

## Freemasonry: The Craft



For centuries, millions of men of every race, color, creed, and religion throughout the world have found in Freemasonry the light to guide their search for answers to eternal questions: *What is the meaning of life? What is the nature of God and man?*

Freemasonry is the world's oldest and largest fraternal order. It is a universal brotherhood of men dedicated to serving God, family, community, and country.

It is religious in character, in that every Mason must have a belief in a Supreme Being. It is a philosophy, which imparts moral and social virtues and fosters brotherly love. Its tenets have endured since man turned the first pages of civilization.

Freemasonry can strengthen a man's relationship with his God, his fellow man and his country. Sectarian religious or partisan political discussion in a lodge is strictly prohibited. We work harmoniously, transcending the boundaries of race, religion and culture. Every Mason stands equal among his brothers, regardless of walk of life.

The purpose of Ancient Craft Freemasonry is to make better men through our quest for Divine Truth, creating a greater understanding of the inner self and a spirit of fellowship.

## Brotherhood At Work

Freemasonry is a fraternal brotherhood devoted to high moral ideals. Community service and charitable works are principal Masonic activities.



Many Masonic bodies support their own statewide and national foundations for research, teaching, treatment or rehabilitation services for children with learning or speech disorders, cancer, visual challenges, or in need of dental restoration. Scottish Rite has the Childhood Language Disorders Clinics. They treat children with hearing, speech, language or learning challenges. The York

Rite is divided into three groups; Royal Arch, Cryptic Masons (Council), and The Knights Templar (Commandery). Royal Arch charitable activity is the Royal Arch Research Assistance which helps fund research and treatment of Central Auditory Processing Disorders. Cryptic Masons support research in vascular diseases such as arteriosclerosis. The Commandery works with The Knights Templar Eye Foundation whose purpose is to provide research, surgical treatment and hospitalization to those who suffer from diseases or injuries to the eyes. Many of the bodies have educational scholarship programs, loans and grants. Easily the best-known activity is the world's largest single charitable institution, the Shriners Hospitals for Children which are located throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Masons everywhere assist distressed brother Masons and their families. They also sponsor or support local projects ranging from the recognition of the achievements of others such as public educators and public safety officers to scholarship programs.

Collectively Freemasonry and its concordant bodies spend more than two million dollars per day on numerous charities without regard to the Masonic affiliation of their recipients. With this spirit of working together to serve mankind, we make a difference in the lives of the people we help. We are the example that shines for the entire world to follow. We lead by example.

## A Progressive Science

Once raised to the "sublime degree" of Master Mason in his "Blue" Lodge, a Brother's journey begins. He now has earned the privilege to study and learn the mysteries of Ancient Craft Masonry.



Concordant bodies like the *York Rite* and the *Scottish Rite* offer more Masonic light. Advancement through these concordant bodies not only invites participation in Masonic work and charitable activities, but also promotes a more comprehensive understanding of its system of ceremonies, doctrines, and symbols. No matter how much a Mason learns or how high a Mason climbs

the Masonic ladder, he is still and most importantly a Brother Mason.

A statewide "Grand" organization governs every Masonic body, and all concordant organizations, with the exception of the Blue Lodge, have national governing councils as well. No Mason is required to advance beyond his Blue Lodge or participate actively in its ritual or business affairs, but those who do so find personal fulfillment. It is here where the bonds of friendship and Brotherly Love are enhanced and grow even stronger.

Whether their commitments are to Masonic ritual, study or organizational and charitable work, most active Masons simply speak of the friendship among trusted friends and a satisfying sense of purpose.



## Ancient Traditions

Though its heritage in antiquity is unmistakable, modern Freemasonry was founded more recently upon the structure, ceremonies, and symbolism of the lodges of operative stonemasons, who built the magnificent Medieval Gothic structures throughout much of Europe and Great Britain.

Dated in 1390 A.D., the *Regius Poem* details the charter of a lodge operating in the 900s A.D. "Masonry" then meant architecture and encompassed most of the arts and sciences. Because lodges held knowledge as competitive secrets, only trusted, capable companions were instructed in the craft, and then only by degrees, orally and through symbols.

In the late Renaissance, lodges of freemasons began to accept as speculative masons those educated men who were attracted by the elegance of Masonic traditions for philosophic expression.

Thus, the framers of speculative Freemasonry began to describe a code of conduct through the symbolic nature of architecture and stonemason's craft. Signaling modern speculative Freemasonry, the first Grand Lodge in England was chartered in 1717. Constituent Symbolic Lodges were soon established throughout the world.

## A Family Affair

The Blue Lodge is the bedrock of the Masonic family, yet there are several appendant organizations, which a Mason's family members can join to share many more of their common interests and activities.

Family oriented activities include a range of social and entertainment programs, family outings, and community service projects, as well as numerous occasions for statewide or regional travel.

Among the appendant groups for adults, both men and women may be welcome as members, but women typically hold the principal offices. These groups include, among others, the Order of the Eastern Star and Order of Amaranth.

Groups for young people build self-esteem, moral values, and prepare them for citizenship through successful experience with responsibility and leadership. Masonic youth groups include the Order of Rainbow for Girls, the Order of Job's Daughters for the young women and the Order of DeMolay for young men.



## Ask Yourself

Among millions of Masons, not one was lawfully invited to apply for membership. Our code of conduct prevents it. Thus, no faithful Mason can invite you. Any Mason can obtain a Petition for the Degrees of Masonry for you, but **YOU MUST ASK FOR IT** and for good reason.

You must first ask yourself if you're suitably prepared to enter the "gentle craft of Masonry" to become a brother in the world's most exclusive fraternal order. Do you reflect on the nature of man's existence and your obligations to God, your family and yourself?

If such ethical and moral questions hold little interest to you, then you will gain little benefit from the teachings of the Craft. But if you seek a more

meaningful quality of life, i.e. the spirit of charity and good fellowship, then Freemasonry has much to offer.

We want you to know what we believe, how we act, and what we do, then, should you ever become a Mason; you will be proud to be our Brother and excited to participate in our work. Only those who desire membership because of their favorable impression of us should seek a petition. That's why you must "ask yourself." Are you ready to become a better man?



## For More Information

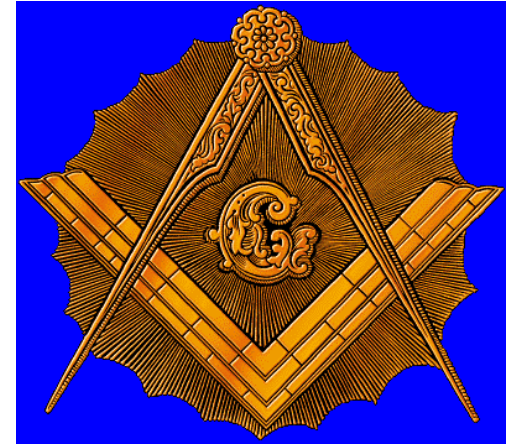
For more information or a petition for membership contact the person who gave you this brochure, the Masonic Lodge in your community or the Grand Lodge of Idaho, A.F.&A.M. You can call 208-343-4562 or 877-898-1867 (toll free). You can visit our website at: [www.idahoaf.am](http://www.idahoaf.am) or you can e-mail us at [gs@idahoaf.am](mailto:gs@idahoaf.am).



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# IDAHO FREEMASONRY

FRATERNAL EXCELLENCE SINCE 1867



- **FOUNDED** on belief in a Supreme Being and tenets of Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth
- **COMPOSED** of moral men committed to self-improvement, family values, and community involvement
- **SUPPORTING** representative government, a free society, and public education
- **DEDICATED** to perpetual fraternal service