



Acolyte Manual

Motto: "I come among you as one who serves."
Luke 22:27

St. Peter's Anglican Church
Tallahassee, Florida

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Table of Contents

The Acolyte's Role in Worship	3
Order of Procession	4
Acolyte Level Requirements	5
Basic Instructions for Acolytes	6
Lighting and Extinguishing Candles	8
Responsibilities of Co-Captains	9
Instructions for:	
First Crucifer	10
Second Crucifer	12
Gospel Torch	14
First Torch	15
Second Torch	16
Banner	17
Thurifer	18

The Acolyte's Role in Worship

The guiding principle of belief within the Anglican Church has been the ancient principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi*. This Latin expression means that “the law of prayer is the law of belief.” In other words, what we believe should not simply be a collection of doctrines or ideas but should find its expression in the way we worship.

This principle explains why *The Book of Common Prayer* is so important—it guides our worship. For us, our worship shapes the content of what we believe and we enact what we believe in the context of our worship.

We are a liturgical church, which means that we share in a tradition of worship that goes back to the early days of Christianity. The term “liturgy” comes from a Greek word meaning “the work of people.” We take so much care for the liturgy not because we want it to be pretty or have a fixation about it, but because it is the lived-out expression of what we believe, offered to the praise and glory of God. And **you**, as an acolyte, play a very important role in carrying out the liturgy.

With that role comes responsibility. Your responsibility is to participate in and help lead worship, without calling attention to yourself. Calling attention to yourself would distract others from their worship and their time with God.

This acolyte manual has been designed as a resource to assist you in your ministry and help you to be the most effective acolyte that you can be. May God be always present in your ministry as an Acolyte at St. Peter's Anglican Church.

Order of Procession

PROCESSION IN

Thurifer
1st Crucifer (and torches)
Acolyte Master(Asstg Verger if AM is
not present)
Banner
Choir
2nd Crucifer (and torches)
Asstg Verger and Lead Verger
Assisting Priest
Gospeler with Torches
Celebrant

PROCESSION OUT

Thurifer
1st Crucifer (and torches)
Banner
Lead Verger
LEMs
2nd Crucifer (and torches)
Assisting Verger
Assisting Priest
Gospeler with Torches
Celebrant

St. Peter's Acolyte Level Requirements

Motto: "I come among you as one who serves."
Luke 22:27

Level One: **Vestments Only**

(May serve as first torch, second torch, and banner)

1. Attend initial training.
2. Faithful in attendance.
3. Participates in worship.

Level Two: **Green Ribbon**

(May serve as first torch, second torch, banner, or Gospel torch)

1. Served at least three times.
2. Faithful in attendance.
3. Participates in worship.
4. Match parts of the church.
5. Match selected terms.
6. Know location of extra wine and wafers.

Level Three: **Blue Ribbon**

(May serve as any torch, banner, first or second crucifer; eligible to serve as a team leader.)

1. Achieved green ribbon.
2. Faithful in attendance.
3. Participates in worship.
4. List parts of the church.
5. Match additional selected terms.
6. Demonstrate order of assisting the Priest or Deacon at the setting of the Holy Table.
7. Draw and label the Epistle Credence table.

Level Four: **Purple Ribbon**

(May serve any position as well as team leader. Eligible to train as thurifer.)

1. Achieve blue ribbon.
2. Faithful in attendance.
3. Participates in worship.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of, location of, and be able to differentiate between various linens used in the Holy Eucharist.
5. Demonstrate knowledge of order of the service of the Holy Eucharist.
6. Knowledge of vestments, ex., only Celebrant wears a chasuble.
7. List order of procession.

Basic Instructions for Acolytes

Before the Service:

- Be vested at least 15 minutes before the service. If you are scheduled as a crucifer, be there 20 minutes before the service. If you are scheduled as a thurifer, be there 45 minutes before the service. **DO NOT BE LATE!!!**
- If you are unable to serve at the appointed time, please arrange for a substitute. **THIS IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** and is **NOT** the responsibility of the acolyte master or your parents.
- If you are unsure about the task you are to perform, consult with your team captain, the acolyte master (or a vergier, if the acolyte master is unavailable).
- Always dress properly. Do not wear clothing that will call attention to you. Always wear dark shoes. Girls should wear their ballet shoes. Boys should wear dress shoes. No sandals, flip-flops, tennis shoes or boots are allowed. You will be asked not to serve on any Sunday that you wear inappropriate shoes.

During the Service:

- During the service, the attention of the congregation should be on the liturgy and not those serving at the altar. Therefore, always move discreetly and quietly – and above all, with reverence.
- A simple bow, made with the head and slightly inclining the shoulders, is made when you approach the altar, at the name of Jesus Christ, and other occasions of reverence. ***However, do not bow when carrying a candle, a processional cross or a banner.***
- When seated in the sanctuary or transept, always sit up straight with both feet flat on the floor with your hands folded in your lap or placed palms down on your knees. Do not cross your legs or stretch them out.
- When walking, unless you are carrying something, your hands should always be folded and held above the waist.
- The sign of the cross should always be made reverently and in a dignified manner. Remember, you are signing yourself with the Cross of Christ and this act of devotion should convey that meaning. With your right hand, fingers together, touch your forehead first, then your chest, then your left shoulder and finally your right shoulder. If you are unsure of when to make the sign of the cross, watch the celebrant. When he makes the sign of the cross, you make the sign of the cross.

- When you are serving, your eyes should always be focused on the action at the altar, on the reader, or on the preacher. This is particularly important to remember if serving in the Gospel procession. It is very distracting to have an acolyte staring into the congregation. If you don't know where to look, the best thing is to keep your eyes lowered and look at the floor.
- Always participate in the service by singing and saying the responses. There should be a prayer book, hymnal and service sheet in or near your seat.
- Never chew gum during the service.
- Always be alert to what is happening in the service in the event you need to fill in for another acolyte.
- Pay attention to the vergers.

Remember that, as an acolyte, you are serving God—offer God your best service.

Instructions for Lighting and Extinguishing Candles

- Make sure that the candles are lit before the service. It is the team captain's responsibility to make sure that the candles are lit and may assign this job to a team member.
- Find a candle lighter in the vesting area or use the one in the thurifer closet, and light it. Hold it with one hand near the bottom and the other hand on or near the knob which regulates the length or the taper.
- Hold the candle lighter in front of you so that it is tipped slightly forward with the flame pointing away from you and the bell pointing toward you.
- Light the Eucharistic candles on the altar. Light the Epistle candle first. Then light the other candle, the Gospel candle. Remember, the Gospel candle should never be lit by itself.
- Be mindful if there are other candles to be lit, such as Paschal or Advent wreath.
- After the service (at vergers' or acolyte master's instruction), extinguish the Eucharistic candles. Begin by extinguishing the Gospel candle first (the candle on the left side facing the altar). Then extinguish the Epistle candle (the candle on the right side facing the altar).

Responsibilities of Co-Captains

- Responsible for mentoring, encouraging, and training persons on the team. Suggest dividing the team in half and each co-captain responsible for “their” people.
- Before the day the team is scheduled to serve, the co-captains call the people for whom they are responsible to remind them of serving and to see who their sub will be if they are not going to be there.
- Be present 20 minutes before the service begins. Check with verger to see if this is a “regular” service or if something is different. If different, be prepared to instruct your team.
- Check to see that candles in torches are secure. If one is loose, fix it or get the verger to help you.
- Assign duties to team members: (Acolyte master or verger will assist you if you need help.)
 1. If two people have the same color ribbon, the older generally gets first choice of job.
 2. All jobs should be assigned by 10 minutes before the service. Anyone who shows up after that will not serve.
 3. Your vested team should be at the back of the nave 5 minutes before the service begins.
- 1. As a rule, a first torch or second torch lights and extinguishes candles. If there are no first torches, then a gospel torch.
- 2. Assign one or two people to monitor the vestment hanging racks after the service to see that garments are hung properly.

First Crucifer

Vestment:

- Alb, rope cincture, and ribbon.

Before the Service:

- Vest 20 minutes before the service.
- Check in with the acolyte master or vergier.
- Make sure the candles in the sanctuary are lit.
- When it is time, get your processional crucifix (the wooden one) and wait in the narthex.

Entrance Procession:

- If there is no thurifer, lead entrance procession at direction of the vergier.
- Stop when you reach the altar. Turning to your right, face the congregation. Stay in this position until the second crucifer begins to walk up the steps. Turn and place your crucifix in the appropriate holder. Make sure the cross faces the congregation. At all times, the cross should be held perpendicular to the ground, even when not in procession.
- Go to your seat.

Gospel Procession:

- At the sequence hymn, get processional crucifix and lead the procession to the altar. Remember to hold the cross perpendicular to the ground.
- At direction of the vergier, turn to the right and lead Gospel procession into the nave, stopping between the second and third window.
- The procession (first crucifer, second crucifer, and Gospel torches) will turn to face the altar so that the Deacon or Gospeler can read the Gospel.
- At the conclusion of the Gospel reading, the Deacon or Gospeler will step aside and second crucifer (bearing Gospel book) will lead procession back to the sanctuary. Second crucifer places the Gospel book on the altar, then exits with the Gospel torches. The first crucifer follows the 2nd crucifer and the Gospel torches and replaces the processional crucifix.

Preparation of Altar:

- After the Peace and the announcements, the Priest will say the offertory sentence. At that time, the first crucifer should go to the Epistle credence table.
- While the Gospeler begins to prepare the Table, take the lavabo towel and place it on your left wrist, then take the lavabo bowl and place it in your left palm (cupping your hand slightly). When directed by Gospeler, pour a little water over his or her fingertips from the water cruet. Replace towel, bowl, and cruet on credence table.
- Present the bread box to the Gospeler. If the box is returned to you, place it back on the credence table.
- Pick up the wine flagon in your right hand and the water flagon in your left hand.
- Offer the wine flagon to the Gospeler with the handle facing away from you. Transfer the water to your right hand. If the Gospeler returns the flagon, receive it in your left hand and then replace it on credence table.

- Offer Gospeler water flagon with handle facing away from you. If the Gospeler returns the flagon, replace it on the credence table.
- When the Gospeler has finished preparing the table, be prepared to wash the Celebrant's hands as you did for the Deacon or Gospeler. Afterward, until the presentation, stand behind the Celebrant's chair (unless there is a chair for you).

At the Presentation of the Gifts:

- At the presentation, you will see oblationers (with additional bread and wine) and ushers (with food basket and alms basins) led by a vergers coming toward the altar. Take your place in front of the altar on the Epistle side. Second crucifer will be on the other side and Deacon will be in the center. The Gospeler and crucifers should all acknowledge the cross together, then turn and walk to the chancel steps. The first crucifer will receive the food basket from an usher. (The Gospeler will receive the bread and wine and the second crucifer will receive the alms basins.) Turn with the Gospeler and walk back to the altar and raise food basket. After the Celebrant has blessed the food basket, alms basins, and oblations, place the basket underneath the Epistle credence table.

During Communion:

- At the communion of the people, the acolyte master or assisting vergers should give you a cruet or flagon of blessed wine from the altar and a purificator. Stand behind the pulpit and refill the chalices of the LEMs as needed. Be alert! You may be needed to get additional bread and/or wine. Also, be attentive to instructions from the Celebrant or vergers. When communion is over, retrieve your crucifix and get in line for procession out.

Procession Out:

- As communion is ending, form the procession line-up in the transept. The order is: Gospel torch, 1st torch, 1st crucifer, 1st torch, Gospel torch, 2nd torch, 2nd crucifer, 2nd torch.
- The acolytes have formed a "procession line" in the transept as communion was ending.
- After the postcommunion prayer, the closing hymn begins. At the assisting vergers' direction, walk to the altar, and face the altar. At the lead vergers' direction, begin the procession to the narthex.

Second Crucifer

Vestments:

- Alb, rope cincture, ribbon, and white gloves.

Before the service:

- Be vested 20 minutes before the service.
- Check in with the acolyte master or vergger.
- When it is time, get your processional crucifix (the brass one) and take your place in the procession forming on the front sidewalk.

Entrance Procession:

- Follow the choir at the direction of the vergger.
- Upon reaching the altar, pause a moment then turn and place crucifix in the appropriate holder. Proceed to your seat. **DO NOT TAKE OFF YOUR GLOVES.**

Gospel Procession:

- At the sequence hymn, wait for the Gospel torches to get their torches, and walk between them as they follow the first crucifer to the altar. Get Gospel book from altar and stand at the altar (facing the altar). Hold the book so the front side will face the people when you turn toward them. At the vergger's direction, all turn and follow the first crucifer to the middle of the nave. When the first crucifer reaches the middle of the nave, turn to face the Gospeler who will read the Gospel.
- After Gospel reading, Gospeler will step aside. Lead procession back to the altar. Replace Gospel book on altar and walking between the Gospel torches, return to your seat. You may now take off your gloves.

At the Offertory:

- After the Peace and the announcements, the Priest will say the offertory sentence. Walk to the chancel steps. The ushers will give you a slip of paper with the number of people present. Give this to the Gospeler preparing the table.

At the Presentation:

- When oblationers (with bread and wine) and ushers (with food basket and alms basins) led by a vergger come forward, take your place in front of the altar on the Gospel side facing the altar. First crucifer will be on the opposite side and Deacon will stand directly in the center. All three should reverence the cross at the same time and walk to the chancel steps.
- Receive the alms basins from the usher(s) and turn with the Deacon and first crucifer and walk back to the altar. Lift alms basins for Celebrant to bless and, after blessing, place them in the appointed place. Resume your seat in the transept.

During Communion:

- At the communion of the people, the acolyte master or assisting vergers will give you a cruet or flagon of blessed wine from the altar and a purificator. Stand behind the angel lectern and refill the chalices of the LEMs as needed. Be alert! You may need to get additional bread and/or wine. Also, be attentive to instructions from the Celebrant or vergers. When communion is over, return to the transept, retrieve your crucifix, and form procession line-up.

Line Up and Procession Out:

- As communion is ending, form procession line-up in the transept. The order is: Gospel torch, 1st torch, 1st crucifer, 1st torch, Gospel torch, 2nd torch, 2nd crucifer, 2nd torch. After the postcommunion prayer, the closing hymn begins. At the assisting vergers' direction, walk to the altar and then process to the narthex.

Gospel Torch

Vestments:

- Red cassock, white cotta, and ribbon.
- Wear white gloves if using the brass-handled Gospel torches.

Before the Service:

- Be vested 15 minutes before the service.
- Check in with your team captain, acolyte master, or verger.
- When it is time, get Gospel torch and wait in the rear of the narthex or outside on the sidewalk in correct procession order.

Entrance Procession:

- At verger's direction, stand beside the Gospeler (carrying Gospel book). Walk with the Gospeler to the altar.
- At the altar, the Gospeler will place the Gospel book on the altar. Then turn and go to the transept and place your torch in the appropriate holder on either side of the 1st processional crucifix. Then take your seat. **DO NOT TAKE OFF YOUR GLOVES.**

Gospel Procession:

- At the sequence (usually the second) hymn, get torch and walk to the altar in this order: 1st crucifer, Gospel torch, 2nd crucifer, Gospel torch. Face the altar. Gospel procession begins at verger's direction. When the second crucifer turns, walk with him/her to the center of the nave.
- At center of the nave, the first and second crucifers will turn and face the altar. The Gospel torches should turn and face EACH OTHER. The light from the Gospel torches should be lighting the Gospel book.
- When the Gospeler has completed the Gospel reading, he will step back and second crucifer will lead procession back to sanctuary. Torches stay even with SECOND crucifer carrying the Gospel book. Once at the altar, wait for the second crucifer to place the Gospel book on the altar and return torches to positions and be seated. You may now take off your gloves.

Procession Out:

- As communion is ending, retrieve your torch and form the procession line-up in the transept. The order is: Gospel torch, 1st torch, 1st crucifer, 1st torch, Gospel torch, 2nd torch, 2nd crucifer, 2nd torch.
- After the postcommunion prayer, the closing hymn will begin. At the assisting verger's direction, walk to the side of the credence table and face the congregation.
- When the Gospeler moves to the front of the altar to get the Gospel book, walk toward the altar and fall in on either side of him. Turn with him and process through the nave to the north exit.

First Torch

Vestments:

- Red cassock, white cotta, and ribbon (if eligible).

Before the Service:

- Be vested 15 minutes before the service.
- Check in with the team captain, acolyte master, or vergger.
- When it is time, get torch and wait in the rear of the nave.

Entrance Procession:

- At vergger's direction, begin procession with first crucifer. Stay even with first crucifer.
- Stop in front of the altar, turn around, and face the congregation. Remain there until the second crucifer begins to walk up the chancel steps. Turn and process to the transept and place your torch in the appropriate holder.
- Go to your seat.

Procession Out:

- As the postcommunion hymn begins, retrieve your torch and form a line-up in the transept: Gospel torch, 1st torch, 1st crucifer, 1st torch, Gospel torch, 2nd torch, 2nd crucifer, 2nd torch.
- After the postcommunion prayer, the closing hymn begins.
- At the assisting vergger's direction, process to the altar, standing next to the crucifer, and face the ALTAR.
- At vergger's direction, first crucifer will begin procession out. All will walk to the rear of the nave.

Second Torch

Vestments:

- Red cassock, white cotta, and ribbon (if eligible).

Before the Service:

- Be vested 15 minutes before the service.
- Check in with the team captain, acolyte master, or vergger.
- When it is time, get torch and wait in the rear of the nave, or on the front sidewalk in correct procession order.

Entrance Procession:

- At vergger's direction process with the second crucifer. Stay even with the second crucifer.
- Stop in front of the altar, pause, and turn left. Place your torches in the appropriate holders on either side of the 2nd crucifix.
- Go to your seat.

Procession Out:

- As the postcommunion hymn begins, retrieve your torch and form a line-up in the transept: Gospel torch, 1st torch, 1st crucifer, 1st torch, Gospel torch, 2nd torch, 2nd crucifer, 2nd torch.
- After the postcommunion prayer, the closing hymn begins.
- At the assisting vergger's direction, walk with the 2nd crucifer to the altar and process to the rear of the nave.

Banner Bearer

Vestments:

- Red cassock, cotta, and ribbon (if eligible)

Before the Service:

- Be vested 15 minutes before the service.
- Check in with your team captain, the acolyte master, or the vergier.
- When it is time, retrieve the banner from the front of the nave.

Entrance Procession:

- Generally, follow the first crucifer and torches. Only process at the direction of vergier.
- Carry the banner as high as you can so the congregation can see it.
- DO NOT walk up the chancel steps. Turn before the steps and place banner in the same stand from which you retrieved it. The front of the banner should face the congregation.
- After the banner has been placed in its stand, proceed to your seat in the transept.

Procession Out:

- As the acolytes form the procession line-up in the transept, wait until after the postcommunion prayer is over and the closing hymn begins. Then go to the banner, remove it from the stand, and move toward the angel lectern so you can see the 1st crucifer.
- Follow the 1st crucifer out to the rear of the Nave.
- In order to put the banner back in its stand, as soon as the Priest says the dismissal (such as “Go in Peace to love and serve the Lord”) go quickly down the center aisle before it becomes congested.

Thurifer

Vestment:

- Alb, rope cincture, and ribbon

Before the Service:

- Arrive 45 minutes before the service.
- Get thurible and needed supplies from the acolyte closet and take it outside.
- Make sure that the boat is full of incense.
- Light three discs of charcoal 20 minutes before the service, placing one disc on the bottom and breaking the other two in half and placing around the sides.
- Vest AFTER you have lit the charcoal.
- With five minutes remaining before the start of the service, take the lit thurible and wait in the rear of the nave.

Entrance Procession:

- At the direction of the Verger, place three spoonfuls of incense on the bottom piece of charcoal. Briefly blow on the charcoal to get the smoke going.
- Lead the entrance procession at direction of the Verger. Carry the thurible in your right hand and boat in your left hand. ABSOLUTELY NO “around the worlds” should be done unless you have the prior permission of the acolyte master.
- When you reach the altar, reverence the altar, turn left, and exit to the north transept.
- If the altar is to be censed at the end of the entrance procession, add more incense when the 2nd crucifer reaches the chancel steps. When the Celebrant reaches the front of the altar, stand on the Gospel side of the altar and hand him the thurible. After the Celebrant censes the altar, take the thurible and exit to the thurifer closet.

Gospel Procession:

- At the beginning of the reading of the Epistle lesson, go to the closet. Wait until the end of the reading and place two spoonfuls of incense in the thurible. Be prepared at the sequence hymn for the direction of the verger to lead the Gospel procession to the bottom of the chancel steps. Step to your left and allow the rest of the procession to move past you into the nave. Fall in behind the Gospeler and wait, facing the rear of the nave until the end of the sequence hymn. The Gospeler will take the thurible, cense the Gospel book, and hand the thurible back to you. Go immediately to the bottom of the chancel steps on the Epistle side. Do not swing the thurible during this part of the procession.
- At the conclusion of the Gospel reading, step in front of the second crucifer and lead the Gospel procession to the altar. FACE THE ALTAR.
- Go back to the thurifer closet. At this time (or a little later in the sermon if there is Baptism or Confirmation), you should light and reload two pieces of charcoal in the thurible for use at the offertory and the presentation of the gifts.

At the Offertory and Presentation of the Gifts:

- At the beginning of the offertory anthem, get the thurible ready. When the presentation hymn starts, put three spoonfuls of incense on the charcoal. Go to the Gospel side of the altar. After the Celebrant receives the oblations (additional bread and wine), hand the thurible to the Celebrant. Note: YOU MAY HAVE TO GET THE CELEBRANT'S ATTENTION. If so, be assertive. After the Celebrant has censed the altar, take the thurible and exit to the thurifer's closet. At this time, light and reload two more pieces of charcoal into the thurible for use during the procession out.

During Communion:

- You have no specific duties during communion unless the vergier needs your assistance.

Procession Out:

- Near the end of communion, just before the postcommunion prayer, go to the thurifer's closet to retrieve the thurible. During the blessing, load three scoops of incense onto the charcoal. Blow on the incense and charcoal to get the smoke going. When the recessional hymn starts, lead the procession to the altar. FACE THE ALTAR. At the direction of the vergier, lead the procession to the rear of the nave. Exit out the west doors, and do not leave the thurible in the church during the rest of the closing hymn.
- If you are the last thurifer to serve, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to neatly put away all incense supplies and the thurible.