

**Saint Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
Altar Server Guidelines**

Altar Server Guidelines

**Saint Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
Altar Server Guidelines**

Table of Contents

I.	Altar Server Ministry	3
A.	Altar Server Requirements	3
1.	Who may serve	3
II.	Preparing to Serve the Mass	4
A.	Before Mass Activities	4
1.	Arrival, Sign In	4
	Expected Attire:	4
2.	Vesting (in the sacristy)	4
3.	Lighting the Candles	4
B.	Beginning the Mass	6
1.	About three minutes before Mass	6
2.	When the music begins	6
3.	When the singing begins	6
III.	The Mass: Introductory Rite	7
A.	The Entry Procession	7
1.	Leading the Procession	7
2.	Approaching the Altar	7
3.	At the Altar Steps	7
4.	Celebrant bows	7
B.	Opening Prayer	7
C.	Kyrie (Lord have mercy)	8
D.	Gloria	8
IV.	The Mass: Liturgy of the Word	9
A.	The Readings	9
1.	First Reading (Hebrew Scripture/Old Testament)	9
2.	The Responsorial Psalm(s)	9
3.	Second Reading (Christian Scripture/New Testament)	9
4.	Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia)	9
5.	The Gospel	9
6.	The Homily	9
B.	Baptism	9
C.	The Creed	9
C.	Prayers of the Faithful	9
V.	The Mass: Liturgy of the Eucharist	10
A.	Presentation of Gifts	10
1.	Preparation of the gifts	10
B.	Offering of the Gifts	10
C.	Prayer over the Gifts	11
D.	Washing of the Fingers	11
E.	Eucharistic Prayer	11
1.	The Holy, Holy, Holy	11
2.	The Great Amen	12
E.	Communion Rite	12
1.	The Lord's Prayer	12
3.	Gathering to Receive	12
3.	Distribution of Communion	12
VI.	Concluding Rite	13
1.	"Let us Pray"	13
2.	"The Mass is Ended"	13
3.	The Exit Procession	13
VII.	Conclusion of the Mass	13
1.	Extinguishing the Candles	13
2.	Extinguish the Altar lights	14
3.	All servers return to the sacristy and hang their alb in the closet by size.	14
	DEFINITIONS:	15

Saint Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
Altar Server Guidelines

I. Altar Server Ministry

Altar Servers have a rich heritage, going back to Jesus himself. In preparation for the Last Supper, Jesus sent two of his disciples to prepare the Passover for Himself and the Twelve. Over the centuries, as ceremonies became more complex and Latin became the language of the Church, specially trained assistants called Acolytes became common. Eventually, this evolved into today's altar servers who love Jesus, love the Mass and want to give their time and talents in the service of God and his Church.

Special Note: The altar server activities described in these pages are intended to characterize a 'normal' Mass. These pages do not characterize occasions involving concelebration (two or more priests, one or more deacons) of the Mass and/or inclusion of other rituals such as Baptism, First Communion, Confirmation or any of the RCIA rites. In these cases, specific instruction will be provided, in the sacristy, before Mass, by the Celebrant or Deacon.

A. Altar Server Requirements

1. Who may serve
 - a) A server can be any person who regularly attends Saint Andrew the Apostle, has received First Holy Communion and is tall enough to safely light and extinguish the altar and ambo candles. The main motivation for joining this ministry should not be parental or peer pressures.
 - b) A server candidate is expected to know the principal prayers of the Mass: The Gloria, Our Father, Nicene Creed, Lamb of God, I Am Not Worthy and the Holy, Holy, Holy to demonstrate they have sufficient interest in being a server.
 - c) Servers are expected to arrive at least **15 minutes** prior to Mass starting times.

**Saint Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
Altar Server Guidelines**

II. Preparing to Serve the Mass

A. Before Mass Activities

1. Arrival, Sign In

Expected Attire:

Please wear a light colored shirt (preferably white) without stripes. Bold colors will show through the server alb, and your shirt collar may protrude above your server alb and be unsightly.

Footwear: Shoes or strapped sandals required; No shower shoes or flip-flops. Try nice dress shoes.

Lady altar servers should not wear rings, should put their hair in a pony tail and should not be wearing fingernail polish. Also, if wearing earrings, be sure they aren't huge and/or dangling or in any way distracting. Please arrive, in the sacristy, at least 15 minutes prior to Mass starting time. Please Sign-In using the yellow sheets provided. (in the sacristy). **Please Print Clearly!**

2. Vesting (in the sacristy)

- a) Please select an alb having length such that only an inch or two of your trousers will be showing. Be sure the alb you select is not too long and cause you to trip at the altar steps.
- b) As each of you get vested, check your fellow server(s) to be sure each of you look sharp!
- c) Each of you have been trained and know how to vest for Altar Serving, AND, our sacristy is small. So,

**Please! NO PARENTS, BROTHERS, SISTERS, ETC. in the sacristy!
THANKS!**

3. Lighting the Candles

- a) About ten minutes before Mass, and after you're properly vested, use the right-hand(exit) aisle to approach the altar area.

Saint Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
Altar Server Guidelines

SPECIAL NOTE: While at the altar, always be sure to reverence both the altar and the tabernacle whenever you pass either by devoutly and respectfully genuflecting or by devoutly and respectfully bowing.

- a) Obtain the igniter from the partition wall and light the two candles on the choir side of the altar. Move to the other side of the altar by going down the altar steps, reverencing the altar (bowing), and going up the steps on the other side of the altar. Light the two candles on the ambo side of the altar, then, light the two ambo candles. **Be sure to reverence both altar and tabernacle during this activity.**
- b) There are two switches in the lower area of wall left of the big cross (on the baptismal font side). Switch the nearest switch to illuminate the Corpus on the big cross. The other switch should be toggled, illuminating the Ambry (the Sacred Chrism) only for a baptism, or during the Easter Season (Easter to Pentecost), or while Christmas decorations are present.
- c) Return the igniter to the partition wall after going down the altar steps, passing in front of and reverencing the altar, going up the altar steps, passing in front of and reverencing the tabernacle, twice. **Be sure to reverence both altar and tabernacle during this activity.**
- d) Step down the altar steps and return to the sacristy using the exit aisle.

Saint Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
Altar Server Guidelines

B. Beginning the Mass

1. About three minutes before Mass

The cross bearer moves into the gathering space, removes the cross from its stand and leads the acolytes from the sacristy through the gathering-space.

While holding the cross with the crucifix facing forward, the cross bearer leads both acolytes, single-file, into the church to the rear of the Entrance aisle. The cross-bearer should stand between the acolytes and slightly ahead (toward the front) of them.

The acolytes should do a last-check to be sure each of the servers are properly vested; the cross bearer should be sure the crucifix is facing forward and may rest the crucifix on his/her toe – being especially sure the base of the cross does not touch the floor!

2. When the music begins

The cross bearer elevates the cross, being sure it's held vertical, and that the crucifix faces the front of church.

The acolytes should position their hands together with palms together and thumbs crossed.

3. When the singing begins

When the first note is sung, the cross-bearer raises the cross, for all to see, and starts moving reverently toward the front of the church. When the cross-bearer starts the second step, the acolytes start to walk, reverently, keeping in line with each other and keeping pace with the cross-bearer, (two small steps behind) continuing toward the altar.

Saint Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
Altar Server Guidelines

III. The Mass: Introductory Rite

A. The Entry Procession

1. Leading the Procession

The cross-bearer and acolytes lead the entrance procession.

2. Approaching the Altar

When the cross-bearer reaches the altar steps, he/she turns toward the right and walks toward the right side of the altar (the choir-side). When at the right side, the cross-bearer stops and faces the altar with the cross still elevated, and waits for the celebrant.

3. At the Altar Steps

When the acolytes reach the altar steps, they should stop, face the ambo and wait for the celebrant.

The celebrant will approach the front of the altar steps near the middle of the altar and may stop for a moment.

4. Celebrant bows

When celebrant bows, all the acolytes should bow with him. As the celebrant moves up the altar steps:

The cross-bearer should position the cross in the stand, being sure the crucifix is facing the congregation then move toward his/her pew position. After the acolytes have moved to their respective chairs, the cross-bearer should lift the Sacramentary (missal) from the pew and move up the altar step toward the celebrant's chair, stopping in front left hand side of the celebrant's chair, then turn to face the congregation while holding the book against his/her chest.

B. Opening Prayer

When the celebrant pronounces, "Let us pray", the cross-bearer should move directly in front of the celebrant, turn to face him and should raise the Sacramentary up ready for the celebrant. The Sacramentary must be held very steady as the celebrant opens the book to the opening prayer. Be sure to keep the pages flat, your fingers out of the text and do not move about while the priest is reading. The celebrant will close the Sacramentary after reading the prayer. The cross-bearer should then move back to his/her pew. Then, together with the other altar servers, sit down. The Sacramentary should be held on the cross-bearers lap.

Saint Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
Altar Server Guidelines

C. Kyrie (Lord have mercy)

Note: The Kyrie may be omitted

All Altar Servers should remain standing and should join the congregation during these prayers

D. Gloria

Note: The Gloria may be omitted

All Altar Servers should remain standing and should join the congregation during this prayer.

Saint Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
Altar Server Guidelines

IV. The Mass: Liturgy of the Word

A. The Readings

1. First Reading (Hebrew Scripture/Old Testament)
The altar servers should remain seated during the first reading.
2. The Responsorial Psalm(s)
The altar servers should remain seated.
3. Second Reading (Christian Scripture/New Testament)
Note: This reading may be omitted (Lenten weekday masses)
The altar servers should remain seated during the second reading.
4. Gospel Acclamation (Alleluia)
The altar servers should stand during this prayer.
5. The Gospel
All the altar servers should stand, and face the reader of the gospel, for it is the word of God.
6. The Homily
All altar servers should be seated during the homily.

B. Baptism

At the conclusion of the Homily, the cross bearer should move to the table located near the baptismal font; the server should grasp the hand towels and hand one of them, to each baptism family as they move toward the font.

Note: Baptisms are omitted during Lent and Advent

c. The Creed

Note: This prayer may be omitted.

The cross-bearer and both acolytes should stand while reciting the Creed.

C. Prayers of the Faithful

The cross-bearer and both acolytes should stand during the Prayers of the Faithful

**Saint Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
Altar Server Guidelines**

V. The Mass: Liturgy of the Eucharist

A. Presentation of Gifts

1. Preparation of the gifts

The altar servers remain seated until the offertory collection basket gets to the fourth pew.

Cross Bearer:

The cross-bearer should place the Sacramentary on the altar – it should be placed on the left hand side, convenient for the celebrant.

The cross-bearer should then very carefully move the chalice, paten and a purificator from the credence table to the center of the altar. {BE CAREFUL! Each priest has his own favorite chalice, BE SURE the chalice you move is the right one for this celebrant}.

Next, the cross-bearer should move toward the choir-side, step down the altar steps, lift the cross from its stand and while holding it elevated (holding it vertical with the crucifix facing forward) move toward the Entrance Aisle. The cross-bearer should continue to move devoutly toward the rear of the church, using the same aisle used during the entry rite. Then, stand between the posts and wait for the procession and offering gifts to be ready. Do not allow the cross to touch the floor, instead, rest it on your toe.

Acolyte:

When the cross-bearer lifts the cross from its stand, the acolytes should move up the steps and behind the altar toward the ambo-side of the altar. The acolytes should step down a step and position themselves on either side of the celebrant/deacon wait for the Offertory Procession to approach the altar.

B. Offering of the Gifts

When the offertory gifts and procession, are ready, the cross-bearer should raise the crucifix and devoutly lead the offertory procession toward the altar. When the procession gets to the altar steps, the cross-bearer turns and moves toward the choir-side, faces the altar and waits for acceptance of the gifts.

Saint Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church Altar Server Guidelines

When the celebrant/deacon steps to accept the gifts, the acolytes should be positioned, one on each side of him and prepared to accept the gifts (bread, wine and basket). The acolytes should put the money basket at the base of the large cross and place the bread and the wine on the altar positioned on the right side of the chalice and purificator.

The acolytes should then descend the steps, move to their pew positions, and move the kneeling pillows from their pews to the floor, in position for kneeling (the cross-bearer's pillow must also be positioned).

The cross-bearer then positions the cross in its stand such that the crucifix is facing the congregation.

C. Prayer over the Gifts

The cross-bearer moves to the credence table, takes the water flask (don't hold the flask by its handle so the celebrant can grasp the flask easier) and moves to the right hand side of the altar/celebrant. The celebrant will pour a small amount of water into the wine, and return the water flask to the altar server. The cross bearer then returns the water flask to the credence table.

D. Washing of the Fingers

If the celebrant chooses this ritual, (Fr. David has been known to skip this) the cross-bearer should move to the credence table, unfold the finger towel and place it over the left arm and grasp the dish with the left hand, with the right hand pick up the water cruet, Then move to the right hand side of the celebrant. After the celebrant positions his fingers over the dish, the server should pour a small amount of water over the fingers, then move his/her arm to offer the finger towel. The celebrant will return the towel to the server's arm as he finishes the "washing of the fingers" ritual. The server returns and arranges the dish, cruet and towel neatly on the credence table. The server then moves back to his/her seat.

All the servers should, in unison, kneel down on their kneeling pillows.

E. Eucharistic Prayer

1. The Holy, Holy, Holy

At the Holy, Holy, Holy, the altar servers stand, then in unison, return the kneeling pillows back under their chairs.

Saint Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
Altar Server Guidelines

2. The Great Amen
At the all servers should join the congregation in this proclamation.

E. Communion Rite

1. The Lord's Prayer
All should stand, extend and open your hands and recite the Our Father
2. Sign of Peace
Each server should wish PEACE, with hand shake, to the person on the right and on the left
3. Gathering to Receive
The Extra-ordinary Ministers gather at the altar area.
The altar servers should position themselves in back of the altar, between the altar and the large cross.
3. Distribution of Communion
After the Altar Servers receive they should move behind the Eucharistic ministers (between the EM's and the large cross) back to their pew positions. If you choose not to receive, cross your arms over your chest and move your head side to side to signify you do not wish to receive, when the EM approaches you.
The cross-bearer should remove the Sacramentary from the altar and set it on his/her chair.

Altar servers should remain standing during distribution of communion, being sure to keep their hands clasped together devoutly and head bowed: **DO NOT LOOK AT/WATCH THE COMMUNICANTS!**

After distribution of communion is completed, the celebrant will be seated: The altar servers should remain seated, with hands on the lap, head bowed, praying quietly.

Saint Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
Altar Server Guidelines

VI. Concluding Rite

1. "Let us Pray"

After the quiet thanksgiving prayer-time following communion, the celebrant will stand and say "Let us Pray". At this time the cross-bearer should carry the Sacramentary and stand before the celebrant, facing the celebrant, with the Sacramentary book held up for the celebrant's reading. All altar servers should stand.

After the celebrant finishes reading the prayer, the server should take the Sacramentary, move back to his/her pew position and set the Sacramentary on the pew.

2. "The Mass is Ended"

After the deacon/celebrant pronounces: "Go the Mass is Ended",

The cross-bearer should lift the cross from its stand and with the crucifix facing forward, face the altar or large cross and wait for the celebrant.

The acolytes should move toward the altar and position themselves, one on each side of the celebrant.

3. The Exit Procession

After the celebrant bows

The cross-bearer raises the cross and moves toward the beginning of the 'exit' aisle, going slow enough for the exit procession to form up.

The acolytes should turn to their right and move toward the beginning of the 'exit' aisle, joining with, but staying a step behind, the cross-bearer.

The procession continues toward the rear of the church and passes between the posts at the rear of the exit aisle.

The cross-bearer positions the cross in its stand in the gathering space.

VII. Conclusion of the Mass

1. Extinguishing the Candles

Altar Server(s) move to the altar, using the 'exit' aisle,
Ascend the altar steps on the choir-side of the altar,

**Saint Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
Altar Server Guidelines**

For each of the two candles:

- Raise your hand to the height of the candle, after cupping, your hand behind the flame, extinguish the candle by blowing out the flame.
- Move to the other side of the altar by going down the altar steps, reverencing the altar (bowing), and going up the steps on the other side of the altar.

Extinguish two altar candles using the above procedure

Move to the Ambo.

Extinguish both ambo candles using the above procedure

2. Extinguish the Altar lights

There are two switches in the lower area of wall, left of the big cross (on the baptismal font side). Toggle both switches downward to extinguish the light illuminating the Corpus on the big cross and the Ambry(Baptismal Font) and the Sacred Chrism.

Be sure to reverence the Altar during this activity.

3. All servers return to the sacristy and hang their alb in the closet by size.

All albs, scapulars, ropes and cassocks must be returned to the closet and HUNG-UP neatly IN SIZE ORDER.

Saint Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church
Altar Server Guidelines

DEFINITIONS:

- Cassock (KASS-uhk) – a long white garment worn by altar servers
- Chalice (CHAL-is) – the large cup used to hold the wine that becomes the Blood of Christ.
- Chrism - A mixture of oil of olives and balsam, blessed by a bishop in a special manner and used in the administration of certain sacraments and in the performance of certain ecclesiastical functions.
- Ciborium (si-BOR-ee-um) – a bowl-like vessel used to hold the Hosts used for communion.
- Cincture (SINGK-sure) – a long cord used around the waist for fastening the cassock in place and may be used to adjust its length.
- Lectionary – a book containing the scripture readings for Mass.
- Pall – the stiff, square, white cover that is placed over the paten when it is on the chalice.
- Paten (PAT-en) – a saucer-like disk that holds the bread that becomes the Body of Christ.
- Purificator – a white cloth used to cleanse the chalice.
- Sacramentary – a book containing the opening prayer, prayer over the gifts, Eucharistic prayers and prefaces for all the Masses.
- Scapular – a sleeveless garment slipped over the head hanging down on the front and back – the back should hang lower than the front.