

Share the Light of Freemasonry



**A Guide to help Strengthen
your Lodge through
Membership Growth and Retention**

**A publication of the
Grand Lodge, A. F. & A. M., of Virginia**



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Introducing the Program

Welcome to the Lodge Membership Reinforcement Program of the Grand Lodge, A. F. & A. M., of Virginia.

This guide will provide you with the ideas and tools to assist your efforts to make positive steps toward improving the fraternal health and future progress of your Lodge.

Whether you are the Worshipful Master of your Lodge, a committee member assigned by the Master to implement this program, or a concerned member of a Lodge in need of strengthening, this program is intended to give you the ideas needed to encourage and implement a plan for the progressive development of your Lodge.

The future of your Lodge is, in large measure, dependent on two factors:

- 1) Membership Development, which focuses on getting the attention of potential new members to keep your Lodge growing and developing, and
- 2) Membership Retention, which focuses on encouraging the interest and involvement of current members to keep your Lodge active and engaged.

Every Lodge can benefit from a plan and a process which encourages the interest of new members to your Lodge. Once the Lodge has drawn the attention of new members, it is also important to have a process to understand and incorporate the interests of all of your members in the programs and activities of the Lodge.

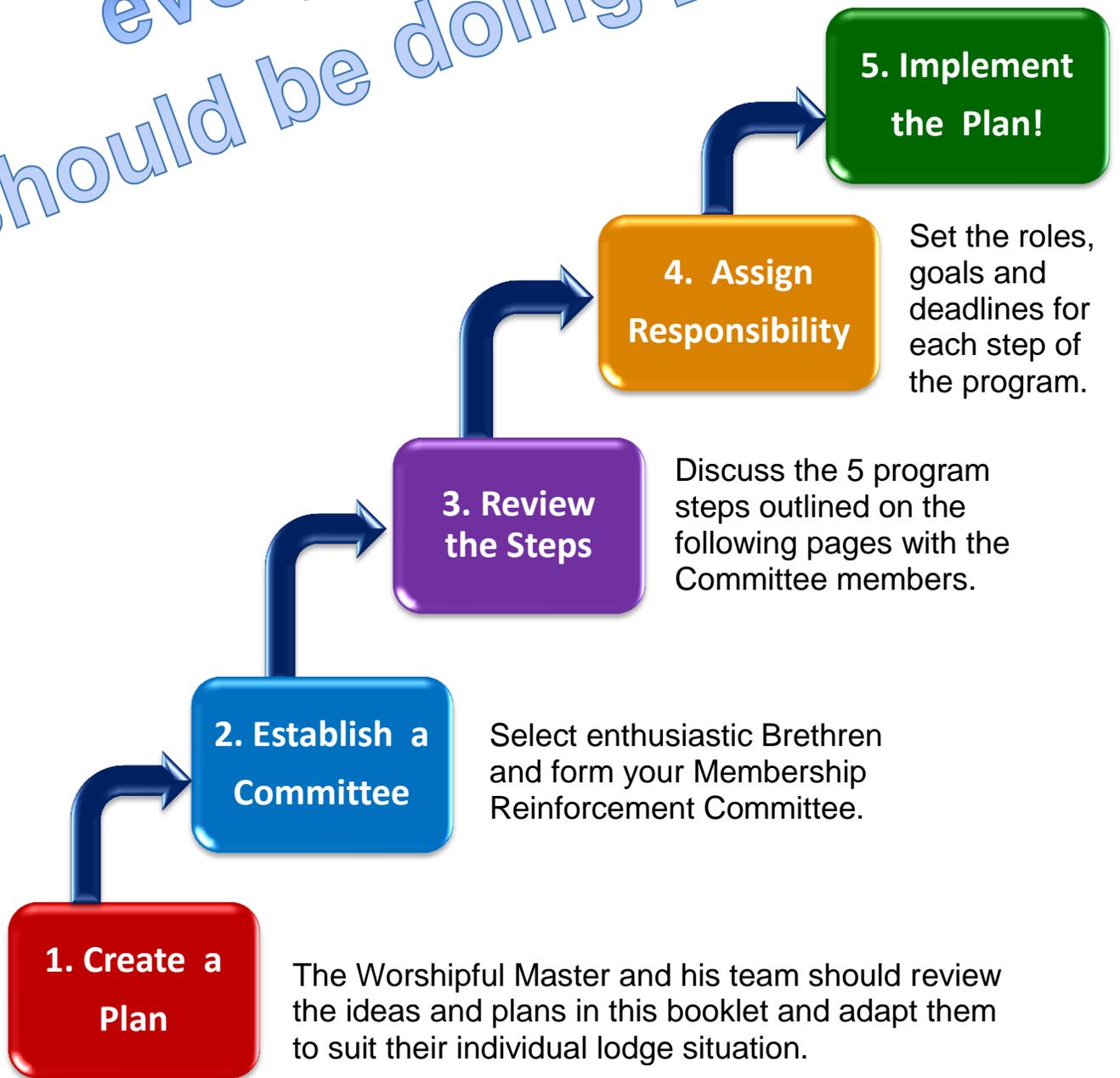
Many studies have shown that, at a minimum, every Lodge needs at least five new Master Masons each year to sustain the Lodge into the future. New members are important to the Lodge because:

- They add new ideas and resources to strengthen the Lodge;
- They constitute tomorrow's leaders of the Lodge;
- They provide additional financial resources for the Lodge; and
- They replace those Brothers we lose each year.

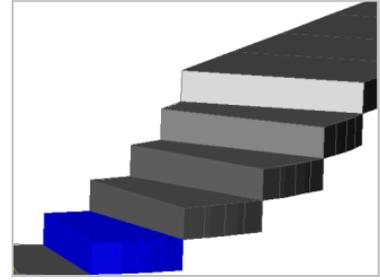
This Membership Reinforcement program is a comprehensive guide to help you build your Lodge for the future by attracting the interest of new members, and retaining existing members by keeping them involved and motivated.



Here is what every Lodge should be doing now:



STEP ONE – Membership Development: PUTTING THE LODGE ON DISPLAY



First impressions are extremely important, so consider the impression your Lodge is making on the surrounding community, and therefore on potential petitioners. Your membership and your building must create a positive opinion from the very start. The community will judge the Fraternity by what it sees in the condition of the Temple and in the behavior of its members.

Questions to consider about your Lodge:

- How does your Lodge appear to the community?
- Is the Lodge clean and welcoming?
- Do you participate in community events and activities?

To draw the attention of good men in the community, it is important to encourage every member of your Lodge to live the values of Freemasonry every day and to guide their actions by the principles taught in the Lodge.

From our first encounter with a prospective member, he will be judging us by the way we act. The prospective member is often attracted to Freemasonry based on the quality of the Masons that he meets. Make sure that every member of your Lodge is prepared to act as an ambassador for Masonry to a prospective candidate.

Take advantage of opportunities to let the public know that you are actively engaged in the life of the community and that you are interested in keeping them informed about the fraternity. (For assistance with this effort, contact the Grand Lodge Committee on Public Relations). Be accessible through the means of communication commonly used in today's world. Reach out to prospective members in as many ways as possible:

- Take part in and be noticeably active at local community events.
- Maintain an up to date Lodge website (for assistance, contact the Grand Lodge Committee on Information Technology).
- Display the Lodge contact information at the building where you meet, in order to answer questions from prospective members and to encourage visitation by sojourning Masons and brethren moving into your area.

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- Maintain a Lodge telephone answering system or cell phone for contact from interested prospective members.
- Regularly provide notices for Community Service Announcements on local television, radio and newspapers to promote public Lodge activities. (For assistance with this effort, contact the Grand Lodge Committee on Public Relations).
- Develop your members into a knowledgeable group of Brothers to address questions from the public.

Understand what the prospective member is looking for and then consider how your Lodge can meet those interests. Recent research identified the following areas of interest that tend to inspire men to participate in an organization:

- Meet new friends
- Help their community
- Have an opportunity for leadership
- Spend time at family events

Ideas to Help your Lodge Take Action to reach your STEP ONE goals:

Position your Lodge to attract the attention of prospective members

Positive first impressions are crucial for success in any relationship. Examine your Lodge and take steps to insure it is appealing to the prospective member.

Lodge website: Make certain it is informative, current, attractive and easy to navigate. Link to: <http://www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org/> .

Public events: Ask Masons who are enthusiastic, informed and articulate about Masonry to be at suitable public events such as fairs, parades, family events, festivals, etc. Make sure everyone is appropriately dressed and there is an ample supply of brochures and information.

Lodge telephone: Be sure the outgoing message is current, informative and recorded by a member who speaks clearly and is enthusiastic, positive and welcoming. Be sure your Lodge listing in the telephone book is correct. Use the Listing "Masonic Lodge" with your Lodge name.

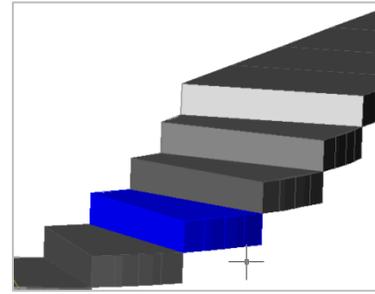
Lodge building: Your Lodge must be clean and well-maintained, be well-lit, and have good signage.

Knowledgeable members: Every Brother should be knowledgeable about Freemasonry to be able to answer questions and invite membership consideration. At a minimum, every Brother should be familiar with the material in the expanded alternate method books.

Understand the expectations of prospective members, and consider how to meet those expectations.

- Does the Lodge need to make changes to be more appealing to prospective members? What could be improved?
- Does the Lodge offer the benefits for which men are looking?
- Are there opportunities for family involvement in Lodge activities?
- Does the Lodge need to be more active in the community?

STEP TWO – Membership Development: IDENTIFYING POTENTIAL CANDIDATES



Understand that it takes a certain type of man to be a Mason.

A prospective Mason must be a man who is interested in self-improvement and who puts his trust in a Supreme Being. He is someone you trust and with whom you would want to spend time. He is usually involved in the community and may be a service-oriented individual.

Men with whom you have established relationships are your best member prospects, including friends, neighbors, relatives, and co-workers.

Relatives of present or past members, such as sons, sons-in-law, nephews, grandsons, uncles, brothers and cousins are good prospects.

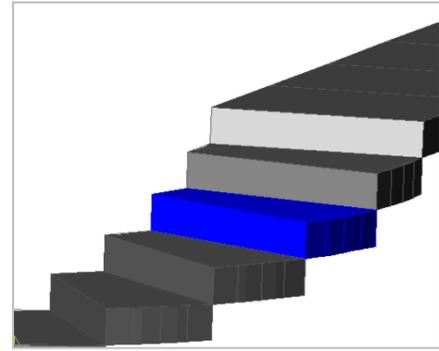
Consider also fathers of young men and women who are members of Masonic youth groups: DeMolay, Job's Daughters, and Rainbow Girls.

Ideas to Help Your Lodge Take Action to Reach your STEP TWO Goals:

Make a list of prospective candidates

- Use the “Prospective Member Worksheet” [see page 18].
- Pair each prospective member with a member of your Lodge.
- Identify specific aspects and benefits that you think will appeal to each prospective member. Add these to the worksheet.

STEP THREE – Membership Development: MEETING POTENTIAL CANDIDATES



It is important to re-emphasize at this point in the program, one of the basic cardinal rules:
Masons do not solicit members.

Talking about Freemasonry and providing information to a prospective member is not soliciting. Most men will not consider joining an organization they know nothing about. You can talk with a prospective member, provide information and answer his questions.

Begin these conversations in a way that is comfortable for you and the prospective member. Ease into the discussion; do not overwhelm him.

Begin a dialog that may span several conversations. While you are providing information, be sure to listen to the prospective member and learn what he is looking for in life. Offer suggestions, thoughts, and ideas, including the many positive aspects of Freemasonry.

- Talk about Masonic history and the contributions Freemasonry has made to the community and to the world.
- Talk about your Lodge and the community.
- Tell him why you became a Mason.
- Tell him how personal growth is one of the benefits of Freemasonry.
- Invite his questions and comments.
- Provide him with your Lodge website, the Grand Lodge of Virginia website, and other good Masonic sites.
- Get other Brothers involved to expand the perspectives in the discussion.
- Invite him to see your Lodge and meet the Lodge Officers.
- Include his wife in the discussion, if she is interested.
- Invite him to lunch or dinner with a few Brothers.
- Ask him about his friends, and if they are interested in Freemasonry.
- Tell him you can provide the necessary paperwork, if he asks to join.

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- If he does ask, it is important to be prepared to give him a petition immediately.
- Explain the process and help him get started.
- Follow up immediately.
- Stay with it, do not neglect the petitioner.
- Provide him with brochures and information about Freemasonry.
- Offer to show him your Lodge and other Masonic points of interest, in your local area.

Ideas to Help Your Lodge Take Action to Reach your STEP THREE Goals:

Be prepared to answer the question, “What is Masonry about?”

Most prospective members are not familiar with Freemasonry, so we must be knowledgeable and ready to answer questions about the Fraternity when the opportunity presents itself.

This is an example of a short “ice-breaker” talk that provides some basic information and may lead to a more in-depth discussion.

“Thanks for asking about Freemasonry (*adapt to whatever question was asked*). I am happy to tell you about the world’s largest Fraternity.

“Freemasonry is hundreds of years old, dating back to at least the late 1300’s. there are approximately five million Masons in the world, with over a million in the United States. Masonry is a serious organization of adult men who have joined of their own free will, with a desire to improve themselves, their family and their community. Masons support and contribute to their community in many different ways. We also have fun, make friends and become better people. Virtually every town in America has at least one Masonic lodge and large cities have several. I am a member of ____ Lodge No. ____ in _____, Virginia, and we offer scholarship programs and assist in blood drives and child identification events.

“Would you like to know more?”

It is important to also be prepared to answer questions that may be based on false information about Freemasonry, and to provide a balanced view of the Fraternity without getting into an argument with someone who is misinformed.

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Be prepared to answer the question “What is it that Masons do?”

“Masonry is a fraternal organization that promotes an environment where a moral and upright man can seek paths to make himself into a better man. Our members become lifelong friends who help each other find those paths of improving themselves by associating with like-minded men.

“Masonry encourages the development of strong moral values, and helps us be better men, better fathers, sons and husbands. This leads us to be better citizens and to seek ways to support a stronger community.

“Charity is one of the beneficial aspects that come from Masonic activities. We are encouraged to help make the world a better place through philanthropy, volunteerism, and community service. As a result, Masonic groups worldwide donate more than two million dollars every day to charity.” (add any specific programs in your own Lodge.)

Be Proactive and Follow up with Prospects

Most men need some time to think about asking for a petition. There is much information that is new to the prospective member.

Ask if he has any concerns you can address.

Ask if you can answer any questions or clarify anything he has read or heard about Freemasonry.

Invite him to an open event so he can meet other members. Suggest a meeting with a small number of Lodge members for further discussion.

Ask the prospective member about his needs and expectations. Discuss how membership will meet his expectations.

Address the time commitment necessary to be an active member of the Lodge. Be up front and explain that, like any endeavor, there is a time commitment to be a member of the Lodge. Answer any question honestly and completely. Do not mislead a petitioner.

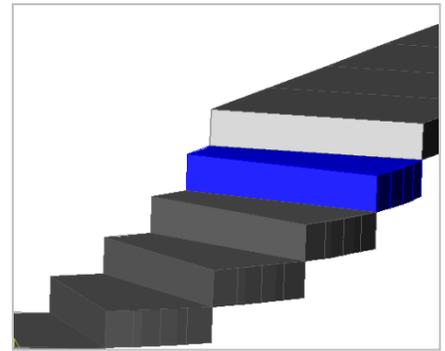
Be ready with a petition, and be ready to explain the petition process.

Be Proactive and Follow up after the applicant has submitted his petition.

Confirm with the Secretary or Worshipful Master that the petition has been received by the Lodge. Be sure that a confirmation letter from the Master has been sent to the petitioner, and that it includes the candidate information packet [see page 19].

Schedule a visit to his home. If he is married, include his wife as part of the visit. Schedule the visit as soon as possible, do not wait until the last minute.

STEP FOUR – Membership Retention: MAKING BROTHERS FEEL WELCOME



Creating a bond with a Brother and beginning to develop his attachment to the Lodge should begin from the moment that he submits his petition for membership.

But our efforts to connect a Brother with his Lodge should not be limited to the new Mason, because every Mason, both young and old, should find his Lodge to be a fraternal space where he feels welcome and at ease. He should have a positive opinion of his Lodge, and be certain of the fact that he is missed when he does not attend his Lodge.

Our efforts and energies applied to the retention of our members must be equally focused on welcoming new brethren to our Lodges as well as encouraging the return of those Brethren who haven't attended Lodge for a while. It is important to remember that we need all of our brethren to become active members in the Lodge, both the new and the older Mason.

For your current members who attend regularly, make an effort to let them know that their participation is appreciated and valued by the Lodge.

For current members who do not attend anymore, the first step should be to find out why the Brother hasn't been coming, either by calling him on the phone or preferably by visiting him at his home. If his absence is health-related, offer rides or other appropriate personal support. If a physical limitation is not the cause of his absence, find out what would interest him enough to start coming to Lodge again.

For your members who are just starting their Masonic journey, once the petition has been accepted by the Lodge, start looking for opportunities to make the candidate feel welcome in his new Lodge.

Most importantly, prior to and following his Initiation, provide the candidate with plenty of support and fellowship. Introduce him to every Brother at the meeting. Know something about him so you can spark conversation with other Brothers.

Begin using the Grand Lodge of Virginia Mentor Program immediately. Be very careful in selecting the mentor for the new Brother. Try to match men with similar interests and styles. Remember, you have the potential for forging a friendship that will last years, so it is worthy of plenty of thought.

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These elements will help keep the Lodge focused on fellowship

- Know the candidate (make use of the Candidate Information Worksheet provided on page 20).
- Greet him by name at each Lodge event.
- Offer to pick him up to attend these events.
- Get him involved in the Lodge immediately.

Reinforce the feeling of welcome for the candidate by using the Welcome Tools provided in this booklet:

- Candidate Information Packet [see page 19]
- Candidate Information Worksheet [see page 20]
- Lodge Contact Information Sheet [see page 21]
- Welcome Letter from the Master [see page 25]
- Welcome Letter to the new member's wife — if married [see page 25]

Ideas to Help Your Lodge Take Action to **Reach your STEP FOUR Goals:**

Make your regularly-attending Brethren feel appreciated

- Have the Deacons welcome each Brother as they enter the Lodge room.
- Recognize special accomplishments, Masonic “birthdays”, and other efforts.
- Look for “unsung heroes” to thank for their efforts.
- If they miss a meeting, call them to let them know they were missed.

Contact your members who don't attend anymore

- Inquire about the reason why the Brother hasn't been coming
- If health-related, offer rides or other appropriate personal support.
- If the cause is not a physical limitation, find out what would interest him enough to start coming to Lodge again.

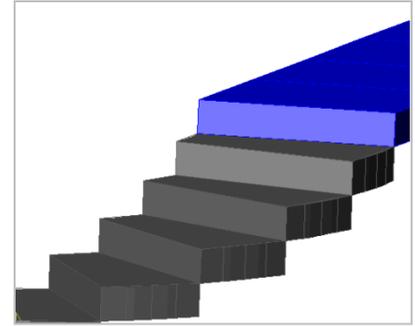
Make the Degree experience a very personal one for your new members

The initiation process of the First Degree will be a completely new and somewhat overwhelming experience for our new Brother, and it deserves to be well-planned by the Lodge.

Be ready to provide the new Brother with information and answers to his questions.

- Prior to his initiation, have a variety of materials ready for the new candidate, such as the Grand Lodge of Virginia “Taking the First Step” booklet, the “For Your Info” pamphlet and the “Who Are the Masons” from the Masonic Service Association.
- Present the new Brother with the Entered Apprentice booklet from Grand Lodge.
- Give him the Lodge Contact Information Sheet [see page 21] with contact information and scheduled meetings.
- Introduce him to his Coach.
- Introduce him to his Mentor.
- Focus on fellowship after the meeting.
- Send him a welcome letter from the Master [see page 25].
- Send a welcome letter to the new member's wife [see page 25].

STEP FIVE – Membership Retention INTERESTED AND INVOLVED MEMBERS



Start now to retain every Brother in your Lodge.

Make an effort to understand what your members are looking for in their Lodge experience, and work toward providing that experience.

Men seek out Freemasonry for a number of reasons, but for many it would include learning more about Freemasonry, associating with like-minded men, and being of service their communities and to mankind.

With that in mind, it is important that your Lodge planning includes:

- frequent Masonic Education opportunities to help your brethren learn more about the wealth of information and topics associated with their fraternity,
- ritual schools for the brethren to learn parts in the degrees or catechisms so that they can take an active role in these lodge activities, and
- social events and projects so that the brethren can join together to accomplish a goal and enjoy their fraternal association.

Each member will be motivated differently, but as a general rule, these are good focus areas for each of these groups of brethren:

- For new members, find a way to get them involved right away.
- For longer-term members, if they are still active, ask them for ideas about new programs needed in the Lodge.
- For inactive Masons, it is worthwhile to contact them and find out what keeps them away. It may only be embarrassment for being away for a long time, and that is fixed with their first visit back to the Lodge!

Based on exhaustive research, it has been determined that the typical Mason becomes inactive in about four years, particularly if he does not become involved with the Lodge or have a role, job, or function he enjoys.

That does not leave you with much time to develop a program for membership retention, if you want to keep those members coming back to Lodge.

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Master Masons who no longer attend their Lodge say they become inactive for the following reasons:

- “I don’t have the time.”
- “It’s not what I expected.”
- “No one contacted me after the degree.”
- “The Lodge was unfriendly.”

Consider what initiatives you can take in order to avoid those statements being made about your Lodge.

Start by developing an understanding of your members and then keeping a focus on the expectations of the members in your Lodge:

- Offer quality and inspiring Masonic programs;
- Make it a priority to send the brethren home from Lodge knowing more about some aspect of Freemasonry,
- Take an interest in the welfare of your brethren and their families;
- Plan family events to allow the brethren to know each other better;
- Offer opportunities to contribute to and serve the community;
- Respect each Brother’s time constraints.

Develop a system to get feedback about how well your Lodge is meeting the expectations of its members.

- Survey the membership [see pages 22 and 23]. [Note: when surveying your new members, it is recommended that their survey take place after they have been a Master Mason for at least 6 months. This will add some perspective to the survey answers, which may be missing immediately after they have been Raised.]
- Compile the results.
- Make a plan to address the results of the survey.
- Develop a plan to provide a meaningful role for every member.

Ideas to Help Your Lodge Take Action to **Reach your STEP FIVE Goals:**

Develop a plan to retain the early interest of each new Brother

- Make certain each new Brother has a mentor.
- Ask the new Brother about his interests and expectations.
- Invite the new Brother to participate in some Lodge activity.
- Make certain a member of the Lodge calls the new Brother prior to each meeting.
- Make certain that everyone present talks to the new Brother at every meeting.
- Follow up with his coach and mentor.
- Schedule family activities for the new Brother and his family.
- It is important to understand the needs and expectations of each new Brother. Make an effort to get to know the new Brother and understand what he is looking for in the Lodge.

Determine if the Lodge is meeting member expectations.

- Appoint a member relations committee to determine if member needs and expectations are being met.
- Immediately after the first degree, interview the new Brother in person and begin to complete the New Member Survey [see page 22]. Continue to interview the new member after the second and third degrees and record his comments on the Survey.
- Create and maintain a database with the responses.
- Conduct a Member Satisfaction Survey [see page 23] at least once a year with at least twelve recent Master Masons.
- Send the Member Satisfaction Survey to some older Lodge members.
- Create and maintain a database of the responses.
- Analyze the results and develop a plan to address any issues.

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Be aware of the time constraints of your members.

- Most prospective members say they only have a limited amount of time, generally about five hours a month, to give to any organization.
- Determine how your Lodge addresses this issue.
- Identify the number of hours a typical member spends on Lodge activities each week.
- Identify and implement changes that save time.
- Make Lodge attendance a valued part of the member's week with good meetings and meaningful programs, Masonic education and family events.
- Increase the level of fellowship both before and after meetings.
- Make meetings shorter and more efficient.
- Meetings should be no longer than two hours.

IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAM

You have worked your way through all five steps of this program now.

Some implementation ideas for each of the five steps have been included, as well.

Now it is up to you to take the thoughts presented in this guide, adapt them to fit the situation at your Lodge, and implement the plan with the assistance of your committee.

If you follow it through, you will have a stronger Lodge with more involved Brethren to show for your efforts.

The following pages provide examples of some of the informational tools that you can use to gather information about your candidates, survey the opinions of your members, and send letters to candidates and their wives to make them feel more welcome in the Lodge.

Prospective Member Worksheet

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Email:

Family information:

Name of Mason who knows him:

Record of contacts:

Date of contact	By Whom	Nature of contact	Miscellaneous

Prospective member's interests:

Prospective member's questions:

Prospective member's concerns/issues:

Next action:

Miscellaneous information:

Candidate Learning Resources

Prepare a packet of information to be given to the prospective candidate. You may include any of the publicly-available literature from the Grand Lodge of Virginia, The Masonic Service Association and any materials produced in your own Lodge or other Lodges in your area. These materials could include the following:

For Your Information (Available from the Grand Lodge of Virginia)

Freemasonry (Available from the Grand Lodge of Virginia)

Who Are the Masons? And What Do They Do?
(Available from the Masonic Service Association)

Also include any other sources of information that could be helpful to the prospective candidate. These sources may include a list of books available at area bookstores or libraries as well as a list of informative Masonic websites.

Suggested books:

American Freemasons by Mark A. Tabbert

Freemasons for Dummies by Christopher Hodapp

The Craft and Its Symbols by Allen E. Roberts

Freemasonry: Symbols, Secrets, Significance by W. Kirk MacNulty

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Freemasonry by S. Brent Morris

Freemasonry: A Journey through Ritual and Symbol by W. Kirk MacNulty

Born in Blood: The Lost Secrets of Freemasonry by John L. Robinson

A Pilgrim's Path by John Robinson

Suggested websites:

<http://www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org> — (The Grand Lodge of Virginia)

http://www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org/cyber_library.htm — (The Grand Lodge of Virginia cyber reference library.)

<http://www.msana.com> — (The Masonic Service Association)

Candidate Information Worksheet

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Family information: _____

Names of Masons who knows him: _____

Candidate's family history of Masonry: _____

Name of Mentor: _____

Name of Coach: _____

Date Initiated: _____

Date Passed: _____

Date Raised: _____

Candidate's interests in Masonry: _____

Candidate's questions: _____

Candidate's concerns/issues: _____

Miscellaneous information: _____

Lodge No. Contact Information Sheet

Lodge Name and Number _____

Address _____

City, State. Zip _____

Lodge telephone: _____

Lodge website: _____

Lodge email list: _____

Meeting days: _____

Master: _____

Address, telephone and email _____

Senior Warden: _____

Address, telephone and email _____

Junior Warden: _____

Address, telephone and email _____

Treasurer: _____

Address, telephone and email _____

Secretary: _____

Address, telephone and email _____

Senior Deacon: _____

Address, telephone and email _____

Junior Deacon: _____

Address, telephone and email _____

Lodge Education Officer: _____

Address, telephone and email _____

New Member Survey

Lodge No.

Name: _____

1. What first interested you about Freemasonry?

2. Are any members of your family Freemasons?

3. Do you have any questions about your initiation, passing or raising?

4. Have you met all of the Lodge officers?

5. What do you like about the meetings?

6. What do you dislike about the meetings?

7. We want to involve you in our Lodge activities and would like to know your specific areas of interest: (presenting a program, participating in the ritual, committee membership, working on a Lodge project).

8. Do you have any questions?

Member Satisfaction Survey

Lodge No.

This survey is intended to be used to determine what might be done to encourage members who do not regularly attend Lodge to become more active. Questions are general in nature and may be tailored or omitted to meet the needs of your Lodge.

Greetings My Brother,

The Officers of your Lodge are interested in your opinion regarding Freemasonry in general and our Lodge in particular. As your Worshipful Master, I am asking that you please take a few minutes to respond to this questionnaire, and let me know how the Lodge might serve you better. To facilitate your response, a stamped self-addressed envelope is enclosed. If necessary, please elaborate on your response(s) on additional pages.

Thank you in advance, my Brother, for giving me your time and by responding to this questionnaire.

1. Name _____

2. Profession _____
(If retired, your occupation at time of your retirement.)

3. How many miles do you live from the Lodge? _____ Driving time _____

4. Are you proud to be a Mason? Yes No

Comment _____

5. What first interested you about Freemasonry? _____

6. What aspect of Freemasonry are you interested in now?

7. Are you interested in serving on a Lodge Committee? _____

8. How often do you attend Lodge? _____

9. Do you feel welcome when attending Lodge? _____

If not, please provide a comment _____

10. What type of events would you suggest? _____

11. Are you interested in a leadership role? _____

If so, what type? _____

12. What would encourage you to attend more Stated meetings? _____

13. How do you rate Freemasonry's Image?

Excellent

Good

Fair

OK

Poor

14. Have you been receiving the Virginia Masonic Herald magazine? _____

15. List your hobbies

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

16. Rank your favorite sports listed:

Baseball

Football

Basketball

Golf

17. Rank your favorite activities listed:

Fishing

Hunting

Reading

Computer

18. Have you ever played a musical instrument? _____

What? _____

19. What is your greatest talent or skill? _____

Would you share it? _____

20. Have you ever visited the Masonic Home? _____

Would you like to? _____

21. What could the Lodge do to improve your participation? _____

22. What can the Lodge do to attract new members? _____

23. List three strengths of your Lodge:

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

24. List three areas that hurt the Lodge:

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

25. Are you a member of :

Scottish Rite _____ York Rite _____ Shrine _____

Please complete this questionnaire and return it to the Lodge as soon as possible. Your time and the thought you put into your response is appreciated.

Fraternally, _____, Worshipful Master

Candidate Letters

Before initiation and while the candidate is advancing through the degree process, it is important that the Lodge maintain contact with him and his wife, if he is married. The following pages provide sample letters that may be used to facilitate this process.

While this seems like a lot of effort in addition to all of your other duties as Worshipful Master, it is not really. If you have a computer, simply store the letters as boiler plate, and all you will have to do is change the name and address for each candidate. Be careful and make sure you change the salutation in addition to the address.

Page 29 contains a sample letter to send to a candidate after his election and while he is waiting to be initiated. This is important because it could be up to two months from the time he submits his petition until he is initiated. This is a long time to wait without hearing from the Lodge.

Page 30 contains a sample letter to a candidate's wife, if he is married, and may be used if the Worshipful Master feels it is appropriate.

Page 31 contains a sample letter to send to an Entered Apprentice and should be given to him the evening he is initiated.

Page 32 contains a sample letter to an Entered Apprentice's wife, if he is married, and if the Worshipful Master feels it is appropriate.

Page 33 contains a sample letter to a Fellowcraft Mason and should be given to him the evening he is passed to that degree

Page 34 contains a sample letter to a Fellowcraft's wife, if he is married, and if the Worshipful Master feels it is appropriate.

Page 35 contains a sample letter to a Master Mason and should be given to him the evening he is raised to the Sublime Degree of Master Mason.

Midtown Lodge No. 211
13510 Westfield Street
Any-town, VA 23236
June 11, 2013

John Q. Doe
204 Main Street
Richmond, VA 23234

Dear Mr. Doe,

On behalf of the Brethren of our Masonic Lodge, I extend our congratulations to you on your election to receive the Degrees of Freemasonry in _____ Lodge No. ____ in (town or city).

This is the beginning of an enriching journey, and we hope you will experience the full measure of the joys and benefits of membership. The degrees you will receive are of a sincere and solemn nature, each incorporating symbols and allegory to teach some very important Masonic lessons.

Freemasonry has many definitions. Perhaps the simplest explanation of our Order is that it “makes good men better.” Character building is, in essence, a goal of Freemasonry. Many Brothers have said that they get out of Freemasonry what they put into it. Therefore, I encourage you to read and learn as much as you can about our Order, to live its precepts in your daily life, and involve yourself in the various aspects of the Lodge activities as your time permits.

The Lodge you are joining is one of several in a district. Your district is one of fifty-seven in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and comes under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge of Virginia, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, located in Richmond. Though we are all bound together by our fraternal ties, there is no national Masonic body in the United States. We are all Brothers and our principal commitment is to mankind.

We look forward to building a Fraternal bond as you progress through each of the degrees in your Masonic journey. The Brethren of your Lodge, and those in your district, are at your disposal to help you in this journey. Please feel free to call on us for assistance at any time.

Sincerely and fraternally,

Midtown Lodge No. 211
13510 Westfield Street
Any-town, VA 23236
June 11, 2013

Jane Anne Doe
204 Main Street
Richmond, VA 23234

Dear Mrs. Doe,

Your husband has been elected to receive the degrees of Freemasonry in _____
Lodge No. ____ in (town or city). We are indeed honored that he chose to petition our
Lodge, and we look forward to his involvement in the Fraternity.

Freemasonry is the most respected and well-established fraternal organization in the
world. The three Masonic Degrees to be conferred on your husband are dramas which
teach the building of character through examples related to the skills acquired by stone
masons as they worked on the Ancient Temples and Cathedrals.

While many people perceive Freemasonry as a secret organization, it is actually very
open. A wide variety of information is available at bookstores and on the Internet. There
is also a significant amount of false or misleading information available, and we
encourage you to bring any questions that you have to our attention, so we may provide
you with answers and information that will provide a balanced understanding of our
Fraternity.

We hope you will share your husband's interest in Freemasonry and that you will
support him on his journey. We look forward to getting to know you, and including you in
the social activities of the Lodge, as many of our Lodge events are designed to include
the family and community.

There is much more that I would like to tell you about Freemasonry, and with that in
mind, I will send you similar letters as your husband progresses on his Masonic journey.
In the meantime, visit our Grand Lodge website at:

www.grandlodgeofvirginia.org, or contact me with any questions you may have.

We welcome you into our Masonic family, and hope you will attend our family and public
events.

Sincerely,

(Master's Name)

(Lodge Name and No.)

(Master's Phone Number)

Midtown Lodge No. 211
13510 Westfield Street
Any-town, VA 23236
June 11, 2013

John Q. Doe
204 Main Street
Richmond, VA 23234

Dear Brother John,

You have completed the first step in your journey along the path of Masonic knowledge and understanding. Congratulations!

The Degree of Entered Apprentice is the first of three degrees that open the door of Masonic knowledge unto you, and ultimately lead you to earn the title of Master Mason. Lessons learned in the Entered Apprentice Degree include obedience, humility, and industriousness.

In the Entered Apprentice Degree, you learned that to be a Freemason, a man must first be prepared in his heart. You would do well to remember that. Freemasonry is concerned with the building of character in the life of the individual. That building must begin in the heart, for if it is not properly receptive, we can expect to make little impression on the mind.

As an Entered Apprentice, you may attend a Lodge on the First Degree of Masonry, as well as any Lodge social events. You will be instructed in, and have the responsibility to demonstrate proficiency in speaking of what you experienced in your First Degree ritual before advancing to the next degree.

You are now preparing for the Second Degree in Masonry, known as the Fellowcraft Degree. The Entered Apprentice's catechism you must learn is not difficult, but will take time with the *[insert the word "coach" or "mentor" as appropriate]* who I will assign to you. You are encouraged to work with your *["coach"/"mentor"]* as soon and as often as possible, so you may progress to the Fellowcraft Degree in a timely manner.

Please call your *["coach"/"mentor"]* or me with questions at any time.

Sincerely and fraternally,

(Master's Name)

(Lodge Name and No.)

(Master's Phone Number)

Midtown Lodge No. 211
13510 Westfield Street
Any-town, VA 23236
June 11, 2013

Jane Anne Doe
204 Main Street
Richmond, VA 23234

Dear Mrs. Doe,

Your husband recently began his journey into the world of Freemasonry when he received the Entered Apprentice Degree in our Lodge. This is the first of three instructive degrees that teach the principles and philosophy. These degrees are very solemn and sincere and teach moral lessons to improve a man's character.

Your husband has been given the responsibility to learn the meaning of the symbolism of this degree which helps to emphasize and reinforce the lessons he has learned so far. Demonstrated proficiency in what has been learned is a necessary requirement before he can progress to the next degree. To accomplish this, he will need to spend time with a *[insert "coach" or "mentor" as appropriate]*, who has been assigned to assist and teach him the required information. We hope you will encourage his meetings with his *["coach"/"mentor"]*, so he can move on to the next degree in a timely manner.

If you have any questions about Freemasonry or your husband's new activities, please do not hesitate to ask your husband or call me or another member of our Lodge. We will always do our best to answer your questions and explain what is going on in our Lodge. For example, if you have not already seen the Lodge room where your husband's Masonic journey began, please join us for dinner before one of our meetings and ask for a tour.

Sincerely,

(Master's Name)

(Lodge Name and No.)

(Master's Phone Number)

Midtown Lodge No. 211
13510 Westfield Street
Any-town, VA 23236
June 11, 2013

John Q. Doe
204 Main Street
Richmond, VA 23234

Dear Brother John,

A short while ago you received the Degree of Fellowcraft. Congratulations on your continued progress in Freemasonry and toward becoming a Master Mason!

As you learned, the Fellowcraft Degree emphasizes the dignity and worth of the individual. This degree symbolizes man in the prime years of his life, an adult who is ready to accept the responsibilities of life, not only for himself, but for his family and the enlarged circle which is his world.

Your Masonic rights as a Fellowcraft are much the same as an Entered Apprentice. You may attend a Lodge on the First Degree of Masonry, as well as on the Second Degree. If your Lodge, or any other, is conferring an Entered Apprentice or Fellowcraft Degree, or hearing a catechism proficiency from an Entered Apprentice or Fellowcraft Brother, you are entitled and encouraged to attend when accompanied by a Master Mason.

You are now preparing yourself for the third of the degrees in Masonry, known as the Master Mason's Degree. This preparation is not difficult, but it will take time with the *[insert the word "coach" or "mentor" as appropriate]*, who has been assigned to you. You are encouraged to work with your *["coach"/"mentor"]* as soon and as often as possible, so you may progress to the Master Mason's Degree in a timely manner.

If you have any questions about any aspect of your Masonic journey, I encourage you to discuss them with your *["coach"/"mentor"]*, another Brother of our Lodge, or with me at any time.

All the Brothers of our Lodge look forward to your continued progress.

Sincerely and fraternally,

(Master's Name)

(Lodge Name and No.)

(Master's Phone Number)

Midtown Lodge No. 211
13510 Westfield Street
Any-town, VA 23236
June 11, 2013

Jane Anne Doe
204 Main Street
Richmond, VA 23234

Dear Mrs. Doe,

Your husband recently continued his journey in Freemasonry when he received the Degree of Fellowcraft in our Lodge. He is well on his way to becoming a Master Mason!

In the Fellowcraft Degree, your husband was taught, among other things, to regard the internal, not the external qualifications of other people. The degree also encourages a man to live a virtuous life; and to maintain a proper perspective when deciding whether and how often to participate in Masonic events when they may conflict with other obligations, such as family events or job related responsibilities.

Your husband will again be responsible for learning the meaning of this degree in order to progress. As before, he will need to spend time with a *[insert "coach" or "mentor" as appropriate]*, who has been assigned to him by me. We hope you will encourage his meetings with his *["coach"/"mentor"]*, so he can move on to the next degree in a timely manner.

If you have any questions about Freemasonry, or your husband's progress therein, please do not hesitate to ask your husband or to contact me or another member of our Lodge.

Sincerely,

(Master's Name)

(Lodge Name and No.)

(Master's Phone Number)

Midtown Lodge No. 211
13510 Westfield Street
Any-town, VA 23236
June 11, 2013

John Q. Doe
204 Main Street
Richmond, VA 23234

Dear Brother John,

You have been “raised” to the sublime Degree of Master Mason. Congratulations! The attainment of this title isn’t easy and, as with all titles of honor, takes persistence and hard work.

What lies ahead? As you obligated yourself at the altar, you are to practice the tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth in your daily life. As a Master Mason, the most important thing you can do is live your life in accordance with the morals and virtues taught in the three Degrees of Masonry.

If it is at all possible, you will be expected to support your Lodge with your attendance at the monthly stated Lodge meetings. In addition, there are other events you will be encouraged to participate in, such as Lodge Degree work, visits to other Lodges, and social or charity events they may hold. Your active participation will not only help sustain the Lodge, but will help you realize the full potential of what it means to be a member of this Fraternity and will strengthen the bonds of fraternal fellowship with the other members of your Lodge.

Ritual is an extremely important part of Freemasonry. To afford you a better understanding of the ritual, we hold regular schools to teach parts in the degrees and the display of solemnity in our ritual work. We encourage you to learn all that you can, and we try to make learning fun!

Don’t hesitate to proclaim your membership in our Order, and feel free to discuss Freemasonry with the non-Mason, just taking care not to reveal any of the “secrets” you have sworn to protect. When in doubt about what you can discuss, don’t hesitate to ask a more experienced Brother. We encourage your inquisitiveness into Freemasonry, but please be aware of the falsehoods of anti-Masonic propaganda. We will gladly recommend books that document the truth about our history and organization.

We hope you will attend the meetings and other events of your Lodge on a regular basis. We encourage you to include your wife (and family) at all public Lodge events.

And finally, you are encouraged to learn your Master Mason’s catechism, and when proficient, stand examination. This is a singular honor, and the ultimate achievement in attaining the title of Master Mason.

Sincerely and fraternally,

(Master’s Name)

(Lodge Name and No.)

(Master’s Phone Number)

