



Five things you need to know about...

ACOLYTES BRINGING IN THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

Jesus said, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life."*—John 8:12

The lighting of candles in a worship service symbolizes Jesus' presence with the worshipping community. In many churches, lighting the candles is the responsibility of an acolyte. The light is brought in at the beginning of the worship service and at the end of the service, the acolyte will relight their candle lighter and lead the way out of the church as a symbol of the light of Christ going with the people out into the world.

Do you have candles in your worship service? Who lights those candles each week? Have you considered inviting children in your congregation to serve as acolytes? If you already have acolytes or are considering having acolytes, here are five things to think about:

1. The word acolyte means one who helps. Acolytes have been serving in churches since ancient times. It may have first begun in the Old Testament when Samuel assisted Eli, the Levite priest.
2. Inviting children to be an acolyte is an excellent way for them to serve and feel a part of the ministry of the church. Sometimes acolytes are given other responsibilities during worship such as assisting with the collecting of the offering.
3. Providing acolyte training is very important for several reasons. First and foremost, carrying an open flame on a candle lighter should be taken seriously, no matter what age you are. It can be a fire hazard if not done properly. And taking time to train children demonstrates to them the importance of this ministry. Some churches use a peer-model or mentor to demonstrate and partner with first-time acolytes.
4. Things to include in training: when to arrive, where to find the candle lighter, who will light the candle lighter, where to sit after lighting the candles, what to do if you are scheduled to be an acolyte and you need a substitute, and other such procedures that would be important in your setting. A practice run-through before their first Sunday to serve is also a good idea.
5. An excellent resource for a new acolyte and those who will be working with the acolytes: *The Acolyte's Book* by Hoyt L. Hickman. This book can be purchased from CP Resources: <https://cpcmc.org/store-2/Acolytes-Book-The-p54528612>