

USHERS (*Hospitality Ministry*) FOR WEDDINGS

Your primary role is to greet, seat and direct people in and out of the pews.

Prior to the wedding:

1. Acquaint yourself with the location of the restrooms. A restroom is located in the main entrance area and separate men's/women's restroom are located in the back section of the church.
2. Check to find out if an aisle runner is to be used. If so, make sure that it is securely taped to the floor in the front of church. Normally the aisle runner is pulled out during the final prelude song. Once it is pulled out, do not walk on it or attempt to seat people down the main aisle.
3. Be standing in the main entrance of the Church (ready to greet and seat people) at least 20 minutes prior to the start of the wedding.

As guests arrive:

1. In the entrance area, greet the people as they arrive and make sure that they have received a program for the service. Usually the programs are located on a table in the entryway or are handed out by special people designated for that role.
2. Do not ask people if they are on "the bride's side or a groom's side." There are no sides for seating at our weddings. Also explain to any "worried amateur photographers" that the congregation remains seated throughout the entire procession, hence every seat has great visibility.
3. Seat those who arrive first.... in the front pews!!!! The first pew is reserved for the immediate family (parents, grandparents, etc.). Please check with the bride and groom if other arrangements are to be made for special seating. The wedding party will be sitting in the first pew in the outer section of pews.
4. Repeat: seat those who arrive first...in the front pews!!!! This is vital to a successful wedding. It looks pathetic for a wedding to have empty spaces in the front pews while the back is "jam packed" with people. This can be tricky for ushers because many guests feel that they are "not worthy" to be sitting so close to the action. Nonsense! Do all that you can to insist that the front pews are filled first (e.g. duct tape them to the pew, put them in a "choke hold," etc.) while filling in the remaining pews as more people arrive.
5. As you seat people, extend your elbow (as in escorting) to the female of the group or the couple. Her companions should follow you. There is no need to genuflect or bow with each group. Simply walk down the main aisle and have them sit.
6. As the front pews surrounding the main center aisle begin to fill up, start escorting people down either side aisles...again filling the front pews first. Once a person is seated, they should not be asked to "slide over" to make room for other guests. Simply escort the other guests down the side aisles to fill in any open spaces.
7. All the guests should be seated in the front two sections of pews. The side pews are for late – comers. The back pews are rarely needed at a wedding.

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At five minutes prior to the wedding:

1. Stop escorting people! At this point invite the guests to simply seat themselves.
2. The wedding will start exactly on time.
3. Once the wedding procession has begun, “hold back” late-comers until the presider asks everyone to stand.

During the service:

1. Be aware of assisting any guests who are in need.
2. Check to make sure the ventilation is appropriate. Open windows if necessary.

During a Catholic Mass:

1. At Communion time, ushers should direct the Communion lines. The Communion “stations” will occur at the front of the middle aisle (not the middle aisle). Simply stand at the front pews and invite those who wish to receive Communion to come forward.
2. The far back sections of pews receive AFTER the main sections have received.

For the Recessional:

1. As the wedding party is exiting down the main aisle, walk down side aisles and move to the front pews of the main aisle. At these front pews stand “at guard” so as to hold back the people from exiting too soon.
2. Wait until the wedding party is ready (usually the presider will give you the cue). Invite people to exit down the main aisle. Don’t escort anyone out. NOTE: the people in the outer sections of pews should wait until the main sections have left.
3. As each pew is “released” pick up any programs, cameras, purses, etc., that might be left in the pew.

After the service:

1. Assist in the clean-up of the church, fellowship area, changing rooms and entry ways.
2. Anything that was moved should be replaced.
3. All garbage containers are to be emptied in the large garbage bin located outside in the back of the Church.
4. When you leave, the church should be ready for Sunday Mass.