

## Mass Etiquette: Things To Do & Not To Do at Holy Mass

1. **Fast before Mass.** Fast for at least one hour before Holy Communion. The purpose is to help us prepare to receive Jesus in the Eucharist.
2. **No Food and Drink in Church.** The exceptions would be a drink for small children, water for the priest or choir (if discreet) and water for those who are ill.
3. **Men take your hats off.** It is impolite to wear a hat into a church for a man and this is a sign of respect.
4. **Don't chew gum in church.** It breaks your fast and can be distracting to others. You would not want the Holy Eucharist to get caught in, gum and then later thrown in the trash.
5. **Cross yourself with Holy Water on entering and leaving the church.** This is a reminder of our Baptism, which made us members of Christ's Church.
6. **Dress modestly and appropriately.** As Catholics we believe that God comes down to meet us at every Mass.
7. **Show up at least a few minutes early.** If for some reason you can't be on time, then try to sit in the back so you don't disturb others. Getting to Mass early allows you to pray and prepare yourself better for Mass.
8. **Cell phones should never be used in Mass for calls or texting.** Using your phone for readings and prayers is ok. The exceptions are emergencies (big ones, not everyday ones) and if you do use one, please walk out of church to do so.
9. **Don't sit on the end of the pew if you sit down before others.** Rather, sit in the middle so others don't have to climb over you. Gentlemen should always offer their seats to any lady (elderly, disabled, etc.) who must stand.
10. **When we enter and leave Church, genuflect toward the Tabernacle.** Christ is present for our sake. By allowing our right knee to hit the floor, we acknowledge He is our Lord and God. If someone is physically unable to genuflect, then a bow is sufficient. During Mass, if you pass in front of the altar or tabernacle, bow reverently.
11. **Please be quiet while in church.** Once you enter the sanctuary - it is not the time or place to visit with those around you. Remember that your conversation might be disturbing someone who is in prayer.
12. **Don't fidget.** Keep in mind that you're in a sacred space and you do not want to disturb others.

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13. **Take loud children to the back.** Every parent knows that sometimes the baby is going to have a bad day. Sit on the end of a pew, if you can, and take the kid to the back quickly. Never stop bringing children to church.
14. **Prepare your offering before Mass.** Christ tells us not to let your left hand know what your right hand is doing when you make your offering.
15. **No bulletin reading during Mass.** Imagine if you invited a guest to your house and before dinner (or during) they decided to read a magazine instead of talking to you. That is what is happening in God's house when you read the bulletin during mass or in the homily.
16. **Respect Boundaries others may have.** You might want to hold hands to pray, they may not. They might be sick and not want to shake during the sign of peace. These are all OK.
17. **Bow before receiving Holy Communion.** If it is God, then show your respect with a bow of the head. This is an ancient practice that has continued until this day.
18. **Do not receive from the chalice if you are sick.** This is an act of charity, and it is not necessary to receive in order to receive the entirety of Jesus' body, blood, soul, and divinity.
19. **Do not leave early.** We should stay to the end of the recession and the hymn that accompanies it if there is one. You are missing one of two blessings that are offered during mass.
20. **Pray after Mass, if you feel called to do so.** It is a good custom, though not required, to offer a prayer of gratitude after the Mass is over.
21. **Leave quietly.** We encourage you to visit with others, but once you are outside of the main sanctuary of the church, so you won't disturb others who want to stay and pray. So, please leave quietly and then have then visit afterward.