

St. John the Baptist Altar Server Training Guide

11/15/19

Altar Server Website – This guide and other training materials may be found on the parish website (www.sjbnf.org). Click on “Ministries” and then on “Altar Server.”

Dress, Conduct, and Posture: Part of the Server’s role is to assist in leading the assembly in worship. A Server’s conduct and appearance set an example for others to follow. Some guidelines to follow are:

- **Dress:** Wear slacks/skirt, nice shirt, nice shoes or sandals. Avoid jeans, shorts, t-shirts, athletic socks, sneakers and flip flops.
- **Hair:** Shoulder length hair should be pulled back to keep it away from the face and candle flames.
- **Sitting:** Straight up with hands folded on lap or flat on legs. Feet flat on the floor. Don’t cross legs/feet.
- **Standing:** Straight up with hands held prayerfully and feet slightly separated.
- **Hands:** When standing, kneeling, or walking, held prayerfully, i.e. together with fingers pointed upward.
- **Walking:** Back and head straight. Hands held prayerfully. Pace should not be rushed.
- **Carrying Items:** Two hands on items. If only one hand is needed, place free hand across the chest.
- **Bow of the head** – is made when:
 - To Our Lord when approaching during communion.
 - The Trinity of “the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” or the name of Jesus, Mary, or St. John the Baptist are spoken.
 - To Priest when leaving him after an action (e.g. holding Missal, presenting gift, washing hands).
 - To Our Lord in the tabernacle when carrying candle or crucifix during entrance procession/exit recession.
- **Profound bow** (at the waist) – is made when:
 - The words, “... and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.” are spoken during the Profession of Faith.
- **Genuflect:**
 - To Our Lord in the tabernacle when walking past before or after Mass when lighting or extinguishing candles.
 - To Our Lord in the tabernacle during entrance procession/exit recession as a 4th (extra) Server.

Server Roles: There are 4 typical server roles: Senior Server, Missal Server, Bell Server, and Corporal Server. Specific duties for the servers are:

- **Senior Server:** Prepares missal, Priest’s hymnal and microphone, Ensures each server knows his role and prompts servers during Mass as needed. Prepares altar when no deacon. Clears altar during communion. Finds replacement if a Server doesn’t show up. Serve as Thurifer if incense is used. Senior Server duties are not addressed in detail in this document.
- **Missal Server:** Typically carries the crucifix during the procession and recessional. Sits next to Priest and holds missal for Fr. Yohe during the Greeting/Penitential Act, and for all priests during the Collect Prayer, Prayer after Communion, and if used, during the Solemn Blessing and the blessing of holy water. Delivers missal to brick wall and retrieves the missal from the altar. Holds the folder during the Creed and Petitions.
Note: The Missal Server does not open the missal for Fr. Yohe. He does open the missal for Fr. Ben and visiting priests.
- **Bell Server:** Typically carries a candle during procession and recessional. Rings bells. Retrieves the Chalice and/or linen from the Senior Server during communion. When used, presents, and retrieves holy water and aspergillum from the Priest.
- **Corporal Server:** Typically carries a candle during procession and recessional. Retrieves the corporal and any other items from the Priest after communion.
- **All servers:** Light and extinguish candles, prepare the altar, receive and present the gifts, and participate fully during Mass.
Note: The tallest server normally carries the crucifix.

Before Mass:

- **Sign In** – Sign in next to your name. If not scheduled to serve and someone pre-arranged for you to fill in for them, write your name on the substitute line and circle the “P” for pre-arranged. If volunteering to serve because someone didn’t show up, write your name on the substitute line and circle “V” for volunteer.
- **Vest** – Servers wear an alb (should almost touch the shoes), a cincture (tied on the left side), and a cross.
- **The Senior Server** ensures that each Server knows what role he will fulfill (e.g. Missal, Bell, or Corporal Server) and if there are any unique aspects in the Mass being celebrated.
- **Light Candles** in the sanctuary. During Easter Season, stand on the stool in the ambo to light the Paschal candle. Adult help may be needed to lower the candle if it is difficult to light.

- Proceed to the atrium (office side) with the crucifix and two procession candles 5 minutes before Mass begins. Walk through Our Lady's Chapel, not the worship area. Servers will pray with the Priest before the procession.
- Note: If a Server does not show up, inform the Senior Server and attempt to find a volunteer. If not assigned to serve and notice there aren't enough Servers, please volunteer, even if Mass has begun.

Entrance Procession

- At the Priest's direction, the Crucifix Bearer and Candle Bearers proceed side-by-side down the center aisle and briefly pause at the first row of chairs to bow their heads to Our Lord in the tabernacle.
- The Crucifix and Candle bearers then turn left toward the ambo side door. The candles are placed in the holder on each side of the ambo from the front side. The crucifix is placed in the holder in the hallway. All proceed together through Our Lady's Chapel to stand at their chairs.
- If there is an extra Server, he follows the crucifix and candles and upon reaching the front of the altar where the other Servers bowed their heads, he genuflects, and then continues to follow the other servers out the door and to their chairs.

Greeting, Penitential Act, and Kyrie or Blessing and Sprinkling of Holy Water

For Fr. Yohe Only:

- Upon arriving at his chair, the Missal Server picks up the missal and when Fr. Yohe puts down his hymnal, proceeds to stand in front of Fr. Yohe for the greeting and penitential act with the missal closed. The Missal Server remains there until Fr. Yohe closes the missal and then returns to his chair and continues holding the missal until the end of the Gloria.
- Note: During Advent, Lent, or Daily Mass when there is no Gloria, the Missal Server holds the missal for Fr. Yohe from the beginning until the end of the Collect prayer.
- Note: There are 3 Penitential Act options. Each is followed by the Kyrie: *"Lord, have mercy/Christ, have mercy/Lord, have mercy."*

Optional Blessing and Sprinkling of Holy Water (typically during Easter Season or on particular feasts)

Note: The Penitential Act and Kyrie are omitted. The Sprinkling is a reminder of Baptism.

- After placing candles and crucifix in holders, the Bell Server retrieves from the brick wall the bowl of salt (if used) and aspergillum (handle facing Priest) in his left hand and the holy water vessel in his right.
- Upon arriving at his chair, the Missal Server picks up the missal. For Fr. Ben, he opens it to the red ribbon (pg 1296).
- When the Priest puts down his hymnal, the Missal Server proceeds to stand in front of the Priest. The Bell Server proceeds to stand in front of the Deacon's chair facing the Priest at an angle.
- After the Priest blesses the water, the Missal Server returns to his chair keeping the missal open.
- When the Priest takes the aspergillum and holy water vessel, the Bell Server returns to his chair.
- When the Priest has nearly completed the sprinkling, the Bell Server proceeds to stand in front of the altar steps to retrieve the holy water vessel and aspergillum from him as he walks back down the center aisle, and then places the items back on the brick wall.
- As either Priest returns to his chair, the Missal Server proceeds to stand in front of him with the missal still open for a final prayer. Following the prayer, he returns to his chair and continues to hold the missal during the Gloria.

Gloria in Excelsis (except during Advent and Lent or during Daily Mass)

- During the Gloria at the words, *"You alone are the Most High...."* the Missal Server proceeds back to stand in front of the Priest for the Collect Prayer. For Fr. Ben, the Missal Server first picks up the missal and opens it to the ribbon for the Collect prayer (usually green ribbon).

Collect Priest: *"Let us pray."* The Missal Server holds the missal during the Collect and then returns to his chair and places the missal on the stand.

During Advent/Lent or Daily Mass, there is no Gloria. During these seasons:

- **Fr. Yohe**, the Missal Server simply continues holding the missal from the Greeting through the Penitential Act and the Collect.
- **Other Priests**, the Missal Server picks up and opens the missal to the ribbon for the Collect at the first *"Lord have Mercy"* (Kyrie Eleison) and proceeds to stand in front of the Priest for the Collect Prayer at the third/final *"Lord have Mercy"*.

Profession of Faith/Creed and Universal Prayer (Prayer of the Faithful/Petitions)

- At the end of the homily, the Missal Server opens the folder to the Creed. When the Priest stands, the Missal Server proceeds to stand in front of him holding the folder until the end of the Petitions.
- Note: The Creed may be omitted at Daily Mass. In which case, the Missal Server opens to the petitions.
- At the conclusion of the petitions, the Missal Server returns the folder, delivers the missal to the holder on the brick wall and proceeds to assist in preparing the altar.

Preparation of the Altar

- Note: When preparing the altar, one Server at a time at the altar. The others wait beside the Missal Server's chair.
- At the conclusion of the Petitions, Servers proceed to the credence table.
- Items are brought to the altar and presented to the minister in the following order:
 - 1.** Chalice with purificator/pall/corporals
 - 2.** Tray of communion cups and purificators
 - 3.** Tray of ciboria (and pyx)
 - 4.** Missal holder and missal (with writing side readable by the minister)
- Note: As one Server turns away from the altar, the next Server in line proceeds to the altar.
- Note: Do not place items on the altar. The Deacon or Senior Server will do so.
- When altar preparation tasks are completed, Servers return to their chairs and remain standing. After delivering all items to the altar, the Missal Server joins the other servers as they await moving to receive the gifts.

Presentation of Gifts and Hand Washing

- When the Priest stands from his chair or leaves the altar, the Servers follow him to the front of the sanctuary. Typically 2 Servers to the Priest's left and 1 to his right. If 4 Servers, then 2 on each side. Note: Don't walk in front of the Priest.
- The Servers with the paten and ciborium of hosts proceed to the right side of the altar and present the items to the Priest/Deacon in that order.
- The Server with the cruet of wine proceeds to the left side of the altar and presents it to the Priest/Deacon with stopper removed and remains there until it is returned.
- The Server with the offertory basket places it on the stool (or shelf) inside the ambo.
- The first 2 Servers to present their gifts return to the credence table. Other Servers sit down.
- The first Server back to the credence table immediately returns to the altar with the pitcher of water and stands behind the Server with the wine. He presents the water with the handle facing the Priest/Deacon.
- The 2nd Server returning to the credence table takes the wash basin/towel and stands about 3 feet (edge of the carpet) from the corner of the altar facing the Priest.
- Note: If there is incense, the Server will remain by the edge of the steps near the Missal Server's chair until the Priest has completed incensing and/or is incensed by the Deacon.
- When the wine cruet is returned to the Server, he places it on the cart in Our Lady's Chapel.
- When the water is returned to the Server, he joins the Server with the wash basin and takes the basin from him. The Server left with the towel unfolds it and holds it by the corners out in front of his body.
- When the Priest turns to face the Servers, the two Servers **step toward** the Priest to meet him. When the Priest extends his hands, the Server places the wash basin under the Priest's hands and pours water over them.
- The Server with the towel presents it to the Priest and extends his forearm across the front of his body for the Priest to return the Towel.
- The Servers return to the credence table. The server with the basin hands it to the server with the towel and both are placed on the cart in Our Lady's Chapel. The server with the water returns it to the credence table. Both servers return to their chairs.
- Note: After preparing the altar, the Missal Server joins the other servers at their seats until the Priest returns to his chair after communion.

Sanctus

All: *"Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of hosts..."* All servers kneel on the first step in front of the server chairs. The Bell Server kneels closest to the brick wall so he can ring the bells located on the step.

Bell Ringing at Epiclesis After the Sanctus (*Holy, Holy...*) the Priest asks that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, the gifts offered substantially become the Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

- As soon as the Priest extends both of his hands over the gifts, the Bell Server rings the bells once for 1 second. The bells will be rung while the Priest is praying.

Note: Don't touch the bells until it is time to ring them.

Note: For Eucharistic Prayer #1, the priest will make the sign of the cross over the gifts. Do not ring the bells when he does so.

Note: When the Priest extends his hands over the gifts, he says the following (varies for each of the four Eucharistic Prayers):

Eucharistic Prayer #1: *“Be pleased, O God, we pray, to bless, acknowledge, and approve this offering in every respect....”*

Eucharistic Prayer #2: *“Make holy, therefore, these gifts, we pray, by sending down your Spirit upon them....”* (short notice)

Eucharistic Prayer #3: *“Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you: by the same Spirit graciously make holy these gifts....”*

Eucharistic Prayer #4: *“Therefore, O Lord, we pray: may this same Holy Spirit graciously sanctify these offerings....”*

Institution Narrative, Consecration and Bell Ringing (The Priest recalls the words and actions of Jesus at the Last Supper at which time the bread and wine are substantially changed into His Body and Blood)

- When the Priest finishes praying the words *“Take this all of you, and eat of it: for this is my body which will be given up for you”* the Bell Server rings the bells 3 times. Each ring should last 1 second and there should be a noticeable pause between rings.
- When the Priest finishes praying the words *“...Take this all of you, and drink from it: for this is the chalice of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in memory of me”* the Bell Server rings the bells 3 times. Each ring should last 1 second and there should be a noticeable pause between rings.

Lord’s Prayer

- **Note:** Servers do not hold each other’s hands or hold their hands extended in the orans position.

Rite of Peace and Fraction (Breaking of the Bread)

- Following the Sign of Peace and *“Lamb of God,”* the Servers kneel.

Communion, Retrieving the Missal and Clearing the Altar

- After the Priest receives communion and the Extraordinary Ministers approach the altar, the servers move together to the top step and stand next to the Extraordinary Ministers to receive communion.
- After receiving communion, the Missal and Bell Servers move to stand on the first step next to the Missal Server’s chair and the other Servers return to their chairs for a period of silent prayer.
- When the Senior Server approaches the altar to clear it, the Missal Server approaches the altar to receive the missal and holder and returns the missal to the stand and the holder to the brick wall.
- When the Senior Server finishes clearing the altar and picks up the items to be removed, the Bell Server proceeds to the altar to retrieve the chalice and/or linen from the Senior Server and returns those items to the credence table.
Note: If the chalice is left at the altar, it will be retrieved by the Corporal Server when the Priest/Deacon returns to the altar.
- After communion when the Priest begins folding the corporal, the Corporal Server proceeds to retrieve the corporal from the Priest and takes it to the credence table. If the chalice was left at the altar, it will be retrieved as well.
Note: If the Priest forgets to remove the corporal from the altar, the Senior Server should approach the altar, fold the corporal and take it to the credence table.
- When the Priest is returning to his chair, the Missal Server immediately returns to his chair and picks up the missal while seated.

Fr Yohe only: Keep the missal closed.

Fr Ben and other Priests: Open the missal to the ribbon for the Prayer after Communion (usually green ribbon).

Prayer After Communion, Announcements, and Blessing

- When the Priest stands to say, *“Let us pray,”* the Missal Server proceeds to stand in front of the Priest with the missal – closed for Fr. Yohe and open for Fr. Ben and other Priests.
- After the prayer when the Priest says, *“Amen,”* the Missal Server closes and places the missal on the stand and stands at his chair. He will not hold the folder during the announcements.
- **Note:** If there is a Solemn Blessing or Prayer Over the People to be given following the announcements (typically during the Christmas/Lent/Easter seasons and on Holy Days):
 - **Fr. Yohe** will gesture for the Missal Server to remain in place following the Prayer After Communion. Fr. Yohe will then place the folder for announcements over the missal, deliver the announcements, return the folder to the slot, and then offer the Solemn Blessing or Prayer Over the People.
 - **Fr Ben:** The Missal Server will return to his chair following the Prayer After Communion and turn the missal to the ribbon at the page number located at the bottom of the page following the Prayer After Communion. At the conclusion of the announcements, the Missal Server will return to Fr. Ben for the Solemn Blessing or Prayer Over the People.

Exit Recession

- As soon as the music begins, the Crucifix and Candle Bearers proceed through Our Lady's Chapel to retrieve the crucifix and proceed together out the door to retrieve the candles from the ambo. The Crucifix Bearer waits several feet past the ambo to be joined by the Candle Bearers who retrieve the candles from the back side of the ambo. All then move to stand facing the altar in the center aisle between the 1st rows of pews.
- If there is an extra Server, he will follow the Crucifix and Candle Bears out the door and to the center aisle. He will stop a few steps before the center aisle and stand facing the tabernacle to the left of the aisle.
- The Priest proceeds to the bottom of the steps in front of the altar. When he genuflects and turns, the Candle and Crucifix Bearers bow their head to Our Lord in the tabernacle, turn, and proceed out the center aisle and turn to the right to exit out the doors. If there is an extra Server, he genuflects when the Priest does and then follows the Crucifix and Candle Bearers.

After Mass

- The Servers proceed down the hallway past the Sacristy and return the crucifix and candles to their holders.
- Extinguish Candles -
 - After 5pm / 11am – Extinguish all candles in the sanctuary using the candle snuffer.
 - After 7:30am / 9:00am – Extinguish procession candles. Leave other candles lit.

Note: Stand on the step stool in the ambo to extinguish the paschal candle. Adult assistance may be required.

Note: Never extinguish the tabernacle candle in the red candle holder .

- The Senior Server takes the lead in reviewing anything that didn't go smoothly or that the Servers should do differently in the future. Sometimes Mr. Lauer or Snyder will also discuss with the servers any opportunities to improve. Direct any questions or any suggestions to Mr. Lauer, Snyder or the Senior Servers.