

GUIDELINES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN LITURGICAL MINISTRIES

*From the Offices of Liturgy and Youth Ministry/Adolescent Catechesis
Diocese of Fort Worth*

In the Constitution On The Sacred Liturgy, the Second Vatican Council called all members of the Church to involvement in the various liturgical ministries. In part this was based on the principle of active participation. As the Constitution says, "The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful should be led to the full and active participation in liturgical celebrations which is demanded by the very nature of the liturgy, and to which the Christian people...have a right and obligation by reason of their baptism." (CSL.14) Further, the Constitution speaks of this participation being based on a division of labor, so that all may take some role within the liturgical assembly. (CSL.28)

All the baptized have a place and role within the assembly of God's people called to prayer. There are no age distinctions in Canon law for these liturgical ministries; only the requirement of Baptism and proper training. Any distinctions within the liturgical assembly are expressions and orderings of the great variety of gifts given for the building up of the Body of Christ. Each of us - regardless of age or wisdom - is called to this work.

Young people are the church of the present as well as the church of the future. Ministering now is their right through Baptism, ministering in the future is their responsibility; a responsibility which they may not fully recognize if they are not welcomed and needed by the Church now. Therefore, all young persons are permitted and expected to be involved both as members of the assembly and as liturgical ministers, according to call and ability.

Parishes in the Diocese of Fort Worth are encouraged to fully integrate their young people as liturgical ministers to serve as lectors, eucharistic ministers, ushers, altar servers, greeters/hospitality ministers, music and art ministers and any support ministries such as sound engineers, etc. using the following as guides:

- All young people with particular focus on adolescents, will be provided the opportunity based on their baptism, to volunteer for liturgical ministries in their parish.
- The candidates should show physical, mental, and spiritual maturity appropriate to their age level and the particular ministry in which they desire to serve.
- The parish will provide proper, adequate, and age-appropriate training for the respective ministries.
- The candidates will be expected to show respect and reverence through proper behavior and attire that is age-appropriate.
- The parish will provide ongoing support from the adult community that encourages a sense of welcome and advocacy as the young people are fully integrated into these various liturgical ministries. Further, the parish should personally invite young people into liturgical ministries noting the importance of relationships to this age group.