

Acolytes – Altar Boys

The word acolyte comes from the Greek and means attendant that is free from sin. Acolytes or altar boys have a very important role in the Orthodox Church services. They help priests and bishops better serve God and the Church. Altar boys represent the angels of the church because they are pure and are always ready to assist all those who need them. It is a great honor to serve as an acolyte.

1.

Acolytes have many jobs to do. They must light candles, prepare the censer, carry the cross during processions, be familiar with the different vestments and sacred vessels, and follow the liturgy to participate in the Small and Great Entrances as well as other parts of the Services.

2.

The most important thing young boys must realize is that when they are an acolyte or altar boy, people are depending on them and look up to them to better reach God through prayer. Altar boys are an example to others so they must always be calm, pious, and ready to serve.



5.

Acolytes must always behave in an exemplary way both inside and outside of the church. They must always be prepared for the service by reading the scripture so that they can follow the liturgy. Also, they need to know their prayers like Our Father, "The Creed" and the prayers before Holy Communion. They need to be familiar with the different parts of the church.

3.

Acolytes wear special vestments: a tunic (stiharion) which represents purity of soul, happiness, and salvation. The very young acolytes are permitted to wear a long sash (orarion) which represents the wings of an angel because they are considered pure. Older acolytes will be permitted to wear the orarion when they are ordained as readers of the church and have attained purity of spirit.



4.

When you are an acolyte, you have to realize that it is a privilege to serve God this way. You will have the chance to get first-hand exposure to the liturgy by participating in it. You will create many memories of your special role in the Orthodox family.



"Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you." 1 Samuel 12:24

"If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor." John 12:26

"I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord: That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works. Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth." Psalm 26:6-8

Name: _____ Date: _____

Unscramble the words to discover different responsibilities of an acolyte.

SERVE GOD

LIGHT CANDLES

PREPARE CENSER

CARRY CROSS

HELP PRIEST

WEAR STIHARION

KNOW PRAYERS



CYRAR CSOSR

KWON PSEAYR

PAREREP CNSERE

WRAE SARINIOHT

HLPE PERSTI

LGITH CNLDESA

SVERE GDO



PRAYER

O King of Glory,

For to serve Thee is a great and awesome thing,
even to the heavenly powers.

- Priest's Prayer during the Cherubic Hymn -

Acolytes – Altar Boys

{Teacher's Edition}

Lesson Objective: To have children become familiar with the roles and responsibilities of an altar boy – acolyte.

Introduction:

The word acolyte comes from the Greek and means attendant that is free from sin. Acolytes or altar boys have a very important role in the Orthodox Church services. They help priests and bishops better serve God and the Church. Altar boys represent the angels of the church because they are pure and are always ready to assist all those who need them. It is a great honor to serve as an acolyte.

Bible Reading

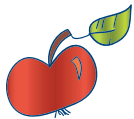
“Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.” 1 Samuel 12:24

“If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.” John 12:26

“I will wash mine hands in innocency: so will I compass thine altar, O Lord: That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works. Lord, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.” Psalm 26:6-8

Highlights:

1. Acolytes have many jobs to do. They must light candles, prepare the censer, carry the cross during processions, be familiar with the different vestments and sacred vessels, and follow the liturgy to participate in the Small and Great Entrances as well as other parts of the Services.
2. The most important thing young boys must realize is that when they are an acolyte or altar boy, people are depending on them and look up to them to better reach God through prayer. Altar boys are an example to others so they must always be calm, pious, and ready to serve.
3. Acolytes wear special vestments: a tunic (stiharion) which represents purity of soul, happiness, and salvation. The very young acolytes are permitted to wear a long sash (orarion) which represents the wings of an angel because they are considered pure. Older acolytes will be permitted to wear the orarion when they are ordained as readers of the church and have attained purity of spirit.
4. When you are an acolyte, you have to realize that it is a privilege to serve God this way. You will have the chance to get first-hand exposure to the liturgy by participating in it. You will create many memories of your special role in the Orthodox family.
5. Acolytes must always behave in an exemplary way both inside and outside of the church. They must always be prepared for the service by reading the scripture so that they can follow the liturgy. Also, they need to know their prayers like Our Father, “The Creed” and the prayers before Holy Communion. They need to be familiar with the different parts of the church.



Activity:

Have children unscramble the words to discover the different responsibilities of an altar boy.

Prayer:

O King of Glory,
For to serve Thee is a great and awesome thing,
even to the heavenly powers.
- Priest's Prayer during the Cherubic Hymn -