

St. Joseph Parish

Roles and Responsibilities of the Usher

September 1, 2013

As an usher, you are most likely to be the first person that newcomers to our parish will encounter. As such, many folks will form their first impression of us - whether or not we're a friendly inviting assembly - based on your actions and attitude. As such, your most important duty is to be friendly, courteous, and helpful. Be alert and offer assistance to folks who need it. Be knowledgeable about the location of rest rooms, meeting rooms, etc.

Before Mass:

1. Arrive at church 15-20 minutes prior dressed appropriately for Mass. Slacks and Sport Coat or equivalent are preferred.
2. Make sure that **all lights** in the Main Vestibule and the Office Vestibule are turned on.
3. **Beginning October 1, each Mass will only need four ushers.**
4. Ensure that you are easily identifiable by wearing an usher tag.
5. Ensure the collection baskets, bulletins, and any other handouts are in the proper places before Mass.
6. Check in the Usher's room for postings or, if unsure, with the Presider as to whether there are special circumstances - such as a renewal of wedding vows, first communion, etc for that Mass. If so, identify specific procedures for what is needed.
4. If there are special circumstances, identify two individuals from the group who are willing to bring the gifts forward at the Offertory. If not, choose two individuals attending Mass. Brief them as to when to come to the back of the church and how to present the gifts.
5. Be aware that occasionally there will be a second collection and follow specific instructions from Presider.
6. Be sure the drop box is unlocked to allow for deposit from offertory.
7. For Masses having an order of worship separate from the Sunday bulletin, distribute the order of worship as people enter the church.
8. Distribute the bulletin as people enter the church and offer copies of the bulletin for those that might desire one as they leave.
9. Greet people warmly and cheerfully. Observe quiet and appropriate reverence while talking to people.
10. When available seating becomes limited, lead people down the aisle to a row with vacant seats. You may need to encourage people to sit closer together and towards the middle of the pew, especially for Christmas and Easter.
11. If the entry procession has begun, ask latecomers to wait until the procession has passed their point of entry.

During Mass:

1. Once Mass has started, be prepared for people who need help finding a seat. Invite those standing at the various church entries to come in and be seated.
2. Actively participate in the liturgy.
3. If necessary, handle unsupervised children gently and tactfully, always using good judgment.

4. If the readings have begun, ask latecomers to wait at the back of the church until that reading is completed and then assist them to find seats. Try to do this quickly and with little distraction.
5. **During the Prayers of the Faithful, the ushers should prepare for the taking up the offertory collection. Beginning October 1, 2013, we begin “passing the basket”. Collections will require only three ushers! The ushers should unobtrusively position themselves in the back of the church at their designated places and pick up their collection basket. After the final prayer, when the people take their seat, the ushers should walk in unison to the front of two side aisles, while a third should walk to the chapel. Once you reach the front of the aisle, each should bow reverently. The ushers in the side aisle should hang a basket to the first person, in the first pew, on each side of the aisle and then return to the back of the church. Pay special attention to the collection process and be ready to assist – if need be – to pass the basket back further in the church. The usher in the chapel should collect the offertory in the chapel and then return to the back the church.**
6. At completion, the offertory collections should be emptied by all ushers into the central basket in the back of the church. Two designated ushers will then proceed together around the right side of the church to deposit the contents of the central basket into the drop box near the front offices. At the same time, other ushers will collect the emptied baskets and return them to the closet in the Usher’s Room.
7. After the sign of peace, proceed to the back of your assigned aisle. Immediately after the priest offers the Body of Christ to the people, proceed to the front of your aisle in unison with the other Ushers as they proceed to the front of their respective aisle. Upon reaching the front, bow reverently together and prepare to direct the people to communion one row at a time, allowing them to begin once the Eucharistic minister is in place.

After Mass:

1. After the final blessing, proceed to the back of your designated aisle.
2. Hand out bulletins to the people departing who do not already have one.
3. Say a word of appropriate farewell.
4. Invite people to stay for coffee and donuts when appropriate and guide them to the area.
5. Straighten/tidy up the pews and church entry areas.
6. Any personal items left in the pews should be stored in the Usher’s room until claimed.

Preparation:

1. A head Usher is assigned to each Mass who is responsible to lead/coordinate activities for that Mass.
2. Know the various abbreviations used in the Sunday bulletin so you can help new members/newcomers find their way.
3. Know the location of rest rooms, fire extinguishers, etc.
4. Ushers are responsible for finding replacements on planned days off and should notify the lead usher of their substitution.
5. Know the procedures used to take the gifts to the altar during the Offertory and be able to explain them to the people who bring up the gifts.

Emergency items located in the Usher’s room:

1. Phone with an outside line. You must first dial 9 to get an outside line!
2. Fire extinguisher
3. First Aid kit
4. Defibrillator
5. Wheel chair