



RITE NOTES
Membership and Recruiting
Grand York Rite Bodies of Florida
15 February 2019

What People Want in Membership

Companions and Sir Knights,

What does a person want in return for dues and time? While generations may change, the basic needs are the same.

When a person joins an organization, they want to be more than a number. They want they want to belong to something, and be valued as a human being. They want to feel like they belong, that they are welcome.

Personalities vary greatly. Some people are natural leaders, others are followers. Some are outgoing and make friends easily while others are introverts and require a lot of work to draw them out. Some are natural ritualists while others are afraid to speak in front of a group. Each person is unique, and their personalities impact the organization in very personal ways.

Despite personal contributions and personalities, all people have things in common. They include the desires for the following:

Security -- Is your York Right Body a safe place to be? Personal safety can include many things.

One is physical safety, Is this a place where a person feels safe from harm? This can include the neighborhood where the local group meets. Declining downtown settings have contributed to people not joining, and older members not coming to meetings. If the feel unsafe, they are less likely to join or attend.

Security is also emotional. Can they be themselves, or must they always be on guard? Will they be accepted, or will they be constantly ridiculed?

Introverted people are especially concerned about emotional safety, as they don't usually mix well with people. They tend to be shy and reluctant to expose themselves in what may appear to be a dangerous setting.

Another fear will be hazing. What will they endure when they join? Will they be embarrassed.

Personal security is important in this day and age when crime is a problem. The fear of lawsuits has also forced many people to withdraw into themselves. The issue of personal safety is vital if we want to grow and organization.

Feeling of Self-Worth-- Will becoming a member make them feel better about themselves? It should. This is an important sales point about Freemasonry. Membership has long contributed to self-improvement. It was a way for a person to improve themselves. Personal improvement has often drawn men and women to our doors.

Potential members want to see belonging as "a good thing". If they feel confident of this, they will more likely consider joining.

Accomplishment--"What will joining accomplish for me". How would you answer this question? The last thing people want to do is to join something just to attend "useless" meetings. So, what is the definition of useless meeting? Literally, it's meeting for the sake of meeting. This is where nothing worthwhile happens. These often include regular business meetings where the biggest item on the agenda is paying the electric bill and the rent.

While routine business is important, it is equally important that our lodges and York Rite Bodies have a purpose for existing. How do we improve the lives of our members? How do we impact the community in which we live? Will our actions better mankind?

The older a person gets, the more they want to give back to the community. Younger members will be looking for how to improve themselves so that they can advance themselves. When we get past age 39, our family is usually grown, and we have settled into our work routine. Now the concern shifts to leaving our community a better place than when we found it. This is the time we want to leave our mark. We want to attract members, our lodges and York Rite Bodies must have ways to address these kinds of needs.

Acceptance--"Will I be accepted by the others if I join?" This is a natural fear everyone has. Every one of us can remember what it was like in school when the captains were choosing teams. I was never very good in sports, so I was one of the last ones they chose. It became very personal, and eventually, I tried to hide when it came time to choose teams. Of course, the decision to choose team members was more based on my skill than if they liked me or not. I remember being shocked one time when they were choosing sides for a spelling bee, and I was chosen first. The two captains were actually fighting over having me on their team! Suddenly, I had worth and acceptance. And I took my team to first place. That sure lifted my spirits.

The same is true of adults. We have been conditioned over the years that we are not acceptable and we fear a repeat performance. We shy away from opportunities because of that underlying fear.

Freemasonry has always shown a great deal of tolerance toward individuals. We need to stress that we are very accepting of people. Of course, new members must be willing to conform to our rules and regulations in order to maintain this orderly society.

The feeling of acceptance is very powerful in the human psyche.

Give something back to the community--As stated earlier, as a person ages, they desire to give something back to the community. Freemasonry needs to offer opportunities to contribute to the community.

Civic clubs offered these opportunities for years. Organizations like Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis and Jaycees gave community members such an outlet for community involvement. Freemasonry is an integral part of any local society. It is composed of members bonded together by a sense of localness. In turn, our lodges and York Rite Bodies need to offer members outlets to contribute to their communities.

How do we learn of these projects? It's usually through our local members! Each of us sees needs and opportunities to become involved. Our national philanthropies are another way to become involved on a larger level. Freemasonry gives nearly \$2 million a day to charity. Why? Because we like to! It is a way of making our world a better place. Freemasons are givers of time and money because they are builders of communities. This is a powerful draw, but it must have a local impact in order to draw new members.

Prestige and Education--Few people want to join an organization composed of a "bunch of losers". If your York Rite Body is dying, it will not attract many new people. What you have to do is to change the image. Prestige is an important part of being a member of any organization. Will being a member enhance one's standing in the community? It's supposed to, but how our masonic Bodies conducts itself says a lot about the value of membership.

Education is another aspect, and this will be a major factor for a new generation. Freemasonry has always offered ways for self-improvement. The fraternity has always been a place to discuss ideas, where people can feel safe sharing opinions. It must be the type of sharing where each member is willing to listen as well as to speak.

Knowledge is power, so says the old adage. It is true. Prestige combined with knowledge and an opportunity to grow and learn can be strong draw for new members as well as retaining older ones.

The above is a list of things that attract people to membership. It is doubtful that the entire list will apply to any single person. One point will be a stronger draw for one than another. Being aware of these areas can allow a York Rite Body to focus on improving these areas, making themselves more attractive to potential members.

There is no substitute for an all-out campaign to strengthen and build our membership.

New Membership by District for 2019:

DISTRICT	LOCATION	#	DISTRICT	LOCATION	#
1	West Palm Beach		6	Cocoa	
	Fort Lauderdale			Melbourne	
	Miami			Fort Pierce	
	Florida Keys				
2	Manatee/Bradenton/Trinity		7	Jacksonville	
	Sarasota/Venice/Trinity			Fernandina	
	Everglades			St Augustine	
	Fort Myers			Palatka	
3	Tampa (Ivanhoe)		8	Lake City	
	St. Petersburg (Sunshine)			Middleburg	
	Clearwater (Springtime)			Gainesville	
				Inverness (Ocala)	
4	Lakeland		9	Tallahassee	
	Plant City			Marianna	
	Sebring (Highlands)			Panama City	
5	Daytona (Halifax)		10	Fort Walton Beach	
	Lake Sumter			Crestview	
	Sanford			Pensacola	
	Orlando				

EXCERPTS FROM THE GRAND ENCAMPMENT CONSTITUTION:

SECTION 220 Funeral Service

Only a Knight Templar in Good Standing is entitled to Templar funeral honors, but a Commandery may grant them to, or withhold them from, an affiliated Knight Templar. The funeral service adopted by the Grand Encampment shall be followed.

DECISIONS FROM THE GRAND MASTER:

A Commandery must be opened in form to perform the Templar Funeral ceremony. (1925, p.59 & 394. No. 8, Newby)

The suspension of a Sir Knight deprives him of all rights and privileges of knighthood as long the judgment remains in force. Hence, such a knight would not be entitled to a Templar funeral. The right of a Templar Funeral exists only in the case of a Sir Knight in good standing.

It is discretionary with the Commandery to grant the funeral honors for an unaffiliated Sir Knight or for a sojourner. (1940, p. 67 & 287, No. 7, Gordon, 1988 digest - 142)

New Membership by York Rite Body 2019:

DISTRICT	DATE	LOCATION	KNIGHTED
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			

TOTAL 2019 KNIGHTINGS	
TOTAL 2018 KNIGHTINGS	101

If any of the above dates are incorrect OR if you have dates or numbers that should be changed, please let me know. Also, as soon as your area determines the dates for the Fall Festival, PLEASE let me know so they may be included.

Fraternally,
Henry A Adams

HENRY A. ADAMS, PGC, KYGCH, KCT
 Chairman, Grand York Rite Membership Program

Every Christian Mason Should Be A Knight Templar"

Some excerpts, from Guidelines for Membership, published by the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar of the United States, reprint from Aug 2009, intro. and Grand Commandery of Florida, Baderstadt, Jon L. What people want in membership. pp17-24, also A New Life for Dying Lodges and Chapters, 2004, pg 31-43, and from the Grand Commanders Handbook given to the Grand Line Officers. Membership Development, Grand Encampment, 2003-2006

Hm Ph: 321 726-6971

Cell: 321-795-8316

Fax: 321-951-968

Email: hadams1@aol.com