

Christ on the Mountain
Catholic Church

Altar Server
Instructions

Christ on the Mountain Catholic Church

Altar Server Instructions

Revised April 4, 2024

Introduction

To be an altar server is a special honor and a great privilege in the Catholic Church. One can look upon being an altar server as a special and unique ministry by which you, a young person, can help to spread the Word and the love of Christ through your actions and words.

The primary role of the altar server is to assist the Priest and or Deacon in the celebration of the Mass. This is done through specific actions and by setting an example to the congregation by active participation in Mass by staying alert, saying responses, singing hymns, and sitting, standing, or kneeling at the appropriate times.

General Requirements

Second grade students and above.

Required Basic Knowledge of the Mass

A server is required to know the principal prayers (*see attached prayer sheet*) of the Mass and responses. Those principal prayers are:

- Penitential Act – The Confiteor, followed by Lord Have Mercy...
- Gloria,
- Nicene or Apostles Creed
- Liturgy of the Eucharist (Holy, Holy, Holy, Sign of Peace, Communion)
- Lord's Prayer and
- Lamb of God

All candidates should be able to recite the basic flow of the Mass. They must learn this to perform their tasks at the proper times. (See *Order of Mass with altar server cues*).

All candidates should be able to demonstrate their ability to make use of the “*tools of the trade*” such as candle lighters, binder, processional cross, preparation of table, cup, church seasonal colors (Green, Purple, White, Red), etc. Altar Servers should learn the names of the items they will be handling and the purpose of each item. (*See Terms Used for Mass*).

PARENTS

Please sit near your children when they altar serve, and help them focus if needed, and, when they forget, please motion for them to go to the altar.

Thank you!

ALTAR SERVER'S DUTIES -- ORDINARY SUNDAY MASSES

I. PREPARATION

- A. When you are getting ready at home, please wear clean shoes; black shoes are preferred, but not required. Wear clean clothes. Wear light-colored clothing without pictures or words as dark colors show through the gown. Please do not wear shorts when serving for Mass.
- B. Arrive for your scheduled Mass 15 minutes prior to the start of the Mass.
- C. Initial after your name on the sign-in sheet underneath the name badge board in the foyer. (See note to altar servers below).
- D. Altar servers will put on their gowns and rope belts in the room next to the women’s restroom that formerly served as the nursery.
- E. Select your gown. The gown should be long enough to come to the top of your shoes.
- F. Check the calendar on the wall to see what the liturgical color (green, white, purple, red) is for the day, then select the appropriate color of rope belt.
- G. After you have the gown and rope belt on, pull your hood up, put on a medallion, then put your hood back down.
- H. Check the mirror to be certain that you have buttoned your gown at the top.
- I. Once you have put your gown and rope belt on, proceed into church, and be seated in the two Reserved seats just outside the sacristy.

ALTAR SERVERS

On Sundays when you are not scheduled to serve, get in the habit of checking the sign in sheet for servers. If scheduled servers have not signed in, find the Liaison for that mass (listed on the sign in sheet) and let them know you are willing to serve if needed and where you and your family will be sitting.

SCHEDULING NOTE: If you cannot serve the Mass to which you are assigned, be certain to request a substitute through the MSP scheduling program. You may need your parents' assistance to do this.

II. POSTURE AND REVERENCES

- A. The job of the Altar Server is to assist the Priest and the Deacon in the celebration of the Mass. Posture and attitude are especially important.
- B. Hold your hands together (fingers extended, palms pressed comfortably together) at chest level unless you are carrying something or sitting.



- C. Stand with your weight evenly placed on both feet.
- D. Sit up straight.
- E. When holding the binder for Father or Deacon to read, the preferred position is to the side of the Priest or Deacon reading if you are taller than five feet, holding the binder with your arm extended in front of him and your other hand to steady the binder. (See Picture A). If you are shorter than Father or Deacon, you can stand in front of Father or Deacon holding the bottom of the binder in both hands at a height and angle comfortable for Father or Deacon to read. (See Picture B).



Pic A:



Pic B.:

- F. The binder holder server should be thinking ahead and identifying and opening by tab the next readings in the binder Father will be reading. i.e., Introductory Rites – Creed – Prayer of the Faithful – Prayer After Communion

G. Pay attention to the Priest* and the flow of the Mass.


* On rare occasions, Father may ask you to get something for him from the Sacristy or deliver a message to the ushers.


III. THE MASS

PART 1


While waiting for Father to join you, go to the sacristy and get the processional cross and Father's binder.

A. The Procession

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1. Altar Server with cross (leads at a slow reverent pace). Wait for the choir to start singing the words, then proceed. Hold the cross with two hands spaced apart one high and one low. Bottom of the cross should be at eye level.
 2. Altar Server with Father's binder
 3. Deacon(s)
 4. Father

- 
- B. The Altar Server/Cross Bearer stops when reaching the steps of the altar, then moves slightly to the right and waits for the Priest to genuflect or bow (other server moves to the left), then all enter the sanctuary. (Note: If you are carrying something such as the cross or the binder, no need to bow your head, and if not carrying anything, simply bow when Father does). The Cross Bearer places the Cross on its stand on the altar, then proceeds to the altar server seating area and sits in the 2nd chair so the other server can sit on the aisle.

Father ALWAYS leads the Deacon and servers up the steps and down the steps to and from the altar. Wait for Father to take the first step.

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- C. The non-cross-bearer server should proceed to the back of the altar and stand to the left Father's chair until the music stops playing and Father begins. When the Father begins: "In the name of the Father, and the Son ...," open the binder to the Introductory Rite tab and hold the binder so that he can read it, using one of the two postures mentioned above. After the prayers Father will close the binder and that is your cue to go with the binder to your chair on the aisle.


What follows is:

~ ~ ~ 1st Reading, >>> Psalm, >>> 2nd Reading, >>> Gospel, >>> and Homily ~ ~ ~

PART 2


CREED, INTERCESSION PRAYERS, OFFERTORY AND COMMUNION







Creed and Intercession Prayers



After the readings, the Gospel, and the Homily, Father will rise. When Father stands up, proceed with the binder, and stand with the binder open to the Creed either at his left side or in front of him so he can announce which Creed we will be using and begin the prayer for the congregation to follow along. After the Creed he will turn to the Prayer of the Faithful (Intercessions), say an opening prayer, followed by the **Prayer of the Faithful** read by the Deacon from Father's binder or read by the commentator from the ambo, after which Father will say one more closing prayer and then close the binder which is your cue to return to your seat.

Collection, Preparation and Presentation of the Gifts

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1. When collection starts, pass along the money basket, then both servers go up to the altar together (do not bring the binder).
 2. This time both of you have nothing in your hands, so together stop at the bottom of the steps to the altar and bow together, then go up to the altar.
 3. Hand to the Deacon the cups, plates and purificators (small white cloths) from the back table. If there is no Deacon, hand them to Father or place these items on the right side of the altar.
 4. If the small glass bowl with low-gluten hosts and or tiny silver cup is on the back table, hand those also to Deacon. If there is no Deacon, hand them to Father or place them on the right side of the altar.
 5. Remain on the altar standing in front of the back table for the offertory collection to finish. Stand with hands held properly, as in II-B above or folded (clasped) together and held in front of your chest.
 6. When Father stands up and walks down to the front of the altar, follow him to the foot of the altar.
Cross bearer goes and stands on the **Cross side** next to Father, and the binder holder stands on the **Server side** next to Deacon. Stand with hands held properly.
 7. The gifts will be brought up to Father and Deacon. Each of you will be handed either two plates or the wine pitcher.

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8. After the bow with the gift bearers, turn around with Father and Deacon, then wait for Father to take the first step up then proceed up to the altar.
 9. Cross bearer goes to cross side (choir side), binder holder goes to the Server side. Hand the plates then the wine pitcher to the Deacon, or Father if no Deacon.
 10. If you carried the plates up, turn and get the water cruet from the back table and hand it to Deacon or Father when they reach for it. If you carried the wine pitcher up remain in your position and wait for Deacon or Father to hand you the empty wine pitcher. Remain in that position until the empty wine pitcher has been handed back to you.
 11. When both of you have the empty wine pitcher and the water cruet returned to you, bow together towards the altar, then turn and place the pitcher and cruet on the back table.
 12. At this point both servers can prepare to wash Father's hands with the water cruet, bowl and towel.
 13. One server carries the water cruet and bowl, and the other server the towel draped over one arm, stand to Father's right at the corner of the altar to wash his hands. Pour water over his fingers above the bowl until he lifts his hands for the towel.
 14. Bow together, then turn and put the water cruet, bowl, and towel on the back table, then return to your chairs. Remember to bow together at the foot of altar as you return to your chairs.
 15. During the singing of the Holy, Holy, Holy, one server (normally the cross-bearer) goes to the kneeler by the hand bells. Hand bells are rung when the Priest places his hands over the bread and wine, and for both elevations of the bread and wine cup. *See below.*

RINGING OF HAND BELLS

- ❖ The bell may be rung regularly at two places during the Mass:
First, the bell is rung at the time when the Priest extends his hand palms down over the bread and wine in the Eucharistic Prayer. (pick up the bells, ONE quick twist of the wrist, then count 3 seconds before lowering the bells to the pillow)
- ❖ Father prays for the Holy Spirit to come down upon the gifts so that they may become the Body and Blood of our Lord. The ringing of the bells

alerts the congregation to the calling down of the Holy Spirit and prepares them for the consecration that immediately follows.

- ❖ Second, After Father says the words of consecration (... "this is my body..."), he elevates the Sacred Host (**pick up the bells, ONE quick twist of the wrist, then count 3 seconds before lowering the bells to the pillow**) and then the cup of Precious Blood (... "this is my blood...") (**ONE quick twist of the wrist, then count 3 seconds before lowering the bells to the pillow**).
- ❖ The ringing of the bell again alerts the faithful that transubstantiation has taken place and that the Body and Blood of our Lord is truly present on the altar.

Communion Procession – no duties during this time. Proceed when the usher directs you to and if you have made your first communion receive the Body of Christ and the Precious Blood if you choose to. If you have not made your first Communion, then proceed up with your arms crossed for a spiritual communion from The Eucharistic Minister.

PART 3

AFTER COMMUNION

1. After Communion, Father and the Deacon return to the altar to repose the Blessed Sacrament and purify the plates and cups.
2. When Father and the Deacon(s) return to the altar after Communion, that is your cue for BOTH altar servers to stand, bow at the foot of the altar and proceed to the area in front of the back table. Stand with hands held properly.
3. The Deacon or Father will then repose (place in the tabernacle) the cup containing the Communion hosts, afterwards when Father (and Deacon) bow toward the tabernacle, you bow also, then they will hand you the tabernacle key which you can place on the back table.
4. One server will present the water cruet to Deacon or Father (just as you did before the offertory) so they can purify the cups and plates.
5. After they hand it back to you, return the cruet to the back table and stand facing the altar.
6. Deacon or Father will hand you cups and plates to place on the back table.

7. Do not grab cruets, plates or cups off the altar, wait for Father or Deacon to hand them to you to place on the back table.
8. When all items have been put away, return to your seats, and prepare for the closing of the Mass.

CLOSING OF MASS

9. When Father stands up and says, "Let us pray", bring the Mass binder up to him. (Hold the binder as instructed above). Father will pray **the prayer after Communion**.
10. Close the binder and stand in front of the back table for the announcements.
11. After the announcements, Father will pray from the binder one last time the closing prayer and FINAL BLESSING. Occasionally he does this without using the binder. Just be prepared to follow his motions.
12. When the closing hymn MUSIC begins, the Cross Bearer should get the Cross and wait in front of the cross stand. After Father and Deacon kiss the altar, follow them down the steps of the altar.
13. The cross bearer goes to the Cross (choir) side and the binder holder goes to the foot of the altar on the Server side.
14. Turn and face the Altar with Father and Deacon.
15. When Father and Deacon turn to process out, the server with the cross leads, followed by the server with the binder, followed by the usher with the offertory basket, then the Deacon and then Father. Process at a slow reverent walking pace to the back of the church. Cross bearer be sure to lower the cross at the back of church where the ceiling drops down.

PART 4

AFTER MASS

- Return the processional cross and Father's binder to the sacristy.
- Hang up your gown (neatly) and any others that may have fallen to the floor.

THANK YOU FOR ANSWERING GOD'S CALL TO SERVE AT MASS

**Summary
Of
Important Changes

Altar Server
Instructions**

Important Changes to Altar Server Instructions:

Collection, Preparation and Presentation of the Gifts

1. Hand to the Deacon the cups, plates and purificators (small white cloths) from the back table. If there is no Deacon, hand them to Father or place these items on the right side of the altar.
2. Remain on the altar standing in front of the back table for the offertory collection to finish. Stand with hands held properly.
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Cross bearer goes and stands on the **Cross side** next to Father, and the binder holder stands on the **Server side** next to Deacon.
4. The gifts will be brought up to Father and Deacon. Each of you will be handed either two plates or the wine pitcher.
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8. When both or you have the empty wine pitcher and the water cruet returned to you, bow towards the altar and place the pitcher and cruet on the back table.
9. At this point both servers can prepare to wash Father's hands with the water cruet, bowl and towel.

RINGING OF HAND BELLS

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Order of Mass

Order of Mass

In the Roman Rite, the Mass is made up of two principal parts: The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. It begins with the Introductory Rites and ends with the Concluding Rites.

Another way of dividing a Mass is into its "ordinary" parts—those texts which, with some variations, are part of the Mass—and its "proper" parts—the texts of prayers and selection of Scripture readings proper to the specific feast, feria or other occasion being observed.

Introductory Rites

Entrance *Process in with (1) Cross and (2) Presider's Binder*
(1) Place cross on stand, proceed to your seat
(2) Stand to the left of Presider's chair.

Greeting *(2) When Father begins "In the name of the Father..."*
open the binder the Introductory Rites tab and
Hold Presider's Binder for Father to read.

Penitential Act

Glory to God

Collect

Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Responsorial Psalm

Second Reading (on Sundays and solemnities)

Gospel Acclamation

Gospel

Homily

Creed (also called The Profession of Faith) *(2) Hold Presider's Binder for*
FATHER to read.

Intercession Prayers (also called Prayer of the Faithful) *(2) Hold Presider's Binder for*
DEACON to read.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Preparation of the Altar	<i>Move chalice and patens from credence table to altar.</i>
Presentation of the Gifts	<i>Stand at foot of altar, one on each side of Father & Deacon</i> <i>Place patens with bread on the altar</i>
Prayer over the Offerings	<i>Present wine pitcher and water cruet to Deacon or Father</i> <i>Stand next to altar with finger bowl, water, and towel.</i>
Eucharistic Prayer	
Preface	
Holy, Holy, Holy	<i>(1) Kneel next to the bells.</i>
First half of prayer, including Consecration	<i>Ring bells (ONE quick twist of the wrist) when Father places his hand over the gifts</i> <i>Ring bells (ONE quick twist of the wrist) when Father elevates the host</i> <i>Ring bells (ONE quick twist of the wrist) when Father elevates the chalice.</i>
Mystery of Faith	
Second half of prayer, ending with Doxology	
The Lord's Prayer	<i>(1) Return to your seat</i>
Sign of Peace	
Lamb of God	
Communion	<i>Follow first row to receive communion.</i>
Prayer after Communion	<i>(2) Hold Presider's Binder for Father to read.</i>

Concluding Rites

Optional announcements
Greeting and Blessing
Dismissal

Mass Prayers

❖ Introductory Rites ❖

Greeting

Priest: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Or: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Or: The Lord be with you.

People: **And with your spirit.**

Penitential Act (A)

The Confiteor

I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,

And, striking their breast, they say:

through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;

Then they continue:

therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

Penitential Act (B)

Priest: Have mercy on us, O Lord.

People: **For we have sinned against you.**

Priest: Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

People: **And grant us your salvation.**

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,
we bless you,
we adore you,
we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;

you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,
you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

❖ Liturgy of the Word ❖

Dialogue at the Gospel

Deacon/Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: **And with your spirit.**

Deacon/Priest: A reading from the holy Gospel
according to N.

People: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

*At the words that follow, up to and including
and became man, all bow.*

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin
Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of
life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son,

who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Apostles' Creed

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

*At the words that follow, up to and including
the Virgin Mary, all bow.*

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God
the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting. Amen.

Liturgy of the Eucharist ❖

Invitation to Prayer

Priest: Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that
my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable
to God, the almighty Father.

People: **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at
your hands for the praise and glory of
his name, for our good and the good of
all his holy Church.**

Preface Dialogue

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: **And with your spirit.**

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right and just.**

Holy, Holy, Holy

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.

Memorial Acclamation

Priest: The mystery of faith.

People: **We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and
profess your Resurrection until you come
again.**

Or: **When we eat this Bread and drink this
Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord,
until you come again.**

Or: **Save us, Savior of the world, for by your
Cross and Resurrection you have set us
free.**

Sign of Peace

Priest: The peace of the Lord be with you
always.

People: **And with your spirit.**

Deacon/Priest: Let us offer each other the sign
of peace.

Invitation to Communion

Priest: Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who
takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are
those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All: **Lord, I am not worthy that you should
enter under my roof, but only say
the word and my soul shall be healed.**

❖ Concluding Rites ❖

Dismissal

Priest: The Lord be with you.

People: **And with your spirit.**

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The Roman Missal

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with permission. All rights reserved. The revised texts of the Mass cannot be
used liturgically until November 27, 2011, the First Sunday of Advent.

KINDLY LEAVE THIS CARD IN CHURCH

Terms Used For Mass

Terms used for Mass

Rev. 8/10/23

<i>Alb</i>	The white gown that you will wear as an altar server.
<i>Ambo or Lectern</i>	Where the lector stands to read the Scripture readings and the priest or deacon proclaims the Gospel.
<i>Ambry</i>	A box in which the holy oils are kept.
<i>Aspergillum</i>	The liturgical instrument used to sprinkle people and objects with holy water.
<i>Boat</i>	A small liturgical vessel containing the incense that will be used with the thurible.
<i>Book of Gospels</i>	A book which contains the Gospel readings.
<i>Chalice</i>	A cup that Father will use to consecrate the wine into the Blood of Christ.
<i>Chimes</i>	Bells which the altar server rings during Mass.
<i>Ciborium</i>	A cup, which looks like a chalice, but is used to store consecrated hosts in the Tabernacle. A Ciborium has a lid whereas a chalice does not.
<i>Cincture</i>	A belt made of rope worn around your waist; it acts like a belt.
<i>Corporal</i>	A small cloth that sits on top of the altar where Father places the chalice, paten, and flagon. Its purpose is to catch any small crumbs of the Blessed Sacrament that may fall onto the altar.
<i>Credence Table</i>	The table at the back altar that has the chalices, Communion bowls or patens, finger bowl, water cruet and finger towel.
<i>Cruet</i>	The little pitcher that holds either water or wine for use during the Mass.
<i>Finger Towel</i>	A towel that Father will use to dry his hands.
<i>Flagon or Flask</i>	The large glass decanter that holds the wine at Mass.
<i>Holy Oils</i>	Chrism – used in the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders, as well as for the consecration of altars and the dedication of churches. The Oil of Catechumens – also used in the sacrament of Baptism, and The Oil of the Sick – used only in the rite of the Anointing of the Sick.

Items used for Mass, p. 2

<i>Lectionary</i>	A large red book at the ambo that contains the Scripture readings.
<i>Mass Binder</i>	This is the 3-ring binder which an altar server will hold while the priest says the Opening Prayers, the Prayer of the Faithful and the Prayer after Communion.
<i>Offertory or Gifts Table</i>	The table near the entrance of the church where the water, bread and wine are placed before Mass, and then brought forward with the offertory collection.
<i>Paten</i>	A small dish or bowl that holds the bread that will be used during Mass.
<i>Pitcher</i>	A container used for water or wine.
<i>Purificators</i>	The small towels that are used to clean the chalices during and after communion
<i>Repose</i>	To place something (such as a ciborium) in [the tabernacle]
<i>Roman Missal</i>	The large red book on the altar from which Father prays during Mass.
<i>Sacristan</i>	The person who takes care of the sacred vessels used at Mass and sets up the credence table before Mass and puts everything away after Mass.
<i>Sacristy</i>	The room in the Church building where the priests, deacons, and servers meet to vest and prepare for Mass.
<i>Sanctuary</i>	The area of the Church that contains the tabernacle, altar, and the ambo.
<i>Tabernacle</i>	A fixed, locked box in which the Eucharist (consecrated communion hosts) is “reserved” or stored.
<i>Thurible</i>	A metal vessel for the ceremonial burning of incense. The thurible is also known as a censer.
<i>Thurifer</i>	The one who carries the thurible and boat when needed.