

Attitude, Appearance and Attentiveness

We cannot stress enough how important it is that you “play the part” of altar server well. You must be fully prepared before Mass. Throughout the Mass, you must show by the way you look, move and hold yourself that you understand the importance of what is going on.

Attitude

Everything starts with your attitude. Make up your mind that you are there because you want to be. Determine that you will do everything to the best of your ability and that you will strive to get as much benefit from the Mass as you can. Take responsibility for getting everything right.

1. **Arrive At Least 15 Minutes Early** – Make sure you have time to get vested properly, light the candles in the Church, sort out who’s doing what, and have everything in place before Mass starts. Also give yourself time to blow your nose, go to the bathroom, etc. before Mass, because you won’t have the opportunity once Mass begins.
2. **Be Ready to Go Before Mass Begins** – There is a clock in the server’s vesting room. Keep track of the time and be ready to process a couple of minutes before Mass is to start. Make sure you know where the priest is before Mass starts. He may want to gather you together for a quick prayer before you process in. He also might already be at the church building waiting for you. Don’t just sit in the vesting room waiting for him to summon you. You find him.
3. **Keep Your Posture Straight at All Times** – When you are standing, stand up straight. When sitting, sit straight up with your knees bent and your feet flat on the ground. When you kneel, keep your body upright; do not sit back on your heels. Do not slouch, fidget, rock back and forth, look aimlessly around, or do anything else that looks like your attention is wandering. Don’t lean on the rails or on the walls; Holy Rosary Church has been standing for many, many years, and it does not need your help to prop it up.
4. **Move With Deliberation and Precision** – Except in the event of an emergency, you should never need to hurry through any action. No running or bouncy walking. No turning abruptly. No hopping or jumping up and down steps. Remember the ritual aspect of the Mass. Every movement should have a certain stateliness and gravity about it.
5. **Remain Silent, Except for Your Participation at Mass** – There should be no need for any of the servers to talk to each other during Mass. Nor shall signaling to each other across the Sanctuary be allowed. Participate fully in the Mass prayers, hymns, and the other parts proper to the congregation.
6. **Treat All Objects with Care** – Whenever you are carrying something, hold it steady and straight. Take care when setting things down that they do not “clomp” or “clang”. Treat everything like it is fragile—even the metal objects.

Appearance

Whether you intend it or not, people will read a lot into your appearance. Therefore, your appearance when serving at Mass needs to be designed to display outward reverence and dignity. If you look like a slob when you serve, people will assume that you attach no importance to the Mass. Remember that every Mass is the Wedding Feast of the Lamb of God! You wouldn't go to a wedding without dressing properly, would you?

1. **Clothes:** Dress for Mass, Not for Where You Are Going Afterward. If you have a game to go to after Mass, bring your uniform and change into it after Mass is over. Do not wear your uniform while serving. Always wear “church clothes” when you are serving. Above all:
 - a. **Solid colors if possible.** The albs you wear are single-layer white cloth. That means that they are slightly see-through. If you are wearing a striped rugby shirt, those stripes will be visible throughout the church. Try to avoid loud patterns or vivid designs. *Absolutely no shirts with writing on them!*
 - b. **Good coverage is a must.** No shorts are to be worn under your alb. Long slacks are required. If you wear a skirt or a dress, the hem should be below the knee. No tank tops other sleeveless items.
 - c. **Appropriate Shoes.** Dress shoes are highly preferred. If you must wear sneakers, they must be clean and not brightly colored. Nice sandals are acceptable, but flip-flops are absolutely forbidden. Wear socks or stockings for the shoes other than sandals.
2. **Hair:** Hair should be neatly trimmed and groomed. If you have long hair, it is preferable that you wear a hairband or tie your hair back to keep it from swishing around too much.
3. **Alb:** Choose the right length of alb. The hem should come about to your ankles once the cincture is tied.
4. **Cincture:** Make sure you've got the right color for the day. There is a calendar in the vesting room which lists the liturgical color for each day. However, if the priest is vesting in a different color, change yours to match the priest's.
5. **Face and Hands:** Surely we don't have to remind you to have washed your face and hands before Mass, right? If you wear makeup, keep it light—nothing that draws attention.

Attentiveness

In short, pay attention *to the Mass* at all times. Don't let your mind wander, so that you are not caught by surprise when the time comes for you to act. Try to keep one eye on the priest. You never know when he might need to summon you to send you on an errand.