

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About

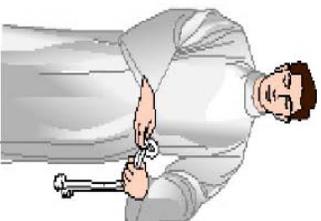
Being an Acolyte



Grab knotted end with your right hand



Slip knotted ends through loop (where left hand is making sure that single loop is on top of double structure.) Feed knotted ends through loop from top to bottom



Drop loop and then tighten around waist



Knot is on left hip

Contents

Congratulations!! 4

The Tradition of Acolytes 4

 What is an Acolyte? 4

 How did the tradition of Acolytes get started? 4

 What do Acolytes do? 5

 Who is eligible to serve as Acolytes? 5

 How long am I to serve and how many times? 5

 How will I know when it's my turn? 5

What happens if I can't serve that day? 6

 New Schedule Posting 6

 All other times 6

What do I need to know to be Prepared on Sunday Mornings? 6

 Why do I need to make sure I have checked my email? 6

 What time do I need to be there? 6

Who do I go to for help? 7

 When are we trained? 7

What Do I Wear? 7

 How Does An Acolyte Dress? 7

 Where are the Albs? 7

Acolyte Training 8

 What is my role in the Service? 8

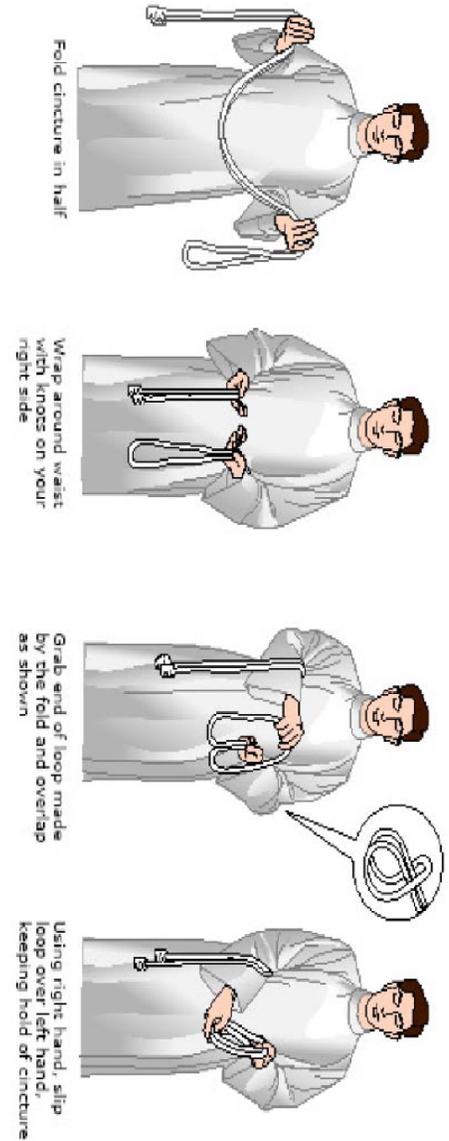
 What do I do at the beginning of worship? 8

What do I do during worship? 9

 Where do I sit? 9

 What do I do when it is time to collect the offering? 9

How do I tie the cincture?



it one hand over the other, upper hand facing out and lower hand facing toward your chest and walk slowly to the entrance and through the doors. If you are carrying one of the two lit candles, hold it with both palms facing your chest and walk behind the crucifer to the entrance and through the doors.

At the Narthex door, you can extinguish your candle and put it away, along with your alb and cincture. If the priest needs help with something at the end of the service, he might ask you to stay or to come back to assist.

What other duties might I have?

There are some special days in the church year when special assistance is needed: Sometimes for special events the priest will ask you to help carry the crucifer, special offering baskets, or the big pulpit Bible to places where they are needed.

Are there any Do's and Don'ts for Acolytes?

PARTICIPATE IN ALL OF WORSHIP –

Be attentive. Say the prayers and sing the hymns.

Especially important: Don't day-dream, stay alert to what's going on when you are serving. Minimize distractions: No gum chewing, no flashy jewelry, no fidgeting or distracting gestures with hands, face, or posture. Remember, everyone can see you!

Don't rush: When mistakes happen (and they will...!), don't worry and don't panic! Everyone makes mistakes sometimes. Continue with grace or repeat as required. If you are "lost" and don't know what to do next, look to the Priest for direction, and follow his lead.

What do I do when it is time for Communion?.....	9
BAPTISMS –	9
What do I do at the end of worship?	9
What other duties might I have?	10
Are there any Do's and Don'ts for Acolytes?	10

Congratulations!!

You are beginning an exciting time in your life. As an acolyte, you will be serving at the altar of God, assisting the priest, and helping everyone at church experience the presence and glory of God when they come to Holy Spirit to worship.

This is a very important part of our worship service and those in your congregation very much appreciate your willingness to be a part of it.

The Tradition of Acolytes

What is an Acolyte?

An Acolyte assists the Priest as a part of the worship leadership team. The term comes from a Greek word meaning “follower”, “attendant”, or “helper”. You are now a member of one of the most ancient traditions in the entire Christian Church!!

How did the tradition of Acolytes get started?

Acolytes have helped with the worship service since before the year 250 A.D., over 1,750 years. During the time of persecution by Emperors Nero and Trajan about 150 AD, Christians were being chased and had to hide out from the Roman soldiers in the catacombs (underground graves) to worship. Lit torches were needed to lead the congregation into and out of the dark caves and to illuminate the service; and the young people were given this task.

During the many centuries that followed, the Church has continued to honor the role of its younger members by making them leaders of worship. This is why you are an Acolyte.

Special roles include: lighting and extinguishing the altar candles and crucifer, receiving the offering, and assisting with communion and baptism.

As you enter the church with your lit torch, and as you leave with a lit torch at the end of the service, always remember the great tradition that you represent... acolyte, helper.

Your service symbolizes the light of Jesus Christ going out into the world where all of us as believers are called to serve.

Some say that acolytes have an even longer history. Samuel, who assisted Eli in the Old Testament Temple, has been declared the first known Acolyte.

What do I do during worship?

Where do I sit?

You will sit in the outside chair on the far left, closest to the CRESCENCE TABLE under the window. If there is more than one acolyte, two sit on left and third on far right. During the service, the priest may ask you to help in a variety of ways. Keep your eyes on the priest and before aware of any signals he might give you.

What do I do when it is time to collect the offering?

Since ancient times, Acolytes have also helped to collect, protect, and present the congregation’s gifts and offerings to God. We offer gifts to God in the form of our talents and skills and in the form of our money.

When the music ends or when the priest gives you a signal, return to the altar to receive the offering from the ushers. They present it to you as one of the ministers, and you in turn present the offering to God. Lay the offering sacks in front of the priest or deacon and take your seat.

What do I do when it is time for Communion?

The bread and wine are blessed and become for us the Body and Blood of Jesus, who fills us with his Spirit and strengthens our faith to serve God. With the priest and other assistants, your job is to make people welcome at the Table of the Lord. We want people to be able to focus on the bread and wine, so it is important that there is not a lot of movement during the time we are standing around the altar.

BAPTISMS – Baptism is the sacrament by which God brings us the promise of eternal life. We are only baptized once, so it’s a very special moment in a person’s and a family’s life

The Deacon or an Acolyte pours the water into the font while the congregation is asking God’s blessing on it. Hold the pitcher firmly with two hands, and pour the water slowly. It’s good if people can hear and see it happening.

One Acolyte may hold the processional cross during the baptism.

During the baptism, the priest’s hands get wet with water and anointing oil. It’s your job to keep your hands dry and hold his prayer book so that he can read from it.

What do I do at the end of worship?

Wait until the choir has completed the first verse of the exit hymn then walk to the crucifer or taper that you came in with, If you are holding the crucifer, hold

Acolyte Training

What is my role in the Service?

What do I do at the beginning of worship?

LIGHT THE CANDLES – The early Christians and the first Acolytes went to worship in hidden places like the catacombs, lit with candles and torches, so that the congregation could see in the dark of the caves.

Today we are glad to have electricity and technology, but we preserve the tradition of using actual lit candles to honor the memory and the sacrifices that those early saints made, so that we could know God and Jesus Christ. The candle light also reminds us that Jesus, the “Light of the world” is still our light today.

The TAPER is a real (but very thin) candle mounted inside a CANDLE LIGHTER. Light your taper in the sacristy: As you enter the church, hold the candle-lighter tipped slightly forward, with the flame pointing ahead of you. Light the altar candle on the left first (for baptism, where we begin our Christian life) and the candle on the right second (for the Word, where our faith is strengthened). If there is a Baptism, and during the Easter season, we then also light the large PASCHAL CANDLE next to the Baptismal font.

After lighting all the candles, place the taper in its holder stage-right of the altar & take your seat. Find your place in the Book of Common Prayer and participate in service.

What do Acolytes do?

The tradition of Acolytes is worth protecting and preserving. It is a ministry that deserves careful preparation and your very best effort.

- Acolytes help the congregation know the worship service is about to begin by lighting the candles,
- Do their task with reverence and care; set a standard that their service is performed out of their deep love and care for God,
- They are extra hands and eyes for the Priest during the Sacraments of Communion and Baptism,
- At the end of the worship service they lead the congregation out of worship, like the first Acolytes did centuries ago.

Who is eligible to serve as Acolytes?

Here at Holy Spirit, your vestry has designated youth, between 4th and 12th grade who have shown maturity and responsibility and have received baptism as eligible to serve as acolytes for the church.

How long am I to serve and how many times?

While no one is required, we ask all youth at Holy Spirit to contribute. You are an important part of our church community and a vibrant community depends on the participation of all its members.

How will I know when it is my turn?

The priest will set up the schedule in three month blocks of time. He will take into consideration the regular Sunday morning worship services, Advent & Lent services, and special services such as Christmas Eve.

We will work very hard to evenly divide up the Sunday Morning and Special services that are held in the evenings. The scheduling software will send a reminder email you during the week and the acolyte coordinator will call you the day before you're scheduled to serve to make sure there won't be any surprises during service.

What happens if I cannot serve that day?

New Schedule Posting: When a new schedule is sent out you will be able to ask the Acolyte Coordinator to make adjustments in the schedule.

All other times: The scheduling program we use at Holy Spirit allows you to 'request sub'. It will generate an email to everyone else on the acolyte list so that someone can volunteer to swap weeks with you. Please also call the acolyte coordinator so that she can help find a replacement.

When you don't show up and don't find a replacement, everybody knows it, because your name will be in the bulletin!

What do I need to know to be Prepared on Sunday Mornings?

Why do I need to make sure I have checked my email?

The Acolyte Coordinator may email or call and let you know if there are additions to the worship service that may affect your duties.

What time do I need to be there?

Arrive at least fifteen (15) minutes before the service begins. You need to be ready to go no later than five (5) minutes before the service begins.

If you are late, a substitute will be requested from someone in the congregation. "Late" means you have not arrived in time to be ready to go by five (5) minutes before the start of the service.

What do I need to do when I get there?

- Check in with the Ushers and let them know you have arrived. It is their job to replace you if you fail to arrive on time.
- Use the bathroom before you vest. Wash your hands!!!
- Get your copy of the bulletin and place it in your seat.
- The next thing you do is check with the priest to see if at the last minute anything might be out of the norm and let the priest know you are ready to go.
- Put your vestments on in the robe room. If you need assistance take someone with you. Do not leave the room half vested looking for help.
- Check the candle lighter to determine whether the taper is long enough. New tapers are kept in the sacristy overhead cabinets with the thurible and incense. Matches to light the candle lighters are kept top left hand drawer of cabinet behind wall where chairs are.

Who do I go to for help?

When are we trained?

Training classes will be held each fall for all youth serving as acolytes. If you feel you need a little extra help, the Acolyte Coordinator is more than willing to work with you one on one.

The position of Acolyte Coordinator was created so that you always have someone to go to no matter what the problem is. Contact me if you have a question on how to do something, if you find dirty robes, if cinctures need repairs, or anything else that might come up. My job is to help you do your very best.

Toni Nash
Second best: tsod5@aol.com

Best way: (205) 249-7482
Home phone 358-8358

What Do I Wear?

How Does An Acolyte Dress?

Everybody who participates in the service dresses according to their role. All worship leaders wear the very same type of robe, called the "alb", which is a white "toga"-style garment just like ordinary people wore on the street in Roman Empire days. Dressing alike in this way shows that all of us are ministers working together as a team of disciples, in Christ's service.

- The Acolyte, and other helpers wear just the alb with a cincture (rope belt) and perhaps, a cross.
- Priests and the Bishop wear a colored stole over both shoulders that looks like a yoke for oxen.

While the alb will cover most of what you are wearing; please dress appropriately for church: nice shoes, no flip flops, no bulky open toe sandals (unless girls' dress shoes), laces tied, dress or nice slacks for girls and long pants for boys. Please avoid bright colors and patterns that might show through the alb. And please, NO FLIP FLOPS – GIRLS OR BOYS.

Where are the Albs?

The albs are located in the closet in the robe room – to the right of the front door of the parish hall.

Please choose a size which is as long as possible without tripping if you bend over. You should get ready for your ministry in this room.

There is a mirror on the inside of the closet door. When your service is completed, it is your responsibility to hang your robe neatly back in the closet.