

Guidelines for Ushers and Greeters

(August 2016)



Thank you for agreeing to serve the parish as either an usher or a greeter or both. The Church's liturgical books call for communities to develop these ministries in order to have a welcoming presence for all who come to worship, especially guests and visitors. Although greeters do not double as ushers, at times ushers do act as greeters. That is why the guidelines for these two ministries are brought together in one booklet.

It is important to review each year the expectations and procedures for those who are ushers and greeters. The Eucharist is the heart of our worship and you are one of the public witnesses to its meaning. It is important that this service not become merely routine but continually challenge us to grow in our own faith, our trust in God, and our appreciation for the Eucharist. You are one of the first and key ways that people see present the full, conscious and active participation toward which the Second Vatican Council asks all Catholics to strive. You are the "face" of the parish to every visitor or guest who arrives and who is seated.



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SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR GREETERS

DRESS AND DECORUM

1. As a public witness to the Eucharist, our behavior and dress should reflect a real respect for the role we perform. It is an expectation, as well, that you will be a registered member of the parish. Although there are not specific rules of dress for greeters, please keep in mind that you represent the parish to everyone who enters the doorway. Excessively casual dress is discouraged. If you wear "Sunday attire," you will be a great example to the community as a whole.

CHECK-IN PROCEDURES

1. Greeters check-in by the sacristy of the Church in the room that doubles as the Reconciliation Room. Please arrive at least 15 minutes early and sign-in. If you are subbing for someone specific, sign-in your name and then list the initials of the person you are subbing for in the column on the right titled "Subbing For."
2. Greeters are encouraged to reserve a seat within the Church so that they can continue greeting through the opening hymn as late-comers arrive. You may sit, of course, anywhere in the church. It seems to work best if you reserve, or have another person reserve, a seat for you at the end of a row.

GREETING PEOPLE

- 1 Greeters: after signing in, go to one of the entranceways, (greeter near the gathering space should stand in the gathering area, the doors to the church should be kept closed) and begin greeting all who enter, warmly and actively.

6. If at anytime there is doubt about what to do, call 911 immediately. After the call is placed, an usher should go to the parking lot to direct EMS to the proper entrance.

GENTLE REMINDERS

1. Before Mass, please be attentive to the people coming in: wheelchairs, walkers, larger families, etc. Ushers should be in each of the aisles, encouraging people to come toward the front.
2. If you are unable to attend your assigned Mass, please find a substitute or inform your group captain.
3. All questions for ushers should be directed to Ken Partyka by calling or texting at (586) 436-4291 or email partykaken@hotmail.com
4. Please try to volunteer for all the special liturgies when they arise. We are always in need of ushers for holiday and special occasion Masses.
5. Thank you for volunteering for this liturgical ministry. Encourage other men and women to join us.

AT THE END OF MASS: BULLETINS AND CLEAN UP

1. At the end of Mass, the ushers will pass out the bulletins at each entrance. When finished, place 10 - 20 bulletins on the tables by each entrance so they are available for those arriving for the next Mass.
2. Main east doors should be opened and west doors may be opened at this time, unless it is cold and/or windy.
3. Close both sets of doors at each entranceway and do a quick check to see if anything needs to be straightened or picked up.
4. If a staff member has not done so, ensure the collection basket has been retrieved from the altar area and properly secured (i.e. turned over to the money counters or a member of the parish staff).

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

1. At times emergencies arise. Ushers can help keep the situation calm by getting people to make room for the ill person, moving chairs to provide space on the floor, etc.
2. We have medical personnel in the parish. Usually there is someone at every Mass with advanced medical training. They should be the ones to assess the situation.
3. If you know of such a person at the Mass, ask them to help. Otherwise call the priest's attention to the situation so he can ask for a qualified medical person to assist and make an assessment.
4. Try not to move the person who is ill or do too much until an assessment is made.
5. If more extensive treatment is needed, such as CPR or using the defibrillator, only someone trained to do so should intervene. The AED is kept in the alcove by the restrooms, next to the water fountain.

2. Greet the person(s) before jumping in with a worship aid. Whatever invites a warmth and hospitable friendliness is the key. Greeters have to be good at reading people's reactions so that you don't force people into an uncomfortable encounter, yet don't miss an opportunity to be actively welcoming.
3. We always have a worship aid prepared for the liturgy. It should be offered to each person (except to children too young to read or who will just use it as a coloring book!), not just one per couple or one per family, but pay attention to reactions. We are not trying to force it on anyone, and a certain number refuse to take one, no matter what.
4. **After** the opening hymn, please take your place in the church. Waiting till then allows you to greet some of the late-comers and give them a worship aid.

SOME THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

1. If you are here early, the worship aids may need some sorting through, throwing out those that have gotten very soiled or even some that are older and no longer are being used.
2. The east entrance doors should remain closed to conserve air and heat and reduce insects. We have an automatic door opener, please use these, rather than propping open the doors, if someone in a wheelchair needs the door opened.
3. Please pay attention to any special needs and call upon the ushers to help seat people.
4. Greeters need to be familiar with the layout of the building (restrooms, where the parish office is located, etc.) and where certain things can be found (e.g. temporary envelopes in the literature racks).

SUBSTITUTES

1. Our greatest challenge with this area is the faithful fulfillment of assignments. Please get a substitute if you cannot be here. It is not fair to assume that someone will fill in if you don't show up. If you cannot make it, get a substitute.
2. Questions or concerns can be directed to Pennie Grover at (586) 677-1609. Schedules will be handed out in the sign-in room near the sacristy (Reconciliation Room) prior to the start of the new schedule. They are also posted online at the parish website (www.ssjohnandpaul.org) by clicking on Liturgical Ministers schedule and then the appropriate ministry. Please listen for the announcement and take a new schedule home. Any concerns about special schedules should be directed to the parish office, which will forward them to the scheduler. If you lose your phone list of greeters or your schedule, please call the parish office and we will send you a new one.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. The length of term for a greeter is one year. There will be annual opportunities to review your commitment and to sign-up for another year. We deeply appreciate those who serve faithfully year after year. On the other hand, if your service has been irregular, please be confident of improvement before signing up for another year.
2. Any way in which you can improve our welcoming feel and look are appreciated. Sometimes little things like picking up a stray paper, paying attention to when help with the door is needed, and so forth, can make a difference.
3. Please try to volunteer for all the special non-weekend liturgies when they arise: holidays, especially the holydays and the prayer for the deceased.

3. Generally people are familiar with the procedures for the distribution of communion. But there are many occasions when visitors are present and not familiar with our procedures. Please be especially attentive to such situations. Usually two (2) ushers on the inside of the center aisle will direct the people, row by row, beginning with the front rows. The idea is to get people flowing in a continuous line.
4. Prior to directing the last two rows of the center aisle to receive communion, the ushers on the side aisles should initiate the flow of people, starting with the back row, to ensure they blend and form a continuous flow down the center aisle.
5. At some Masses the side rows are sparsely occupied and the people simply cross over to the center aisle. Don't worry about such an occurrence at the lesser attended Masses. Be flexible and patient. In general, as long as the people proceed to communion in an orderly manner the goal has been accomplished.
6. At Masses where the choir is present, the choir will proceed to the back and wait in the rear of the church until Father and the communion minister(s) return to the altar. They can then process up the east side of the center aisle on their own so they can receive communion before the rest of the congregation and return to their seats to continue singing. Once the last choir member has received communion, the usher at the east center aisle should proceed as outlined above.
7. The ushers are last to receive communion.

PASSING OUT ENVELOPES

1. When passing out envelopes after communion, wait until the priest announces the purpose of the collection. This takes place AFTER the quiet time and prayer after communion, not during it.

COMMUNION

1. At the Greeting of Peace, please wait until we are all invited by the priest to offer each other a sign of Christ's peace.
2. Everyone that needs communion brought to them will receive it before the rest of the congregation. Ushers should review all individuals with this requirement and whether they want both the consecrated bread and wine or just the consecrated bread. When it is time for communion, three (3) ushers will process up the center aisle to the front. Two (2) will keep the congregation in their rows and the other will communicate this requirement to Fr. Ejimadu and the communion minister that has the consecrated wine. At Masses presided by Fr. Sayes, it will be two (2) communion ministers. Please utilize the communion ministers located along the front row. This usher will guide Fr. Ejimadu and/or the communion minister(s) to everyone requiring communion. Please keep in mind the goal is to have one (1) usher handling this task. The use of an additional usher and communion minister(s) is permitted if it is determined to be the most effective way to meet the requirement at a specific Mass. At Fr. Ejimadu's Masses, he will make that decision. At Fr. Sayes' Masses, the ushers will have the prerogative. After Fr. Ejimadu and/or the communion ministers return to the altar, the rest of the congregation will process and receive communion.

SPECIFIC GUIDELINES FOR USHERS

DRESS AND DECORUM

1. As a public witness to the Eucharist, our behavior and dress should show respect for the role we perform. Men are encouraged to wear dress slacks, shirt and coat (with or without a tie). During the months of May, June, July, August and September, dress slacks and short sleeved parish logo shirts are acceptable. Women are encouraged to wear business-casual attire.

AS YOU ARRIVE

1. Each Mass is assigned a team of ushers that serve on an every other month basis. Each team member should plan on arriving 15 minutes prior to the start of Mass.
2. It is very appropriate for ushers to sit with their families during Mass. If you choose to do so, please sit toward the back of the church so that you can be attentive to what is happening in the whole church.
3. When ushers arrive they should check the ushers' cupboard in the alcove (located by the restrooms) for any information on special occurrences for the day. Special collection envelopes are the most common example.
4. Check to ensure the collection basket is under the gift table. It is always best for the captain or a team member to check to see if counters are present at their Mass. If the collection basket is in the counting room, return it to the shelf under the gift table. In rare cases, if the basket is not in either location, check with a staff member.

5. If you notice that there is not a greeter at either of the entrances and people are starting to arrive, please step in and help greet.

BEFORE MASS AND AT THE BEGINNING OF MASS

1. Ushers need to be in three (3) area's: The center, east and west aisles. Encourage people to sit toward the front if there is room. Please assist people if they need help in being seated.
2. As people are coming in, be alert for individuals who may require communion brought to them due to their physical condition. A request will be made during the pre-mass announcements to notify an usher if an individual requires communion brought to them. Generally, people sit in the same area at the Mass they usually attend. This can help make those individuals easy to identify. Politely and discreetly confirm that they want communion brought to them and if they wish to receive both the consecrated bread and wine or only the consecrated bread. Review with your team members the individuals who need communion provided to them.
3. One (1) usher finds a family to take up the gifts. Before doing so, check to see if there is a special occasion (baptism, first Eucharist, anniversary, etc.) being celebrated. It is best to try and find a family that has not brought up the gifts recently. Inform them that the time to go back to the gift table is shortly after the collection begins.
4. Main east doors, from the gathering space into the church, are to remain closed before and during Mass. The greeter will be standing in the gathering area.
5. After the Opening Song and once Mass begins, continue to escort people to their seats as unobtrusively as possible.

THE COLLECTION AND GIFTS

1. Ushers take up the collection once all are seated after the Prayers of the Faithful. One (1) basket is passed on each side in the rows by the walls. Two (2) baskets, are passed on each side of the main sections using every other row.
2. If an usher finishes one area, he/she should then begin to pass the basket from the back rows in another area.
3. The requirement for a second collection will be identified in the bulletin and during pre-mass announcements. The ushers will make this collection immediately after the first. The basket(s) will be placed under the center of the altar.
4. Please note that the container for wine will ordinarily have a pall (cloth-covered square) on it. Before taking the gifts up, remove the pall and put it on the shelf of the gift table.
5. If counters are present at the 9:30 or 11:30 a.m. Mass, two (2) ushers are to bring the collection basket to the counters in the counting room. If no counters are present, the basket, containing the envelopes and money, is brought to the altar as part of the procession of gifts. Should the collection not be completed when the family brings the gifts, an usher will take the collection basket with the envelopes and money and place it under the altar. Before placing the collection basket under the altar, remember to bow toward the altar.
6. It is time to take the gifts up when the priest is at the front of the altar. Be sure the family is present, (or if necessary ask them to go to the back). Give them the bread, wine and the collection basket (if it is ready to go up).
7. There is no easy way to predict what the timing will be at each Mass for bringing up the gifts. So please be flexible and attentive at this time.