

“Leading a Masonic Discussion”



The Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Ohio Committee on Education and Information

Preparation: “Freemasonry unites the men of every country, sect and opinion.” This line from the Entered Apprentice lecture illustrates one of the most unique and yet least utilized aspects of Freemasonry—especially for Lodge education. Holding an open discussion of some Masonic question or topic is an opportunity to tap into the experience and knowledge of the Brethren for the benefit of the Lodge.

Materials: None

Instruction:

1. Ask the Master to allow 15 minutes for a discussion at the next meeting. Discussions will likely last much longer once the Brethren get used to the practice.
2. Announce the question to be discussed at the meeting prior to when it will be discussed. Allow the Brethren to choose which of the four suggested questions to discuss or to suggest an alternative question. Remember, the discussion of partisan politics or sectarian religion has no place in the Lodge or when Freemasons are assembled.
3. A couple Brethren should be asked, in advance, to start the discussion by briefly sharing their responses to the question.
4. Hold the discussion in the Lodge room while the Lodge is at refreshment. This will preserve the good manners of a tyled meeting while allowing the Brethren to remain seated during the discussion. It also avoids having the discussion go through the Master and dispenses with the need to give due-guards and signs.
5. Whoever leads the discussion should remember that his role is to encourage discussion and not to share his own ideas.
6. Make use of resources like Mackey's Encyclopedia to help with expanded definitions of Masonic terms like "Cable Tow." (It really is more than just a rope)
7. Use follow up questions like: "What does everyone else think?" or "Is there anyone else who agrees?" "Anyone else who disagrees?" "Tell me more about why you think that is important?"-- These kinds of questions will encourage members to speak with each other and also reinforce the idea that there are no wrong or right answers.
8. Be prepared to briefly summarize the high points at the end of the discussion.

Demonstration:

Possible questions/topics for a Lodge educational discussion:

- General Topics
 - What is the purpose of tradition?
 - How can Masonic teachings help us to be better fathers?
- EA Topics
 - What makes a man a Mason?
 - What is the length of a Mason's cabletow?
- FC Topics
 - What are the rules and regulations of the Fellow Craft Degree?
 - What is the significance of being received upon the angle of a square?
- MM Topics
 - What could the three ruffians represent and why are they heading to Ethiopia?
 - What are the lessons of the 2nd section of the Master Mason degree?

Assessment: None

***It can be helpful to review some ground rules before starting the discussion:**

- Everyone should listen respectfully to the other (even if they disagree).
- The person who is speaking should not be interrupted.
- No more than one person should speak at the same time.
- No one's ideas should be disregarded or discounted.
- If you disagree with someone, disagree with his ideas, but don't disrespect the person.
- Try to understand the others, as much as you hope they try to understand you.