

USHER ACTIVITIES & GUIDELINES

1. Procedures related to doors.

Piazza (outside) Doors

Remain closed and are not locked open by ushers. Greeters & individuals open and close Piazza Doors. Ushers do not open Piazza Doors after Dismissal.

Narthex (inside) Doors

Remain closed, except after Dismissal, when the celebrant turns to walk up the aisle. Center Aisle ushers then lock open all Narthex Doors.

Side(outside) Doors

Remain closed and are not locked open by ushers. Individuals open and close Side Doors when they enter or depart.

2. Presenting Offerings of the Faithful (Gifts).

Prior to Mass, center aisle ushers secure couple or family to present the offerings of the faithful. Instruct Presenters (gift bearers) to leave their pew and move to the rear aisle as soon as the ushers walk down their aisles to begin Collection. Holding the offerings, the Presenters immediately position themselves in the center aisle at last pew and remain there until the Celebrant begins to move toward center aisle to receive the offerings. The Presenters then walk forward with the offerings.

3. Seating assistance: objective and guidelines. The objective is to minimize any distraction during the Liturgy of the Word when assisting those who arrive after Mass begins.

Ushers use three (3) seating- assist options:

- 1) Remain in the rear aisle and direct individuals to open pews.
- 2) Meet individuals in the rear aisle and escort them to open pews. When escorting, the usher always politely informs those seated of the number of fellow worshipers coming into their pew. Usher then returns to the rear aisle without waiting for everyone to be seated.
- 3) When there is a continuous flow of late arrivals, the usher can move to an open pew and wait for these individuals to come to the open pew. Waving hands is not an appropriate way to beckon individuals to open pews. If needed, fingers can show the

number of spaces available. When the individuals arrive at the pew, the usher politely announces the number of fellow worshipers to be seated. Not waiting for everyone to be seated, the usher then proceeds to another open pew and repeats this process. Usher returns to the rear aisle when the continuous flow ends.

When to seat late arrivals: When the entrance hymn begins, ushers locate open pews to assist with seating as needed during the Introductory Rite. "May I help you locate a seat?" is appropriate. Seating people from the center aisle first is less distracting.

Knowing God's presence on the altar during the Liturgy of the Word, ushers should listen to the readings from their stations in the rear aisle unless they are assisting others. Ushers may direct or escort individuals to open pews until the First Reading. Ushers should be at their position stations in the rear aisle during the readings, responsorial, gospel and homily. If necessary, individuals can be escorted to open pews between the readings and gospel.

Recalling the objective is to minimize distractions to all listening to the Word of God, ushers are asked to use "common sense" and judgment regarding the seating of those who arrival during the readings and homily. (i.e. a large build-up of people waiting to be seated also is a distraction.)

4. Count and report attendance.

The time to count mass attendance may vary by specific liturgy. Generally this is during the first or second reading. Usher Captains know the best time for their masses. Record the count for your section on the appropriate form. The goal is that worshipers do not notice an usher using hands or fingers to count attendance.

5. Offertory Collection.

Anyone ushering a liturgy when money is collected needs to sign-in. The sign-in form is on the same sheet as the mass count report. The usher who carries the Collections Basket should be identified on the sign-in form. Because diocesan guidelines prohibit the Collections Basket carried by the same person continuously, Captains have rotation programs for their respective mass teams.

Collection begins with the usher team walking down their respective aisles to the front aisle and, bowing together. Collections are transferred into the large Collections Basket in the rear aisle, near the center, and carried to sanctuary via the side aisle. Collections Basket is placed on the top step directly below the Sanctuary Lamp.

6. Special Collections.

From time-to-time special collections will be taken. Special collections begin after Holy Communion when the celebrant returns to his chair for communion meditation. Ushers walk in unison down their aisles to the front aisle, bow together and distribute baskets. Special collections are combined into a large Collections Basket to be held by the usher who will carry both baskets to the back sacristy after the priest leaves the assembly area.

7. Reception of the Eucharist to insure a smooth and efficient flow of communicants.

Usher Captains know the best procedure to follow for their specific liturgies. During Masses with large attendance, Holy Communion is also received in the rear aisle. Most communicants look to ushers for direction at this special time in the liturgy. Immediately after the celebrant receives the Eucharist and as he begins distributing to the Extraordinary Ministers, ushers walk in unison down their respective aisles to the front aisle, bow together and then move into position to lead their sections to the Eucharist. This practice varies slightly when Holy Communion is also received in the rear aisle. Usher Captains know the best procedure to follow for their specific liturgies.

8. Communion for those with mobility difficulties who are not seated in front pew.

Extraordinary Ministers stationed at side aisles take Holy Communion to communicants unable to walk to them. If known before mass, the usher communicates with Extraordinary Ministers in narthex. Otherwise, the usher is the final person receiving Communion and after receiving, the usher should advise there is a communicant in the pew and lead the EM to the pew.

9. Manage Dismissal and departure.

Bulletins are placed in the boxes when the celebrant returns to his chair for communion meditation. (If there is a Special Collection, bring out bulletins after the collection.) After the Final Blessing (or concluding announcements, if any) ushers stand in their rear aisle position stations for the singing of the Going Forth hymn. (Ushers who will hand out bulletins can also be holding these while singing.) All ushers remain in position until the celebrant in the center aisle turns and begins to walk toward the narthex. Center aisle ushers then open all narthex doors. Bulletins are handed out after the celebrant arrives in the narthex. Side aisle ushers move to St. Joseph Altar and retrieve the Collections Basket.

10. Procedures for the administration of collections.

Diocesan guidelines stipulate an escort usher join the usher who retrieves the Collections Basket. During the singing, when the celebrant turns, side aisle ushers should leave their station for the collections. The Collections Basket is retrieved and both ushers take it to the back sacristy. Usher Captains know the best position location for side aisle ushers to stand and sing the Going Forth hymn; generally both ushers stand together in the rear aisle St Joseph station.

No one is permitted to sort money alone. Special instructions are provided for money sorting. Each money bag needs to be locked before being placed into the safe. Special collections are not comingled with regular collections.

11. Ready church building for the next liturgy.

Before leaving assembly area, ushers inspect their sections, clearing pews of articles left and placing hymnals and missalettes in their proper positions. Remaining Bulletins are returned to the Ministry Room and the bulletin box tables are removed from the aisle. All doors (except confessional doors) are to be closed.

Unusual Circumstances

1. Safe Environment policy.
2. Lost and Found procedures.
3. When someone in a pew faints or requires assistance.
4. When someone on the altar faints or requires assistance.
5. Location of cups for drinking water.
6. When individual requires Emergency Medical Service.
7. CPR training and administering.
8. Seating in pews reserved for people with handicaps or for liturgy ministers.
9. Roping for blocking off pews.
10. Reserving pews.
11. When late arrivals are not seated.
12. Requests to present gifts (Offerings of the Faithful)
13. When an usher uses a pew.
14. Special celebrations
15. Special liturgies (i.e. Ash Wednesday; baptisms)
16. Bowing: when to bow and when not to bow.
17. Additional masses in other parish buildings
18. Noise in the assembly area before and after mass.
19. Unlocking and locking side doors.
20. Security procedures for collections.