

The Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of Ohio



A Basic Masonic Education Course
For Fellow Crafts
With Questions

Prepared by
The Committee on Masonic Education and Information
of
THE GRAND LODGE OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF OHIO

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A Basic Masonic Education Course

THE FELLOW CRAFT

This manual does not disclose any of the esoteric portions of the ritual of the Grand Lodge. The contents of this manual therefore may be discussed with, and read by, any person interested in acquiring knowledge about Freemasonry.

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THE FELLOW CRAFT DEGREE

BASIC TEACHINGS OF THE SECOND DEGREE

In one sense the Fellow Craft Degree symbolizes the stage of adulthood and responsibility during a man's life on earth. In this stage, his task is to acquire knowledge and apply it to the building of his character and improving the society in which he lives. As the father of our Masonic lectures, William Preston saw Freemasonry as a means to educate men in the liberal arts and sciences. A Fellow Craft Mason is urged to advance his education in these fields during the ritual of this Degree.

Some view the three part initiation of Freemasonry as representing a progressive teaching directed toward perfecting human nature. It is a simple and straightforward view of human nature divided into three parts: body, mind and soul. Each Degree addresses and instructs one part. The Entered Apprentice Degree encompasses the body and our faculties of action in the world. The four cardinal virtues are extolled as the proper guides to our action in the world that we may perfect our relation to it. The Fellow Craft Degree addresses the mind and its faculties. We are instructed in the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences, which were formulated hundreds of years ago, in order to develop and perfect the mental nature. The intention was to prepare the mind for spiritual truths. The Third Degree confers the central Mystery of Freemasonry; that is, how the soul may be brought to its perfection.

If we accept the view of Freemasonry's purpose given above, then it is obvious that the Fellow Craft Degree encompasses much more than just gaining a broad-based education. The teachings of this Degree are extremely profound and surprisingly exact.

SYMBOLISM OF THE DEGREE

The symbolism of the Entered Apprentice Degree emphasized beginnings, spiritual birth, the first steps and youth, orientation to the Light, which are all consistent with a rite of induction into the Fraternity. The Second Degree of Fellow Craft symbolizes the methods of developing and progressing in the Craft; and, in a sense, the emergence into spiritual manhood. Therefore we find symbols of advancement, passage, instruction and elevation throughout this Degree. We find symbolism of taking the next step and a new way of approaching the East. What was considered in the last Degree to be our weaker nature has now been squared and elevated. While keeping our fidelity to the Three Great Lights, we deepen our connection with the Fraternity and take on new commitments.

Our Working Tools are now testing instruments. With them, we try, square and prove. With them we learn to develop the faculty of judgment: what is valuable, what is true, what is real.

The central motif of this Degree being one of advancement, we are presented with the symbol of the Winding Staircase consisting of so many steps and leading to the Middle Chamber of the Temple. Staircases, ladders, extended vertical ropes, and mountains are all symbols of ascending to new heights.

Gaining entrance to a new place symbolizes a distinct advancement in our work as Freemasons. Attaining this level gives us access to certain benefits that we were not entitled to before. These benefits are symbolized by Corn, Wine, and Oil. There are other things granted here as well. We become invested with the ability to hear the teachings of our Fraternity and keep them close to our heart. Finally, we are reminded of our central focus in the symbolism of the letter “G” and the humility it should inspire.

DULY AND TRULY PREPARED

At the outset of this Degree, it should be clear to the Candidate that although much of it seems familiar, it is also very different, and some aspects even seem to be in opposition to the previous Degree. There are certain avenues of further exploration that should be brought out here. We are usually given an explanation for most parts of the ritual in the various lectures. Some seem to allude to deeper interpretations. As we prepare to enter the Mysteries of Freemasonry certain things should be kept in mind. For example, the number three keeps emerging in the rituals in one way or another. Geometrically, three is the triangle. And in fact, there are three kinds of triangles: the equilateral triangle (all three sides equal), the isosceles triangle (two sides equal), and the scalene triangle (no sides equal).

THE PREPARATION

The changes in dress from an Entered Apprentice to a Fellow Craft have been explained in the ceremony. Gaining admission is similar to the First Degree, with addition of a pass, which is given for him by his conductor. We are trying to teach that the knowledge and energy are freely given toward gaining the privileges of Freemasonry, and that by the aid of others, we are able to advance.

THE RECEPTION

It takes on a new significance during your reception for this Degree. The square should be a rule and guide to your future actions with mankind.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A FELLOW CRAFT

In addition to the rights you acquired as an Entered Apprentice, you have the right to sit in a Lodge when opened in the Fellow Craft Degree, when accompanied by a Master Mason who has sat in Lodge with you. You may visit another Lodge opened in the Fellow Craft Degree. You have the right to be instructed and examined. If found proficient, you may request advancement to the next degree.

The responsibilities are found in part in the Obligation, and you should review these along with the Obligation of the Entered Apprentice. Finally, you are reminded that you are to acquire the special knowledge introduced in this Degree and seek to apply that knowledge to your duties in life so you can occupy your place in society with satisfaction and honor.

THE WORKING TOOLS

THE SQUARE

The Square is the symbol of morality, truthfulness and honesty. The direction of the two sides of the Square form an angle of 90°, or a right angle, so-called because this is the angle which stones must have if they are to be used to build a stable and upright wall. It symbolizes accuracy, not even varying by a single degree. When we part upon the Square, we go in different directions, but in full knowledge that our courses in life will be going according to the angle of the Square (which means in the right direction), until we meet again.

THE LEVEL

The Level is a symbol of equality. We do not mean equality in wealth, social distinction, civic office, or service to mankind; but, rather, we refer to the internal, and not the external, qualifications. Each person is endowed with a worth and dignity which is spiritual, and should not be subject to man-made distinctions. Freemasonry recognizes that one man may have greater potential in life, service, or reward, than another; but, we also believe that any man can aspire to any height, no matter how great. Thus, the Level dignifies labor and the man who performs it. It also acknowledges that all men are equal without regard to station. The Level also symbolizes the passage of time.

THE PLUMB

The Plumb is a symbol of uprightness of conduct. In Freemasonry, it is associated with the plumb line which the Lord promised Amos he would set in the midst of His people, Israel, symbolizing God's standard of divine righteousness. The plumb line in the midst of a people should mean that they will be judged by their own sense of right and wrong, and not by the standards of others. By understanding the Plumb, a Mason is to judge his Brothers by their own standards and not those of someone else. When the plumb line is thought of in this way, it becomes a symbol of an upright life and of the conscience by which each person must live. This idea is closely tied to the concept of Justice. For, in truth, Justice is giving another man his due.

THE JEWELS

The attentive ear, the instructive tongue, and the faithful breast, remind the Craftsman that the time-honored method of instruction is by word of mouth. These jewels should signify the necessity to learn and utilize good Masonic instruction and develop a devotion to the teachings of our Craft.

OTHER IMPORTANT SYMBOLS

THE PILLARS ON THE PORCH

Two pillars were placed at the entrance to King Solomon's Temple, which are symbolically represented within every Masonic Lodge. These pillars are symbols of strength and establishment - and by implication, power and control. One must remember that power and control are placed

before you, so you might realize that power without control is anarchy, or that control without power is futility. Man must have both if his life is to be successful.

Some researchers have thought that the two pillars before Solomon's Temple represented the Pillar of Cloud and the Pillar of Fire which led the Israelites through the desert to the Promised Land. It was their guide in the light as well as in the dark.

The globes on the columns are said to be the celestial and terrestrial spheres representing heaven and earth.

THE WINDING STAIRCASE

Much of the symbolism of the Winding Staircase is explained in the ritual itself. There are some points to bring out that may lead one to further research and insight. The significance of the number three has already been mentioned. We have the three Degrees, the Three Great Lights, the three Officers, and the three Principle Tenets of Freemasonry. What we want to emphasize here is the Three Theological Virtues: Faith, Hope, and Charity. These virtues were considered a ladder to heaven, another symbol of ascent.

The Five Steps are also explained in some detail. They symbolize the five orders of architecture as well as the five human senses which man constantly employs and is dependent upon in his daily life.

The Seven Steps symbolize the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences. These were formulated as early as 330 CE. The Christian scholars adopted them soon afterwards and we find their full flowering at the Neo-platonic Cathedral School of Chartres in 12th Century France. The interesting work that came together here was the union of the philosophies of Neo-platonism and Christianity. The study of the Seven Liberal Arts was considered a means to the knowledge of God. This principle was actually expressed in the construction of the Gothic Cathedral of Chartres. We even find for the first time sculpted representations of the Seven Liberal Arts on the West Door of the Cathedral.

The Masters of Chartres taught that the proper study of the Seven Liberal Arts guided the intellect to approach the hidden light behind the world. The invisible underlying structure of Reality, the Truth, could be apprehended in this way. As another matter of interest, it was in the mid-thirteenth century that the humble mason who had mastered the Seven Liberal Arts was entitled to the designation of architect.

ADMISSION TO THE MIDDLE CHAMBER

The passage from the Outer Porch to the Middle Chamber represents a definite step in the journey to enlightenment. The wages received in the Middle Chamber come as a result of achieving this distinction. Remember that the Candidate had to first ascend the Winding Staircase in order to gain admission. The Fellow Craft must become proficient in the Seven Liberal Arts. A regular study of the subjects is demanded to gain admission to the outer doors leading to this Middle Chamber. It is when the initiate begins to perceive the synthetic vision of this Masonic education and a special intuition begins to dawn within his mind and conscience that he knows the inner doors are opening to that Chamber within. Outside, the Candidate was shown a symbol of plenty, but here it has been established in fact.

THE WAGES OF A FELLOW CRAFT

Corn, Wine, and Oil are symbolic wages earned by the Fellow Craft Mason who arrives at the Middle Chamber. These symbolize wealth in mental and spiritual worlds. Corn represents nourishment and the sustenance of life. It is also a symbol of plenty, and refers to the opportunity for doing good, to work for the community, and to the performance of service to mankind.

Wine is symbolic of refreshment, health, spirituality, and peace. Oil represents joy, gladness and happiness. Taken together, Corn, Wine, and Oil represent the temporal rewards of living a good life.

The actual "wages" are the intangible but no less real compensation for a faithful and intelligent use of the Working Tools, fidelity to your obligations, and unflagging interest in and study of the structure, purpose and possibilities of the Fraternity. Such wages may be defined in terms of a deeper understanding of Brotherhood, a clearer conception of ethical living, a broader toleration, and a more resolute will to think justly, independently, and honestly.

THE MASONIC LETTER "G"

Why the letter "G" is so prominently displayed in Masonic Lodges is an enigma to Masonic historians. Like the sphinx before the pyramids, it stands before us in silence and mystery. It is not consistently displayed throughout the Masonic world and there are Masonic scholars who feel it should be removed. The reason that it is so displayed is plainly given to the Candidate in this Degree. We are told that it is the initial of Geometry as well as the initial of the name of the Supreme Being. From the time of the "Old Charges" and manuscripts up to the present, the synonymous nature of Geometry and Freemasonry is clearly stated. It is also obvious that "G" is the initial of God. This alone may be sufficient reason for its presence.

The importance of Geometry to a full understanding of Freemasonry becomes apparent to the Candidate as he progresses through the degrees. He is unequivocally informed that Geometry is the basis or foundation of Freemasonry. A full explanation for this importance is not forthcoming, just that it is very important to undertake the study. We would suggest that the Masonic student might follow some of the following lines of research that he may come to his own conclusions.

It is thought that the Egyptians became skilled at surveying because the annual flooding of the Nile obliterated boundary markers in their fields. They had to set out and calculate new boundaries each year. The Greeks named this skill Geometry, or "earth measurement." Empirical generalizations were derived, presumably, from their experience in field measurement. The Greeks, it is thought, made the advancement of using deductive logic to expand the knowledge into a theoretical science, and Pythagoras is credited with this achievement. This actually set the groundwork for the development of the sciences. So we may consider Geometry the first science.

Pythagoras and his Society, and later, Plato and his Academy, raised Geometry to a sacred science of discovering the nature of reality and through it the Deity. We have such statements from Plato as: "Geometry rightly treated is the knowledge of the eternal." And also: "Geometry must ever tend to draw the soul towards the truth." Later, Euclid systemically presented all the knowledge of Geometry in his work *Elements of Geometry*, beginning with five unproved principles about lines, angles, and figures, which he called postulates. Euclid uses only the compass and straight edge for all the drawings, proofs, and solutions.

MASONIC GLOSSARY – FELLOW CRAFT

Admonish	to caution advise or counsel against; to express warning or disapproval; to give friendly, earnest advice and encouragement
Artificer	a skilled or artistic worker or craftsman; one who makes beautiful objects
Beneficent	doing or producing good
Bourne	boundaries; limits
Brazen	made of brass
Candor	freedom from bias, prejudice or malice; fairness; impartiality
Chapiter	an alternate, and earlier, form of the word capital
Column	a supporting pillar consisting of a base, a cylindrical shaft and a capital
Composite	one of the five orders of architecture, combining the Corinthian and Ionic styles
Conflagration	fire, especially a large, disastrous fire
Contemplate	to look at attentively and thoughtfully; to consider carefully
Contrive	to devise; to plan; to invent or build in an artistic or ingenious manner
Corinthian	one of the three classical (Greek) orders of architecture - the most ornamented of the three. Originated in the City of Corinth in Greece
Cubit	an ancient unit of linear measure, approximately 18 inches in today's measure
Discerning	showing insight and understanding; excellent judgment
Dispersed	scattered; spread widely
Doric	one of the three classical (Greek) orders of architecture - the oldest and simplest of the three, originated in an area of ancient Greece known as Doris
Edifice	a building, especially one of imposing appearance or size
Ephraimites	members of one of the twelve tribes of Israel, descended from Ephraim, one of the sons of Jacob

Homage	respect or reverence paid or rendered; expression of high regard
Injunction	an order or requirement placed upon someone by a superior
Inundation	to overflow with water; a flood
Ionic	one of the three classical (Greek) orders of architecture, originated in an area of ancient Greece known as Ionia
Judicious	having, exercising or characterized by sound judgment; discrete; wise
Naphtali	one of the sons of Jacob, Brother of Joseph, and a founder of one of the twelve tribes of Israel
Palliate	to try to conceal the seriousness of an offense by excuses and apologies; to moderate the intensity of; to reduce the seriousness of; to relieve or lessen without curing
Pilaster	an upright architectural member that is rectangular in plan and is structurally a pier, but is architecturally treated as a column; it usually projects a third of its width or less from the wall
Reprehend	to voice disapproval of; to express an attitude of unhappiness and disgust
Salutary	producing a beneficial effect; remedial; promoting health; curative; wholesome
Summons	a written notice issued for an especially important meeting of a Lodge, the written notice or requirement by authority to appear at a place named
Superfice	a geometrical object which is of two dimensions and exists in a single plane
Superstructure	anything based on, or rising from, some foundation or basis; an entity, concept or complex based on a more fundamental one
Tuscan	one of the five orders of architecture, originated in the Tuscany area of southern Italy
Vicissitudes	the successive, alternating or changing phases or conditions of life or fortune; ups and downs; the difficulties of life; difficulties or hardships which are part of a way of life or career

Questions for the Fellow Craft

1. Which part of man is dealt with in the Fellow Craft Degree? (Physical, Mental or Spiritual)
2. This degree depicts man in which period of his life?
3. How were you received upon first entering a Lodge of Fellow Craft?
What is this meant to teach you?
4. What are the four rights of a Fellow Craft?
5. What are the Working Tools of this degree?
6. Name the Three Jewels of a Fellow Craft.
7. What do the Two Brazen Pillars represent?
8. How many steps are there on the Winding Staircase?
9. According to Masonic Tradition, who fashioned the original Pillars at King Solomon's Temple?
10. What are the five Orders of Architecture?
11. Which three are particularly essential to Masons? Why?
12. Name the Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences.
13. Which of the seven is most important to Masons and why?

14. Where is the Middle Chamber? How do we get there?
15. What are the Wages of a Fellow Craft?
16. What do these Wages symbolize?
17. Which letter is suspended in the East, and what does it represent?