

# **GUIDE FOR PREPARING A MASONIC INFORMATION PROGRAM**

Published by the  
Institute for Masonic Studies  
of the Masonic Grand Lodge of California

When developing a Masonic Information Program for your Lodge, this guide outlines the most useful parts of many successful programs and can assist you in many ways. Although it is a proven format, you are not required to adhere strictly to its contents. If you have any questions or desire additional assistance after reading this manual, please contact the Chairman of the Masonic Information Program at the Institute for Masonic Studies.

Many California Lodges have benefited from Masonic Information Program. Some of the benefits are

- Correcting misconceptions among both Masons and Non-Masons.
- Educating Masons – allowing each one able to speak to non-Masons about Masonry.
- Dispelling the myth of secrecy by inviting non-Masons to see our Lodges.
- New members.

While some Lodges are fortunate enough to have members that are both knowledgeable Masons and gifted speakers, this is not so in every Lodge. If your Lodge does not have such a member, or for any reason, desires to have a speaker from outside the Lodge, the Institute for Masonic Studies is happy to provide a qualified and experienced speaker well versed in what Masonry is and what Masonry is not.

## **WHAT THE MASONIC INFORMATION PROGRAM IS ABOUT**

The goal of this program is to draw aside the “Cloud of Doubt.”

- To educate the Mason.
- To inform the non-Mason.
- To convey new knowledge
- To dispel some of the popular myths about Freemasonry

There is but one purpose of any Masonic Lodge, and that is to make Masons. To do this we need two components: knowledgeable instructors (while every Mason should be able to explain the basic principals of Masonry, not every Mason feels comfortable doing so) and good men who desire to become Better men.

A well-planned and executed Masonic Information Program can provide both the knowledgeable instructors and the good men desirous of becoming better men. Many non-Masons are flooded with misconceptions about Masonry. Often, what we do not know, we fear and/or distrust. To inform the Mason and non-Mason alike about what Masonry is and what Masonry is not is the goal of Masonic Education.

## HOW TO PLAN A SUCCESSFUL MASONIC INFORMATION NIGHT

Please read the entire guide before planning your event so that you can understand and anticipate the steps to a successful program.

Attempting a Masonic Information Program without proper preparation may fail to present a correct impression of our Fraternity.

Your Masonic Information Night should be a special event in your Lodge and not combined with your stated meeting or any other closed event. However, holding an Information Night in conjunction with a public event such as a scholarship presentation, a civic recognition (e.g. retirement of a public figure), or live entertainment by a local talent could enhance attendance. Having the Lodge serve a special dinner (roast beef, steak and/or rib BBQ, or even a pizza night) has also been proven to enhance attendance.

### THE PROGRAM

#### I – MANAGEMENT

As with all Lodge events, the first steps will be taken by the Worshipful Master. These steps are:

- Include the Masonic Information Program in his yearlong calendar.
- Provide a budget for the event.
- Appoint a capable and enthusiastic Brother as the chairman for the event (provide this Brother with a copy of this guide).
- Emphasize early and frequent notices to the members about the event to encouraging participation.

#### *THREE MONTHS BEFORE*

Appoint a Master of Ceremonies for the Information Night – this may be the Brother appointed to chair the event. If the MC is different than the chairman, provide him with a copy of this guide as well. The chairman should secure any additional speakers that will participate in the event. The chairman should also secure any and all supplies, equipment (e.g. PowerPoint projector), and paraphernalia necessary for the event.

#### *TWO MONTHS BEFORE*

Put a notice in the Trestleboard (Lodge monthly newsletter). The Master should also ask the Chairman or the MC for a report on the progress of the event at the Stated Meeting. You will improve your attendance if you mail a special flyer to the members and have the telephone committee do follow-up phone calls. Newspaper articles and radio spots are also effective. If no one knows about the event no one will show up.

#### *ONE MONTH BEFORE*

Put a large notice in the Trestleboard. The chairman or MC should again make a report at the Stated Meeting. The Master and Chairman should offer to assist any of the Brothers with a method of inviting their friends and neighbors to attend the event.

## *THE MONTH OF THE EVENT*

The Master should again encourage the participation of the Lodge. The chairman should take reservations (if there will be a dinner served), and prepare the final arrangements. Allow for those members that show up without reservations – the ones who state, “You know I always come.”

## II – SUPPLIES

All supplies should be at the Lodge two weeks before the event.

Order, through your Lodge Secretary – from the Grand Lodge Supply Room, the pamphlets: *Masons of California, Masonic Youth Groups, Membership Kits*, and any additional information that would be of interest to both Masons and non-Masons. The three-book set *Masonic Education Manual for Candidates* is available and very informative. It is most important to have plenty of applications available.

## III – GET THEM THERE

The primary factor in your success is the attendance of both Masons and non-Masons. The men should understand that their ladies are a very important part of this program and that they are most cordially invited. It not only makes a sociable foursome, if a member and his lady invite a non-member and his lady, it creates a foundation of understanding on the ladies’ part that may remove a barrier from the guest’s ability to join. Members of concordant bodies, such as Eastern Star and our youth groups might be asked to assist in the preparation and serving of the dinner. Masonry is a family affair. What better way to display this fact than having members of the Masonic Family present. All Lodge officers should be present, and should greet the members and guests as the evening progresses. Lodge officers should also bring at least one non-Mason. The example shown by the Lodge officers will be reflected in the support you receive from the rest of the Lodge membership.

## IV – BEST FOOT FORWARD

- On the day/night of the program, have the Lodge building and Lodge room clean and illuminated for effect.
- Tables should be properly set and decorated.
- A Nametag for everyone is a nice touch.
- Welcome your guests and make them feel comfortable. All guests should be met at the door by a greeter and introduced to the key members of the Lodge.
- If unaccompanied guests arrive, assign a member to be the guest’s host for the evening.
- Preparing the Lodge room by having the flag in its proper place, the chairs set up with officers’ aprons, (jewels are optional), the altar with the closed Holy Writings, and other paraphernalia helps dispel the cloud of secrecy. (It is not necessarily recommended to light the lesser lights, or to put out the rods – as the Lodge is not open and the rods are distracting if the presentations are given in the Lodge room.)
- Have a supply of the current Trestleboard and other printed Masonic material suitable for non-

Masons placed in a convenient location.

## V – HOW MUCH

How much and who should you charge for the dinner? This question is very dependent on your lodge finances, the potential cost of the dinner, the number of attendees, etc. Some suggestions are: the members pay for their dinner and the guests do not, or the Lodge pays for members who bring potential members and their guests, or the Lodge pays for the entire night.

## VI – HOW MANY

On the day/evening of your program assign one of the junior officers the duty of counting the total people present. Divide the count into Lodge Officers and their wives, members and their wives, Masonic Family members and their spouses, and non-Masons and their wives (eight categories should equal the total count). This information is extremely valuable in helping measure the success of your program and in determining future needs. The Institute for Masonic Studies requests that you report this information, along with the report of the speaker (if provided through the Institute for Masonic Studies).

Please file the report of your Masonic Information Program with the Chairman of the Masonic Information Program: [ims@freemason.org](mailto:ims@freemason.org).

## VII – FINALLY

The Masonic Information Program of the Institute for Masonic Studies at the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of California appreciates the opportunity to be of service to your lodge and Freemasonry. Our thanks for your efforts in providing this chance for our speaker to talk about Freemasonry, to enlighten the uninformed or misinformed and to contribute to the furtherance of Masonic Education among the Brethren. Our goal has been accomplished if each member and guest leaves with increased knowledge and pride in the Masonic Fraternity. Each of us must do his part in order for Masonry to exist.

Will Rogers, a famous Brother of the Fraternity said:

“To be successful you have to do three things:

You have to know what you’re doin’

You have to love what you’re doin’

You have to believe in what you’re doin’”

Only then, will more good men have the desire to become better men.

So Mote It Be!

## Appendix A SCHEDULE

Suggested Schedule (all times are flexible)

- 6:00 p.m. Doors open to Dining room and Lodge room  
Social
- 6:30 p.m. Assemble in Dining Room  
MC – Introduce Worshipful Master  
Master’s Welcome  
Invocation  
Pledge of allegiance
- 6:45 p.m. Dinner Served
- 7:00 p.m. MC – Purpose & Schedule of Program  
Introduction of Officers, Past Masters,  
and dignitaries (who in turn  
introduce their guests)  
Introduction of Members who have  
brought guests (who in turn  
introduce their guests)
- 7:15 p.m. MC – Attendees enter Lodge room for  
the program
- 7:30 p.m. MC – Introduces Speaker for the  
program  
Address by Speaker (be sure to save time  
for questions and answers)
- 8:15 p.m. MC – Invites attendees to return to the  
dining room.  
Desert is served  
Attendees are encouraged to continue  
conversations with the members  
and/or speaker. Use your good  
judgment as to when to close off  
the evening.

## Appendix B SAMPLE OUTLINE FOR SPEAKERS ADDRESS

- Welcome, Self Introduction – Resume if not given by MC
  - Introduce Wife
- What Freemasonry is not
  - Not a Religion
  - Not a Secret Society
- What Masonry is
  - History
    - Prior to Grand Lodge of England
    - English 1700 era
    - Revolutionary era
  - Masonry today
    - The first degree charge contains a good explanation of our way of thinking
    - Three Principal Tenets – Brotherly Love, Relief, Truth
    - Cardinal Virtues – Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence, Justice
    - Tools and implements – present day use
      - Square, Level, Plumb, maybe the others
  - Our members
    - Who they are – Famous and Unknown
    - Who they are not
    - Requirements – Male, Over 18, Belief in a Supreme Being, Good moral character, Petition, Own Free Will, Fees, Recommenders, Referrals
    - Procedures – Investigation, Balloting, Receive Degrees
- Masonic Family
  - For men – Scottish Rite, York Rite, Shrine, and others
  - For Women – Eastern Star, Amaranth, and others
  - For our Youth – Rainbow for Girls, Job’s Daughters, DeMolay
- Masonic Charity
- Questions
- Thank you