

ALTAR SERVER HANDBOOK

Blessed Sacrament Parish – Midland, Michigan

SERVER SCHEDULE:

- Scheduling periods are June to August, September to November, December to February and March to May. You will receive a Scheduling Form on which you indicate any times or dates when you are not available. This form must be returned by the deadline date given.
- Return your ministry scheduling form by the deadline date. Ask your parents to help you fill it out.
- When you receive your schedule, go through and mark every time you are scheduled to serve. Then, transfer those dates and times to your family calendar. Ask you parents to help you.
- If you cannot serve, you must find a substitute from among the other servers on the list provided.
- You must also call the Liturgy Office (Loretta Schepperly) at 835-6777 Ext 239 and tell her who your substitute will be so we put their name of the sign-in list.
- Get in the habit of coming to the sacristy before every mass, even when you are not scheduled, to see if servers are needed.

PREPARING TO SERVE:

- Arrive in church at least 15 minutes before mass.
- Please dress appropriately for going to church.
- Check off your name on the sign-in list.
- Review the “Today’s Liturgy” notes found on the large bulletin board in the Work Sacristy (opposite wall from the alb closet), to determine:
 - Whether or not there is a procession INTO church.
 - Whether or not there are any special requirements for this mass (such as baptisms, sprinkling rite, etc).
- Put on your alb and cincture. Wear cinctures of the same color as the altar cloth.
- Inform the sacristan if all three servers have not checked in.
- Determine who will do “Books”, “Candles” and “Gifts”. Altar serving is a ministry of service. Be cooperative and be ready and willing to take on any of the tasks.
- Check to see that there are hymnals and worship aids at your chairs.
- When the bell rings, light the processional candles and the altar candles.
- As you prepare, try to keep the noise level down.

ALTAR SERVER HANDBOOK

Blessed Sacrament Parish – Midland, Michigan

GATHERING:

- Altar Server Seating: The chairs reserved for Altar Servers are in the front row of Section #8 (the section of pews by the font). The presider's and deacon's chairs are on the altar platform. The first TWO chairs (in the front row of Section #8, closest to the font) are reserved for the sacristans. The remaining THREE chairs are for the servers. The Book Server should sit in the chair furthest away from the font.
- Simple Gathering (No Procession):
 - Light and place the processional candles at the ambo.
 - Go to your chairs and be seated 2-3 minutes before the time that mass begins.
- Entrance Procession:
 - Begin in the gathering space near the font.
 - The "Gifts" server leads the procession. This server carries the thurible, if incense is being used.
 - Two servers carry the processional candles.
 - The presider (and deacon or other preachers) follow.
 - Move to the left and circle behind the altar platform (see the church diagram).
 - Stop at the place indicated on the church diagram.
 - Everyone (except the candle bearers) bow.
 - Candle bearers put the candles in the holders by the ambo. Then return to your seat. The lead server goes immediately to their seat.
- Gathering Prayer ... At the end of the Gathering Rite, the presider will say "Let us pray" ...
 - This is the cue for the "Book Server" to go to him and stand in front of him.
 - Take the book and hold it so that he can lead us in the prayer.
 - Stay still during the time of silent prayer and spoken prayer.
 - When the prayer is complete, hand the book back to the presider and return to your seat.
- When you are at your chairs, please listen, pray and sing with the rest of the community.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD:

- Includes the readings, psalm, gospel acclamation, gospel, homily and general intercessions.
- Sometimes during special seasons or feast days, incense is used to honor the gospel.

ALTAR SERVER HANDBOOK

Blessed Sacrament Parish – Midland, Michigan

- The “Gifts” server brings the thurible and boat to the ambo at the beginning of the gospel acclamation. The presider will add some incense and then take the thurible and hand the boat back to the server. When he is finished with the thurible, he will hand it back to the server.
- During the proclamation of the gospel, the incense server stands on the altar platform near the credence table and swings the thurible.
- After the gospel is proclaimed, the incense server returns the thurible and boat to the stand and returns to his/her seat.
- Celebration of a sacrament such as infant baptisms, confirmation, marriage or a rite of initiation (such as dismissal) may follow the Liturgy of the Word. [Note: See Page 6 for special instructions.]
- Prayer After the General Intercessions ... At the end of the General Intercessions (prayers lead by the cantor at the ambo), the presider will need help from the Book Server, holding his book ...
 - Watch for the presider’s cue for the “Book Server” to go to him and stand in front of him.
 - Take the book and hold it so that he can lead us in the prayer.
 - Stay still during the time of silent prayer and spoken prayer.
 - When the prayer is complete, the presider will hand you his book. Place it on the altar and then return to your seat.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST:

- Preparation of the Table and Gifts: Setting the Table
 - Your cue to begin is when the collection starts and the music begins.
 - “Candle” server does nothing at this point of the liturgy.
 - “Book” server has already placed the presider’s book on the altar.
 - “Gifts” server places the chalice, the purificator and the cruet of water on the altar, on the white rectangular corporal.
 - When you have completed your task, return to your seat.
- Preparation of the Table and Gifts: Receiving the Gifts and Hand Washing
 - When the presider gets up to receive the gifts, the “Gifts” and “Candle” servers leave their seats and stands next to the presider (to his right).
 - After the presider adds some water to the wine, the “Gifts” server takes the cruet and walks back to the credence table.
 - If the gifts will be honored with incense (only performed on special

ALTAR SERVER HANDBOOK

Blessed Sacrament Parish – Midland, Michigan

occasions), the “Gifts” server brings the thurible and boat to the presider at the altar. After incensing, return the items back to the credence table.

- The “Gifts” server picks up the hand-washing bowl and the cruet. The “Candle” server picks up the small towel and both servers go back to the presider at the back of the altar.
- The presider will place his hands over the bowl while the server pours water from the cruet, over his hands and into the bowl.
- The presider will dry his hands with the towel.
- When the towel is handed back to the server, both servers place the items back on the credence table.
- When your tasks are completed, return to your seat.
- Communion Rite: Eucharistic Prayer, Lord’s Prayer and Sign of Peace
 - When the community kneels for the Eucharistic Prayer, you should kneel by your seat.
 - After the Great Amen, when the presider invites the community to pray the Lord’s prayer, join hands with others in the community and pray.
 - Join in the Sign of Peace with the other servers and the people around you.
 - At the Sign of Peace, the “Candle” server brings the extra bread plates from the credence table to the altar. Then return to your seat. [Note: Sometimes the Sign of Peace comes earlier in the mass. If so, then put the bread plates on the altar right after the Lord’s Prayer.]
- Communion
 - Receive communion in line with everyone else.
 - After you receive communion:
 - “Book” server places the presider’s book back on his chair.
 - “Gifts” server takes the two trays for the cups back to the credence table. Do not stack them but place them side by side.
 - “Candle” server returns immediately to his/her chair.

SENDING FORTH ... THE PROCESSION OUT:

- “Book” server holds the presider’s book at the final blessing. The presider will say “Let us pray” ...
 - This is the cue for the “Book Server” to go to him and stand in front of him.
 - Take the book and hold it so that he can lead us in the prayer.
 - Stay still during the time of silent prayer and spoken prayer.

ALTAR SERVER HANDBOOK

Blessed Sacrament Parish – Midland, Michigan

- When the prayer is complete, hand the book back to the presider and return to your seat.
- When the closing song begins:
 - The candle bearers (“Candles” and “Books” servers) go to the ambo, take the candles from their stands and then come to stand at the base of the altar platform.
 - The third server (“Gifts” server with hymn book or worship aid) moves from his/her chair and stands to the left of the candle bearers, ready to lead.
- As the presider bows, the server without candles (“Gifts” server) also bow and then leads the procession back to the gathering space (see church diagram). The next two servers follow (next to each other) ... and then the presider.

AFTER MASS:

- Candle bearers take the processional candles back to the Work Sacristy. Put the candles back into the rack and snuff them.
- “Candle” server snuffs the altar candles. [Note: During the Easter season, snuff the Easter Candle and snuff the pew candles after 5 pm and 11 am masses.] **DO NOT BLOW OUT CANDLES** because wax will splatter. Always use the candle snuffer.
- Hang up your alb (close the neck snap to keep it on the hanger) and cincture neatly.
- Go home knowing that you have served your faith community and that they appreciate what you do.

CONTACTS:

- For scheduling and reporting substitutions ... Loretta Schepperly (835-6777 Ext 239) or lorettas@blessed-midland.org.
- For questions about procedures or for on-going formation ... Joe Plevyak (835-2846) or joe.plevyak@gmail.com.

ALTAR SERVER HANDBOOK

Blessed Sacrament Parish – Midland, Michigan

SPECIAL PROCEDURES:

“Baptism Sundays” ... If the “Today’s Liturgy” notes identify this as a Baptism Sunday, there are a few tasks in addition to your duties for a “Regular Sunday” ...

- The “Book Server” should assist the presider by holding his book during the baptism at the font. After the baptism, return the presider’s book to his seat and then return to your seat.
- Decide which server will help with the chrism. After the baptism, the server comes to the ambry (oil cabinet) and takes the small bowl of chrism and the small cloth towel to the presider (in front of the altar). Hand the bowl to the presider. Afterwards, return the chrism bowl and towel to the ambry and then return to your seat.

“Sprinkling Rite” ... If the “Today’s Liturgy” notes identify that a Sprinkling Rite will occur, there are a few tasks in addition to your duties for a “Regular Sunday” ...

- Decide which server (either “Gifts” or “Candles” server) will help with the sprinkling. “Book” server and bowl bearer go to the font with the presider.
- “Book” server holds the book during the blessing prayer. Once the sprinkling starts, leave the book on the font ledge and goes back to your chair.
- The presider fills the bowl with water and gives it to the bowl bearer.
- Server carries the bowl while presider sprinkles the people. Server follows the presider around the altar platform but not up and down the aisles. Server stops at each aisle and waits for the presider.
- When everyone has been sprinkled, server returns bowl and sprinkler to the font ledge.

“Confirmation” ... If the “Today’s Liturgy” notes identify that confirmation will be part of this mass, there are a few tasks in addition to your duties for a “Regular Sunday” ...

- Sprinkling Rite (see above) ... [Note: Difference is that only the bowl bearer (not the “Book” server) goes to the font with the presider.]
- “Book” server holds the book for the presider, during the Prayer Invoking the Spirit. This is after the presider has laid hands on each person to be confirmed.
- Anointing with Chrism (see above, under “Baptism”)

“Using Incense” ... If the “Today’s Liturgy” notes identify that incensing will occur during the service, there are a few more tasks in addition to your duties for a “Regular Sunday” ...

ALTAR SERVER HANDBOOK

Blessed Sacrament Parish – Midland, Michigan

- The “Gifts” server also handles the thurible. Whenever you carry the thurible, you should also carry the boat. You should swing the thurible when you are holding it.
- Bring the thurible and boat to the presider or deacon. Give them the boat.
- Present the thurible by holding it up at about chest level. When the presider or deacon has added incense to the thurible, give the thurible to the presider while you take the boat.
- Wait in your place while the incensing occurs. If the the presider is incensing the Gospel book, stand behind the ambo with the thurible and boat, until the Gospel reading is completed.
- Then take the thurible and return the thurible and the boat to the stand. Return to our seat.