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# THE GRAND LODGE



## ANCIENT FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF IOWA



Iowa Committee on Masonic Education  
Iowa Masonic Library - 815 First Ave. S.E.  
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

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## What Is a Mason?

A Mason is a member of the world's largest fraternal organization. He can enjoy the friendship of other Masons in his community, and he will be welcomed as a "brother" by Masons anywhere in the world.

A Mason shares the aspirations and obligations of men of good will who seek to make themselves better than they are — not better than others.

A Mason worships in his own fashion according to his own religious faith whether he be Christian, Jew or Moslem, Protestant or Roman Catholic, Buddhist or Hindu, but free of regimination by society or the state.

A Mason holds that the brotherhood of man is an imperative, and it is the bond that unites him to other men.

A Mason endeavors to grow in things spiritual through the exercise of sobriety, truth, justice, charity, and faith in God.

A Mason insists that every man has the right to freedom of worship and freedom of expression, the right to vote according to his conscience, and the right to a public school education.

A Mason honors other men by respecting each man's inherent dignity, by succoring a brother Mason or any man in need, by devotion to his community's welfare.

## **Why Is He Called A "Mason?"**

For many centuries, the ancient craft of builders — masons who worked in stone erecting temples, cathedrals and public works — shared high standards of workmanship and conduct. The brotherhood of such masons worked in imperishable stone and gave rise to the crafts of Apprentices, Fellows and Master Masons. The tools of their trade were the square, compass, plumbline, level, trowel and other instruments of precision workmanship.

Over two hundred years ago, the great principles of operating masons were adopted by countless others who did not necessarily work in stone. Ever since, still others have joined voluntarily in thousands of local groups called "lodges" that are dedicated to the same principles of brotherhood, rectitude, sobriety, charity and invigorated by a common dedication to high ethical and spiritual purposes.

Employing the words and titles of the ancient craft of masonry allegorically, Masons today band together for building not structures of stone but men of character. There is a dynamic force in the ancient institution of the "lodge" that continually gives fresh impetus to a man's individual striving.

## **What Do Masons Do Today?**

### **In Public Life**

Charity in the largest sense is a fundamental precept of modern Masonry and is evident in every community in its support

of socially necessary institutions. In some States it is hospitals for cancer, or other malignant disease, or for crippled children. In others, it is homes for the aged or institutions for geriatrics, or youth guidance. In some countries, all of this is shown by the acts and conduct of individual Masons sponsoring and fostering socially beneficial legislation. The world over, Masonry ministers to the poor, the handicapped, the displaced, the derelict.

Masonry moves quietly to alleviate human suffering and increase the stature of men and women as children of God. Creeds have their rightful function in every land. Yet it is not creed but action that Masonry emphasizes. Masonry buttresses the good works of all religions in community service. Men of all faiths wear the "square and compass" of this fraternity.

No Mason will wittingly permit another man — or any man — to go hungry, to suffer indignity, to be a slave, or to lose his position as a son of God.

### **In Personal Life**

Masonry employs allegory in its teaching the "lodge" to illustrate moral and spiritual values. Derived from man's historical development, it is on these values that man's very existence today and in the future depends.

In the family of nations — whose present argument is the United Nations — the honoring of these values and their practice would materially aid in solving today's grievous ills.

Courage is one of these values. Citing the example of great men of past centuries who stood firm — often alone — against oppression, tyranny, fanaticism, usurpation of power and intolerance, Masonry inspires men today and firm against similar evils — from

whatever source — that threaten our freedoms.

Masonry emphasizes personal responsibility for one's own conduct and for that of his family as another of these moral values. By example, a Mason extends the sphere of influence of the moral values to his own community and nation.

The Mason employs the tools by which the ancient craftsman in stone — the mason — gauged the accuracy of his building. The ancient mason used a level, a square and a plumbline. With these symbols, a Mason tries to live "on the level" and "upon the square" in all dealings with other men.

For centuries the plumbline has been used and is still used in construction to erect perpendiculars in a building. Similarly, the plumbline has a moral significance in Masonry that affords a gauge of upright conduct. Masonically, the gauge serves not as a static guide but sets a standard of rectitude of behavior to which every Mason must aspire.

## How To Become A Mason

There are better than 500 Masonic lodges in Iowa with over 89,000 members. In the United States there are 16,000 lodges with over four million members.

Masons do not put on drives for membership. No one asks a man to join the fraternity. But a voluntary request for membership is simple to make. Upon a man's request, a member of a Masonic Lodge may give him an application for membership in the local Lodge in his community.

The application form, called "Petition for Degrees," requests information about a man's character, personal history, and his family status.

The applicant signs the petition form, and two Masons sign it as recommending him for membership. Obviously, the Masons who sign as sponsors should be well acquainted with the petitioner.

Each Lodge has an established membership fee which is to accompany the petition.

The applicant gives the petition to his Masonic friend who turns it in to the Master or Secretary of the lodge. The petition is read in the Lodge, after which the Investigating Committee is required to make diligent inquiry into the character and fitness of the applicant. This Committee will report at the next regular meeting of the Lodge. Following which the Lodge will act upon the petition.

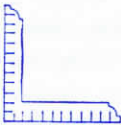
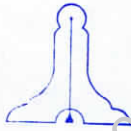
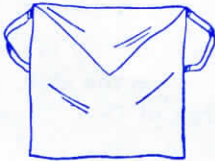
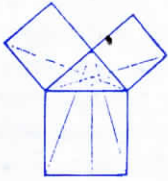
Following election by the Lodge the candidate will be informed by the Master of the Lodge, who will send him a booklet explaining further steps in becoming a Mason.

The basic tenets of Masonry are taught in three Degrees. These Degrees are First, Entered Apprentice, Second, Fellowcraft; Third, Master Mason, and they consist of ceremonies of serious nature in which each candidate takes part with dignity and solemnity.

When a man has been raised to the Degree of Master Mason he will enjoy the friendship of a fine group of men in his community and be recognized all over the world as a "brother." Moreover, he can participate in the activities and fellowship and social events in every lodge in his own State, in the Nation, and in fact, all over the world.

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## Some Symbols of Masonry



Issued by

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