

# **Grand Lodge of Nebraska**



## **Five Steps to Enroll and Prepare Candidates**

Developed by the Membership Committee of the Grand Lodge of Nebraska  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

Candidates for Masonry can come from a variety of sources, but each will necessitate interaction with a knowledgeable representative of the lodge. Potential candidates will come from many sources including: friends, coworkers, neighbors and such and from members of the lodge; from an individual who has an interest in finding out about Masonry and has contacted the Grand Lodge via the Grand Lodge Website; or even someone who walks into the lodge unexpectedly.

No matter what the source, it is important that the potential candidate have an understanding of what Masonry can provide to him and what Masonry expects from him. The purpose of this “Five Steps to Enroll Candidates” is to satisfy that requirement and keep the potential candidate in Masonry for his lifetime. The jurisdictions of Washington, Kansas, and South Dakota have found a process similar to this to be very beneficial in obtaining individuals interested in Masonry, and retaining those who become Masons well into the future.

The process outlined in this document is not “one size fits all”, but is intended to provide a proven process that, if adopted and adapted for the steps that work for your lodge, will develop candidates that will be Masons for life.

## **THE STEPS**

### **STEP ONE – BRIEF INTERVIEW/DISCUSSION**

The first step of the process is for a lodge member to contact the potential Mason and have a short discussion with him regarding Masonry. This first contact can be in person or more likely in a phone conversation. Questions to ask may include: Why is he considering becoming a Mason? Does he know any friends or family members who are or have been Masons? What does he know about Masonry? Is he interested in a follow up face-to-face meeting?

If his interest continues, schedule a meeting preferably at the lodge. Encourage the potential candidate to bring any and all questions regarding Masonry, such as those listed in the next section.

## **STEP TWO – IN DEPTH INTERVIEW/DISCUSSION**

This meeting will be in person, either at the lodge building or another agreed upon location; preferably at the lodge. The lodge member or members that meet with the potential candidate will try to answer any and all questions or concerns he may have to enable him to make an informed decision whether to move forward or not. Some potential questions from the candidate may include:

- What is the financial and time commitment needed to be a Mason?
- Are there any activities for my wife and/or children?
- What do Masons do at their meetings and activities?
- What do Masons believe and why is Masonry important?
- What days / times does the Lodge usually meet and hold activities?

If the candidate does not ask those questions, you should bring up those topics and provide the answers for him.

Additionally, the questions and topics below are examples of other things you may want to cover with the candidate in this meeting.

- What are your motivations and desires for becoming a Mason? His honest answers and careful consideration of each question will help determine if proceeding further is the best course for himself and the lodge.
- Some of the areas to be explained are:
  1. The physical layout of a lodge room and why.
  2. The aprons, collars and other regalia Masons wear.
  3. Titles and offices in the lodge.
  4. The three levels of Craft Masonry: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason.
  5. What the process of becoming a Master Mason entails.
  6. Dress code for different events.
  7. Wife and family involvement.
- At this point let him know that there will be ritual he must memorize as he moves through the different degrees. You might want to mention that this process is the same or very similar to the process used by Masons going back hundreds of years. If the candidate has expressed an interest in history or our Founding Fathers you might

mention that the process he will follow will be very similar to what our Masonic Founding Fathers went through when they joined the Craft.

- Let him know that if he had not already done so he may want to read one or more of the hundreds of books and/or review websites available on Masonry to increase his understanding. Caution him that there are a number of “theories,” in the popular media regarding Masonry. Some of these are conjecture based on different levels of evidence and others are just plain wrong. While the Grand Lodge of Nebraska takes no official stance on different author’s writings it is recommended he read with a critical eye and asking questions.
  1. Recommend he read “Freemasons for Dummies” by Christopher Hodapp, a simple and straight-forward description of Masonry, written by a Mason.
  2. Recommend he review the Grand Lodge of Nebraska Website at [www.glne.org](http://www.glne.org).

Let him know that this is the last meeting that will be set by the lodge. All men must decide if Masonry is for them by their own free will and accord and that moving forward with this process is now dependent on his initiative. This is not meant to be inhospitable or rude on our part but as a way to ensure becoming a Mason is his true desire.

### **STEP THREE – THE SOCIAL MEETING**

Let the candidate know the first two steps of this process have focused on his understanding of the lodge and giving him insights to what Masonry is about. The aim is to ensure the candidate feels comfortable at every point in his decision to move forward or not.

Now, step three is about him getting to know about the lodge on a personal level and get to know some of the members of the lodge. This step is less about Masonry as an institution and more about the interests and personalities of the local lodge members. Every lodge is different and has its own personality. Remind him that to be happy and fulfilled as a Mason it is important that he not only agree with and subscribe to the principles of Masonry, but that he have a genuine affinity for many of the members of the lodge as well.

This meeting may be at a regular lodge dinner, a special event open to the public, or may simply be to go out with members for coffee or a drink. Depending on the lodge, make sure he understands the meeting may be for him alone, or he and his wife, or the entire family (depending on his desires and the nature of the event). The key is to get to know as many members of the lodge as possible and for them to get to know him. Let him

know he is welcome to attend as many or as few social events as he would like. Be sure the potential candidate is given a schedule or a way to keep up with activities through a website. Also insure that whomever is going to sign his petition and/or be his mentor is part of this process.

If the potential candidate lives in an area with more than one lodge let him know there are other lodges and that he is free to ask about their activities. The potential candidate's goal should be to find the place where he will feel the most comfortable and welcome.

#### **STEP FOUR – THE PETITION**

Once a potential candidate has decided he would like to proceed with becoming a Mason let him know how his journey will progress. That formal first step is completion of the petition and initiation fee. After he has completed the petition let him know that his petition will be read in lodge during a regular communication. After the petition is read in lodge and accepted let the candidate know:

- An investigating committee of three members of the lodge appointed by the lodge master will contact him to arrange a meeting to review the petition and answer any questions the candidate may have.
- After the investigating committee meets with the candidate, his petition will be balloted on in lodge. After the ballot, the candidate will receive a phone call or email from the lodge secretary informing him of the ballot and, if favorable, asking the candidate to attend lodge on a specific date and time to be initiated into Masonry. Some lodges follow up with a letter that has the dates and times for all three degrees.
- He will be assigned a mentor after the first degree who will help him learn the proficiency requirements before progressing to the next degree. The mentor will also help him learn the different terms, symbols, and their meaning, plus answer any other questions he may have.
- He will prove his proficiency in the first degree, by being examined in open lodge, before proceeding to the next degree.
- He will need to prove his proficiency in the second and third degrees, as well.

#### **STEP FIVE – AFTER INITIATION AND BEING RAISED**

Stress to the new brother that after his initiation as an Entered Apprentice Mason he would be eligible to attend lodge meetings conducted in the Entered Apprentice Degree, but would not have a vote/ballot on any lodge business until he is a Master Mason. Also

let him know that after he is passed to the degree of Fellow Craft Mason he is eligible to attend lodge meetings with the same voting/balloting restriction as in an Entered Apprentice Lodge.

Once he is a Master Mason he is eligible to become fully engaged with the Lodge. Inform him that his mentor will continue to assist and guide him on his Masonic journey. The new Master Mason should be instructed that he has had the satisfaction of experiencing a unique set of degrees, the purpose of which provides him with the essential elements of a philosophy of living one's daily life. He has now bound himself to the ancient brotherhood which shares moral values and the aspiration of living an admirable life. The members of his lodge have invested many hours in teaching the basic principles, lectures, and other important material to support this goal. But that is not the end.

Remind him of a few things to consider.

- He needs to make the effort to make Masonry work for him. Remind him of the Entered Apprentice Degree when he was instructed to seek light.
- Reading books on such subjects as Masonic history, symbolism, and ritual will open a new world of interest.
- Encourage him to take part in degree work and all activities of the lodge. Remind him to pay attention to the ritual and working of the lodge and become a part of the process.
- By doing the above it will help the lodge become more fulfilling to him.

## SUMMARY

Having a structured and well executed plan for bringing in new members, you can greatly increase the chances that your candidates become lifelong members of your lodge. It's hard to over emphasize how important first impressions can be for new Brothers. If the process feels clunky, disorganized, or chaotic then the new member is left with a first impression that can tarnish his opinions of your lodge or Masonry in general for a long time.

Some people grow up with a relative who is active in Masonry and they probably have a very good idea of what the Craft is all about and what is expected. However, for those who haven't been raised in an active Masonic family the process of joining a lodge can seem quite intimidating. Any time anyone is in an unfamiliar circumstance it's natural for there to be nervousness and trepidation. Having a well-structured process for bringing a candidate into your lodge will go a long way towards making him feel at ease, because he will be given ample opportunity to ask questions and get to know people before he stands before a closed door ready to seek admission for the first time.