

## Lesson 3:

# Preparing for Mass

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### Background

Over the year the Church reveals in its liturgy the mystery of our redemption. The Church Year is marked by seasons: Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter (including the Triduum), and Ordinary Time. Each season has particular colors for vestments and altar linens: violet for Advent and Lent, white for Christmas and Easter, and green for Ordinary Time.

Mass is celebrated every day of the Church Year except for Good Friday. Sunday, also called "The Lord's Day," celebrates the first day of the week and takes its origin from the day Christ rose from the dead. Readings for the Liturgy of the Word follow the liturgical church calendar year. The readings are divided into three cycles, so that over a three-year period, the Church will hear a good portion of the Bible read at Mass.

### Say to the Students:

Every Mass includes the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The Bible readings change with the days and seasons. The vestments—the clothing worn by the priest—also change in color between the seasons of Advent (violet), Christmas (white), Lent (violet), Easter (white), and Ordinary Time (green).

One of the beauties of the Mass is that in this celebration of God's love for us, we combine many voices and talents to make each liturgy special. We use certain items during Mass to remind us of the holiness of the celebration. Many people, working together, make the Mass special. We come together with many helpers to celebrate God's love.

(Read or summarize each section to the children to explain the items used at Mass that are also a part of the craft display that follows.)

**The Altar** The altar is a big table, much like a family's dining table. It is in the middle of the sanctuary ("holy place") so everyone can see what is going on. One or two candles

remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. Most importantly, the altar holds the bread and wine for the consecration. (see page 19)

**Things on the Altar** The cup the priest uses for the wine is called the *chalice*. The plate the priest uses for the blessed bread is called the *paten*. Small pitchers, called *cruets*, are used to pour water and wine. The priest reads from the Mass book called the *Sacramentary*. It is on the altar too. (see page 19)

**The Priest** The priest is our celebrant. That means he is the one who will lead us to celebrate the Mass as one people. He wears certain clothes called vestments. (see page 21)

**Vestments** Vestments are the priest's special clothes. The colors of the vestments tell us which season of the Church Year it is. (see page 21)

**Altar servers** Altar servers are boys and girls who want to show their love for God in a special way by helping at Mass. These altar servers learn the parts of the Mass so that they can help the priest at the altar. They light candles, carry the cross, hold the book, and do anything else they are asked to do during the Mass. (see page 23)

**Choir** The group of singers is the choir. This group of people can also include the choir director, musicians, and a cantor. (see page 27)

**Cantor** This is a person who sings solo (alone) and leads special parts of the Mass. (see page 27)

**Musicians** These are the people who play musical instruments, including the piano, organ, violins, and other instruments. Each Mass can be different. Some Masses may have no music. (see page 27)

**Choir Director** This is the person who helps keep all of the music, the singers, the cantor, and everyone singing together. (see page 27)

**Eucharistic Ministers** Eucharistic ministers help the priest give out the blessed bread and wine of communion. They take a class to learn how to handle holy things properly and then they are given this name because of the special job they have. Eucharistic ministers may also bring communion to sick members of the community who are unable to come to Mass. (see page 25)

**Lector** The person who brings the Lectionary (book of readings) to the front in the opening procession and who reads the first and second reading is called the *lector*. (see page 25)

**Greeters/Ushers** The greeters say hello and make us feel welcome in the church. The ushers guide us to our seats. They help collect

our offerings. In many churches, ushers and greeters distribute the church bulletin so that everyone can be reminded of upcoming events at the parish. (see page 25)

**Lectionary** There are certain Bible readings for each Mass. They are contained in the *Lectionary*, the book of readings. You can go to any place in the world and know that the Mass will be celebrated in the same general way with the same Bible readings. It may be in a different language but if you know the Bible story for the day, you will understand.

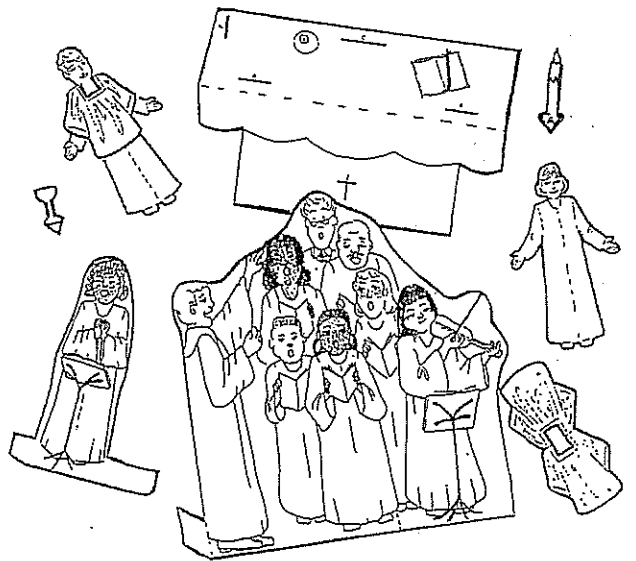
Note: Encourage the children to identify helpers they may recognize from Mass. For example, perhaps their religion teacher is also a cantor or their parent is a lector.

### Craft Directions for Preparing for Mass (pages 19-28)

1. Color and cut out the altar and items (page 19). Cut the slits on the altar (A-E). Insert the pieces into the proper slits and fold.
2. Color and cut out the priest and vestments (see page 21). Fold the vestments on the dotted lines and slip them over the priest's head. Fold the stole on the dotted line. Slip it over the priest's head and the vestments.
3. Color and cut out the altar servers and vestments (page 21). Fold the chasubles on the dotted lines and slip them over the heads of the altar servers. Cut out the stands, fold on the dotted lines, and glue to the back of the altar servers.
4. Color and cut out the other helpers (pages 25-28). Fold stands on dotted lines.

### Review Questions

- What is the sanctuary?
- Why is the altar in the very center of the sanctuary?
- What helper would you like to be at Mass someday?

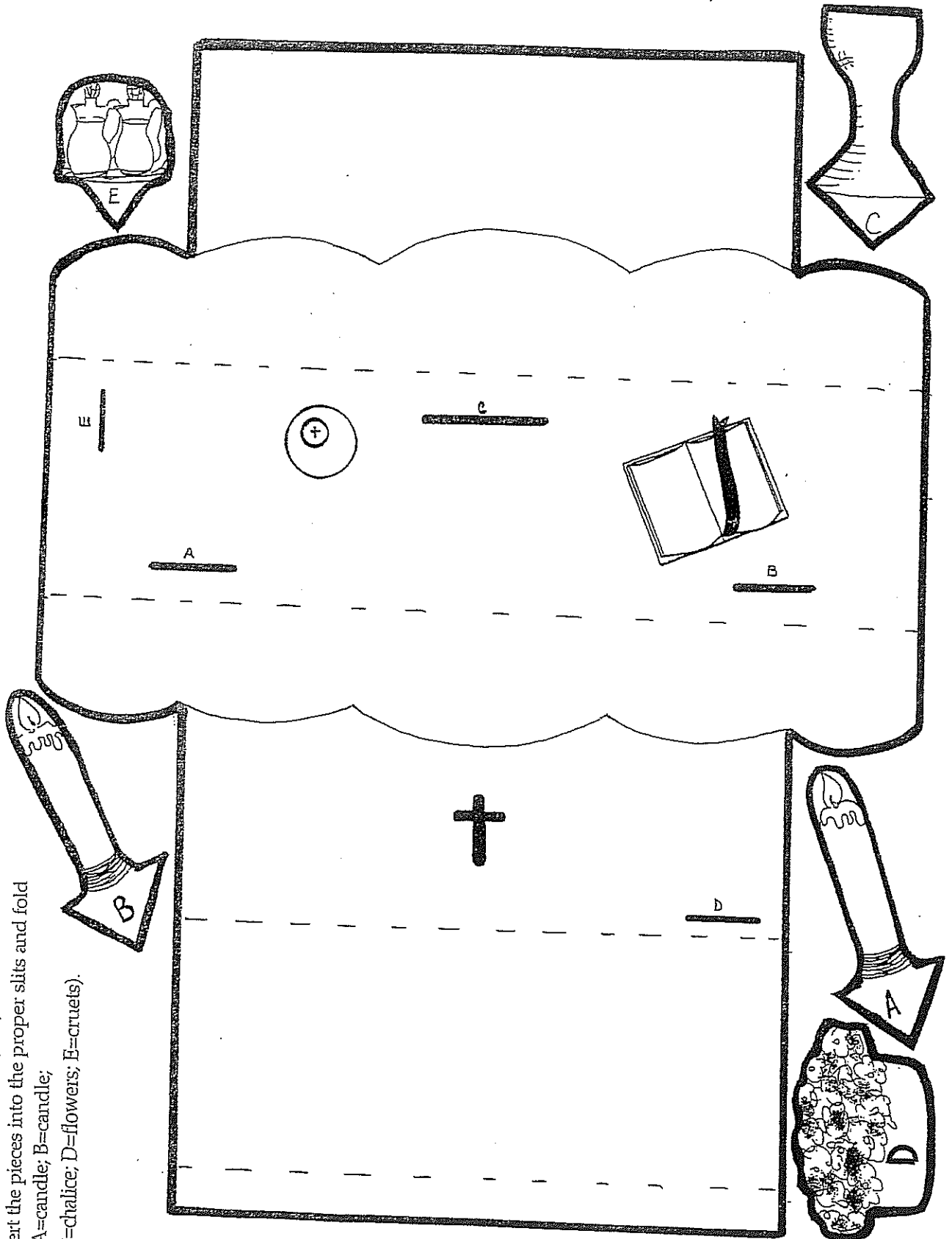


# The Altar

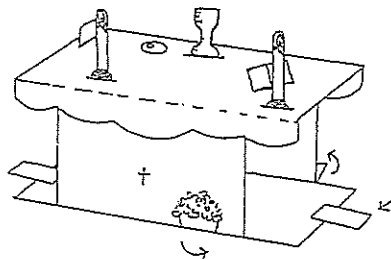
## Things on the Altar

### Directions:

1. Color and cut out the altar and items
2. Cut the slits on the altar (A-E).
3. Insert the pieces into the proper slits and fold  
(A=candle; B=candle;  
C=chalice; D=flowers; E=cruets).



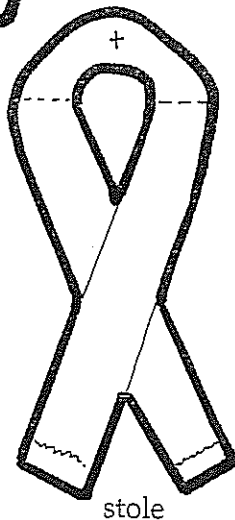
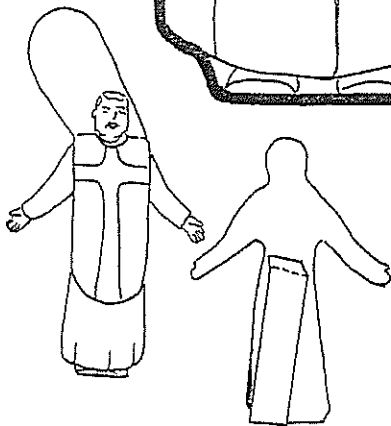
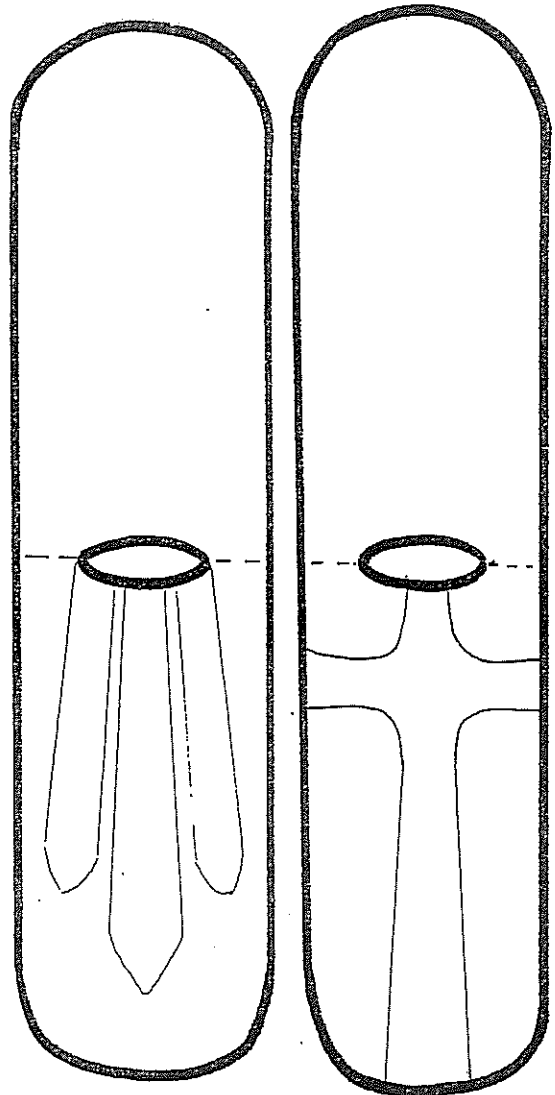
The altar is a table much like a family dining table. It is in the center of the sanctuary (holy place) so everyone can see what is going on. Candles on or near the altar remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. Most importantly, the altar holds the bread and wine for the consecration. The cup the priest uses is the *chalice*. The plate the priest uses is the *paten*. The paten holds the host. Small pitchers, called *cruets*, are used to pour water and wine. The priest reads from the Mass book, called the *Sacramentary*. It is on the altar too.



# Priest

## Vestments

### chasubles



stand

### Directions:

1. Color and cut out the priest and vestments.
2. Fold the vestments (chasuble) on the dotted lines and slip them over the priest's head.
3. Fold the stole on the dotted line. Slip it over the priest's head and the vestments.

Our Celebrant

The Priest

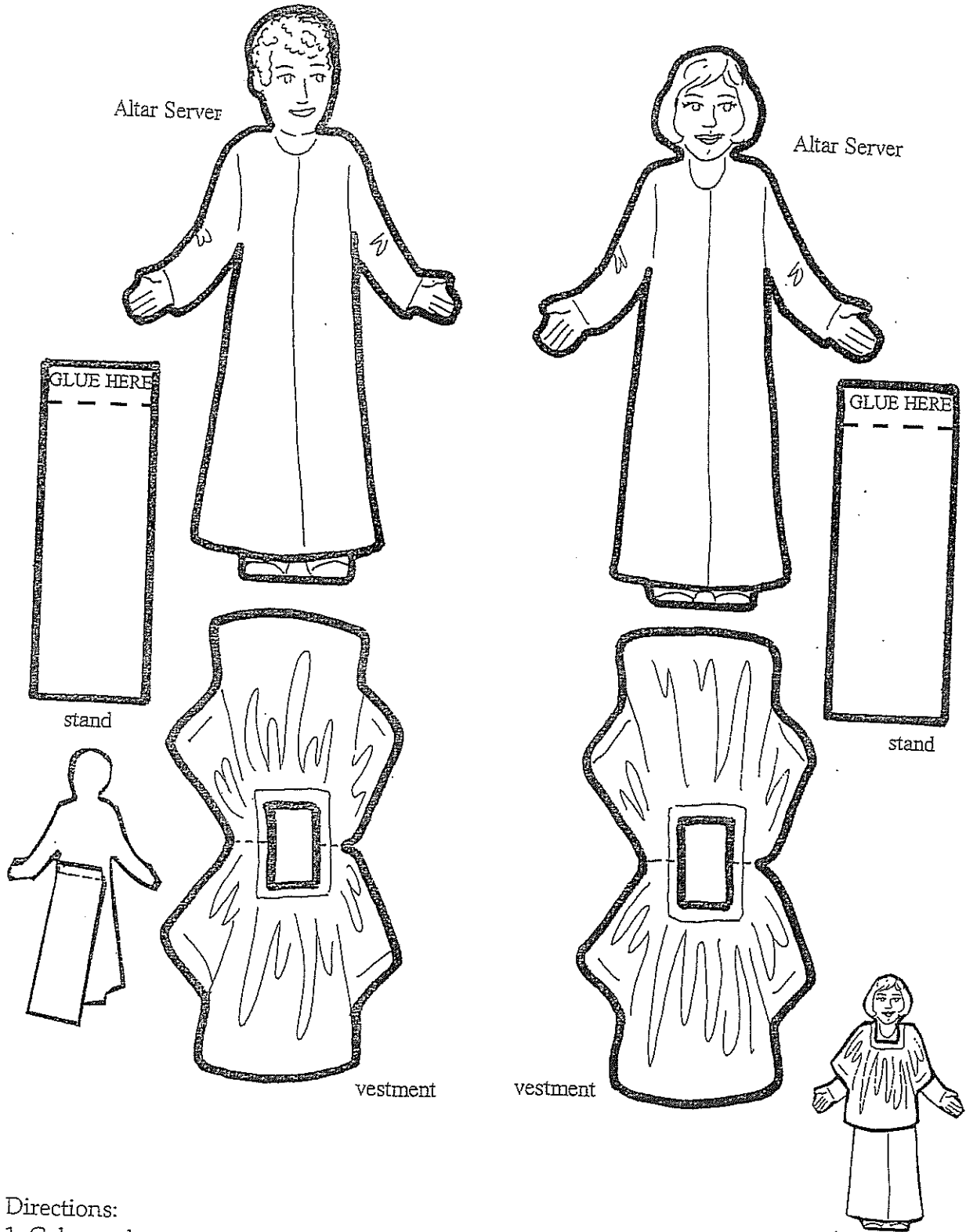
Chasuble

Chasuble

stole

Make and decorate your own vestments. Use the vestments you have cut out for a pattern. Using this priest pattern, make a priest doll that resembles your own parish priest.

# Altar Servers



## Directions:

1. Color and cut out the altar servers and vestments.
2. Fold the chasubles on the dotted lines and slip them over the heads of the altar servers.
3. Cut out the stands, fold on the dotted lines, and glue to the back of the altar servers.

altar server

altar server

chasuble

chasuble

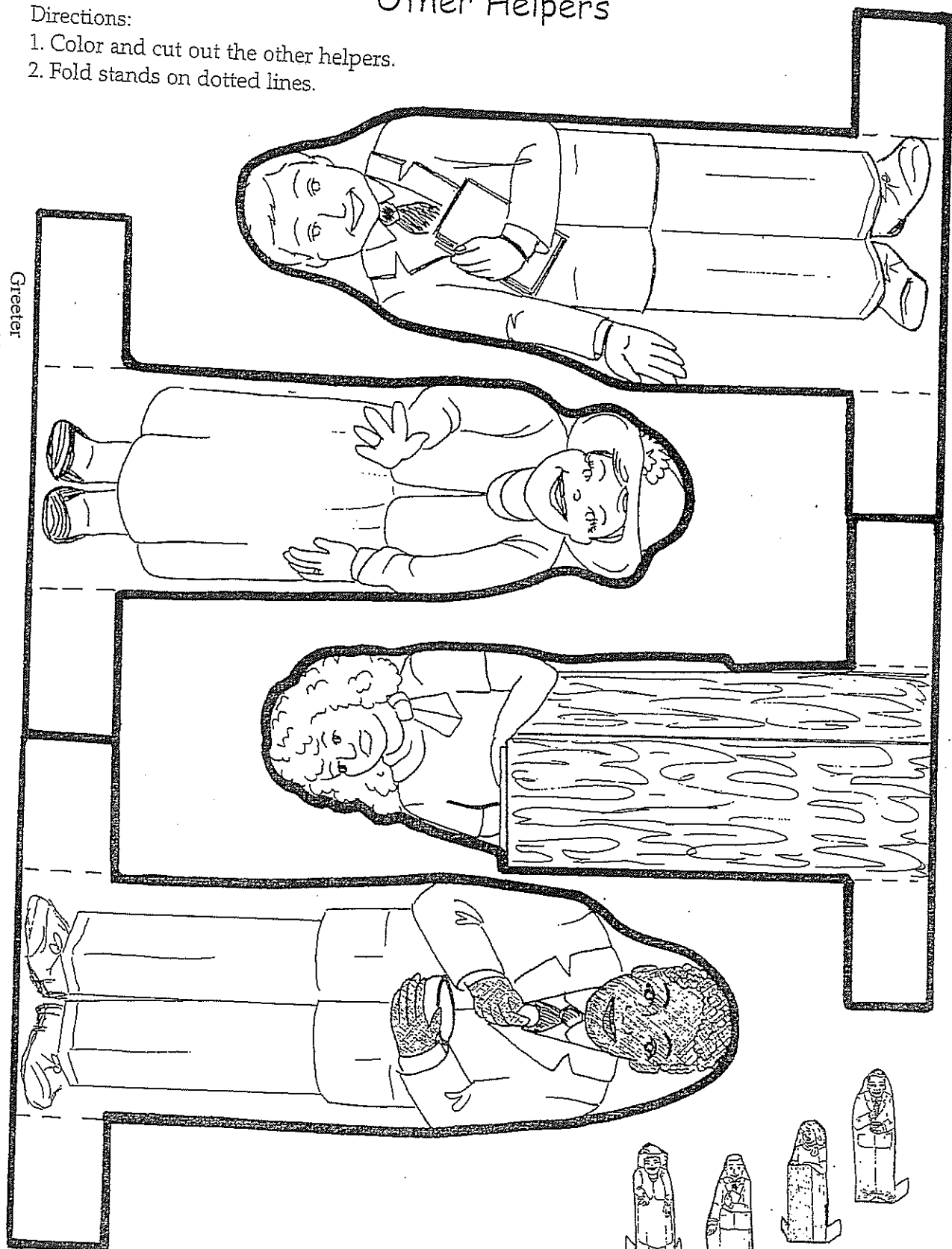
- Find a photo of you that is about the same size as these altar servers. Cut out the photo and put the vestments on your photo. Or, cut out a photo of your face to put on the altar server.
- Trace around one of the altar servers and draw your own face and hairstyle on it.



# Other Helpers

Directions:

1. Color and cut out the other helpers.
2. Fold stands on dotted lines.



Greeter

Usher/Greeter

Lector

Eucharistic Minister



# Eucharistic Minister, Lector, Usher, Greeter

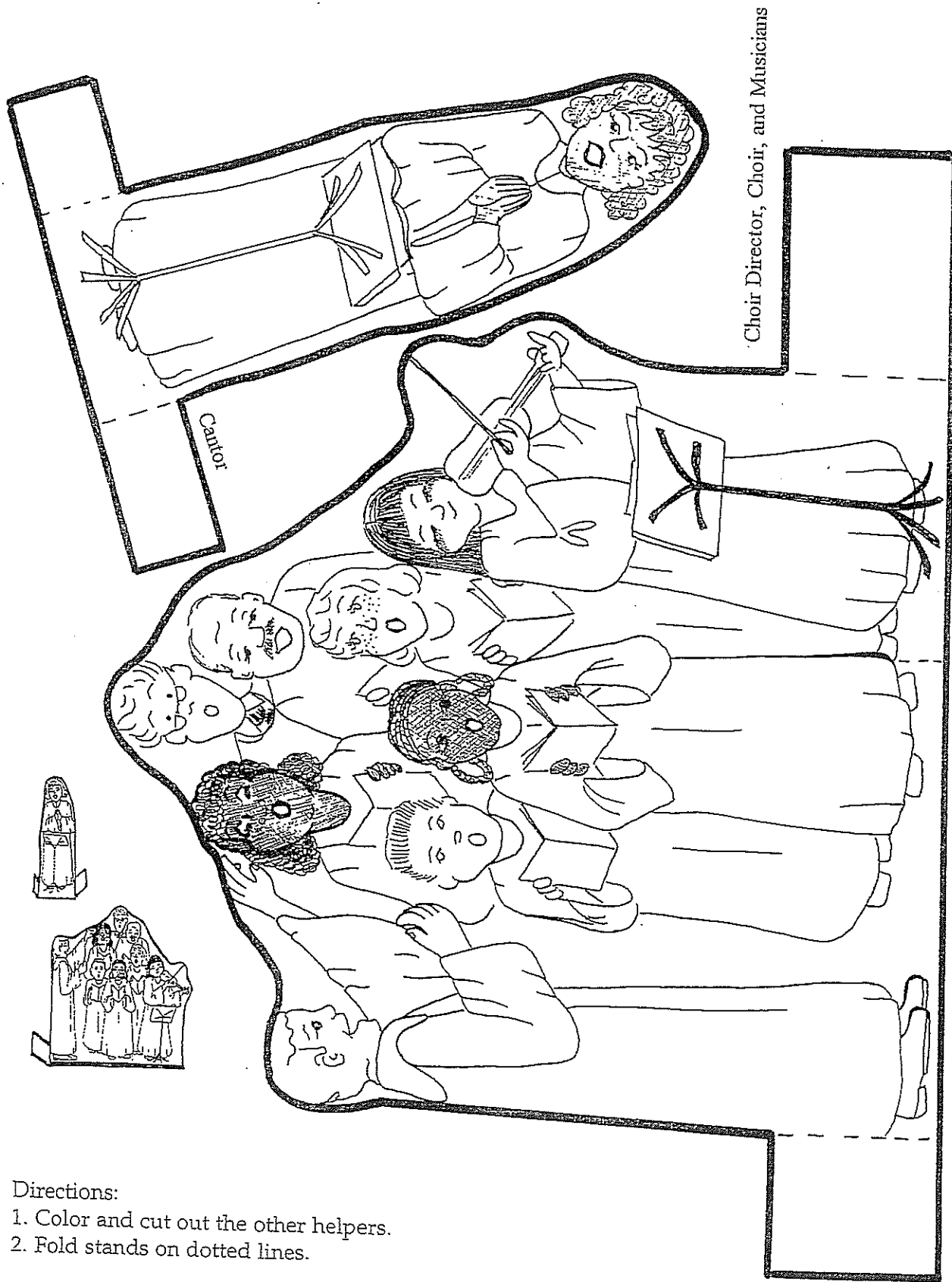
The usher helps us find a place to sit and distributes church bulletins.

The greeter welcomes us to the church.

The lector reads the first and second readings at Mass.

The eucharistic minister helps to distribute communion.

# Other Helpers



## Directions:

1. Color and cut out the other helpers.
2. Fold stands on dotted lines.

## Choir and Musicians

*The cantor sings alone during special parts of the Mass.*

The choir director, choir, and musicians work together to make the music a beautiful part of each liturgy.

The choir director leads the cantor, choir, and musicians.

The musicians accompany the sung music and often play music without singing to help us think and pray.