

Archdiocese of Los Angeles
Ministry of Hospitality Guidelines

Introduction

The message of the Gospel and the kingdom of heaven is for everyone. God's love is for all people, whatever their culture, age, economic status, sexual orientation, physical, mental or social wellbeing. Each time we gather around the Eucharistic Table, we celebrate that all people are equal in God's eyes.

With this awareness of God's all-encompassing love, we understand that every member of the assembly is a minister of hospitality. Those specifically designated to serve in this ministry, regularly remind us of our call to this God-like spirit. They not only welcome the stranger, but they also awaken within us our oneness in Christ. They don't just serve individual needs; they serve the health and wholeness of the entire community.

We are all ministers of God's Word by the way we live our lives. Lectors are specifically designated to PROCLAIM that Word. Ministers of Hospitality by their actions PROCLAIM God's Word of welcome and all-embracing love.

"A liturgical function is also exercised by: c) those who take up the collections in the Church. d) those who, in some regions, welcome the faithful at the church doors, seat them appropriately, and marshal them in processions." (General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM) No. 105)

The Ministry of Hospitality is an expansion of the traditional role of the usher, which was a standard function in every parish before the Second Vatican Council.

Ministers of Hospitality can be divided into two types of ministry, Ushers and Greeters, each with distinct roles to fulfill at Mass. These two ministries can be performed by the same person.

Requirements for a Minister of Hospitality

- ability to make eye contact
- ability to smile at and talk to strangers
- knowledge of the liturgy
- knowledge of and active in parish life
- a prayerful and calming presence
- ability to see the face of Christ in every person
- dress appropriately for the liturgy
- ability to know and understand this ministry as a way of life

Greeters:

- Welcome people with a smile as they enter the Church.
- Create first impressions of the church community to both regularly attending parishioners and visitors.
- Provide a sense of belonging and connection to all who enter.
- Greeters, as well as their fellow ushers, should avoid congregating in only one area of the Church, and speaking with their fellow ministers to the exclusion of those who are gathering for the liturgy.
- Greet people by name when possible.

Ushers

- Facilitate the seating of the people gathering for Mass.
- Seat those who arrive later during the natural breaks in the Mass when they are less distracting to others.
- Be attentive to the special seating needs of the less abled and the elderly.
- Take up the collection in the Church.
- Assist the communion procession.
- Notify the Eucharistic Ministers of those unable to join the communion procession.
- Maintain a spirit of order and calm for the community throughout the liturgy.
- Some parishes give ushers the task of inviting members to carry the gifts of bread and wine during the gift procession.
- Manage any emergencies. Please see the addendum.
- Offer the parish bulletin to the assembly members as they exit the church building.

Ministers of hospitality are part of the worshipping community. As such, they are to participate fully in the music, responses, and prayers of the liturgy. At times, however, the special duties of the minister may limit his or her ability to participate. Every effort should be made by the ministers of hospitality to be models of participation in the worship of the Church.

Ministers of Hospitality need effective training to be open and aware of the importance and dignity of their role. This training consists predominantly of spiritual development in the ministry. They also need annual on going formation and renewal events or retreats so that they maintain the God-given spirit of their ministry, and do not become only reflections of their functional role.

Preparing for your Ministry

We cannot give what we do not have! Each minister needs to spend time in prayer and reflection before coming to the Church to serve. Our hearts and minds need to be filled with the presence of God so that we can offer that loving spirit to others.

Collection

After the Creed, gather in the rear of the Church. Ushers should participate in the Prayer of the Faithful from there (do not begin the collection at this time). As people are seated after the Prayer of the Faithful, the collection begins. The spirit of hospitality demands that people should not feel they are being rushed or embarrassed about not visibly contributing.

After Mass

After Mass, Hospitality Ministers stand at the doors to hand out bulletins as the congregation leaves the Church building. Just as people are greeted with a smile and kind word when they arrive, the same should be true when they leave.

The last duty of Hospitality Ministers is to help straighten the pews before the next Mass. The hymnals, hymnal supplements (if applicable), and pew cards should be placed in the hymnal racks of each pew. If any clothing or personal items are left behind, they should be placed in the Lost and Found. Kneelers should be moved up so people do not trip on them.

Finally

Jesus provided the example of hospitality as service at the Last Supper when he washed the feet of the Apostles. Consider that when you offer your service as an usher and/or greeter, you are responding to Christ's example. Your ministry is act of prayer, an attempt to witness to the living Christ.

Special Situations

In case of Fire/Evacuation: All Ministers of Hospitality should familiarize themselves with the locations of fire extinguishers and fire alarms. If an emergency evacuation is needed, please ensure that those parishioners in need of assistance are escorted to the nearest available exit. This could include people who are on walkers, in wheelchairs, elderly, or pregnant.

First Aid/Medical Emergency Assistance: Ministers of Hospitality MUST be aware of potential problems. Our Church community has many senior members who may need special assistance. If someone becomes ill, please help escort them to the restroom, vestibule or outside. Parishioners will feel more at ease knowing there is someone nearby to help them should a problem or emergency arise.

*Taken from the Archdiocese of Los Angeles Administrative Handbook
Health and Safety
Accident Procedures*

Responding to an Injury

If an accident occurs and a person is injured, determine if the person needs immediate medical

attention. This will depend on how serious the injury is or it appears to be: Is it life threatening (very serious) or non-life threatening (less serious or minor)?

When the Injury is Life Threatening

Call 911. Also call the injured person's emergency contact. Do not move the person unless he or she is in immediate danger of further injury. Cover the person and arrange for someone to meet the paramedics and bring them to the injured person.

Each location should have persons who are trained in emergency [first aid procedures](#).

When the Injury is Not Life Threatening

Administer minor first aid and then make the person comfortable.

If the injured person is an employee and needs medical attention, then arrange to transport the person to the location's assigned medical panel facilities. Contact the [Insurance Department](#) at the archdiocese for help and further instruction. See the [Medical Care Location Sheets](#).

If the injured person is not an employee or student and needs medical attention, then provide help:

- Ask if the paramedics should be called. If so, dial 911 and then give the phone (if practical) to the injured person to make the arrangements directly.
- Ask if anyone else should be notified. If so, call that person on the injured person's behalf.
- File an accident report with the archdiocese, as described in [Reporting an Injury or Accident](#).

Note: Any injured person or a student's parent/guardian has the right to refuse a medical examination and treatment. In this event, ask the person to sign the [Refusal of Medical Examination and/or Treatment for Non-Employees and Non-Students](#).

Topics to Avoid

Please DO NOT say:

- The location is at fault or is responsible for the injury
- The location will take care of or pay the medical bill
- The same accident or a similar type of accident has occurred at the location
- Staff members will be your [witnesses](#)

