

Altar Server Manual



Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we, the family of St. John Neumann, strive to become committed disciples of Jesus, growing as stewards of God's gifts, and sharing His love with all who are searching for the Truth.

St. John Neumann Mission Statement

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(updated 7/15/19)

Altar Servers

Servants of Jesus

Dear young people,

I greet you affectionately, dear young people. Your commitment to the altar is not only a duty but a great honor, a true holy service. Regarding this service, I would like to suggest some points for your reflection.



The vestments worn by altar servers are very special. They recall a garment that everyone puts on when he is welcomed, in Jesus Christ, into the community. I am referring to the baptismal garment whose deep meaning is explained by St. Paul: “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Gal 3:27).

Even if you no longer fit into your baptismal garment, dear altar servers, you have put on that of an altar server. Yes, Baptism is the starting point of your “authentic liturgical service,” which puts you beside your Bishops, priests, and deacons (cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, no 29). The altar server has a privileged place in liturgical celebrations. Those who serve at Mass present themselves to a community. They experience from close at hand that Jesus Christ is present and active in every liturgy. Jesus is present and active in every liturgy. Jesus is present whenever the community gathers to pray and give praise to God. Jesus is present above all in the Eucharist, under the appearance of bread and wine. He acts through the priest who celebrates Holy Mass and administers the sacraments in *persona Christi* (in the person of Christ).

Therefore in the liturgy you are far more than a mere “helpers of the parish priest.” Above all, you are servants of Jesus Christ, the eternal High Priest. Thus you altar servers especially are called to be

young friends of Jesus. Strive to deepen and foster this friendship with him. You will discover that in Jesus you have found a true friend for life.

The altar server often holds a candle in his hand. How can we not think of what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount: “You are the light of the world” (Mt. 5:14). Your service cannot be restricted to the inside of a church. It must shine out in your everyday life: at school, in the family, and in the different social contexts. For those who want to serve Jesus Christ in a church must be his witnesses everywhere.

Dear young people, your contemporaries are awaiting the true “light of the world” (cf. Jn 1:9). Do not hold your candlestick only inside the church but take the light of the Gospel to all who live in darkness and are going through a difficult time in their lives.

I have spoken of friendship with Jesus. How happy I would be if something more sprang from this friendship! How beautiful it would be if some of you could discover a vocation to the priesthood! Jesus Christ urgently needs young people who generously make themselves available to him without reserve.

Furthermore, might not the Lord also be calling some of you girls to embrace the consecrated life in order to serve the Church and the brethren? Also for those who would like to be united in marriage, an altar server’s service teaches that an authentic union must always include readiness for reciprocal and gratuitous service.

Pope Saint John Paul II
August 1, 2001

Dear Altar servers,

You are now a member of a very special group of young people in our parish who have answered God's call to ministry. As a St. John Neumann altar server, you are one of the liturgical ministers of our parish and have special tasks to perform during liturgies, especially during the celebration of the Eucharist; the Mass. Serving the Mass will involve learning some new words and terms. You will also be asked to perform very special duties. It is important to realize that you are serving God in helping with prayers and with the Eucharist.

This guide covers the main details of serving the Mass. The guide should help you become more comfortable and refined in your role on the altar.

In Christ,

Fr. David Peck



The Ministry of Altar Server

Serving at Mass is a privilege, and everyone who serves in this ministry must realize that with this privilege come responsibilities.

All youth, fourth grade and older, are eligible to serve.

Servers must attend Sunday Mass weekly. Without a devotion to the Eucharist, serving is an empty task.

Servers must be of high moral character and an example to their family, friends and classmates of what it means to be a Catholic Christian. If you want to serve, you have to be a good Catholic, which means weekly Mass, following The Commandments, and making sure that you are a friend of Jesus.

Servers must be on time for serving assignments. If you are unable to serve, **you need to find a suitable substitute.**

Become familiar with the items you see and use in Mass

Tabernacle



The Tabernacle is the place where the Eucharist is kept and protected. Priests, deacons, and people with special permission remove the Eucharist from the Tabernacle to bring to Mass or to the sick and home-bound.

Cassock

The Cassock is a close-fitting garment, usually black, reaching to the heels. It is worn by seminarians and priests, and sometimes Altar boys. It is black to symbolize poverty.



Surplice



The surplice is a white linen garment worn over the cassock. It is white to symbolize purity.

Alb

An alb is a white garment reaching to the heels and is worn by priests and altar servers. At St. John Neumann servers wear albs at all Masses. It is white to symbolize purity, as well.



Chasuble

The chasuble is the vestment that a priest wears to celebrate Mass. Different colors are worn depending on the liturgical season of the year. It goes on top of all the other vestments to symbolize the virtue of charity, which is supposed to cover all that the priest does.



Stole



A stole is a wide piece of cloth that hangs around the neck of a priest and straight down his front. A deacon wears a stole crossing his heart. The stole signifies that the person who is wearing it is ordained in the Sacrament of Holy Orders either as a deacon, priest or bishop.

Purificator

A purificator is a white cloth that is used to purify and clean the chalice.



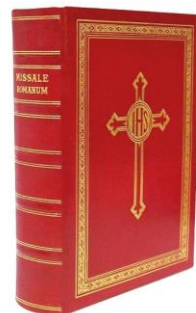
Corporal



The corporal is a square white cloth that is spread over the place on the altar where the bread and wine will be consecrated into the Body and Blood of Christ.

Roman Missal

The Roman Missal is a large red book that contains the prayers the priest uses at Mass.



Lectionary

The lectionary contains the reading from Scripture at Mass.



Ambo



The ambo is the place where the Word of God is read.

Chalice

The cup which the priest uses for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass that holds the precious Blood of Jesus.



Paten



The plate that is used with the chalice for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. This holds the Body of Christ. The Chalice and paten are usually a matching set that are used together by the priest.

Ciborium

This is the vessel that holds the extra hosts. They are either brought up in the offertory procession or reserved within the Tabernacle.



Cincture



The word cincture comes from the Latin word “Cintura” meaning belt. This is the cord which the altar server or priest ties around his waist as a belt. Its color varies depending on the Liturgical Season. It symbolizes chastity.

Cruets

These are the vessels that hold the water and the wine for the Eucharistic Celebration.



Flagon



A pitcher-like vessel used to hold wine that will be consecrated at Mass for the communion of the people.

Lavabo bowl and finger towel

The bowl with which the priest washes his hands and the towel with which he dries them. “Lavabo” is Latin for “I will wash.”



Thurible and boat



A thurible is a covered metal container suspended from a chain or chains. Glowing charcoal is placed inside. Incense is sprinkled over the charcoal. We use incense to remind us that our prayers rise like incense. When we bless actions or things with incense, the smell and smoke of incense remind us that what we are doing is holy.

Aspergillum

It is the “wand like” container that is kept inside the Holy Water bucket that is used to sprinkle the people during “Sprinkling Rite”, within the Mass.



Pall



This word has two meanings.

- The cardboard like cloth square that is placed on top of the chalice. You will usually see a small red cross on the top of it.
- The long white cloth that we use to drape over a coffin for a Funeral Mass.

Sanctuary Lamp

The Sanctuary Lamp is usually a candle in a glass container burning near the Tabernacle to let people know that Christ is present.



Credence Table

The table by the Altar that holds the goblets, ciborium, lavabo bowl and purificators

The Mass

For Catholics, nothing is more important than the Mass. It is the heart and soul of our worship of God. It is the celebration that gives us the strength we need to live a Christian life. Because of its importance, the Church places a serious obligation on all its members to take part in the Mass each Sunday and holy day.

Thus each Sunday the Christian community comes together to give joint worship to the Father and our Lord, Jesus Christ. Of all things Christians do, nothing is more important than celebrating Mass together.

The Mass is a Memorial of the Last Supper when Jesus instituted the Eucharist and told his followers, “Do this in memory of me.” Although the Mass is a mystery, we accept the fact that bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus because Jesus told us this is so. Some descriptions will help us to understand it better.

First and foremost, the Mass is a sacrifice. The idea of sacrifice to God is at the very heart of religion. The Bible tells us how Abel and Cain, the sons of Adam, offered sacrifice to God. Abraham, whom the liturgy calls “our father in faith,” was prepared to offer to God his only son, Isaac. In the Old Testament, Jews through their priests sacrificed lambs and goats to God. Jesus offered his Father a sacrifice: Himself. Jesus promised us that “when we eat this bread and drink this cup” he would continue his great sacrifice until he comes again.

The Mass is a memorial. It is an event that helps people to remember. The most important event, the one remembered at every Mass, is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We also remember through the readings other great deeds God has done for his people.

The Mass is also a sacred meal called the Eucharist (from the Greek *eucharistia*, meaning “thanksgiving”). In the Mass we give thanks for all that God has done for us, and we all eat the same food - “the bread of life and the cup of eternal salvation.” Jesus has told us that this bread and wine are his body and blood (read John

6:53-55). So, in this sacred meal, we Catholics believe that Jesus' life, death, and resurrection are continued for all of us through our celebration of this holy meal, begun at the Last Supper.

The way in which Mass is celebrated has developed over almost two thousand years. The early Christians called it "the Breaking of the Bread." Throughout its development, two elements have always been the same: listening to God's Word in Scripture and partaking of the consecrated Eucharistic meal. Today we refer to these elements as the **Liturgy of the Word** and the **Liturgy of the Eucharist**.

Since servers are important ministers of the celebration you should be very familiar with the order of Mass. You have to know the things you do so that they are second in nature to you. This leaves you free to concentrate on your involvement in prayer



The Order of Mass

Introductory Rites

- * *Procession*. Starts in the back of the church down the center aisle. The order is: cross-bearer, other servers, lector, concelebrants, deacon, and priest.
- * *Greeting*. Done by the celebrant.
- * *Blessing and Sprinkling Holy Water*. This is not always done, depending on the feast and local custom. When it is done, the penitential rite is omitted.
- * *Kyrie (Lord, have mercy)*. Said or sung unless used in one of the penitential rites.
- * *Gloria*. This hymn is said or sung on all Sundays outside of Lent and Advent, and on great feasts.
- * *Opening Prayer*.

Liturgy of the Word

- * *First Reading*. Read by lector, usually from Old Testament.
- * *Responsorial Psalm*. Usually led by the cantor (song leader) but may be recited. It is never omitted.
- * *Second Reading*. Also read by the lector. On most weekdays there is no second reading.
- * *Gospel Acclamation*. The cantor sings it first and the congregation repeats. It may be omitted when not sung.
- * *Gospel*. Taken from one of the four Gospels, it is read by the priest or deacon, never by a lay person.
- * *Homily*. By priest or deacon, explaining the Scriptures.
- * *Profession of Faith*. Said on Sundays and certain feasts. All join in this declaration of beliefs.
- * *General Intercessions*. We also call these the Prayers of the Faithful. The deacon or lector leads the people in response to each petition.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

* *Preparation of the Gifts.* This is also called the offertory. Servers assist the priest with preparation of the altar, and then accompany the priest to receive the gifts.

* *Eucharistic Prayer.* There are various Eucharistic prayers, but the responses you need to know are pretty much the same for each. Here are parts of the Eucharistic prayer you should know: the preface; the Holy, holy; the institution; the memorial acclamation; and the Great Amen.

* *Communion Rite.* This part begins with the Our Father and ends with the Prayer after Communion.

Concluding Rite

* Brief announcements may be made here.

* *Greeting and Blessing.* There are varied forms for this to which you respond.

* *Dismissal.* The priest sends the congregation out to serve God and his people. The ministers leave in procession, departing the altar area in the order in which they entered.

How to Serve Sunday Mass

Introductory Rites

Entrance Procession and Opening Prayer:

1. Procession begins in front of the font. Those servers not carrying the cross, candle or book must fold hands reverently.

- a) **Head Server** will lead the procession, carrying the cross.
- b) **Candle-bearers (Assistant and Book)** will follow walking side-by-side, carrying candles.
- c) Lector
- d) Deacon
- e) Priest

2. Procession begins when we begin to sing the processional song. Walk straight ahead. Line up in front of the Altar.

3. Servers bow their heads when priest bows to the altar. Then go to the pew.

4. When Priest says “Let us pray,” **Book** bearer brings up the Roman Missal, open to the purple ribbon.

Liturgy of the Word

1. The server is to sit reverently and listen. Be attentive to the readings and homily.

2. At the end of the 2nd reading, when we respond “Thanks be to God”, **Candle-bearers** rise, take processional candles and wait for the priest/deacon to stand. When the priest/deacon moves toward the altar, **Candle-bearers** move forward, stop in line with the altar and wait for the priest/deacon to come down the steps. When the priest/deacon is on the steps, **Candle-bearers** slowly process around the front of the altar platform to the ambo.

One server stands on each side of the ambo, facing the ambo. After the Gospel has been proclaimed, **Candle-bearers** move together around the back of the altar platform, replace their candles and return to the pew. Listen carefully to the Priest's homily.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Gifts

1. After the General Intercessions, when the Priest or deacon stands, servers will proceed to **prepare the Altar**:

The first thing to be brought up is the folded corporals from the credence table to the altar and hands them to the Priest or deacon. Next bring up the chalice with the pall and the Roman Missal. Then bring Ciboria containing hosts, Chalices and Purificators.

Assistant will accompany the priest or deacon to the steps to receive the gifts of bread and wine. Carry the flagon of wine to the altar and wait there until the priest fills the chalices and hands you an empty flagon. Place the empty flagon on the credence table and return to your pew.

While the priest and **Assistant** have moved to receive the gifts, **Head** brings the cruet of water to the altar. Stand between the altar and the **Assistant**. Be sure the handle of the cruet is facing away from you and towards the priest. When the priest hands the cruet back to you, return to the credence table and take the pitcher for hand washing.

While the gifts are being prepared, **Book** prepares the lavabo bowl and figure towel for hand washing. **Head** and **Assistant** proceed together to the altar with the vessels.

2. At the Holy, Holy, Holy, all 3 servers go to side of altar and kneel on the bottom step.

3. Servers will pray and respond to all Mass parts.
4. **Head** rings the bells once at the Epiclesis (when the priest stretches both his hands over the chalice) then three rings for the Consecration of bread and three rings for the consecration of wine.
5. At Communion, servers move to the steps beside the altar to receive communion from priest or minister.
6. After receiving communion, **Book** removes the Roman Missal from the altar and places it on pew.
7. When the priest comes back to the altar after distributing Communion, **Assistant** brings up cruet of water to the priest.

Closing Prayer and Recessional

1. After the priest says, “Let us pray,” **Book** will bring up The Roman Missal and open to the purple ribbon.
2. When the prayer is finished, **Book** returns to his/her pew.
3. When the priest says “The Mass is ended...” **Head** retrieves the cross, **Candle-bearers** get their candles and line up behind **Head**.
4. When the priest moves to kiss the altar servers proceed to the front of the Sanctuary facing the altar and wait.
5. As the priest bows to reverence the Altar, servers bow or kneel together, and then all turn to leave as they came in.

Summary of Roles

Head Server (Cross-bearer):

- The most experienced server (see server ranks).
- Lead the procession in and out carrying the cross.
- Bring up chalice at the Preparation of the Gifts.
- Bring up water cruet after the chalice.
- Bring up pitcher of water to wash priests hands.
- Rings the bells at the Epiclesis and Consecration.

Assistant Server:

- The next most experienced server.
- Carry candle into and out of Mass behind Head Server.
- Hold candle next to the ambo during the Gospel.
- Receives the flagon of wine with the Priest or Deacon at the Preparation of the Gifts, then brings it to the altar.
- Brings up bowl and finger towel to wash the priests hands with Head Server.
- Brings up cruet of water after Communion to priest.

Book-Bearer:

- Carry candle with Assistant Server into and out of Mass.
- Hold candle next to the ambo during the Gospel with Assistant Server.
- Brings up the Roman Missal:
 - o At the beginning of Mass, when the priest says “Let us pray.”
 - o *For the Gloria* (depends on the priests preference).
 - o *For the Creed* (depends on the priests preference).
 - o To the altar for the Preparation of the Gifts, and back to seat after Communion.
 - o At the end of Mass when the priest says “Let us pray.”

Mass Prayers to Know

Servers are to remember the following:

1. They should actively participate in the Mass, which includes singing, or saying all the acclamations: Lord Have Mercy, Confiteor, Gloria, Responsorial Psalm, Creed, Holy, Holy, Holy, Memorial Acclamation, Great Amen, Our Father and The Lamb of God.

Confiteor

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done
and in what I have failed to do,
through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.
We praise you, we bless you, we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.
Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
Son of the Father,

you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world, receive
our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.
For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father. Amen

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven, (Bow)
and by the Holy Spirit
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake
he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven and is seated

at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.
And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life, who proceeds
from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
And one, holy, catholic
and apostolic Church.
I confess one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection
of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen

Preparation of the Gifts:

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of His name, for our good, and the good of all His Holy Church.

Holy, Holy, Holy

Holy, holy, holy, Lord, God of hosts,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Our Father

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

Lamb of God

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only
say the word and my soul shall be healed.



The Ranks

There are different ranks of servers at St. John Neumann. They are distinguished by the cross worn on their server's alb. After preparing and learning the information for the next rank, the server will tell the Altar Server Ministry Team (ASMT) and they will go over the material with the server to determine how well he/she knows the material.

St. Dominic Savio: The first rank of serving. They must become familiar with the Order of the Mass, know how to serve at Mass, memorize the prayers of the Mass and be familiar with the life of the saint.

St. John Berchman: Complete 1 year or be in the 5th grade, be familiar with the saint and show an understanding of the Bible, Baptism and the connection with the Mass. Have a working knowledge of the Rosary.

St. Tarcisius: Complete 2 years or be in the 6th grade and show a deeper understanding of the Eucharist, and know the 7 sacraments. The rank of St. Tarcisius is one that demands that the young man, or young lady be of high moral character and have a good spiritual life.

St. Pius X: This is the highest rank a server can reach. The rank of St. Pius X is very respectable. One must serve for at least 3 years or be in the 7th grade and have working knowledge of the Trinity, Mary, Works of Mercy, and worship.

The rank of St. Dominic Savio



The youngest of Servers

St. Dominic Savio lived during the last century and is an inspiration to all altar servers because he demonstrated that clean living, hard work, and good fun can lead to holiness at any age. He was completely devoted to Jesus and Blessed Virgin Mary. His motto was “Death rather than sin!” During his short lifetime of 15 years, he taught others boys and the world about sanctity and was a model of Christian perfection.

Everywhere, he was a good example of what it means to be a server. He was popular, fun-loving, avoiding quarrels, cheating and other wrong acts. He played sports, was always cheerful, and had a ready smile for everyone. He spoke out when something was wrong and didn’t hide his Faith. Stengthened by daily Communion, Dominic persuaded other boys to receive the Sacraments, to visit the Blessed Sacrament daily, and to recite the Rosary often.

Patron of Children

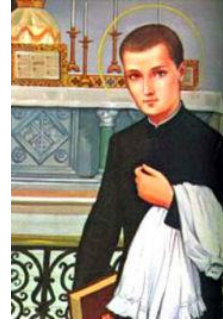
Feast Day March 9

Lord God, You alone are holy and no one is good without you. Through the intercession of St. Dominic help us to live in such a way that we may not be deprived of a share in Your Glory.

Servers start at the rank of St. Dominic Savio

The rank of St. John Berchman

St. John Berchman is the patron saint of Altar servers. He was from Belgium and was born in 1599. He is a model for Altar servers who love Jesus, Mary and the Rosary. He attended religious instructions faithfully and served daily Mass.



At the age of 10, his deep faith and piety was evident to all and he decided to become a priest. He worked and tutored to earn money to continue his education, and as a teenager, ranked first in his class. He knew when to have fun and when to be serious. He strove for obedience. He inspired others by giving them council and encouragement. He calmly said his final prayers and received the Blessed Sacrament when he was near death. With his crucifix and the Rosary in his hand, he whispered, “Jesus, Mary!” and died at the age of 22.

Patron of Altar Servers

Feast day November 26

O God, you inspired St. John Berchman to strive for perfect charity and so attain Your Kingdom at the end his pilgrimage on earth. Strengthen us through his intercession that we may advance rejoicing in the way of love.

To move up in rank, you must know these answers

1. What is the Bible?

The Bible is the revealed word of God, a collection of books written between 1000 B.C. and 100 A.D. It contains the stories of God’s love for humanity and our response to God.

2. What is meant by the Old and New Testament?

Testament is another word for covenant or agreement. The Old Testament contains the record of God's dealings with us under the terms of the agreement God made with Abraham and Moses. The New Testament contains the record of God's dealings with us when He sent His Son Jesus to save us from our sins.

3. What is Gospel?

The word "Gospel" means "good news". The Gospel is the good news that Jesus had mended the broken friendship between God and us, that God loves us and that if we follow Christ we will live forever.

4. Tell the story of your favorite parable and explain its message.

5. Who are the People of God?

The People of God are the Church. A community which exists to love God and serve humanity by spreading the good news of Jesus Christ through worship and service.

6. What is worship?

Worship is the coming together of God's People to thank God for giving us new life through His Son.

7. When did you become a member of God's People?

At baptism.

8. How is Baptism similar to the crossing of the Red Sea by God's People in the Old Testament?

Through the waters of the Red Sea the people were delivered from slavery and entered into freedom. Through the waters of Baptism we are delivered from slavery of sin and enter into the freedom of being God's friends.

9. What does Baptism do for us?

- A. Takes away Original Sin, or the barrier that prevents us from being friends with God.
- B. Gives us the chance to choose to walk with God.
- C. Makes us members of the Church.

10. What is the greatest act of worship performed by God's People?

The Sacrifice of the Mass is the greatest act of worship.

11. Why do we show such reverence for the Bible?

We reverence the Bible because it is the true word of God.

12. What is the Eucharist?

The Eucharist is Christ substantially present under the appearances of bread and wine, and what (who) is received at Holy Communion.

13. What do we mean when we say Christ is really present in the Eucharist?

We mean that the bread and wine has been changed into the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ. Though the Eucharist looks like bread and tastes like bread, looks like wine and tastes like wine, its substance had been changed and now it is really Jesus Christ. Remember at the Last Supper Christ took the bread and said "Take and eat, this is My body," and he took the cup of wine and said, "Take and drink, this is My blood."

14. So we receive Christ when we receive Communion?

Yes.

Witness

1. Tell when and where you were baptized and why this information is as important as the time and place of your birth. Give your own answer but remember that at birth we receive physical life. At Baptism we are joined to Christ and share His life.

At Baptism, a Christian promises to accept Christ and what he stands for and to reject the devil and all his standards.

2. How is the Sign of the Cross a renewal of your baptismal promises? By the words we profess our faith in the mystery of the Holy Trinity; by the sign we show our allegiance to Christ who makes it possible for us to overcome sin.

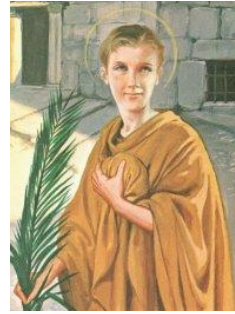
3. What connection is there between your Baptism and your assistance at Holy Mass? At Baptism we made a pact of friendship with God. Each Mass is a renewal and a strengthening of this pact of friendship with God through His Son Jesus Christ.

4. Choose several verses of a psalm that would make an appropriate prayer for a server.

5. An Altar Server should also be close to Christ's mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary. Mary helps us keep our relationship with Jesus strong. The Rosary is a good way to honor Mary and also draw closer to Christ. All servers should have a Rosary and use it often. **Describe how to pray the Rosary.** Be able to recite and pray of the Rosary by heart. Know the mysteries of the Rosary by heart.

The rank of St. Tarcisus

St. Tarcisus was a poor, uneducated orphan who served as an altar boy during a time of great persecution of Catholics in the early Church in Rome (sometime before 300 A.D.). Powerful, pagan tyrants persecuted the Church, seizing and plundering Church properties, capturing the followers of Christ, mistreating and even killing them.



After Mass one day, the priest called for someone to take the Blessed Hosts for Holy Communion to hundreds of people in the dungeons who were to die in the arena. Tarcisus begged the priest to let him carry the Hosts. The Hosts were wrapped in linen cloth and placed in a leather pouch which this 12 year old son of martyrs held close to his heart. On his way through a slum area of Rome, 6 older boys begun teasing and bullying the boy. When they discovered he was a Christian and what he was carrying, they set upon him like a pack of mad dogs. Tarcisus held tight even though they were now beating him with a stick and kicking him. The bleeding boy slumped to the ground then and they began to stone him. The 6 murderers seized the boy's body and tore off his cloak. But when they forced open his clenched hands, the Holy Eucharist had disappeared.

Patron of First Communicants

Feast Day- August 15

God of power and mercy, through Your help

St. Tarcisus has overcome the tortures of his passion. Help us who celebrate his triumph to remain victorious over the wiles of our enemies.

To move up in rank, you must know these answers

1. What does “Messiah” mean?

“Messiah” means “The Anointed One.” The Jews used it to refer to the great Son of David who had been promised by God and through whom they would be saved from their enemies and become a great people. Jesus is considered to be the Messiah by Christians, but He taught people that the Messiah would save everybody not by defeating enemies with force of arms, but defeating evil through suffering, dying on the cross and rising from the dead.

2. Who were the prophets?

The prophets were men sent by God to remind the people to be faithful to the covenant. They were God’s spokesman.

3. What is sacrifice?

A sacrifice is the offering of some material gift to God as a sign that we need and depend on Him.

4. Describe a sacrifice in the Old Testament.

The people took a lamb to the Temple. The priest killed the lamb and offered it to God. Part of it was given back to the people to have a banquet to celebrate their friendship with God.

5. Show how the Mass is also a sacrificial meal.

At Mass, the people offer bread and wine which become the Body and Blood of Christ. The people want to join themselves with Christ who dies for them. Jesus offers the people and Himself to His Father and God accepts this sacrifice by inviting the people to take part in Holy Communion. *(This is a difficult question and if you don’t fully understand it, that’s ok...we will talk about it when we go over this material together)*

6. Why does a priest celebrate the Mass?

The priest is ordained by the bishop in the Sacrament of Holy Orders to represent the people and represent Christ. Through the words of consecration, he changes the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ.

7. What are the words of consecration?

The priest lifts the bread and says: “Take this all of you and eat it; this is My Body which will be given up for you.” The priest lifts the cup of wine and says: “Take this all of you and drink from it; this is The cup of My Blood, the Blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for many so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of Me.”

8. What are the two main divisions of the Mass and what takes place in each?

- A. The Liturgy of the Word in which we speak to God and God speaks to us through the Scriptures.
- B. The Liturgy of the Eucharist in which we offer ourselves and gifts of bread and wine and Christ becomes present to us.

9. Name the Seven Sacraments and briefly describe them.

Sacraments of Initiation

Baptism: takes away original sin and makes us members of the Church

Confirmation: makes us full members of the Christian community and gives us the gifts of the Holy Spirit so that we can go out into the world and proclaim our faith by word and deed.

Eucharist: the Sacrament in which we receive the real presence of Christ under the forms of bread and wine.

Sacraments of Vocation

Marriage: the Sacrament that gives two people the chance to live together in love united in their faith with God and the Church.

Holy Orders: the Sacrament that provides bishops, priests and deacons for the Church so that the Sacraments may be celebrated.

Sacrament of Healing:

Anointing of the Sick: The sacrament administered by a Priest or Bishop to offer God’s healing grace to the sick and elderly.

Reconciliation: The sacrament that celebrates the experience of God's loving forgiveness.

10. What is Sin?

Sin is rejecting God and what He stands for.

11. What are the two types of sin?

Venial Sin: weakens our relationship with God but does not totally destroy our friendship with Him

Mortal Sin: a very serious sin which destroys our relationship with God

12. How does one commit a mortal sin?

Though you can commit a mortal sin with one action, usually a person works up to that one action by a series of smaller sins that weakened our friendship with God so much that it becomes possible to commit a major sin that totally destroys that friendship. To commit a mortal sin, three things must occur:

- a. It must be a very serious action.
- b. A person must know it is very serious.
- c. A person must freely choose to do it.

13. How can sin be forgiven?

Sin is forgiven when the sinner repents of the decision to choose something else instead of God's friendship and determines to put God first in his life again. An Act of Contrition can take away venial sin, but the Sacrament of Penance is needed to forgive mortal sin. Usually, this Sacrament is recommended of everybody regardless of how serious they sin.

14. Does God stop loving us when we sin?

No, but he respects our freedom and if we say no to Him, He will allow us to walk away from Him.

15. What is grace?

It is a supernatural gift given by God, through the merits of Jesus Christ, for our salvation.

16. What types of grace are there?

There are two: sanctifying and actual grace.

17. What is sanctifying grace?

Sanctifying grace makes the soul holy and pleasing to God.

18. What is actual grace?

Actual Grace is the help from God which helps us know Him and choose the good and avoid evil.

19. What are some ways we can receive these graces?

In the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist.

20. What is a cope?

The cope is a long cape worn by the priest or deacon at Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and at other solemn ceremonies outside Mass.



21. What is Benediction?

Benediction is a ceremony honoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament (the consecrated hosts that are reserved in the Tabernacle). Usually, a single large host from the tabernacle is put in a monstrance, a beautiful holder for the host, and displayed for the people to adore. Songs and readings accompany this ceremony. Benediction means “blessing” and the highlight of this ceremony is when the priest/deacon blesses the people with the host.

22. Explain the symbolism of: water, candles, oil, bread, and wine.

Water-purifies and is a source of life. Holy water reminds us of our Baptism when we first received divine life.

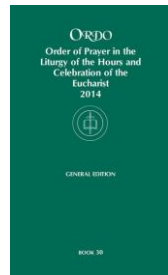
Fire-seems most spiritual of all elements and we use it with candles. It gives both light and heat. The Risen Christ is the source of our understanding and power of loving. Christ is our Light. The Holy Spirit is the fire of God’s love burning in us.

Oil-is a sign of healing and of dedication. It symbolizes the healing effect of God’s grace and is a sign of our desire to dedicate our lives to His service.

Bread and Wine-signify the food and drink on which our physical life depends. When we offer bread and wine, we offer our lives.

23. What is the Ordo?

A book that contains the list of offices and feasts of the Roman Catholic Church for each day of the year. You look in this book to find out the readings of the day; if there is a feast to be celebrated; as well as the color of vestments to be worn, for the Mass.



24. What is meant by the symbol IHS?

IHS stands for the Latin letters Iesus Hominum Salvator, which mean “Jesus”, Savior of Mankind.

25. What is meant by the symbol XP?

It is a combination of the Greek letters, chi (X) and rho (P) which are the first two letters of “Christ”.

26. What does INRI stand for?

INRI are the first letters of the Latin title that hung on Christ’s cross, Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum, “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.”

27. What is the Monstrance?



This is the vessel that hold the consecrated Host so that it may be exposed to the people for adoration and for Benediction.

28. What is the Luna?



The luna is the small container that holds the consecrated Host so that it may be placed into the center of the Monstrance for Adoration and Benediction.

What is prayer?

Prayer is lifting our minds and hearts to God.

What prayer did Our Lord Himself teach us?

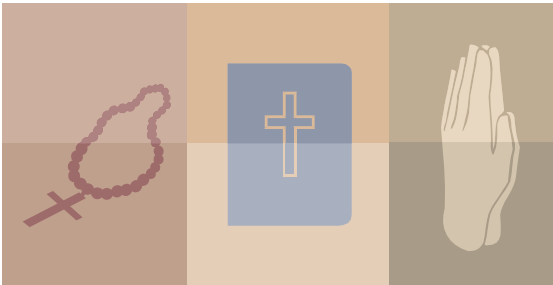
The Our Father.

What is the prayer of the Church?

The Eucharistic Liturgy, or Mass.

Tell something about your favorite saint.

How does serving Mass help you become closer to God?



The rank of Pope St. Pius X

St. Pius X can be thought of as the greatest of all servers. From a little altar boy, God led him to be a poor country priest, bishop and finally Shepherd of the entire world as Pope. He made it possible for children to receive First Holy Communion at an early age, and for all to receive communion frequently.



He became an altar boy at 8 and leader of the servers at 10. He learned to play the organ for Church services, studied Latin privately from one of the two parish priests, and was first in his school class. The townspeople raised money to send him to high school 3 miles away where he ranked first in his class all 4 years. He walked barefoot to school to save on shoe leather. At 15, he completed high school and knew that he wanted to be a priest. He talked to old and young alike stressing frequent Confession and Communion, introduced May Devotions to Mary, and encouraged Stations of the Cross. He was made a saint in 1954.

Feast Day August 21

O God, to preserve the Catholic Faith and renew all things in Christ. You filled Pope St. Pius with heavenly wisdom and apostolic fortitude. Grant that we may follow his direction and example and be rewarded with eternal life with You.

To move up in rank, you must know these answers

1. What is Holy Trinity?

Trinity -Three persons in one God. What this means is that God is one, but since he is a loving God three relationships occur in Him.

First, God is Father, the Creator of everything. Second, God the Father for all eternity has spoken forth and loves His Word; the Word became Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Third, the Father loves the Son-the love between them is the Holy Spirit, the presence of God in the world today. You will never completely understand the concept of the Trinity. But it helps to realize that though God is personal, He is not a person like we are persons. He is BEING itself. And the persons in the Trinity are not persons like we understand it, rather they are relationships. That is how Jesus can be God at the same time the Father is God and the Holy Spirit is God-yes there are not three Gods, but three persons (relationships) in one God. Confusing? You bet, but upon this dogma, all of faith rests.

2. What do we believe about God the Father?

God the Father is Creator of all things and keeps the universe in existence by His will and His love. God is more than human-God is pure being. Yet, God is also personal; that means we can relate to Him and He to us. Though it is traditional to speak of God as Father, remember that God is neither male nor female. But the way people of Israel and Jesus Himself experienced God was best described as Father/Child relationship.

3. What do we believe about Jesus Christ?

Jesus is the Word of God, the second Person of the Trinity. He is truly God and truly human. He is like us in all things except sin, but He is also God. That means that as the Word of God, He has existed always. God so loved the world that he sent His Son to save us. Jesus walked among us, was crucified, died and was buried. He rose from the dead and is seated at the right hand of God the Father. Through His Cross and Resurrection we are saved from our sins and offered eternal life.

4. What do we believe about the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity. Christ promised the Spirit to the Apostles when He ascended to heaven and on Pentecost, the Spirit came and dwelt in Mary and The Apostle's hearts. The Spirit is God. In our daily lives, it is the Spirit that guides us and dwells within us because we have been Baptized. The Spirit helps us live out the commands of Jesus. Sometimes described as a dove or fire, the Spirit is really the presence of God that we feel acting in our lives.

5. Why do Catholics honor Mary?

Mary is the perfect Christian, the one who most faithfully followed Christ. Since she is the Mother of Jesus, she knows Him better than anyone. Mary is called the Mother of God, and because of her special role, in our salvation, we honor her. Any prayer or honor we give to Mary leads us to Christ her Son. We do not worship Mary, but we honor her.

6. What are the 7 Corporal Works of Mercy?

“Corporal” deals with our bodily or daily needs. Remember that Jesus said, “As often as you helped the least of my brothers and sisters, you did these things for me.”

1. to feed the hungry
2. to clothe the naked
3. to shelter the homeless
4. to give drink to the thirsty
5. to visit the imprisoned
6. to visit the sick to
7. bury the dead



7. What are the 7 Spiritual Works of Mercy?

1. to admonish the sinner
2. to counsel the doubtful
3. to bear wrongs patiently

4. to instruct the ignorant
5. to comfort the sorrowful
6. to forgive all injuries
7. to pray for the living and the dead

8. What are the 5 Precepts of the Church?

1. To worship God by participating in Mass every Sunday and holy day of obligation.
2. To lead a Sacramental life: to receive Holy Communion frequently and the Sacrament of Penance regularly. This means at the minimum: to receive the Sacrament of Penance at least once a year (if serious sin is involved), and to receive Holy Communion at least once a year. Between First Sunday of Lent and Trinity Sunday.
3. To observe the marriage laws of the Church, to give religious training to one's children, to use parish schools and religious education programs.
4. To strengthen and support the Church and the Church's mission by using one's time, talent and treasure. This is called Stewardship.
5. To do penance including abstaining from meat and fasting from food on the appointed days.

9. What are the gifts from God called that allow us to believe in Him, hope in Him, and love Him?

These are the supernatural virtues: faith, hope, and charity.

10. What is faith?

Faith is firmly believing in the truths God has revealed.

11. What is hope?

Hope is the firm belief that God will give us eternal life and the means to obtain it.

12. What is charity?

Charity is the love of God for His own sake, and the love of others as ourselves for the love of God.

13. Why do we have stained glass windows and statues in Church?

Stained glass windows usually have pictures from the life of Christ or of the saints. In olden days, when people couldn't read, these windows were used to teach them the basic stories of our faith. Statues remind us of the lives of people who lived holy and worthy lives as Christ has asked. Remember, Catholics use the things of earth - - art, sculpture and music as windows to see God more clearly.

14. Do Catholics worship statues?

No, we worship only God. We do give honor to holy objects that have been blessed, but we do not worship them.

15. Why do we pray to the saints?

We pray to the saints because in their lives on earth they helped people come closer to God. Now that they are with God, they can help us even more. But when we pray to the saints, we are really asking them to ask God to help us. Do we have to pray to them? No, but it is a very human and very good thing to do.

16. What is essential to real participation in Mass?

In order to really participate in the Mass, it is not sufficient merely to pray and sing along and go through the motions of serving Mass. One must inwardly speak to God, listen to His Word, receive the Lord in Communion and then go out into daily life and live the commands of Christ in thought, word and deed.

17. How do you show respect for the Holy Name of Jesus?

God warned the Israelites that they must not take the name of the Lord their God in vain. As Christians, we know that all the names of God—Father, Jesus, Christ, Spirit, Word, etc. are holy names.

As a Catholic, you should be known for clean speech. But as an altar server you should be known as never swearing.

Bow your head when you hear the name Jesus, and when you hear someone misusing the name of Jesus say to yourself, “Blessed be the Name of Jesus,” to make up for the insult to Christ.

18. How do you stay in person of Christian character and integrity?

- a. By keeping the 10 Commandments, the Beatitudes and the laws of the Church.

- b. By keeping away from things that may cause you to sin: magazines, movies, TV shows that degrade human sexuality, or that glorify racism, hate and violence.

19. Tell how the life of each of the following saints help you to lead a better Christian life...

St. Tarcisius, St. John Berchman, St. Dominic Savio, St. Pius X

20. What do we mean by vocation?

Every person has a vocation - - some to the priesthood or religious life, single or married, others in business or academics, still others in one of the trades. Each vocation is holy and it is up to us to figure out what God wants us to do. When we decide, then we must live out our vocation according to our faith. In whatever we choose to do, other people must see us acting as Christians.

21. What are your most memorable experiences as a server?

Server's Prayer

*Loving Father, creator of the universe,
you call your people to worship,
to be with you and one another at Mass.*

*I thank you for having called me to assist others in
their prayer to you.*

*May I be worthy of the trust placed in me
and through my example of service,
bring others closer to you.*

*I ask this in the name of Jesus Christ,
who is Lord forever and ever.*

Amen.

If you have any questions, please contact the Altar Server Ministry
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