



Mentoring Programme

Personal Guide

Master Mason

Provincial Grand Lodge of East Lancashire

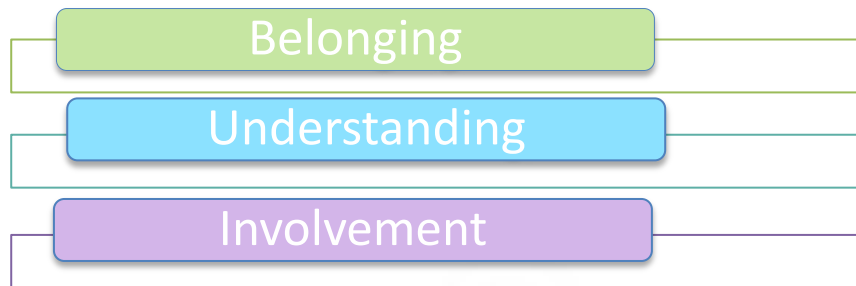


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Further copies of this guide are available from your District Mentor, or directly downloadable from the Mentoring section of the East Lancashire Provincial Grand Lodge Website: www.pglel.co.uk

Provincial Grand Lodge of East Lancashire

Mentoring Scheme



Dear Brother – Congratulations on becoming a Master Mason

As explained following your Ceremony of Initiation, to assist you on your Masonic 'journey' you were to be presented with a series of 'Guides' from your Lodge Mentor, one after each Ceremony during your Masonic progression. This is your third and final booklet in the present series of 'Personal Guides'. It is very much hoped that they, plus the very important support you have received from your Mentor, have ensured that your time so far in the Craft has been one of enjoyment, which has been based upon a true feeling of belonging, combined with understanding and growing involvement.

You have now progressed through one of Freemasonry's most dramatic ceremonies and have been 'Raised' to become a Master Mason. Again I have the honour on behalf the Provincial Grand Lodge of East Lancashire to offer you heartiest congratulations. The Province, your District Officers and the Brethren in your Lodge all wish you a long and fruitful time as our Brother in the Craft.

Whilst this series of Guides may end here, the support from your Mentor and indeed other Brethren in your Lodge does not. They will always continue to support and guide you, as you will no doubt support other new Brethren in the future. You should now have no concerns about your ability to act as an Ambassador for Freemasonry – just tell others of the enjoyment and personal satisfaction that the Craft and its members give you. Let your enthusiasm spill over and encourage our membership to go 'from Strength to Strength'.

*Wishing you well,
Yours Sincerely & Fraternaly*

The Provincial Grand Mentor



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Provincial Grand Lodge of East Lancashire

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Symbolic Explanation of the Ceremony of Raising

It was no doubt obvious from the outset that this Ceremony is the most dramatic of the three through which you have progressed. It is also the one that has the deepest meanings, so take time to review the Ceremony. In the Exhortation you were encouraged to reflect on the previous degrees in order to prepare yourself for the teachings of this degree. You are told that its peculiar objects are to reflect on death. This is so, and no doubt forms an appropriate conclusion to the study of yourself that is encouraged in the Charge. The ceremony teaches us to die with honour and courage and expresses our hope for life after death. Death is inevitable and we learn to meet it face on, with dignity. However, there is so much more to the meaning of the ceremony and reflection over time will lead you to consider many points.



You are introduced to the legend of King Solomon, King Hiram and Hiram Abif. Clearly there is a genuine secret that they possess, but which is lost following the death of Hiram Abif. A highly dramatic and poignant moment occurs when you represent him, following which you are Raised on the Five Points of Fellowship. You should discuss in detail with your Mentor the Five Points of Fellowship, as they are not only a key part of this degree, but also of the whole Masonic structure.

Through your preparation in the earlier two degrees you are now capable of being raised to a new sublime level of speculative thinking.

This will lead you to consider why you need to improve yourself. The purpose of improvement lies in a personal need to search for that Supreme Being, for whom you have been in the process of creating the Temple. Through our work and especially through the Light received from the Volume of the Sacred Law, we are now able, on the centre, to contemplate this most important of matters.

Now you have been raised to the Sublime Degree of a Master Mason, it means that you are permitted to take part in all of the ceremonies of Craft Freemasonry with the exception of the Esoteric Board of Installed Masters. With due diligence and careful preparation, that will surely come in the fullness of time.

Applying the Principles to our Everyday Lives

The ceremony seeks to demonstrate a noble principle, that often it is better to die rather than be subjected to any falsehood and dishonour. This was dramatically shown when you became the representative of one who did just that.

It also taught you loyalty to your fellow men; a sense of not wishing to let them down. However, you have been made aware this loyalty must never be misplaced, for whilst you have promised to keep the Masonic secrets safe, you have an overriding obligation to act as a dutiful citizen at all times and obey both the civil and moral law.



As quoted in an earlier degree, you need to do your duty to God, your neighbour and to yourself. By now you should realise that there is a strict code of conduct to which all Masons are required to adhere in their everyday lives.

Life as a Master Mason

As a new Master Mason it is hoped that you will wish, in a short while, to embark on an exciting ladder of progression within your Lodge, culminating in years to come with your installation as Worshipful Master. To be installed as Worshipful Master of his Lodge, is the pinnacle of a man's Masonic career. But for the moment, you would be well advised to remember the motto of Grand Lodge 'Audi, Vide, Tace' meaning 'Watch, Learn and Listen' for these are key words not only for newly made masons, but for us all.

You should now be in possession of a Book of Ritual and should not be embarrassed to ask your Mentor or, in his absence, more experienced members of the Lodge what passages actually mean, if their meaning is not clear to you.

Try to make occasional visits to other lodges, as each lodge approaches the ritual in a different manner, some of which are most interesting and original. Volunteer to undertake Stewarding duties if the opportunity arises, as this helps you get to know the other Brethren in your Lodge.

In many Lodges, new Brethren are encouraged to do small pieces of work, such as the explanation of the Working Tools, on the floor of the Lodge. Mention to the Lodge Director of Ceremonies that you would be interested in learning and delivering a small piece of ritual. You may well wonder at the long pieces of ritual committed to memory by some Brethren which are then delivered on the floor of the Lodge, in front of an audience, with great aplomb – remember, each one of those Brethren probably started his Masonic career learning just such a short piece of ritual as you will do.

Be interested in everything that is going on in your Lodge. Become involved as an active and useful member, but do not overburden yourself. The true test is always – am I still enjoying myself?

Lodge of Instruction

If your Lodge has a Lodge of Instruction, or shares one with another lodge, then you are indeed fortunate, for not every lodge has this facility. The Lodge of Instruction is often referred to as the LOI; although in some parts of the country it is referred to as 'Junior Lodge', or 'Junior Practice'. It is where ceremonies or Ritual are practised and rehearsed and it enables you to gain confidence about the part you have to play when your time comes to participate in a ceremony.

A good Lodge of Instruction will not limit itself to rehearsing ritual and ceremonies, but will also devote time to explanation and/or research. It is an opportunity to learn not only what we do, but why we do it.

The Lodge of Instruction, where one exists, is presided over by a Preceptor, or Director of Ceremonies who is in charge of the work and your Mentor will certainly introduce you to him.

Grand Lodge Certificate

At a meeting soon after you have been raised to the Third Degree, you will be presented with your Grand Lodge Certificate and asked to sign it. As a Master Mason, you are entitled to receive from Grand Lodge such a Certificate, stating that you have been regularly Initiated, Passed and Raised. The presentation may be made by the Worshipful Master, a learned Brother designated by him, a visiting Representative of the Provincial Grand Master, or indeed a visiting Ruler.

The Certificate is a sort of 'passport' to regular Freemasonry and may be used within the Craft as documentary proof of your membership. Nevertheless, it is clearly stated on the Certificate that it does not, in itself, entitle you to gain admission to a Lodge, other than one to which you belong, without due examination. In effect, this means you may well be called upon to 'prove' yourself should you visit a Lodge where you are not known, and you would normally do this by answering questions on Freemasonry.

You should keep the Certificate with your regalia. It should not be framed and must not be displayed either privately or publicly.

There is no formal ritual for the presentation of a Grand Lodge Certificate. Indeed, you may well hear it done differently on every occasion you witness one being presented. However, a presentation that follows an outline of the Lecture on the First Degree Tracing Board is very appropriate, as it identifies and explains the meaning of the many symbols on the Certificate.

Visiting other Lodges

This is one of the most enjoyable parts of Freemasonry and, if invited, you should certainly accept if you are able to do so. It provides an opportunity to make new friends and see how other Lodges conduct their ceremonies. It is fair to say that no two Lodges are exactly alike!

If you are in any doubt about the 'Regularity' of the lodge to which you have been invited, you should ask your Lodge Secretary to confirm that it is recognised, something which is mandatory if the lodge is located overseas.

Whilst visiting is extremely enjoyable, you should not engage in it to the extent that it becomes detrimental to your family or working life. The same common sense rule applies to every part of your Masonic activities.

Conclusion – Being a Mason in the World

Freemasonry is a wonderful experience and something that will be of benefit throughout your life, but it is true with Freemasonry, as it is with life, that you will only get out of it what you put in. It is hoped therefore, that you will use those ‘talents wherewith God has blessed you’, to the benefit of your Lodge.

A lodge has the need for many services in addition to those provided by Officers invested by the Worshipful Master. You may find your niche as Lodge Auditor, Librarian, Building Surveyor, Caretaker or Barman.

It has to be recognised that some Brethren, although wishing to be actively involved in the life of the Lodge, find it difficult to learn ritual. It is possible for them to offer their services as Treasurer, Secretary, Almoner or Charity Steward, as these offices are not restricted to Past Masters of the Lodge. But if you are not ready to progress yet, do let your Mentor know – the most important thing is to enjoy yourself.

Whatever the service you provide to your Lodge and whatever the office you hold – remember it is but a step in your complete understanding of Freemasonry. You will undoubtedly encounter Brethren with a greater knowledge of Freemasonry than you, being impressed by the knowledge of your Mentor, the skills of your Worshipful Master or the confidence shown by Past Masters and Provincial and Grand Officers. Always remember that, like you, they continue to seek a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge.

Freemasonry does not aim to make you better than the next man, but does hope to make you better than you were. To make you someone who cares not just for his family, although this is your first duty, not just for the Brethren in your Lodge, but also for the disadvantaged and vulnerable in our society. As a Freemason in the modern world, we can give you no better advice than to do unto others as you would have them do unto you and to do all in your power to relieve the suffering of the less fortunate wherever you are able so to do.

ENJOY YOUR FREEMASONRY

Talking about Freemasonry

What can I tell my family?

Other than our means of recognition (see below for more information on this), there is nothing regarding your experience as a Freemason which cannot be freely discussed with your family, or others. Indeed, it is a very good idea to share your experiences, so that family members understand what happens at a Lodge meeting and how you yourself participate in it. It is also important that those close to you, especially your wife or partner, if you have one, has a good understanding of what Freemasonry is and why you are prepared to devote some of your time and money to it.

Can I tell my friends I am a Freemason?

Yes, you are positively encouraged to do so - this may be contrary to what you have heard, or understood prior to joining the Craft. The prime reason for this misconception is that in the past, typically during times of political unrest and war, it was necessary for Brethren to keep their activities strictly private. Not that there was anything subversive, or improper in their activities. It was simply to protect themselves and the Craft from those foreign powers and areas where extreme prejudice and ignorance existed. Gladly, this is no longer the case and it is important that all Brethren now act as Ambassadors of the Craft. You should be keen and confident to spread the word regarding our very positive approach to Society, Morality, Charity AND FUN.

Your membership of the Craft is hopefully something of which you are very proud. There is no good reason for not letting your friends and colleagues know that you have become a Freemason and it is only natural that you will wish to tell them about those aspects of it which you find most enjoyable and intellectually rewarding. Remember, the friend in whom you confide may one day be interested in becoming a Freemason, so feel comfortable in what you will say to a prospective Candidate. You may wish to address the following issues and many more -

- Why and how you came to become part of Freemasonry and the fun and fulfilment you personally derive from it
 - This is often the most effective way to enthusiastically communicate the essence of your membership
- What is Freemasonry?
- Who is eligible to join?
- What are the characteristics of a good mason?

It is very much hoped that the information you have gained from this series of 'Mentoring Guides' and the discussions you have had with your Mentor and other Brethren in the Craft, has given you sufficient information and confidence to positively speak with others regarding the Craft in general and your personal enjoyment in particular.

Is there anything I cannot talk about?

The only things you must not disclose are the modes of recognition i.e. the Signs, Tokens and Words of the Degrees, because you have promised in your obligations not to do so. If pressed on the subject, you should advise that they are wholly symbolic and used as a means of recognition only within the confines of the Lodge Room (and are readily available to the public via the Internet – but not on official Masonic websites).

There will of course be other things about which you cannot talk for lack of knowledge, not because they are secret in any way. When talking to family or friends, do not be afraid to admit that you are on a steep learning curve and that your understanding of Freemasonry is, as yet, far from complete. Tell them you will find out the answers they require before you next meet. A brief conversation with your Mentor will doubtless provide the necessary information to satisfy your friends whilst, at the same time, enhancing your own knowledge of Freemasonry.

What if I encounter bias?

Some of our detractors are biased through plain ignorance of the aims and objectives of Freemasonry. If you come across this, try asking the individual to keep an open mind and not be swayed by the misinformation and pure sensationalism that surfaces from time to time. Give them copies of the Grand Lodge booklets you would have received in the 'Welcome Pack' presented to you at the Social Board following your Initiation. Invite them to a Lodge Open Day, or to a Lodge social function.

The number of both vociferous detractors and scurrilous articles published about Freemasonry has noticeably decreased in recent times, owing to the work of the Communications Department of Grand Lodge that leaves no such matters unchallenged. Nevertheless, there are still detractors and you may well come across someone who has no intention of changing their preconceived opinion. Just tell them the absolute truth about your activities and the enjoyment it provides – we have nothing to hide and everything to be proud about.

Relationship between the Craft and the Holy Royal Arch

Introduction

The Order of the Holy Royal Arch, often referred to as 'Chapter' because each unit meets under the title of Chapter rather than Lodge, is an important step in pure Antient Freemasonry.

For many years it was described as the completion of the Third Degree which, as the Grand Master said in April 2004, *"implies that neither the Third Degree nor the ceremony of Exaltation is complete, which is surely untrue."* He further made the point that

"a man only becomes a complete Mason when he takes the very important additional step into the Royal Arch"

The Holy Royal Arch is thus an Order with its own independent status as may be seen in the foreword to the Book of Constitutions, which states specifically that it is *"an extension to, but neither a superior nor a subordinate part of the Degrees which precede it"*. It may therefore be seen as a completion of a journey in pure Antient Freemasonry.

History

The history of the Royal Arch is somewhat complicated. It is probably enough to say that the legend upon which the Order is based, does go some way towards explaining what the Third Degree *appears* to leave out.

You will know that before 1813 there were two Grand Lodges, and that they differed in certain key respects. The Antients practised the Royal Arch as an appendage to the Third Degree and regarded it as a fourth degree conferred in their lodges. The Moderns did not. Indeed, if it was performed it was unofficial and without the blessing of Grand Lodge and thus led to the formation of separate Royal Arch Chapters. It was not until after the Union of the two Grand Lodges in 1813 that it was declared to be an official and universally accepted part of pure Antient Masonry – but delivered in separate Chapters, each attached to a lodge.

The Holy Royal Arch

- An Extension of the Craft, or different from the Craft

Our journey in Freemasonry, as you will have learnt, is a quest for philosophical and spiritual growth. Whereas the Craft ceremony, and in particular the five points of fellowship which you learnt in your Raising, deal principally with your mortal existence and relationship with your fellow men, so you will find that the Royal Arch and its peculiar five signs are primarily concerned with man's relationship with God. In effect, the Royal Arch puts pure Antient Masonry into the context of the eternal and eternity.

The Story of the Ceremony

To do this, it bases its ceremonies on the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem when the Jews were allowed to return from Babylon many years after they had been taken there following their defeat and the destruction of Solomon's original Temple by Nebuchadnezzar.

The ceremony is quite beautiful and moving – something which, as with one's Initiation, one never forgets.

The Organisation

Many lodges have Chapters attached to them, bearing the same number as the lodge and often the same name. When you feel ready, you should enquire about being Exalted, as it is called, into this Supreme Order. It does not have to be in the Chapter attached to your Lodge if there is one. Your Mentor, or any Brother wearing the Royal Arch jewel, will be happy to help you.

In general, it would be sensible to wait for a few months before you join Holy Royal Arch, in order that you may be able to digest what you have already experienced and enjoy the pleasures of visiting as a Master Mason. But, be assured that once you do take that next step you will be welcomed as warmly as you were into your Lodge.

Other Orders

It is worthwhile pointing out that as well as completing your journey in pure Antient Freemasonry, which is what the Craft and Royal Arch are called, you will now find that you are eligible for entry into a number of other Orders and Degrees. You will perhaps have heard mention of these at the Festive Board when, in general conversation, reference is made to the Temple, Mark and Royal Ark Mariners, Red Cross and Rose Croix. Each

of these is, in its own special way, a further means of teaching lessons and philosophising upon the values and virtues which always merit greater understanding, amplification and investigation, Faith, Hope and Charity being prominent. *(For further reading see "Beyond the Craft" by Keith B Jackson)*

Whilst these additional Orders and Degrees throw a valuable and interesting light upon our philosophies, **one must never lose sight of the fact that it is the Craft and the Holy Royal Arch upon which all rests.**







For Personal Notes
