

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP ALTAR SERVER GUIDE

Welcome to the Altar Server ministry at Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic Church. Your service at the altar is of great importance to the sacred liturgy at our parish. As altar servers you will be able to assist the priests and deacons in the sanctuary during the holy sacrifice of the mass, which is when heaven and Earth meet, and we join with the hosts of heaven to worship God and receive the graces and blessings imparted by the Eucharist.

Given this great privilege, it is important to keep in mind the reverence due to our Lord and sacredness of the sanctuary before, during, and after mass. It is our hope that through this ministry, you will find joy in serving the Lord and will come to know and love Him even more every day.

Group training sessions will be offered throughout the year. We will be happy to meet with any server individually (in the presence of their parents or another adult) who would like a “refresher” course, or if they have any particular questions about how to serve. We do understand that many servers are nervous about being in front of the congregation during mass. We want to be sure that each server is as comfortable as possible, so that they may be able to fully take part in this rewarding ministry. We will institute an Altar Server mentor program whereby Mass Shepherds will be assigned to each Mass.



“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 whenever the community gathers to pray and give praise to God. Jesus is present in the words of Sacred Scripture. Jesus is present above all in the Eucharist, under the appearances 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 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.”

–ST. POPE JOHN PAUL II

Attitude and Reverence

Attitude is everything. Determine that you are there to serve the Lord and that you will come mentally prepared, do everything to the best of your ability, and take responsibility to do things the right way.

Please arrive no later than 15 minutes prior to mass so that you can get vested, prepare yourself mentally & spiritually for mass, and say the Altar Server Prayer with the Mass Shepherd in the vesting room.

If 10 minutes before mass, there are not enough servers, and you are NOT scheduled to serve, PLEASE step up and serve.

During mass, it is important to keep a reverent and respectful attitude at all times. Keep appropriate reverent posture (prayer hands). When you are standing, stand up straight. When you are carrying something, hold it steady and straight. When sitting, sit straight up with your knees bent and your feet flat on the ground. When you kneel, keep your body upright, do not sit back on your heels.

While moving around the sanctuary, try to move in a smooth and deliberate manner. You should never have to hurry, rush, or turn abruptly. Talking to each other during mass should be kept to an absolute minimum.

It is important to pay attention at ALL times to the priest and deacon. You never know when something may come up and they may require your assistance. Be sure to participate fully during mass, saying the prayers, bowing, kneeling, making the sign of the cross, and all responses. Do not slouch, fidget, rock back and forth, look aimlessly around, or do anything else that makes it appear that your attention is wandering.

After the mass has been completed, it is important to remember that we are still within a holy place, in the presence of our Lord and Savior, and that reverence should be maintained while placing all objects back into their places.



Attendance

The priests and deacons are depending on your help to assist during mass. Please be sure to check the schedule each month, with your parents, so you all can make plans to serve on those days listed for you. If you cannot serve at your scheduled time, please do your best to find a substitute, either through the scheduling app or by speaking with another server directly.

Please REMEMBER to sign in on the attendance sheet in the Narthex. If you are subbing for another server, or if you have been asked by the mass coordinator to help when walking into mass, please include your name on the sheet.

Search via City & State for Our Lady.

Dress and Attire

Your dress and appearance is an outward sign of your inward disposition. As we are entering into a holy place at a time when heaven comes down to Earth, while in the physical presence of our Lord and Savior, it is important to be present ourselves in a manner worthy of the sacredness of the moment.

BOYS

Boys should wear a collared shirt (polo or button-down dress shirt), dress pants or khakis, socks and dress shoes.

GIRLS

Girls should wear a dress or dressy shirt with a skirt or dress pants, along with dress shoes.

Please do not wear any sports uniforms, t-shirts, shorts, jeans, or sandals/flip flops. If you have a sporting activity before or after mass, please bring a change of appropriate clothing.

Please take time to ensure your face is washed and that your hair is neatly combed and out of your face. All servers should have their hair neatly styled and secured away from their face so that it does not distract them or require attention during mass.

M.A.S.S

At each Mass, we will schedule a M.A.S.S., Mass Altar Server Shepherd. These individuals will have the responsibility of meeting with the servers 15 minutes before Mass, review any possible peculiarities pertaining to that Mass, pray the Altar Server Prayer and then after Mass, answer server questions, provide positive reinforcement and/or provide gentle coaching related to the server's actions during Mass.

Point System

Points will be awarded to each server based on attendance (see below). These points will be used toward determining the altar server of the month, as well as an invitation to an occasional trip or party. Points will also be used in identifying servers who may no longer be interested in continuing this ministry.

- 1 point will be given for serving at a weekend mass or if you sub/fill in.
- 1 point will be given for serving at a weekday mass.
- 2 points will be given for volunteer serving at mass on a Holy Day of Obligation.
- 2 points will be given for volunteering for any Diocesan liturgical celebration at Our Lady.
- 2 points will be given for volunteering for any optional Solemn or Extraordinary liturgical celebration here at Our Lady. Example-Corpus Christi Procession, Mass of Lord's Supper (Holy Thursday), etc.
- 3 points will be given for attending training.
- 2 points will be TAKEN AWAY if you miss a mass you are scheduled for AND you did not request a sub in the online system by 8 am the day before you are scheduled. No points taken away if sub request was made in time.

Point system will go into effect December 3, 2022. This will allow new servers trained October 2022 to begin accumulating points during the new minister scheduling period which begins December 1, 2022.

Altar Server Training Levels

Level I Server

- 3rd Grade, 4th Grade and newly trained servers.
- Main role is as a torch bearer.
- May assist as cross bearer if not enough servers.

Level II Server

- 5th, 6th and 7th Grade.
- Main role as cross bearer
- May serve as torch bearer.
- After proper training, may hold thurible or incense boat.

Level III Server

- 8th Grade and up.
- May serve as cross bearer.
- May serve as torch bearer.
- After proper training, may hold thurible or incense boat.
- Main role is to make sure altar servers are serving correctly and giving guidance where needed.
- By being focused and observant during the mass, remain proactive making sure servers are ready for the next part of the mass.
- After mass, discuss server actions during mass with Mass Shepherd that will allow Mass Shepherd to give positive reinforcement and where needed, provide gentle coaching.

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