

St. John the Baptist Altar Server General Guidelines

9/22/23

Altar Server Website: The server schedule and training materials may be found on the parish website www.sjbnf.org/altarservers, or from the homepage www.sjbnf.org click on “Get Involved” and then “Liturgical Ministries”. Under “Altar Servers” click on “Visit Page”

Server Assignments: Servers are relied upon to serve when assigned (especially senior servers). Ensure dates and mass times are put on family calendars. If a conflict arises, servers are expected to find a replacement – see server contact roster. Last minute illness on the morning of mass is unavoidable. If able, text the senior server family or Mr. Snyder to provide notice.

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 nice “church” clothes that are modest, and appropriate for the ministry. Avoid jeans, t-shirts, and athletic socks.
- **Shoes:** Wear well-fitting “church” shoes. Avoid sneakers, flip flops, slide-on shoes & high heels to prevent tripping.
- **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. palms 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 flat across the chest.
- **Bow of the head** – is made when:
 - To Priest when leaving him after an action (e.g. holding Missal, presenting gift, washing hands).
 - 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 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.” during the Profession of Faith.
- **Genuflect:**
 - **Before or after Mass** to Our Lord in the tabernacle when walking past to light or extinguish candles.
 - **During Mass** to Our Lord in the tabernacle when the Priest returns the Eucharist to the tabernacle and genuflects.
 - **During Mass** to Our Lord in the tabernacle during entrance procession/exit recession if not carrying anything.

Before Mass:

- **Arrive** – Senior Servers should arrive 20-25 minutes before mass. All others arrive no later than 15 minutes before mass.
- **Sign In** – Sign the sheet 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), and a cincture (tied on the left side).
- **The Senior Server** ensures that each server knows what role he will fulfill and if there are any unique aspects in the Mass being celebrated.
- **Light Candles** in the sanctuary. During Easter Season, may need to 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 procession candles 5 minutes before Mass begins. Walk through Our Lady’s Chapel, not the worship area.
- **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.

During Mass: See Cue Cards for specific procedures.

- **Changing Sides:** If a Server needs to move from one side to the other (missal side to ambo side), he should do so by going “around back” past the confessionals and not simply walk across the altar. When moving from the door directly to the chairs, use the ramp or steps.
- **Seating:** The Senior Server and Missal Server will sit on the same side as the Priest. The Credence Server(s) will sit on the Ambo Side.
- **Missal:** Kept on table, not stand. Should be opened and placed in a server’s arms. If no one available to do so, keep it closed.

After Mass

- The Servers pause in the atrium to pray with the Priest, then proceed down the hallway and return the crucifix and candles.
- Extinguish Altar Candles -
 - After 5pm / 11am – Extinguish all candles in the sanctuary using the candle snuffer (except the red tabernacle candle).
 - After 7:30am / 9:00am – Extinguish procession candles. Leave other candles lit.
- **Note:** May need adult assistance or to stand on the step stool in the ambo to extinguish the paschal candle during Easter.
- The Senior Server takes the lead in reviewing areas to improve in the future. Mr. Lauer, Gering or Snyder may also discuss any opportunities to improve. Direct any questions or suggestions to Mr. Lauer, Gering, Snyder or the Senior Servers.