

Holy Family Altar Servers Guild

Program and Requirements

1. Service at the altar is a special ministry within the Christian community. Not only do altar servers minister to the needs of the priest, they also reflect the devotion of the entire parish community. Therefore, all altar servers are expected to have a love of worship and an eagerness to learn more about the Church's liturgy. In addition, they must faithfully participate in the celebration of the Eucharist each Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation. They must also show respect for God's house, especially when they are present within the sanctuary. Finally, they are also expected to carry out their duties respectfully, always aware of their posture and demeanor.

2. Altar servers will be advanced through three levels of service based on their age, abilities, experience, and faithfulness. These four levels are: (a) Novice Server; (b) Apprentice Server; (c) Junior Master Server or Senior Master Server; and (d) Master of Ceremonies. Certain duties and requirements will be assigned to each level of service which must be satisfactorily completed before a server may advance to the next level.
 - a. Novice Servers: Any boy or girl who has received First Eucharist (eligible in grades 3 and above) may apply to become a Novice Server. After he or she completes the required training they will be installed as Novice Servers. A server will be considered a Novice until he or she has served at least five (5) weekday Masses. After they have met these requirements, they may be recommended for advancement to the level of Apprentice Server and receive their wooden cross.
 - b. Apprentice Servers: A server will be considered an Apprentice for a period of at least two years. During this time they will be expected to serve on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation in accord with the Ministers Schedule. In addition, training sessions will be held on how to serve the various Rites of the Church, especially funerals, weddings and Eucharistic Adoration. If the apprentice satisfactorily completes these training sessions he or she may be assigned as a server for funerals, weddings, and Adoration. At the end of two years, based on the above listed criteria, an apprentice may be recommended for advancement to the level of Master Server and receive a silver cross.
 - c. Master Servers: A server will be considered a Master Server if he or she has reached at least the fifth grade; has demonstrated a love for the ministry of server; has been faithful in their service; and has satisfactorily completed his or her apprenticeship. Master Servers will continue to serve on Sundays and Holydays; will be assigned to funerals, weddings, and other special ceremonies; and will assist in the

training of novices and apprentices. After two years of service and upon reaching the seventh grade, a Master Server who has been faithful to his or her duties may be recognized with a gold cross. Further opportunities for gold cross Master Servers will be made available on an individual basis.

- d. Masters of Ceremonies: A Master Server who chooses to continue serving when he or she enters high school and who continues to be faithful to his or her duties will be recognized as a Master of Ceremonies and given a gold cincture. Masters of Ceremonies are called upon to assist the sacristans in preparing for Mass and given supervisory roles over their junior servers.

3. Altar servers must abide by a required dress code if they wish to serve. Boys must wear black shoes or docksiders with blue, black, or gray socks and trousers with a solid, light-colored dress or polo shirt. Girls must wear a black, blue or grey dress, skirt, dress shorts, or slacks with a solid, light-colored blouse or polo shirt. They must also wear low-heeled black shoes or docksiders with stockings or socks. NO TEE SHIRTS, NO SNEAKERS of any color, NO FLIP FLOPS and NO JEANS of any color or type are to be worn while serving at the altar. (An exception may be made ONLY for those who are called at the last minute to fill in for an altar server who does not show for his or her scheduled Mass.) Failure to abide by the dress code will result in a suspension from service and may lead to dismissal from the corps of servers. An alb (the white liturgical garment) which is to be worn while serving will be provided by the parish. A cross which must also be worn while serving will be given to each server in accord with the ranks listed above.

4. Altar servers must be vested and in the sacristy not less than fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled time of Mass. They must see to it that all is properly prepared for the celebration of Mass. Once they have done so, they are to go the vestibule of the church. At the end of Mass, the altar servers are required to return everything to its proper place and to hang up their albs before leaving the church.

5. Apprentice, Master Servers, and Masters of Ceremonies must keep their assignments and should be available to serve at any Mass. Special requests can be accommodated if they are made to Father Robert at the rectory before he makes the monthly schedule. Once the servers' schedule has been distributed, it is the responsibility of the server to find a substitute if he or she is unable to serve a Mass for which he or she is scheduled. Servers who miss two assignments will be warned and may be put on probation.

6. Meetings and other social events will be scheduled to promote a spirit of friendship among servers. Participation in these events will be limited to those servers who are faithful to their commitments in accord with the point system in use.