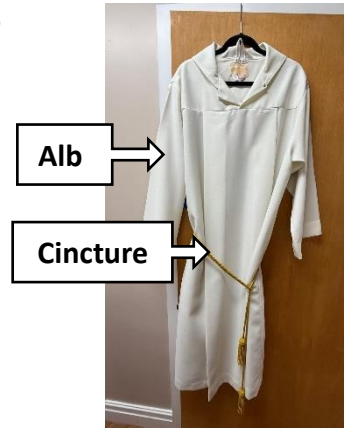


Training guide for Altar Servers.

Altar Servers must have received First Holy Communion, and want to serve at Mass. It is best to arrive at about 15 minutes before Mass to get ready and ask any questions.

The proper dress for an altar server is a white Alb, which should be long enough to cover the server's ankles to just above their shoes. The Alb should be tied at the waist with a cincture. These are kept in the cupboard in the sacristy. One of the older altar servers can help you with this.



Altar server's duties

- At the start of Mass, you may be asked to carry the Cross or the candles. The Cross bearer may be asked to ring the bell on the wall by the sacristy door, to announce the start of Mass with the procession. Process from the sacristy, Cross first, then candles, down the side aisle, through the porch and down the centre aisle to stop and stand in front of the altar. Spread out in a line in front of the altar, leaving a gap for the ministers in the middle, then bow at the same time as Father and the Deacons.
- After the Ministers have processed onto the Sanctuary, the candles and Cross are placed on the back, right hand side of the altar. Make sure the Cross is facing forwards. Then move to stand in front of your chairs, at the side of the altar.



- Follow the congregation as to when to sit, stand or kneel. If you have a Mass or hymn book, try to follow and join in.
- You will stand for the Gospel acclamation (the prayer that begins Alleluia, Alleluia). When the reader has finished this and begins to leave the altar, two altar servers move to collect the candles and go to stand on either side of the lectern whilst the Book of the Gospels is brought to the lantern and during the Gospel reading. Accompany the Deacon or Priest towards the stand, wait until the minister places the Book on the stand and has moved away, then place the candles back in the same spot, then sit down.
 - If the Book is not carried (maybe because there are no Deacons) just place the candles back after the proclamation of the Gospel (when Father says "The Gospel of the Lord").
- Get the Cross and candles again for the offertory (after the Bidding Prayers). When the collectors reach the front to start the collection, get the Cross and candles and walk down the central aisle, to the back of church. Then wait until the whole procession is ready (the gifts of bread and wine, the collection and Children's Liturgy) before leading them back to the altar, walk around the ministers and then place the candles and Cross back in their usual place.

The Bells

- After the “Holy, Holy, Holy...” we all kneel, then listen carefully; when Father says “Make Holy, therefore these gifts we pray” and holds both hands over the bread and wine, ring the 4-bells for 3 seconds.



- When Father holds up the bread, after saying ‘Take this all of you and eat of it, for this is my Body, which will given up for you’, ring the gong 3 times. Wait for the bell to be rung by the choir after each stroke of the gong (if the choir is there).



- Do the same again, after Father says “Do this in memory of me”, and when he holds up the Chalice containing precious blood.



- Ring the small bell when Father drinks the Precious Blood. Then as he begins to give Communion to the Deacons, move to the aisle ready to receive Communion.



- At the end of Mass, after the dismissal (“Go in peace...” or similar), collect the Cross and candles; move off the Sanctuary and turn and face the altar. Just like the start of Mass, spread out to allow enough space for the Ministers and bow to the Altar at the same time as the Ministers. Turn and process out towards the front door. When in the porch turn to the left towards the side aisle to return to the sacristy. Place the Cross back onto the altar, but the candles go back in the sacristy.

If there is anything you aren't sure about – just ask! 😊