

# Acolyte Duties and Tips

## Vesting:

On your appointed Sunday, please wear appropriate clothing. An appropriately dressed and vested acolyte *looks much more reverent and dignified. The main part of your personal clothing showing is your shoes.*

Please wear black closed toe shoes. Young women should wear flats if possible.

***Arrival time: It is essential that the acolytes arrive by 15 minutes before the service. At 10 minutes before the service, all final decisions on assignments are made. After that time, it is too late to reassign.***

When vesting, find the alb (robe) that fits you the best. The alb should fall between midcalf and your ankle. The albs are numbered according to their size. Try to remember the number of the alb that fits and wear that one each time you serve. Try to keep the robes from dragging on the floor as you dress.

The cincture should be at your waist and the knot should be at your left side.

## Reverence:

Nothing is more important to emphasize than the need for reverence. This is a service to worship the Lord. It is to be solemn and dignified. The acolyte is helping lead in that worship. Any distraction is noticed by the congregation and disturbs their worship. A wrong turn or wrong action is not nearly so significant as a yawn, a laugh, a scratch, or a slumped posture.

Hands can best be controlled by folding them in the lap. Necessary yawns should always be covered with the hand.

The torches and the crosses must always be carried properly, even before and after the service. There are hundreds of “no-nos” (twirling the cincture, yawning, hand gestures, fidgeting), but it should be put in positive terms: ***participate reverently in the service.***

## Duties:

### Main Crucifer

- Leads in entire procession.
- Waits at the front with the torchbearers until the choir has finished processing and the vergers arrive.
- The vergers will tell you and the torchbearers to reverence and go to your assigned seats. Place cross in stand.
- When the gospel song is being sung and when the vergers signify it is time, begin the procession for the gospel reading. You will pause facing the front cross and then follow the vergers down the center aisle.
- When you have arrived at the designated spot, turn and face the gospel reader.
- After the gospel reading you will lead (not the vergers) the gospel procession back up the aisle, pausing at the front center and then when the entire procession is at the front, all reverence and return to your seat.
- After the announcements and after the priest says, “Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God”, you pick up all the collection plates (with the large one underneath) and walk to the inside of the rail. Meet the ushers at the

- center (where the gate has been opened by the verger) with the plates. When the plates have been taken place the large plate on the altar to your right/the priests left (where the book had been), reverence and return to your seat.
- When the final hymn is being sung, retrieve your cross and wait for the verger to tell you when to begin the procession. Walk to the center, stop facing the front cross and wait for the torchbearers to join you. Reverence and turn leading the final procession out of the church.

### **Torchbearers following the crucifer**

- Before the service, enter by the side door off the hall with the candle lighter--left hand holding the high end and the right hand holding the low end.
- Go to the center in front of the main cross, stop, reverence and proceed to the candle on your side closest to the cross and begin lighting from the cross out in unison with the other torchbearer.
- Return to center, stop, reverence and go back out the side door off the hall.
- Always use the torches with the cupped base below the candle. These are the torches that are to follow the crucifer.
- Follow the crucifer by a couple or so feet and walk in unison with the other torchbearer.
- Stop at the front of the church and position yourself beside the crucifer. Wait for the choir to process and for the verger to arrive behind you and then reverence and proceed to your seat.
- Place your torch in the torch holder in front of the column facing the seated parishioners.
- When the gospel song begins, stand and when the verger indicates it is time to go, take your torch and follow the crucifer to the front of the church. Face the front cross, waiting for all to gather and the book bearer to retrieve the book, reverence and follow the crucifer down the center aisle.
- Stop when the crucifer stops and turn facing toward the center of the aisle and face the other torchbearer.
- You are the light for the book bearer, so leave room for the book bearer to come between you for the reading of the gospel.
- When the gospel is concluded, allow the crucifer to walk between you and follow the crucifer down the aisle.
- Stop at the front of the church, waiting for all of the gospel procession to join you and when they have, reverence and return to your seat, returning your torch to its stand.
- After the final prayer, the verger will indicate that it is time to snuff out the candles. Take the candlesnuffer, holding it as you did before, and walk to the center facing the main cross. Stop and reverence. Walk with the other torchbearer and begin putting out the candles starting with the large candle (this is the eucharistic candle) beside the altar. Put the candles out starting with the candles farthest from the cross. The light must end at the candle closest to the cross.
- At the final hymn, when the verger indicates it is time to move, follow the crucifer to the front of the church facing the main cross, stop, reverence and follow the crucifer down the aisle and out of the church.

### **Banner Bearer**

- Follow the crucifer and the torchbearers in the opening procession.
- Pause with crucifer and torches until the choir has processed and the verger arrives.
- At this point reverence and place the banner in the stand at the front right of the church beside the baptismal font. Make sure the banner faces the congregation.
- Go to your assigned seat.
- At the recessional, follow the crucifer and torches to the front of the church, pause facing the main cross and begin the procession down the aisle behind the two torches and out the back door.

### **Clergy Cross**

- You will follow the vergers down the aisle at the processional hymn. (The choir will have already gone)
- When you reach the front of the church, stop and pause waiting for the two torchbearers and the book. Wait while the book is placed on the altar and the book bearer returns to the waiting group. Reverence and proceed to the right of the church. At this point, stand waiting on the side beside the chalice bearers. You are waiting for the priest to announce children's liturgy of the word.
- After the priest calls the children forward, walk to the center so that the children can follow you out the side door and up to the room for their service.
- When you return, return through the side door at the front of the church near the collection plates. Wait here on the opposite side (leaving the clergy cross outside the door) until it is time to return the children to the church.
- When the vergers tell you, at the Nicene Creed, go up and get the children bringing them back in at the rear of the church and up the aisle at "the Peace".
- Stop, reverence and at this point go to the right of the church and place the clergy cross in the stand and take your seat.
- When the recessional hymn begins watch for the vergers to tell you when to proceed to the front of the church. (You will proceed after the crucifer and the first group has recessed, AND you will follow the vergers). Go to the front of the church, face the main cross and pause waiting for the two torchbearers, the book bearer and the clergy to join you.
- Reverence and lead this final group down the aisle and out the door.

### **Back Torchbearers**

- Use the torches with the flat bottoms.
- Follow the clergy cross down the aisle during the processional hymn.
- Pause at the front of the church beside the clergy cross and wait for the book bearer and clergy. After the book bearer has placed the book on the altar and returned to join the group, reverence and go to your seats-one to the right and one to the left.
- At the recessional hymn, wait for the vergers to tell you to proceed to the front of the church. Follow the clergy cross to the front and wait for the book bearer and priests to join you.
- Reverence and proceed down the aisle, behind the vergers and the clergy cross, and out the back door.

### **Book Bearer**

- You are bringing God's word to the people. At the processional hymn, follow the clergy cross and the two torchbearers. Hold the book up and out with straight to semi straight arms all the way down the aisle.
- When you get to the front where the clergy cross and torches are waiting, go to the right of the right torch and walk up the steps to the altar and place the book standing up to your right of the altar.
- Return to the group, reverence and go to your seat.
- When the gospel song begins, wait for the vergers to come forward. Follow the clergy cross and torches to the front of the church. Walk back up the steps and retrieve the book from the altar, holding it up.
- Turn and face the main cross, reverence and follow behind the torchbearers down the center aisle. When all are stopped at the designated place, walk between the two torches (they are the light for the book) and turn back facing the gospel reader holding the book down at this point.
- The gospel reader will take the book and lift it while saying, "The Gospel of the Lord according to..." and then place the book back in your hands to hold during the reading.
- After the gospel reading and after the reader has said, "The word of the Lord." And the people have responded, "Thanks be to God!" Move to the side of the aisle beside the

opposite torchbearer of the Reader. (That means if the reader goes to the right side, you go to the left side.)

- Wait for the crucifer to process through and the two torchbearers. Follow the torchbearers to the front, pause waiting for the entire group to join you, reverence and return to your seat, placing the book on the bottom shelf of the front stand holding the wine goblets.
- When the recessional hymn begins, wait for the vergers to come forward and call for the clergy cross. Follow the two torches to the front, stop and pause facing the front cross, when all of the clergy has joined you, reverence and recess following the torchbearers down the aisle and out the church.