

# Youth Acolyte Training Guide

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Grade levels are approximate.

## **Grades 1-4 (wood):**

1. Your duties are the bell (“bell toller”) and/or offering plates (“offerer”).
2. The neck cross you may wear is wood.

## **Grades 5-6 (silver):**

1. Your duty is lighting the candles (“candlelighter”) and may also include ringing the bell and offering plates, if needed.
2. The neck cross you may wear is silver.

## **Grades 7 and above (gold):**

1. Your duty is carrying the cross (“crucifer”) and may also include ringing the bell, the offering plates, and lighting the candles, if needed.
2. The neck cross you may wear is gold.

## **All acolytes please note:**

1. Arrive at least by 20 minutes before the worship hour.
2. Dispense with any gum. Silence phones.
3. Find your vestments and neck cross, if desired.
4. Check your seat for:
  - a. Bulletin
  - b. Prayer book
  - c. Hymnal
5. When ready, wait in the narthex of the church.
6. Some boredom is going to happen in worship so the best way to respond is to work on paying attention to the worship service: follow the bulletin, use the prayer book, sing the hymns, and watch what is happening in the worship leadership. When you get distracted, return your attention to the worship.
7. The best seating posture is sitting up straight in your chair with both feet on the ground. This helps you stay alert better.
8. In the opening and closing procession, you line up immediately after the choir.
9. Plan to attend the Commissioning of Acolytes. Arrive 30 minutes before the worship hour. Vest. Enter with the choir. Sit together in reserved pews.

**Bell Toller Duties:**

1. The bell reminds us to be ready to worship, to be ready for God.
2. Ring the church bell five minutes before the hour.
3. Ring it at least five good tolls, or the number of tolls for the hour. Enjoy!

**Offerer Duties:**

1. God calls us to participate in the blessing and the healing of the world with our gifts.
2. After the clergy says the Peace and returns to the sanctuary, meet the clergy at the altar gate to receive the offering plates.
3. Turn and take the plates to the ushers. Pass the center chancel handrail on your left. Meet the ushers below the rail and hand off the plates.
4. Return to the altar gate, pass the chancel handrail on your left, reverence the altar, and return to your seat.
5. When "Praise God from whom all blessings flow" is sung the clergy will get the large offering plate to give to you. Meet at the gate to receive it.
6. Turn and take the plate to the ushers. Pass the center chancel rail on your left. Meet the ushers below the rail. Extend the large plate and let the ushers place their plates in your plate.
7. Return to the altar gate, passing the chancel rail on your left, give the stacked plates to the clergy, reverence, and return to your seat.

**Candlelighter Duties:**

1. Fire is mysterious. It is a reminder that God is mysterious. Fire is light. Christ is the Light of the World.
2. "Candlelighter" will refer to both the acolyte lighting candles and the device used.
3. Know how to operate the slide of the candlelighter. Push out enough taper to keep it burning but not too much that it drips. This would be about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch. Be prepared to adjust the slide as the taper burns by keeping a thumb on or near the slide lever.
4. Know how to hold the candlelighter so you light the candles most effectively. This usually involves one hand holding it in the middle and extending your arm up so that it serves as a pivot point. The other hand holds the handle near the slide. Raise the candlelighter up high so that you can tilt the fire down toward the wick of the candle.
5. When extinguishing the taper, pull the slide back, snuffing out the taper, and then immediately push the taper back out so the wet wax does not stick inside the taper tube.
6. When extinguishing candles, use the bell to snuff out the candles carefully without the bell actually touching the wick, insofar as possible.
7. Decide on your pattern of lighting and extinguishing candles.
  - a. Basic Method:
    - i. Lighting: Light the candles on the right side of the cross first, and then the left side.
    - ii. Extinguishing is the reverse: You begin with the candles on the left side of the cross and then the right side.
  - b. Advanced Method (see Addendum diagram):

- i. Lighting: You begin with the right altar candle then start at the top of the right candelabra, working your way down. Then you move to the left altar candle and start at the top of the left candelabra, working your way down.
  - ii. Extinguishing is the reverse: You begin with the left altar candle then start at the bottom of the left candelabra, working your way up. Then you move to the right altar candle and start at the bottom of the right candelabra, working your way up.
8. Determine if any special candles need to be lit that Sunday. If the church season is Easter through Pentecost Sunday, or if it is a baptism or funeral, then the Paschal Candle will be out and you will need to be sure it is lit first and then the altar candles. During Advent, the Advent Candles are lit by designated families—the candlelighter does not light these. You can ask the officiating clergy if any questions.
9. The side altar candles are lit on two basic occasions: if the sacrament of healing will be offered there after the service (after the 9am service) or when there is a baptism.
10. The torches—the candles with the glass globes to the side of the altar—are so far only lit Christmas Eve and Easter Sunday.
11. As soon as you arrive and are vested, light the candles.
12. The candlelighter is in the room to the left of the altar. Check the slide and taper. If there is any problem, try the other candlelighter. Light the candlelighter and proceed to light the candles for the day. If there is any problem, ask for help.
13. Always reverence the altar at the gate, before entering and after exiting.
14. The candles are extinguished immediately after the clergy gives the Blessing and the last hymn has begun. If the Advent Candles are out, then you may extinguish those too, if you can reach them. If the Paschal Candle is lit, do NOT extinguish that candle at this time. Wait until after the service is over.

#### **Crucifer Duties:**

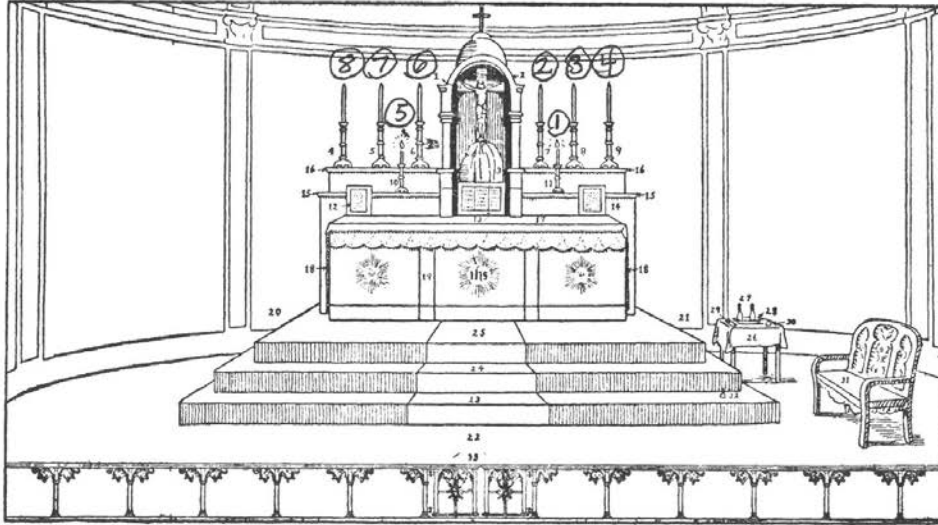
1. The cross reminds us that our worship is all about Jesus Christ.
2. The crucifer leads the flow of worship at crucial moments.
3. The cross stays at the back of the nave when there is not a service. It stays by your seat in the chancel during a service. Familiarize yourself with the latches in both locations.
4. It is important that your posture be intentional and straight when standing with or carrying the cross.
5. The cross should be held intentionally and reverently.
6. The cross should always be checked to make sure it is straight and not twisted, with it turned in the right direction.
7. When standing stationary it is fine for the cross to rest on the floor in front of you.
8. When moving with the cross, you may brace the cross against your body with your lower arm—this will decrease the stress on your arms and enable a firmer and more comfortable hold. Your top arm can hold the cross with either the back of your hand facing you or facing away. Experiment with this to see which gives you the least stressful and steady grip. Again, whenever preparing to move with the cross, look up and check to make sure the cross is straight up and down and not twisted.

9. When entering the church you will receive your cue to begin the processional from the choir or a clergy. If the patriotic hymn is being sung, then wait until it is over and when the congregation begins singing the processional hymn. If there is no patriotic hymn then you begin the procession with the singing of the first hymn.
10. The crucifer leads the processional--so you set the pace yourself. Make sure it is not too slow and not too fast—a comfortable, dignified pace. The choir will follow your pace.
11. Always pass the center chancel handrail with it on your left.
12. *Never* reverence the altar by bowing when you are carrying the cross. When you are carrying the cross you reverence by pausing momentarily before the altar and then turn and go to your seat.
13. The cue for the gospel procession comes either when the clergy alerts you directly or when the clergy leaves their seat and moves to the altar to get the gospel book. Usually this happens about half way through the gradual hymn before the gospel reading. Reverence at the altar gate by pausing (not bowing). Pass the center chancel rail. Lead the clergy down into the nave, usually stopping around the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> pew, turning back around, placing the cross to the floor, and facing the clergy while reading. Then at the conclusion of the reading, you lead the clergy back, reverencing the altar appropriately, and returning the cross to its holder.
14. The cue for exiting at the end of the service comes from the choir or clergy. Usually you begin to exit around the middle of the closing hymn. Reverence appropriately at the altar gate. Pass the center chancel rail. Once you have exited, stand at the inside doors until the dismissal is completed.
15. Return the cross to its location at the back of the nave.

Addendum:

*Advanced Method*

Lighting Sequence



Extinguishing Sequence

