



A Division of David Wood Ministries

The "ALTAR WORKER'S Training Guide

THE FUNCTION AND JOB DESCRIPTION

NOTES

- There is no "one fits all" description of how the Church altar should be conducted after the invitation has been extended by the preacher. However, the following procedure has worked successfully in small and large churches.
- As changes are made in workers responsibilities and forms used, additional training will be needed.
- To ensure that this vital ministry area of a soul winning church functions correctly, it is vital that there be training with review as necessary.... Followed by PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE.....
- Of course, all should be careful and give attention to their breath and personal hygiene and attitude.
- Normally, a man deals with a man at the altar and a lady deals with a lady. It is usually best for one altar worker to deal with one inquirer. However, one person may deal with a couple who are a complete family if the greeter or circumstance calls for this.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS AREA OF MINISTRY

It is vital that a person responding to a public invitation know that his spiritual need has been addressed (i.e. salvation, restoration, church membership, etc.). Many times the inquirer comes to the altar confused, but wanting definite spiritual help. Too often, he is asked, "Why have you come?" and leaves with no recognition of his need and therefore; no help.

Remember the Ethiopian eunuch's statement to Philip's question: "And Philip ran thither to him, and heard him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except SOME MAN SHOULD GUIDE ME? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him."

Acts 8:30-31; II Tim. 2:1-2

THE ALTAR'S PERSONNEL & DEFINITION OF EACH

Inquirer: The person coming forward in response to the invitation.

Greeter: The person greeting the inquirer as he comes forward.

ALTAR Worker or Personal Worker: The person "dealing" with the inquirer according to his need.

Secretary: The person "recording" the inquirers' decision on the "decision form".

Carrier: The person receiving the decision form from the secretary and delivering it to the "Decision Presenter".

Decision Presenter: The person announcing (sharing) the inquiries decision to the congregation – (this is normally the pastor).

Congregation: Those who respond publicly to the decision made by the inquirer after it has been announced by the presenter.

PERSONNEL INSTRUCTION

THE INQUIRER

This, of course, is the person in the congregation that responds to the invitation given by the pastor. It must be remembered that the Holy Spirit has already dealt with his heart. He is ready to respond – – he is seeking DEFINITE guidance.

THE GREETER

This is the person standing at the altar, at the end of the aisle, in which the inquirer has come. He would greet the inquiry as follows:

Taking a step forward, he would smile, reaching forward to take the hand of the inquirer and greet him - "God bless you" or "Thank you for coming" - etc.

If, because of advance information, he already knows why this person has come forward (for membership, to make his prior salvation decision public, etc.); he would simply turn to the altar worker, motioning for him to step forward and explain the decision. The altar worker would then lead the inquirer to the altar (or prayer room).

If, however, the greeter does not know the person or his reason for coming, it is best to ask the following question: "You have come to receive Christ as Savior, have you not?" Most of the time, the response would be a simple "yes" or a nod of the head. The greeter would then turn to the altar worker and proceed as noted above.

The inquirer, however, may respond by saying, "I have already been saved and have come for the following reason...." The greeter would then proceed as noted above.

It should be noted that many of the inquirers are confused. The greeter should by spiritual maturity, prayer, readiness and experience be prepared to recognize the need (salvation, assurance of salvation, restoration, etc.) and proceed by sharing this with the altar worker. Note: always err on the side of instructing them of their need for salvation or assurance of salvation.

THE ALTAR WORKER OR PERSONAL WORKER

This is the person standing a step or two behind; to the right or left of the greeter.

He, with a smile of encouragement, will receive the inquirer from the greeter with instructions as to need of the enquirer.

If the inquirer has come to join the church:

The altar worker would lead them to the secretary and inform her of the decision; leading the inquirer to be seated so that the secretary can record the needed data.

If the inquirer has come for salvation:

The altar worker would lead them to the altar (or the prayer room), kneel and lead them to Christ using steps 4-11 of the "13 point soul winning plan". The worker would then lead the enquirer to the secretary and proceed as noted above. It is suggested that if the inquirer is seeking assurance of salvation, the altar worker proceed in exactly the same manner as he would if they needed salvation.

If the inquirer is in need of restoration:

The altar worker would lead him to the altar and deal with his need accordingly. There is no need for the inquirer to actually "confess" his sin to the altar worker.

It is suggested that the altar worker use I John 1:9 (and the surrounding verses, as needed).

Note: The discipleship booklet "Fruit That Remains" is a wonderful tool for the inquirer to be instantly given an assignment that will help him to Biblically understand his decision as well as to begin his spiritual growth. For example, if the decision made is:

Salvation - assign lessons #1

Assurance of salvation - assign lesson #2

Restoration - assign lesson # 9 and #10

This could be done immediately after the service, giving him a personal copy of the FTR booklet. Additionally, he could be instantly enrolled in the Discipleship class/group. Go to the DWM *website for additional information on the FTR booklet and information (downloads) on the "how to" of organizing a complete discipleship program.

THE SECRETARY

This is the person who would receive the inquirer from the altar worker and record the correct data, legibly, on the "decision form".

The secretary would normally be sitting on the front row with a "decision form" on a clipboard with a pen in hand. The altar workers would bring the inquirer to the secretary, introducing the person - by name, and sharing the decision made. The secretary would smile, offering the person(s) a seat next to her while saying something like:

"God bless you! Please allow me to "gather" a little information so that our pastor and congregation can pray and serve you effectively."

Now, fill out the information requested on the form. This is very, very important for comprehensive follow up and discipleship of the inquirer. Now, check the appropriate box relating to the decision that the inquirer has made. Explain by saying something like:

"I am noting your "salvation decision" (or the appropriate one) so that our entire congregation may rejoice and pray with you. We love you and are so glad for your love of our Wonderful Savior."

The secretary would now ask appropriate questions for additional commitments on the part of the inquirer that would deepen their relationship to the Lord and the local church. She would ask something like:

"Now that you have accepted Christ as Savior, would you like to take the next step of obedience, which is to follow Him in believer's baptism?" (If the inquirer responds in a positive manner, the secretary would check the box that indicates "baptism". She would now state, asking; "We would now like to invite you to join, as a member, the fellowship of the church. If this is acceptable to you, I will check that box also –"

The secretary would now give that form to the carrier who is standing ready to deliver it to the presenter (pastor).

A note about the "decision form":

The information that is recorded on this form is very important. All of the "inquirers" personal data needs to be entered (email address, zip code, personal cell #, etc. are vital). Also, it should list every possible decision, giving the secretary the opportunity to check the appropriate box by each decision. The form can be duplicate or triplicate (using NCR printed forms) allowing no loss of information for correct data entry.

THE CARRIER

This is the person who will take the "decision form" from the secretary and hand it personally to the presenter (pastor). This person could be an assistant pastor or a greeter if he is now available.

THE DECISION PRESENTER

As noted, this person is normally the pastor of the church. At the conclusion of the invitation, he would normally, addressing the congregation, announce the name and decision of each person that has responded to the invitation. (If a group of believers have responded for a stated purpose, he might announce this and praise the Lord for their commitment.)

When the pastor announces the name of the inquirer and the decision made, The altar worker would then walk over to that person, smiling, signaling for him to follow.

He would then lead them to the front of the auditorium, turning and standing, with the inquirer, facing the congregation as if presenting the inquirer to the congregation.

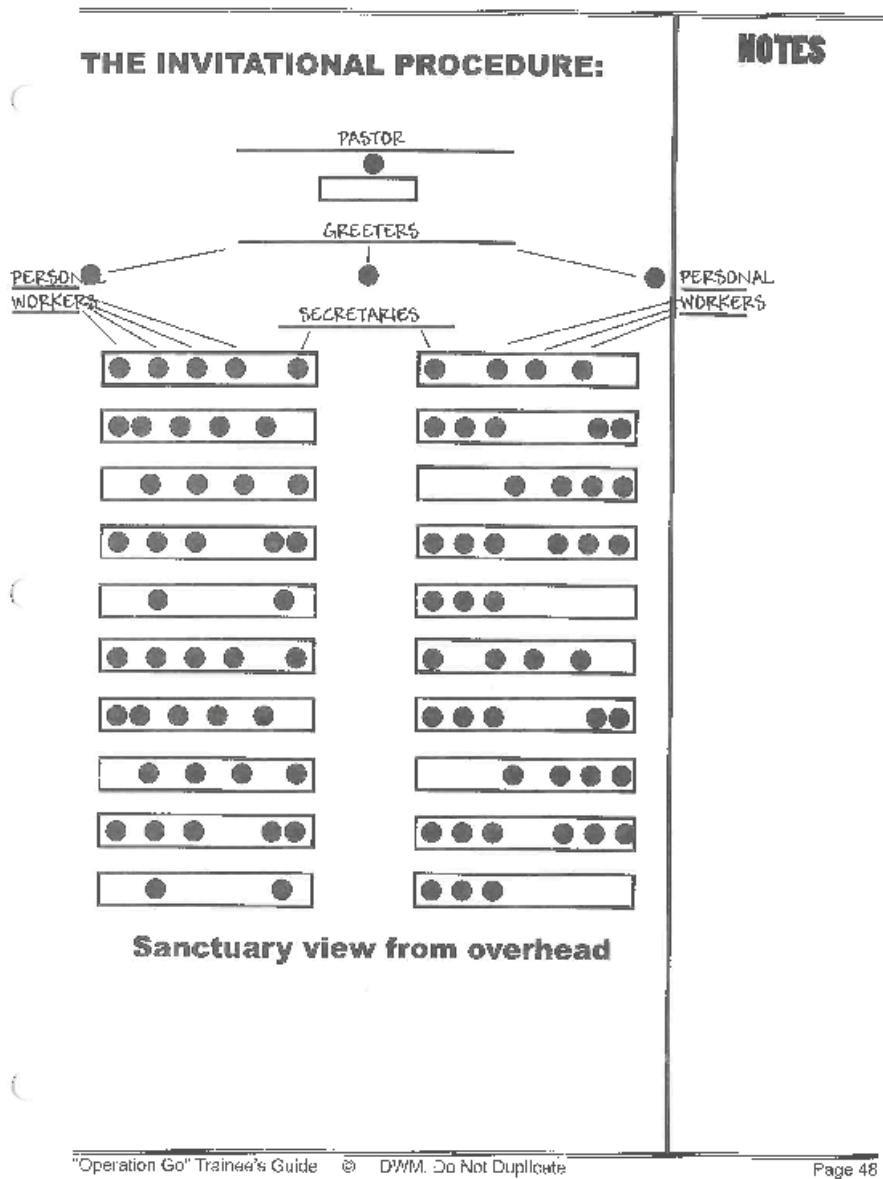
THE CONGREGATION

This group, of course, is the believers who remain in their seats while the entire invitation and altar procedure has been happening. However, this does not mean that they do not play a vital role. Through training, and spiritual excitement the congregation becomes a powerful encouragement to the inquirer. Additionally, they contribute mightily to the atmosphere of a soul winning church.

Their role begins as the pastor extends the invitation....PRAYER. It continues as the pastor presents the inquirer and the decision made. Their response should be very, very positive..... spontaneous, hearty "amens" and even "clapping". The congregation should be trained NOT TO LEAVE during the invitation nor the presenting of the inquirers. It is very important that the congregation be trained to understand that the invitation is as much a part of the service as the singing, preaching, etc.

Select soul winners, who remain in the congregation, can be trained to encourage individuals to respond to the invitation. They do this quietly and without embarrassing the individual. If the individual responds in a positive manner, they would walk forward with him and present him to the greeter.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



*Go to dwministries.org to review and/or download this ministry aid

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