at the reader, and respond when appropriate.
- C. Gospel Procession
 - 1. When the music begins for the Gospel acclamation (“Alleluia”), the servers will retrieve the candlesticks, carry them into the sanctuary and stand at the front corners of the altar, facing the congregation as they wait for the priest.
 - 2. The priest/deacon will pick up the Book of the Gospels gospel and face the congregation. When he turns towards the ambo, the two servers turn and lead the short procession to the ambo.
 - 3. Once at the ambo, the servers should be facing each other from either side of the ambo for the duration of the Gospel. Rest the candlesticks on the ground.
 - 4. After the Gospel they return the candlesticks to their stand, walking reverently, and then return to their seats.

VI. Liturgy of the Eucharist

- A. Preparation of the Gifts
 - 1. After the homily, the priest will return to his chair and everyone will recite the Creed.
 - 2. After the Creed, when the congregation sits, the cross bearer will retrieve the cross and walk to the back of the main/center aisle.
 - 3. The servers will assist the deacon/Eucharistic coordinators in setting the altar.
 - 1. The older server will carry the tray with the chalices and place it on the center corporal. Wait for the tray to be emptied, return to the credence table.
 - 2. The younger server will carry the tray with the ciboria and place it on the center corporal, after the first server returns to the credence table.
 - 4. Once the altar is set, stand beside it, waiting for the priest to stand and go to the foot of the sanctuary.
 - 5. Once the priest, with the servers, arrives at the foot of the sanctuary, the cross bearer leads the gifts down the aisle.
 - 6. When the priest stands and goes to the center aisle to receive the gifts, the servers accompany him and assist with carrying the gifts to the altar.
 - 7. Upon reaching the front of the altar, the cross bearer returns the cross in its stand and returns to their seat, do not stop at the foot of the sanctuary.
- B. At the altar
 - 1. Both servers stand just behind the corner of the altar so the priest/deacon does not have to reach across the altar in order for you to hand him the water and wine when he needs them.
 - 2. Take the “stoppers” out of the cruets and hold them with the handles facing the priest/deacon. Hand them to Father when he needs them.
 - 3. When he hands the cruets back to the servers, put the “stoppers” back in the cruets and then take the cruets to the credence table.

4. One server then picks up the bowl and towel from the credence table while the other server picks up the pitcher of water. Bring these items to the altar and once again stand just slightly behind the back corner of the altar.
 5. After Father blesses the bread and wine, he will wash his hands. One server holds the bowl while the other server pours water from the pitcher over father's hands. The server with the bowl also has the towel which Father will use to dry his hands.
 6. After washing Father's hands the servers take the items back to the credence table and return to their pew.
- C. Eucharistic Prayer
1. The Eucharistic prayer is a solemn and sacred part of mass, and we all should listen to it with reverence and in prayerful silence.
 2. The cross bearer will ring the bells at three different times during the Eucharistic prayer.
 - a. At the Epiclesis – when Father holds his hands over the gifts and says, “Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you”
 - i. When Father moves his hands ring the bells ONE TIME (quickly)
 - b. At the elevation of the Sacred Host the priest will say “Take this, all of you, and eat of it: this is my Body which will be given up for you.” He will then lift the Host up so all can adore our Lord.
 - i. As he lifts up the Host, ring the bells THREE TIMES (quickly)
 - c. At the elevation of the chalice, the priest will say “Take this, all of you, and drink from it: for this is the chalice of my Blood, the Blood of the new and eternal covenant; which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me.” He will then lift up the chalice so all can adore our Lord.
 - i. As he lifts up the Chalice ring the bells THREE TIMES (quickly)
- D. Our Father
1. Stand by your kneeler and participate reverently in the prayer, using “prayer hands.”
- E. Communion
1. Follow the ushers' direction and receive with the congregation. Do not enter the sanctuary. You will be the first to receive at the station nearest you.
- F. Closing Prayer
1. When Father sits down, the cross bearer will pick up the Missal and open it to the RED RIBBON. As soon as Father stands up, bring him the Missal.
 2. Wait until the priest closes the book and then return to your place.
- G. After Final Blessing and Dismissal (when the congregation begins to sing the final song):
1. Cross bearer:
 - a. Get the processional cross and go to stand in the center aisle, in front of the 2nd pew facing the altar.
 2. Servers:
 - a. Both servers wait until the cross bearer passes in front of them to retrieve the processional cross, and then they follow the cross bearer to the candlesticks. They then follow the cross bearer and walk to the center aisle in front of the 1st pew facing the altar.
- H. Recessional
1. Father will genuflect; all three servers will make a simple bow of the head. Then all turn to leave.
 2. Cross bearer leads the procession out of the church with servers following the cross bearer and the priest behind the servers.

- I. After Mass
 1. The servers put the candlesticks in the sacristy and the cross is returned to its stand.
 2. All three will then go to the server sacristy to return albs to the closet. Remember, the **albs must be hung up and buttoned** so they stay on the hanger.