

July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Dear St. Leo the Great Altar Servers and Families,

There have been some great questions in our liturgy office about the “whys and hows” of teenagers serving on the Altar at St. Leo the Great. While it’s common to see students age 7-11 serving in our Archdiocese, that age group presents a couple of challenges for St. Leo...

Since we don’t have a school physically attached to our Sanctuary, students that young don’t really get the repetition they need in the space or the supervision and instruction they need in the space to feel comfortable. Our wonderful servers at the School who happen to be St. Pius members get to practice serving up to twice a week some weeks and really learn the rhythm, whereas here at St. Leo, when we can train students might be a few weeks away from when they get to shadow and serve on the weekends in the face of busy family schedules. So older kids are really more suited to remember those routines, especially in our quickly changing culture.

More importantly, our Archdiocese doesn’t have many paths to ministry on the weekends for students aged 12-16. Our wonderful Youth Minister, Janet, has done a phenomenal amount of research showing us that this is a pivotal time for young people to experience the value of service and the rich treasures of our faith life as Catholics. Statistically, Students who participate in the Mass with their families during these years’ experience a greater abundance faith of and connection to the Church as they get older.

Perhaps most importantly, with such a large Religious Ed family and such a thriving school, Altar Serving is a natural and powerful way teens from all corners of our Family can experience fellowship and the Joy of service together. This is a tremendous treasure for our Parish Family Prayer life; to see young people joining us at the alter as they grow into a more adult understanding of our faith and of their community.

We understand that your family’s schedules and strengths play a role in this decision. At the end of the day your joyful service to and involvement in St. Leo the Great’s Parish life is the most important factor. We hope your teens will consider continuing to live an example of prayerful service in the Mass this way. **We need your teenagers to share the joy of the Mass with us!**

Additionally, any students grade 8 and older are eligible to help train younger servers as Senior Servers! Please email [drew@stleo.net](mailto:drew@stleo.net) if that interests you! We have had some great success with Senior Servers in the Past Year but need as many with as much enthusiasm and initiative as we can get!

Finally, if you are not called as a family to support the Mass in these ways, we would love you to encourage your teenage students to serve as Greeters, Ushers, Liturgy of the Word for Children Helpers and in our Music ministry. In prayer and joy please let us know how we can help you find a home in service to the Mass. Even if you only sub or only serve on occasion, your service is still a beautiful way to share and spread Christ’s love!

  
Fr. Craig Loecker