Ceremonial Explanation of the
Entered Apprentice Degree

PROLOG

W.M. -- The purpose of this presentation is to provide Mason’s families and friends with an explanation and description of the flavor of typical ritual work done in a Masonic Lodge, and expose them to some of the philosophy of Masonry. All of the material used in this presentation is constructed from materials which, for more than 150 years, have been considered to be non-secret by Grand Lodges in the United States. Much of this material is exactly as it is printed in the Minnesota Masonic Manual, published by the Grand Lodge of Minnesota, and which is officially considered to be a non-secret document.

We have long recognized that informing our families and friends about the non-secret aspects of Masonry is an important part of Masonic education. We have encouraged Masons to share certain publications and video tapes with their families and to invite friends to open-house presentations. However, these instruction methods do not give an awareness of the ceremonial aspects of Masonry, or of the ritualistic experiences that a candidate must encounter during conferral of the degrees. Nor do they impart a full appreciation of the intellectual, moral, and social philosophy of our Craft.

While we cannot show the Entered Apprentice Degree work or discuss its secret parts, this short “Presentation In Ceremonial Form” gives an experience that is similar to what a candidate for Masonry goes through.

W.M. -- Brother Lodge Education Officer, please give the introductory lecture.

THE LODGE AS A SYMBOL

LEO -- The lodge is a symbol of the world. Its shape, the "oblong square," is the ancient conception of the shape of the world. The Entered Apprentice is taught its dimensions, its covering, its furniture, its lights, its jewels, and will learn more of it as a symbol as he proceeds through the degrees. Although a symbol of the world, the lodge is a world unto itself; a world within a world, different in its customs, its laws, and its structure from the world without. In the world without are class distinctions, wealth, power, poverty, and misery. In the lodge all are on a level and peace and harmony prevail. In the world without most laws are "thou shalt not" and enforced by penalties. In the lodge the laws are mostly "thou shalt" and compulsion is seldom thought of and rarely invoked.

Freemasons obey their laws not so much because they must, as because they will. In the world without, men are divided by a thousand influences: race, business, religious belief, politics. In
the lodge, men are united in the common bond of three fundamental beliefs: the Fatherhood of God, the brother-hood of man and the immortality of the soul, and all the sweet associations which spring there from. In the world without, men travel many roads to many goals.; In the lodge the initiate does as all others who have gone this way before him, and all, youngest Entered Apprentice and oldest Past Master, travel a common way to an end which is the same for all.

W.M. -- To order, my Brothers and Ladies. Brother Chaplain, you will lead us in the Opening Prayer. All rise.

**PRAYER AT OPENING.**

Chaplain -- Most holy and glorious Lord God, the great Architect of the Universe, the Giver of all good gifts and graces! You have promised that "where two or three are gathered together in Your name You will be in the midst of them and bless them." In Your name we have assembled, and in Your name we desire to proceed in all our doings. Grant that the sublime principles of Freemasonry may so subdue every discordant passion within us — so harmonize and enrich our hearts with Your own love and goodness — that the Lodge at this time may humbly reflect that order and beauty which reign forever before Your throne.

W.M. -- Brother Senior Deacon, please conduct the participating Ladies to the door of the symbolic preparation room. All on the sidelines may be seated.

**PREPARATION FOR INITIATION**

W.M. -- It has been said that the "youth as an Entered Apprentice should industriously occupy his mind in the accumulation of useful knowledge." That the Fellowcraft, in his manhood, should engage in active work, applying the knowledge so acquired in the duties of his profession, while the elderly Master Mason should find his employment in teaching and reflection, and by his learning and experience develop the designs from which others may work.

W.M. -- Every candidate previous to his reception is required to give his free and full assent to the following interrogatories:

W.M. -- Brother Stewards, please propound the necessary interrogatories.

S.S. -- 1. Do you seriously declare, upon your honor, before these gentlemen, that, unbiased by friends, and uninfluenced by mercenary motives, you freely and voluntarily offer yourself a candidate for the mysteries of Masonry?

2. Do you seriously declare, upon your honor, before these gentlemen, that you are prompted to solicit the privileges of Masonry, by a favorable opinion conceived of the Institution, a desire of knowledge, and a sincere wish of being serviceable to your fellow creatures?

3. Do you seriously declare, upon your honor, before these gentlemen, that you will cheerfully conform to all the ancient established usages and customs of the Fraternity?

J.S. -- If the proper answers have been made, the preparatory lecture will then be given, and the candidate prepared for initiation.
W.M. -- Having signified his assent to these questions, the candidate is prepared for the ceremonies that await him.

Brother Stewards, conduct the Ladies to the center of the Lodge room. (Done)

W.M. -- As a candidate starts out upon his journey in search for the Light, he is at this point reminded of that universal dependence upon that Great Source and Giver of all Light and Life, whereby the world exists.

W.M. -- Let us pray.

The following prayer is very old:

"Vouchsafe Thine aid, Almighty Father of the Universe, to this our present convention and grant that this candidate for Masonry may dedicate and devote his life to Thy service and become a true and faithful brother among us. Endue him with a competency of Thy Divine Wisdom, so that by the influence of our art he may be better enabled to display the beauty of holiness, to the honor of Thy Holy Name. Amen!"

Response by the brethren: "So mote it be."

W.M. -- The next lesson to be inculcated and the first real lesson to be impressed upon the candidate after his admission to the lodge is "Faith in God." The man, if such there be, who acknowledges no higher power than himself, will never consider a purely moral obligation binding. To such a man there is no such word as "ought," no such word as "duty." The words "expediency" and "inclination" will take their place. Freemasonry, among English-speaking people, has always required a declaration of belief and trust.

W.M. -- Brother Senior Deacon, conduct the Ladies to the Senior Warden in the West. (Done) Brother Senior Warden, instruct the Ladies about the Badge of a Mason.

THE BADGE OF A MASON

S.W. -- Throughout the Old Testament there are references to lambs, often in connection with sacrifices, frequently used in a sense symbolic of innocence, purity, gentleness, weakness—a matter aided by color, which we unconsciously associate with purity, probably because of the hue of snow.

This association is universal in Freemasonry, and the initiate should strive to keep his apron white and himself innocent. His badge of Masonry should symbolize in its color the purity of his Masonic character; he should forever be innocent of wrong toward all, but more especially toward a brother Mason.

With the presentation of the apron the lodge accepts the initiate as worthy. It entrusts to his hands its distinguishing badge. With it and symbolized by it comes one of the most precious and most gracious of gifts—the gift of brotherhood. Lucky the Entered Apprentice who has the wit to see the extent and the meaning of the gift; thrice lucky the lodge whose initiates find in it and keep that honor, probity and power, that innocence, strength, and spiritual contact, that glory of unity and oneness with all the Masonic world which may be read into this symbol by him who hath open eyes of the heart with which to see.
In the words of the Old Dundee, Scotland Lodge's Apron Charge:

It is yours to wear throughout an honorable life, and at your death to be placed upon the coffin which shall contain your mortal remains and with them laid beneath the silent clods of the valley. Let its pure and spotless surface be to you an ever-present reminder of a purity of life and rectitude of conduct, a never-ending argument for nobler deeds, for higher thoughts, for greater achievements. And when at last your weary feet shall have come to the end of their toilsome journey, and from your nerveless grasp shall drop the working tools of life, may the record of your thoughts and actions be as spotless as this emblem.

For thus, and thus only, may it be worn with pleasure to yourself and honor to the Fraternity.

Every candidate, at his initiation, is presented with a Lambskin, or white leather apron.

The LAMB has in all ages been deemed an emblem of innocence; he, therefore, who wears the lambskin as a badge of Masonry is thereby continually reminded of that purity of life and conduct, which is essentially necessary to his gaining admission into the Celestial Lodge above, where the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides.

The LAMBSKIN, or white leather apron, is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason; more ancient than the Golden Fleece or Roman Eagle, more honorable than the Star and Garter, or any other Order that could be conferred upon the candidate at the time of his initiation or at any time thereafter, by king, prince, potentate, or any other person, except he be a Mason, and which every Mason ought to wear with equal pleasure to himself and honor to the Fraternity.

W.M. -- Brother Senior Deacon, conduct the Ladies to the East. (Done) Brother Chaplain, please instruct the Ladies about the Mason’s responsibility concerning charity.

THE GREATEST OF THESE

Chaplain -- The Entered Apprentice practices the Rite of Destitution before he hears the beautiful words of the lecture describing the three principal rounds of Jacob's ladder: "the greatest of these is charity, for faith is lost in sight, hope ends in fruition, but charity extends beyond the grave, through the boundless realms of eternity." But he may reflect upon both at once and from that reflection learn that Masonic giving to the destitute is not confined to alms.

Putting a quarter in a beggar's hand will hardly extend beyond the grave through the boundless realms of eternity!

Masonic charity does indeed include the giving of physical relief; individual Masons give it, the lodge gives it, the Grand Lodge gives it. But if charity began and ended with money, it would go but a little way. St. Paul said: "And although I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

If the charity of Freemasonry meant only the giving of alms, it would long ago have given place to a hundred institutions better able to provide relief.

The charity taught in the lodge is charity of thought, charity of the giving of self. The visit to the sick is true Masonic charity. The brotherly hand laid upon a bowed shoulder in comfort and to
give courage is Masonic charity. The word of counsel to the fatherless, the tear dropped in sympathy with the widowed, the joyous letter of congratulation to a fortunate brother, all are Masonic charity and these, indeed, extend beyond the grave.

Often an Entered Apprentice believes that the Rite has taught him that every Mason must give a coin to every beggar who asks, even though they line the streets and need as many dimes as a pocket will hold. Such is not the truth. The Mason gives when he meets anyone "in like destitute condition." It is left for him to judge whether the appeal is for a need which is real or one assumed. In general all calls for Masonic charity should be made through the lodge. Machinery is provided for a kindly and brotherly investigation, after which the lodge or Grand Lodge will afford relief. Individual charity is wholly in the control of the individual brother's conscience.

But no conscience need control that larger and finer giving of comfort and counsel, of joy and sadness, of sympathy and spiritual help. Here the Mason may give as much as he will and be not the poorer but the richer for his giving. He who reads the Rite of Destitution in this larger sense has seen through the form to the reality behind and learned the inner significance of the symbol.

W.M. -- Brother Senior Deacon, conduct the Ladies to the Junior Warden in the South. (Done) Brother Junior Warden, please explain the working tools of a Mason.

THE WORKING TOOLS

J.W. -- The working tools and implements of an Entered Apprentice are the Twenty-four inch Gauge, and the Common Gavel.

The TWENTY-FOUR INCH GAUGE is an instrument made use of by Operative Masons, to measure and lay out their work; but Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, are taught to make use of it for the more noble and glorious purpose of dividing our time. It being divided into twenty-four equal parts, is emblematical of the twenty-four hours of the day, which they are taught to divide into three equal parts, whereby they find eight hours for the service of God and a distressed worthy brother; eight hours for their usual avocations, and eight for refreshment and sleep. The COMMON GAVEL is an instrument made use of by operative Masons, to break off the corners of rough stones, the better to fit them for the builder's use; but Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons, are taught to make use of it for the more noble and glorious purpose of divesting their minds and consciences of all the vices and superfluities of life; thereby fitting their bodies, as living stones, for that spiritual building, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

W.M. -- Brother Senior Deacon, conduct the Ladies to the East once again. (Done) Brother Past Master, please explain the Mason’s charge.

Past Master -- THE CHARGE AT INITIATION

There are three great duties which a Mason is charged to inculcate: to God, to his neighbor, and to himself. To GOD, in never mentioning His name, but with that reverential awe which is due from a creature to its Creator; to implore His aid in all your laudable undertakings, and to esteem Him as the chief good; to his NEIGHBOR in acting upon the square, and doing unto his neighbor as one wishes his neighbor should do unto him; and to ONESELF, in avoiding all irregularity and intemperance, which may impair your faculties, or debase the dignity of your profession.
W.M. -- Brother Stewards, would you invite the Ladies to a seat among us and present the Entered Apprentice lecture for them? (Alternating topics)

S.S. -- THE ENTERED APPRENTICE LECTURE

The second section of the Entered Apprentice Degree accounts for the origin of our hieroglyphical instruction, and convinces us of the advantages which will ever accompany a faithful observance of our duty; it maintains, beyond the power of contradiction, the propriety of our rites, while it demonstrates to the most skeptical and hesitating mind, their excellence and utility; it illustrates, at the same time, certain particulars, of which our ignorance might lead us into error, and which, as Masons, we are indispensably bound to know.

J.S. -- THE EXTENT OF FREEMASONRY

From east to west Freemasonry extends, and between the north and south in every clime and nation, are Masons to be found.

S.S. -- THE THREE GREAT SUPPORTS OF THE LODGE

Our Institution is said to be supported, by WISDOM, STRENGTH and BEAUTY; because it is necessary there should be wisdom to contrive, strength to support, and beauty to adorn all great and important undertakings. Its dimensions are unlimited, and its covering no less than the canopy of heaven. To this object the Mason's mind is continually directed, and thither he hopes at last to arrive by the aid of the theological ladder, which Jacob, in his vision, saw ascending from earth to heaven; the three principal rounds of which are denominated FAITH, HOPE and CHARITY, and which admonish us to have faith in God, hope in immortality, and charity to all mankind.

J.S. -- THE THREE GREAT LIGHTS OF MASONRY

Every well governed lodge is furnished with the HOLY BIBLE, SQUARE and COMPASS. The BIBLE points out the path that leads to happiness, and is dedicated to God; the SQUARE teaches us to regulate our conduct by the principles of morality and virtue and is dedicated to the Master; the COMPASS teaches us to limit our desires in every station, and is dedicated to the Craft.

The BIBLE is dedicated to the service of God, because it is the inestimable gift of God to man, the SQUARE to the Master, because, being the proper Masonic emblem of his office, it is constantly to remind him of the duty he owes to the Lodge over which he is appointed to preside, and the COMPASS to the Craft, because by a due attention to its use, they are taught to regulate their desires and keep their passions within due bounds.

S.S. -- THE LODGE ORNAMENTS

The ornamental parts of a Lodge, displayed in this section, are the Mosaic pavement, the Indented tessel, and the Blazing star.
The MOSAIC PAVEMENT is a representation of the ground floor of King Solomon's Temple; the INDENTED TESSEL, that beautiful tessellated border, or skirting which surrounded it, and the BLAZING STAR, in the center, is commemorative of the star which appeared to guide the wise men of the East to the place of their Savior's nativity. The Mosaic Pavement is emblematic of human life, checkered with good and evil; the beautiful border which surrounds it, those blessings and comforts which surround us, and which we hope to obtain by a faithful reliance on Divine Providence, which is hieroglyphically represented by the Blazing Star in the center.

**J.S. -- THE JEWELS OF THE LODGE**

The movable and immovable jewels also claim our attention in this section.

The ROUGH ASHLAR is a stone as taken from the quarry in its rude and natural state. The PERFECT ASHLAR is a stone made ready by the hands of the workman, to be adjusted by the tools of the Fellow Craft. The TRESTLE BOARD is for the Master Workman to draw his designs upon.

By the ROUGH ASHLAR, we are reminded of our rude and imperfect state by nature; by the PERFECT ASHLAR, that state of perfection at which we hope to arrive, by a virtuous education, our own endeavors, and the blessing of God; and by the TRESTLE BOARD, we are reminded that as the operative workman erects his temporal building agreeably to the rules and designs laid down by the master on his Trestle Board, so should we, both operative and speculative, endeavor to erect our spiritual building agreeably to the rules and designs laid down by the Supreme Architect of the Universe, in the Book of Life, which is our spiritual Trestle Board.

**S.S. -- Our ancient brethren dedicated their Lodges to King Solomon. Masons professing Christianity dedicate theirs to St. John the Baptist, and St. John the Evangelist, who were eminent patrons of Masonry; and, since their time, there is represented in every regular and well-governed Lodge, a certain Point within a Circle; the Point represents an individual brother, the Circle represents the boundary line of his duty to God and man, beyond which he is never to suffer his passions, prejudices or interests to betray him on any occasion. This Circle is embordered by two perpendicular parallel lines, representing St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist, who were perfect parallels, in Christianity as well as Masonry; and upon the vertex rests the Book of Holy Scriptures which point out the whole duty of man. In going round this circle, we necessarily touch upon these two lines, as well as upon the Holy Scriptures; and while a Mason keeps himself thus circumscribed, it is impossible that he should materially err.**

**J.S. -- BROTHERLY LOVE, RELIEF AND TRUTH**

**OF BROTHERLY LOVE**

By the exercise of BROTHERLY LOVE, we are taught to regard the whole human species as one family; the high and low, the rich and poor; who, as created by one Almighty Parent, and inhabitants of the same planet, are to aid, support and protect each other. On this principle Masonry unites men of every country, sect and opinion, and conciliates true friendship among those who might otherwise have remained at a perpetual distance.

**S.S. -- OF RELIEF**

To RELIEVE the distressed is a duty incumbent on all men; but particularly on Masons, who are linked together by an indissoluble chain of sincere affection. To soothe the unhappy, to
sympathize with their misfortunes, to compassionate their miseries, and to restore peace to their troubled minds, is the grand aim we have in view. On this basis we form our friendships, and establish our connections.

J.S. -- OF TRUTH

TRUTH is a divine attribute, and the foundation of every virtue. To be good and true is the first lesson we are taught in Masonry. On this theme we contemplate, and by its dictates endeavor to regulate our conduct. Hence, while influenced by this principle, hypocrisy and deceit are unknown among us, sincerity and plain dealing distinguish us, and the heart and tongue join in promoting each other's welfare, and rejoicing in each other's prosperity.

S.S. -- THE FOUR CARDINAL VIRTUES

To this illustration succeeds an explanation of the four cardinal virtues-Temperance, Fortitude, Prudence and Justice.

S.S. -- OF TEMPERANCE

TEMPERANCE is that due restraint upon our affections and passions, which renders the body tame and governable, and frees the mind from the allurements of vice. This virtue should be the constant practice of every Mason, as he is thereby taught to avoid excess, or contracting any licentious or vicious habit, the indulgence of which might lead him to disclose some of those valuable secrets which he has promised to conceal and never reveal, and which would consequently subject him to the contempt and detestation of all good Masons.

J.S. -- OF FORTITUDE

FORTITUDE is that noble and steady purpose of the mind, whereby we are enabled to undergo any pain, peril or danger, when prudentially deemed expedient. This virtue is equally distant from rashness and cowardice; and, like the former, should be deeply impressed upon the mind of every Mason, as a safeguard or security against any illegal attack that may be made, by force or otherwise, to extort from him any of those secrets with which he has been so solemnly entrusted, and which was emblematically represented upon his first admission-into the lodge.

S.S. -- OF PRUDENCE

PRUDENCE teaches us to regulate our lives and actions agreeably to the dictates of reason, and is that habit by which we wisely judge and prudentially determine, on all things relative to our present. As well as to our future happiness. This virtue should be the peculiar characteristic of every Mason, not only for the government of his conduct while in the Lodge, but also when abroad in the world. It should be particularly attended to in all strange and mixed companies, never to let fall the least sign, token or word, whereby the secrets of Masonry might be unlawfully obtained.

J.S. -- OF JUSTICE

JUSTICE is that standard, or boundary, of right, which enables us to render to every man his just due, without distinction. This virtue is not only consistent with divine and human laws, but is the very cement and support of civil society; and, as Justice in a great measure constitutes the real
good man, so should it be the invariable practice of every Mason never to deviate from the minutest principles thereof.

W.M. -- Thank you, Brother Stewards.

ENTERED APPRENTICE SUMMARY

W.M. -- In the Entered Apprentice's Degree the initiate is taught the necessity of a belief in God; of charity toward all mankind, "more especially a brother Mason"; of secrecy; the meaning of brotherly love; the reasons for relief; the greatness of truth; the advantages of temperance; the value of fortitude; the part played in Masonic life by prudence, and the equality of strict justice.

He is charged to be reverent before God, to pray to Him for help, to venerate Him as the source of all that is good. He is exhorted to practice the Golden Rule and to avoid excesses of all kinds. He is admonished to be quiet and peaceable, not to countenance disloyalty and rebellion, to be true and just to government and country, to be cheerful under its laws. He is charged to come often to lodge but not to neglect his business, not try argue about Freemasonry with the ignorant but to learn Masonry from Masons, and, once again, to be secret.

Finally he is urged to present only such candidates as he is sure will agree to all that he has agreed to.

In the Latin Craft, on the European Continent, they concluded the initiation ceremony by presenting the new Entered Apprentice with a pair of white gloves for a lady, saying:

"These the Lodge presents to your wife, or to her who, beloved by you, may hereafter become such. They will be a fit symbol of the purity of true affection, and will be to her as a pledge on the part of the Lodge, that if she should ever need its assistance, consolation, or encouragement, an advocate or a defender, she will find all in the Lodge or among the Brethren."

W.M. -- Brother Chaplain, please conclude our ceremony with the closing prayer.

W.M. -- THE LODGE IS CLOSED WITH A PRAYER:

Chaplain -- Almighty Father, we ask Your blessing upon the proceedings of this communication, and, as we are about to separate, we ask You to keep us under Your protecting care until again we are called together. Enable us, O God, to subdue every discordant passion within us. May the blessing of heaven rest upon us and all regular Masons. May brotherly love prevail, and every moral and social virtue cement us. Amen.

Response: "So mote it be."

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This Ceremonial Presentation was prepared by W.B. Duane E. Anderson and issued by the Masonic Research and Education Committee of the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Ancient Free and Accepted Masons of Minnesota.
Suggestions for Conducting the

Ceremonial Presentation

This presentation can be put on in the Lodge room or in any meeting room. It does not have to be done in a lodge building. Nine Masons, representing the W.M., S.W., J.W., LEO, Chaplain, S.D., S.S., J.S., and a Past Master, should take part in the presentation.

If the presentation is done in the Lodge room, the Lodge should be either at refreshment or closed. The officers should be in their normal stations and places, and the observers and participating ladies will be seated on the side-lines. Instructions for conducting the participating ladies are given in the script.

If the presentation is given in a meeting room there are many possible ways to arrange the seating of the officers and the floor movements of the participants.

If the room is set up as a lodge then follow the instructions in the script.

If the room is set up for a table lodge (head table and two long tables on the sides to form a “U”) then the officers can be seated as for the table lodge ceremony and, depending on the amount of space and the number of participants, the ladies can either move from place to place or simply stand at the open end of the “U” and turn to face toward the different speakers.

If the room is set up for a banquet, with a head table and separate tables, a sufficiently large area in front of the head table should be cleared for conducting the participants and the officers can all be seated at the head table during the presentation.

If the room is set up in “auditorium” fashion, with a speaker’s podium at the front, then a sufficiently large area at the front of the room should be cleared for the participants and the officers can all be seated in the front row or beside the podium.

Circumambulation is an important symbolic part of the degree work and, for this presentation to have the best effect, it is important to have enough floor space (if at all possible) so that the participants can be conducted conveniently from place to place during the presentation.

As in all ritual work, the best impression is given if the speeches are given from memory. The S.S. and J.S. parts thus should be given to members who know the third section of the Entered Apprentice lecture. The other parts contain portions of the work that all Masons should know, plus explanations and commentary that are not usually memorized.

As for any presentation, whether it is a degree, a skit, or a talk, rehearsal always improves the performance. This is also true for any part that you may be reading.