

Masonic Membership Outreach Handbook

A Step-By-Step Guide To Increase The Number Of Masons In Your Lodge, (Not Just Add Members)

Increasing the membership in your lodge isn't brain surgery or rocket science, but it does require you to follow certain guidelines if you are to be successful in growing the number of Masons in your lodge, not just expanding the number of new members. Perhaps you don't personally feel totally comfortable talking to others about Freemasonry or inviting them to become Masons. Perhaps you believe that your lodge has developed a successful process of getting prospective members to petition your lodge on a regular, continuing basis. Regardless of your present level of comfort and activity in membership matters, however, it is absolutely critical that you understand and employ the concept of enrollment.

Enrollment is described in detail in the Passport to Light, but for our purposes, suffice to say that it is a complete process whereby a man who is interested in becoming a Mason, is entered, passed and raised to the degree of a Master Mason, and is purposefully transformed into an active and supportive Mason. He becomes fully enrolled when he understands the goals of the fraternity, supports those goals through his active participation in lodge activities and recommends the organization to others. In other words, he is enrolled when he becomes an advocate for Masonry.

Many lodges have no problem bringing in new members, but they fail to realize that membership isn't an activity, it is a process. Unless you complete the entire process, you may gain members, but you will likely not have increased the number of Masons. However, if you fully enroll new members, not only will they become Masons in every sense of the word, they will also be promoters of Masonry in general and your lodge in particular. More about full enrollment later, but for now, let's concentrate on the recruitment process.

As mentioned earlier, recruiting new members is not a difficult task, if you have the right procedure in place. In fact, it can be described in 4 simple words: Identify, Invite, Initiate, and Involve.

Identify

How can you recruit new members if you don't know where to look? Potential candidates are located all around you, but you may never know it. Identify men in your community who would meet the qualifications of membership. Have trouble coming up with names? Consider the following:

- Prospect Prompter (*included in this recruitment package*)
- Telephone Book
- Relatives of present or past members
- Look through the local newspaper for people who recently or will celebrate 25-year wedding anniversaries or even wedding

announcements. Both of these events help identify potential "Baby-Boomers" who may find themselves with more time on their hands. These are men who now are looking for exactly what Masonry has to offer - a chance to "give back" to their communities, a sense of belonging, fraternal relations, etc.

- Don't overlook men who have expressed an interest in the past, even those who may have taken their 1st or 2nd Degree(s). Maybe it simply wasn't the right time or perhaps there were other circumstances that prevented them from becoming a Mason.

Invite

Invite your friends and acquaintances to become Masons. Most people don't join an organization on their own – they need to be and expect to be asked. The vast majority of men never knew (nor understand why) they had to ASK to become a Mason. Now that we can ask, the best way to get someone interested in becoming a Mason is to do just that--ask HIM. Use the Invitation to Petition (*included in this recruitment package*) for those men who you think would benefit from becoming a Mason. Learn how to properly use the Invitation to Petition – it isn't for every occasion.

When talking with friends or acquaintances about Masonry, keep in mind the following:

- Avoid the words “join” or “ask,” both of which imply an expectation from the friend with whom you want to share your Masonry. *In other words, they will think you are trying to “get them into something.” No one likes to be sold.* Instead, use terms such as “become a Mason” or say that you'd like to “share your Masonic experience with them.”
- Focus on the benefits to him instead of on the features of Freemasonry.

If the friend or potential Mason has been elected via the terms of the Invitation to Petition, formally invite him to become a Mason in writing with a letter or even with a regular invitation greeting card. (But follow-up in person!)

Whether you are formally inviting the man or simply talking informally about Masonry, you will at some point have to talk with your friend in person, so it is important for you to be comfortable about talking Masonry.

Some brothers have avoided talking with their friends about becoming a Mason – afraid of being asked a question(s) for which they had no answer. The best way to combat this problem is to: a) increase your own personal knowledge about Masonry, and b) be aware of the questions that are most likely to be asked (*see enclosed list of Frequently Asked Questions FAQs*). Be prepared ahead of time for questions that are likely to come. Review the complete answers, but be ready to provide the quick, short, to-the-point response. Be able to explain the initiation process in a few short sentences

(including the initiation fee and annual dues). Have some examples in mind of activities of the lodge, especially those that have benefited the community or schools.

Perhaps the best way to communicate with others about the fraternity is to simply consider your personal Masonic experience. Why did you become a Mason? Why do you remain a Mason? What experiences associated with Freemasonry have enriched your life? If your son or daughter, or grandson or granddaughter for that matter were excelling in sports or music, you'd be telling your friends and neighbors all about it. Why? Because you're proud of them – and you should be. Aren't you also proud of your Masonic membership? Share your Masonic Pride!!!

Initiate

Initiate and FOLLOW-THROUGH on that invitation. If after talking with your friend, he says he needs more time to think about it, or he must talk to his wife, do not push for an immediate decision. Do follow-up and GET BACK WITH HIM AT AN AGREED UPON TIME. If he is ready to join now, make sure you have a Petition on hand, give it to him and offer to assist him in filling it out. Collect the proper Initiation Fee, inform him of the process of reading and voting on his Petition, assume approval and schedule a date for his Initiation. DON'T DROP THE BALL!!!

When it comes time for his initiation to take place, make sure you and the lodge make a good first impression on the new candidate. Everything that the candidate sees, hears, smells or tastes makes an impression on him and communicates something about your lodge. With that in mind, consider the following:

- Every part of the Masonic Temple must be clean and orderly. The candidate's garb should also be freshly laundered. The aprons should be neatly displayed, not wadded up in a pile. Let your members, as well as neighboring lodges know that you are having a degree on that date. Do your best to fill the sidelines, which will communicate an active, vibrant organization to a candidate, instead of one unable to get members to show up at anything.
- When speaking to the candidate, don't use Masonic jargon that he won't understand. Also, don't talk amongst yourselves while ignoring him – include him at every opportunity. After all, he is the only reason you are having degree work that night.
- Is your lodge room musty, damp, dirty or dingy? Does it have a distinctive unpleasant odor? Take care of this before you initiate a candidate.
- Is the temperature properly set and maintained? Take care of this in order to have and provide a pleasant atmosphere for the degree conferral.
- Have refreshments available after the degree, making sure the food and drink you offer is pleasant to smell and taste. Consider having cold beverages as well as hot coffee.

- Don't just tell your candidate when and where his initiation will be held. PICK HIM UP AND TAKE HIM THERE.

Remember, he is your guest and should be accorded all the courtesies and hospitality that guests deserve, and that you would want to receive should you be a guest. He continues to be a guest—and deserve this special treatment—throughout this process and until you have completed his enrollment as a full Mason.

For instance, if you decided to plant a pear tree to assure a ready supply of sweet, fresh pears (and we all know there is nothing like a good pear), you would expend significant effort to assure that this tree thrives. You might even plant several pear trees for the benefits of cross-pollination. You would watch for signs that your pear trees put down good roots. You would water, fertilize, mulch, stake, and protect the trees from pests. In its early days, weeks and months, you would check on them frequently to assess general health and growth. You would provide protection from the ravages of winter and devastation of a too hot summer. And you would continue these activities year in and year out because a pear tree is a long-term investment, not a single-season crop like tomatoes or beans. The new members in your lodge who are in transition to become Masons deserve no less attention and for no shorter period of time.

Involve

The Masonic activation process can be broken down into four specific responsibilities that must be completed in sequence. And if you are doing this right, you may already have taken care of some:

See it – Learn it – Do it – Teach it

See what Masonry is all about – experience it.

Learn enough about Masonry to talk intelligently comfortably with others.

Live your Masonry by being energetic in and around your lodge.

Teach your new members how to do the things that you and your fellow pillars of the lodge take responsibility for.

Don't Forget, Membership Is A Process, Not An Activity

Remember, simply bringing in a new member won't get the job done. He must be mentored throughout his first year and enrolled in your lodge. (*More information about enrollment can be found throughout the Passport to Light.*) Your job isn't finished when you collect the signed petition and initiation fee. Your job isn't finished after the new member has been a Mason for a year. Your job isn't even finished when you have enrolled him in the lodge. Your job is only completed when you have taught the new brother what he needs to know, including what he needs to know to one day take over your responsibilities. In short, your job isn't finished until you have trained your replacements, and trained them to recruit and train their replacements... Masonry has a proud heritage; if you want it to have a bright future you must plan and act accordingly. Masonry isn't just for the here and now, it is for the future.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) About Masonry

Q. What is Masonry all about?

A. *Freemasonry is the world's oldest and largest fraternal organization. It is a brotherhood or society of men from all social and economic classes coming together for the sole purpose of making good men better. Better for themselves, better for their families, better for their communities and better men for their God.*

Soundbite: Masonry is a fraternity – a brotherhood where men of good character get together to improve themselves and their communities.

Q. What do Masons Do?

A. *As mentioned above, one of the primary goals of Masonry is self-improvement, which is a natural by-product of a member's Masonic experiences. As a fraternal organization, bonds of brotherhood are formed between the members, which can result in lifelong friendships between brothers who share similar values, but who may come from an tremendously different background.*

In addition, Masonic Lodges are usually involved with a variety of charitable and community involvement projects. Many lodges/Masons are also involved in volunteer work at local schools. Because Freemasonry is not controlled by a central bureaucratic hierarchy, there is no single, central cause or charity. It is up to the individual lodge and/or state to determine the best method and object of their charitable means.

*Currently, the total Today in North America, the Masonic Fraternity continues this tradition by giving almost \$1.5 million each day to causes that range from operating children's hospitals, providing treatment for childhood language disorders, treating eye diseases, funding medical research, contributing to local community service, and providing care to Masons and their families at Masonic Homes.**

Soundbite: Masons are engaged in numerous charitable and civic projects for the benefit of others.

Q. When did Masonry originate?

A. *No one knows with certainty how or when the Masonic Fraternity was formed. A widely accepted theory among Masonic scholars is that it arose from the stonemasons' guilds during the Middle Ages. The language and symbols used in the fraternity's rituals come from this era. The oldest document that makes reference to Masons is the Regius Poem, printed about 1390, which was a copy of an earlier work. In 1717, four lodges in London formed the first Grand Lodge of England, and records from that point on are more complete.*

Within thirty years, the fraternity had spread throughout Europe and the American Colonies. Freemasonry became very popular in colonial America. George Washington was a Mason, Benjamin Franklin served as the head of the fraternity in Pennsylvania, as did Paul Revere and Joseph Warren in Massachusetts. Other well-known Masons

*involved with the founding of America included John Hancock, John Sullivan, Lafayette, Baron Fredrick von Stuben, Nathanael Greene, and John Paul Jones. Another Mason, Chief Justice John Marshall, shaped the Supreme Court into its present form.**

Soundbite: One of the fascinating things about Masonry is the fact that we *don't* know exactly when it began. We do know that it has a proud heritage but more importantly a bright future.

Q. Is Masonry a religion? A cult?

A. *It is neither a religion nor a cult. Freemasonry does not possess any theology or dogma, nor does it claim to lead to salvation. Although Masonry requires its members to believe in God, it does not specify, influence or advocate any particular sanctity or denomination. Masonry believes that it is up to the individual to determine the manner of worship that is best suited to him. Although every Masonic meeting begins and ends with a prayer, religion is not discussed in a lodge meeting. Freemasonry is religious in nature, but is by no means a religion in and of itself.*

Soundbite: Some have accused Masonry of being a cult partly because we don't specify that our members adhere to their particular denomination or theology – just a belief in a Supreme Being.

Q. Is Masonry a secret organization?

A. *No – People sometimes refer to Freemasonry as being a "Secret Society." In one sense the statement is true. Any social group or private business is "secret" in the sense that its business meetings may be open only to its members. In Freemasonry, the process of joining is also a private matter, and its members are pledged not to discuss with non-members certain parts of the ceremonies associated with the organization.*

Freemasonry does have certain handshakes and passwords, customs incorporated into later fraternities, which are kept private. They are means of recognizing each other-- necessary in an organization which spans the entire world and which encompasses many languages.

The tradition of using handshakes and passwords was very common in the Middle Ages, when the ability to identify oneself as belonging to a building or trade guild often made the difference in getting a job or in obtaining help for yourself and family. Today, Freemasons make the same pledge to every member that he will be offered assistance if he, or his family, ever requests it.

Freemasonry can't be called a "secret society" in a literal sense. A truly secret society forbids its members to disclose that they belong to the organization, or that it even exists. Much of the Masonic ritual is in books called "Monitors" that are widely available, even in public libraries. Most Freemasons wear rings and lapel pins which clearly identify them as members of the fraternity. Masonic lodges are listed in public phone books, Masonic buildings are clearly marked, and in many areas of the country Masonic lodges place signs on the roads leading into town, along with civic organizations, showing the time and place of meetings.

*In terms of what it does, what it teaches, who belongs, where it meets, there are no secrets in Freemasonry! It is a private fraternal association of men who contribute much toward the public good, while enjoying the benefits of the brotherhood of a fraternity.**

Soundbite: Masonry is an organization that is private in nature that has some secret forms of recognition.

Q. I've read that many of our Founding Fathers were Masons, is that true?

A. *Yes, quite a few of our colonial and Revolutionary War heroes were Masons, as have influential and famous people of all eras. This list of notable men include: George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, Paul Revere, John Hancock, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ty Cobb, Will Rogers, John Wayne, Arnold Palmer and many, many more.*

Soundbite: Yes, such as George Washington, Paul Revere, John Hancock, as well as Benjamin Franklin.

Q. How much of a time commitment is involved?

A. *As with most activities, the more you are willing to put into it, the more you will receive in return. In fact, Masonry is unique in that it yields far more in proportion to the amount of input than do most other organizations. In terms of actual time spent becoming and being a Mason, there are few requirements.*

Becoming a Mason involves certain steps. First, you fill out a petition (application) for membership and return it with the initiation fee to the man who gave it to you. After the lodge has approved your petition, the initiation process can begin. You become a Mason by being initiated in three separate, distinct and progressive ceremonies, called "degrees" (Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft and Master Mason). Traditionally, each degree is conferred at three different meetings by the lodge you are joining. In addition to the traditional method of becoming a Mason on three separate days/nights, you can become a Mason by taking all three degrees in one day at one of the Grand Master's One-Day Classes, held in different geographic regions in Iowa each year.

Soundbite: Becoming a member of a Masonic lodge requires approximately 3 evenings to receive your degrees plus enough time to review some educational material information and meet with another member after each degree.

Q. Is it expensive to join / belong?

A. *Each lodge has its own initiation and dues structure. The average initiation fee in the State of Iowa is around \$50 and the average annual dues are around \$40 per year.*

Soundbite: Our initiation fee is _____ and our annual dues, which you must pay after receiving the Master Mason Degree are _____.

Q. Can my family be involved? How?

A. *As in many organizations and activities, it is important to have the acceptance and support of our families. Masonry is a fraternity, meaning that it is a “men’s” organization. However, many lodges have activities that include wives and children. In addition, there are specific organizations related to Freemasonry that are designed for husband and wife membership and participation, such as Eastern Star and the White Shrine. There are also organizations for children, Rainbow and Job’s Daughters for girls and Demolay for boys.*

Soundbite: Most lodges include activities for wives and children of Masons. There may also be related organizations for men and women, as well as those for children.

Q. What’s In It For Me?

A. *Masonry provides a setting where you can confidently trust every other member, not just for yourself, but for your family as well.*

Masonry encourages freethinking, free speaking and spiritual growth, helping you grow to your fullest potential.

Masonry provides an opportunity to meet outstanding individuals from every walk of life; people whom you would not otherwise have the chance to meet.

Masonry’s core beliefs are Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth.

Masonry provides self-development opportunities, leadership experience and the chance to improve in public speaking.

Masonry provides a setting where you can seek support as well as to offer it.

Masonry provides a reinforcement of your moral values and virtues.

Masonry provides an opportunity to spend time with a group of brothers where you will feel encouraged to become a better man. Not better than others, but better than you might otherwise have been.

Masonic teachings help you to become better equipped to serve your church and community.

Masonry provides opportunities to meet with established members of your community and to become a larger part of your community.

Soundbite: Masonry provides an opportunity to make new friends, grow as an individual and leave a positive impact on my community *while having a good time.*

Masonic Outreach Scripts

(After The Friend Has Been Elected To Receive An Invitation To Petition)

Exchange small talk to build rapport with your friend/acquaintance

You: Hi Don – have you got a few minutes to talk?

Don: *Sure – what's on your mind?*

You: Well, it's something that I've been meaning to talk to you about for some time now, but was just waiting for the right moment. Don't worry, I'm not going to try and sell you something or take you to one of those "Opportunity Meetings."

Don: *Whew! I'm sure glad of that.*

You: There's an organization that I have been involved with for some time now and I really think it is something that you'd enjoy as well.

Don: *What is it?*

You: You've probably heard of the Masons, right?

Don: *Yeah, I think so – isn't that some type of secret society?*

You: Not at all. Most Masonic lodges are listed in telephone books and many of us wear rings, lapel pins and other types of representative insignias and/or jewelry. Many lodges also have signs at each entrance into their city, displaying their meeting dates and times. However, we are a private organization because only members can attend most of our meetings.

Don: *We've known each other a long time, why haven't you talked about the Masons before?*

You: That's a fair question, Don. You see, until recently, our membership was not only private; it was restricted to those men of good character who *asked us* if they could become members.

Don: *That seems kind of strange. How would anyone know about that rule? Most organizations are just the opposite – you have to be invited to join.*

You: That's exactly right, Don, and that's exactly why I wanted to talk with you. As I mentioned, until recently, we couldn't really ask or invite someone to become a Mason. For quite a while, I have thought that you were a man of good character and someone who would get a lot out of being a member of our fraternity.

We had a meeting the other night and I put forward your name as a person who would be a good member, but more importantly, someone who would benefit from what Masonry has to offer. The rest of the guys in my lodge agreed and voted to extend to you an invitation to become a Mason. You've probably received those credit card solicitations – you know the ones that say, "You're Pre-Approved?" Well, our invitation is like that in one respect in that you have basically been pre-qualified for membership. However, our invitation is considerably more meaningful than any credit card you will ever need.

Don: *What kind of benefits?*

You: There are many benefits to being a Mason – you may discover some that I have not. Here is a card that lists 10 of the most frequently listed benefits. In a nutshell, Masonry provides an opportunity to make new friends, grow as an individual and leave a positive impact on my community *while having a good time.*

As I mentioned earlier, Don, I have enjoyed my Masonic experience a great deal and would like to share it with you – I think you'd enjoy it as well.

If he doesn't go for it at this point, leave the 10 Reasons card, a Petition and any other informational brochures you might have and ask him to take them home with him and look over. Then promise to call him back in a day or to AND DO IT.

KEY POINTS:

- Be yourself – talk to him as your friend, not as a potential member.
- Think of mutual friends who are brothers and mention them in your conversation.
- Review the list of Frequently Asked Questions and the Top 10 Reasons to Become a Mason so that you can be prepared to answer his questions.
- Think of your own Masonic experiences and what Masonry has meant to you and relate it to him.
- Don't use Masonic jargon – these references will likely have no meaning for him.
- Don't "...ask him to join your lodge." Instead, "...invite him to become a Mason."
- Don't say, "... you'd be a good Mason," or "...you'd be a good member." Instead, say, "I think you'd really benefit from being a Mason because..." or "I think you'd really enjoy being a Mason."
- Talk about the benefits to him for joining, not benefits to the lodge.
- Again, be natural – be yourself. Talk to him as your friend because that is the reason he will join, not because of what "he can do for your lodge." He will become a Mason because he sees that the fraternity is meaningful to you and others, not because of what he can contribute.

Masonic Outreach Scripts **(NOT Connected to Invitation To Petition)**

Exchange small talk to build rapport with your friend/acquaintance

You: Hi Don – have you got a few minutes to talk?

Don: *Sure – what’s on your mind?*

You: Well, it’s something that I’ve been meaning to talk to you about for some time now, but was just waiting for the right moment. Don’t worry, I’m not going to try and sell you something or take you to one of those “Opportunity Meetings.”

Don: *Whew! I’m sure glad of that.*

You: There’s an organization that I have been involved with for some time now and I really think it is something that you’d enjoy as well.

Don: *What is it?*

You: You’ve probably heard of the Masons, right?

Don: *Yeah, I think so – isn’t that some type of secret society?*

You: Not at all. Most Masonic lodges are listed in telephone books and many of us wear rings, lapel pins and other types of representative insignias and/or jewelry. Many lodges also have signs at each entrance into their city, displaying their meeting dates and times. However, we are a private organization because only members can attend most of our meetings.

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You: That’s exactly right, Don, and that’s exactly why I wanted to talk with you. As I mentioned, until recently, we couldn’t really ask or invite someone to become a Mason. For quite a while, I have thought that you were a man of good character and someone who would benefit from being a member of our fraternity.

Don: *What kind of benefits?*

You: There are many benefits to being a Mason – you may discover some that I have not. Here is a card that lists 10 of the most frequently listed benefits. In a nutshell, Masonry provides an opportunity to make new friends, grow as an individual and leave a positive impact on my community *while having a good time.*

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Masonic Outreach

Sample Language To Be Used In Invitational Letter Or Greeting Card After Invitation To Petition Has Passed In Lodge

Dear Don,

You and I have known each other for some time now and there is something that I've always wanted to talk with you about. You may be aware that I am a member of the local Masonic lodge. Masonry has been a very important part of my life and it is something that I believe you would benefit from as well.

The benefits that Masonry has to offer the individual, as well as the community, are too numerous to mention in this note, but I have enclosed a card which lists ten of the most frequently mentioned reasons why men have become and remained Masons. My name, email address and phone number are listed on the back panel, as are some web site addresses that can provide you with even more information about Freemasonry. Another brochure is also enclosed which provides even more information.

Don, becoming a Mason is one of the best things I have ever done. The men that I have met through Masonry are some of my closest and dearest friends and among the most important people in my life, outside of my family. Masonry is not for everyone, but I truly believe that you would get a lot out of Masonic membership, as have I. Only men of good character are accepted into our fraternity and you certainly fit that description. And this isn't just my opinion – at a recent meeting of our lodge, I proposed your name as being someone we would like to invite to become a member. I am very pleased, though not at all surprised, that this suggestion was unanimously approved.

That is one of the reasons behind this letter – to invite you to become a member of _____ Lodge. As I mentioned earlier, my Masonic experiences have been among the best times of my life. I would like to share that with you. Please look over the information enclosed with this letter. If you have any further questions, please give me a call or email at your convenience and I'll be happy to sit down and talk with you.

Thanks, I look forward to talking with you personally about Freemasonry.

Sincerely,

Joe Mason

PS. Is Masonry for you? I don't know, but I can truly say that Masonry has provided an opportunity for me to make new friends, grow as an individual and leave a positive impact on my community *while having a good time.*

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Sample Language To Be Used In Invitational Letter Or Greeting Card NOT Connected To Invitation To Petition

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