HOSPITALITY AT CHURCH

GREETERS

Jesus Christ teaches that whenever we welcome one of the least of our sisters and brothers, we welcome Christ Himself. Parishioners of a stewardship parish seek to see the face of Christ in one another. – The Pillars of Parish Stewardship

Qualities of a Greeter

- Attentive
- Courteous
- Eager to help
- Friendly
- Punctual
- Warm-hearted

Recruiting Greeters

- Call all who indicated an interest in being a Greeter on the “time and talent commitment form!”
- Invite families to serve as greeters together.
- Ask each of the ministry groups of the parish to take turns providing greeters.
- Think of people in your parish who display the qualities mentioned above. Ask if they are willing to share these good qualities and help to make the parish an even more welcoming place. Personal invitation always works the best!
- Recruit enough greeters to have at least two at each door of the church at every Mass.

Organizing Greeters

- As with any liturgical ministry, it works best if there is a coordinator. This person would be responsible for the following:
  - maintaining a list of the greeters' phone numbers, addresses, etc.
  - scheduling the greeters for Masses and mailing the schedule to the ministers
  - providing training as needed
  - organizing to meet as a group at least annually to build fellowship, discuss new ideas to improve the ministry, and answer questions
Organizing Greeters, continued

- providing information enabling greeters to answer questions such as:
  - Location of the bathroom
  - Location of the parish office
  - The name of the presiding priest

- assigning a Greeter Captain at each Mass who would be responsible for finding someone to “fill in the gaps” for any area/door of the church that may be missing a greeter

- leaving any messages or appropriate hand outs at the agreed upon location that are needed for a Mass
Duties of a Greeter

▫ Pray for God’s guidance as you extend the gift of hospitality.

▫ Wear your name badge.

▫ Check ________________ (location) for any notes with special instructions for the day such as material to distribute or a specific general message to be given to parishioners as they enter the door.

▫ Arrive at your assigned location at least 20 minutes before Mass begins.

▫ Some parishioners come earlier than your arrival time, so please make sure that each of them receives any hand out you are responsible for giving.

▫ Stand at the door of the church as parishioners approach and be prepared to open the door whenever possible.

▫ Smile, offer a welcoming message such as “Good morning and welcome!,” a firm, warm handshake, and any hand out you have been assigned to give.

▫ Be friendly to all age groups! Each age group has their own reasons for possibly not feeling secure as they approach the doors of the church. Be the first sign of Christ to them and welcome young and old alike with enthusiasm!

▫ Be alert to newcomers and become familiar with the names and faces of parishioners by reviewing the parish directory.

▫ Return to your seat at the beginning of the Mass.

▫ Find a substitute if you cannot attend your scheduled Mass.

Provided by Diocese of Cleveland
A quick reference of simple Do’s and Don’ts for Greeters

Do’s

- Smile and make eye contact.
- Reach out to others rather than waiting until they come to you.
- Welcome everyone you can, not just those you already know, especially children, teens and young adults as well as adults.
- If there are enough greeters to cover the doors of the church, go outside to welcome people as they approach, extending the warmth of hospitality.
- Be as attentive as you can to people’s varying moods and dispositions.
- Be outgoing with newcomers, welcome them and introduce yourself. “Have I met you before? My name is __________, and yours?”
- Try to remember newcomers’ faces and, if possible, names. When you see them again, introduce them to parish staff or parish regulars to help them get acquainted.
- Be an active, participating member of the assembly during the liturgy; one who sings, prays, and listens.
- Gently offer assistance to anyone who appears to need it – elderly persons, any adult with small children, or persons with disabilities.
- Be a model of hospitality for others in the parish.

Don’ts

- Spend more time than necessary with each person, especially friends.
- Pass judgment on those who come through the Church doors.
- Engage in idle chit-chat that could be interpreted as gossip.
- Be overly aggressive, authoritative or pre-occupied.
LITURGICAL HOSPITALITY

“It is through the liturgy, especially, that the faithful are enabled to express in their lives and manifest to others the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the true Church”— The Constitution on the Liturgy

Background

“Where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am in your midst.” (Mt 18:20) These words from scripture remind us that as we gather each Sunday to celebrate liturgy, Christ is present not only in the Eucharistic elements, in the Word proclaimed, and in the person of his minister, but Christ is present also in the people who gather.

How we celebrate Sunday worship is one of the most important things we do all week. We come to give thanks and praise to God. We come to hear God’s word. We come to be nourished by the Body of Christ. We come to be sent forth as better Christians, alive in the Spirit, to take the bread of life to hungering people.

The Constitution on the Liturgy states that “The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ’s faithful, when present at this mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators.” Those who serve as liturgical ministers have an important role in creating a welcoming, hospitable community where all can feel at home and an integral part of the community gathered for worship. Demeanor, attitude, gestures, facial expression, posture, voice tone, body language and even dress, often speak louder than words and can strongly convey hospitality or lack of it. A developed self-awareness will help the minister be more intentional about it. The spirit of hospitality can help to counteract the anonymity many people experience.

Lectors

Lectors end the scripture proclamation by saying, “The Word of the Lord.” How powerful are these words. The lector is an instrument for the Word of God to

- Comfort us in our suffering
- Rouse us from lethargy
- Confirm us in faith
- Encourage us in our discouragement
- Proclaim hope in our doubts and fears
- Announce joy
Lectors, continued

God’s word is an event, a happening, a person. God’s word becomes flesh in the proclamation of it. The Word is to be proclaimed in such a way that we hear it for the first time every time. Lectors assist the congregation to receive God’s word in a welcoming spirit, and make it a living and saving word that shapes the community of believers.

Guidelines for lectors:
- Prayerfully prepare through meditative reading of the scripture passages.
- Proclaim effectively with conviction – believe what you proclaim.
- Prepare so pronunciation is correct, diction, phrasing and voice inflection are meaningful.
- Proclaim in a clear voice, making eye contact with the congregation.
- Walk to the ambo without hurry; bow reverently.
- Turn pages of the lectionary gently so as not to distract listeners.
- Ask someone to critique you.

Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist

One of the most meaningful ways Jesus practiced hospitality was in the act of feeding. Sharing a meal is one of the most significant ways we build relationships with one another. The suggested rite for commissioning Eucharistic ministers asks the question, “Are you resolved to undertake the office of giving the body and blood of the Lord to your brothers and sisters, and so serve to build up the church?” The Eucharistic minister is commissioned to build up the body of Christ, to make Christ’s community truly his body.

With the words, “Body of Christ,” the Eucharistic minister welcomes the pilgrim who comes to be fed with the Bread of life. Eucharistic ministers proclaim an act of faith – this IS the Body of Christ! The Eucharistic minister gives food that satisfies hungry hearts and unites us as one body.

Guidelines for Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist
- Check yourself at the door of the church: How is my heart, frame of mind? Am I ready to proclaim and offer the body and blood of Christ?
- Arrive on time. Be familiar with procedures.
- Prepare yourself with a few minutes of quiet reflection, praying for the assembly.
Guidelines for extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, continued:

- Walk gently to the altar/communion station without rushing.
- Avoid an assembly line production. Look at the person as you proclaim, “The Body of Christ, the Blood of Christ.”
- Greater consciousness of one’s role will help to avoid saying the words in monotone or rote fashion.
- Offer the host/cup with peaceful joy.
- Place the host in the hand or on the tongue gently.
- Reverence is critical.
- Carry this ministry beyond the final blessing and recessional hymn. Eucharist commissions us for mission. Live it throughout the week, consciously bringing Christ to others through witness, word and action.
- Prepare by reflecting on and praying regularly on the meaning of the Eucharist.
- Maintain a reverent attitude when taking communion to the sick and shut-ins.

References:
*Lay Ministers, Lay Disciples*; Susan Blum Gerding and Frank DeSiano, CSP; Paulist Press, 1999.
*Christian Hospitality*; Archdiocese of Louisville, 2002

*Provided by Diocese of Cleveland*
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