

THE LODGE NIGHT PROGRAM
July - September 2000



Tonight
We Have A Petition



The Committee on Masonic Education
The Grand Lodge of A.M. & A.M.
of
North Carolina

P Lodge Night
PROGRAM

JULY -
SEPTEMBER 2000

Tonight
We Have A Petition

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- A. Presently, it is considered un-Masonic to solicit members. There are people who believe this policy has long outlived its purpose and is contributing to the decline in membership.

Discussion

1. Give three reasons why we don't solicit members? Was this practice practical 100 years ago? Is there any difference now?
2. If we are a "secret" society, how are men supposed to know about us?
3. Trace the chain of events that would cause a man to ask to join the fraternity. What would draw him to us?

- B. Other men are supposed to see Masons as upstanding members of the community who, as a group, live and practice the tenets of Friendship, Morality and Brotherly Love. From this they are to draw their impression of the fraternity.

Discussion

1. In general, do today's Masons exemplify Friendship, Morality and Brotherly Love more or less than they did 100 years ago? How is it different?
2. **As a group**, do today's Masons project an image of good men working toward admirable goals. Is this openly visible to those outside the fraternity? How?
3. Where would someone outside the fraternity see examples of Freemasonry? Would these examples be sufficient to entice him to seek membership?

2nd Stated Communication in July 2000

Doing the Petition the right way

The expectations of Freemasonry are high, both from the fraternity and from the petitioner. Unlike a civic or social club which offers a man the opportunity for entertainment and the chance to help his community,

Freemasonry expects to become a part of, and to change, a man's life. A man may **join** a social or civic club, but he **becomes** a Mason. Some men are not comfortable with ritual. Others see no need in memorization.

- A. Masonry is not a passive experience. The man who would prefer to sit idly by and simply observe will gain little from being a Mason. And, Masonry will gain little from his membership. Much of the teachings of Masonry must be derived from study and interpretation of ritual.

Discussion

1. How would you explain the need for ritual and memorization to the prospective candidate? How would you respond to someone who asks for an example of each?
 2. How would you respond when the prospective candidate asks you how much memorization is necessary and how long it will take?
 3. In your opinion, did the memorization and ritual change your life? How?
 4. Is it fair, or honest, to downplay the necessity of ritual and memorization to the prospective candidate?
- B. One of the most common causes for delays in the petition process is improperly completed forms. A good policy is to **READ** each question completely before answering. While such questions as "Mother's Maiden Name" may appear unnecessary, the answer helps create a more complete record of the individual.

Discussion

1. **Every** petition must be sent to the Grand Lodge for recording and verification **PRIOR** to any ballot. What items are verified? Why do these items need to be verified?
2. A petition may not be balloted upon for at least one Lunar Month from the date of the petition. Why?
3. Why is it necessary to type or print the full names of the Masons signing the petition? What are, and what will be the responsibilities of the brothers signing the petition?

1st Stated Communication in August 2000

What Happens Now?

The petition has been completed and presented to the Secretary of the Lodge. He has checked it and any questions have been answered. Next, the petition will be sent to the Grand Lodge to be verified and recorded. While this is being done, the Worshipful Master will appoint an Investigating Committee to meet and examine the candidate. In many lodges, the potential mentor will also meet with the candidate and explain what is happening and what the candidate may expect in the coming weeks. In other lodges this may be done by the Investigating Committee.

- A. There are many times when Masonry will impress the candidate. But the completion of the petition will be our only time to make a good first impression. How it is handled may influence a man's entire perception of the fraternity. The impression the candidate forms now will continue to be his impression of Masonry for some time.

Discussion

1. It is not uncommon for a brother to obtain a petition from an individual and then say no more. Is this the right thing to do? What would be the right thing to do at this point to begin teaching the candidate about Friendship and Brotherly Love?
 2. To you, this petition may just represent another potential member. But to the man petitioning for the degrees it is an application to a world which he knows little about. What steps should you take to support his decision?
 3. What can you do to let him know the importance of his decision?
- B. This is a time of uncertainty on the part of the candidate. He wonders what is happening? Why did they ask me all those questions? What kind of club am I getting into? What will the Investigating Committee ask me? How should I respond to their questions?

Discussion

1. The candidate really wants to know what to expect. What do you tell him?
 2. How do you prepare the candidate for the Investigating Committee? For the results of the ballot?
 3. If all goes well, how do you prepare the candidate for his initiation? What are five things you can do now to make the night the candidate is initiated a good, and beneficial, experience?
- C. If you assume the position of a Mentor to the petitioner, and the ballot is favorable, you may soon be coaching the candidate in the catechisms.
1. How can you begin to prepare now?
 2. There is information available from the *Program for Progress*. Do you have that information available?
 3. What references can you recommend to the petitioner? How often should you contact him?

2nd Stated Communication in August 2000

Helpful Tools

The Grand Lodge has issued several pamphlets, brochures and videos to be presented to the petitioner and his family. These items will help explain what Freemasonry is and how it can improve a man's life. Prior to this session, check with your Lodge Secretary and present the items you have available for this purpose so that each of the members may see what is available and the best ways to present them.

1st Stated Communication in September 2000

The Investigating Committee

The Worshipful Master has appointed you and two other members of your lodge to an Investigating Committee . You are to meet with a petitioner and his family and to decide whether or not you would recommend him to receive the degrees.

- A. Several sources of information about the petitioner are listed on the petition. In addition to the signers, there will be references given by the petitioner and job and residence information.

Discussion

1. In what order would you contact those listed on the petition? How would you explain who you are and the purpose of your call? What would you ask?
2. Some references may not have a phone available. Others may live out of town. How would you handle these references?
3. One of the references acts reluctant to talk about the petitioner. How would you handle this?
4. You receive a call from a member of your lodge with negative information about the petitioner. How do you evaluate this information? Should it become a part of your investigation?

- B. Prior to meeting with the petitioner you prepare a list of questions you wish to ask.

Discussion

1. What would be on that list? Discuss each item.

- C. You meet with the petitioner and his wife. It is obvious the petitioner knows little about Freemasonry and the wife knows even less.

Discussion

1. How do you respond when asked how much time will be involved?
How much will it ultimately cost?
2. The wife wants to know how much he will be able to tell her about Freemasonry and how it works. How do you respond?
3. Questions arise about the Rites, Eastern Star and Shrine. How do you respond?
4. How can you exemplify Friendship, Morality and Brotherly Love at this meeting?

2nd Stated Communication in September 2000
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Tonight We Ballot

Many would say the ballot box is our greatest defense against those who would do us harm. Others would say it has needlessly cost us thousands of good dues-paying members. In either case, prior to every ballot, we are reminded by the Worshipful Master to vote for the good of Masonry.

- A. Each time we ballot we must make several decisions. In most cases, the decision is simple and requires little thought. If we feel we have sufficient information on a petitioner to assure us he is likely to become an asset to the fraternity and the fraternity to him, we vote to elect. On the other hand, if we feel we have evidence that the fraternity would not benefit from his membership we vote to reject.

Yet, sometimes the decision is not so clear and we must obtain sufficient information to place him in one of the two categories above. Only then can we cast an honest ballot.

Discussion

1. At what point, if any, should we consider declining membership in our decision? Describe a “marginal” petitioner for the degrees.
 2. Is the recommendation of the Investigating Committee an automatic approval? Is a negative report from the Investigating Committee an automatic rejection? How?
- B. You have been a signer on a petition that has been rejected. Prior to the letter from the Secretary, the petitioner phones you to ask the results of the ballot.

Discussion

1. What would you tell the petitioner?
2. Is there a possibility that you may be able to help the petitioner at a later date? He has shown an interest in the fraternity, should you try to deter this?
3. How could you handle the situation Masonically?

Other Reading

#4-78 *The Petitioner Knocks*

This and other pamphlets, Short Talk Bulletins, and videos are available from:

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