

Characteristics of a Server

A Server should possess the following characteristics:

- Can mould into the background and thus become invisible to the congregation.
 - Be able to facilitate the public expression of shared prayer.
 - Don't fumble and stumble.
 - Don't daydream, yawn or fall asleep.
 - Anticipate what might happen next.
 - Be able to work together as a team.

Before You Come to Church:

- Make sure you get a good night sleep. No one wants to watch a server keep yawning.
 - Make sure you have had something to eat and drink.
 - Make sure you have been to the Toilet.
- Make sure your shoes are the proper type for church. Sneakers/tennis shoes should not be worn.
 - Make sure your hands and fingernails are clean.

When You Come to Church:

Arrive at the church at least fifteen minutes before Mass begins. If the weather is bad, you will probably have to leave home a bit earlier than usual.

When you arrive at the church, stop and think about what a special building you are entering. Your church is a place where God lives with his people in your parish, and a place where God's people come together to praise God.

Servers should come to church properly clothed. **See AS Ministry Requirements.**

Be quiet in the sacristy and avoid making loud unnecessary noise.

Treat your vestments with care. Check to see if the vestment is too short or too long. Look at yourself in the mirror, if so, you will need a bigger size. *Please remember to hang them back up after using!!!*

Get things ready according to your allocated job (i.e. CB, CA, B, etc.) Check the credence table. You should check to make sure all the proper items are set up for Mass. **Ask those preparing for Mass and after, if they need your help.**

Be especially ready to help the priest if he is a visitor to your parish. He may ask you some questions about how Mass takes place in your church. If he does, try to answer them clearly. He wants to serve the people at Mass well, just as you should and you can be a big help to him.

Before Mass is scheduled to begin, *the lead server should light the candles on the altar*. Sometimes you may be asked to light other candles also. During the weeks after Easter, you will light the large Easter Candle that has a special place in the sanctuary. Lighting the candles tells the people that Mass is about to begin. You should light them in such a way that people will find it a pleasure to watch. When lighting the candles, know that you are suppose to do and be careful for the safety of the church and all who are in it, including yourself. **Keep the flame away from your vestments.**

The cross bearer leads followed by the two candles followed by the lector and then the priest. Note: The cross and candles always lead the procession/recession. If incense is used, then the incense bearer (thurifer) leads. When you are processing to the altar remember this is not a race. We have plenty of time to get to our destination. **Walk slowly!!!**

Also, remember that during mass people are watching you. They do make comments to the Celebrants and the Team Leaders about how well or bad the servers were at Mass. You are not supposed to be laughing or playing while serving. However, you are to respond to the priest and sing with the congregation throughout the Mass.

Servers can distract the congregation in their prayer because of the way servers are standing or sitting. Hands should be folded: locked together held at the chest or pressed together at the chest. If two servers need to move they are to move together. Don't move without your partner!

After Mass take everything to the sacristy, and extinguish the candles using the candles snuffers. *Finally, return your vestment to its hanger and place it in its right order and manner of hanging.*

Walking

We do a lot of walking everyday and sometimes we get sloppy as we do it. Always walk with your back straight and your head held high. Do not "bound" up or down the altar steps. Do not run, walk, or cross in front of the celebrant, slowly walk or cross behind them. When in procession/recession, remember, **WALK SLOWLY!!!**

Bowing

When you bow to someone or something at mass, it should be a smooth forward inclining of your head and shoulders. When you bow to the altar, bow deeply at the waist and bring yourself slowly to your full height. When you bow to the priest, bow your head slowly and gracefully. Never walk and bow at the same time: stop before bowing.

Genuflecting

When you genuflect, keep your hands in front of your chest while you go down on your right knee. Keep your body straight. Do not wobble back and forth, or you may look like a newborn lamb trying to walk. Be sure that your vestment isn't going to trip you on the way down or up.

Kneeling

When you kneel, your body should be upright and your hands should be in front of your chest, well above your waist. *If you lean your body forwards or backwards you will hurt the muscles in your back or the ligaments in your knee.*

Standing

Always stand up straight with both feet firmly on the floor six to eight inches apart. This will give you balance and comfort at the same time. ***Don't lean against the furniture or against the walls.***

Sitting

Sit down on your stool or chair carefully and gracefully. Once you are seated, sit tall and don't slouch. Place your hands on your lap or flat on your thighs in a relaxed manner. Watch how the celebrant sits.

Hands

Unless you are sitting down or carrying something (like a candle); your hands should be kept joined in front of your chest; either locked together, or palm-to-palm, fingers pointing upward. Keep your hands high up on your chest. If you are carrying something in one hand *hold the other hand flat on your chest.*

Eyes

During Mass always look towards the place where the action is happening: the celebrant's chair, the lectern or the altar. When a reader is reading the scriptures, you should be looking at the reader. When you are talking to someone you expect that person to look at you, the same is true at mass. Never look at the people in the congregation, rather look just above their heads.

Know what you are to do while serving, and when you are to do it. Never fidget, pay attention and be alert!!
Always do things smoothly. If you make a mistake, never get flustered.

Should you ever have any question regarding your service at the altar, do not hesitate to ask the priest, deacon, or the team leaders. Remember, that *you and your family* are a part of a Team: **The St. Pius X Altar Server Ministry.**

