

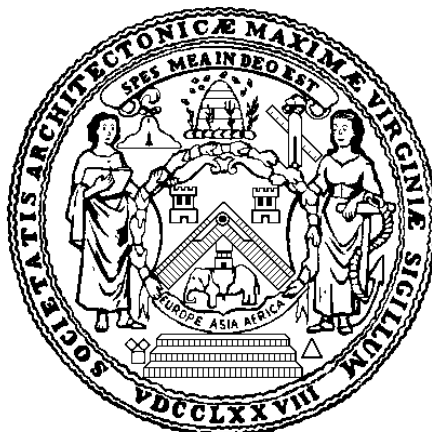
*The Virginia Masonic
University*

New Mason Curriculum

Instructor's Manual

Master Mason Section

January, 2012



Grand Lodge of Virginia A.F. & A.M.

VMU – Master Mason Section

The following is Section Three of the Virginia Masonic University (VMU), New Mason Education Curriculum. This section covers the Master Mason (MM) Degree and is one of three, along with the sections for the Entered Apprentice (EA) and Fellowcraft (FC) Degrees. All three sections are meant to provide the newly raised Mason with continuing education and a more in-depth view of the principles, philosophy, history, and protocol of Freemasonry. In addition, they provide further symbolic interpretation of the EA, FC, and MM Degrees. After completion of the three sections of the New Mason Curriculum, a Master Mason may then wish to proceed to the more advanced studies found in the “Officer Training” or “Advanced Studies Curriculum.”

The VMU New Mason curriculum has been created using the best materials available from the Acacia Lodge No. 16 Primary Instructional Program (PIP), the Fredericksburg Lodge No. 4 Standards of Learning, and the Herndon Lodge No. 264 Alternative Program. It incorporates material from the Mentor’s Manual, Degree Booklets, Alternate Education Booklets, as well as material from various historical and philosophical studies.

As an Instructor, you will present the VMU New Mason Curriculum in a classroom setting at the Lodge. You will then have the student’s Mentor follow up with each student to discuss the material and answer questions.

- 1) You will present the material for each section (EA, FC, MM) in two, 2-hour sessions, making a total of 12 hours of classroom instruction covering all three sections. The first class for the MM will cover Parts 1-3. The second class will cover Part 4-5.
- 2) As an Instructor, you will ensure that each student is properly prepared to answer the assessment questions for each section. After the completion of each section, the student should be examined by a committee of three Master Masons at the Lodge before proceeding to the new section.

- 3) Upon successful completion of all three VMU New Mason sections, the student will be issued a certificate from the Grand Lodge of Virginia Committee on Education and will then be encouraged to proceed to the Advanced Studies Curriculum.
- 4) Students who have successfully completed the New Mason curriculum and are interested in teaching should be encouraged to apply for VMU teacher certification through their DEO.

I. PHILOSOPHY

BASIC TEACHINGS OF THE MASTER MASON DEGREE

As we've learned previously, the three-degree system of Blue Lodge Masonry represents a progressive system directed toward perfecting human nature. It is a unique and fascinating system of degrees concentrating on three parts: body, mind and soul. The Entered Apprentice Degree focused on our ability to control our most basic appetites and desires, the Fellowcraft degree addressed our intellectual development. With the Master Mason Degree, we now consider our spiritual development and the great truth that there is life after death.

Remember, the overall goal of our degree system is "Masonic transformation," whereby a man is transformed from the inside out, pursuing the right things in life as a matter of habit. And yet, even in the Master Mason Degree, we are still firmly rooted in the world of philosophy, and not religion. Although some Masons disagree on whether the degree rituals are more of a mystical or rational nature, all would agree that we in no way are attempting to provide the means of salvation, which being the ultimate goal of life, is the primary mission of religion. We simply stress those aspects of a man's spiritual aspirations and journey that are common to all men, bringing us together in a solemn way under one roof.

- Encourage a discussion on the value of religious and spiritual life.
- Discuss some examples of Masonic transformation.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DEGREE

In the first two degrees, the Lodge is a symbol of the world. In the Degree of Master Mason, the Lodge is a representation of the Sanctum Sanctorum or Holy of Holies of King Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem, which itself was a symbol of Heaven, a place where God dwelled. This Degree is the climax of the teachings of the Blue Lodge. It is the culmination of all that has been taught to the candidate in the two preceding ceremonies.

At this point the candidate has symbolically, if not actually, balanced his inner natures and has shaped them into the proper relationship with the higher, more spiritual parts of himself. His physical nature has been purified and developed to a high degree. He has developed stability and a sure footing. His mental faculties have sharpened and his horizons have been expanded. The candidate is now ready to approach the portal of the Sublime Degree of Master Mason.

Being “Raised to the Sublime Degree” is the appropriate terminology. Sublime is defined as being exalted or elevated so as to inspire awe and wonder. And it also means to undergo sublimation that, like distillation raises and reforms a substance at a higher level. The Degree portrays the removal of everything that keeps us from rising to that state of improvement from which we are able to absorb the great lessons of this degree.

One of the primary goals of the Master Mason Degree is to symbolize the great doctrine of immortality – which it accomplishes in dramatic fashion. One of the greatest lessons to a man from this Degree is, that having been faithful to his trust, he must at last die in order to attain the ultimate rewards of his fidelity. His old self must die and a new one reborn as he prepares himself for the future. Each reexamination of this Degree by a brother yields new meaning concerning these important lessons.

- Discuss the death and raising of the Hiram Abiff character. What is symbolically being renewed?

II. HISTORY

Freemasonry is not a religion, but it is religious. It requires a belief in God, but articulates no path to salvation, leaving that to the various religions. However, Freemasonry was influenced by various religious strains and doctrines.

Freemasonry flourished during the Enlightenment, and one of the strongest religious and philosophic currents of that time was Deism. This was the belief that there is a grand architect and creator of the universe, i.e. God, but that after creating the universe he moved on to “other things” and generally does not intervene in the affairs of man in this world. Therefore, Deists were very interested in the investigation of nature (natural philosophy), which being the handiwork of God, would reveal something of his nature. However, they distrusted revelation, as recorded in the Bible through the prophets, believing it to be superstition. Notable Deists include the philosopher Voltaire, Lord Bolingbroke, and Thomas Payne, author of “Common Sense.”

- Discuss the concept of intelligent design and what can be learned about God by observing his creation (natural philosophy).

Deism was incorporated into the belief system of various Enlightenment figures in different ways. For some the influence was slight and they remained traditional Christians, using these ideas to further their intellectual curiosity in the area of religion. Others were more significantly influenced by the tenets of Deism and it became for them

a true religion – although Deism itself never took hold as a traditional church. The influence of Deism spread from Europe to America and the same broad spectrum of adherence to deistic principles was found among the Founding Fathers:

- Orthodox Christian – Sam Adams, Patrick Henry
- Unitarian – John Adams
- Christian Deist – George Washington, James Madison, James Monroe
- Non-Christian Deist – Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Payne, Ethan Allen

While some of the Enlightenment figures and some early Masonic leaders were influenced by Deism, Masonry is not Deism. However, there are some deistic influences in the ritual, especially in the Middle Chamber lecture on the subject of Geometry. Deistic names for God include the “Divine Watchmaker” and “Divine Providence” (see language of Declaration of Independence). An area for further study might be to examine Deism as a philosophical movement during the Enlightenment and then explore in greater detail how it has affected our Masonic ritual.

In addition to the interest in deistic principles, there was during the Renaissance and Enlightenment a great revival of interest in all things Classical, among these was interest in the ancient mysteries. Thus, a second powerful influence on the development of the Masonic Degree system was “The Mysteries.”

The Mysteries were religious cults of the Greco-Roman world, dedicated to a particular God, which restricted admission to those who had gone through secret initiation rites. The Eleusinian Mysteries (considered the greatest of its kind) were initiation ceremonies held annually by the cult of Demeter and Persephone based at Eleusis in ancient Greece. They began in the Mycenaean period (c. 1700 BC), lasting up to 392 AD, when they were closed by the Roman Emperor Theodosius I.

There is no evidence of any direct link between Masonry and the mysteries, however, the creators of speculative Masonry clearly borrowed some ritualistic practices from the mysteries, e.g. revelation of “esoteric” knowledge by degrees, purification of initiate, circumambulation, and use of the blind fold before revealing the light.

➤ Why does Masonry incorporate these mystical devices into its ritual?

Before the Grand Lodge era, Masonry originally had one degree for making a Mason (Entered Apprentice or similar term), with some evidence of a Fellowcraft ritual in Scotland. A two-degree system was put in place about 1720, later confirmed in the Constitution of 1723. The third degree was added about 1725, for which we find the first evidence in the minutes from Lodge No. 83 in London, 1732. This third degree was firmly implanted in Masonry by the time the Constitution of 1738 was finalized.

It is generally believed that Dr. James Anderson, a Presbyterian Minister and framer of the Constitution of 1723, and Dr. Jean Desagulier, early Grand Master and fellow of the

Royal Society, played the central role in constructing the Master Mason Degree. It is important to note that these men, although being greatly influenced by the spirit of rationality, science, and natural philosophy so prevalent in the Enlightenment, were nonetheless Christian, and that Christian heritage had a very significant influence on Masonic development. Thus, our tradition of dedicating our Lodges to the Holy Saints John, two eminent Christian saints continues to this day.

In sum, Freemasonry, as it developed, was influenced by many traditions, to include the operative Masonic tradition, the Mystery Schools, classical Greek ethics, Judeo-Christian ethics, Deism, and late Renaissance traditions such as Neo-Platonism, Alchemy, and Hermeticism. And yet, despite these various influences, Masonry favors no particular religion, and is dedicated to bringing good men of all religions, creeds, and countries together under one roof for the benefit of the individual and society at large. Out of these various influences and traditions, Masonry developed a unique philosophic system all its own, depicting life, death, and rebirth in dramatic form, as has been done by many civilizations in ages past. It symbolizes the ongoing search for truth, and uses drama, ritual, and symbolism to make more vivid the lessons that may assist us on the great journey of self discovery and self improvement.

Reading Assignment:

- 1) *“The Masonic Myth,” Jay Kinney, Chapter 8*
- 2) *“The Builders,” Joseph Fort Newton, Part I, Chapter 3, “The Drama of Faith”*
- 3) *Ibid, Part III, Chapter 3, “The Spirit of Masonry”*

III. KNOWLEDGE OF THE MM DEGREE

SYMBOLISM OF THE DEGREE

After ceremonies in the first section which seem quite familiar, the candidate partakes of the central mystery drama of our Fraternity. The very nature of participating in this rite and assuming the role of Grand Master Hiram Abiff is to forge a link with the inner soul of our Fraternity.

The drama represents tragedy of the greatest magnitude – bad things happening to good people. Justice is given to the ruffians who betrayed Hiram, mercy is given to those who repented. The Master Mason’s Degree symbolizes the triumph of life over death. It exemplifies the power and the powerlessness of evil. Even though man can be laid low by the horrible conspiracies of another, yet the better part of man will live on, despite the evil done to him. There is a reward for those who live life the right way, even though it may not seem so at a given place and time.

- **Discuss examples of remaining faithful to principle, despite certain defeat or death.**

The Master Mason's Degree not only teaches the great truth of the immortality of the soul, it also teaches the resurrection of the body. This is done by referencing a messiah, the "Lion of the Tribe of Judah," from the line of David and Solomon. The actual phrase "Lion of the Tribe of Judah" appears only once in the Bible, in the Book of Revelation, where it refers to Jesus Christ. It would seem that the original intent by the founders was to suggest Christ, especially when contrasted with the immortality of the soul belief contained in the Jewish Dispensation. But as with most Masonic symbolism, its interpretation is not prescribed and can be interpreted by the individual Mason who reflects on these great and serious principles in accordance with his own traditions.

The lion has always been the symbol of might and royalty. In the Middle Ages, the lion became a symbol of resurrection. There were common tales that the lion cub when born lay dead for three days until breathed upon by its father. This breath brought the cub back to life. Representations of roaring lions symbolized the resurrection of the dead on the Last Day. The lion, being such a majestic animal, has long been considered the "king" of beasts; associated with the sun because of its mane. Its likeness is commonly found on the thrones and palaces of rulers. And because of its association with the sun and its correspondence to the zodiacal sign of Leo, the Lion is also considered a symbol of alchemical Fire.

The candidate is prepared for the Master Mason Degree in much the same way he was prepared for the previous Degrees. The mode of dress, entrance and reception retain a similar symbolic meaning and the obligations of the Third Degree expand upon the basic obligations already taken.

THE WORKING TOOLS

The Working Tools of a Master Mason are "all the instruments of Masonry." In the United States, the Trowel is especially assigned to this Degree. The Master Mason uses the Trowel to cement ties between Masons, and to spread Brotherly Love. It should be remembered that this Degree is specifically related to the soul and, as such, the Trowel is exalted as a tool of brotherly love.

THE LEGEND OF HIRAM

Hiram Abiff, the skilled artificer, was the Son of a Widow of the Tribe of Naphtali. The earlier accounts of Hiram are recorded in the 1st Book of Kings, 7:13 & 14. His coming to work on the great Temple at Jerusalem is mentioned in a letter written to King Solomon by Hiram, the King of Tyre, and recorded in II Chronicles, 2:13 & 14. The word Abiff is believed to mean "his father," and the name is often translated as "Hiram, my father." He was regarded as the father of the workmen on the Temple. One of the lessons of the legend of Hiram Abiff is that of fidelity to one's highest ideals.

The Hiram Abiff character is very similar to some of the Mystery School heroes. For example, the drama of the Egyptian god Osiris began with his tragic death, the search for his body by Isis, its discovery and restoration. The Greek god Dionysus was attacked by

the Titans. In the course of the fight he went through many transformations but was finally overcome. The Titans dismembered him, but in due time the goddess Rhea came to his aid and he rose glorious and entire. This formula is ancient. It is the concept of the sacred king, who in many instances is lame (which signifies his dedication), and is destined for sacrifice, that the earth might become regenerated and uplifted by divine power.

There are similar parallels with respect to Hiram as the “Son of the Widow.” The Egyptian god Horus, as the child of Isis and Osiris, was also the son of a widow. Hermes Trismegistus was called the stone “orphan.” There may also be a Manichaean origin to the terms “son of the widow” and “children of the widow.” The Manichaeans were called “children of the widow.”

THE THREE GRAND MASTERS

The three Grand Masters mentioned in our rituals concerning the building of the Temple are: Solomon, King of Israel; Hiram, King of Tyre; and Hiram Abiff. This is just one of many triads in Masonic ritual. We should note that in a number of religions Deity is regarded in three aspects, and we use devices such as these to provide a more serious and solemn tone for our ritual.

The secrets known only to these three Grand Masters represent Divine Truth, which was known only to them through Deity, and was not to be communicated to man until he had completed his own spiritual temple. Once these secrets were attained, a man could reap the rewards of a well-spent life, and travel to the unknown country toward which all of us are traveling. This is yet another device meant to stimulate our thinking and serve as a vehicle for further reflection.

TRAVELING IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

The goal of our ancient operative brethren was to become masters, so they might possess those secrets which would enable them to practice the art of the builder, no matter where they traveled, even in foreign countries.

The term “foreign countries” is used symbolically in Speculative Masonry, and is not necessarily meant to refer to a certain geographical location. Freemasonry itself is a foreign country to every new member. To fully appreciate and enjoy the privileges of membership, one must become familiar with its territory. He does this by learning its language, customs, and history.

Once raised, many of our members continue their journey into the inner recesses of the Craft. This can be a most rewarding experience of self-improvement. Truly, Freemasonry is the journey of a lifetime, and we are enjoined to continue to search for light and truth where ever it may be found.

➤ How has Masonry stimulated your mind to research different topics?

THE THREE RUFFIANS

There are many symbolic explanations for the appearance of these three ruffians in our ritualistic work. Their attempt to obtain the secrets not rightfully theirs, and the dire consequences of their actions, are symbolic of many things. Trying to obtain special knowledge by some means other than a reward for faithfulness makes the culprit both a thief and a murderer.

Each of us is reminded that rewards must be earned, rather than obtained by violence or devious means. We learn that hard work and perseverance are keys to success, that violence is never an acceptable form of conduct, except in self-defense, and that moral shortcuts can have serious consequences. The Ruffians also are symbolic of the enemies we have within ourselves: our own ignorance, passions and attitudes, which we have “come here to control and subdue.”

Another interpretation suggests that they represent tyrants, who seeking to enslave us, first by denying the right of free speech, symbolized as a blow to the throat. Second, by attacking our right to place our affections where we wish, symbolized as a blow to the heart. Finally, and most importantly, by attacking our ability to think for ourselves, symbolized as a blow to the brain.

LOW TWELVE

In ancient symbolism, the number twelve denoted completion. This sign arose from the twelve signs of the Zodiac being a complete circle and the twelve edges of the cube being a symbol of the earth. High Twelve corresponds noon, with the sun at its zenith, while Low Twelve denotes midnight, the blackest time of the night.

THE LOST WORD

There is also the idea of the lost word of Masonry and the attempt to recover it. The literal Master Mason word allowed them to work at various projects all over Britain, i.e. in foreign countries. However, the symbolic word can be taken to allude to the divine name of God pronounced only once a year by the High Priest in the Holy of Holies of the Jewish Temple.

The ongoing search for the true lost word of Masonry symbolizes and emphasizes the common aspects of man’s universal search for truth across time and space, in particular divine truth. Once the true Master Mason word was lost, a substitute was provided, which can be taken to symbolize that we cannot fully understand divine truth in this life. This search has gone on throughout history and around the world – a Mason may be found in every clime. In fact, Masonry prompts investigations into many fields of study, such as history, philosophy, and religion – this is symbolic of traveling in foreign countries.

The search for the lost word leads Masons to be open to receiving truth from any source, and to reexamine their opinions in light of new information. Thus, Freemasonry is devoted to freedom of thought, speech, and conscience. It also means that each of us needs to triumph over the prejudices, passions, and conflicts that may have developed within us. No one can be a true Freemason unless he sees each and every person, regardless of their color, race, religion, nationality or gender as worthy of respect and dignity.

THE SETTING MAUL

This was a wooden instrument used by operative masons to set polished stone firmly into a wall. The Maul has been shown to be a symbol of destruction from prehistoric times, and is shown many times in mythology. One of the best known is that of Thor, God of Thunder, who is shown as a powerful man armed with a mighty hammer. As Masons, we recognize it as a symbol of that event or condition that removes us from this earthly life.

THE SPRIG OF ACACIA

The Hebrews would plant a sprig of acacia at the head of a grave for two purposes – to mark the location of the grave, and to show their belief in immortality. Because of its evergreen nature, they believed it to be an emblem of both immortality and innocence.

The true acacia is a thorny plant, which abounds in the Middle East. Both Jews and Egyptians believed that because of its hardness, its evergreen nature and its durability, it signified immortality. It is believed that the acacia was used to construct most of the furniture and the tabernacle in the Temple. Acacia has red and white flowers. It is a tradition in the Near East that the Crown of Thorns was acacia.

RAISING OF A CANDIDATE

Most people do not understand what being “Raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason” means. This Degree is the sublime climax of Symbolic Freemasonry. If you learn only that the living, dying and raising of a Master is a drama, designed to teach the virtues of fidelity, faith and fortitude, you have received only partial light and have seen nothing but a moral lesson. In fact, the Degree delves into the deepest recesses of man’s nature. While it leads the initiate into the Sanctum Sanctorum of the Temple, it probes into the Holy of Holies in his heart.

As a whole, the Degree is symbolic of old age, by the wisdom of which we may enjoy the happy reflections consequent on a well-spent and properly directed life, and die in the hope of a glorious immortality. This Degree seeks to answer the age-old question put forth by Job - “If a man die, shall he live again?” It teaches no creed, no dogma, no doctrine, no religion; only, that there is immortality and that we must live our lives the right way, with this fact in mind.

HIEROGLYPHICAL EMBLEMS

In *The Three Pillars* we have the three great supports of Masonry - Wisdom, Strength and Beauty.

The Three Steps remind us of how youth, manhood and old age are each a separate stage of life, possessing its own duties and problems, and each calling for its own philosophy.

The Pot of Incense teaches that, to be pure and blameless in our inner lives is more acceptable to God than anything else, because that which a man really is, has far greater importance than which he appears to be. It is also a symbol of prayer and meditation.

The Beehive recommends the virtue of industry and teaches us that we should never rest while our fellow creatures are in need of assistance. It should be mentioned that bees have also been symbols of messengers from the heavens.

The Book of Constitutions Guarded By The Tyler's Sword is the emblem of law and order, and reminds us that our moral and spiritual character is grounded in law and morality as much as is government and nature. It teaches that no man can live a satisfactory life if he lives lawlessly.

The Sword Pointing To a Naked Heart symbolizes that the importance and ultimate expectation of justice, and that if a man be unjust in his heart, he will be found out.

The All Seeing Eye shows that we live and move and have our being in God; that we are constantly in His Presence, wherever or whatever we are doing. The single eye is found in many countries from Egypt to India: the Eye of Horus, the Eye of Shiva and so on.

The Anchor and Ark stand for that sense of security and stability of a life grounded in truth and faith, without which sense there can be no happiness.

The Forty-Seventh Problem of Euclid, or the Pythagorean Theorem, is a very potent and important symbol in Freemasonry. Its properties have incredible implications in many different areas both practical and theological. Plutarch informs us that the Egyptians attributed the holy family of Osiris, Isis, and Horus to this specific triangle: Osiris the vertical (3), Isis the horizontal (4), and Horus the diagonal (5).

In *The Hourglass* we have the emblem of the fleeting quality of life.

The Scythe reminds us that the passing of time will end our lives as well as our work, and if ever we are to become what we ought to be, we must not delay.

Reading Assignment:

- 1) *"The Craft and its Symbols – Allen E. Roberts*

OBJECTIONS TO THE DEGREE

A religion's main mission is to provide the path of salvation for its flock, i.e. to save souls. When an institution like Masonry provides a Degree that focuses on the spiritual side of man, it is not unreasonable or unexpected that religious leaders would want to understand what is being taught. Many religions, upon examination of the principles of Freemasonry, find no fault with those principles and see no conflict with their religious teachings.

A problem arises when the proponents of a particular faith are so zealous and rigid about their system and plan for a man's life, that they cannot countenance different approaches to the truth. Rather than seeing Freemasonry as an excellent support for religion as well as for promoting civic virtue, they see it as encouraging "error" because it is accommodating of different views and belief systems. They seek to convert everyone to their understanding of the world, and find us subversive to their mission because we are willing to join together men from various religious traditions.

➤ Discuss some historic examples of narrow-mindedness and lack of toleration and the effect this had.

Let us address some of the FAQ's in this area.

- 1) Is Hiram Abiff a false saviour? No, Freemasonry does not claim him as a savior, but only as a symbol of the universal and timeless religious principles of morality, resurrection, and immortality.
- 2) Masonry promotes religious toleration and admits members of different religions. Does this amount to universalism? No, our purpose is not to promote a religious dogma, but to stress those elements in common to all good religions and men. Masonry holds that each man retains his personal religion and conception of God.
- 3) By using the term "GAOTU," does Masonry mean that all Gods are really the same God? No, there is no "Masonic" God and no attempt to supplant the God of the Bible or any other man's personal interpretation of God. It is simply a symbolic name that enables us to carry out our ceremonies and ritual. This is seen in "civic" ceremonies all the time, such as at a funeral for the President at the National Cathedral, or the dedication of a new building.
- 4) Is Masonry incompatible with Christianity? No. However, it bears mentioning that there have been studies by the Church of England and the Southern Baptist Convention that have raised questions in this area. Masonry has at times hurt itself by not coming forward more eagerly to conduct a thoughtful dialogue with these organizations.
- 5) Isn't it true that Masonry provides a false plan of salvation, i.e. one can get to heaven by "good works." No. Some religions may hold that good works have nothing to do with salvation; others may hold that good works are an aid but not a guarantee of salvation; still others may see good works as the way toward

salvation. But Freemasonry makes no specific claim one way or the other about how salvation can be attained. It only suggests that moral living (good works) is an important part of life, and we are unaware of any religious tradition that opposes this view.

IV. PROTOCOL

THE RIGHTS OF A MASTER MASON

These consist of Masonic Relief, Masonic Visitation, and Masonic Burial.

MASONIC RELIEF:

Masonic Relief may be applied for by any Master Mason – either to his own Lodge, or to an individual Master Mason. In every case, the individual asked has the right to determine the worthiness of the request and whether such aid can be granted without material injury to his family. Relief is a voluntary function of both the Lodge and the individual. If the Lodge's financial condition will not allow it to help, he can apply to the Grand Lodge for help. The widow and/or orphan of a Master Mason, who was a member of the Lodge at the time of his death, are similarly entitled to consideration if they apply for assistance. The same conditions as to worthiness and the ability and willingness of the Lodge apply in these cases.

MASONIC VISITATION:

Visitation of other Lodges is one of the greatest privileges of being a Master Mason. You can gain admission to another Lodge in one of two ways. You can be vouched for by another Brother, a member of the Lodge you are visiting, or by a visiting Mason who has already been admitted to the Lodge – if they previously sat in Lodge with you and thus have Masonic knowledge that you are a Mason in good standing.

If this is not possible, you will be examined by a committee appointed by the Worshipful Master. If you are visiting a Virginia Lodge, you will be asked to show your current dues card, to show that you are a Mason in good standing in a Lodge holden under the Grand Lodge of Virginia. If you are visiting another Grand Jurisdiction, your dues card will help to establish whether you are a Mason in good standing in a Lodge holden under a Grand Lodge recognized by the Grand Lodge of the jurisdiction you are visiting.

It also is your right to ask to see the Charter of the Lodge to ensure yourself that the Lodge you are visiting is a regular Lodge holden under a Grand Lodge recognized by the Grand Lodge of Virginia. This is rarely done, because presumably you will have ascertained the regularity of the Lodge you will be visiting in advance, by either checking, or having the Secretary of your Lodge check, the current edition of the *"List of Lodges Masonic."*

The examination usually consists of a few questions to satisfy the committee that you are a Mason. It is helpful to have a reasonable familiarity with the memory work and know the modes of recognition in each Degree. After successfully passing the examination, the committee will vouch for you, the Worshipful Master will be informed and you may be admitted to the Lodge, and attend the meeting provided no member of the Lodge you are visiting has objection to sitting in Lodge with you.

THE RIGHT OF BURIAL:

The Masonic Funeral Service is conducted only at the request of a Brother or some member of a Mason's immediate family. The choice belongs to the family, not to the Lodge. This service can be held in a church, the Lodge room, funeral parlor, or grave site. It is a beautiful and solemn ceremony and, like Masonry itself, does not conflict with a man's personal religious beliefs. It is tradition that the Masonic Service either be the first or the last at the gravesite.

PUBLIC AND OTHER FORMAL CEREMONIES

There are a number of beautiful ceremonies, which reveal a side of the Craft not normally seen, in which the Master Mason should participate or simply observe.

Some of these are public ceremonies: the Public Installation of Officers; the Ceremony for the Laying of Cornerstones; the Ceremony of Consecrating, Dedicating and Constituting a New Lodge; the Presentation of Veterans' Pins; and the Masonic Evening Memorial Service or Funeral

In addition, as a Master Mason you will want to be present at the Official reception of the Grand Master and District Deputy Grand Master, and the opening of Grand Lodge.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A MASTER MASON

The constant responsibility of a Master Mason is "to preserve the reputation of the Fraternity unsullied." By leading a good life, the Mason will bring credit to himself and honor to the Fraternity, and this is the best means of carrying through our individual responsibility to our Lodge and our Craft.

We would all do well to remember that brotherhood is the cornerstone of our Fraternity. We should treat others with the same respect and consideration with which we would like to be treated. In all our actions, we should be an example of brotherly love in action, and thus, not be too hasty to condemn others. We do not know that in their place, and given the temptations they were presented with, that we would have resisted better than them. But even so, should we condemn one who is weaker than us? It is the Masonic way, if our Brother's conduct should slip, to whisper good counsel and offer our hand to him in a most friendly manner. But, there are circumstances where, in order to protect the reputation of the Fraternity, it will be necessary to bring Masonic charges against a Brother.

LODGE ATTENDANCE

We do not have a mandatory attendance requirement as ancient Lodges did nor as some foreign Grand Jurisdictions now have. And we do not have a penalty for not attending. However, every Master Mason has an obligation to be loyal to the Lodge which gave him Masonic Light and the benefits which come with his membership. This should be your inducement to attend Lodge as often as possible and to join in the fellowship that is such an important part of Freemasonry.

BALLOTING

Only Members in good standing have a right to vote. No member present can be excused from balloting on any petition before the Lodge. No member is permitted to retire from the Lodge to avoid casting his ballot. The white balls indicate an affirmative or favorable ballot, and the black cube indicates a negative or unfavorable ballot. If you do not know a moral reason why the petitioner should not be admitted to the Fraternity, you should accept the word of the Investigating Committee and the two vouchers, and cast a favorable ballot on a petition for membership.

If there is a moral failing of the petitioner that you are aware of, the time to raise that objection is *before the ballot is taken*. You have the right to speak to the Master privately and express your concern. This is one of the reasons we wait a full month after a petition has been presented before voting on it. However, in the end, if you know of some legitimate reason why the petitioner is morally unworthy, then for such proper Masonic - not personal - reasons, a black cube may be cast to protect the Lodge from an undesirable member.

As you approach the ballot box, examine your motives and be sure that the ballot you are about to cast will do justice to the candidate and Freemasonry. The Right to Secrecy of the Ballot is guaranteed by Masonic law, and custom allows each member to have perfect freedom in balloting on petitioners. No Brother should disclose how he voted and no Brother should inquire into how another Brother voted on a particular candidate.

EXAMINING VISITORS

This responsibility belongs to the Lodge itself and is delegated by the Master to a committee of Brethren who are to satisfy themselves that the visitor is a Master Mason in good standing in a regular and recognized Lodge. The Master may call upon any member of the Lodge to serve on the examining committee. It should be remembered that the purpose of examination is to prove that a visitor *is* a Mason, and not to test the extent of his Masonic proficiency. Kindness and courtesy should be shown to all visitors at all times.

VOUCHERS ON PETITIONERS

Before endorsing the petition of anyone for initiation into our Mysteries, you should know the applicant for a sufficient amount of time so that you can truly vouch for his moral character and reputation. In addition, you should take the time to discuss Masonry with the applicant. You should know why he wishes to become a Mason, what he expects and explain what may be expected of him.

You also should remember that signing the petition of a man who wishes to become a Freemason is a significant responsibility. By doing so, you are committing to assist him to learn and grow as a Mason. Nor does your responsibility end when he has been raised.

From the moment your sponsor his petition, you should consider yourself one of his mentors in Freemasonry.

INVESTIGATING PETITIONERS

This responsibility belongs to every member of the Lodge, and should not be taken lightly. Serving on an Investigating Committee should be regarded as a mark of special trust by the Master of your Lodge. It is a solemn responsibility. Only those who can be counted on to make a complete and impartial inquiry into the petitioner's character and determine his worthiness to become a Mason should be selected.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Your financial responsibilities are twofold. The first is in the area of mandatory support - the payment of annual dues. The second is in the area of voluntary contributions to certain charities, distressed worthy Brothers, and other Masonic organizations as you desire. By paying dues, each Brother carries his share of the expenses to run his Lodge. Regarding voluntary financial support, he must determine the extent of his participation, measuring the need against his ability to pay.

Any member failing to pay his dues for a period of more than twelve months is subject to suspension. There is no reason a Brother should be suspended for non-payment of dues. Not being able to pay dues can be handled easily and without embarrassment. No Lodge desires to suspend a Brother who is unable to continue payment of dues. A distressed Brother should inform the Master or the Secretary of his situation. One of these Officers will take care of the situation so no record is shown on the books and no debt is accumulated. This is not Masonic Charity, but rather Brotherly Love. In most cases, the other Brethren in the Lodge know nothing about his situation.

LODGE MEMBERSHIP

Although Entered Apprentices and Fellowcrafts are considered Masons in every sense of the word, one does not become a member of a Lodge until after being raised. Termination of membership can occur in one of four ways - demit, suspension, expulsion or death. One can apply for a demit (and then transfer to another Lodge) if his dues are current and he is otherwise in good standing.

You can also hold plural or dual membership in more than one Lodge. This sometimes occurs when a Mason raised in one Lodge then moves to another area and wants to become active in a new Lodge. One must be a member of a Lodge in order to become an officer there. Plural Membership refers to being a member of more than one Lodge in his jurisdiction; Dual Membership refers to being simultaneously a member of Lodges in two Masonic jurisdictions (Grand Lodges). See your Lodge secretary for proper handling of the paperwork.

APPENDANT BODIES

Once you have been raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason, you may choose to join any number of Masonic Appendant Bodies, for example, the Scottish Rite and the York Rite. These organizations confer degrees that may provide more light in Masonry. Depending on your interests you may, for example, also wish to join the Shrine, or the Tall Cedars, or become a member of the Philalethes Society, which is an international organization of Masonic Research. It offers members an outstanding quarterly publication, The Philalethes magazine, which includes excellent Masonic information from around the world.

The Order of the Eastern Star, Order of the Amaranth, and the White Shrine of Jerusalem are appendant bodies which admit both men and women. Often, they provide the chance for a husband and wife to share in the Masonic experience together. There are also three Masonic Youth Orders: The Order of Demolay for boys, the Order of Job's Daughters and the Order of Rainbow for girls. Each of these appendant bodies is an important part of the larger Family of Freemasonry.

MASONIC LAW

The basic law rests upon the Old Charges and the Constitutions of Masonry as these laws were compiled by the Reverend James Anderson, George Payne and John T. DeSaguliers around 1722-1723. Our own Virginia law began with these and has expanded as times and circumstances have required, until our present system of jurisprudence has evolved. The original Book of Constitutions was adopted by the Grand Lodge of Virginia in 1791. It is divided into 6 chapters: the first chapter has sections concerning God and religion, government and the civil magistrate, private qualities and duties, and the proposing of new members. The second chapter concerns a Lodge and its government. The third chapter concerns Grand Lodge; the fourth, the election and duties of Grand Lodge officers; the fifth concerns Grand Lodge charity; and the sixth concerns Grand Visitations and Communications. The reading of the Book of Constitutions is recommended to every Brother who comes into the Craft.

The legislation passed at the Grand Annual Communication, and all decisions of Grand Masters adopted by Grand Lodge are codified in a book called the Virginia Methodical Digest, which any Mason can obtain from the Office of the Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Virginia. The Methodical Digest is divided into five sections which deal with: Grand Lodge; the Subordinate Lodge; the Individual Mason; Masonic Offenses, Investigations, Charges and Trials; and the Life Membership in Perpetuity Plan. In addition, there is a section on decisions of Grand Masters concerning Cornerstone Ceremonies, Funerals, Masonic Home and Veteran's Emblems; a section on Grand Master's edicts; and one on standing resolutions.

MASONIC CHARGES

Masons in Virginia are required to: support the established Government; obey the civil law; keep inviolable the mysteries of the Order; preserve and obey the laws, resolutions and edicts of the Grand Lodge; observe the Ancient Landmarks of Masonry; and, discharge their duties and obligations to their families, to each other, and to mankind in general. Willful failure to comply with any of these requirements is a Masonic Offense.

Masonic charges may be brought in only one Lodge for the same offense, and then through the process of accusation, investigation by a committee, which the Worshipful Master will appoint, and the formulation and presentation of the charge(s) itself at a stated communication of the Lodge. A Trial Commission is then appointed, and its judgment can be appealed to the Grand Master. If found guilty, a Brother may be subject to reprimand, suspension, or expulsion from the Fraternity. Additional information on Masonic trials can be found in the Methodical Digest and in a Grand Lodge publication on Masonic Trials.

V. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. What are the jewels of a Master Mason? – The jewels of a Master Mason are friendship, morality, and brotherly love. We come into the Lodge as a friend of someone who signed our petition. We extend that friendship into brotherly love for our fellow Masons, and we encourage each other to act morally, honorably, and courteously toward all mankind.
2. What is the significance of the five points of fellowship? – The five points of fellowship teach us that we should be ready and willing to help our Brethren and that we can expect similar help from them.
3. What is meant by receiving Master's wages? – We get out of Masonry in proportion to what we invest in it. As we study its history and philosophy, as we associate with learned Brethren, as we visit various Lodges and meet the members, we gain personally and socially. MW Carl Claudy suggests that the wages of a Master Mason are the intangibles of love, friendship, respect, opportunity, happy labor, and association.
4. When is a man truly a Mason? – After a man receives the Degree of Entered Apprentice, we tell him he is a Mason; after he receives the Degree of Master Mason, he enjoys all of the rights and benefits of Freemasonry. But in a larger sense, we do not really become a Master Mason until we have internalized the moral values and philosophy of Freemasonry and put them to work in our daily lives. This occurs through the process of Masonic transformation.
5. Who was Solomon, King of Israel? – Solomon, the son of David and Bathsheba, was born about 997 B.C., and became King in 977 B.C. He reigned for 40 years before his death in 937 B.C. In the history of the Hebrew people, the reign of

Solomon stands out as one in which the greatest power, prosperity and recognition of that nation were achieved. The name, Solomon, means, peaceful; his reign was one of peace.

6. Who was Hiram, King of Tyre? – Hiram was a friend of King David and became both ally and friend of King Solomon. According to the Biblical accounts, he assisted Solomon by supplying certain materials for the construction of the Temple and, in return, received gifts from Solomon, including twenty cities (I Kings, 9:11). Our ritual assigns certain duties to Hiram of Tyre, but these duties are purely legendary.
7. When was the Grand Lodge of Virginia formed, and who was the first Grand Master? – The Grand Lodge of Virginia is the oldest independent Grand Lodge in the United States, for it was never a Provincial Grand Lodge, nor was it ever under the authority of a Provincial Grand Lodge. It has been continuously under the authority of the Grand Master of Masons in Virginia by the sovereign will of the Craft. The first Grand Master of Masons in Virginia was Justice John Blair, Jr., of Williamsburg Lodge No. 6. He was elected by a Convention of delegates from several Virginia Lodges on October 13, 1778; he was installed into that office on October 30 of the same year. We date our history of the Grand Lodge from the date of his election. A history of the beginnings of our Grand Lodge can be found in the Virginia Methodical Digest and in almost every edition of the *Proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Virginia*.
8. What are some of the roots of Anti-Masonry? – Dictatorships have regularly opposed Freemasonry because we support freedom and democracy. Other groups have opposed Freemasonry because we welcome men of all religions. In addition, some individuals espoused anti-Masonic views simply to make money by producing anti-Masonic books and videotapes or appearing on anti-Masonic television programs. Others have opposed Freemasonry because they do not have the facts about what Masons do and what our organization represents.
9. Was there really a political party in the United States that was opposed to Freemasonry? – Although Freemasonry played a key role in the founding of our nation and enjoyed a very positive reputation up until the 1820's, a large group of people came to believe that Freemasonry was a bad influence. The triggering event was a claim that a man named William Morgan had been kidnapped and possibly murdered by Masons in northern New York State because he was threatening to write a book disclosing the secrets of Freemasonry. No one is sure what happened to Morgan, but many people came to believe that Masons had acted in ways that were contrary to law and the democratic ideals of America, and they founded an official political party called the Anti-Masonic party in 1826. This party achieved some successes in electing members of Congress, state Governors and other public officials in the New England states, New York, and Pennsylvania. During this period,

Freemasonry fell into disrepute, and was almost eliminated in America but it began to recover starting in the 1840's.

10. What is the composition of the Grand Lodge of Virginia and who has a vote? - The Grand Lodge of Virginia is composed of:
 - The Grand Master of Masons in Virginia, who has one vote and, in case of a tie, a second vote;
 - The Deputy Grand Master, who has one vote, and the Grand Wardens, the Grand Treasurer, the Grand Secretary, and the Grand Deacons, who collectively have one vote;
 - The Past Grand Masters, who each have one vote, and the Past Deputy Grand Masters and the Past Grand Wardens who collectively have one vote;
 - The representatives of the subordinate Lodges, with each Lodge having one vote;
 - The District Deputy Grand Masters, who collectively have one vote;
 - The Past Masters of subordinate Lodges, not included in above classifications, who collectively have one vote.

11. When does the Grand Lodge meet, and what happens at its meetings? – The Grand Lodge meets each year in November. At the sessions of Grand Lodge, called the Grand Annual Communication, the Grand Master provides a report on his stewardship of the Fraternity and receives detailed reports from the various Grand Lodge Committees on the state of the Craft. There also is: discussion of, and voting on, proposed legislation that, if adopted, becomes a part of Masonic law and is included in the Methodical Digest; the election and installation of Grand Lodge Officers; and, a number of social events. Before Grand Lodge begins, the Committee on Work, which is responsible for the ritual, exemplifies the ritual of the three degrees as conferred in our Grand Jurisdiction.

12. Who can attend Grand Lodge meetings? – All Master Masons are encouraged to attend Grand Lodge meetings. Those attendees who are not voting members can observe what occurs at the tiled meetings of the Grand Lodge. Non-Masons are welcome at the social events.

13. Who is a Grand Lodge delegate? – The Worshipful Master, Senior, and Junior Wardens are entitled to represent their Lodge. If none of them are present, their proxies, elected by the Lodges, represent them.

14. Who are the Officers of the Grand Lodge? – The elected officers are: the Grand Master of Masons in Virginia, the Deputy Grand Master, the Grand Senior and Grand Junior Wardens, the Grand Treasurer, Grand Secretary, and the Grand Senior and Grand Junior Deacons. The Grand Master also appoints several Grand Lodge officers, including the Grand Marshal, Grand Chaplain, Grand Lecturer, Grand Provost, and Grand Tiler. The names, addresses and the phone numbers of

Grand Lodge Officers are listed in publications of the Grand Lodge, including the Annual Proceedings, and in an annual Directory.

15. How does one become a Grand Lodge Officer? – The Grand Master and Deputy Grand Master are always in nomination for the Office of Grand Master and any member of Grand Lodge can make additional nominations. The Grand Master-Elect nominates each of the other elected Grand Lodge officers, and again, any member of Grand Lodge can make additional nominations. The Grand Deacons, the Grand Wardens, and the Deputy Grand Master are known as the progressive line officers because, most often, they will be elected each year and advance from Grand Junior Deacon to Grand Master in six years. The Grand Master-Elect also designates the appointed Grand Lodge officers.
16. What are the powers of the Grand Master? – The Grand Master presides during any session of the Grand Lodge, and controls the conduct of all business coming before the Grand Lodge. When the Grand Lodge is not in session, all of its powers are vested in the Grand Master who has the power to: suspend any law or resolution enacted by the Grand Lodge; issue dispensations for the formation of new Lodges; empower subordinate Lodges to set aside the requirements of their by-laws, and for other purposes; appoint commissions; make decisions; and, perform all other acts which are imposed upon his office by law, custom, or usage.

He reports all of his official acts to the Grand Lodge in his annual address, which is referred to the Committee of Past Grand Masters. That Committee makes recommendations to the Grand Lodge on the decisions and rulings of the Grand Master, and, if adopted by Grand Lodge, become part of Masonic law, are codified and are placed in the Methodical Digest. The disapproval of any decision or ruling of the Grand Master does not affect the particular act, but governs only its future application.

17. Who are District Deputy Grand Masters? – They are the personal representatives of the Grand Master in their respective Masonic district. The Lodges in the district recommend a candidate for District Deputy Grand Master to the Grand Master, but the decision to appoint rests solely with the Grand Master. The District Deputy observes the functioning of the Lodges, enforces conformity to the work and compliance with the laws of the Grand Lodge, and reports irregularities to the Grand Master. Lodge officers can request advice from the District Deputy Grand Master, and dispensations to change the date or time of a Lodge meeting.
18. Where is the Grand Lodge building located, and what does the Grand Lodge staff do? – The Grand Lodge building is located in Richmond, on the grounds of the Masonic Home of Virginia. The building contains the office of the Grand Master and his apartment, the office of the Grand Secretary and his staff, a conference room, and a museum and library which all Masons are encouraged to visit. The Grand Lodge staff maintains various records and provides assistance to the Grand Master, the Grand Lodge Officers, and all of the Lodges.

19. What is the Masonic Home of Virginia? – The Masonic Home is a full-service facility with cottages and rooms for independent living, assisted-living quarters, a care center and an Alzheimer’s facility. It is located on Nine Mile Road in Richmond. This wonderful retirement community is supported and maintained by the Masons of Virginia. It provides a home for our older Masons, their wives and widows. It is primarily for Masons who cannot afford other living arrangements, but also accepts paying residents.
20. How are new Lodges started, and how can they be ended? – When a group of Masons wishes to form a new Lodge, they apply to the Grand Master for a dispensation to permit them to form and work temporarily. If, after a period, the new Lodge has met certain standards, the Grand Lodge may grant it a Charter. The Grand Lodge or the Grand Master can revoke the Charter of a Lodge and the Lodge then ceases to exist. In addition, a majority of members at a meeting may vote to surrender their Charter.
21. How are Lodge officers elected? – The Worshipful Master conducts annual elections by voice vote, or, if there is more than one candidate for an office, by secret, written ballot. The Worshipful Master nominates a Brother for the Office of Worshipful Master; and the Worshipful Master-Elect makes the first nomination for the other elected officers. As in the case of Grand Lodge, any member of the Lodge can make additional nominations.
22. What are “stated” and “called” communications? – The stated communication is the regularly scheduled meeting of the Lodge provided or “stated” in its by-laws. Every Lodge is required to have, if practicable, at least one stated communication a month and the location, day, date and time cannot be changed without Grand Lodge permission. In case of scheduling conflicts or when weather conditions require, the meeting can be changed by obtaining a dispensation from the District Deputy Grand Master. The business of the Lodge is usually conducted at these meetings, although degrees also can be conferred. The Worshipful Master also is free to have special meetings, known as called communications, because they are “called” by the Worshipful Master. A dispensation from Grand Lodge is not necessary for “called” meetings, but the Brethren must be given timely notice. Except for funerals, no stated or special Lodge meetings are allowed when the Grand Lodge is assembled for its Grand Annual Communication.
23. Are “Roberts Rules of Order” used in Masonic Lodges? – We do not follow Roberts Rules of Order, although we follow a similar system of parliamentary procedure. Under Masonic law, the Worshipful Master rules and governs his Lodge, controls the order of business, and may refuse to entertain any proposition he deems not in the best interest of the Lodge. The decisions of a Worshipful Master can only be appealed through the District Deputy Grand Master to the Grand Master.

24. How does the Lodge ballot on new members? - There is strict ritual about how Lodge members vote on potential new members. There must be at least a month between when the petition is first read to the Lodge and when it is voted upon. During this time the investigating committee would have visited the petitioner and his family, and be prepared to make its recommendation. After the petition is read for the second time in Lodge, each member of the Lodge present must vote “yes” or “no” by placing a white ball or a black cube in the ballot box. If one black cube is cast, the petitioner is rejected. Balloting in Lodge on petitions is secret; under Masonic law, you must not discuss how you voted, and no one shall ask you to reveal or discuss how you voted.
25. How is voting done on other issues in Lodge? - Apart from membership issues, voting for officers or to spend money is usually done by a voice vote or show of hands.
26. What is Life Membership in Perpetuity? - Brethren are encouraged to take care of their dues obligation in a Lodge by purchasing a Life Membership in Perpetuity (LMIP). After they have paid their current year dues, they pay into the LMIP fund 16 times those current dues. That fully satisfies their dues obligation to that Lodge for the rest of their lives, and they also help their Lodge, because this income stream will continue to support the Lodge beyond their lifetime.
27. What is meant by recognized and unrecognized Grand Lodges, by regular and irregular Masonry, and by clandestine Lodges and Masons? – Each Grand Lodge chooses whether or not to recognize other Grand Jurisdictions. It also appoints a representative from the recognized Grand Lodge to its Grand Lodge, and our respective Brethren are free to visit Lodges in a sister “recognized” Grand Jurisdiction.

Regular Masonry is generally considered to mean those Masonic groups that support the same fundamental principles as our Grand Lodge. Clandestine Masons and Lodges are those who do not have a charter from any recognized Grand Lodge.

28. The terms, recognized or unrecognized, regular or irregular, and clandestine or not clandestine are not interchangeable. For example, an unrecognized Grand Lodge might be regular and not clandestine, but simply not be recognized by our Grand Lodge, because it is new or because it has not requested recognition from our Grand Lodge. A Lodge that has its Charter revoked and continues to meet would be a clandestine lodge.
29. What are the purposes of the appendant bodies? – Each appendant body teaches moral and philosophical lessons by conferring degrees on their candidates. The lessons taught by the body are the central theme of its objectives. In addition to the lessons taught, each body supports a major charity. For example: the Scottish Rite supports Childhood Language Disorder Centers; the Grand Chapter of Royal

Arch Masons supports Alzheimer's programs; the Knights Templar support the Eye Foundation; and, the Shrine runs a number of Children's Hospitals and Burn Centers.

30. What is meant by profane? - This is an archaic term used to refer to someone who was not a Mason. The preferred term is simply "non-Mason."

CONCLUSION

You have now been instructed in the basics for each Masonic Degree, but there is much more to learn about Masonry – enough to last a lifetime. You are encouraged to consider all the beautiful facets of Masonry, including its history, traditions, and philosophy. Choose an area or subject that is of particular interest to you, and pursue further knowledge about it. You will be amazed at the places it will take you.

Keep in mind that the principles and attractions of Masonry are timeless. Despite changes in technology, in the economy, and in our society, Freemasonry remains solid as a rock, rooted in virtue, pointing the way to self-improvement, and encouraging the greater good of society. To achieve all of these objectives we need to maintain ourselves as a strong organization and to encourage like-minded men to join the Fraternity.

Keep in mind also that even in the midst of the explosion in electronic communication and social networking, there are many men who feel more isolated than ever before. They are looking for a personal connection, and Masonry provides real opportunity for fellowship and the development of meaningful friendships. Through Freemasonry, men are exposed to new ideas and timeless values. We promote reason, moderation, and toleration, and are a civilizing force in a turbulent world that struggles with terrorism and social unrest. It is our responsibility as Master Masons to act in such a way that we are effective ambassadors for Freemasonry in our communities so that others would wish to join with us in our great work.

- Provide an opportunity for the students to reflect on all they have learned during the course of the New Mason curriculum. What did they like the most?

MASONIC LABOR IS PURELY A LABOR OF LOVE

*HE WHO SEEKS TO DRAW MASONIC WAGES
IN GOLD OR SILVER WILL BE DISAPPOINTED.
THE WAGES OF A MASON ARE EARNED AND PAID
IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH ONE ANOTHER,
SYMPATHY BEGETS SYMPATHY,
KINDNESS BEGETS KINDNESS,
HELPFULNESS BEGETS HELPFULNESS,
AND THESE ARE THE WAGES OF A MASON.*

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN