

Share the Light of Freemasonry

A guide to help the
Lodge **GROW**

How to increase membership

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



Welcome to the **Membership Development Program** of the Grand Lodge of Virginia. If you would like to truly do something for your Lodge, this is the place to start.

The future of your Lodge is dependent on attracting new members to keep your Lodge growing and developing. Many studies have shown that, at a minimum, every Lodge needs at least five new Master Masons each year.

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.

Membership Development is a plan and process for attracting new members to your Lodge.

This Membership Development program is a comprehensive guide to help you in building your Lodge for the future by adding new members, and retaining existing members by keeping them involved and motivated.

Here is what you should do NOW:

- Establish a membership development committee in your Lodge;
- Review this program;
- Assign responsibility for each step of the program; and,
- Implement!

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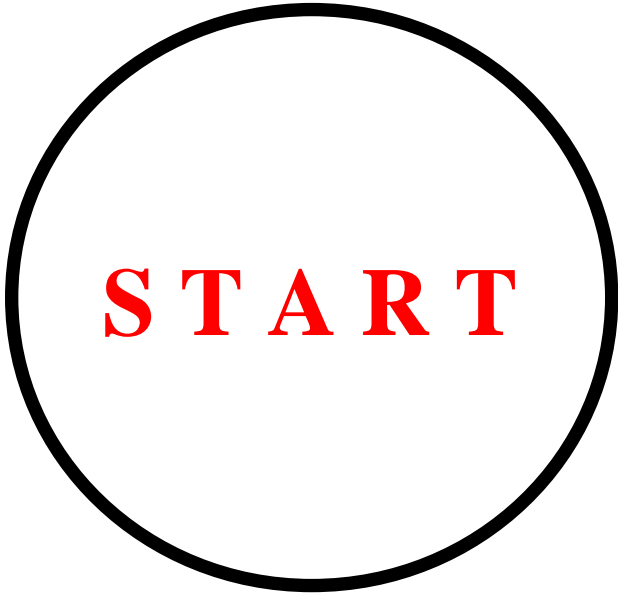
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beginning

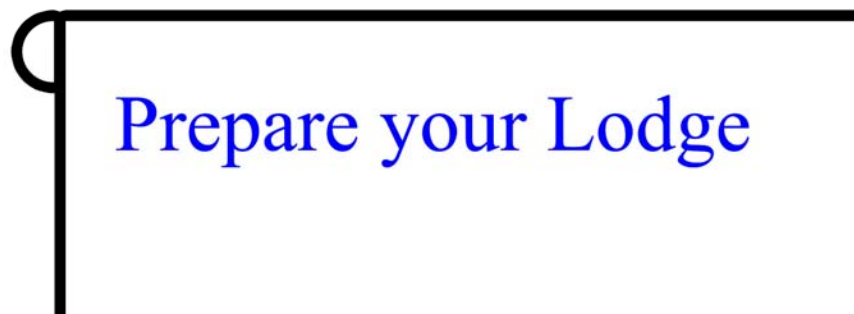
Planning

first

*get
ready*



Step One



Prepare your Lodge

Step One - Prepare your Lodge

First impressions are extremely important so lead by example. Live the values of Freemasonry each day. From your first encounter with a prospective member, he will be judging you by the way you act. The prospective member is often attracted to Freemasonry by the Brothers he meets. Make sure that every member of your Lodge is ready to meet a prospective candidate today.

Reach out to prospective members in as many ways as possible:

- Public community events
- Lodge Website
- The Lodge building
- Telephone
- Community Service Announcements
- Knowledgeable Brothers

How does your Lodge appear to the community?

Is the Lodge clean and welcoming?

Do you participate in community events?

Understand what the prospective member is looking for and how your Lodge can fulfill his needs and desires. Recent research identified the following things men want in their lives:

- 1 - Meet new friends
- 2 - Help their community
- 3 - Opportunity for Leadership
- 4 - Family events

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 candidate.

Step One – Action Items

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

Action Items: Make your Lodge ready to attract prospective members.

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.

Make sure your Lodge is ready to attract prospective members.

Action Items: Understand the expectations of prospective members, and 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?

Action Item: Be sensitive to time constraints.

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.

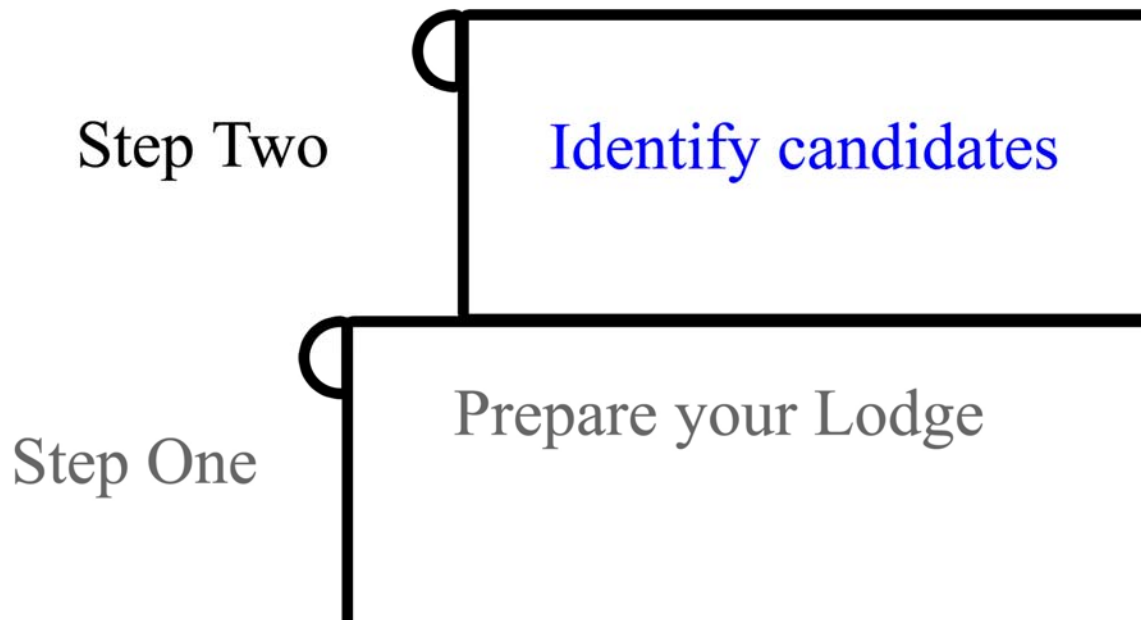
Identify and implement changes that save time.

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.



Step Two - Identify Candidates

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

A prospective Mason is a man who is involved in the community, service-oriented, and interested in self-improvement. He is someone you trust and with whom you would want to spend time.

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.

Step Two – Action Items

Action Item: Make a list of prospective candidates

Use the “**Prospective Member Worksheet**” [see page 30].

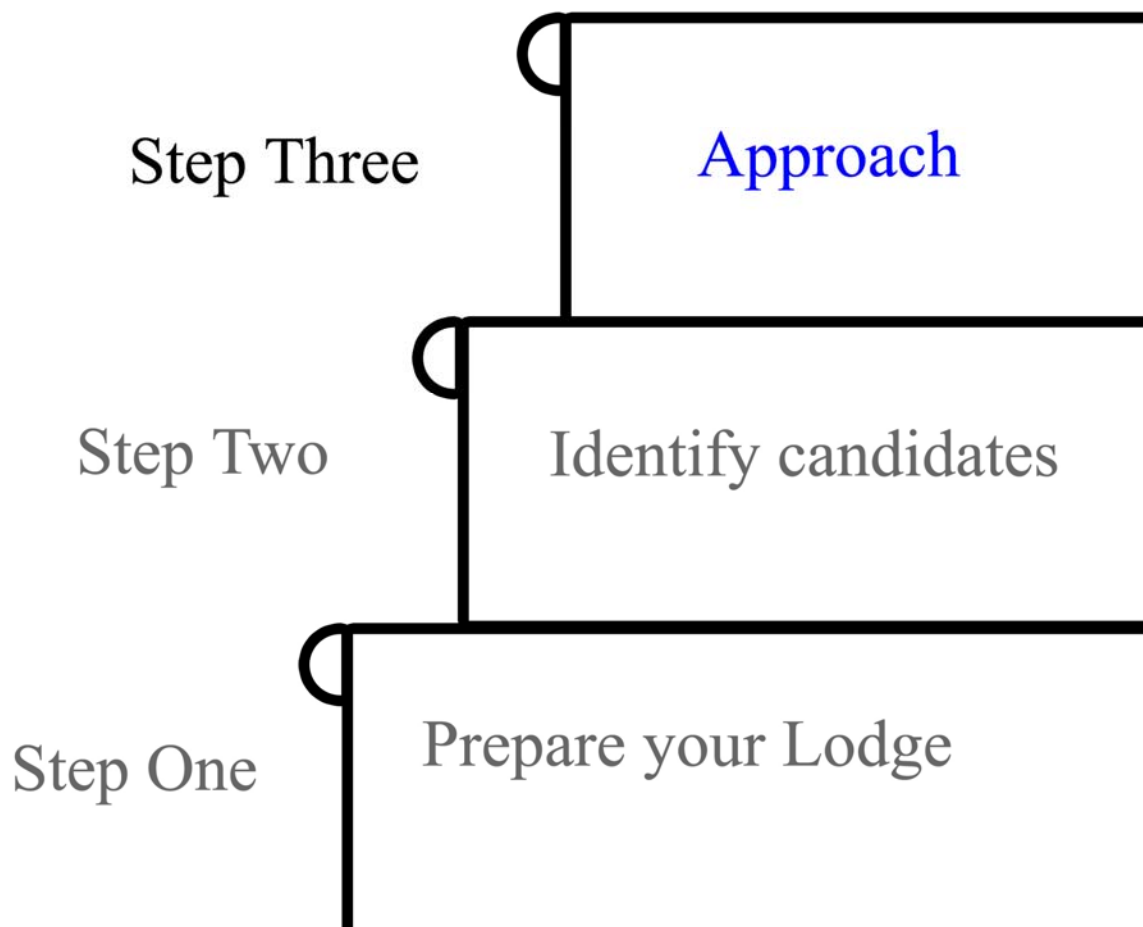
Pair each prospective member with a member of your Lodge.

Identify specific aspects and benefits that you think will appeal to each prospective member. Add these to the worksheet.

? ? ?
? ?
?
?
? ? ?
? ?

hello





Step Three – Approach

Remember 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 he can benefit from 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.

Invite him to see your Lodge and meet the Lodge Officers.

Include his wife.

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.

If he does ask, give him a petition immediately. Explain the process and help him get started. Follow up immediately. Stay with it, do not neglect the candidate. Provide him with brochures and information about Freemasonry. Offer to show him your Lodge and other Masonic points of interest, such as the George Washington Masonic Memorial in Alexandria.

Step Three – Action Items

Most prospective members are not familiar with Freemasonry, so we must be knowledgeable and ready to inform him about the Fraternity.

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

Use the “Elevator Talk.”

Masonic “Elevator Talk”

Thanks for asking about Freemasonry (*or 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 1300s. 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 *your Lodge name* Lodge in *town* , Virginia, and we offer scholarship programs, blood programs and contribute to charity.

Would you like to know more?

Action Item: Be prepared to answer the question “What do Masons do?”

Charity is at the heart of Masonic activities. We help make the world a better place through philanthropy, volunteerism, and community service. Masons donate more than two million dollars every day to charity. Masonic charities receive no public funding; they are completely supported by Masonic charity. Cite specific programs in your own Lodge.

Masonry is a fraternal organization and the members become lifelong friends who help each other in many ways.

Masonry provides strong moral values, and helps us be better men, better fathers, sons and husbands.

Action Item: Follow up

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.

Be ready with a petition. Explain the process. After the applicant has submitted his petition, follow up.

Action Item: 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 31].

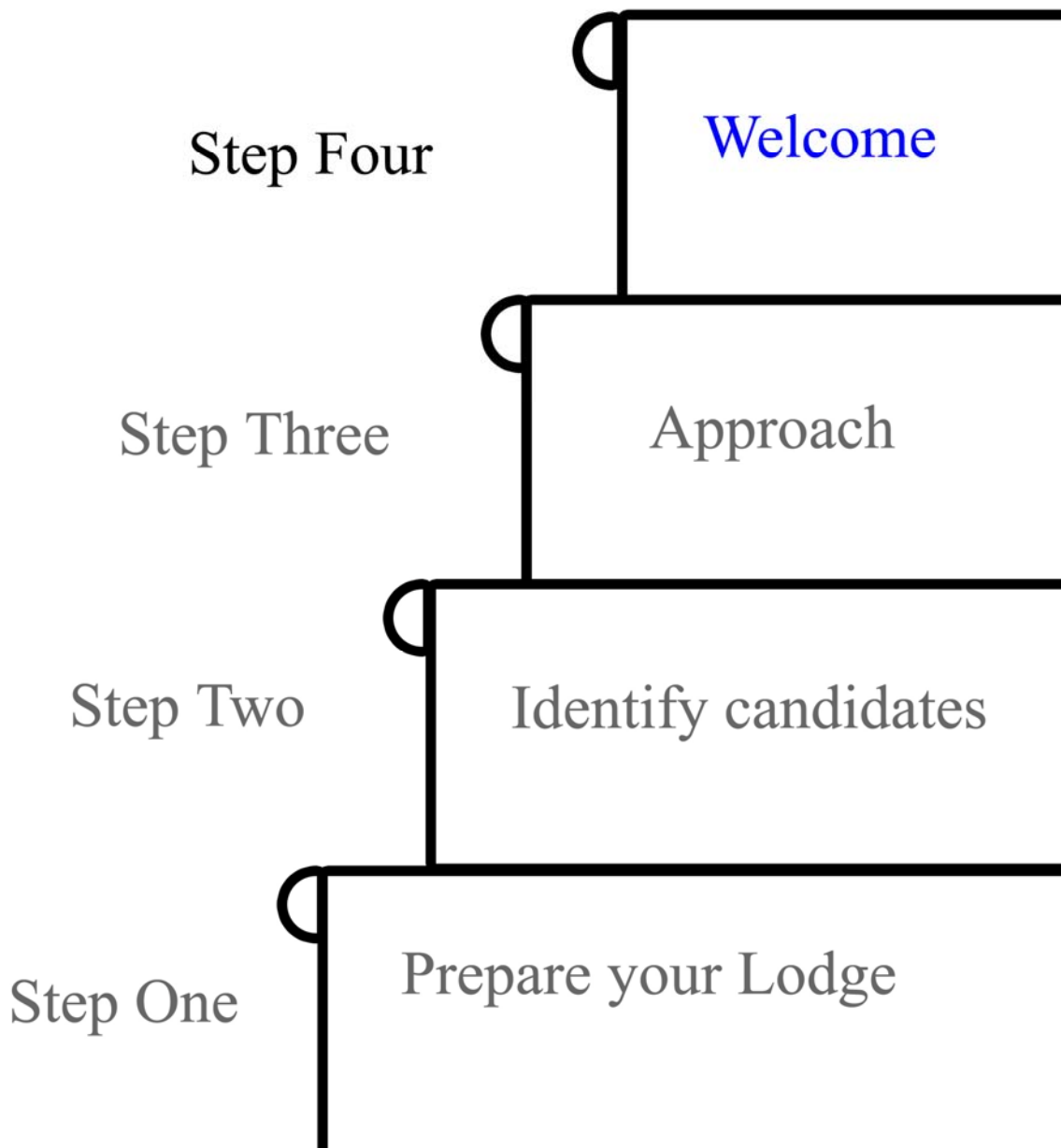
Schedule a visit to his home. If he is married, include his wife as part of the visit. Schedule the visit as soon as possible, do not wait until the last minute.

fellowship

family

friends





Step Four – Welcome

Right from the start make the candidate feel welcome in your Lodge. Beginning the very first night, 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 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 are likely forging a friendship that will last years, give it plenty of thought.

Use the welcome tools provided in this booklet:

- Candidate information packet [see page 31]
- Candidate information worksheet [see page 33]
- Lodge information sheet [see page 34]
- Welcome letter from the Master [see page 35]
- Welcome letter to the new member's wife — if married [see page 37]

Focus on fellowship

- Know the candidate (use the candidate information worksheet — see page 33).
- Greet him at each event.
- Get him involved in the Lodge immediately.

Step Four – Action Items

The initiation process of the First Degree will be a completely new experience for our new Brother. It can be somewhat overwhelming for the candidate. Be ready to provide the new Brother with information and answers to his questions.

Action Item: Plan for each degree

Have a variety of materials ready for the new Brother, such as the Grand Lodge “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 information sheet [see page 34] 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 35].

Send a welcome letter from the Master’s wife to the new member’s wife [see page 37].

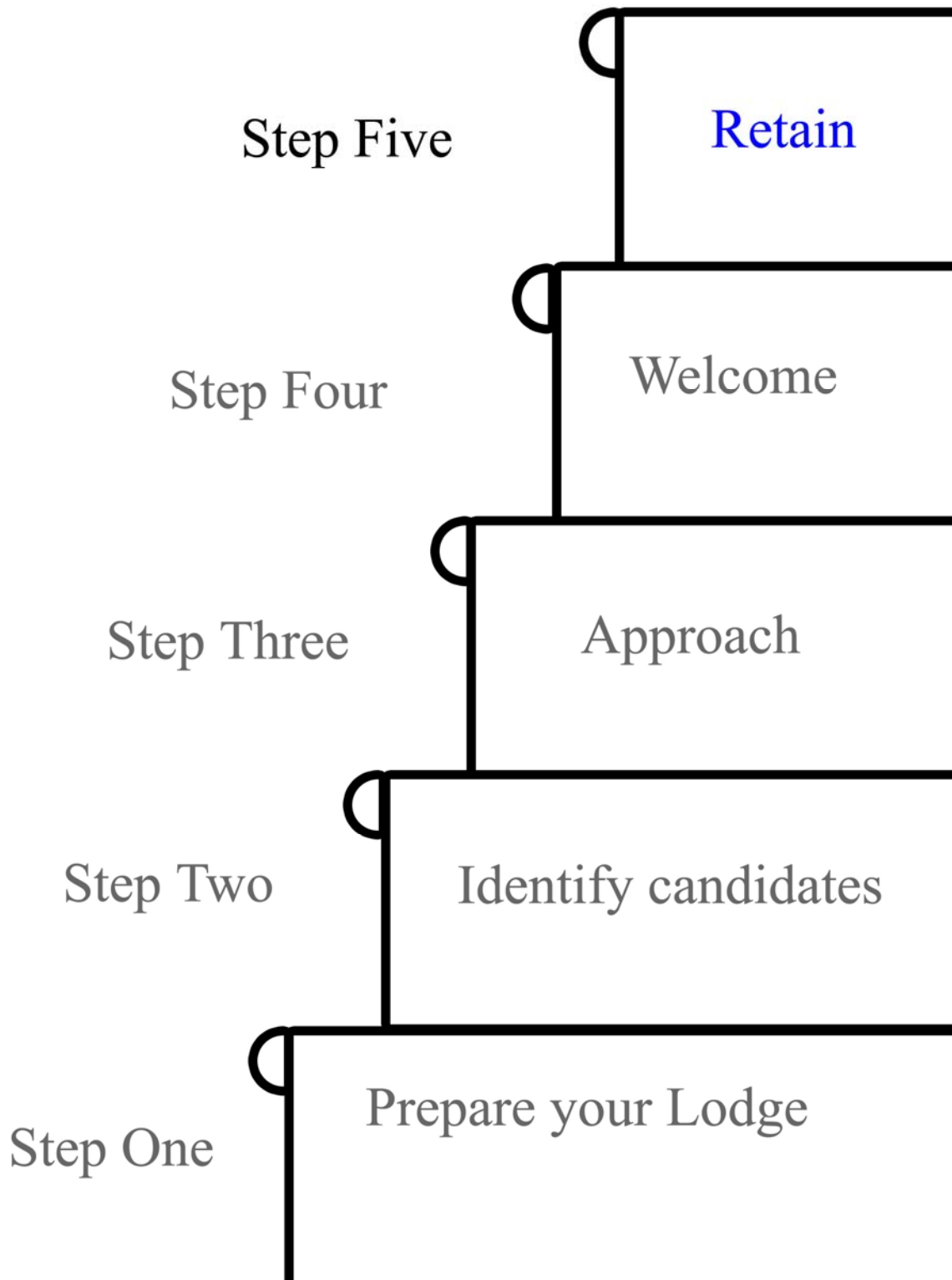


Friendship

Morality

&

Brotherly love



Step 5 – Retention

Based on exhaustive research, the typical Mason becomes inactive — in about four years. Start now to retain every Brother in your Lodge.

Focus on the expectations of the Brothers in your Lodge:

- Take an interest in your new Brother.
- Respect each Brother's time constraints.
- Offer quality and inspiring programs (include the family).
- Offer opportunities to contribute to the community.

Understand if your Lodge is meeting the expectations of its members.

- Survey the membership [see page 40].
- Compile the results.
- Make a plan to address the results of the survey.
- Develop a plan to provide a meaningful role for every member.

Step Five – Action Items

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.

Master Masons 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.

Action Items: Develop a plan for 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 every one 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.

Action Items: 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 39]. 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 at least once a year [see page 40] with at least twelve recent Master Masons.

Create and maintain a database of the responses.

Analyze the results and develop a plan to address any issues.

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 Information Packet

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.msana.com> — (The Masonic Service Association)

<http://www.masonryofnorfolkva.org>

<http://freemasonry.org> — (The Philalethes Society)

http://bessel.org/masonic_info.htm (Paul Bessel's Masonic website)

<http://www.gwmemorial.org/> — (George Washington Masonic Memorial)

<http://aw22.com/> — (The Virginia Masonic Information Net)

<http://www.angelfire.com/va/mason/vmw.html> — (Virginia Masonic Websites)

<http://www.thelodgeroom.com/index.html>

<http://morelight.org/>

<http://www.freemasonry.org/>

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

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

Welcome Letter from the Worshipful Master

(Print on your Lodge letterhead)

(Add date and address)

Dear Brother _____,

Welcome to _____ Lodge No. _____. We are happy to have you in our Lodge.

This is the beginning of a long and fruitful journey, and we hope you will experience in full measure the joys and benefits of membership. There is much to be learned about Freemasonry. You will find it to be both a moving experience and a very personal journey. As you travel in Freemasonry, do not hesitate to talk with well-informed Brethren who will be happy to guide you in that way you will gain from the experience as each of us has.

Many Brothers have said that they get out of Freemasonry what they put into it. So I encourage you to read and learn as much as you can about Freemasonry, live its precepts in your daily life, and involve yourself in the various aspects of the Lodge activities as your time permits.

Your Lodge has a variety of activities throughout the year and there are many other activities in the district and beyond which you are free to attend. As these activities may be new to you, please call the Brothers

involved who will be pleased to include you in an event or invite you to travel with them.

Please feel free to call me or any of the Lodge officers at any time. We are all on the level and the Lodge is a reflection of every member. You are a valued part of our Lodge and we welcome your participation in all of our activities.

Fraternally,

(Insert Master's Name)

(Insert Lodge Name)

Letter to the New Member's Wife (if married)

*Note: this letter can be sent from the Master or from the Master's Wife
(if married)*

(Print on Lodge Letterhead)

Date

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Dear Mrs. (New Member's Name) ,

Kindly permit me to introduce myself: I am the Master of (Lodge Name) Lodge in (town name) . It is with great pleasure that we have recently welcomed your husband into the Masonic Fraternity. The recent ceremony at our Lodge began your husband's journey into Freemasonry and also was the first step on a journey that emphasizes morality, charity and brotherly love.

We hope that you will share your husband's interest in Freemasonry and support him on his journey. While our Lodge meetings are private and limited to Masons, many of our Lodge events are designed to include the entire family. Our schedule includes a variety of events including dinners, picnics, trips and other social events as well as various public ceremonies at our Lodge and

elsewhere. You are always invited to our family and public events.

If you have any questions about Freemasonry and 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.

We welcome you into our Masonic family and hope you will attend and participate in our family and public events. The members of our Lodge look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

(Insert Master's Name)

(Insert Lodge Name)

New Member Survey

Lodge

Name:

What first interested you about Freemasonry?

Are any members of your family Freemasons?

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

Have you met all of the Lodge officers?

What do you like about the meetings?

What do you dislike about the meetings?

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).

Do you have any questions?

Member Satisfaction Survey

_____ Lodge

Name:

What first interested you about Freemasonry?

What aspect of Freemasonry are you interested in now?

Are you active in the Lodge?

If not, why not?

How many meetings do you attend each year?

If less than 3, why do you not attend?

What do you like about the meetings?

What do you dislike about the meetings?

What would you like to see at a meeting?

What should the Lodge do differently?

What projects or programs would you like the Lodge to undertake?

Do you have any questions?

