



# Ideas That Work



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## Short, Interesting Meetings Attract Members to Lodge

One of the biggest challenges facing lodges is how to make meetings interesting so more members will attend. On average, only about 10 percent of a lodge's total membership attends meetings.

In most youthful marriages: both partners work in 84 percent of marriages; children reduce free time by 60 percent; and most married men have only five free hours a month. Long meetings cause family stress.

First, every member should make everyone feel welcome and a part of the lodge at every meeting, but unquestionably it's the officers who absolutely must assume this responsibility every time.

Here are suggestions for saving time:

- Summarize minutes and correspondence. Hand out copies of the minutes, pass around the correspondence, or consider posting them with the treasurer's report.
- Begin meetings on time.
- Make sure each presenter is prepared to efficiently give his report.
- Hold introductions to a minimum, and introduce guests in a group, if possible.
- Limit remarks at the end of the meeting.
- Don't review in lodge what you can put on paper for brothers to read later, such as upcoming events.

Masters must ensure meetings are organized and effectively controlled by:

- Arriving in time to organize the meeting.
- Know the ritual so lodge can be opened and closed efficiently.
- Know the business for the meeting. Prepare an agenda for every meeting and discuss it with the Secretary. Talk to committee chairmen about their reports.

Avoid these pitfalls:

- The Secretary must remember he is not in charge of meetings or the lodge.
- Ritual purists can sidetrack a meeting and embarrass members by enforcing letter-perfect ritual.
- Hold Masonic education presentations and functions with the ladies and youth before, during or after meetings.

Make lodge meetings an event. Consider the following when preparing for a meeting:

- Plan all meeting details, which forces you to consider the members' needs.
- Hold special activities at least six times a year during stated meetings. Involve members in the program and planning.
- Ask individuals in your community who will provide excellent programs for your lodge, whether they are Masons or not.

Ideas to make meetings more interesting:

- Offer a dinner before meetings.
- Ask the principal of an elementary, middle or senior high school to talk about ways you can improve the school.
- A financial planner can help members discover the important financial or retirement services available to them and answer questions or concerns.
- A travel agent can talk about how to save money on travel, and available trips.
- An insurance agent, broker or claims specialist can speak about life, health or property insurance and offer insights on avoiding delays in claim processing and how to reduce premiums.
- A career counselor can talk about the changing nature of jobs, how to find a job and how to be better trained for the future demands of the job market.

- A real estate broker can talk about changes in the real estate market and the importance of their home as an asset.
- A health care specialist can speak on ways to protect good health.
- A law enforcement officer or fireman could provide an interesting program.
- Hold a winter putting contest, Masonic Jeopardy (like the game show with Masonic answers), or draw for prizes.
- Contact the Grand Lodge office to borrow a video to show.
- A program about the George Washington Masonic Memorial.
- Provide Masonic education programs. Ask members to make presentations.

## Web Site for 2009 Masters Available

Next year's Masters can learn about 2009 Grand Lodge activities and begin planning for their lodge's year by visiting a Web site geared specifically for them. It can be found at:

<http://www.lodgeleaders09.com/>

Included on the site are:

- **Planning Tools** – A lodge planning site that each month will provide a guide to planning the year they'll serve as Master. Those who complete each section, each month will have next year planned before the end of this year.
- **2009 Trestle-Board** – An explanation of the activities and programs of the Grand Lodge in 2009.
- **2008 Programs** – An explanation of this year's Grand Lodge activities and programs.
- **Leaders Blog** – A chance for next year's Masters in Nebraska Freemasonry to comment on ideas, thoughts, activities and events.
- **From the DGM** – Comments from the Deputy Grand Master.
- **2009 Calendar** – The 2009 calendar that will be updated throughout the year.

## Ideas from Lodges . . .

### Scholarships for Piano Lessons

Pomegranate Lodge No. 110 in Ashland has teamed up with Matthews Eastern Star Chapter No. 242 to offer local children \$100 scholarships to take piano lessons.

Applicants complete forms to provide information to help the scholarship committee choose which students get the awards. Payment is mailed directly to the child's piano teacher. One of the questions on the form is the name of a relative or friend who is a member of either Masonic body. Each recipient receives an award certificate and brochures about Masonry and Eastern Star. Plans are to present the

scholarships at recitals. If the student doesn't practice it's a "deal killer," the information states. Information is attached.

### Solomon's Building Permit

Geneva Lodge members were treated to a humorous play written by Master Jeff Andrews and his father, Alfred. The two portrayed King Solomon and Hiram Abiff in a discussion of the legal requirements that must be met before they can begin construction of the Temple. You could present the play before, during or after a meeting. A copy of the play is attached.

## From the Field . . .

The following ideas were submitted by Grand Lodge officers.

### Card Tournaments

Hold community bridge, cribbage, pitch or other card tournaments to raise funds, such as scholarships. Publicize it to get the community involved. Post winning teams in the community paper every month for free publicity. Play monthly rounds from September thru April.

### Fundraiser

Talk to local school officials so members can sell concessions at home high school ball games.

### Masonic Education

Hold a One Book, One Lodge activity. Select a book for all members to read and then discuss it at or after meetings.

### Public Relations

Invite several groups from the area (church, Boy Scouts, Masonic youth, Knights of Columbus, etc.) to an activity (such as a boat ride on the river). Hold a light dinner (sandwiches, chips, beverages) afterwards. The lodge pays for everything, but donations are also accepted. It's a good way to raise awareness in the community and to get newspaper coverage.

### Recruit Help with Ritual

Seek the help from area lodges when members from your own lodge can't attend degree work.

## Ideas from the Lodge Leadership Manual . . .

The following are just a few of the more than 400 ideas in the Lodge Leadership Manual. To review the manual and to start planning the year you'll serve as Master, or for ideas this year, go to:

<http://glne.org/fileDownload.aspx>.

Activity ideas are suggested in these areas of lodge performance.

- **Ritual Work** – For the ongoing health of your Lodge, more than one brother should be able to perform each part of our work. Provide for additional brothers to perform the work so there is a backup for each part. No one should “own” a part and be the only one to deliver it. Brothers who learn new parts should be scheduled to alternate the performance of the work so they maintain what they've learned.
- **Grand Lodge Programs** – The Masonic All-Star Marching Band Clinic starts Tuesday, July 15, and boasts the involvement of more than 200 high school students from across the state in performances at the Shrine Bowl Parade and during halftime of the Shrine Bowl

Game. Consider sponsoring one or more local students to the camp, and serve as a chaperone for the camp.

- **Fellowship** – Appoint a committee to identify and contact widows of Lodge brethren. Maintain a list of widows, their addresses and telephone numbers, and call them on a regular basis to make sure their needs are being met, if they need handiwork done around the house and inform them of special lodge activities. Serve as helpers to the widows we have obligated ourselves to aid and protect.
- **Community Service** – Volunteer a few hours a month to work with teachers to read to children, listen to them in small groups and work with them on special assignments.
- **Membership** – Teach members what to say when a prospective member gives a reason why he can't join your lodge. For good explanations to frequently used excuses, go to page 11 of Section 7 - Membership of the Lodge Leadership Manual. Download it from the Grand Lodge Web site at the Downloads tab

under the Publications category:

<http://www.gln.org/>

- **Communication** – A lodge newsletter can be as simple as a typed letter or a full-fledged publication. Either one can effectively communicate information to your members. For tips on how to produce a newsletter, refer to page 7 in Section 8 – Communication of the Lodge Leadership Manual. Download it from the Grand Lodge Web site at the Downloads tab under the Publications category: <http://www.gln.org/>

- **Finances** – Include in your lodge budget a line item for maintenance of your building. Many lodge buildings have become unsightly, both inside and out, due primarily to neglect. Each Lodge should establish a long-range preventive maintenance program to steadily improve the usability and appearance of their building. Much preventive maintenance could be performed simply by cleaning, caulking and painting.

## Past Ideas That Work Are on Grand Lodge Web Site

To ensure the information in *Ideas That Work* is available in the future, the tips and issues of this publication can be found on the Grand Lodge Web site at: <http://www.gln.org/Ideas.aspx>.

## What's Going On in Your Lodge?

*Ideas That Work* provides activity ideas for your lodge's annual calendar of events.

Its success also is dependent on you to send activity ideas to share with other lodges. What may seem commonplace to you, because your lodge has held an event for many years, may be new to someone else. If it's working for your lodge, please send it to us. Write a one paragraph summary and send it to: [michelle@gln.org](mailto:michelle@gln.org) or mail it to the Grand Lodge Office at: 1240 No. 10<sup>th</sup> St., Lincoln, NE 68501-1852. If additional information is needed, we'll call.

This newsletter will be sent to you as often as we have ideas. It will take you only a few minutes, but it could help our fraternity across the state. Thanks for your help.

## Grand Master's 2008 Goals for Lodges

M.W. Grand Master Reg Kuhn has encouraged all Nebraska lodges to participate in the following programs this year:

- **Who Are You?** Each lodge is to develop a mission statement which answers the question, "Who are you?" by considering its core values, and putting those values in words. Lodges will soon receive information to help in this process. At Annual Communication next year, the mission statements will be displayed about the lodge room.
- **Building Maintenance.** Four, \$1,000 grants will be presented to lodges to make improvements on their lodge buildings. To

be eligible, a lodge must raise at least \$750 of new funds to support either Masonic youth programs, such as CHIP, our youth groups, the band camp, or a youth program in the local community. Recipients of the grants will be selected from the applicants.

- **Ritual Work.** The Grand Master challenges each lodge to ensure its ritual is done in the best possible manner. He urges everyone to double their efforts to maintain and improve the quality of the ritual.