

# District or Multi – District Wide Grand Master’s Class



## A Guidebook and Program Outline

The Grand Lodge Membership Retention and Development Committee - 2013

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## Overview of the Grand Master's Class

Ohio Freemasonry has a rich tradition of “Making Good Men Better”. For generations, the Craft has made sure the candidates have received his degrees, in the traditional manner, one a month, over a three-month period.

Understanding that work schedules no longer fall within the traditional work day of nine a.m. to five p.m., we have to accept that the number of men coming to the fraternity and needing to take part in a Grand Master's Class is growing. It is the fraternity's obligation to make degrees available to assist all “good men” who wish to become Freemasons.

The Grand Master's Class format has become a valuable opportunity for those who cannot join in the traditional manner and be able to access our fraternity. A candidate can now receive his degrees in a number of ways, at:

1. His Home Lodge;
2. He can visit another lodge and take a degree as a courtesy candidate;
3. And there is now this year Grand Master's Class.

It must be remembered that membership in the Craft is a lifelong Masonic journey. The foundation of our journey starts with the three symbolic lodge degrees. If we rush this process and do not educate the new members properly, they will not have formed any sort of bond to the fraternity, or with the brothers whom they have met to this point. Unless the new Brothers establish a connection, we may find they leave the Craft as quickly as they entered it.

The Grand Master's Class should be used selectively, just as taking candidates to other lodges as courtesy candidates should be done on a case-by-case basis, and for good reason.

With the degrees being presented to them in an accelerated fashion, candidates must have an active and experienced brother who will be with them throughout the Class. This may be his Sponsor, or it could be a Mentor/Master Craftsman appointed by the Master of the Lodge. Keep in mind that there are times when a Sponsor may be someone who knows the candidate, but hasn't been to lodge in many years and may not recall the Due Guards, Signs, etc. In this instance, the Sponsor may add confusion during the day-long degree and is not able to properly educate the candidate.

The Mentor/Master Craftsman on the other hand, is a Brother who has been appointed by the Master of the Lodge, and someone who is knowledgeable enough to be able to see that the candidate is properly informed of the fundamentals of the Fraternity. He can be a guide and educator during the day, and ideally, after the Class has concluded both the Mentor/Master Craftsman and the Sponsor will regularly keep in contact with the new brother and be sure he attends the future lodge meetings.

It is expected that in a Grand Master's Class, the number of candidates will likely exceed five. This being the case, the degrees would be performed with an Exemplar (one candidate representing all the candidates present). A Grand Lodge Officer or District Deputy Grand Master must be in attendance to witness the degrees.

## Program Committee

There are a multitude of duties that need to be performed prior to, and on the day of the Grand Master's Class. It is important that whoever is selected to be in charge, must have enough brethren to fill the needed roles.

In setting up the committee, the District Deputies should be included as one of the main "go-to" people. The District Deputies have been working closely with the lodges from within the District, and those lodges that have shown a strong desire to take active roles should see that tasks are accomplished.

Some of the details you need to consider are:

- Where will this event take place? (considerations should include the size of the building, handicapped accessible, air conditioning/heating, parking, etc.)
- Who will prepare the food?
- How much food will be needed for everyone in attendance?
- Who will be in charge of reservations for candidates and Mentors/Master Craftsman?
- Who will sign everyone in on the day of the Class?
- How much will you need to charge to cover the expenses of the event?
- Who will see that the day runs on schedule?
- How will you get the word out to the Lodges taking part in the Grand Master's Class?
- Who will perform the three degrees?
- Who will be the Degree Director for the degree or the day?
- Who is responsible for the aprons, regalia, rods, working tools, candidate's aprons and attire, etc.?
- Confirm that the DDGMs will obtain the Dispensation
- What will be the name of the lodge for the day? (It must be a lodge in the district or participating)
- Who will do the printing of the flyers and programs?
- Do you have enough brothers to be sure the candidates are properly cared for and instructed during the entire day?
- Will there be Medical Personnel present if needed?
- Will there be a collation at the conclusion of the day?

As you start to plan the event, there will be other items that will naturally come up. Because this is a District or Multi – District wide program, there will be varying opinions as to how the work should be performed. There can only be one Degree Director for a degree or the day. He is in charge of the ritual. All of the officers performing the three degrees need to understand that we have slight differences in how our ritual is performed, but on this day, they must agree to do it the way the Degree Director directs.

One other point to keep in mind is that the degree work will be done with an Exemplar. The candidates must be in the lodge room from the very beginning and to the end of the degree work. Be sure that there are no due guards or signs given in the First sections of each degree until after the obligation.

## Desired Results of the Program

One benefit of the Grand Master's Class is certainly the accelerated degrees; however, we do not want the new member to feel that at the conclusion of the day this is the end of his education in Freemasonry.

Those who are in charge of running a Grand Master's Class must keep in mind that the overall outcome is not just to get the degrees performed. It is to be sure that the degrees are performed well, the program runs according to schedule, the candidates have Mentors/Master Craftsman in attendance with them during the degrees, and that they leave at the end of the day with a desire for more. Make them want to learn more, meet more brethren, know they did the right thing by joining, and have them wanting to share their excitement with family, friends and associates.

After the Grand Master's Class, how do we make the transition from the large forum of a Grand Master's Class, and properly introduce them to their own lodge? Some ideas might include:

- Have the first line signer, or if this is not possible, a member of the lodge brings the new brother to the first meeting after the Grand Master's Class.
- At the first lodge meeting following their degrees, have the Worshipful Master escort them to the East of the lodge and introduce them to the membership. Take this time to present them their Bible, Lambskin Apron, etc. and if possible, place them at the Altar and have a brother present one of the Masonic Charges.
- At the first lodge meeting after their degrees, have the Lodge conduct a "Rusty Nail Degree" to help refresh the memory of the Brethren.
- At the first lodge meeting following their degrees, conduct a ladies program to explain Freemasonry to the new brethren's ladies as well as Masonic Ladies, other appendant and youth organizations
- Have the Worshipful Master place them on an active committee
- Appoint a Mentor/Master Craftsman (if they don't have one already) who can introduce them to the other members of the lodge, instruct them on the ritual, and call them before each meeting
- Give them a calendar with the upcoming months showing the lodge meetings and other activities. As well as ensure they know they are invited and welcome to attend.
- Have a member of the lodge take the new brethren to visit other lodges in the District.

- Do not push the joining of other Masonic bodies, until the brethren are familiar/comfortable with the first three degrees.

This is just a short list of some ways to help engage the new Brother. Don't overwhelm them, but don't forget about them either. They may have received all the degrees, but you can be sure they won't recall most of what they witnessed or what has been explained to them.



## “Welcome to Freemasonry” prior to the Grand Master’s Class

When a man approaches the Fraternity and expresses his desire to become a member, he already has given a lot of thought regarding this new endeavor. As we know, everyone joins for a different reason. It is personal to them, but they have stepped up and have knocked at the door of Freemasonry.

One possibility to help introduce the candidate to the Craft and make them feel welcome would be to have a Candidate’s Night an evening or even the evening prior to the Grand Master’s Class. With the extensive amount of information that will be shared during the Class, it can be easy for a new initiate to feel overwhelmed. It is strongly recommended that you consider the addition of a Candidate’s Night.

This program should be coordinated so that it runs no longer than two hours. The idea is to provide a casual get-together (jacket and tie as usual), where candidates can meet each other along with Masons from around the District, the Masters and officers from their respective lodges, as well as the District Deputy Grand Masters, if they are able to attend. It would be ideal to have a dinner, or perhaps coffee and pastry, and get an overview of what will take place the next day and to present a program designed to explain to them the “big-picture” of Freemasonry. By starting and ending the program on time, you have shown respect for them, and you have gained credibility in their eyes. Inviting the ladies as well is beneficial so that the new brethren’s ladies obtain an understanding of Freemasonry as well as existing members ladies may also have questions.

**Evening Program outline could be:**

Welcome to the \_\_\_ Masonic District’s Grand Master’s Class

- Introduction from Master of Ceremonies
- Brief overview of how the degrees will be conducted the next day
- Housekeeping issues for the Grand Master’s Class
  - a) Parking for attendees
  - b) Be at lodge by \_\_\_\_ a.m. (jacket and tie)
  - c) Explain how traditionally the three degrees are performed over several months, where this will be done in one day for them
  - d) The program will start promptly at 9 a.m., and lunch will be served after the Second degree

e) Third degree will start right after lunch, and the day should conclude at approximately 3 p.m.

- Introduction of the Masters of the lodges in this District, and the District Deputy Grand Masters (the DDGM will have final words at the very end of the evening, and will be last one to speak).
- If there is a speaker, let the attendees know who this is
- Reassure them they will be done by 8 p.m.

### “Welcome to Freemasonry” (Sample Talk for the Master of Ceremonies)

Let’s talk about Freemasonry or the Craft as some people call it. Masonry is about history, and it’s about life-long learning. You won’t learn everything there is to know about Masonry tomorrow. I have been a member for \_\_\_\_ years, and I haven’t scratched the surface.

There are many resources for you in your pursuit of learning more.

- Appendant Bodies (York Rite, Scottish Rite, Shrine, etc.) \*Do not go into great detail at this time\*
- The Grand Lodge of Ohio has a tremendous library and historical items that are available to you
- And remember, seek and ye shall find

There is a structure of the different Masonic bodies I’d like you to understand. I am not going to get too detailed, but I want to give you an overview of how Masonry is organized.

- Within these organizations there are other degrees that are available, and they will be explained in detail at a later date
- Tomorrow you’ll be taking your degrees in what we call a Blue or Symbolic lodge. The lodge you joined is called your home lodge. Your home lodge is part of a District, and the lodges in this district are:

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These lodges meet on different nights during the month, so you can always attend one of their meetings. All of the lodges in all of the Districts fall under the umbrella of the Grand Lodge of Ohio.

- Once you take your degrees tomorrow, are you finished in your Masonic journey? Not at all. After you've taken your degrees, members of your lodge will speak with you about opportunities within your lodge, and will also discuss options available through other Masonic bodies.

How much do you know about Freemasonry?

- Do you know we are the oldest fraternity?
- Do you know we are the largest fraternity?
- Do you know we donate millions of dollars a day to charities?
- Include any interesting history that may relate to your local lodges or communities
- Explain any local charities that you support on a lodge or district level
- Freemasonry symbolically uses the tools of an operative mason to build character, there are many lessons to be learned in Freemasonry, you just have to take time and be willing to learn them.

At this point, if you have a speaker, he should be introduced at this time. It is recommended that the topic be Masonic in nature, and that it absolutely does not go longer than twenty minutes. It can be followed by ten minutes or so for questions and answers. This night may be the first official introduction to the Craft for many in attendance, so you need to be sure you have a friendly, informed and engaging speaker.

If there are other officers or representatives who are present on this evening, and it is proper to introduce them, it is important that their comments be kept brief. You assured those in attendance they would be finished by a certain hour, and you should keep your word.

There has been much information shared with the candidates on this evening, and they have a long day coming up for the Class. Be respectful of their time and understand they do have family waiting for them at home.

Prior to ending the evening, re-introduce the District Deputy Grand Master. He will give his remarks and should close the evening.

Please remember, the candidates should leave this meeting feeling that they have made the right decision in their desire to join the fraternity, and that they leave with a desire for more.

## Grand Master's Class Program

If you decide not to do the evening "Welcome to Freemasonry", much of the preceding information needs to be shared with the new members once they have finalized the degrees and have gone back to their lodges. The evening program certainly isn't required, but it does afford a nice opportunity for fellowship and initial education.

As has been mentioned before, the Grand Master's Class is an option for the degrees, and it must be planned and executed well. The candidates have certain expectations, and we must be sure to impress them.

The following pages in this section are templates for putting the Grand Master's Class in place. Feel free to modify the pages as you see fit. These are only suggestions.

As you progress through implementing this program, you will be asked many questions about why certain things are being done and have many brothers offering their suggestions. The question you have to ultimately ask is... "if I were taking my degrees at this Grand Master's Class, would I benefit from what has been put in place for me?"

This day is about the candidates receiving the best degree work and instruction, and they should be impressed by the degrees and the sincerity of the brethren. The District or Multi - District Grand Master's Classes are being approved because there is a need to expand the options for one to be able to receive the degrees. However, there is to be no minimizing of the solemnity of the work, or the history and significance each degree represents.

As this Class is being offered as a District or Multi - District event, the District Deputy Grand Masters will be requesting the Dispensation from the Grand Master of Masons in Ohio. Each lodge that sends candidates to the Class should receive a copy of the Dispensation for their lodge records.

If you have further questions about a Grand Master's Class, please contact your District Deputy Grand Masters. The Membership Committee of Grand Lodge is also willing to assist you in your endeavors to run an organized and successful program.

## District or Multi - District Grand Master's Class of Blue Lodge Degrees



A Guidebook and Program Outline

Appendices

## Appendices

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## District Candidate Registration for Grand Master's Class

	Last Name	First	Tel. #	E-mail	Lodge	Mentor
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						
Out of District Candidates						
	Last Name	First	Tel. #	District #	Lodge	Mentor
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						

Date of Program: \_\_\_\_\_

## Grand Master's Class Schedule

8 to 8:45 a.m.    **REGISTRATION**

8 a.m.            (Lodge to be opened on the EA Degree by the Officers performing this degree, and then to be called from Labor to Refreshment)

8:45 a.m.        Candidates should be taken to a separate room and asked the designated questions in the Ritual. Following this, all Candidates (except Exemplar) should be brought into the lodge room and seated in a designated section with their Mentors/Master Craftsman.

9 a.m.            Lodge called from Refreshment to Labor. Receive the District Deputy Grand Master(s).

9:10 a.m.        **CONFERRAL OF THE FIRST DEGREE**

Performed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Exemplar: \_\_\_\_\_

### **BREAK**

(Ten to fifteen minutes maximum)

\*During the break, the Officers performing the Second Degree should change the Lodge from EA to FC, and then call the Craft from Labor to Refreshment. No candidates can be present.

**CONFERRAL OF THE SECOND DEGREE**

(Approximately at 10:45 a.m. If you don't list a start time on the schedule, you can begin as soon as you are ready)

Performed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Exemplar: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Lunch**

\*During the break, the Officers performing the Third Degree should change the Lodge from FC to MM, and then call the Craft from Labor to Refreshment. No candidates can be present.

1 p.m.            **CONFERRAL OF THE THIRD DEGREE**

Performed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Exemplar: \_\_\_\_\_

At the conclusion of the Third Degree, the candidates will receive further information from the Masters of their respective lodges. Dignitaries should be introduced at this time, and then the District Deputy Grand Master should be introduced and have the final words for the day.

*\*In the First Section of all three degrees, the Senior Deacon should not give the Due Guard and Sign in his interaction with the Worshipful Master when notifying him of a candidate being without. The candidates have not received the Due Guards or Signs of the degrees as of yet.*

*\*To expedite the conferral of the degrees, it is recommended that after the conclusion of the First Sections of each degree, the Exemplar should not be taken out of the lodge room. Instead, the degree should continue immediately into the Second Section.*



**Grand Master's Class Entered Apprentice Degree**

If a Degree Team, \_\_\_\_\_ (name)  
Degree Director : \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

**First Section**

Worshipful Master: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Warden: \_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Warden: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chaplain: \_\_\_\_\_  
Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Steward: \_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Steward: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tyler: \_\_\_\_\_

**Second Section**

Worshipful Master: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Warden: \_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Warden: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chaplain: \_\_\_\_\_  
Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Steward: \_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Steward: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tyler: \_\_\_\_\_

Lecture: \_\_\_\_\_  
Charge: \_\_\_\_\_

Exemplar \_\_\_\_\_

**Grand Master's Class Fellowcraft Degree**

If a Degree Team, \_\_\_\_\_ (name)  
Degree Director: \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

**First Section**

Worshipful Master: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Warden: \_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Warden: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chaplain: \_\_\_\_\_  
Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Steward: \_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Steward: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tyler: \_\_\_\_\_

**Second Section**

Worshipful Master: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Warden: \_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Warden: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chaplain: \_\_\_\_\_  
Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Steward: \_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Steward: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tyler: \_\_\_\_\_

Lecture: \_\_\_\_\_  
Charge: \_\_\_\_\_

Exemplar \_\_\_\_\_

**Grand Master's Class Master Mason Degree**

If a Degree Team, \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

Degree Director: \_\_\_\_\_ (name)

**First Section**

Worshipful Master: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Warden: \_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Warden: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chaplain: \_\_\_\_\_  
Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Steward: \_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Steward: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tyler: \_\_\_\_\_

**Second Section**

King Solomon: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Grand Warden: \_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Warden: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chaplain: \_\_\_\_\_  
Treasurer: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Deacon: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior Steward: \_\_\_\_\_  
Junior Steward: \_\_\_\_\_  
Tyler: \_\_\_\_\_  
Wayfaring Man: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ship's Captain \_\_\_\_\_  
Fellowcraft #1 \_\_\_\_\_  
Fellowcraft #2 \_\_\_\_\_  
Fellowcraft #3 \_\_\_\_\_  
Fellowcraft #4 \_\_\_\_\_  
Fellowcraft #5 \_\_\_\_\_  
Fellowcraft #6 \_\_\_\_\_  
Fellowcraft #7 \_\_\_\_\_  
Fellowcraft #8 \_\_\_\_\_  
Fellowcraft #9 \_\_\_\_\_  
Fellowcraft #10 \_\_\_\_\_  
Fellowcraft #11 \_\_\_\_\_  
Fellowcraft #12 \_\_\_\_\_

**Gates**

1<sup>st</sup> Gate: \_\_\_\_\_

2<sup>nd</sup> Gate: \_\_\_\_\_

3<sup>rd</sup> Gate: \_\_\_\_\_

Lecture: \_\_\_\_\_

Charge: \_\_\_\_\_

Exemplar \_\_\_\_\_

**THE \_\_\_\_\_ MASONIC DISTRICT (S)**

Invite you to send your candidates, officers, and members to our



**GRAND MASTER'S CLASS  
INTRODUCTION DINNER AND PROGRAM**

Location of event: \_\_\_\_\_

Friday, \_\_\_\_\_, at 6 p.m.

This dinner and program is an opportunity to introduce your candidates to the other men who will be joining them in their degrees on Saturday. Following the dinner and brief overview of the Grand Master's Class agenda, \_\_\_\_\_, will be presenting a short talk on \_\_\_\_\_." The evening will be concluded by 8 p.m.

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**GRAND MASTER'S CLASS OF BLUE LODGE DEGREES**

Saturday, \_\_\_\_\_, at 9 a.m.

Degrees performed by:

First Degree -

Second Degree -

Third Degree -

Registration: 8 a.m. to 8:50 a.m.

Continental Breakfast will be served

Lunch: following the Second Degree

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The officers and members of each lodge are invited and encouraged to attend both days.

Please contact \_\_\_\_\_,  
for additional information and reservations.



**THE MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE  
OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS  
OF THE OHIO**

On behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_ Masonic District (s)

We welcome you to the:

**District-Wide  
Grand Master's Class of Symbolic Lodge Degrees  
Program**



**Washington & Lafayette' Apron**  
France, end XVIIIth century



**Voltaire's Apron**  
France, circa 1778

The Helvetius's apron offered to  
Voltaire the day of his reception.



Friday, \_\_\_\_\_ from ? p.m. to ? p.m.  
Saturday, \_\_\_\_\_ from ? a.m. to ? p.m.

Friday evening, \_\_\_\_\_

## Welcome to Freemasonry – Dinner and Program

This dinner and program is an opportunity to introduce the candidates to the other men who will be joining them in their degrees on Saturday. They will also meet members of their own lodge, and will be introduced to the District Deputy Grand Master, Rt. Wor. \_\_\_\_\_.

This evening affords us the ability to spend time before the degrees to explain the “big picture” of Freemasonry. What charities do the Masons take part in? What additional paths are available to learn more about the Craft’s history, and what other organizations can be joined if one wishes to? Much of this information will be shared tonight.

We have the pleasure of having one of Freemasonry’s most informed and enjoyable speakers, \_\_\_\_\_, who will be presenting a short talk on “\_\_\_\_\_”.

Saturday, \_\_\_\_\_

## One-Day Class of Symbolic Lodge Degrees

Degrees performed by:

First Degree - \_\_\_\_\_ (a description of the team or group presenting the degree should go here).

Second Degree - \_\_\_\_\_ (a description of the team or group presenting the degree should go here).

Third Degree - \_\_\_\_\_ (a description of the team or group presenting the degree should go here).

## One-Day Class Schedule

9:00 PM

OPEN LODGE

Open Lodge on the First Degree, in Form  
Receive the District Deputy Grand Masters of the  
\_\_\_\_\_ Masonic District, Rt. Wor. \_\_\_\_\_

9:10 AM

CONFERRAL OF THE ENTERED APPRENTICE  
DEGREE

- Performed by \_\_\_\_\_

By permission of the Grand Master, M.W. \_\_\_\_\_  
our District-wide Class of Candidates, entitled:

(Names to be inserted here)

*(There will be a number of courtesy candidates present today)*

Following the First Degree, there will be a ten minute  
break

CONFERRAL OF THE FELLOW/CRAFT DEGREE

- Performed by \_\_\_\_\_

12:00 PM

LUNCH

1:00 PM

CONFERRAL OF THE MASTER MASON DEGREE

- Performed by \_\_\_\_\_

Following the end of the Third degree, the District Deputy  
Grand Masters will give his final words.

3:00 PM

CLOSING OF THE LODGE