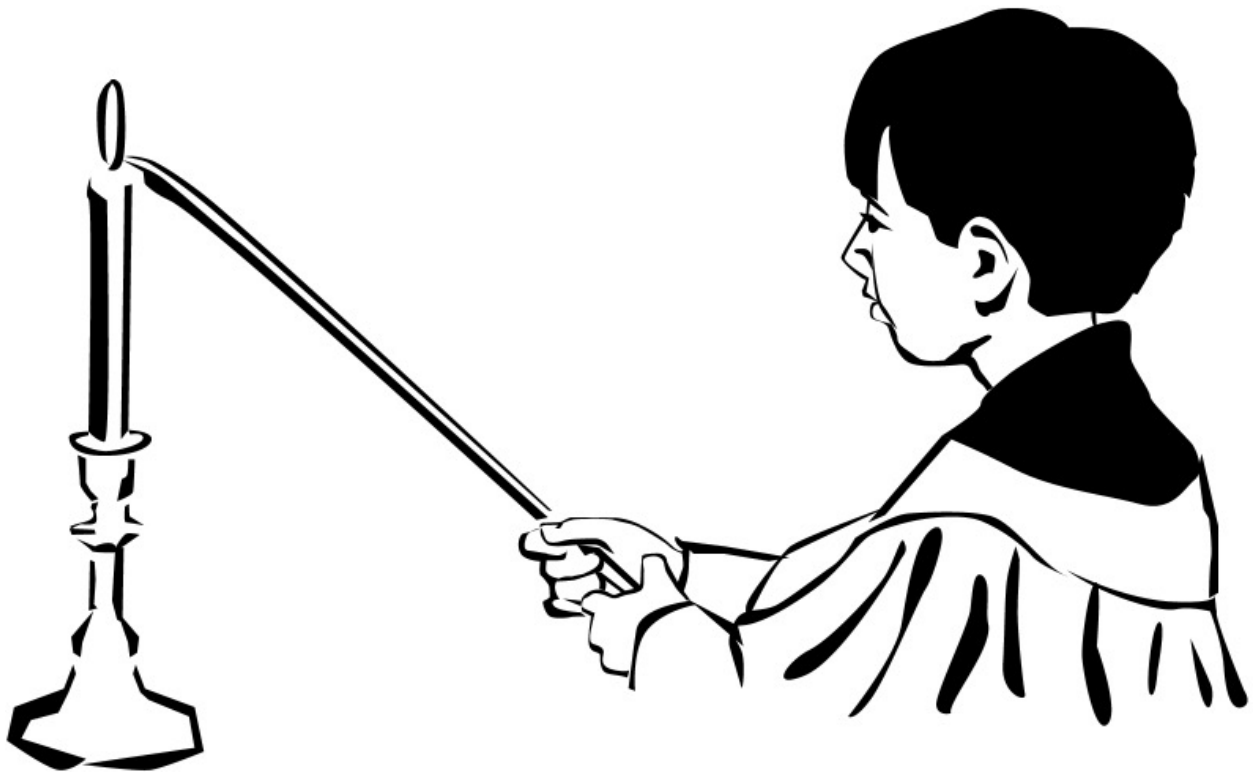


Serving at the Altar of God

An Instruction for Children and Youth



YOUR NAME: _____

TODAY'S DATE: November 6, 2022

Saint Vincent de Paul Catholic Church Religious Education Program
Berkeley Springs, WV

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**DO MORE OF
WHAT
MAKES YOU
~~HAPPY.~~
HOLY.**

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Lesson 3: PREPARING YOURSELF TO SERVE AT MASS

A good altar server always comes to Mass well prepared in body, mind, and spirit.

Preparing Your Body:

When you go somewhere special, how do you get yourself ready? Let's say you're going to meet your favorite movie star or sports hero. Would you go with a dirty face and messy hair? Or would you put on a nice shirt or dress and be sure your teeth are brushed and your hair neat and face clean? Would you think of something nice in advance to say to this person, or would you blurt out something silly at the last minute that even you didn't understand?

God is so much more important than any human being, right? So,

1. Be neat and clean when you come to church: bathe, brush your teeth, comb your hair, and dress as best you can.
2. Stay healthy: get a good night's sleep each night, eat well, and drink plenty of water.
3. Come early enough to Mass so you have plenty of time to dress, pray, relax and focus on doing your job at Mass well.

DRESS CODE WHEN SERVING AT MASS:

Boys and Girls:

- Wear clean clothes that are in good condition (no holes, rips, or stains).
- No light-up sneakers, tennis shoes, open sandals, or flip-flops which make noise.
- No jeans, shorts, sweatpants, pajama bottoms, cut-offs, or sports apparel.
- No shirts or pants with words or graphics of any kind.
- No tight or revealing clothes. Modesty is the best policy; if you have to ask yourself, "Should I wear this?" - then you shouldn't.
- No hats, caps, or hoodies.
- Leave all electronic devices (including earbuds) with a family member or in the altar server room.

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Specifics for Boys:

- Wear slacks (no jeans), polo shirt, dress shirt, or a plain t-shirt.
- Wear dark shoes or boots that are clean (either tie-up or loafers; no open sandals).
- Hair and nails must be neat, clean, and well-groomed, including facial hair.

Specifics for Girls:

- Wear a dress, or skirt and blouse, or ankle-length slacks and blouse. Dresses and skirts must be no shorter than knee-length. Leggings or slacks must be worn under a tunic or short dress. Remember, modesty is the best policy!
- No sheer or see-through clothing of any kind is permitted. No halter tops, tube tops, or short-sleeved garments (shoulders must be covered).
- Wear flat shoes only, or shoes with a heel no higher than 1 inch. No backless shoes, open sandals, slippers, or Ugg-like boots.
- Hair and nails must be clean and well-groomed (no chipped nail polish or fake press-on nails). Long hair should be tied back in a ponytail.
- No excessive makeup or trendy jewelry.

Preparing Your Mind and Soul:

1. Go to **confession** at least once a month to help you resist the devil and remain in a state of grace.
2. Receive the **Holy Eucharist** at Mass each Sunday and on **holy days of obligation**.
3. Say your prayers each day, and the Holy Rosary as often as you can.

There will be a prayer posted in the Altar Server Room for you to pray immediately before Mass either alone or with others. You will also be provided with a prayer card to keep with you.

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SIDE NOTE: Behavior on the Altar and During Mass:

- *Always behave reverently on the altar and throughout the entire Mass.*

DO:	DON'T
<i>Keep your hands held up to your chest and folded when praying or walking</i>	<i>Play with your hair or jewelry</i>
<i>Participate verbally in the Mass; say the responses and sing the hymns if you know them</i>	<i>Wave to your family or people you know</i>
<i>Pay attention to the priest at all times; be ready to anticipate anything he needs done</i>	<i>Talk with others on the altar unless absolutely necessary</i>
<i>Be prayerful, and smile! God loves a cheerful servant.</i>	<i>Worry about making a mistake! Only God does everything perfectly!</i>

GOOD EXAMPLE



POOR EXAMPLE

It's not "uncool" or weird to hold your hands up in prayer. You're in church; it's expected of you, and it sets a good example for others! Folding our hands in prayer symbolizes the upward motion of our prayers and petitions towards Jesus in heaven. (Do this even when you're not serving at Mass, especially when you're receiving Holy Communion. It's a sign of respect and love for God.)

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Lesson 4: THE PARTS OF THE MASS

- Introductory Rites (ProceSSIONal and Opening Prayers)
- Liturgy of the Word
- Liturgy of the Eucharist
- Closing Prayers and Recessional

HAVE YOU NOTICED that everything in the world has a certain order? Night turns into day, winter turns to spring, school starts in the morning and ends in the afternoon...everything good in life has a certain order. God created order. If He didn't, our lives would be very chaotic (*kay-ah-tick*: adj. having no order; all messed up). Living a well-ordered life can lead us to holiness.

There is a certain order to the Mass, too. A beginning, a middle, and an end. Let's start at the beginning:

1. Mass always starts with the **Introductory Rites (ProceSSIONal and Opening Prayers)**.

- Altar servers meet with the priest in the narthex (gathering space) and line up in this order:
 - FIRST: The cross bearer (the cross ALWAYS goes first!)
 - SECOND: The candle holders (one on the left, one on the right)
 - THIRD: The lector
 - FOURTH: The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion
 - FIFTH: The priest (the priest ALWAYS goes last!)

The cross bearer waits for the priest's signal to begin processing down the main aisle. Never begin the procession without the priest's signal. Even if the music has started, always check with the priest before starting down the aisle.

- Where do we stand when we get to the altar?
 - The **cross bearer** turns to the left and stands in front of the **ambo** facing the altar.
 - The **candle bearers** stand behind the priest - one on his left and one on his right - facing the altar
 - (The **lector** will place the **Book of the Gospels** upon the altar and return to his or her place in the processional, to the left of the priest, facing the altar)
 - (The Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion will stand next to the priest to his right, facing the altar)

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Everyone in the procession stands in front of the altar and waits for the priest to bow to the altar. Everyone in the procession also bows and then proceeds to their respective places: the priest will go to the altar; everyone else goes to the pews to the left of the altar (near the statue of Our Blessed Mother). The cross bearer places the processional cross in its stand; the candle bearers then place their candles in their respective holders; all altar servers stand in front of the pews near the Blessed Mother statue and prepare to assist the priest on the altar as he prays.

AT THE END OF THE **GLORIA**, the priest prays the **collect**. One altar server brings the **missal** to the priest on the altar and stands in front of him. The priest will then open the missal and pray the collect. The altar server closes the missal and returns it to its stand. Everyone sits down while the lector proceeds to the altar to proclaim the Word of the Lord.



The priest and altar server at the *collect*

SIDE NOTE: What do we do with our hands during Mass?

When serving at Mass, if you do not have anything in your hands it is best to fold them at your chest in prayer. Never let your hands dangle at your sides. If one hand is holding something, place the other hand over your heart (just like during the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag).

When sitting at Mass, place your hands on your legs as pictured. Do not fidget when sitting. Continue to pay close attention to the priest so you don't miss any of his cues.



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Altar server holding cruet in one hand while placing hand over his heart. Notice the altar server with nothing in his hands: he folds his hands at his chest in prayer.

2. After the collect, everyone sits down - even the altar servers. This begins the second part of the Mass called **The Liturgy of the Word**.
 - The first reading is proclaimed by the lector. (We respond "Thanks be to God.")
 - Next, the **psalm** is sung by the **cantor** and the congregation (including altar servers!) responds. (Listen carefully to the cantor for the response.)
 - Next, the lector proclaims the second reading. (We respond again, "Thanks be to God.")
 - The priest next proclaims the **Holy Gospel** during which everyone stands. (The priest says, "A reading from the Holy Gospel according to...", after which we all say "Glory to You, O Lord." We make a small sign of the cross with our right hand on our forehead, lips, and over our heart. We do this to remind us that the Word of God is always to be on our minds, on our lips, and in our hearts.") After the Holy Gospel is read, the priest says "The Gospel of the Lord." We all then respond "Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ." Then everyone sits while the priest gives his **homily**.

SIDE NOTE: Why is it called The Liturgy of the Word? What does that mean?

During this part of the Mass, we listen to readings from the Holy Bible which we know is the Word of God. First, through the lector during the first and second readings, and through the Psalm, we listen to what God has spoken to us through the prophets of the Old Testament, and through Jesus Himself in the New Testament. After the readings proclaimed by the lector, we say "The Word of the Lord." We say "Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ" after the priest proclaims the Gospel because we just heard the words of Jesus directly from His lips as written by Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, James, Jude, and Paul.

The priest will conclude his homily and then sit for a short while so we can reflect on all we just heard. He then stands and invites us also to stand and say the **Creed**.

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After the Creed, we remain standing for the Universal Prayer (also called the Prayer of the Faithful) which is read by the lector. After each prayer, we respond, "Lord, hear our prayer." At the end of the Universal Prayer, everyone in the congregation is seated. The altar servers begin to prepare for the next part of the Mass...

3. The Liturgy of the Eucharist

We will continue to learn about the parts of the Mass next time we meet for altar server training, which is scheduled for NEXT WEEK, November 13, 2022!

The schedule has been changed as we do not have use of the parish hall next week. So, after Mass next week, November 13th, snacks will be in the Gathering Space (the narthex), and then we will all meet again in the church to continue our next session of altar server training.

Class instruction time is canceled on November 20th due to a parish event for the volunteers of the parish. We will not have use of the parish hall. We will meet again on November 27th in the parish hall and have regular class instruction then. Please show this paper to your parents!

An announcement will also be on the Religious Education page of the parish website: www.stvincentdepaucaatholicchurchbs.com. Mrs. McBee will also send an email to your parents. Announcements will be made at Mass and also placed in the bulletin.

God bless you!

