



Six Steps Before Becoming a Freemason

A Guide to the Candidate Selection Process

Freemasonry is a joyous journey that is inundated with friendship and compassion for all. A Freemason is a man who has taken the solemn obligations that are required before he may partake in the rights and privileges that are a result of having such altruistic associations. The Six-Steps Before Becoming a Freemason provides a method by which a man who is desiring admission into Freemasonry can develop an intimate relationship with his prospective lodge of membership; and allows the lodge to become acquainted with the worthy candidate.

This document is intended to be used for the pre-screening of, and becoming acquainted with, candidates prior to the Petition for Initiation being presented to them. It is a tool to help evaluate potential members and determine their suitability for membership in each lodge. We know from experience that Freemasonry is not for everyone and it is necessary to determine, as best we can, who it is for and for who it is not a good fit.

You are encouraged to use this guide in its entirety, fulfilling each step and then completing the final checklist summary report. This will then be presented to the lodge, evaluated by the principal officers, and if acceptable, a Petition for Initiation will be issued. The Guide and the Petition will be given to the investigating committee to assist them in the interview process.

The Candidate Selection Process consists of six steps:

1. Brief Interview and Discussion- (Initial response and set up an in person meeting)
2. In Depth Interview and Discussion (Tasked with reading material/questionnaire)
3. The Follow Up Meeting (Assign memory work)
4. The Social Meeting (Introductions to other members at a social function)
5. Ongoing Social Events (Continued social functions)
6. Asking for a Petition

When referenced, the "Charge to the Brethren" is the charge given at the end of the Installation of Lodge Officers, as is provided on page 4-22 of the 2014 Standard Work. The suggested memory work is "The Common Gavel" as it is provided on page 1-20 of the 2014 Standard Work. Both are provided within this packet.

These steps are a guide, and are outlined in more detail on the next few pages and are accompanied by general recommendations on how to approach each step. Steps two and three have a two- page hand-out that you will present to the candidate for completion and return at the next meeting. They will be included in the final check list and should form part of the summary report.

Candidate Selection Summary Report Checklist

STEP ONE

Brief Interview and Discussion

Refer to the Guideline notes for a suggested approach on how to conduct this phone call.

- Return phone call made. Date: | |
- Does candidate wish to meet? Yes No
- Is the candidate serious about a *life* in Freemasonry? Yes No
- Was candidate asked to write a question list and bring to the first meeting? Yes No
- What does the candidate know about Freemasonry?

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STEP TWO

In Depth Interview and Discussion

Refer to the Guideline notes for a suggested approach on how to conduct this meeting.

- Reason for interest in Freemasonry:
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- Did candidate bring questions? Yes No
- Were your answers satisfactory? Yes No
- Traditional Approach explained? Yes No
- First Meeting Questionnaire provided and explained? Yes No
- Is the candidate prepared to answer and return the questionnaire at your next scheduled meeting? Yes No

STEP THREE

The Follow Up Meeting

Refer to the Guideline notes for a suggested approach on how to conduct this meeting.

- Did the candidate read the Charge to the Brethren? Yes No
- Did it describe principles and a way of life that the inquirer relates with? Yes No

How? Notes on this discussion:

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- Did the candidate find and explore the Grand Lodge website? Yes No

(www.freemason-wa.org)

Notes on any discussion regarding the Website:

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- Did you go over the lodge positions and briefly explain them? Yes No
- Did you go over the three degrees and briefly explain them ? Yes No
- Did you go over a typical lodge meeting and refreshment ? Yes No
- Does the candidate understand the expected dress when attending lodge? Yes No

STEP FOUR

The Social Meeting

Refer to the Guideline notes for a suggested approach on how to conduct this meeting.

- Was a topic of interest from the Grand Lodge website selected and discussed: Yes No
- Notes on your discussion:

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- Was the memory work completed? Yes No
- Did another brother attend? Yes No

STEP FIVE

Ongoing Social Events

Refer to the Guideline notes for a suggested approach at these meetings.

- Major lodge social event attended
 - Game Night Summer Picnic
 - Dinner event
 - Other
- Meeting night evening festive board
 - Meeting Night, Date
 - Meeting Night, Date
 - Meeting Night, Date
- Any feedback from the brethren of the lodge?

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STEP SIX

Asking for a Petition

Refer to the Guideline notes for suggested communication at this step.

- Are all sponsors prepared to sign the petition? Yes No
- If no, is further time recommended? Yes No - not a good match
- Petition presented to lodge secretary Yes No
- Date | | 20.....
- Any additional information:

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Guidelines and Suggested Questions

STEP 1

Brief Interview and Discussion

Q: Hi (Name) _____, my name is John Doe; I am a member of _____ Lodge No. _____

I understand that you have expressed interest in becoming a freemason?

A: if YES reply with: That's great (Name) _____, we are always happy to welcome well informed and sincere men into our fraternity.

if NO your conversation is short.

Q: So (Name) _____, what do you know about Freemasonry ?

A: *It is important that you listen carefully to this answer and make key notes on the Summary Check List.*

Q: That's a good start (Name) _____ A lot of people who approach us are simply curious and their interest is trivial, sometimes they think they are going to learn all kinds of secrets but they never do. If your interest is trivial I can answer your questions over the phone right now and save us both some time, but if you are serious about a *life* in Freemasonry then I suggest that we meet for a coffee and get to know each other a little. Would you like to do that?

A: YES serious about a *life* in Freemasonry

NO trivial interest

Q: Okay, it would be helpful if you were to make a list of any questions you may have and bring it with you to our first meeting. This will be your chance to find out everything you ever wanted to know about our fraternity. I will personally answer all of your questions for you, honestly and completely.

** Set the time and place for a 45 minute meeting.*

STEP 2

In Depth Interview and Discussion

Q: Well (Name) _____ what brings you to Freemasonry?

A: *It is important that you listen carefully to this answer and make key notes on the Summary Check List.*

Q: Did you bring your list of question we talked about you putting together on the phone?

Go over these and answer them for the candidate.

Q: Good questions but there are a few things that were not addressed that we should go over.

Give the candidate the First Meeting two page hand-out.

Explain the Traditional Approach typically done in the past.

Explain each of the important points for the candidate to take home and think about before ending the meeting. Use this two page hand-out to help explain that this is a *life* decision.

Provide a copy of the Charge to the Brethren and explain the reading assignment.

STEP 3

The Follow Up Meeting

Q: Did the candidate read the Charge to the Brethren? Yes No

Let me ask you, does it describe who you are, or who you would like to be? *(If the answer is negative then the interview is over)* If positive, explain to the candidate that every time new officers are installed in a lodge this lecture is delivered to remind all of us of how we should live our lives.

Q: I would like to talk to you today about our lodges and our structure.

This meeting should be to describe everything about our lodge and how it functions.

- The physical layout of the lodge room and why.
- The regalia
- The offices and titles
- The progression
- The three degrees
- Where he will start
- The refreshments
- The special events
- The dress code
- Anything else you can think of.

There is some additional research I am going to ask you to do and I have some memory work for you to learn for the next meeting.

Do you have any questions or concerns regarding this? Yes No

STEP 4

The Social Meeting

This should be a warm and friendly meeting without too much talk about the Craft

Well (Name) I would like you to meet (Lodge Member)

He is a member of our lodge and I will likely ask him to co-sign your petition with me, when the time comes. I have told him about our previous meetings but I'm sure in time, he will have some questions of his own to ask you.

Potential co-signer satisfies himself that the candidate is viable over this and the next few meetings.

Did you do that research on the Grand Lodge web page Yes No
and choose a topic for brief discussion today?

Were you able to memorize that small piece I gave you at our last meeting? Yes No

Due to our long standing traditions and ritual work, being able to do this is quite important, so it is good to know that you are not uncomfortable with it. This is something we all have to do so go ahead present it to us from memory.

Explain to the candidate that the series of meetings after this are going to be in the lodge and/or in another social environment with other members of the lodge.

Choose the next major social event where the family or wives can participate, if possible.

Explain to the candidate any associated monetary expectations prior to his arrival to any social events.

Also encourage the candidate to attend refreshment before or after two or three stated meetings at your lodge. If there are no social events in the near future, his presence on the night of a stated meeting will be imperative for his being acquainted with other members of the lodge.

Advise the candidate these social meetings will provide him opportunities to meet our members and get to know them a little. While there, he should be asking himself if these are the type of people he would like to spend a good portion of his time with. If the answer is no, then he should not proceed. Tell him that the members will be asking themselves if he is the type of person they want to have in their lodge and if he will fit in.

Explain to him the importance of this step; if there is no harmony this lodge, in particular, might not be a good fit (perhaps another nearby lodge would be?).

Explain that our lodge is a very harmonious place. We choose to be there, spending time with people we enjoy being with, people who share the same ideals, who support the same charities, who are good friends, who are there for each other when needed and who share the common bond of Freemasonry. A sacred retreat of friendship and virtue, like this, is a rarity in the modern era and we want to ensure no one enters our doors that would interfere with that harmony. Once you enter our lodge you will know exactly what I am talking about.

STEP 5

Ongoing Social Events

These are social events where the candidate and his family should be made very welcome at. They should be made to feel at ease very quickly. Be sure to encourage his lady's attendance.

There is nothing else to do at these social meetings but have fun and talk about whatever comes forward. His behavior and our instincts and observations will tell us whether or not Freemasonry is for him. Encourage him to continue asking questions.

STEP 6

Asking for a Petition

How did he enjoy the social event or events? Make sure you meet him socially at least three times so you both have some context with this.

We would like to describe to you what happens after your petition has been signed.

- Presented in open lodge for all to hear.
- Examination committee is appointed to interview you and your lady at your home.
- Committee makes their report to the members of the lodge.
- The members then vote on your acceptance into the lodge
- If favorable, you will receive a notification from the lodge secretary asking you to attend on a specific date in order to be initiated into Freemasonry.



Second Meeting Hand-out Candidate Copy

Please return at your next meeting

TRADITIONAL APPROACH

As an individual, seeking further information and a possible *life* in Freemasonry it is important that you understand how things have traditionally been done. In the past, most people who approached Freemasonry came well recommended by another Freemason. They were either a family member, a longtime friend, a workmate or a neighbor, and some Freemason could vouch as to their character. Today's world is different and many people, just like you, contact us *via* the internet or by telephone; there is no personal relationship, we know absolutely nothing about them, and it is not possible for any Freemason to recommend a man for membership under these circumstances. In order to overcome this, it is necessary to schedule a series of meetings so that both parties can get to know each other and to give you a chance to learn about our fraternity. Every new candidate for Freemasonry must be sponsored by three freemasons who are members in good standing of a lodge. The three members must sign a statement that they know you and can vouch for you and your character. The intention of the meetings suggested here will be to meet with this as our goal.

Do you have any concerns with this approach?

Yes No

Some very important points you should know:

Freemasonry is *not* for everyone and we need to find out if it is suitable for you. This is done in your best interest; if this is not a good fit, we would rather find out before you have spent your valuable time and money, rather than after. These points are a first step in helping us with that.

1. If your interest in Freemasonry is an attempt to tap into our large membership base for the purpose of furthering your career or business network, note that this has not worked in the past and will not work now. Freemasons do not support this type motive for initiation.

Do you understand this important point?

Yes No

2. Becoming a Freemason today is *not* an event; it is *not* something that you decide to do on Lodge Night and it is done for the month. Rather, it is a process; it takes time, both mental and physical; it costs money; and it requires commitment on your part and also on the part of the lodge that receives your petition.

Do you understand this important point?

Yes No

3. Freemasonry is a lifetime commitment and most Freemasons remain active until death. Are you prepared to make such a long-term commitment?

Yes No

4. As a Freemason, it would be required that you attend your lodge regularly. Sickness, emergencies, family and work obligations excepted, most lodges meet at least twice per month. Your regular attendance and participation is not only encouraged, but expected.

Are you prepared to make this type of commitment?

Yes No

5. Freemasonry costs money. There will be a one-time initiation fee of \$..... There are also annual dues that *must* be paid by the first of January each year. In this lodge they are currently \$.....

Would this financial requirement present a problem for you?

Yes No

In addition to the above there are other financial expectations in the form of fundraisers, food, charitable contributions *etc.* It is not unusual for freemasons to contribute on a regular basis.

Are you okay with these expectations? Yes No

6. The members of the lodge you are petitioning will want to meet your family and answer their questions, as well. If your lady or family does not fully support your decision, your petition may be rejected.

Do you understand this important point? Yes No

If you think that Freemasonry will interfere in any way with your family or your career; you should not proceed.

Do you understand this important point? Yes No

7. During the course of getting to know you we will ask you to attend some of our social functions or to attend before/after our lodge meeting so you can meet some of the members. This will provide an opportunity to determine whether or not this lodge is a good fit for you. It is important that we like each other.

Are you okay with this approach and concept? Yes No

8. We expect that you are seeking not only to improve yourself but also humanity through service. Would this be a valid or correct expectation? Yes No

9. You will be expected to contribute to, and exemplify, a high moral standard while dealing with others. Particularly with your brethren in Freemasonry.

Is this what you want to do in your life? Yes No

10. We want candidates to be fully informed when they join us. We want them to know exactly what it is that they are getting involved in. We will tell you what we can, but this will also require some research on your part.

Are you interested enough to do this research? Yes No

11. You will be expected to memorize certain lectures and to repeat them from memory to the lodge. Would you be comfortable with this? Yes No

12. Finally, no one is ever asked to become a Freemason, you must approach Freemasonry of your own free will and accord. With this understanding it will be your responsibility to call to arrange each of our next few meetings.

My Contact information is: Name:

Phone:

Email:

*****It is your responsibility to follow-up with the fraternity regarding your progression towards initiation. Your display of initiative and dedication will be a reflection of your desire to become a Freemason.*****

Charge to the Lodge

Words to Live by

After the annual installation of officers at a Masonic Lodge, the following charge is given to all of the brethren who are in attendance. Read this carefully and decide what it means to you. This excerpt from our ancient ceremonies well describes a way of life and attitude that is expected from all Freemasons. Take notes and develop questions about this charge.

"Brethren of _____ Lodge, No.____, such is the nature of our constitutions, that as some must, of necessity, teach and rule, so others must, of course, learn and obey. Humility in both is an essential duty. The officers who have been selected to govern your Lodge are sufficiently conversant with the rules of propriety and the laws of the Institution to avoid exceeding the powers with which they are entrusted, and you are of too generous disposition to envy their preferment. I, therefore, trust that you will have but one aim- to please each other, and to unite in the grand design of being happy and communicating happiness.

Finally, my brethren, as the Fraternity has been formed and perfected in so much unanimity and concord, in which we greatly rejoice, so may it long continue. May you long enjoy every satisfaction and delight which disinterested friendship can afford. May kindness and brotherly affection distinguish your conduct as men and Masons. Within your peaceful walls may your children's children celebrate, with joy and gratitude, the annual recurrence of this auspicious solemnity. And may the tenets of our profession be transmitted through your Lodge, pure and unimpaired, from generation to generation."

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Memory Work

The Common Gavel

The Common Gavel is one of the working tools of an Entered Apprentice Mason. You will be required to learn its use to both the operative mason and the speculative Freemason. Memorize the paragraph within the quotation marks below. As you are committing the words to your memory, commit the meaning behind the words to your heart. Feel free to take notes as you decipher what these words mean to you.

“The Common Gavel is an instrument used by operative masons to break off the corners of rough stones, the better to fit them for the builder’s use; but we, as Free and Accepted Masons, are taught to make use of it for the more noble and glorious purpose of divesting our hearts and consciences of all vices and superfluities of this life, thereby fitting our minds, as living stones for that spiritual building—that house not made with hands—eternal in the heavens.”

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