

A Walk-About the Lodge

Introduction

This program is intended to instruct and assist a newly Raised Brother to become more at ease and comfortable in a Lodge room that is seemingly full of customs, symbols and mysteries. It may also help to stir his interest in furthering his Masonic Education.

This program is not ritual and should be given informally in a light friendly manner. The presenter may conduct the walk-about in his own words and at his own pace. He can also initiate his own humor during the walk-about of the Lodge room. As a suggestion, one Brother could narrate the walk-about with another acting as the guide.

It is recommended that the presentation of the walk-about take place at a regular business meeting shortly after the new Brother receives the Third Degree of Masonry. It must never be given in conjunction with any Degree, and should be presented in the order of business entitled "New Business".

Preparation

The following instructions should be given and understood, at an Officers' meeting or preferably at a rehearsal.

The Worshipful Master may appoint a representative of the L SOME Committee or any qualified Brother to conduct the walk-about program. The presenter should instruct all concerned that when the candidate is presented to them, the Officer should rise and extend his hand in token of Friendship and Brotherly Love. When it is said "and his jewel is", that Officer should lift and display the jewel of his office. When all remarks are concluded at that particular station or place, the guide or narrator thanks the Officer by Title (Worshipful Master, Senior Deacon, etc), the Officer will sit down in his chair before the guide moves the candidate forward.

The following text represents the maximum length of material that should be offered. The guide or narrator also has the option to edit or modify the program.

The sequence of introductions as outlined in the text is recommended. It should be done in a counter-clockwise direction and adjusted to suit the individual Lodge room.

The guide should meet the newly Raised Brother prior to the opening of the Lodge and accompany him to a seat near the northeast corner of the Lodge.

The instructions contained within the text to be presented are within parenthesis and italicized.

When the Worshipful Master announces "New Business . . ." or "Has any Brother anything to bring before the Lodge?"

(The Guide rises and begins :)

Worshipful Master, May I have permission to conduct our newly Raised Brother on a walk-about?

(The Worshipful Master responds :) Permission granted.

(The Guide rises, indicates that the new Brother should do the same. He extends his hand in friendship, and begins)

My Brother, I am _____ and I am about to conduct you on a walk-about of the Lodge room. Please understand that this is not official ritual and does not need to be memorized. It is presented to you so that you will gain a better understanding of the workings of the Lodge. This will enable you to become more comfortable in attending and participating in this, your Mother Lodge, and in visiting others.

This is the Northeast corner of the Lodge. You were placed here before the Worshipful Master when he informed you that you there stood an upright man and Mason. It is where you began your journey in the world of Masonry. The Northeast corner is where, traditionally, the first stone of a building is laid, and it is where we have laid that first stone of your personal spiritual building. You stand here a rough ashlar (*point to it*) starting a lifelong journey toward the ideal of becoming that perfect ashlar (*pointing to it*) fitted for that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We are taking this walk-about the Lodge so that you may meet the Brothers who assisted in the conferral of your Degrees. We hope to provide you with additional information that will make you a better Mason.

As you can see, the Charter of this Lodge (*point to it*) is displayed before the Worshipful Master. No Lodge may conduct their work legally without their Charter present in the Lodge room. Just as a Lodge you are visiting has the right to require you to prove yourself a Master Mason, so you have the right to examine their Charter to assure yourself of their regularity. It is important to remember that once the Lodge is opened and at labor, no one is allowed to talk or move about, except with the permission of the Worshipful Master. To do so would be the height of rudeness and disrespect.

(Guide escorts new Brother to the Worshipful Master and sees that he comes on the Sign of Fidelity by showing him how it is done.)

This is the Sign of Fidelity, it is a Master Mason's proper sign of respect and is always to be given when addressing or being addressed by a senior officer. If you wish to speak in Lodge or ask a question, you will rise to your feet and come on the Sign of Fidelity, and wait to be recognized. You will continue to hold the sign while speaking and will drop it only when you are done and return to your seat. When speaking, you will only address the Worshipful Master. No cross talk is permitted in Lodge.

There are other times when the Sign of Fidelity is also used as when the Chaplain is offering prayer to Deity, when the Senior Deacon approaches the altar to open or close the Great Light. It is also used when the Worshipful Master is obligating a candidate at the Altar and upon the entrance of the Grand Master, or the Deputy Grand Master in the absence of the Grand Master.

During the Pledge of Allegiance and the singing of the National Anthem the civilian salute (*right hand over heart*) should be given.

(Directed to Worshipful Master)

Worshipful Master, I have the pleasure of presenting our newly Raised Brother _____.
(Worshipful Master rises and shakes hands).

His title is Worshipful Master and he is always to be addressed in this manner when the Lodge is at work. The title is one of respect and does not indicate that he is to be in any way worshipped, for it has no religious connotation. Its use is based upon the 13th century English custom of using the honorific “Your Worship” or “Worshipful.” as a mark of respect for men who occupied positions of honor or authority. Freemasons adopted the latter title and it has been used in the craft for several hundred years.

The jewel of his office (*Worshipful Master holds jewel up for display*) is the Square, an emblem of morality and virtue. It is also displayed upon his apron. The Worshipful Master is the presiding Officer of the Lodge; he may be the elected Master or someone designated by the elected Master to fill the station for a specific purpose and time. The Brother who sits in the East and wears the jewel and apron of the Master will always be addressed as Worshipful Master while there.

At the hand of the Worshipful Master is his gavel, a sign of authority in the Lodge room. With it the Worshipful Master can call his Officers up with two raps, raise the entire Lodge to their feet with three raps, and sit them again with one. If there is conversation in the Lodge room, all must fall silent upon the Worshipful Master’s single rap. It is a serious breach of proper Masonic conduct to ignore the Worshipful Master’s gavel. Thank you Worshipful Master.

(Guide points to the Flag of our Country)

To the right of the Worshipful Master stands the Flag of our Country. It must be on display at all times when the Lodge is at work. It is customary for us to recite the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag during the opening of the Lodge. If you are visiting a Lodge in a foreign jurisdiction and they follow this or a similar custom, you are not required to recite their pledge. You should stand with them out of courtesy and respect for their traditions.

(Standing at the northeast corner of the Lodge and facing south)

The area between the Master’s Station and the Altar is sometimes called the Master’s Carpet. No Brother shall pass between the Altar and the East while the Lodge is at Labor, except when required to do so by ritualistic performance. The Worshipful Master is responsible for giving Masonic light to his Lodge, and because Masons consider the Holy Writings to be a source of this light, we must never block the Master’s view of the open Sacred Volume upon the Altar.

(Guide escorts new Brother to a position in front of the Senior Deacon)

Here we have our Brother Senior Deacon (*Rises and offers handshake*). The jewel of his office (*displayed*) is the radiant sun contained within the Square & Compasses. This emblem is also present on his staff and apron. He welcomes visitors to the Lodge and sees that they are properly clothed as Master Masons. It was he who acted as your trusted guide as you progressed through the Degrees. He also serves to convey the orders of the Worshipful Master about the Lodge room and serves at the altar during the opening and closing of the Lodge. Thank you Brother Senior Deacon.

(Guide turns new Brother to Treasurer)—note: the Treasurer’s place may vary from Lodge to Lodge. Place this segment in the proper sequence to accommodate your Lodge’s layout.

This is our Brother Treasurer. *(Rises and offers handshake.)* The jewel of his office *(displayed)* is the Crossed Keys and represents the keys to the strongbox or safe and signifies the trust placed in him to manage the financial resources of the Lodge. He receives all funds paid to the Lodge, via the Secretary, and issues checks at the direction of the Lodge as certified by the Master and Secretary. Thank you, Brother Treasurer.

(Guide turns to the Organist)—note: the position of the Organist may vary from Lodge to Lodge. Place this segment in the proper sequence to accommodate your Lodge’s layout.

Still further on the right of the Worshipful Master sits our Brother Organist, *(Rises and offers handshake.)* who provides musical accompaniment to our work. The importance and power of Music, one of the liberal arts, was explained to you during your 2nd Degree. His jewel is the lyre *(displayed)*, an ancient musical instrument. Thank you Brother Organist.

(Guide moves to the north of the altar {only if there is a chair there})

It has been already explained to you that the north side of the Lodge is considered to be in Masonic darkness. So you might ask, “Why is there a chair there?” This is because our concordant and associate bodies, such as the Scottish Rite, York Rite and Order of the Eastern Star, frequently use Masonic Temples, and they may use this position. It is, however, never used during the regular workings of a Masonic Lodge.

(Guide leads to just inside the two pillars at the inner door.)

Here are the two pillars, representing those famous pillars at the entrance to the porch of King Solomon’s Temple. They guard the inner door of the Lodge. This door leads to the preparation room where you made yourself ready to embark on your Masonic life. This door is only to be used for the entrance and exit of Degree candidates and their escorts during Degree work and is never to be used by a Master Mason to enter or retire from the Lodge.

(Moves to the West facing the Masters of Ceremony)

These are our Brothers Masters of Ceremony *(They rise and offer handshake)*. Their jewel is the Crossed Swords *(displayed)*, worn about their neck, and displayed upon their aprons and staves. They are responsible for assisting the Worshipful Master in the ceremonial work of the Lodge. It was they who first met you in the preparation room and insured that you were duly and truly prepared to enter. They also were part of your escort around the Lodge during the Degrees. Thank you Brothers Masters of Ceremony.

(Facing the Senior Warden)

This is our Brother Senior Warden (*rises and shakes hands*). The jewel of his office (*displayed*) is the Level, an emblem of equality and balance. The Senior Warden is second in command of the Lodge and will assume the Worshipful Master's duties and responsibilities in his absence. During your Degrees he was one of those responsible for observing that you were duly and truly prepared and later that you were indeed in possession of the signs and tokens. He often heads up Lodge Committees and projects for the Master. Thank you Brother Senior Warden.

(Guide leads new Brother to the Junior Deacon)

On the right of the Senior Warden is our Brother Junior Deacon (*rises, shakes hands*). The jewel of his office (*displayed*) is the Quarter Moon within the Square & Compasses, worn about his neck and also displayed on his apron and staff. He insures that we are properly tiled and attends to alarms at the Outer Door. He announces all visitors to the Worshipful Master, and, at the Worshipful Master's direction, admits them to the Lodge. Brother Junior Deacon, please make an alarm at the outer door. (*When answered by the Tiler, the Junior Deacon opens the door and temporarily stands aside.*)

(Guide faces the Outer Door)

This is the Outer Door of the Lodge. It is the only proper place for a Master Mason to enter or leave the Lodge room except for the use of the inner door by officers or Brothers participating in a Degree or acting as escorts following a Degree. It was here that your presence was first made known to the Worshipful Master when you appeared for your Degrees.

(Facing Tiler through open Outer Door)

Our Brother Tiler guards the Outer Door. His jewel (*displayed*) is the drawn or naked sword and his implement of office is the sword. He guards the Lodge against the intrusion of outsiders and prevents anyone from listening at the door. Additionally, he makes sure that all those wishing to enter are properly clothed and vouched for, at which time he will make an alarm and inform the Junior Deacon of their presence. Thank you Brother Tiler.

(Steps back clear of the Outer Door)

Brother Junior Deacon, please secure the Outer Door. (*Junior Deacon closes Outer Door*) Thank you Brother Junior Deacon.

(Guide leads the Brother to the South, facing the Junior Warden and Stewards)

These are the Stewards of the Lodge (*rise and shake hands*); their jewel (*displayed*) is the Cornucopia, or Horn of Plenty. This is often the first chair a Brother will take when he aspires to begin his passage as an Officer to the East. They are responsible for assisting in the preparing, serving and clearing of collations and assisting in the housekeeping about the Lodge. Traditionally, Masonic Lodges celebrated Feast Days twice a year and it was the Stewards duty to prepare and serve the festive meal. They also were part of the procession during your Degrees. Thank you Brother Stewards.

(Guide faces the Junior Warden)

This is our Brother Junior Warden (*rises and offers his hand*). The Junior Warden is the 3rd Senior Officer of the Lodge and it falls upon him to open the Lodge and set it to labor in the absence of the Worshipful Master or Senior Warden. His jewel (*displayed*) is the Plumb, an emblem of uprightness. At the direction of the Worshipful Master, it is he who calls the Craft from labor to refreshment and supervises the Brothers at that time. He also serves as the catering manager of the Lodge and arranges for the feasts and collations. He also was one of the Officers who examined you during your Degrees. Thank you Brother Junior Warden.

(Guide escorts new Brother to the Secretary's Desk)

This is our Brother Secretary (*rises and shakes hands*). His jewel is the Crossed Quills (*displayed*) and is symbolic of the instrument he uses to keep a correct record of the proceedings of the Lodge. The Secretary receives all money that is sent to the Lodge and pays it into the hands of the Treasurer. When directed by the Worshipful Master, he will send a summons to all of the members of the Lodge. There is an old adage that "Worshipful Masters come and go, but Secretaries go on forever!" They often serve for many years in a row, and we are truly appreciative of their dedication, and love of the Craft. Thank you Brother Secretary.

(Guide moves to the front of a Trustee, sitting near the Southeast)

This is our Brother Trustee (*rises and shakes hands*). Our Lodge has three, one of which is elected each year. The Constitutions do not define the duties of Lodge Trustees. They are defined by our Lodge By-Laws. Their duties can include the care, management, and control of all the property of the Lodge, subject to the resolutions of the Lodge. Thank you Brother Trustee.

(Guide moves to the front of the Marshal)

Here is our Brother Marshal (*rises, shakes hands*). The jewel of his office is the Crossed Batons (*displayed*) and the implement of his office is the Baton, a symbol of authority. Anciently it was a symbol of the Officer in charge of the English Lord's horses and stable, a position of great importance and prestige. In the Lodge, the Marshal takes charge of all Masonic processions and conducts distinguished visitors. He also assists the Worshipful Master in maintaining order in the Lodge room. Thank you Brother Marshal.

(Guide turns to Chaplain, who comes down on the level to offer his hand)

This is our Brother Chaplain. The jewel of his office is an open copy of the Volume of Sacred Law (*displayed*), also worn upon his apron. His duties include leading our devotions to Deity at the opening and closing of the Lodge and reading the Scripture lessons during the Degrees. He does not have to be an Ordained Minister, though at the Grand Lodge level Grand Chaplains usually are. He ends his devotions with the word AMEN, a Hebrew word signifying "so should it be", at which time all Masons traditionally reply "So Mote It Be". This response has the same meaning as "Amen". Thank you Brother Chaplain.

(Turning to the newly Raised Brother)—note: the number of officers mentioned and their means of attaining office (election or appointment) should be adjusted to suit the needs of your Lodge as dictated by its Bylaws.

You will perceive, my Brother, that there are 15 Officers of this Lodge. The Constitutions of the Grand Lodge of New York mandate 8 officers: Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Treasurer, Secretary, Senior Deacon, Junior Deacon and Tiler. The others are mandated by the By-laws of our Lodge to be either elected or appointed. All non-elected officers are appointed by the Worshipful Master and serve at his pleasure. Five officers, the Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Secretary and Treasurer are yearly elected by the Brethren of the Lodge and serve for a one-year term. They may not resign their office but can leave only when their replacement has been duly elected and installed. Some Lodges appoint additional Officers, such as Historian or Education Officer. Since Grand Lodge does not mandate these positions, they have no official jewel or emblem of office.

(Guide leads Brother West of the Altar)

Here, at your request, you were presented with the most important symbols of Masonry – the Holy Bible, Square and Compasses, the three Great Lights in Masonry. Lodges are referred to as “Blue” or Symbolic Lodges. The color Blue is emblematic of Friendship, a characteristic peculiar to our ancient Craft Lodges as well as our Lodges today. Masonry is not a religion, nor is it political; therefore, our symbolic teachings are acceptable to all men under the Blue Canopy of Heaven.

My Brother, it has been my pleasure to conduct you on a walk-about the Lodge room this evening, to explain and instruct you in some of our ancient and honorable customs. As you have seen here tonight, every Mason under the Blue Canopy of Heaven will extend the hand of Friendship and Brotherly Love to you at every opportunity. Your Brethren spent many hours learning and practicing their work to present your Initiation, Passing and Raising in this Lodge. We stand ever ready to continue to share Masonic Light with you; all you need do is ask. Congratulations and best wishes, my Brother, in your progress through the Craft.

(If a Master Mason Certificate is to be presented, it should be done at this time while the new Brother stands West of the Altar. If not, he should be conducted to a seat among his Brethren.)

(Guide faces the Worshipful Master in the East)

Worshipful Master, I thank you for the opportunity and privilege of escorting our newly Raised Brother on this walk-about the Lodge.

(The Guide returns to his seat).