



Parent's/Guardian's Training Manual for Acolytes

Congratulations on your choice to let your child(ren) serve at the Lord's Altar in the St Martin of Tours Parish.

Prior to registering and during your child's training, you can assist the trainers with training your child some basics. To become an acolyte, your child needs to be able to do the following:

Overview

- Can fold hands together in the proper position
- Can remain focused on the altar (can refrain from looking at Mommy, Daddy, or other people during Mass)
- Enjoys serving
- Can refrain from carrying on conversations with other servers during Mass (about video games, school, their friends, their pets, etc.)
- Can focus on and pay attention to what is going on with the Order of the Mass
- Can refrain from playing with their vestment and cinctures (rope belt) during Mass
- Can refrain from using bad words, profanity, or obscene speech
- Can refrain from participating in rowdy activities when vested (chasing other servers, jumping on other servers, etc.)
- Can dress appropriately for Mass
- Can vest themselves, including tying and untying their own cinctures (rope belt)
- Can tie and untie their own shoes
- Can be silent during Mass and speak only when necessary or when they are participating in the prayers or songs
- Can refrain from regularly using the restroom during Mass (especially since there are no restrooms nearby in the sacristies of our Churches for the acolytes to use during Mass); if they have a hard time with this, they can try not drinking much for two hours before Mass and make sure they get to the restroom before Mass
- Can refrain from regularly falling asleep during Mass (less than once a month for Sunday Masses and less than once a week for daily Masses)
- Can refrain from talking loudly or boisterously in the acolyte sacristy or in any other part of the church unless necessary
- Can refrain from playing around with the books (skimming through the pages without intending to read anything, slamming the books shut, intentionally dropping them on the floor, etc.)
- Can refrain from socializing with each other after the *Server's Prayer before Mass*
- Can maintain correct posture at all times during the Mass



Details

Can fold hands together in the proper position

- Your child will need to hold their hands together in a reverent praying position (palm to palm at lower chest height) for the majority of the Mass (approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a Mass, which is done while kneeling, walking and standing).
- Practice with your child in the pew: have them keep their hands folded while standing and kneeling for the Mass. They can rest their hands on their lap while they are sitting.



Can remain focused on the altar (can refrain from looking at Mommy, Daddy, or other people during Mass)

- Your child will need to be able to practice self-restraint with their eyes, refraining from looking around at the congregation, at the people behind them, at the ushers during the collection, and at children who start crying or making noise.

Enjoys serving

- If your child does not want to serve, **DO NOT FORCE THEM!!!** Do not pressure them or nag them or give them the guilt trip about it either. For your child to serve, they must want to do so of their own free will. This usually signifies that they do not understand the Mass or that they need further spiritual formation.

Can refrain from carrying on conversations with other servers during Mass (about video games, school, their friends, their pets, etc.)

- Your child will need to be able to refrain from carrying on conversations with other acolytes during Mass, and refrain from partaking in them even if some of the other acolytes start them.

Can focus on and pay attention to what is going on with the Order of the Mass

- Your child should know the basic structure of the Mass (Sign of the Cross, Penitential Rite, Gloria, First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Second Reading, Alleluia, Gospel, Homily, Creed, Petitions, Offertory, Preface, Eucharistic Prayer, Our Father, Lamb of God, Communion, Prayer after Communion, Final Blessing), and be able to follow along. In order to anticipate and be ready for their next task during Mass.
- Your child should become familiar with the organization of the missalettes (which can also be very helpful in teaching your child the parts of the Mass). “Education of our faith begins first at home”

Can refrain from playing with their vestments and cinctures (rope belt) during Mass

- Your child will need to be able to practice self-restraint with their fingers and refrain from playing with their cincture, hair, hood, or vestments. This habit can already exist before hand in the pews with your child playing with their clothing and need to be discouraged in order to better focus on the Mass.

Can refrain from using bad words, profanity, or obscene speech

- Using bad words, profanity, and obscene speech is a violation of the Second Commandment. As parents/guardians, you cannot use this kind of language yourselves, and you cannot allow your child to use this kind of language.

Can refrain from participating in rowdy activities when vested (chasing other servers, jumping on other servers, etc.)

- Your child will need to be able to practice self-restraint even when their friends are misbehaving. Talk with your child and determine ways that your child can avoid situations where their friends try to provoke them to misbehave.

Can dress appropriately for Mass

- Have your child wear “formal” clothing, when attending Mass, that means no jean pants, t-shirts, short pants, slippers, sneakers, over exposing dresses or high heel shoes taller than 2.5 cm (1”). Regardless vestments are being used, imagine how your child would look as an acolyte during Mass if vestments weren’t used.
- Only exception is when your child is wearing their school uniform while attending Mass just before, during or shortly after school hours.



Can vest themselves, including tying and untying their own cinctures (rope belt)

- Have your child practice putting their vestments on and taking them off at home after receiving their own vestment. Have him practice how to tie and untie his own cincture using a piece of string or rope long enough (a knot tying diagram will be provided).

Can tie and untie their shoes

- Shoes frequently come untied during Mass, and your child could easily trip if it happens to them unless they know how to retie it.

Can be silent during Mass and speak only when necessary or when they are participating in the prayers or songs

- Your child will need to practice self-restraint with their mouth and refrain from speaking when unnecessary, making comments, asking irrelevant and unnecessary questions (“Why are Father's vestments green today,” etc.), or complaining during Mass. This can be left for before or after Mass.
- Note: your child will on occasion need to speak with other servers or priests during Mass (if there is a change of plans, something breaks, someone gets sick, etc.)

Can refrain from regularly using the restroom during Mass (especially since there are no restrooms nearby in the sacristies of our Churches for the acolytes to use during Mass); if they have a hard time with this, they can try not drinking much for two hours before Mass and make sure they get to the restroom before Mass

- Practice with your child in the pew and ensure they can refrain from having to leave for the restroom during Mass. If they can do this when they are in the pew, they will be able to do this as an acolyte.

Can refrain from regularly falling asleep during Mass (less than once a month for Sunday Masses and less than once a week for daily Masses)

- Practice with your child in the pew, and ensure they can remain awake by themselves without you needing to intervene. If they can do this when they are in the pew, they will be able to do this as an acolyte.
- Ensure your child gets adequate sleep before Mass, and possibly have them take a nap before Masses late in the day.

Can refrain from talking loudly or boisterously in the acolyte sacristy or in any other part of the church unless necessary

- Practice with your child and make sure that when they are at home, in the store, or in church, they can control their tone of voice and realizes that they rarely needs to shout or talk loudly to be heard. If they can do it, they will be able to do it as an acolyte.

Can refrain from playing around with the books (skimming through the pages without intending to read anything, slamming the books shut, intentionally dropping them on the floor, etc.)

- Practice with your child and ensure they can refrain from doing any of these things when they are by themselves. If they can refrain from doing these things in the pew, they will be able to refrain from doing them as an acolyte.

Can refrain from socializing with each other after the Server's Prayer before Mass

- After the prayer, we begin to quiet ourselves, thinking of the Mass and preparing for our conversation with the Lord.

Can maintain correct posture at all times during the Mass

- Practice with your child and ensure they can stand, sit, and kneel reverently during the Mass, refraining from squirming, swaying, or complaining. If they can already reverently maintain the correct posture in the pew, they will be able to do it as an acolyte.