

GRAND LODGE OF NEW JERSEY

MASONIC RENEWAL EVENING

A SCRIPT FOR USE BY THE LODGE

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This guide is intended to be used as a template in preparing your Lodge's Masonic Renewal Evening's program. Speakers should be selected based on appearance and their ability to present their information in a pleasing manner. This program is intended to make a good first impression on those seeking more information about Freemasonry. Therefore it is hoped that any one speaking should be comfortable speaking before a group. It is not necessary that the speakers be officers. Brethren should be chosen on their ability to speak on the various topics of Freemasonry. It is not intended that this guide should be read. Its purpose is to highlight the various topics that should be discussed. In general, this type of presentation is better received and appreciated if the speakers use a less formal and more personal approach.

Section 1 – Introduction and Presentation on the History of Freemasonry

It is recommended that Open House begin in the collation room and then move on to the Lodge Room. Depending upon the configuration of your building this may or may not be advisable. It is recommended that a Past Master or Warden be chosen to make the opening remarks and present a short history of Freemasonry. However, the selection of this speaker should be one who will make a GREAT first impression. You only have one chance to make that first impression and we want our visitors to be instilled with a sense of who we are. This is not the place for someone with a weak delivery. They should be able to be clearly understood and loud enough that all can hear them.

This portion of the program should last no more than 20 minute and include the following subjects:

- History of Freemasonry
- History of your Lodge
- Secrets of Freemasonry

Here are is a list of points in each subject to assist in the development of you program.

History of Freemasonry

- It is recommended that the speaker chosen for this subject have a good general knowledge of the history of Freemasonry that would enable him to answer any questions that might arise from the presentation.

Freemasonry in the World

- Tradition informs us that the origins of Freemasonry can be traced back to the building of King Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem
- Historically it is commonly accepted that Freemasonry can trace it roots back to the 10th century A.D.
- Oldest known Masonic document is the Regius Poem from 1390
- A commonly accepted theory would trace the origin of the Fraternity to the stonemason guilds that existed during the Middle Ages. The

craftsmen in these guilds were instrumental in the construction of the great cathedrals and castles constructed during that period in time. The Symbolic Degrees of Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft and Master Mason can be directly correlated to the members of these guilds and the division of the workmen into apprentice, fellow or master. These divisions were dependent upon the level of their skills. As the construction of these magnificent edifices declined these guilds began to accept members who not operative as a means to maintain and even increase membership.

- Grand Lodge of England established in 1717
- Today there exist over 200 Grand Lodges, 33,000 subordinate Lodges and numerous appendant bodies spread over 150 countries throughout the world with a membership estimated at five million.

Freemasonry in the Unites States of America

- Freemasonry in the United States of America is directly linked to the Grand Lodges of England.
- Masonic Lodges established during the colonial period included those in the states of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and South Carolina.
- Famous Masons from the Colonial Period
 - George Washington
 - Paul Revere
 - John Paul Jones
 - Benjamin Franklin
 - John Hancock
- Masonic Lodges exist in every state along as well as in the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.
- There are roughly 15,000 individual Masonic Lodges in the United States with an estimated membership of 1.8 million.

Freemasonry in New Jersey

- First Masonic Lodge
- St. Johns #1 established in Newark in 1761
- Grand Lodge constituted in 1787
 - First Grand Master
 - David Brearley
 - Signer of the US Constitution
 - Chief Justice, State of NJ
- Currently 119 local Masonic Lodges in the state with a membership of roughly 23 thousand

- Year established
- Your building
- Current membership
- Any members, past or present that were influential or famous in your community.
 - Be careful as not drop names that might turn off your visitors.

Secrets Of Freemasonry

- Impress upon your visitors that we are not a “Secret Society” but a “Society with Secrets”
- We don’t keep our membership secret from our friends and family
 - We openly wear rings, pins, hats, shirts even tattoos.
- We don’t hide our meeting places
 - Buildings are always clearly marked
- What’s the “BIG SECRET”
 - That there is NO secret
 - That we have a series of handshakes to identify the Three Degrees.
 - Entered Apprentice
 - Fellow Craft
 - Master Mason
 - That the ceremonies or manner in which the Three Degrees are conferred is kept secret to allow the candidates to more thoroughly enjoy them.
 - In today’s world there are no real secrets. The internet is full of information about freemasonry. The secret is separating fact from fiction.
- Be prepared to dispel the usual rumors that we “Rule the World”

Section 2: Petition, Committee, Ballot, Lodge Room, Officers Duties, Altar

At the start of this section, it is critical to be honest about the process of getting started in the Lodge. The discussion concerning the Petition/Committee / Ballot should take place outside the Lodge room preferably in the Anteroom

Petition:

- A petition is the way for the Non-mason to show his interest in becoming involved in Free Masonry.
- Masons cannot solicit members, but will gladly discuss Masonry with anyone who shows an interest. The petition is easy to fill out. (Make sure that you have plenty of Petitions on hand at any Open House – show the basics of the Petition during the talk).

Investigating Committee:

- Once a petition is filled out and submitted to the Lodge Secretary, an Investigating Committee, composed of members of the Lodge, will set up a time to meet with the perspective member.
- The Investigating Committee is a great way for the Lodge to ask questions of the perspective member and for the perspective member to ask questions of the Lodge.
- If married, the wife of the perspective member will be invited to attend the Investigation in order to get a better understanding of the Lodge and the process.
- It is important to understand that Freemasonry does not endorse any particular Religion; however no Atheist can become a Freemason.
- The petitioner must believe in a Supreme Being.

Balloting:

- After the Investigating Committee meets with the perspective member, they will report back to the Lodge with their recommendations.
- The Secretary of the Lodge will place the name of the perspective member in the Trestleboard (Lodge Newsletter) for one month,
- Using a secret ballot, all members will have the chance to ballot on the perspective member.

- The Secretary will contact the perspective member with the results of the ballot within 24 hours of the vote.

Once the Balloting discussion is completed, usher the attendees of the Open House into the Lodge room. The Lodge room should be set up for normal Lodge Operations, including the 3 great lights, square & compass and the Book of Sacred Law). The members Should occupy seats around the Lodge, close enough to hear the speakers. They should be in the East and the West.

Master (East): You have entered into the Lodge room, where the Lodge holds its meetings. It is set up as the Lodge room would normally be set up for a meeting. Most lodges meet two times per month. This Lodge meets on _____. The Lodge room itself is typically a rectangular shape oriented East to West, and located on the 2nd floor, to give safety, security and privacy to the meetings. Masonic Lodges in the Grand Lodge of New Jersey are open to Males who are 21 years or older. I am currently standing in the East, where the Master of the Lodge would sit. The Master is head of the Lodge and typically runs the Lodge for one year. He is elected by the brethren on a yearly basis and is the final authority of leadership in the Lodge. You will know the Master as he is the only one in the room who has the authority to wear a hat. The term “Worshipful Master” does not refer to religious reverence. The title “Worshipful”, means honorable taken from the olden days.

Sr. Warden (West): The Lodge has an Altar in the center of the room, on which rests a “Volume of Sacred Law”. Typically, Lodges display the King James version of the Holy Bible but any other holy book can be used. The Volume of Sacred Law is used to take oaths during the Degrees. I am standing in the West in the place of the Senior Warden who will govern the Lodge if the Worshipful Master is not available. He is elected for a one year term and is next in line to become the Worshipful Master.

The Junior Warden is located in the South (point to the Jr. Warden’s Station) and acts as the 2nd Vice President. He is in charge of supervising the Stewards for entertainment and collations. He is also an elected Lodge officer and will become Worshipful Master in 2 years.

Worshipful Master (East) : The Secretary and Treasurer (point to the respective stations) are located on the right and left hand of the Worshipful Master and are responsible for keeping accurate records of the transactions of the Lodge and keeping the books/checkbooks of the Lodge, respectively. They are also elected officers. The floor officers are responsible for taking part in the actions of Lodge meetings and the degrees.

The officers are (point them out as you speak):

Chaplain: Provides Opening and Closing prayers for the meetings

Senior Deacon: Acts as Floor Manager and escort to guests

Junior Deacon: Guards the door and announces guests to the Worshipful Master

Senior Master of Ceremonies: Prepares new candidates for the 3 Degrees.

Junior Master of Ceremonies: Prepares new candidates for the 3 Degrees.

Senior Steward: Provides Collation and programs for the membership at meals

Junior Steward: Provides Collation and programs for the membership at meals

Organist: Provides Music during the meetings.

Historian: Keeps accurate history of the Lodge.

Marshal: Conducts processions in the Lodge and gives Grand Honors to visiting Dignitaries.

Tyler: Guards the Outside door and makes sure that all who enter have the necessary dues cards and are clothed as a Mason.

Sr. Warden (West): A Master Mason is known by his good works. He is also known by the apron he wears. Those aprons include

:

- Master Mason Apron: White Lambskin
- Lodge Officer: White Lambskin with Blue Border
- Past Master: White Lambskin with Royal Purple Border
- Grand Lodge Officer (Past or Present): White Lambskin with a Thick Royal Purple Border
- Grand Master (Past or Present): White Lambskin with Thick Purple Border and an Effulgent Sunburst.

Worshipful Master (East):

Information about Freemasonry is readily available on the Internet. Reiterate that we are not a secret society. Rather, we are a fraternal society with secrets.

Feel free to adjust the script as needed to make the presenters and the Open House feel as comfortable as possible. Take time out for Questions as they come up. Be courteous and give honest answers.

Section 3: Masonic Charity

Before beginning the presentation about Masonic Charities, as a group return to the collation room. This will help focus the conversation in a more relaxed atmosphere.

Presenters for this portion of the program should not be limited to Lodge Officers. This will afford an opportunity to identify those Brethren in your Lodge who play active roles in the Appendant Bodies and, as active participants, they can speak authoritatively about their charitable endeavors. Limit your presentation a maximum of 10 to 15 minutes.

The Importance of Charity to the Fraternity. Note these quotes from your ritual.

- *“Charity extends beyond the grave, through the boundless realms of eternity”* or
- *the greatest of these is Charity*
- *even the rungs of the Ladder...even Jacobs Ladder.... Faith, Hope, and Charity.*
- Explain in your own words.

1. Charity in the Lodge. Speak to your own lodge’s contributions towards your selected charities. Some common examples could be:

- ARC,
- MSANA,
- DeMolay
- etc.

2. Note that charity is a portion of our annual dues. Touch on contributions made to:

- George Washington National Masonic Memorial
- Rainbow for Girls
- DeMolay
- Masonic Home
- etc..

3. Shriners Hospitals and Burn Centers for Children.

- All Shriners must be Masons.
- Worldwide, there are 22 Burn Centers and Hospitals that care for children who are in need of prosthetic limbs and therapeutic programs that help them walk.
- The Burn Centers give care to those children who have been severely burned.
- All care and family support is given free of charge.
- New Jersey Shriners support Philadelphia and Boston Hospitals and raise funds to support their efforts.
- It is estimated is that Shriners need to raise over 2 million dollars per day to provide these services.

- Shriners who reside in Northern New Jersey attend Salaam Temple in Livingston. Southern New Jersey Masons attend Crescent Temple in Westhampton.
4. Children's Dyslexia Centers of NJ
- Principle charity of Scottish Rite Northern Jurisdiction.
 - New Jersey is one of 15 member Grand Lodges.
 - This is a no fee remedial program to treat children with diagnosed cases of Dyslexia.
 - Utilizes the Orton-Gillingham method of multi-sensory training to teach reading and writing comprehension.
 - Other charitable functions of the Scottish Rite include funding and research for the treatment of Schizophrenia.
5. Every Masonic Body has some form of charitable endeavor as part of its organized activity. Offer examples such as:
- Tall Cedars
 - Royal Arch,
 - etc...

Finally, explain to your guests that it is a Mason's desire to become a better man, citizen, father and husband. Close the program with the following statement:

How Masons Make Good Men Better

The most profound way we make Good Men Better is by understanding our moral teachings using symbolism, By being charitable to others whenever feasible, we attempt to shape the rough Ashlar into that living stone that is not made with hands eternal in the heavens.

Masonry does not solicit its membership. However, we hope that after learning some of our teachings and experiencing the spirit of brotherly affection demonstrated during your visit, we have made you curious to discover the greatness which resides in your heart.