

**CELEBRATING THE MINISTRY OF ACOLYTES &
CRUCIFERS AT ST. PAUL'S, Wallingford CT**

[updated 2011]

[

Thank you for serving as an acolyte and/or crucifer. Like most things in life, we enjoy this more if we feel confident and informed about what we're doing. The goal of this training is to help your service as an acolyte or crucifer be a source of JOY for you and the congregation we serve.

1. Acolytes and crucifers are liturgical leaders for the entire congregation throughout the entire service – from at least 15 minutes before the official start time until approximately 10 minutes after the Dismissal. We're "on duty" throughout this entire period. Thank you for your time!
2. We lead by doing – so participate fully in the service: pray and say "amen" after prayers, follow lessons, recite psalms, sing hymns, generally be aware of what's happening when, etc. *Make sure you have bulletins, prayer books and hymnals at your seats.*
3. *Posture* is important! Standing up straight on solid footing without swaying will get you far in life in general – including your life as an acolyte or crucifer. When not holding a cross, torch or book, etc., clasp your hands gently together at a comfortable level near your waist. This eliminates the temptation of twirling the tassels on our cinctures ("ropes" or "belts") or dangling our arms – so the congregation isn't distracted . . . and we don't look silly!
4. At the same time, #3 above doesn't mean being stiff or fussy or phony. The goal is to be natural, comfortable and healthy!
5. *Pray without ceasing.* (1 Thessalonians 5:17)
6. Make a good faith effort at these things + pay attention = faithful and helpful acolyte or crucifer. AMEN!

BEFORE the service:

1. Arrive at least 15 minutes before the scheduled beginning of the service. Getting properly vested and prepared is part of our liturgical leadership. Note that your vestments are now in the clergy sacristy (“vesting room”); the color coded size chart is posted on the wall outside this room. Cinctures (“ropes” or belts) are found in the labeled bins on the closet floor.
2. After vesting, go into the church to make sure you have bulletins, Prayer Books and hymnals at your seats, and that your kneelers are there too.
3. Light candles, remembering that “the Gospel never stands alone” – in other words, light the candle by the Eagle lectern first. (Note: During Easter season and other special occasions such as baptisms the Paschal Candle should be lit, as well as the two candles in the Baptistry.)
4. Gather your torches or the cross, quietly preparing to begin the service. Ask the Celebrant if there’s anything special you need to know about the service.
5. Join in opening prayer just before the processional.

DURING the Service:

1. During the Liturgy of the Word, follow the readings and prayers in the bulletin and prayer book. The Crucifer takes Gospel Book and acolytes take torches for the Gospel Procession.
2. After the Peace/Prayers for “Life’s Milestone’s”, the Crucifer sets the table. Bring chalice (CUP), paten (PLATE), pall (square COVER over chalice) and corporal (NAPKIN) to the altar. Unfold the corporal, with cross at the front edge of the altar and the creases *down* (so it can collect any bread crumbs). Place chalice and paten on the corporal.
3. While Crucifer sets the table, Acolytes may assist. At 8:00: Bring bread box and cruet (small silver pitchers) of wine and water to the altar. At 10:00: The ushers or Ministers of Communion generally present the “elements” – bread box and cruets of wine and water – directly to the priest.
4. At 8:00: Crucifer meets ushers at the altar rail, and brings the offering plates (of money) to the altar. At 10:00: ushers generally bring the offering up to the altar.

5. Acolytes stand on either side of Celebrant at the altar, ready to assist.
6. Crucifer brings lavabo bowl, cruet (small CLEAR pitcher) of water to Celebrant, with the towel folded over his or her left forearm. After washing hands, Crucifer and Celebrant bow slightly. Crucifer returns the lavabo bowl and water to the credence table, and then comes back to stand at the altar to the left of the Celebrant, ready to assist.
7. All stand in a semi-circle around the altar. Participate in the Eucharistic prayer, including bowing slightly when the Celebrant bows. Acolytes and Crucifers receive communion.
8. One Acolyte follows the Celebrant to the altar rail with the gluten-free wafers, standing on the first step. (Note: If gluten-free wafers are not already on the altar, they are found in the aumbry – the small wooden box by the credence table which holds the “reserved” sacrament.)
9. After the congregation receives communion, the Crucifer and Acolytes help clear the altar by taking items to the credence table or the counter in the Altar Guild sacristy, as directed by the Celebrant.
10. Crucifer and Acolytes return to the altar, making a semi-circle to pray the post-communion prayer and receive the blessing.
11. Crucifer and Acolytes immediately pick up the cross and torches and begin the recession -- generally “short” at the 8:00 and “long” at the 10:00.

AFTER the service:

1. Closing prayer.
2. Remain in good posture, holding your torches or the cross, as you stand near the front column listening to announcements. You’re an important part of the community and deserve to hear what’s going on!
3. Say response to dismissal: “Thanks be to God!” (adding “Alleluia! Alleluia!” in season).
4. Put torches and cross away. **Extinguish candles.** Then remove vestments, **hanging them up on the color-coded hangers and returning the cinctures (“ropes” or belts) to the appropriate bin.**

THANKS BE TO GOD . . . for you and your service!