

Sample Formation Session

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Recommended Resource: **Guide for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion**, by Kenneth A. Riley and Paul Turner

I. Welcome & Introductions

II. Opening Prayer

III. Presentation I: History of the Ministry of the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion

(See Guide for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.)

IV. Presentation II: The Call to Ministry

A. Invite the participants to consider:

- How were you called to ministry?
- What are the gifts that God has given you?
- When you said yes, how were you trained for the ministry as an EMHC?

B. After a pause, invite people to share with one other person the experience of their call to ministry and their training. Then use their answers as you bring out the following principles and ideas.

- Through Baptism, we have the privilege and the responsibility to minister to the church.
- The mode of our service depends on the gifts we have been given and God's grace. All need to develop and share their gifts.
- The call to serve may come from the assembly, parish staff, pastor or the whisperings of the Holy Spirit. General calls for volunteers are often not productive.
- Church leadership has the responsibility to acknowledge and foster the ministry of the lay faithful.
- Ministry presupposes an attentiveness to God's people, a willingness to learn skills and to grow in faith.
- Ministry can be a means of spiritual formation. Living the Liturgical Year will be an inspiration and guide.
- Being an EMHS is not just about fulfilling a function on Sunday morning. It is about sharing in the very life of the Body of Christ. Ministers are called to feed those who come to the Sacred Banquet.
- Formation of the EMHC requires both training in procedures as well as direction for spiritual growth.

- EMHC serve as a team with other ministers and offer life-giving energy by their full participation in the Mass: in hospitality, in praying, listening, singing and serving together.

V. Presentation III: Procedure

A. Procedures Before Mass

- Pray for God's gift of peace, confidence and generosity.
- Dress professionally, appropriately and simply as to serve at the Banquet of the Lord. (Norms #29)
- Arrive 15 minutes before Mass begins.
- Note your arrival at the Mass with a sign-in according to the practice of the Parish: such as taking a pendant, cross, etc. or checking a list, etc.
- Review the instructions and procedures (especially if the celebration is special and/or the celebrant is a visiting priest or bishop).
- Check that a suitable number of EMHC are present for the Mass having two Cup ministers for each minister of the Body of Christ. (Norms #30)
- At the Credence table, demonstrate the preparation and setting out of the vessels and purificators (if customarily done by the EMHC):
 - a) provide sufficient ciboria/plates for the bread
 - b) provide with cups and purificators
- At the gift table show how to place the paten or ciborium with the proper number of hosts and a falgon with sufficient wine. (Know the parish custom.) Consult with the ushers/greeters for estimated numbers in attendance. (Norms 32, 36)
- Genuflect toward the Tabernacle while preparing before Mass (not during Mass. Bow toward the Altar. (GIRM 274, 275)
- Take your place within the assembly (or a place according to parish custom).
- Participate fully in the Mass by singing, praying, listening, processing, etc. (GIRM #18)

B. Procedures During the Communion Rite

- Approach the sanctuary after the priest receives Communion. Stand in the place designated by parish custom. (Norms #38, 39)
- Receive the Sacred Body and Precious Blood from the priest or deacon. (GIRM #162B). If one chalice is not sufficient for Communion to be distributed under both kinds to the Priest concelebrants or Christ's faithful, there is no reason why the Priest celebrant should not use several chalices (Redemptionis Sacramentum 105). (In situations of serious need, the priest will give directions for any assistance with distribution of Holy Communion to the Extraordinary Ministers. Norms #28).
- Receive the vessels for distribution from the priest or deacon. (Norms #38, #40)
- Walk reverently holding the sacred vessel with both hands. (Norms #22, 25)

- If ministering the Cup, stand far enough away from the other ministers to avoid congestion and to allow the Communion procession to move.
- Be alert to the way in which individuals approach Communion:
 - a. Be friendly in your approach to each communicant. Look attentively at each person.
 - b. Allow each person time to reverence the Sacrament with a bow of the head, the designated gesture of reverence in the USA. (GIRM #160)
 - c. Be aware that Bishops have designated standing as the normative posture for receiving Communion. (However, never deny Communion to anyone who kneels.) (GIRM 160)
 - d. Note that persons may receive the consecrated Host in the hand or on the tongue. (Norms #41, GIRM #160)
 - e. Allow time for the Communicant to respond “Amen” before presenting the Host or the Cup. (Norms #14, 46)
 - f. After each person receives from the Cup, dry both sides of the rim of the Cup with the purificator. Then turn the Cup ¼ turn. Unfold the purificator to allow for a clean surface. (Norms # 42, 45)
 - g. Note that self-intinction of the Host is not permitted. If a person places the Host into the Chalice, tell the priest or deacon after the Mass that this has happened. (Do not deny Communion to anyone during the Mass. This decision rests with the Bishop and the Pastor.) (Norms #24, 44, 50)
- When distributing Communion, say The Body of Christ; The Blood of Christ. (Norms #41, 43)
 - a. Do not change, delete or add to the words of presentation.
 - b. Avoid using the individual person’s name when sharing Communion.
- Keep your voice loud enough for the communicant to hear, but not so loud as to distract others who are receiving Communion.
- Only when Hosts from the Mass are not sufficient, go to the Tabernacle for additional consecrated Hosts. Frequently, this ministry is done by a liturgy coordinator or a deacon who oversees the procedures of the Communion Rite. (Norms #30, GIRM #85)
- If the amount of Precious Blood in a Cup is not sufficient, either
 - a. stop and return the Cup to the Credence Table or
 - b. take an additional Cup usually provided by a liturgy coordinator or a deacon, or
 - c. note that other ministers of the Cup whose Communion procession is ended may assist at the Communion station that is in need.

- Check that all people who desire Communion have received. Make certain that all persons with disabilities have received. (Ask about the parish plan for this provision.)
- Check with the arrangement for the musicians and the choir to receive Communion. Ask the pastor or the musicians how to proceed with this provision of Communion. (Norms 52, 54, 55)
- When finished ministering the Cup, go to the Credence Table and consume what remains of the Precious Blood from your Cup. If a large amount of Precious Blood remains, the EMHS may share in consuming it. Never pour the Precious Blood onto the ground or into the sacrarium. (Norms #52, 54, 55)
- If Hosts remain after the Communion Procession, return them to the Altar (or to the place designated by the parish plan). Walk slowly and reverently to the Altar, Tabernacle or the Credence Table. (Norms #22)
- In case of an accident with Hosts or Cup, wash the area touched by Host ore Precious Blood and pour the water into the sacrarium. (Norms #29)
- After returning the vessels, walk reverently with hands folded to your place. Avoid swinging arms and running the steps. (Norms #22, 25)

C. Procedures After Mass

- Before leaving the Church, remove any pendant or vesture as customarily used in the parish.
- If another Mass is to follow, place the cleansed vessels on the Credence Table with clean purificators. If it is the last Mass, return the vessels to their storage place.
- Place all used linen in the laundry container.
- Ask the priest or deacon if you can assist with any other duties.

VI. Presentation IV: Spirituality of the EMHC

(See Guide for Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, pg. 19-27)

The purpose of this presentation is to help reconnect spirituality and lived faith with the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ. The Eucharist is a transformative event. When we are sent forth it should be as people who are changed in some way.

This presentation can be an effective place for the presenter to share his/her own experience of the Eucharist and how this event is lived out in daily life. Emphasize the importance of prayer and reflection and the importance and transformative nature of the Eucharist. The role of the EMHC is to facilitate this process of transformation by offering the Body and Blood of Christ to a hungry and thirsty world.

Allow time for personal reflection and small group sharing on one or more of the suggested questions below:

What we do in liturgy should model what we do home.

How do you live a life of thankfulness and hospitality in your home?

The purpose of Eucharist is not to create a community closed off from the world, but to sustain one that embraces it, fully and boldly. (Nathan Mitchell)

In what ways do you take what you've received – the body and blood of Christ – into the world?

Be what you see, receive what you are. (Hippolytus)

How are the Body and Blood of Christ for others?

VII. Prayer of Blessing for EMHC

The following may be prayed as a closing prayer:

Bountiful and compassionate God,
you place in the hands of your disciples
the food of life.

Nourish us at your holy table,
that we may bear Christ to others
and share with them
the gifts we have so richly received.

We make our prayer through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever. Amen.

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