

ST. DEMETRIOS ALTAR BOYS GENERAL GUIDELINES

General Notes

Arriving at the Holy Altar for Service

- Arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of the Divine Liturgy, or other divine service.
- Enter the altar from the north door (Archangel Gabriel), making the sign of the cross.
- Fold your vestment neatly and carry it to the Priest for a blessing.

Proper Altar Etiquette

- Only the Priest can stand/walk in front of the holy table. Altar boys must always walk around the holy table from behind.
- Talking and whispering is not proper inside the holy altar.
- When not actively carrying out a task, stand still and straight in a line with the other altar boys- half on one side, and half on the other side, 2 or 3 paces away from the holy table.
- When processing or standing outside the holy altar, stand straight and do not fidget-remember that people can see you.
- When handing to or receiving something from the Priest (ex. the censer), kiss his hand as you do so.
- Check periodically that the censer has enough incense and hot charcoal.
- Keep the north and south doors closed after entering/exiting the holy altar.

Service during the Divine Liturgy

Beginning of the Liturgy

- Make sure that the processional candles are lit in their rack.
- Have someone start cutting the loaves of bread into pieces.

The Small Entrance

- When the Priest lifts the Gospels book and starts to walk, start walking in front of him (at a slow but steady rate) with the processional candles.
- Once at the middle of the solea, line up on either side of the Royal Door, facing each other.

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Epistle/Gospel Readings

- Give the censer to the Priest after the Epistle reading begins.
- When the Priest returns the censer, cense him 3 times before hanging the censer back on the hook.
- Place the lectern for the Gospels book outside the holy altar for the Gospel reading.
- After the Gospel reading is finished, bring the lectern back inside the holy altar.

The Great Entrance

- Prepare the censer. Make sure it is producing smoke.
- Line up for the procession with the processional candles, fans, cross, and censer.
- Give the censer to the Priest at the Prothesis (preparation) table.

The Anaphora

- All boys recite the Creed, together with the congregation.
- At the proper time, kneel on the altar floor for the consecration of the holy Gifts.
- At the words “Especially for our all-holy...” (“Exeretos tis panayias...” in Greek), stand.
- Give the censer to the Priest.
- Bring the bowl(s) with the *antidoron* and hand to the Priest to bless the bread.

Holy Communion

- Bring the hot water to the Priest, using the special cup. Make sure the water is very hot.
- During Holy Communion, two altar boys stand with the Priest to hold the cloth, and two stand at the side aisles with the bowls of *antidoron*.
- When Holy Communion is finished, return to the holy altar.
- Give the censer to the Priest.