

# THE GRAND LODGE

of Ancient, Free and  
Accepted Masons  
of North Carolina



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GRAND MASTER 2020  
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## Official Opinion of the Grand Master of Masons of North Carolina

P. Shaun Bradshaw

December 1, 2020

It has come to my attention that there are questions regarding what, if any, formal guidelines should be followed by lodges that wish to utilize a Chamber of Reflection to assist a candidate in preparing himself for the degrees of Masonry. Over the last several years many lodges have requested clarification and advice from the Board of Custodians regarding how to establish a Chamber of Reflection, what symbols are permitted, where it can be setup in the lodge, and when a lodge may employ a Chamber of Reflection for its candidates. With each of these requests, the Board of Custodians has affirmed that using a Chamber of Reflection is an appropriate method to help in preparing a candidate mentally and spiritually for the degree he is about to undertake. In each of these cases they have provided guidance to those lodges making the requests as to what is and what is not permissible.

Upon review of many of the requests that were made by the lodges and the guidance provided by the Board of Custodians, and in consultation with the Chairman of the Board of Custodians, I requested that the Committee on Miscellaneous Ceremonies prepare a set of specific guidelines for use by all subordinate lodges under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of AF & AM of NC that wish to implement a Chamber of Reflection. In preparing these guidelines it is noted that:

1. The use of a Chamber of Reflection is not a part of any official ritual or ceremony of the Grand Lodge of AF & AM of NC and should, in no way, interfere or hinder the execution of any degree or ceremony as described in the Official Standard of the Work.
2. While a Chamber of Reflection is not part of the Official Standard of the Work, it is nevertheless permissible for a lodge to utilize one prior to the ritualistic preparation of a candidate.

3. No candidate shall be forced or compelled to enter a Chamber of Reflection. The use of a Chamber of Reflection is completely voluntary on the part of the candidate.
4. The Master of the lodge is responsible for deciding if a lodge shall establish a Chamber of Reflection.
5. The Master may appoint a committee to establish and maintain the Chamber of Reflection.

Accordingly, it is my Official Opinion that, should a lodge choose to implement a Chamber of Reflection for its candidates, the attached guidelines must be strictly adhered to, and if any lodge is found to have gone outside the bounds of these established guidelines then it shall be cited by the Grand Master to show just cause as to why its charter should not be arrested.

Given under my hand and seal this 1<sup>st</sup> day of December, 2020, in Greensboro, North Carolina.



P. Shaun Bradshaw  
Grand Master of Masons in North Carolina, 2020



## GLNC CHAMBER OF REFLECTION GUIDELINES

“Freemasonry, a beautiful system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols.”  
*Bahnson Manual, p. 17*

When a lodge receives a candidate desirous of obtaining light in Masonry, the candidate is introduced to various forms and symbols, specific to each degree, with which to build the foundation for their Masonic journey. To better prepare a candidate, a lodge may utilize a Chamber of Reflection prior to the ritual work being performed. This Chamber will provide a quiet space for thoughtful contemplation prior to the candidate entering the lodge and embarking on the journey of the degree.

The Chamber of Reflection is a room or apartment set outside the confines of the lodge room and the preparation room and may include any symbols pertaining to the degree they are about to receive. The symbols used must conform with those set out in the *Bahnson Manual*, these guidelines, and any other applicable regulations set out by the Grand Lodge. The use of the Chamber will allow each candidate time to center themselves and mentally prepare for the lessons that each degree teaches. While a minimalist approach is recommended for the Chamber, the lodge may use any of the symbols relevant to the degree being conferred if those symbols are presented as proscribed in these guidelines. The Chamber of Reflection will hopefully be an important first step into a lifetime of contemplative thought and discussion amongst the brethren.

A lodge that chooses to utilize the Chamber of Reflection should carefully read the *Bahnson Manual* along with the requirements as set out in these guidelines to ensure conformity therein.

The Chamber of Reflection should be set up in a room that is as quiet as possible. Apart from the light of one candle, the room should be dark. Walls and any other surfaces should be bare or covered to hide all extraneous decoration. Only the furnishings listed within these guidelines shall be present. A charge may be read to the candidate, prior to his entering the CoR (see Exhibit B). Candidates shall be instructed to leave behind or turn off their cell phone and any other similar devices prior to entering the Chamber. Interactions between the candidate, lodge members, and the Chamber shall be reverent. A brother shall remain stationed outside the Chamber door, to protect the candidate’s privacy and to assist should the candidate desire to emerge prior to being retrieved. Candidates shall remain within the Chamber of Reflection for no more than 30-45 minutes. Each lodge will decide for themselves how long their candidates will remain in the CoR, within this 30-45-minute window. When the necessary time has passed, the brother who is stationed outside of the CoR will retrieve the candidate from within.

**Exhibit (A)**

**Recommended Furnishings of a Chamber of Reflection**

<p align="center"><b>1<sup>st</sup> Degree Entered Apprentice</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>2<sup>nd</sup> Degree Fellowcraft</b></p>	<p align="center"><b>3<sup>rd</sup> Degree Master Mason</b></p>
<p>Chair, Table, Candle, Mirror</p> <p>Working Tools</p> <p>Lambskin (properly arranged for the 1<sup>st</sup> degree)</p> <p>The point within a circle (see below)</p> <div align="center" data-bbox="365 793 418 856"> </div>	<p>Chair, Table, Candle, Mirror</p> <p>Working Tools</p> <p>Lambskin (properly arranged for the 2<sup>nd</sup> degree)</p> <p>Corn, Wine, and Oil</p>	<p>Chair, Table, Candle, Mirror</p> <p>Working Tools</p> <p>Lambskin (properly arranged for the 3<sup>rd</sup> degree)</p> <p>Pot of Incense (Frankincense is recommended)</p> <p>Hourglass</p> <p>Sprig of Acacia</p> <p>Setting Maul</p>
<p>Any symbols directly found within the <i>Bahnson Manual</i> 1<sup>st</sup> Degree sections may be used in addition to or in place of the symbols listed above.</p>	<p>Any symbols directly found within the <i>Bahnson Manual</i> 2<sup>nd</sup> Degree sections may be used in addition to or in place of the symbols listed above.</p>	<p>Any symbols directly found within the <i>Bahnson Manual</i> 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree sections may be used in addition to or in place of the symbols listed above.</p>

The above table provides examples of the furnishings and symbols of the CoR, which are approved for use by the Grand Lodge of North Carolina. A **minimalist approach** is recommended for the Chamber, but the lodge may use any of the symbols relevant to the degree being conferred if those symbols are present within the *Bahnson Manual* ritual work for that degree. Any symbols that are not **directly** found in the *Bahnson Manual* for the degree being conferred **may not** be included.

## **Exhibit (B)**

### **Recommended Chamber of Reflection Charge**

“My friend (“brother” after first degree),

We request that you submit yourself to a time of reflection and meditation. This is not a requirement for this degree, and you are free to refuse. Yet, this opportunity will allow you time to prepare yourself mentally, emotionally, and spiritually for the journey you are about to undertake. Use this time for deep and serious reflection of the man you are and the man you want to be. Contemplate your relationship with your God. Make ready for a renewal of perception. If at any point you find yourself uncomfortable and wish to emerge, please do so. Soon, a brother will come for you. Until then, look inside yourself.”