



**Aim:**

To help the child to hear the story of St Tarcisus, the Patron Saint of Altar Servers. *Note this is a story-telling session.*

**Room Setting:** All are seated in a circle in the room.

**Parent:** Welcome the child and the other members of the family. Invite all to become quiet and think of when they are at Mass on Sunday. Think of what the people do. Allow a few minutes, and then invite all to share their thoughts. Now tell the child: we are going to tell you a story of a young man. His name was Tarcisus.



**Parent:** Invite the other members of the family to help in telling the following story: (P=Parent, M=Family member).

- M. Tarcisus was a young man who lived in Rome about the year AD 370. It was a time of great persecution for the Christians. But they managed to meet every day to celebrate the Eucharist.
- P. Afterwards they would secretly take pieces of the Holy Communion to those Christians who were imprisoned and on death row just because they were Christians.
- M. One day the priest was looking for someone to safely carry the Body of Christ to the prisoners. Tarcisus volunteered to do this.
- P. "You're too young!" the priest told him. "It would be too dangerous for you and for the Holy Communion you would be carrying."
- M. Tarcisus replied, "Father, they will never bother a young person. Being young will be my best protection."
- P. So, the priest placed the pieces of the Holy Communion into a cloth and told Tarcisus to always remember who it was that he was carrying. He told him: "Keep away from crowds."
- M. Tarcisus answered: "I will die rather than betray God's Sacred Gift."
- P. Cheerfully setting out on his way to the prison, Tarcisus came across some boys who were playing. They called Tarcisus to come and play in their game.
- M. He declined saying, "I have some important business to do."
- P. The youths became curious about what Tarcisus was hiding in his tunic. They wanted to see what he was carrying. And they began to wrestle with him to take it away.
- M. Tarcisus resisted, and the youths began to beat him until he fell to the ground bleeding from their blows.
- N. The youths now attempted to take the Blessed Sacrament from Tarcisus, but they were suddenly repelled by a violent and giant force.
- P. They ran away. All except one – a boy named Quadratus. He took pity on Tarcisus and asked: "Are you badly hurt?"
- M. Tarcisus replied, "Never mind me. Just take this back to the Christian priest."
- N. With that Tarcisus died of his wounds.
- P. Saint Tarcisus is the Patron Saint of Altar Servers.

**Discussion**

Invite the child and the other members of the family to a share:

- What do you think of Tarcisus?
- What was Tarcisus carrying?
- Why did he not want to give it to the youths?
- Anything else you want to say?

**Tell the child and the other members of the family:**

- Today boys and girls can become Altar Servers.

**Parent asks:** How do they help the priest at Mass?

**Parent:** We also have Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

They help the priest to give Holy Communion to the people at Mass.

- They also take Holy Communion to the sick and elderly each Sunday so that they can be part of the Mass.
- When we return to Mass in the Church again, we will see the Altar Servers and the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.
- Would you like to be an Altar Server?

**Conclusion:** Say the Spiritual Communion Prayer. (Take it line by line.)

**St. Alphonsus Liguori's Act of Spiritual Communion**

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.