

Rite Notes
Membership and Recruiting
Grand York Rite Bodies of Florida
15 March 2010

Stimulating Membership Interest and Attendance

Leadership is vitally important in all York Rite activity but never more urgently needed than in the task of stimulating membership interest and attendance. The good leader finds ways of interesting men to work for the good of the Order. There are countless ways of challenging their interest. There is no rule of thumb that everyone must follow. A good leader will display initiative and will devise and invent ways to inspire the interest of the Chapter, Council and Commandery. The Companions and Sir Knights must be made to feel that they are "Part of the Team" - and not just spectators. The best way to get them to feel that way is to actually put them to work as part of the team. There are so many tasks to perform and so many jobs to do that no Sir Knight ought to be left out.

Here are some places to put men to work:

1. Membership on one of the many Regular or Standing Committees.
2. Membership on one of the Committees for Special Projects
3. Membership on a Drill Team
4. Membership on a Ritualistic Team
5. Membership on a York Rite Festival Committee.
6. Membership on the Property or Locker Room Committee.
7. Membership on one of the many, newly created committees.

A little ingenuity will reveal many more ways to put Sir Knights to work. Experience shows that men will respond and will begin making suggestions on their own part to improve the work. All it needs is a determined leader. It was Colonel John Glenn's father who told his famous son when he was a boy: "The world will stand aside for a man who knows where he is going."

Attendance at a York Rite meeting is a by-product of arousing interest in York Rite activity. Attendance is most important to any Masonic organization - but particularly where we depend so largely upon manpower. Only by attendance of dedicated and devoted Templars can we progress and prosper. There are numerous ways to stimulate attendance, among which are the following:

1. Arrange a York Rite Festival
2. Hold "Special Nights"
 - a. Honoring some Companion or Sir Knight on his birthday
 - b. Awarding a pin on an membership anniversary (25th, 40th, 50th)
 - c. Honoring a Companion or Sir Knight upon some civic achievement
 - d. Honoring a Companion or Sir Knight who has performed outstanding service
 - e. Honoring Past Commanders, High Priests and Illustrious Masters
 - f. Receiving and honoring distinguished Masons, Grand Officers, etc.
 - g. Honoring an anniversary night of your Chapter, Council or Commandery

3. Publishing a York Rite Bulletin. This is of tremendous importance because it will be the means of telling the members of coming events. It will carry the Commanders orders, and will elaborate on social affairs, entertainment and speakers. The York Rite Bulletin is the Regular and continuous contact between the Commander and the Sir Knights. The Bulletin does not need to be elaborate or expensive; however it should be attractive and informative. The use of the names of Companions and Sir Knights give it greater appeal. A story about Templar projects will increase the readers interest. As for finding an Editor - the average Commandery will be pleasantly surprised to see how much talent it has along this line if they only look.

4. Organizing a York Rite stated meeting night. In many sections of the country, The Chapter, Council and Commandery (located in the same town) can meet on the same evening for their Stated Conclave. Short sequential meetings are critical to success. Their routine business is transacted in one evening instead of spending three separate nights. This speeds up business and leaves other night for the conferral of degrees and Orders. It also tends to unify the three bodies of the York Rite and increases membership attendance and participation.

5. Organizing a Ladies Auxiliary or affiliation with the Social Order of the Beauceant, composed of Templar ladies. If the women attend a meeting at the Masonic Temple, it is surprising how attendance of the Sir Knights grows. Many women would welcome an organization of their own to assist Templary or to perform some useful work for the community. A ladies organization, meeting on the same night and at the same place as the Commandery has frequently resulted in doubling the attendance at the Commandery Conclave.

6. Designate a night to honor each of the Blue Lodges, Chapters, Councils , Scottish Rite, and Shrine of the Community.

7. Conduct all meetings on a business-like basis. After all is said and done. One of the best ways to secure attendance is for the Commander to conduct all meetings on a business-like basis and let it be known in advance that-

- a. Each meeting will be on time;
- b. Conferral of Orders will be done with dignity and finish promptly;
- c. The Commander will plan ahead and follow the agenda.
- d. The Conclave will adjourn at a reasonable hour; and
- e. Social events of general interest with outstanding speakers, excellent food, good music, or other exciting entertainment are scheduled throughout the year.

Last month in the "Rite Notes" we included additional examples and fresh ideas for stimulating interest and attendance in your York Rite Body. Refer back to 15 February for these ideas. I hope this helps.

Our Feb/March, April, festivals will begin by the time you receive this. Lets continue our work during this period and began the process of bringing new brothers into our bodies. Allow them to take a seat in the leadership of the body. If all seats are filled, encourage them to get involved in the ritual work as part of a degree team, but let them know that they are needed.

Note: If any York Rite Bodies plan weekend festivals, Short of Time or Slow Classes, please let me know, with the date, time, location and contact person, and I will put it in the next newsletter, and on the website. Remember, Membership and Retention is everyone's business.

Knighted

Dist 1

Dist 2 9 Feb,9 Mar, 13 Apr Ft Myers YRB
11 May, 8 June

Dist 3 3&10 October Tampa
3 & 10 April Tampa

Dist 4 Slow Class
13 Mar, 10 Apr, 8 May Lakeland-Winter Haven YRB
12 June, 26 June 2010

Dist 5 4,11,18 Feb. 6,27 Mar Eola, Orlando 5
September Eola, Orlando

Dist 6 March 12-13, 2010 Fort Pierce YRB 12
October 1-2, 2010 Melbourne YRB, Harbor City Lodge

Dist 7 March 18-20, 2010 Jax YRB
October 29-30-31 Jax York Rite Temple

Dist 8 2, 13, 16 Feb, 2,6 Mar 2010 Gainesville 1
March Ocala
Sep/Oct/Nov 2010 Ocala

Dist 9 10 April 2010 Tallahassee

Dist 10 27 Mar. & 10 Apr 2010 Pensacola
3 & 10 October 2010 Pensacola/Mariana

If any of the above dates are incorrect or if there are any additional dates please let me know, I will include them next time.

HENRY A. ADAMS
Eminent Grand Senior Warden
Chairman, Membership Committee

*some excerpts, from Guidelines for Membership, published by the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States, p 43 and Grand Commandery of Florida,, And from the Grand Commanders Handbook given to the Grand Line Officers. Membership Development, Grand Encampment, 2003-2006

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