shape to accommodate the introduction of any instrument therethrough and still maintain the overall flexibility of the outer sheath and dilator during introduction. The length of the assembly, particularly the outer sheath, can be varied for use with a gastroscope to examine the stomach or other parts of the gastrointestinal system. It is still yet further contemplated that the outer sheath can be used to retrieve foreign bodies from the stomach or to ligate varices in the esophagus. The size of the assembly, particularly the outer sheath, can be varied to adapt to the size of the patient such as with a child or with the various sizes of transducers.

What is claimed is:

1. An oroesophageal, instrument introducer assembly comprising:

an outer sheath having a first tapered distal end, a proximal end, and a first passage extending longitudinally therethrough and including a first cross-sectional shape sized for passing a large specified instrument therethrough;

a mouthpiece proximate said proximal end of said outer sheath and including a third passage communicating with said first passage of said outer sheath and sized for passing the large specified instrument therethrough; and

a dilator having a proximal end, a second tapered distal end extending from said first tapered distal end of said outer sheath when positioned in said first passage of said outer sheath, and a second passage extending longitudinally therethrough and including a second cross-sectional shape smaller than said first cross-sectional shape of said first passage, said second tapered distal end having an outermost cross-sectional shape proximate said first cross-sectional shape of said first passage and longitudinally decreasing in size from said first cross-sectional shape of said first passage to said second cross-sectional shape of said second passage.

2. The introducer assembly of claim 1 further comprising an introducer guide having a third cross-sectional shape proximate said second cross-sectional shape of said second passage of said dilator.

3. The introducer assembly of claim 2 wherein said introducer guide includes a tube having a closed, atraumatic distal end, a proximal end, a third passage extending longitudinally therein, and a plurality of side ports positioned proximate to said closed distal end and communicating with said third passage.

4. The introducer assembly of claim 3 wherein said introducer guide further includes a removable connector positioned in said third passage proximate said proximal end of said tube.

5. The introducer assembly of claim 3 wherein said introducer guide further includes a visible marker positioned on an outer surface of said tube a specified distance from said closed distal end.

6. The introducer assembly of claim 1 wherein said outer sheath comprises a flexible material tube.

7. The introducer assembly of claim 1 wherein said dilator includes a connector fitting positioned proximate a proximal end thereof and having a passage therein communicating with said second passage, said connector fitting being interconnectable with said mouthpiece.

8. The introducer assembly of claim 1 wherein said dilator includes an inner sheath.

9. The introducer assembly of claim 8 wherein said inner sheath comprises a flexible material tube.

10. The introducer assembly of claim 8 wherein said inner sheath has an outermost cross-sectional dimension substantially smaller than an innermost dimension of said first cross-sectional shape of said first passage.

11. The introducer assembly of claim 8 wherein said dilator further includes a distal tip piece including said second tapered distal end and positioned in a passage of said inner sheath proximate a distal end thereof.

12. The introducer assembly of claim 11 wherein said distal tip piece comprises a semi-rigid material.

13. The introducer assembly of claim 8 further comprising a detachable connector fitting positioned in said second passage of said inner sheath proximate said proximal end thereof, said connector fitting being insertable in said third passage of said mouthpiece and being interconnectable with said mouthpiece.

14. An oroesophageal, instrument introducer assembly comprising:

an outer, flexible material tube having a first tapered distal end, a proximal end, and a first passage extending longitudinally therethrough, said first passage having a first cross-sectional shape sized for passing a large specified instrument therethrough;

a mouthpiece positioned in said first passage proximate said proximal end of said outer tube and including a passage communicating with said first passage and sized for passing the large specified instrument therethrough;

an inner, flexible material tube having a distal end, a proximal end, and a second passage extending longitudinally therethrough, said second passage having a second cross-sectional shape;

a dilator piece positioned in said second passage and proximate said distal end of said inner tube and having a second tapered distal end extending from said first tapered distal end of said outer tube when said inner tube is positioned in said first passage of said outer tube and also having an outermost cross-sectional shape approximating said first cross-sectional shape of said first passage and longitudinally decreasing in size from said first cross-sectional shape of said first passage to said second cross-sectional shape of said second passage;

a detachable connector positioned in said second passage and proximate said proximal end of said inner tube and interconnectable with said mouthpiece;

a guide tube insertable through said detachable connector, said second passage of said inner tube, and said dilator and having a closed, atraumatic distal end, a proximal end, a passage extending therein, and a plurality of ports proximate said closed distal end and communicating with said passage thereof;

a visible marker on an outer surface of said guide tube and positioned a specified distance from said closed distal end; and

a removable connector positioned in said passage of said guide tube.

15. A method of orally and introducing a large specified instrument into an esophagus of a patient, comprising the steps of:

providing an outer sheath having a first tapered distal end, a proximal end, and a first passage extending longitudinally therethrough and including a first cross-sectional shape sized for passing a large specified instrument therethrough;

providing a dilator having a proximal end, a second tapered distal end extending from said first tapered