

Part #8

Guide for Preparing Candidates

This process should never be a single individual's responsibility. The First Line Signer, the assigned mentor, the proficiency coach, the Master and the Secretary will probably all be involved with ensuring the candidate is properly prepared for degree process.

Ensure that the candidate understands the importance of his pending Masonic experience and that he will be a valuable member of the fraternity. Make clear that Masonry is a family-friendly institution and that any questions or concerns that a family member has should be addressed.

Make clear to the candidate that nothing that occurs in the degree process will be embarrassing or demeaning in any way; there is no hazing in Masonry.

Regardless of how much background or research the candidate has done, an effort should be made to establish a proper level of understanding of what is expected of him and what will happen. In addition, the dates and times for various events should be very clear. This guide is a valuable tool for communicating important information to the candidate.

Inform him that each degree is solemn and meaningful, and they do use older language (degrees have been mostly static since 1860s.) The degrees are symbolic in nature. Most things/lessons taught during the degrees and the lectures have obvious meaning, but also are designed to teach deeper lessons.

Night of Degree:

1. Take the opportunity to ask if he has any questions. Answer them.
2. What he will experience is nearly identical to what Masons have experienced for centuries.
3. The prologue to the degree should be read (available on Grand Lodge website under Lodge Resources, Member Resources).
4. Explain that the degree is always performed in the singular, even if there are multiple candidates.
 - a. The degree is being done for each one of them.
 - b. There will be certain times when each candidate will be involved singularly for a short time (first part of the first degree, second part of the third degree)
 - c. Most of the degree work is done as a group.
5. Discuss the nature of "Questions" posed to the candidate.
 - a. Several times he will have to supply an affirmative answer (interrogatories, own free will and accord) – "I am" or "It is" are preferred, but some response is required.
 - b. His escort will often answer questions which are asked of him.
 - c. On initial entry for the first degree, there will be a question he must answer, unprompted.
 - d. After the obligation, his escort will provide him with answers which he is required to repeat.
6. At the beginning of the degree, he will be dressed in an outfit furnished by the lodge.
 - a. All masons enter the same way; "On the level" regardless of your "worldly wealth and honors."

- b. Some candidates may have issues about his body. If possible, discuss this ahead of time and make clear that all brothers have been similarly clothed.
7. For part of the degree he will be blindfolded (hoodwinked)
 - a. Masonry is a journey in search of “Light” which is symbolic of the individual’s personal search for enlightenment and truth. He starts his Masonic journey in the dark about the lessons of Masonry.
8. There are a few times when he will be required to kneel; confirm this will/will not be a problem.