

Basic formation for ministry

All who exercise a liturgical ministry within the assembly need proper preparation for their responsibilities. They are to have the competence to perform the particular ministry with which they have been entrusted.

The formation of liturgical ministers is both spiritual and technical. Although this formation varies in extent and depth depending upon the nature of the particular ministry, it will normally have liturgical, biblical, and technical components.

- Through liturgical formation ministers acquire an understanding of the Mass as a whole, with particular emphasis on the parts of the Mass for which they have specific responsibility. They should especially learn the intimate connection between the two principal parts of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.
- Through biblical formation they are helped to understand the cycle of Scripture readings and to perceive the revealed message of the Scriptures by the light of faith.
- Through training in the particular skills of their ministry, they learn to make the best use of their personal gifts and strengths in order to communicate the person and message of Christ by the reverent use of word, gesture, or movement.

Regular opportunities should be made available for liturgical ministers to pray together and be renewed in their ministry. These occasions may provide for their continuing spiritual formation and for the improvement of their ‘technical’ abilities to assist the assembly in its worship.

CTM 29, 30, 32

Some Questions

- What formation is currently offered to all liturgical ministers?
- What formation can be done by all ministers together? What needs to be separate?
- What is provided at a deanery or diocesan level?
- What opportunities are there for reflection and renewal?
- In what ways do the ordained ministers model best practice?

Further References

General Instruction of the Roman Missal
91, 97, 100–107, 109–111

Celebrating the Mass
25–51

Redemptionis Sacramentum
40, 43–47

Practical Points

- Make sure that there enough ministers so that people are not ‘doubling-up’ ministries — a server also ministering as reader.
- Give someone the responsibility at each Mass for checking that all ministers are present.
- Make available to ministers books and magazines that might nourish their ministry.
- Hold an introductory evening for ministers so that they can hear what formation and support will be available to them and what the expectations of the parish are of them.
- To accompany publication of the *General Instruction* a series of leaflets for ministers has been produced.

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Questions for Groups

1. What is good about current practice?
What concerns do you have?

4. Who is most directly involved in these matters, e.g. liturgical ministers?
What formation/information is necessary to engage them in the renewal of current practice?

2. In what ways does the documentation affirm or challenge your current practice?

5. How will the assembly be engaged in the process?
What, in particular, needs addressing at Sunday and/or weekday celebrations?

3. Prioritise the issues you have identified.

6. How will you know whether the formation has worked?