

On Being an Acolyte: St. Luke's Lutheran Church

Who and What Are Acolytes?

You are an acolyte. Acolytes are youth who serve the congregation during worship. Youth in grades 7 and 8 help this congregation worship well as a worship leader with specific duties that only you carry out. As an acolyte, you: light candles, assist when there is a children's lesson, receive the offering, assist with Holy Communion, extinguish candles and more.

How Does An Acolyte Dress?

Everybody who participates in the service dresses according to the role s/he performs. The pastor wears a robe and a stole. Acolytes wear acolyte robes with rope "cinctures" colored to match the liturgical color of the day. Wearing robes reminds us of a couple of things. We symbolize what scripture calls the "robes of righteousness" reminding people that God makes us "right" with God through Baptism. Robes also help the congregation recognize you as a worship leader, and that is what you are.

Where are the Robes Located?

Robes and lighters are located in the "Robing Room" which is on the Northwest side of the sanctuary. You get ready for your ministry in this room. When your service is completed, it is your responsibility to hang your robe neatly in that room.

What to Wear

Dress pants or dress, nice shoes, white robe, cincture (rope). **Do not wear shorts or ratty Shoes.**

Participate in The Service

As an acolyte, you are a worship leader. Therefore, you need to **function like a leader** throughout the entire service. It is important for you to follow the service and **participate fully** in all readings, responses, and hymns. When you are not participating, you show disregard for the service in which you are a leader and you become a distraction to others who can see what you do.

Duties of an Acolyte

1. Arrive at church **no later than 15 minutes prior** to the service beginning
2. Prepare for the service by putting on the acolyte robe and cincture
 - a. Ask the Assisting Minister for help if you need assistance.
3. Check to see if the Paschal Candle (at the baptismal font) is to be lit.
 - a. Ask a pastor if you are unsure.
4. Get a bulletin and put it in your seating spot before the service begins.
5. Be ready to pray with pastors and assisting minister just before going out to light the candles
6. Light the altar candles
 - a. Candles are lit prior to the beginning of the service.
 - b. Lighting of the candles:
 - i. Move to the front of the altar and pause for five seconds
 1. Do this on floor level, before stepping into the "chancel."
 2. We honor the altar as a sacred space by pausing in place.
 - ii. Step up to the altar and light the candle on your side of the altar at the same time as the other acolyte lights his/her candle.

- iii. When the paschal candle is to be lit, one acolyte stays at the altar, turns toward the candle and watches as the other acolyte makes his/her way toward the candle and lights it.
 - iv. Return to the center on the altar level, pause five seconds, and take your seat.
 - 1. Sit in the leader's section, back row.
 - 2. Place your candle lighter on the floor behind the chairs.
- 7. Assist with children's lesson – when there is one
 - a. When it is time for the children's lesson, locate children's bulletins and put them in your hands
 - b. Move to the front of the railing and sit on the floor in front of and facing the pastor.
 - c. Assist children coming to the front so that they sit facing the pastor in such a way that they are not spread out across the front, but looking at the person leading the children's lesson.
 - d. When the children's lesson is completed, help the kids get their children's bulletin
 - e. Help shepherd the kids back toward their parents after they have their bulletins
- 8. Assist with Holy Communion
 - a. One acolyte will hold gluten free wafers.
 - i. Stand near the communion distribution stations so that you can be readily available to help when needed.
 - ii. If a communicant requests gluten free, the communion assistant or pastor will turn to you and request your presence at the station
 - iii. When requested, hand the paten with the wafers to the communion server so s/he can serve the one coming up for communion.
 - iv. When serving gluten free, do not touch the wafers
 - b. At the end of communion, receive communion with the other servers
- 9. Extinguish candles
 - a. Do this during the first verse of the last hymn of the service
 - b. If there isn't a closing hymn, wait until the service is over to extinguish the candles as the postlude is being played
 - c. Move to the front of the altar, facing it, then pause five seconds.
 - d. Using the flames of the candle, light your candle lighter.
 - e. Extinguish the candles using the snuffer.
 - f. When both candles are out, move as a pair to the floor level and face the altar, standing so that each acolyte is at the edge of the railing's opening.
 - i. The center of the space between the two acolytes will be filled with pastors and other worship leaders involved in the service.
 - g. When instructed, you will lead the procession to the baptismal font.
 - h. Go beyond the baptismal font, stand in front of the doors and face the font for the closing of the service.
 - i. Leave the sanctuary only after the dismissal is done.
 - i. If the paschal candle was lit at the beginning of the service, extinguish it as the dismissal is being done.

Points to Remember

1. Please remember that you fill a role that is unique to your position. Others will not be prepared to cover for you. If you do not show up for your duties, you are missed and it puts additional stress on other leaders to find somebody to fill your spot – at a time when they have other details to cover.

- a. Remember that if you don't show up, everybody knows of your absence because your name is listed in the bulletin.
2. If you will be absent, it is your responsibility to find a replacement to serve in your place. You must also notify the church office of this change so that it can be listed correctly in the bulletin. Do so no later than Thursday morning of the week prior to the change.
3. When finding a replacement, it is best to switch days with another youth so that everybody serves equally.
4. Be sure to arrive at the church early! Be in the vestry at least 15 minutes prior to the service and get your robe on. If you need assistance, the assisting minister can help you.
5. When using the candle-lighters, remember that after you snuff the flame from the wick, you need to push the wick out so that it can be lit again. If you pull it into the candle-lighter and leave it down, it is possible for the wick to get stuck.
6. If you find that a wick is stuck in the lighter, heat up the brass with a flame until it comes free. When it is stuck, do not force it out. Be gentle, or it will be more difficult to fix.
7. Be sure you know how to change the wicks of the lighters. Only change the wick if you have less than two inches of wick remaining.