

Hales Corners Lutheran Church

Acolyte Instruction Manual

What is an Acolyte?

The origin of the term "Acolyte" comes from several languages including Medieval Latin (acolytus), Greek (akolouthos), and from Middle English (acolyte). By definition, an acolyte is one who assists a priest in the celebration of Mass. They are also referred to as an attendant or follower.

What is the Role of the Acolyte Program at Hales Corners Lutheran Church?

The "Acolyte Program" plays a significant role as a part of Youth Ministry at Hales Corners Lutheran Church. Acolyting is generally associated with the Faith Ink Confirmation Ministry. It serves as one of several unique opportunities for youth members in our congregation to begin to grow in their knowledge of the Church and live their faith in service to their Lord and Savior. It further serves to instill an adult sense of responsibility, and seeks to provide each youth participant with a meaningful hands-on experience that will help them to grow in their own faith and reverence for God's Word. The acolyte's role is an important one in our church and should be taken seriously.

What are the responsibilities of an Acolyte?

Just as its definition suggests, the acolyte's responsibility is to assist the pastor(s) and the congregation in helping to provide an organized and meaningful worship experience. The primary duties of the acolyte include:

- Lighting and extinguishing of the candles at the open and close of each worship service;
- Assisting with Holy Communion whenever it is celebrated; and
- Carrying out any other related duties at the instruction of the pastor(s).

How do you become an Acolyte?

The Acolyte program consists of both young men and women in the 6th through 8th grades. Participation is voluntary and is gained through enrollment in the Faith Ink Confirmation Ministry. Enrollment takes place each spring for the next up-coming school year. Contact Faith Ink for additional information.

Acolyte - Proper Dress and Conduct

As an Acolyte, you are in a very visible position that the entire congregation will see. Students and parents alike are asked to use good judgement in relation to clothing and appearance. You are also looked upon to be attentive and to be an active participant during the worship service.

Please have your child dress appropriately for leading worship. No jeans or tennis shoes, if possible please. For boys a collared shirt (polo or dress shirt) and nice pants would be great, for girls dress shoes, skirt, dress or nice pants. Please no gum or candy during the worship service. Please no cell phones.

Please contact the following as necessary concerning any Acolyte Program related manners:

General Program Information: Church Office, Jessica Ramdohr, 414-529-6700

Scheduling Matters, Switches, Multiple-Day Illness: Acolyte Coordinator, Jodie Freiburger, 414-761-3397

Day of Service Illness or Sudden Family Business: Acolyte Coordinator, or if coordinator is unavailable, Church Office, 414-529-6700, select a pastor's extension and leave a message.

Note: The Acolyte Coordinator's phone number is always on the current schedule. Keep it handy for your reference. Please call promptly whenever possible.

Acolyting Procedure

On your scheduled day to acolyte, please arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of the service. This is important so you have enough time to prepare for the worship service. Please let an usher know you are there before you get ready, to help them plan their preparation as well.

Preparation

When entering the worship center, enter in the far left door from the altar. You will be in the storage area. Turn right and proceed to the hallway.

Walk to the closet on the right with sliding doors. There you will see the acolyte robes. Select one that looks close to your size along with a cincture (robe belt). Note the size of the robe for your future reference.

To find if the robe is your correct size, the length should cover you to just above the top of your shoes and fit comfortably around you.

Fasten the robe using the internal snap on the left shoulder, the internal string at the waist, and the external snaps on the right shoulder. Place the cincture (robe belt) around your waist and tie it off in a loop to the side



The Sacristy

When you have found a properly fitted robe, and put it on, close the closet and walk across the hallway to the Sacristy room. Take a wooden cross with a gold chain from the hooks on the wall and put it on over your robe. Feel free to use the mirror on the wall to make sure you have everything on correctly.



Next to the counter where you found the wooden cross, you will also find the candle lighters. They are a y-shaped device with a gold top and a wooden handle. The side with a wick sticking out is for lighting candles. The bell-shaped side is for putting them out.

Select one of the lighters and make sure it is working properly using the following steps.

1. Find the little sliding lever on the wick side. Make sure it slides and moves the wick in and out.
2. Check to see if there is enough wick in the lighter. Look in the groove on the side of the lighter just above the adjusting lever and you can see the remaining wick. You should always be able to see about 6 inches of wick to be on the safe side. If the wick is too low, you may change the wick yourself or ask an usher or pastor to help you.

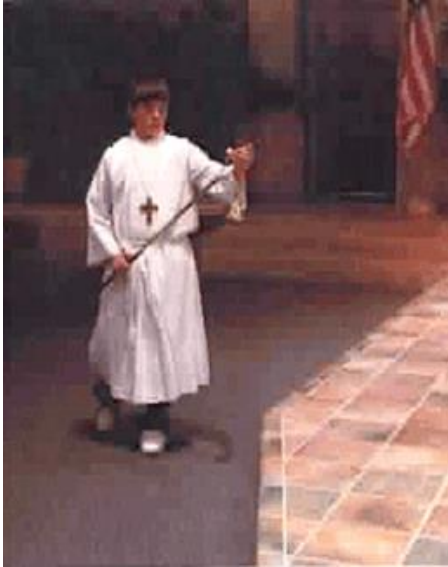
The pastors will help you light the wick prior to the service.

*See the last page for information about **Changing the Wick***

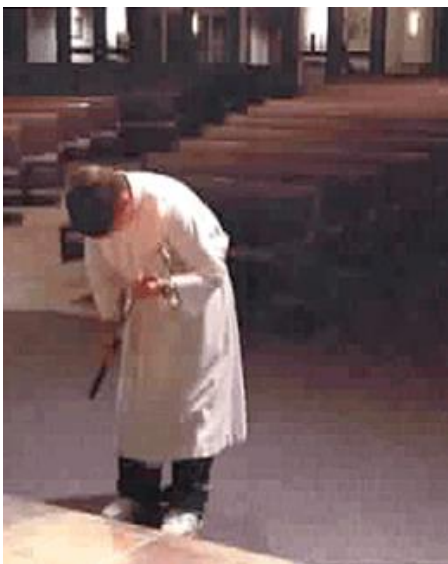
When you have gotten your robe on and your lighter checked, please wait patiently in the Sacristy for the pastor or lay worship leader. Do a quick double-check to make sure that you have everything. There is a restroom just down the hall if you need it. The pastor(s), Ushers, readers, lay assistants, and you will gather in the Sacristy for any special instructions, and a word of prayer just before the service starts.

Entering the Worship Center

At the direction of the pastor(s), go through the door directly across from the Sacristy and enter the worship center. Be sure to cup your hand in front of the flame to protect the flame from drafts or breezes that may blow it out.



Proceed at an easy pace along the outer edge of the altar area. Be sure to watch the flame so it does not blow out. Continue around to the front of the altar area. At this point the acolyte should bow slowly at the waist, straighten and then walk up to the altar to light the candles.



Lighting the Candles

As you approach the altar be sure your wick is adjusted to give you enough flame. The wick burns rapidly so you need to adjust it frequently. Reach up with the lighter and touch the flame to the candle. The candles are oil candles which light very easily. Once the candles are lit, pull the wick into the lighter to extinguish the flame using the adjusting lever. Immediately after the flame is out, slide the wick back out a little bit. Failure to do this hardens the melted wax and the wick will jam in the tube.



After lighting the candles, you should turn and follow your same path back down to the front of the altar area. Bow once again and take a seat for the start of the worship service. (In the front row of section 5 – to the right when facing the Altar.) The lighter can be placed under the pew until needed at the close of the service.



Holy Communion

Acolytes also assist with Holy Communion when it is celebrated. When the pastors and lay worship assistants come forward at the start of Holy Communion, the acolyte should also step forward with them on the right side at the front edge of the altar area. If you are prepared to receive Holy Communion yourself, you may do so at this time. If not, remain standing with hands folded or crossed in front of you.



At the cue of the pastor(s), the acolyte should step up to the right side of the altar, turn and face the congregation. Your role is to return empty trays to the Altar Guild room.

As wine trays become empty from communion distribution, a lay worship assistant will bring them to you. As this happens, your responsibility is to take the empty trays back to the counter in the Altar Guild room. This is located through the door behind you next to the organ.



Depending on the size of the communion attendance, you may have to make several trips back and forth. Return to your post each time and wait to be excused by the pastor(s) to go back to your seat.

Close of Service

During the last verse of the closing hymn, the acolyte extinguishes the candles. As the pastor(s) turn to leave the church, proceed with the lighter to the front edge of the altar area; bow, then walk up to the altar. Using the bell-shaped side, the snuffer, gently come down squarely over the top of each candle. Hold the snuffer in place for several seconds until the flame goes out. Repeat this step for the second candle. When the candles are out, proceed to



of the altar area, turn and face the altar, and bow.

Proceed back along the outer edge of the altar area and through the door on the left closest to the altar (where you entered at the beginning of service). Return the lighter and the wooden cross to their proper place in the Sacristy. Put your robe back on a hanger with the snaps buttoned and place it neatly in the closet along with the cincture (rope belt). You are then free to leave.

Changing the Wick

Extra wicks for the candle lighters are located in the cabinet over the counter in the Sacristy. You may change a wick yourself or ask for assistance. Change the wick as follows:

Slide the small adjusting lever on the side of the lighter up as far as possible to expose the remaining wick.

Pull the old wick out of the hole in the slide mechanism and discard it.



Gently push one end of the new wick into the hole in the slide mechanism so it sticks out about 1 inch on the other side.



Slide the adjusting lever back down to draw the new wick into the lighter.

Slide the adjusting lever up and down several times to be sure it operates smoothly and the wick is moving in and out. The lighter is now ready for service once again.

