



diocese
of limerick
our catholic community

Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Limerick

Ministry of the Altar Server



Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments

Altar Server Ministry -

The Altar Server Ministry is a long established tradition in the Catholic Church that continues today. Altar servers support and assist the priest and serve the people in the congregation to participate more fully during the various liturgies and worship services.

Service of the people and the congregation is important since the congregation is Christ's presence in the world. We call it the Body of Christ. Vatican Council II made the point of telling us that the people gathered in the congregation is one of the primary ways that Christ is present with us. So in serving the people in the congregation, the altar server is also serving Christ.

The congregation, which has been called by God to worship and to celebrate the Mass, includes the priest, ministers, altar servers and the assembled people. We each serve one another in the opportunity to relate to God during this special time we call "Liturgy"

The word "liturgy" is loosely translated as "the work of the people". So it's important that altar servers, who are ministering to each other and to all present in the liturgy, are prepared to fulfil their role in ministry in an appropriate and respectful manner.

The ministry of altar service draws its history from the example of the disciples in preparing for times of breaking bread with Jesus. This is seen in the action of the disciples bringing loaves and fish to Jesus in order to feed the crowd of 5,000 people (John 6:8) and in preparing for the Last Supper with Jesus (Matthew 26:19).

Pope Francis speaking to young people attending the twenty-eighth World Youth Day Meeting in Rio de Janeiro in July 2013, said;

"Our generation will show that it can rise to the promise found in each young person when we know how to give them space. This means that we have to create the material and spiritual conditions for their full development; to give them a solid basis on which to build their lives; to guarantee their safety and their education to be everything they can be; to pass on to them lasting values that make life worth living; to give them a transcendent horizon for their thirst for authentic happiness and their creativity for the good; to give them the legacy of a world worthy of human life; and to awaken in them their greatest potential as builders of their own destiny, sharing responsibility for the future of everyone. If we can do all this, we anticipate today the future that enters the world through the window of the young."

For many young people, the ministry of altar service has been the catalyst that first brought them into experiencing that "tremendous horizon" that is God's love and grace. This strong tradition within the Irish Catholic Church of young people engaging this ministry, serving at Mass and other liturgies, needs to be nurtured and encouraged.

Safeguarding Children and young people

At all times, the Church is committed to ensuring a safe and nurturing environment for children, in all of its activities. The Church regards this with critical importance.

To build a safe and solid environment for children, each Church authority must strive to be child-centred in their practice and behaviour. In practical terms, this will include clear written procedures outlined in National Board and Diocesan Guidance and templates (*NBSCCCI Guidance Document Standard 1.4A*)

The Altar Servers are coordinated by parents working in conjunction with the parish priest. Diocesan Child Protection Procedures are followed at all times. Guidelines for Ensuring the Safe Care of Children in all Activities can be found at: -

<http://www.limerickdiocesesafeguarding.com/#safeguardingStandards>

Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments

Requirements

Any boy or girl who has received their First Holy Communion is welcome to become an Altar Server. Prior to becoming an Altar Server, a short training programme takes place. The training programme aims to provide each young person with the necessary skills to serve Mass and other liturgical celebrations.

If you interested in becoming an altar server, please contact the Parish Office or one of the priests of the parish

Formation

As with any ministry in the Church, preparation before beginning as an altar server, and continuous formation throughout their ministry is important for altar servers.

Initial formation will happen over at least two sessions and new altar servers will usually be accompanied by experienced servers.

Training Manual

The Safeguarding Office will provide facilitation/training material if required.

Important Information for Parents/Guardians

Children Leaving School to assist for Religious Ceremonies e.g. Funerals Weddings etc.

While in school, pupils are in the care of the school, therefore, any arrangements must be approved by the school with the full consent of the parents.

The person from the school accompanying and supervising children to/from/during the religious event should be Garda Vetted and appropriately trained in safeguarding.

Special Consent is required for Masses outside of regular Parish Masses

If you wish for your child to leave school to serve Mass (e.g. funeral / wedding) you must provide written permission to the school and to the Parish Priest. Schools can only release a child to the care of a parent or someone who has been nominated by a parent to collect them, so it is essential that the written permission outlines who will collect the child in question and escort them to and from the church. A parent may also give permission for a child to make their own way to and from the church.

Altar servers make a commitment to assist at liturgies as required during the year and as outlined to you in Parish communications.

Altar Server appendices and forms, attached:

1. Leader's Responsibilities.
2. Application, Parent/Guardian/Altar Server Joint Consent Form
3. Special Event Consent Form
4. Form for Dealing with Accidents/Incidents
5. Complaints form of the Diocese of Limerick for Safeguarding Concerns that are not Allegations of Abuse.

Altar Servers - The Leader's Responsibilities



Ensure you complete a full days safeguarding training once every three years approx.

In light of the training be sure you are adhering to Diocesan Policy and Procedure around creating safe environments and that you are implementing correct supervision ratios etc.

Ensure that other leaders are recruited properly. This means your leaders should:

- Fill in Volunteer Application Forms (Referees and Codes of Behaviour are part of this form)
- Complete Garda Vetting
- Receive an input on your code of behaviour and best practice.

Supervise and support your leaders in their role

Ensure the parents of altar servers sign joint consent forms.

Ensure parental consent is sought for extracurricular trips or overnight stays.

Ensure you are aware of what needs to be put in place if you are bringing young people away for a night or on any type of day or residential programme.

Ensure you keep attendance records at any of your training – adults and altar servers must sign this attendance sheet.

Ensure altar servers sign in the Sacristy Register.

Record any accidents or incidents

Ensure you refer any safeguarding concerns to the Diocesan Director of Safeguarding at:-

Mr Ger Crowley, Director of Safeguarding

Designated Liaison Person (D.L.P.)

T: 087 3233564 / 061 350000

E: ger.crowley@limerickdiocese.org

Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments

Application and Joint Consent Form

The Ministry of Altar Server



The Diocese of Limerick values and encourages the participation of children in the life of the Church and is committed to best practice, which protects children from harm and abuse. As staff, volunteers, clergy and religious in this Diocese, we accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop an awareness of the issues which cause children harm. If you have concerns about any church activity, please contact the Director of Safeguarding for the Diocese, Mr Ger Crowley, Diocesan Centre, St. Munchins, Corbally Limerick, T: 061 350000. 087-3233564 or at ger.crowley@limerickdiocese.org

Name of Parish					
First Name and Surname of child / young Person		Gender Tick as appropriate		Male	Female
Home Address					
Date of Birth		School Attending		Class	

Name of Parent / Guardian					
Home Telephone No		Mobile Telephone No.		E Mail	

Give details of any medical condition

Please include details of any medication which has to be taken or any dietary requirements. Please ensure that your child has any medication he or she might require and knows how to administer same. This information will be treated with confidence.

Details:

In the event of a medical emergency - In the event of illness or an accident, I give permission for medical treatment to be administered to my child, where considered necessary, by a suitably qualified medical practitioner and/or hospital. I understand that every effort will be made to contact me as soon as possible. In an emergency I can be contacted at the telephone numbers provided above.

Signed _____

My Child does	<input type="checkbox"/>	Does not	<input type="checkbox"/>	have permission to walk home alone from the church
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Parents are reminded to drop off or collect children and young people promptly from all activities. Only those with signed permission will be allowed to leave unaccompanied.

Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments

Parish Sacristan – Name & Contact details	Name		
	Address		
Telephone Numbers	Home	Mobile	E Mail
Adult Leaders Involved	Name	Name	
	Name	Name	

Parent / Guardian / Young Person - Joint Consent

I have read all the information provided and I am willing to allow my child to serve at Masses and other Liturgies when needed.

I also consent for him/her to leave school under conditions agreed with the school for ceremonies when needed.

Signed (Parent / Guardian) Tick whichever is appropriate		Date	
Signed (Child/Young person)		Date	

Photography: From time to time we may use photographs of altar servers in promotional material and on our website. We will not use photographs in this way without the specific permission of the altar server and their parents/guardians.

I consent to the use of photographs as described:

Signed (Parent / Guardian) Tick whichever is appropriate		Date	
Signed (Child/Young person)		Date	

Webcams: Church Services may be broadcast which may include images of your child. If you have any concerns regarding these images please advise us here.

Parent/Guardian comment:

Data protection: This form will be held on file, in accordance with the data protection policy of the Diocese of Limerick. The data entered will be used only for the purpose indicated on the form. It may only be accessed by those with responsibility for managing records or group activities.

OFFICE USE ONLY Form Received by	<i>Insert name and role here</i>	Date	
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Creating and Maintaining Safe Environments

Form for Special Events Altar Servers Consent Form



1. Name of Parish: <hr/> 2. Name of Child/Young Person: <hr/> Address: <hr/> Date of Birth <hr/> Parent / Guardian Name: <hr/> Telephone Contact Home: <hr/> Telephone Contact Mobile: <hr/>	5. Code of Behaviour – Special Events Children and Young People should treat each other, their leaders and their surroundings with care and respect. Bullying will not be tolerated and should be reported to the leader in charge. If leaders and parents have other agreed guidelines for special events they should be attached and all young people should be made aware of them prior to the event.
3. Give details of any dietary / medical condition of which the Organisers ought to be aware, please include details of any medication which has to be taken or any allergies. (This information will be treated with confidence). <hr/>	6. Safeguarding The Diocese of Limerick values and encourages the participation of children in the life of the Church and is committed to best practice, which protects children from harm and abuse. Staff, volunteers, clergy and religious in this Diocese accept and recognise our responsibilities to develop awareness of the issues which cause children harm. <p style="text-align: center;">For more information please visit our website http://www.limerickdiocesesafeguarding.com/ If you have concerns about any church activity please contact the Diocesan Director for Safeguarding Children, Mr Ger Crowley, Diocesan Centre, St. Munchins, Corbally Limerick, at 061 350000 or 087-3233564 ger.crowley@limerickdiocese.org</p>
4. In the event of an emergency I authorise the administration of any medication which has been prescribed by a medical professional. <hr/> Signed: (parent/guardian)	7. Photography – From time to time we may use photographs of young people in promotional material and on our website. If you would prefer us not to use photographs of your child please advise us of this decision. Webcams - Services may be broadcast which may include images of your child. If you have any concerns regarding these images please advise us. <hr/> 8. I give permission for my son/daughter to take part in this special event <hr/> Signed: (parent/guardian) Date:
Data protection: This form will be held on file, in accordance with the data protection policy of the Diocese of Limerick. The data entered will be used only for the purpose indicated on the form. It may only be accessed by those with responsibility for managing records or group activities.	
<u>Special Event (Parents should keep this information)</u>	
Nature of Special Event (e.g. Day Trip): _____	
Activities that will be undertaken: _____	
Young people will need to bring: _____	
Date: _____ Venue: _____ Cost (if applicable): _____	
Drop off and Collection point / time: _____	
Leader in Charge of Event: _____ Phone Contact: _____	

Form for Dealing with Accidents/Incidents

(NBSCCCI 1.4B T1)



Group details

Name of group _____

Name of group leader _____

Names of others present _____

Accident details

Date and time of accident/incident _____

Name of person involved _____

Date of birth of person involved _____

Emergency contact details for the person involved (usually parent/guardian)

Name _____

Telephone number _____

Please describe the accident/incident that occurred (continue on separate sheet if necessary).

Action taken during and following the accident incident.

People contacted (include dates and times) _____

If medical attention was required, please note the name and address of the medical facility and the people who treated the person involved in the accident/incident.

Please detail any follow-up action required.

Name of person completing this form (print name) _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Complaints form of the Diocese of Limerick

(for Safeguarding Concerns that are not Allegations of Abuse)
(1.7A Template 1 NBSCCCI)



All complaints arising during a Church-related activity (with the exception of complaints about child abuse) should attempt to be resolved by discussion between the parties involved. If this is not possible, this form should be completed and sent to chancellery@limerickdiocese.org

Name _____

Address _____

Email _____ Telephone number _____

Details of complaint *(continue on separate sheet if necessary).*

Signature _____

Date _____