



St. Ann's Catholic Church Abbotsford BC



Altar Server Ministry Parent Information Package

Aug 11th, 2015

Version A1

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Welcome

Welcome to a wonderful service that gives praise and glory to God.

The Altar Server's Ministry is a unique one in the Catholic Church.

Other than priests and deacons, no one else is allowed (to so closely) play a part in the preparation of the Eucharist.

Your participation as an Altar Server is special. When you serve the priests and deacons, you serve the people of God, and above all, you serve Christ.

Altar Servers must remember that everything that they do is for the Glory of God.

They do it out of love for His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

This means "**All for the Honor and Glory of God**". It is the motto of a heart of service

The most
important thing is

PRACTICE!

How do you learn any
sport or art?

PRACTICE!

Support

Jesus promised that he would be with us when we gather. When we join in the liturgy, we remember Jesus and give thanks and praise for all the good things that God does for us.

Service

Serving in the church is a special privilege. It allows us to be close to the altar, to carry the cross, to carry the light of Christ, to wear the robe of baptism, to hold the book of the prayers and to swing the censer.

May you learn to love the rites of our holy faith and serve the church with joy and with reverence.

Let us serve God with gladness.

When we serve God in church, we learn how to serve God outside of church: by helping people who are in need, by taking care of each other, by taking care of the earth and by loving people whom no one else loves.

That's how we really serve God

Introduction

Who is an Altar Server?

The Altar Server is a boy or girl, a woman or man who is trained to help at the Mass so that it can be celebrated with grace and reverence.

An Altar Server is a member of the Church who participates in the celebration with the understanding that they are leaders of the assembly.

What does an Altar Server do?

An Altar Server assists the priest and deacon during the Mass and other religious ceremonies. There are special responsibilities for serving.

The Server is also an example to the assembly by joining in the singing, praying and keeping silence during the Mass.

Why should an Altar Server step forward to assist at Mass?

A person steps forward to serve at Mass because God moves the heart, inspires the mind and calls the person to this ministry.

God invites generous and helpful people to serve at Mass so that it can be a reverent and prayerful celebration for all who come to worship.

Without a server, it would be difficult for the priest and deacon to do the many duties of leading prayers and rituals.

What must an Altar Server learn in order to serve at Mass?

The training program for an Altar Server includes four sessions that teach special information. When knowing this information, the Altar Server gains confidence and skill as an assistant at Mass. The four sessions include information about:

1. Identification and purpose of religious items used at Mass:
Liturgical Books, Furniture, Vessels, Vestments and Articles.
(two sessions)
2. Procedures and responsibilities for serving at Mass.
3. Structure of the Mass and the meaning of Catholic prayer and ritual.

REQUIREMENTS TO BECOME AN ALTAR SERVER

All servers must meet these requirements before they will be accepted to the St. Ann's Altar Server Ministry

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Servers' families must be registered members of St. Ann's Parish.
- Servers must actively practice the Catholic faith and should regularly receive Communion.
- Servers must have completed third grade. (there may be exceptions to this rule)
- **Servers should be currently participating in a program of Faith Formation or Catechism**, either through the Parish Faith Formation Program, (Catechism) or through attendance at a Catholic school, or through structured home study. Servers not meeting this requirement should discuss their situation with the Altar Server Coordinator. Accommodations will be made.

INTENTIONS:

New servers must meet with the Altar Server Coordinator to answer this question, "*Why do you want to be an Altar Server?*"

Servers must be prepared to meet the commitment required of them. They should understand the principles of ***Devotion, Dedication, and Discipline***.

Your willingness to serve God in the capacity of an altar server reflects your commitment to Christ and the community of St. Ann's of which you are a member. While this ministry often goes without praise and thanks, it is very much appreciated by all those who work with you in the ministries of the Mass

Being an altar server is a special and unique ministry through which you can help spread the word and the love of Christ through your actions and words

KNOWLEDGE:

A new server must be very familiar with the Mass. They must understand why the Mass is important, and what happens during Mass.

Before they serve for the first time, a server will be required to demonstrate that they know the Order of the Mass, the prayers of the Mass, and the postures and responses during Mass. All of this will be taught during the new server training period.

Altar Servers must also demonstrate the ability to make use of the "tools of the trade" such as matches, candles, candle lighters, books and sacred vessels. All of this will be taught in training.

How Parents can be Supportive of their Altar Servers

One of the most important things that parents can do for their child is to help them grow in their faith life. There are so many different things that this entails: praying with your child, sharing with them your faith relationship with God, and supporting their own desires in acting on their faith. On behalf of the community of St. Ann's Catholic Church, we thank you for your support and generosity in their ministry and for all you give to them as they work to be the best altar server they can be.

Each Mass has a Mass Coordinator that helps with managing the details and events of each Mass and are responsible for scheduling the servers. Their contact information is included in the **Altar Server Ministry Training Manual**. Please work with them with scheduling.

There are several things that you can do to help your server be prepared and to be the best that they can be.

- 1) Help your server with scheduling their time. This means communicating your family Mass schedule needs to the Mass Coordinator each month so that they know when your server is available and when they are not.
- 2) Help with arrangements for substitute servers. There are times when your server may be sick and you need help from another server to substitute. At the same time there are other servers who also need a substitute, and your server might be available to help when they are not scheduled. Please feel free to ask for help, and make sure that you are available to help in any of these cases that you can.
- 3) Help have your server prepared for Mass ahead of time.
 - a. We ask that they wear nice dress black or brown shoes. That is what primarily shows from under their robes. If you do not have access to dress shoes, please let us know and we will work with you to get them.
 - b. We ask that they arrive 15-20 minutes before Mass to change, pray, and prepare for Mass. This also allows time for any last minute information to be given to them before Mass starts.
 - c. We also ask for their help for 5-10 minutes after Mass in cleaning up. We ask for your patience as they finish this, change back, and get back to you.
- 4) Please help keep distractions and interruptions to a minimum when they are serving. As they are setting up the altar, serving during Mass, and cleaning up afterwards, they are very busy and focused on what they have to do. If you are

trying to communicate with them or get their attention, they will likely lose focus on what they need to do and distract or disrupt the flow of the Mass.

- 5) We ask for your help in modeling good sacred behavior for them. Even when they are not serving they are watching your example. Pray together. Be respectful of the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle. Participate in the Mass every Sunday. All of these help reinforce the importance that God has in our lives and in the Mass.
- 6) Server help is always needed for the Sunday and Saturday Masses (including the Vigil Mass), but there are other times of the year that allow for opportunities for servers to serve.
 - a. Weddings – Often weekends in the late morning
 - b. Funerals – Often Friday nights or Saturday mornings or early afternoons
 - c. Holy Days of Obligation
 - i. Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God – *January 1st*
 - ii. Ascension of Our Lord – *40 Days after Easter*
 - iii. Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – *August 15th*
 - iv. All Saints Day – *November 1st*
 - v. Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception – *December 8th*
 - vi. Christmas – *December 25th*
 - d. Holy Week
 - i. Holy Thursday – *3 days before Easter Sunday*
 - ii. Good Friday – *2 days before Easter Sunday*
 - e. Other Holy Days
 - i. Ash Wednesday – *First Day of Lent (usually in February or March)*
 - ii. All Souls Day – *November 2nd*

If your altar server is available for weddings or funerals without affecting their time in school, please contact us so that we can add them to our contact list for these Masses.

The Masses for the other Holy Days need servers and any help you and your server can offer in supporting these Masses is greatly appreciated – especially around Holy Week, Easter, and Christmas when families tend to travel.

Again, we thank you for your help and support. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Bob Kaszonyi – 604-864-9443 – altservmin@stannsabbotsford.ca
St. Ann's Altar Server Coordinator

ALTAR SERVER TRAINING

TRAINING:

Training will be scheduled regularly for all new altar servers. Once servers have completed the initial training, they will be able to begin serving as an Apprentice.

After a server has qualified to serve, they will be added to the regular altar server schedule.

All servers continue to participate in ongoing training through:

- 1) the server advancement process
- 2) training resources
- 3) regular practices

Altar servers will be trained to handle all of the tasks assigned to each specific duty.

Servers will be required to memorize the prayer responses of the Mass, know the names of the vestments and vessels of the altar, and to learn the Order of the Mass.

PRACTICE:

Practice will be held at regular intervals. Practices give every server the occasion to improve their current skills as well as the opportunity to learn new ones.

Some practices will be mandatory for all servers.

Practices are mandatory when there is significant new information, or when there are liturgical changes. When a server misses a mandatory practice, they will be required to make up the practice before being scheduled again.

Every effort will be made to give the server a choice of multiple sessions for mandatory practices.

Most practices will be optional, which means that a server should make a personal decision if they need to attend or not. However, all servers will be required to attend a minimum number of optional practices each year.

Currently, servers are required to attend a practice at least once every three months.

Servers who fall below this requirement may be excluded from the schedule until they attend practice.

Wherever possible, attempts will be made to offer practice at various times to allow for flexible schedules.

ADVANCEMENT:

As servers grow in their knowledge, their skill, and their maturity, they will be recognized through advancement in the Altar Server Program.

Advancement through the levels of the program is not automatic, nor is it guaranteed.

Altar Servers will have to prove themselves ready for promotion by demonstrating their

Devotion, Dedication, and Discipline.

Information on how to advance between each level is listed in the Training Manual.

ADVANCEMENT LEVELS

THE ALTAR SERVER COMMITMENT

Service at the altar is a serious responsibility.
Altar Servers must demonstrate commitment at all times:

DEVOTION: A COMMITMENT TO WHAT WE BELIEVE.

- A love of God and the Catholic Faith
- A strong desire to do God's work and serve his people
- A willingness to conduct yourself in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord

Even if they are not serving, anytime an Altar Server is in the church their actions should be an example to the rest of the people at Mass. Altar Servers wearing vestments are an extension of the clergy.

Devoted Altar Servers know that their service is important to the whole faith community. Through their service at the Altar, others are able to grow in their love of the Lord.

DEDICATION: A COMMITMENT TO HOW WE ACT.

- The commitment to fully meet the requirements of the service for which you have been chosen
- The commitment to fulfill your duties when you are scheduled
- The commitment to help the entire altar server team to do well

Dedication to service comes from our love and Devotion to the Lord.

Dedicated Altar Servers know that others are counting on them. They help less skilled servers when needed, and they never say "That's not my job."

DISCIPLINE: A COMMITMENT TO HOW WE SERVE.

- The self-control that allows Altar Servers to carry out their duties with precision
- The determination to do what needs to be done, the right way every time
- The desire to be prepared, to arrive early to help prepare for Mass, and to ensure that the rest of the Altar Server Team is prepared
- The initiative to pay attention and think about what they will do next
- The ambition to improve each time they serve. Asking at the end of each Mass, "What could I have done better?"
- The motivation to listen to coaching with an open mind and a willing heart

Dedication to proper service pushes us to be more Disciplined.
The most disciplined Altar Servers are rewarded with more responsibility, including training new servers

ADVANCEMENT LEVELS - AN OVERVIEW

APPRENTICE:

An Apprentice is a candidate that is learning how to become an Altar Server. Apprentices will be scheduled at the Masses they wish to serve. At the discretion of the presiding priest, Apprentices may process in the opening and closing procession. Apprentices sit in reserved seats that allow them to be close enough to directly observe and learn from the Altar Servers.

Altar serving can be a little scary at first. The apprentice program is a chance for new servers to get past being nervous and build the confidence that they need to enjoy service. It also gives the Altar Server Coordinator an opportunity to observe new servers and determine when they are ready to be active Altar Servers

JUNIOR ALTAR SERVER:

Once an apprentice becomes certified, they are promoted to Junior Altar Server.

Junior Altar Servers are learning new parts of the Mass and new responsibilities.

In this first year, they are demonstrating to themselves and to the community that they are fully capable of service at all parts of the Mass.

SENIOR ALTAR SERVER:

The main body of servers is made up of Senior Altar Servers. They are promoted to this position based on their proven track record of service. They may learn new responsibilities for special services, but their competence at weekend Mass is well established.

LEAD ALTAR SERVER:

Some Senior Altar Servers will show a commitment to leadership in their service.

They reach out to newer servers to help them learn. They drive their Altar Server teams to excel.

These servers may be recognized as Lead Altar Servers, and given responsibilities beyond what other servers are asked or permitted to do.

St. Ann's Catholic Church – Altar Server Ministry

Altar Server's Commitment

Altar Server's must attend the required Altar Server training along with reading the Altar Server Ministry Training Manual.

Before you will be scheduled as an Altar Server at Mass, you must attend the Altar Server Training sessions and sign the form below.

Please return this form to Bob Kaszonyi or the Parish office.

You have been called to be an Altar Server. If you are willing to make this commitment to serve at the Lord's Table give prayerful consideration to this ministry and let God lead you and guide you.

Server's Name (Please Print)

Server's Signature

Date

Parent's Signature

Date

St. Ann's Catholic Church
Alter Server Registration Contact information Form

St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church
33333 Mayfair Ave, Abbotsford BC V2S1P4
Office Ph: 604.852.5602

Pastor: Rev. Hien Nguyen
pastor@stannsabbotsford.ca

Server's Name (Please Print) _____ / _____ / _____
Date of Registration

Male ☐ Female ☐ Date of birth _____ / _____ / _____
M D Y

Home phone number _____ Cell phone number _____ e-mail (if you have) _____

Address _____ Postal Code _____

Parent/ Guardian (please print) _____ e-mail (or family e-mail) _____

What Mass will you and your family be attending?

Weekends:

Saturday 5:00pm ☐ evening
Sunday 8:00am ☐
Sunday 10:00am ☐
Sunday 12:00pm ☐

Weekdays:

Monday 8:00am ☐
Tuesday 7:00pm ☐ evening
Wednesday 8:00am ☐
Thursday 8:00am ☐
Friday 8:00am ☐

Are you available and willing to server anytime ☐
First Fridays ☐ Benediction ☐

The above information is for the purpose of registration and communication.
For scheduling servers at all the different Mass celebrations.
If you have any questions please feel free to contact the Altar Server Coordinator
Bob Kaszonyi 604-864-9443 or altservmin@stannsabbotsford.ca



St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church
33333 Mayfair Ave, Abbotsford BC V2S1P4
Office Ph: 604 852 5602

CONSENT FORM – FIELD TRIPS

We are arranging a field trip for all Altar Servers on _____
(mm/dd/yy)

We will be going to _____

From _____ am/pm to _____ am/pm

We will be travelling by: _____

Students will need to bring: _____

Medical Concerns (if any) _____

- *I confirm that my child is covered by BC Medical Plan. MSP#* _____
- *I confirm that my child is covered by a private medical plan:* _____

Name of Insurance Plan _____ Policy # _____

Accidents can be the result of the nature of the activity and can occur with or without any fault on either the part of the student, or St. Ann's Catholic Church, or its employees or volunteers, or the facility where the activity is taking place. By allowing your child to participate in this activity, you are accepting the risk of an accident occurring, and agree that this activity, as described above, is suitable for your child.

I give _____ (name of child) permission to participate in
the field trip to _____ on _____ (Date).

I understand that my child may be exposed to certain risks while participating in this activity. Accidents and injuries may occur.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Printed name of Parent/Guardian

Date:

Address of Parent/Guardian

Phone Number

Note: If other travel arrangements have been made, written consent of the parent/legal guardian is still required.