

## Archdiocesan Guidelines for Altar Servers

(Please insert in the Handbook for Parish Pastoral Leadership, Tab R)

1. The ministry of altar server may be carried out by men and women, boys and girls. When an instituted acolyte is not present, the altar server may take on the liturgical functions of the instituted acolyte listed in numbers 98-100 of the *General Instruction to the Roman Missal*. In the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, keeping in mind priestly vocations, the Archbishop expects half of the servers to be boys.
2. No distinction should be made between the functions carried out in the sanctuary by men and boys and those carried out by women and girls. The terms "altar boys" should be replaced by "altar servers".
3. Servers should be mature enough to understand their responsibilities and to carry them out well and with appropriate reverence. They should have already received holy communion for the first time and normally receive the eucharist whenever they participate in the liturgy.
4. Servers should receive proper formation before they begin to function. The formation should include education on the Mass and its parts and their meaning, the various objects used in the liturgy (their names and use), and the various functions of the server during the Mass and other liturgical celebrations. Servers should also receive appropriate guidance on maintaining proper liturgical presence and attire when serving Mass and other functions.
5. Since the role of server is integral to the normal celebration of the Mass, at least one server should assist the presider. On Sundays and other more important occasions, two or more servers should be employed to carry out the various functions.
6. Servers should normally be vested. This is within the tradition of the Church and prevents difficulties regarding appropriate dress for these ministers. All servers should wear the same liturgical vesture. (The alb is the preferred vestment for servers. See *GIRM 298*).
7. Servers carry the processional cross, the processional candles, hold the book for the presider when he is not at the altar, carry the incense and censer, present the bread, wine, and water to the presider during the preparation of the gifts or assist him when he receives the gifts from the people, wash the hands of the presider, assist the presider and deacon as necessary.
8. Servers respond to the prayers and dialogues of the presider along with the assembly. They also join in singing the acclamations, the psalm refrain, the hymns and other chants of the liturgy.
9. Servers should be seated in a place from which they can easily assist the presider and deacon. The place next to the presider is normally reserved for the deacon.
10. Servers may not distribute holy communion unless they have been mandated for this function.
11. The *Order for the Blessing of Altar Servers, Sacristans, Musicians, and Ushers (Book of Blessings, nos. 1847-1870)* may be used before servers first begin to function in this ministry.