

Introduction

First of all, thank you for your willingness to serve as an acolyte! Your service is a gift to God and to all of us at St. Patrick's Episcopal Church. Each acolyte role helps to enhance our worship and glorify God. Liturgy means "the Work of the People." Therefore, it is all of us together that make worship happen. You are all ministers of God and play a special role in the worship and life of this community. We appreciate your service!

Overall Responsibilities of All Acolytes

Overall responsibilities for acolytes are listed below. It is important to know your duties and be confident in your abilities. Do not worry about mistakes—they are bound to occur (even the Celebrant goofs up sometimes). Always act as if everything you do is supposed to happen that way and most people will never know whether a mistake was made or not. An acolyte's responsibilities include:

- serving when assigned and being prompt.
- helping to get the church ready for worship (e.g., lighting candles).
- understanding the different parts of a worship service; knowing what is supposed to happen and when.
- knowing the specific responsibilities of the assigned position (e.g., crucifer).
- performing actions carefully and with reverence.
- maintaining a neat appearance.
- helping lead the congregation in worship by joining in prayers and singing and or standing at appropriate times.

Scheduling

Each month an acolyte schedule is sent out by email. You should review this schedule to make sure that you do not have any conflicts on your scheduled dates to serve. If you are unable to serve on a particular date, it is your responsibility to find a substitute acolyte. You may contact the church office for a list of other acolytes. Please inform the church office of the substitution as soon as possible. Reminder emails are then sent out one week before the service.

Vestments

You should be vested 15 minutes before the start of a service; which means you should arrive no later than 20 minutes before a service starts. Acolyte robes are kept in the acolyte/choir room next door to Suzanne's office. The cincture is tied in a slip knot on the left side. Robes should come down to the tops of your shoes. When serving, you should always dress

neatly and pay special attention to your choice of shoes. (Flip flops or other shoes that may be difficult to walk in should be avoided).

Before the Service

Candles should be lighted no later than ten minutes before the start of a service. Servers should check with the Celebrant (and the other acolytes with the server) for any special instructions for the upcoming service (for example, during different seasons there are slight changes).

Prepare for worship through prayer and reflection on the service you are about to perform. One prayer to use before worship is found on page 833 of *The Book of Common Prayer*:

O Almighty God, who pours out on all who desire it the spirit of grace and of supplication: Deliver us, when we draw near to you, from coldness of heart and wanderings of mind, that with steadfast thoughts and kindled affections we may worship you in spirit and in truth; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Each acolyte should bring items necessary for their role (e.g., torchers go get the torch) and gather at the back of the sanctuary five minutes before the service. The Celebrant will then say a prayer and give last minute instructions.

Procession

The usual order for a procession is shown below. All positions are not filled at every service. The duties of each acolyte are described in the following sections. The procession begins after the congregation begins singing the processional hymn.

Procession Order

Typical Sunday

Crucifer
Torch Torch
St. Patrick's Banner
Server
Deacon
Priest
Celebrant

Christmas Eve/ Easter

Incense
Crucifer
Torch Torch
Kite
Seasonal Banner
St. Patrick's Banner
Server
Deacon
Priest
Celebrant

Responsibilities of Individual Acolyte Positions

Thurifer Responsibilities

Before the Service

First of all, the thurifer must practice prior to the service. This is a role that we do not use often, and you need to be comfortable with the thurible. Fifteen minutes before the service take the thurible from its stand and light two coals. Gather with other acolytes at the back of the sanctuary five minutes before the service. The priest will bless and add the incense right before the service.

The Procession

You will lead the procession. Please begin walking in a slow and stately manner after the congregation has begun singing the first hymn. Pause at the altar and wait for the rest of the processional to gather. Bow in reverence with the other acolytes and clergy. Then proceed to the right of the altar. Hang up the thurible and have a seat.

The Gospel Procession

At the sequence hymn add two more scoops of incense to the thurible. Wait for the deacon's cue to process. Then lead the procession to the center of the aisle for the reading of the Gospel, pausing and bowing at the altar on your way. Hand the thurible to the deacon and bow to him/her afterwards. The deacon will then cense the Gospel book and hand the thurible back to you. Bow again after receiving the thurible. Stand for the reading of the Gospel. Lead the procession back to the seats, however; continue on into the sacristy. Add two coals to the thurible, so that it will be ready for the Offertory.

Preparation for Holy Communion

At the Offertory, take boat and thurible to the Celebrant. He/She will bless it and add more incense. The Celebrant will then cense the altar. Stand waiting by the side of the altar stage. Bow each time you hand off the thurible to the Celebrant. Take the thurible and bow towards the altar and the Celebrant. Cense the Celebrant and altar once to each corner and the center. Bow. Then, turn and face the congregation. Bow. Cense the congregation. Bow. Then, return the thurible to its stand and take a seat.

The Recession

Take the thurible from its stand after the Blessing. Wait for the candles to be extinguished. Lead the recession out, pausing and bowing at the altar. Follow the instructions for carefully extinguishing the thurible.

Crucifer Responsibilities

Before the Service

After vesting, you will find the cross at the back of the sanctuary in its stand. Please gather with the other acolytes five minutes before the service for a prayer.

The Procession

On a typical Sunday, you will lead the procession. Be ready to go when the Celebrant welcomes and gives the opening acclamation. After the congregation has begun singing the first hymn, walk in a slow and stately manner down the aisle. Pause at the altar and wait for the rest of the processional to gather. Since you have a cross, you do NOT bow. Simply stand in reverence of the altar. Proceed to the right side of the altar and place the cross in its stand. Take a seat.

The Gospel Procession

At the Sequence hymn, take the cross from its stand. Wait for the deacon's cue to begin the procession. Lead the procession to the center of the aisle pausing at the altar. Once you have reached the center of the aisle, turn around and face the altar for the reading of the Gospel. After the reading, lead the procession back pausing again at the altar. Place the cross in its stand and return to your seat for the homily.

The Recession

After the Blessing, take the cross from its stand. Wait for the Celebrant or deacon's cue and lead the recession. Pause in reverence at the altar. Wait for all of the clergy and acolytes to

gather and bow. Again, you do NOT bow, but simply reverence. The Celebrant will give a closing prayer before the Deacon dismisses the congregation.

Torch Bearer Responsibilities

Before the Service

Light the candles ten minutes before the service begins. If there is a Paschal candle, it should be lit as well (this candle will NOT be extinguished at the end of the service). If you need assistance lighting the candles, please do not hesitate to ask. After the candles are lit, light the torches and gather at the back of the sanctuary. Please be careful once the torches are lit! The Celebrant will say a prayer and give any further instructions.

The Procession

In the procession, you will follow the cross. You will walk beside the other torch bearer. Try to walk together and in a slow graceful manner. Pause at the altar with the other acolytes and clergy. You will NOT bow when you are holding the torch. Proceed to the right side of the altar. Place the torches in their stand and take a seat. If you are leaving for Christian Formation, one of you may take the cross and process out with the other children.

The Gospel Procession (This does not apply if you are going out for Christian Formation)

During the Sequence Hymn, take the torch from its stand. Follow the cross out to the center of the aisle pausing in reverence at the altar. When you reach the center of the aisle, turn and face the altar. After the reading, process back pausing again at the altar. Place the torch in its stand and take a seat for the homily.

The Recession

After the Blessing, take the extinguishers and walk to the front of the altar. Pause in reverence. Walk up and extinguish the candles. Step back off the stage and again pause in reverence to the altar. Walk the extinguisher back to its holder. Leave the torches in their holders. Wait for the cue of the Celebrant or Deacon and recess out following the cross. Pause and bow at the altar. The Celebrant will give a closing prayer before the Deacon dismisses the congregation.

Kite Bearer Responsibilities

Before the Service

First of all, the kite bearer must practice prior to the service. This role is used only for special occasions and it's important to be comfortable with the kite. After vesting, please take the kite and gather at the back of the sanctuary five minutes before the service for a prayer.

The Procession

During the procession, you follow the torches. Wave the kite in a figure eight pattern. Please be careful not to hit people or lights. Remain in movement with the kite throughout the Opening Hymn. Instead of pausing at the altar, continue in the “Holy Pretzel” around the congregation until the hymn ends. Then, collapse the kite and take a seat on the left side next to the priests.

The Recession

After the Blessing, take the kite and wait for the Recessional Hymn to begin. On the Celebrant’s cue, begin to wave the kite in the figure eight.

Seasonal Banner Bearer Responsibilities

Before the Service

Take the seasonal banner and gather at the back of the sanctuary five minutes before the service. The Celebrant will say a prayer and give any further instructions.

The Processional

You will follow the kite in the processional. Walk in a slow and stately manner to the front. Pause and reverence the altar with the rest of the acolytes and clergy. Then, proceed to the right side of the altar. Place the banner in its stand and take a seat.

The Recession

You will not recess with the banner. Therefore, you will sing and carry your hymnal with you as you recess out. Wait for the Celebrant or Deacon’s cue and recess out following the torches. Bow at the altar with the rest of the acolytes and clergy. The Celebrant will say a closing prayer before the Deacon dismisses the congregation.

Banner Bearer Responsibilities

Before the Service

Take the banner and gather at the back of the sanctuary five minutes before the service. The Celebrant will say a prayer and give any further instructions.

The Processional

You will follow the seasonal banner in the processional. Walk in a slow and stately manner to the front. Pause and reverence the altar with the rest of the acolytes and clergy. Then, proceed to the left side of the altar. Place the banner in its stand and take a seat next to the priest.

The Recessional

You will not recess with the banner. Therefore, you will sing and carry your hymnal with you as you recess out. Wait for the Celebrant or Deacon's cue and recess out first from your side of the altar. Bow at the altar with the rest of the acolytes and clergy. Then follow the torches on a typical Sunday or the seasonal banner on a special Sunday. The Celebrant will say a closing prayer before the Deacon dismisses the congregation.

Server Responsibilities

Before the Service

If you are not acting as the crucifer and server, then you should grab a hymnal before heading to the back of the sanctuary five minutes before the service begins. The Celebrant will say a prayer and give any further instructions.

The Processional

You will follow the banner in the processional. Please walk in a slow and stately manner. Also, please sing along with the opening hymn and carry your hymnal with you. At the altar, pause and bow with the rest of the acolytes and clergy. Then, proceed to the right side of the altar and sit closest to the credence table.

The Gospel Procession

During the Sequence Hymn, take the Gospel book from the credence table. Wait for the cue of the Deacon and process out to the center of the aisle following the cross. Pause and bow at the altar. Once you have reached the center of the aisle, turn and face the altar. Hold the Gospel for the Deacon while he/she reads. After the reading, process back once again bowing at the altar. Place the Gospel back on the credence table and take your seat for the homily.

Offertory

You are responsible for assisting the Deacon in setting the table for Holy Communion. First, give the Missile book and stand from the credence table to the Deacon. Next, give him/her the chalice and basket. Then, take the lavabo bowl and towel from the credence table and stand at the side of the altar stage. Drape the lavabo towel across your left arm. The Deacon will bring you a pitcher of water. You will pour water onto the Celebrants hands. Then, place the lavabo bowl and towel back on the credence table. Wait for the Deacon to bring you the offertory and place it on the credence table as well. Be seated and watch the Celebrant and Deacon for any cues in case they need assistance.

Holy Communion

During Holy Communion, you will need to be paying close attention. At the Sanctus, when we sing "Holy, Holy, Holy" hit the gong three times. Make sure to hit it hard—the louder

the better! Then, after the Celebrant says, “The Gifts of God for the People of God,” take the extra basket and chalices from the credence table and place them on the altar. Typically we need two baskets and four chalices total.

The Recession

After the Blessing, prompt the torch bearers to extinguish the candles. Again, please sing the Closing Hymn and carry your hymnal with you. Follow the cross and again pause and bow at the altar. The Celebrant will say a closing prayer and then the Deacon will dismiss the congregation.