

## Introduction

To be a server means you are accepting a very special role in the prayer of the Church. You are a leader of our liturgical prayer, along with the Priest, Deacon, Lectors, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at the table of the Lord. This is both an honor and a privilege and should not be taken on lightly. Our hope is that, as a server, you will enable our community to pray well. Your behavior, dedication and participation in our prayer will make it happen.

Being a server is not always easy. In fact, sometimes it will be difficult, especially when you have to make choices between serving and other activities. It will require you to have more knowledge and understanding about the liturgy than what you might currently have. This means you will need to study and be attentive to what happens during the various liturgies.

Each ministry is an opportunity to get closer to God. Your commitment to this ministry is a great blessing for you and for all of us at St. Christopher Parish. Thank you for volunteering, and know that our community is better because of your participation.

This handbook has been developed as a training guide and a reference book. You will need to be familiar with everything in it. Use it as often as you need to and keep it so you can look at it during your years in this ministry. When your training period is completed, you will be expected to know the material in this handbook and demonstrate that knowledge before you begin this ministry.

## General Expectations

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| <b>When to be at church:</b> | 1. Servers must be in the Lay Ministers' Room and vested at least 15 minutes before the service begins. Sign in when you arrive.   |
| <b>Dress code:</b>           | 1. Appropriate dress is long pants/slacks, socks, and dress shoes. Skirts and shorts are permitted during the summer months. No gym shoes. No flipflops.<br><br>2. Servers are to wear the albs that come to the tops of the shoes. After use, albs should always be hung back on the rack. Each alb is marked with a size so you can easily find one that fits. |
| <b>Behavior:</b>             | 1. Be helpful and courteous to all. "Fooling around," fighting, or loud talking is not appropriate behavior. Proper respect is to be given to everyone. Your best behavior is expected at all times.   |

2. Do everything in the church with respect and reverence. People in the assembly notice servers; servers can either help or hinder them in prayer.
3. Stand and sit up straight. Slouching or kicking feet out in front of you while sitting makes a person look too relaxed or sloppy. When sitting, servers keep both feet on the floor and hands in their laps.
4. **Participation during the liturgy is essential.** Servers sing and pray because we are all called to full, conscious, and active participation at liturgy. Servers are expected to sing and respond at the appropriate times.
5. Never hurry or rush during the liturgy. Perform everything at a dignified pace.
6. If a server cannot make an assignment, it is the server's responsibility to find a substitute.
7. Sign in when you arrive in the Sacristy. If subbing, write your name next to the name of the scheduled server.

## Dictionary

Each server is expected to be familiar with the items used in the liturgy. The following list of definitions is to be known by every server.

acolyte	Another name for a server; usually carries a candle.
alb	The long white robe which is the basic garment for all liturgical ministers if they wear special clothing for the liturgy.
altar	The table at which the sacrificial meal of the Mass is celebrated. The altar is the focal point of the church building and is a symbol of the cross.
ambo	The reading stand from where the Scriptures are read and the homily is preached.

Blessed Sacrament	A name used to refer to the Real Presence of Christ under the form of bread and wine after the consecration in the Eucharistic Prayer of Mass.
boat	The dish for incense before it is burned. It has a small spoon used to put the incense in the thurible. (Its name comes from the Middle Ages when it was usually shaped like a boat.)
Book of Gospels	A special Lectionary that only contains the Gospel readings for Mass on Sundays and special feasts. It is also called the Evangeliary.
censer	<i>See thurible.</i>
chalice	The cup used at Mass for the consecration of the wine into the Blood of Christ.
chasuble	The outer vestment worn by the priest for Mass. The different colors of chasubles signify the different liturgical seasons and feasts.
ciborium	The container used to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. (The plural is <i>ciboria</i> .)
cincture	The rope-like belt worn with the alb to hold it at the waist.
cope	A cape worn by bishops, priests and deacons for some liturgies outside of Mass.
corporal	The white cloth placed on the altar on top of the altar cloth. On it is placed the bread and wine to be consecrated at Mass.
credence table	A small table near the altar where the items for Mass are kept until they are needed.
crozier	The staff used by a bishop.
crucifer	The server who carries the processional cross.
cruet	A vessel to hold the water or wine for the celebration of Mass.
dalmatic	The outer vestment worn by the deacon over the alb and stole. It is square cut with sleeves and is made in all the liturgical colors.

hand towel	The towel used by the priest when he washes his hands at Mass.
humeral veil	A liturgical veil that is worn over the shoulders by a cleric when he carries the Blessed Sacrament in procession or when he uses the Blessed Sacrament to bless the assembled people.
incense	A mixture of spices which produce a sweet smell and smoke when burned. It is used to show respect and honor to things (like the altar or Book of Gospels) and to people. It is used to symbolize our prayer to God. (Psalm 141 says "Let our prayer rise like incense, O God...")
Lectionary	The book of Scripture readings used for the liturgy.
Lector	A person who reads the first and second reading at Mass.
mitre	The liturgical head-dress proper to a Bishop.
monstrance	The large container used for displaying the Blessed Sacrament. Usually it is shaped like a cross or a sunburst. In the center is a glass-covered area into which the Host is placed in a smaller container called a luna.
nave	The interior of the church.
pall	1.) The large cloth (usually white) used to cover the casket at funerals. It reminds us of the white robe used for everyone at baptism to signify the holiness God gives us in baptism. 2.) A small square linen cloth that is stiffened. It is used to cover the chalice so foreign objects don't get into the chalice when it is on the altar.
Paschal Candle	The large candle blessed at the Easter Vigil to symbolize the Resurrection and Christ's presence in our midst. It is lit at all Masses in the Easter season, and at baptisms and funerals.
paten	Another name for a communion plate or bowl. Often it is smaller and only holds a few hosts.
presider's chair	The chair used by the priest or deacon who leads the prayer of the community.

processional cross	The cross carried at the beginning of the procession.
pulpit	The reading stand where the Scriptures are read and the homily is preached. It is also called the ambo.
purificator	The small white linen towel, usually folded into three parts, used by the priest, deacon, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion to wipe the rim of the chalice after people have received the Blood of Christ.
pyx	A small metal container used for carrying communion to the sick or homebound.
Roman Missal	The book of prayers used by the priest and deacon during the liturgy.
sacristan	The person who helps prepare all the items needed for Mass.
sacristy	The place where the ministers prepare for the liturgy by putting on their vestments, reviewing what is to happen during that particular liturgy, and by remembering the sacredness of what they are about to do.
sanctuary	The area in the church that encompasses the altar, ambo, and presider's chair.
staff	<i>See crozier.</i>
stole	The cloth strip hung around the neck of a priest or deacon. It symbolizes their ordination and role in the community. The priest wears the stole with both ends hanging straight down in front. The deacon's stole is worn diagonally over the left shoulder with one end hanging in front and one in back, being joined on the right side at his hip. Stoles are made in all the liturgical colors.
tabernacle	The large container in which the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. The ciborium with the consecrated Hosts is placed inside it. A candle is kept burning near it to indicate that the Blessed Sacrament is present.
thurible	The container for burning incense with charcoal. Also called a censer.
thurifer	The server who is in charge of the thurible with incense.

**Along with the previous items, servers should know what the liturgical colors are and what they stand for in the Church.**

Black	The color of sorrow. Black can be used for funerals and All Souls Day.
Gold	The color for special celebrations. Vestments of gold cloth can replace white for special events like Christmas or Easter or the anniversary of the founding of a parish.
Green	The color of hope. It is used on all Sundays and weekdays that do not have a special feast outside the seasons of Easter, Christmas, Lent and Advent.
Purple	The color of waiting and of penance. It is used in Advent (the waiting) and in Lent (the season of penance). Purple can also be used at funerals to show our sadness.
Red	The color associated with the Holy Spirit and the martyrs who shed their blood for the Lord. It is also the color used on Passion(Palm) Sunday, Good Friday, Pentecost, and for Confirmation.
Rose	The color of joy during Advent and Lent. Half-way through Advent and Lent there is a Sunday (Advent is Gaudete and Lent is Laetare) when rose can be the liturgical color used. It shows that while we wait (Advent) or while we do penance (Lent) we are still joyful that God continues his gifts to us. It also reminds us that we are getting close to a great celebration.
Silver	Can be used in place of white or gold.
White	The color of joy. It is used for all major feasts of the Lord Jesus and the Blessed Mother. It is used for the feasts of the saints who are not martyrs. It is the color for baptisms, weddings, funerals and the Easter season.

## **The Structure of the Mass**

A server must know the structure of the Mass.

### **The Entrance Rite**

- The Procession
- The Sign of the Cross and Greeting
- Introductory comments
- The Penitential Act or the Blessing of Water
- The "Glory to God" or Gloria
- The Collect(Opening Prayer)

### **The Liturgy of the Word**

- The First Reading (Old Testament or New Testament)
- The Responsorial Psalm
- The Second Reading (New Testament)
- Gospel Acclamation
- Gospel Reading
- Homily
- Profession of Faith or Creed
- Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful)

### **The Liturgy of the Eucharist**

- The Preparation of the Altar and Gifts
- The Prayer over the Gifts
- The Eucharistic Prayer

#### **The Communion Rite**

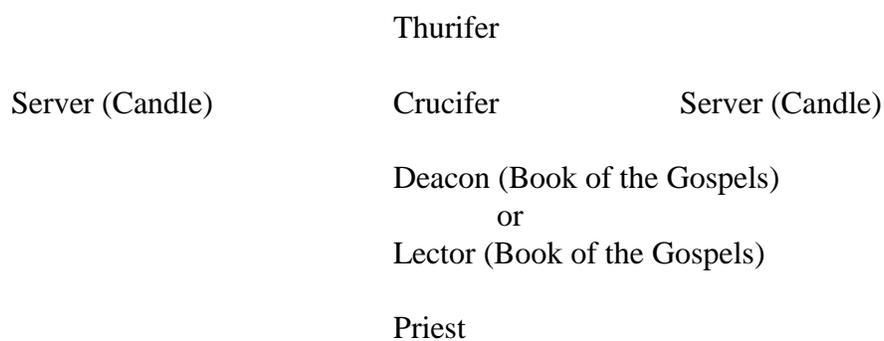
- The Lord's Prayer
- The Sign of Peace
- The Breaking of the Bread (also called the Fraction Rite)
- Reception of Holy Communion
- Prayer after Communion

### **The Concluding Rite**

- Announcements
- Final Blessing
- The Recession

## General Principles for Serving

Servers always lead a procession, whether there are a lot of people or a few in it. The following is a standard order and should be adjusted according to the celebration and the presence or absence of a deacon or thurifer:



### Entrance Procession and Introductory Rites

- The procession forms at the back of the main aisle of church. The servers with candles flank the server with the cross.
- At the direction of the priest or deacon, the procession starts at a dignified pace.
- The servers stop at the bottom step for one second and then proceed into the sanctuary. Since servers are carrying items, e.g. cross and candles, they do not bow.
- Next, they place the thurible, candles, and cross in their appropriate positions, and then take their place in the front chairs closest to the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.
- The server who is the Book Bearer brings the Roman Missal to the priest or deacon (if present) for the Penitential Act.
- During the singing of the Gloria, the Book Bearer returns to his or her place.
- When the priest says, **Let us pray**, the Book bearer brings the Roman Missal to the priest. At the **Amen** of the Collect, the server takes the Roman Missal back to his or her seat.

## Liturgy of the Word

- The servers are expected to be attentive during the readings, sing the Responsorial Psalm and Gospel Acclamation, and be attentive during the homily.
- When the music begins for the Gospel Acclamation, two servers pick up the processional candles and stand behind the altar, one at each corner. The Priest or Deacon will go to the altar, bow, and pick up the Book of the Gospels. When he turns to go to the ambo, one server leads and the other follows behind him. Once at the ambo, one server stands at one side and the other stands at the other side, facing the Priest or Deacon. At the conclusion of the Gospel, the servers place the candles back on the credence table and they themselves return to their seats.
- At the end of the Creed, at the words, “We believe in one holy, catholic, and Apostolic Church...”, the Book Bearer brings the Roman Missal to the priest for the Universal Prayer (Prayers of the Faithful) and stays there until the Amen. **If a deacon is present, he will proclaim the Universal Prayer and the Book Bearer will need to stand in between the priest and deacon so they both can see their appropriate parts.** At the “Amen” of the concluding prayer, the server then places the Roman Missal on the altar and takes the wooden holder for the Book of the Gospels back to the credence table.

## Preparation of the Altar and Gifts

- Once the offertory hymn begins, the servers set the altar. The servers place the priest’s chalice and purificator and the tray with cups and purificators on the altar at the appropriate places.
- Two servers accompany the priest or deacon for the presentation of the gifts, stand one on each side of the priest or deacon and receive the gifts from the priest or deacon. They place the wine and bread on the altar at the spot from where the priest prays the Eucharistic Prayer.
- The third server returns to the credence table, picks up the bowl, pitcher of water, and hand towel, and returns to the side of the altar.
- If incense is used, the thurifer brings the thurible and boat to the altar and stands next to the server with the hand towel and bowl.
- After the priest has said the blessing prayers over the bread and wine, he will then need the boat and thurible to incense the altar and gifts. **The servers need to give the priest plenty of room to walk around the altar.**
- After the priest is finished, the deacon (if present, if not, then the thurifer) incenses the

priest with three swings of the thurible. It is appropriate to first bow to the priest (who will also bow), then incense him. Then bow after the incensation.

- The thurible and boat are then returned to their place.
- The hand washing takes place next. One server should pour the water over the priest's hands and into the bowl that is held by another server. The third server holds the towel open for the priest to dry his hands.
- When this is completed, the servers take the items back to the credence table, and they return to their proper place. **Once again, servers are expected to say the appropriate responses and to sing the Holy, Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Amen, pray the Our Father, etc.**

### Communion and Concluding Rites

- Servers exchange the Sign of Peace with each other and those around them; then one server brings the ciboria from the credence table to the altar.
- After receiving communion, the server who is the Book Bearer retrieves the Roman Missal from the altar and takes it back to his or her seat. The other servers also take the priest's chalice, purificator, and tray back to the credence table. They then return to their seats.
- After communion, the priest will then say, **Let us pray**, and the Book Bearer holds the Roman Missal for the priest for the prayer.
- At the **Amen**, the Book Bearer takes the Roman Missal back to his or her seat if the priest has not asked the Book Bearer to stay there for a Solemn Blessing from the Roman Missal.
- As soon as the music for the recessional hymn begins, the servers retrieve their items (thurible, cross, and candles) and line up at the bottom of the steps, facing the altar. They need to leave enough room for the priest and deacon in the center.

ALTAR

## STEPS

candle      cross      deacon      priest      thurifer      candle

- After the priest and deacon bow, the servers lead the recession in the same order as the procession.
- The servers will then return their items (thurible, cross, candles) to the appropriate places and bring the other items back to the sacristy. They also extinguish the candles.