



# ALTAR SERVER'S GUIDELINES

## I. Introduction:

“To be in ministry to serve the Lord and His people---*is a privilege and not a right!*”  
Read below carefully, it clearly spells out the expectations and guidelines for all altar servers.

## II. Expectations:

- All servers are expected to be at the Church ***15 minutes*** before mass begins.
- All servers are expected to *fulfill their assigned times to serve* .
- All servers are to *sign* the Altar Server Sign In Book when they serve.
- All servers are expected to *find their own replacement* at mass if they cannot make it for *whatever reason*; i.e., boy for boy, girl for girl, although, a girl may find a boy substitute. When possible there should always be a mix serving at mass. **A Lead Server must replace a Lead Server!**
- All servers are to *wear proper clothes and footwear* (refer to ASMinistry requirements) at all masses.
- All servers are expected to *pay attention* during mass.
- All servers are expected to serve at *Holy Days, funerals, weddings, etc.* when asked.
- All servers will be *ranked according to their experience* ;( i.e., Beginner, Server, Lead Server) ranks must be earned by evaluation.
- All servers are expected to *know and say* the appropriate responses throughout the mass
- All servers are expected to *hang up their vestments* after mass. Keep the server area neat!
- All servers will follow expectations addressed in Altar Server's Guidelines and Ministry Requirements.

## III. Ranks & Training

### A. Altar Servers:

1. Beginner--0-12 months in training (**earns certificate**)
2. Server-3-12 months or more and is proficient (**earns pin**)
3. Lead Server --Proficient leader (**earns Cross Bearer status**)

## IV. Altar Server Evaluation:

**\*\* All evaluations administered by the Deacon \*\***

All Beginners will move up to the next position by being evaluated *every month* until they reach Server level. You *may not* remain at the Beginner level. You must achieve the level of proficiency of a Server. Lead Server are only for those who demonstrate leadership qualities and is *not mandatory* for everyone.

1. Beginner--you must be able to identify the following by name and know what they are used for in the liturgy:

- **Sacramentary**--the book the priest prays from during the mass at the altar
- **Lectionary**--the book of scriptures read at the liturgy of the Word.
- **Sanctuary**--the sacred space elevated before the congregation.
- **Sacristy**--the room where priests vest before mass.
- **Vestments**--special robes worn by priests, deacons and altar servers.
- **Alb**--white robe worn over street clothes, priests, deacons.
- **Cincture**--cord used as a belt for the alb.
- **Chasuble**--colored vestment worn only by the priest.
- **Dalmatic**--colored vestment worn only by the deacon.
- **Cassock**--black/red/white vestment worn by altar servers.
- **Surplice**- -a white garment worn over the cassock that is half its length.
- **Altar**--the table of the Lord in the sanctuary.
- **Altar Cloth**--the tablecloth for the altar--always white.
- **Purificator**--small white cloth used with the chalice.
- **Corporal**--small white cloth placed in the center of the altar.
- **Altar Vessels**--sacred vessels used during the celebration of liturgy.
- **Chalice**--gold cup used by the priest/eucharistic ministers for the Blood of Christ
- **Paten**--small dish usually used with the chalice.
- **Ciborium**--gold cup with a lid for the Body of Christ in the Tabernacle.
- **Pall**--stiff, white board placed over the chalice. Note! The white covering for a casket is also called a pall.
- **Tabernacle**--the ornate receptacle used to place the Body of Christ.
- **Ambo**--the place where the Word of God is proclaimed.
- **Credence Table**--the small table off to one of the sanctuary for sacred vessel.
- **Paschal Candle**--the large ornate candle used at funerals, baptisms, and Easter until Pentecost.
- **Processional Cross**--the cross carried in and out of the mass.
- **Cruets**--small pitchers of water and wine for the mass.
- **Finger Bowl**--small bowl for priest to wash hands during the liturgy of Eucharist.
- **Thurible**--container for burning incense.
- **Thurifer**--the server responsible for the thurible.
- **Boat**--the container for incense.
- **Aspergillum**--the holy water sprinkler
- **Demonstrate**--knowledge of all of the above items and definitions.

2. Server-- will be evaluated within 12 months. Once you shown proficiency you will be eligible to wear "Altar Server" pin at mass and school.

- **Demonstrate**--that you know everything from the Beginner's and Server's evaluation.
- **Demonstrate**--that you can recite all prayers said during the mass.
- **Demonstrate**--by your history that you can perform your ministry well.

3. **Lead Server** --only for those Servers that demonstrate the ability and the desire to move into a *leadership* role. You will be eligible to carry Processional Cross, ring bells, will help in training of other levels, will always be the first to be asked to serve in the special masses; i.e, Christmas, Easter, etc.

- **Demonstrate**--how to light and extinguish candles properly.
  - **Demonstrate**--how to set the altar correctly for eucharistic celebration.
  - **Demonstrate**--when to bring the cruet of water for wine intinction.
  - **Demonstrate**--when to bring the finger bowl and towel for hand washing.
  - **Demonstrate**--what posture and hand holding is proper while serving.
  - **Demonstrate**--the appropriate responses said by the people during mass
- **Demonstrate**--all of the above in Section IV (1-3) with proficiency.
  - **Demonstrate**--that you know and understand the various parts of the mass as well as the priest does so that you can anticipate him during the celebration; i.e., the Procession; the Introductory Rite; the Penitential Rite; the Opening Prayer; the Liturgy of the Word; the Homily; the Profession of Faith; the General Intercessions; the Liturgy Of the Eucharist; the Eucharistic Prayer; the Preface Acclamation; the Memorial Acclamation; the Communion Rite; the Prayer after Communion; the Concluding Rite, the Blessing and Dismissal.

