

The Fellow Craft Degree

Congratulations on being Passed to the degree of a Fellow Craft. As a new Fellowcraft you need to return to the Lodge Room and walk through the process of your passing with your Mentor. You should be conducted to the several Stations and he should explain their significance. You also need to be instructed in the Pass, Grip, and Word of the degree. Any questions you may have concerning the degree can be addressed at this time.

As a Fellowcraft you have the right to sit in Lodge when it is opened on either the Fellow Craft or Entered Apprentice Degree. You may also visit another Lodge opened on those degrees with permission of its Master, and accompanied by a Brother who has sat in Lodge with you in those degrees and can vouch for you.

The Fellow Craft Degree symbolizes the prime years of manhood and your attendant responsibility during your life on earth. During those years you acquire knowledge and apply this knowledge to the building of your character and to improving the society in which you live. In the ritual of the degree, you as a Fellowcraft are urged to advance your education in the liberal arts and sciences. The Fellowcraft degree is thought by many Masonic Scholars to be the most instructive degree. It is in this degree that we address the knowledge and wisdom that has been passed down to us from time immemorial. This degree teaches that knowledge is freely given toward gaining the privileges of Freemasonry, and that by the aid of others you are able to advance.

You were received into the Lodge on the angle of the Square, and were told that the Square should be a rule and guide in all your future actions with mankind. A square meal, (complete,) a square deal, (fair,) and a square person, (honest,) are examples of this idea.

The obligation is the center of every degree, and its solemnity is crucial. Each Fellow Craft pledges obedience, assistance, and protection to each other, binding us by a tie that should last us our Masonic lifetime.

The emblems of the Fellow Craft are the Plumb, Square, and Level; Corn, Wine, and Oil; the Pillars; the Winding Stairs; the Liberal Arts and Sciences; and the letter G. You should become very familiar with them for they epitomize the lessons of this degree.

The Symbols of this degree are the Square, Level, and Plumb, and you will also recognize them as the Working Tools of a Fellow Craft.

The Square is the symbol of morality, truthfulness, and honesty. The direction of the two sides of a square form an angle of 90 degrees, or a right angle, so called because this is the angle that stones must have if they are to be used to build a stable and upright wall. 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, (in the right direction,) until we meet again.

The Level is a symbol of equality. The equality practiced in Masonry is like that of a family in which the members may contribute little or much, but all share equally. The law is “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need.” The fraternity recognizes equality as a natural fact despite the differences of talent, possession, opinion, race, and creed, which there are in each of us. Each person is endowed with a worth and dignity that is spiritual and should not be subject to man-made distinctions.

The Plumb is a symbol of uprightness of conduct. In Freemasonry it is associated with the Plumb Line, which the Lord promised Amos that he would set in the midst of His people Israel, symbolizing the Supreme Being’s standard of divine righteousness. The Plumb Line in the midst of a people should mean that they would be judged by their own sense of right and wrong, not by the standards of others. By understanding the Plumb, a Mason is to judge his Brothers by their own standards not by those of someone else. When the Plumb or Plumb Line is thought of in this way, it becomes a symbol of an upright life and the conscience by which a person must live.

The jewels of a Fellow Craft are the Attentive Ear, the Instructive Tongue, and the Faithful Breast. They remind the Fellow Craft of the time-honored method of instruction is by word of mouth. The secrets of Freemasonry are always deposited in the hearts of the faithful Brethren. These jewels should signify the necessity to learn and utilize good Masonic instruction and to develop and understanding of the teachings of our Craft.

The wages of Corn, Wine, and Oil, are thought of in Symbolic Masonry as wages that are earned by the Fellow Craft who completes his task and comes to the Middle Chamber. Together 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, the opportunity to work for the community, and the opportunity to perform 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 reward of living a good life.

There were two pillars placed before the entrance to King Solomon’s Temple, and these are symbolically represented within every Lodge of Fellow Crafts. These pillars bear the name of Boaz and Jachin, symbolizing strength and establishment and by implication, power and control. These two pillars remind the Fellow Craft that power without control is anarchy, and that control with out power is manipulation.

The winding staircase represents the progress of an inquiring mind toiling and laboring toward intellectual cultivation and study. This is the road to knowledge. The winding stairs, by their very shape, are also symbols of courage and faith. They are also symbols of physical, mental, moral, and spiritual progress.

The symbolism of numbers is first presented to the New Mason in the Middle Chamber Lecture.

The first three steps allude to the three degrees of Masonry, and the three principle officers of the Lodge. Study will reveal there are many other allusions to the number three.

The second group of five steps teaches the use of order in architecture, and to the five human senses, of which three are most revered by Masons: Seeing, by seeing we see the sign; Hearing, by hearing we hear the word; Feeling, by which we recognize the grip whereby one Mason may know another in the dark as well as the light.

Education is the theme of the Fellow Craft Degree. It is here the Fellow Craft is taught that only through life long pursuit of education, can he hope to obtain the knowledge and wisdom from the experience and teaching of others who have come this way before him.

The Seven Liberal Arts and Sciences symbolize education.

Grammar is dedicated to the cultivation and mastery of our language.

Rhetoric addresses the adornment of language in order that we might communicate clearly and more precisely.

Logic helps us realize the importance of reasoned conclusions throughout our lives.

Arithmetic reminds us to add to our knowledge, never to subtract from the character of any man, to multiply our benevolence to all mankind, and to divide our means with a suffering Brother.

Geometry is most revered by Masons. Geometry reminds us of the origin of our Gentle Craft, as well as the Great Architect of the Universe who created all things.

Music teaches us that life becomes more meaningful and harmonious when we learn to appreciate the beauty of music, poetry, literature and the fine arts. These provide us with peace and tranquility in our lives when we are beset with trials and tribulations.

Astronomy is a realization of the vastness of the universe, and the Great Architect of the Universe who created all things of heaven and earth.

In this degree, the symbols and ceremonies are directed to lessons for the cultivation of the candidates reasoning faculties, and the improvement of his intellectual powers. Each Freemason is encouraged to continue his quest for education and knowledge throughout his entire life by ever pursuing the seven liberal arts and sciences.

The passage to the Middle Chamber symbolizes a man's journey from ignorance to enlightenment. His wages as a Fellow Craft are received in the Middle Chamber, and they are symbolic of the knowledge that can only be gained by a closer relationship with his creator.

The letter “G” is a symbol of geometry, and also that of Deity. The letter “G” reminds us that our every act is done in the sight of the Supreme Being and that Divine Providence is over all our lives.