

Usher or Sacristan Ministry

VISION

Ushering in His presence to bring the Glory of God to the people in order for them to receive from the LORD the things He desires to perform in them.

MISSION

To usher each person into the presence of God by providing an atmosphere that is free of as many distractions as possible, yet maintain freedom, order, reverence and respect for the Holy Spirit.

The ministry of an usher or sacristan is more than just passing the offertory basket. The usher is a form of Christian hospitality. The usher is the first impression of the church for those who are attending Sunday Mass. The usher is even more important than flowers and music in setting the environment for the Mass. A welcoming and friendly usher offers the opportunity for those worshipping with us to feel the presence of God and the desire to come again. Look at your ministry as being Christ to everyone you meet today.

Imagine if you went to dinner at someone's house and your host didn't seem to be expecting you. The table wasn't set; dinner wasn't cooking; your host wasn't very neatly dressed and didn't even greet you at the door – just left it unlocked for you to come in on your own. How would you feel? Now imagine if your host greeted you at the door with great enthusiasm and smiles. The table was set; dinner was almost ready; and your host made a place for you to sit at the table. Feel much better? Ushers have a tremendous responsibility in creating the right atmosphere for worship and fellowship.

You have a front line position - this is not only a ministry position, but it is a public relations position! You make a difference in people's lives, so why not just make their day? Greet people with a smile and say "***Welcome to <Church Name> Church, it is good to see you today!***" As an usher, you are often the first impression people have of our parish. And more importantly, you are also an impression of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, therefore, let the joy of the Lord shine through you - smile, be warm, be interested in people.

But what if I don't feel like it? Different personalities respond differently, therefore, you must choose to smile; you must choose to make someone's day. The Holy Spirit is the great Encourager and He lives inside of you, thus you are empowered to be an encourager! Speak with a smile - it actually makes a difference in what you communicate to people.

We usher the people of God into the Presence of God and we assist in ushering in the Presence of God Himself! We are called to insure the orderly conduct of the people of God in the House of God. We are spiritual gatekeepers, and ministering servants in the House of the Lord.

Some Ushering Tips

- Speak to people, smile at people and look them in the eyes, call people by name, be friendly and helpful, be cordial and courteous, show a genuine interest in people.
- Listen to announcements from the pulpit - people may inquire after the service.
- Know how to direct people to the rest rooms and the Parish hall and various collection areas (i.e. South Portland food cupboard, Catholic Charities box, My Sister's Keeper closet).
- Develop kindness in conversation, even when there is a need to be firm. Negative statements, which tend to be judgmental or imply criticism, are the opposite of kindness.

USHER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Arrival time – 30 minutes prior to Mass. One door may already be open.
2. Put on your nametag found in the drawer in the vesting sacristy.
3. Unlock entry doors –rear and side, if you have a front door key.
4. Turn on interior lights and turn on heat or air handling system, when applicable.
5. Light both candles on sides of altar 15 minutes before Mass.
6. Solicit parishioners to take up gifts. If there is a baptism at Mass, most likely the family of the child to be baptized would like to take up the gifts. They need to be in the back of church right after the prayers of the faithful.
7. Help parishioners find a seat. If a parishioner needs a wheelchair, there is one in the vesting sacristy. If it is snowing, a path might need to be cleared from the front stairs to the front doors. There are snow shovels and sand/salt mixture in the closet in between the two sets of front doors.
8. Place Book of Intentions in ambo immediately before Mass.
9. Pass out literature or bulletins when applicable.
10. During Mass where there is Children's Liturgy of the Word, please notify the Children's Liturgy of the Word leaders that the homily has just ended.
11. If someone is ill during Mass and needs medical attention, use the phone in the vesting sacristy to call 911 (dial 9 first to get an outside line). There is a first aid kit in the kitchen.
12. Take up collection(s). Ask a few people to help take up the collection before Mass begins.
13. Put out candles after Mass.
14. Pick up items left in pews and return them to their appropriate locations (i.e. Missalettes, bulletins, etc.)
15. Put collection taken up during Mass in the slot in the Reconciliation door using the proper sealing plastic bags provided in the Working Sacristy behind the altar.
16. Turn off church lights if applicable.
17. Lock doors after Mass if there is no YM or Jr. YM session or other parish event occurring on Sunday evening, if you have a front door key.

SETUP FOR BAPTISM

1. Put Sacred Chrism on the baptistery.
2. Place baptismal candle on the baptistery. Take candle out of box.
3. Place towel on the baptistery.
4. Place baptism book on the baptistery.
5. Light the Paschal candle just before Mass.
6. If the baptistery water is not flowing, contact a parish staff member to check the pump in the basement. **DO NOT TOUCH THE SWITCHES ON THE WALL.**

SETUP FOR FUNERAL

1. Move table into Narthex.
2. Place funeral pall on table in the Narthex.
3. Move Paschal candle to front of altar.
4. Setup for Mass as usual, putting number of small hosts in priest's paten according to size of congregation for funeral.
5. During the funeral, act as an altar server (consult altar server guidelines). Prepare the charcoal for the incense during communion. Bring incense and hot charcoal out to the priest at the end of Mass when the priest incenses the deceased during the song of farewell.
6. Let charcoal cool before putting into trash or dumping outside. Return incense to cabinet.
7. Return the Paschal candle to the baptistery.
8. Return funeral pall to the vesting sacristy.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHRISTMAS AND EASTER

1. For Masses where there is a concern with overcrowding, especially Christmas Eve 4:00 pm Mass and Easter Sunday 9:00 am Mass, we have special instructions.
2. Make sure that everyone can find a seat in the sanctuary until it is full. Try to keep people from standing in front of the doorways.
3. Encourage people to sit in the Parish Hall when the sanctuary is full.
4. Fire regulations will not allow any more chairs to be brought into the sanctuary on these high holy days, so please do not allow anyone to bring chairs into the sanctuary.
5. Help people to form lines for communion in the back of the sanctuary.