

When the Candidate is presented to you on the North side please ensure you look at him and not at the Deacon who is prompting.

IPM Only prompt the WM when he asks you. All too often a premature prompt is given when the WM is just pausing to collect his thoughts. The only way to know when the WM is pausing for effect or where his weak areas of ritual are is to listen to him carefully at the Officers rehearsal the night before the meeting. It is advisable to have a ritual book open so that no false prompt is given.

Wardens When a Candidate is presented to you your first statement is directed to the Deacon so look at him. Afterwards you are putting questions to the Candidate so now look at him and not the Deacon.

JW When addressing the WM face the North and just turn your head.

Deacons When taking hold of a Candidate to take him round the Lodge do so firmly. One method is to bring your left arm under his right arm and grasp him firmly by the wrist. This puts you slightly behind the Candidate and makes it easier to instruct him. It also means it is not so easy to pull him round and this focuses your mind to give clear instructions. Speak the instructions loud enough so that everyone can hear, they do not have to be whispered. When presenting a Candidate to a Warden first of all face the Warden for your presentation. After that turn slightly towards the Candidate so that you can more easily prompt him. This also turns you away from the Warden who will not then be tempted to address you. When prompting the Candidate judge the length of the phrase to be repeated from the manner in which the Obligation was taken.

IG Make sure that you step onto the carpet when addressing the WM and the JW. (The WM and Wardens chairs are deemed to be an extension of the carpet. When addressing the JW face the East and then just turn your head.



District of Cyprus Mentoring Programme

A series of Fact Sheets for a Master Mason



MM 08 Ritual Learning and Delivery

Making a daily advancement in Masonic knowledge

Ritual Learning and Delivery

The learning and delivery of ritual comes easy to some, whilst others find it difficult, so much so that there are many good Masons who have not progressed to the Chair because they felt they could not learn the ritual. But there are a number of hints and tips that can help when learning and delivering the ritual. Our ritual consists of three degrees each of which is a moralistic and spiritual play in two acts. Act one is the actual ceremony and act two is a lecture. If a candidate is to benefit from the ceremonies and lectures it is important that the ritual and lectures are delivered clearly, at the proper speed and with some element of drama.

Learning

There is no short cut to learning, nor is there a preferred method to learning the ritual. In this Fact Sheet we will offer suggestions which might be of help to you. The key to learning ritual is repetition time after time after time until it is second nature to you. The next stage is to analyse the words and any that you do not understand find out the meaning through your Mentor, the LoI or the Library. If the piece of ritual is a long one, for example, the Charge after the 1st Degree or the 2nd Degree Tracing Board, learn the first page then the last page, then the second page and then the penultimate page. In this way you will be able to start and end on a high even if you stumble along the way.

Aim to read the piece of ritual once or twice a day for a couple of weeks without trying to memorise any of the words. Along the way highlight any words or phrases that are not clear and research them. At the end of a couple of weeks you will have a very good idea of the flow of the piece and you should be able to give quite a detailed summary of it.

Then set about learning each section in turn thoroughly using the method of first section, last section, second section and so on. Aim to learn the whole ritual at least one month ahead of when you are due to present it. From this point on then decide where to place emphasis on words or phrases, where to pause for effect and when to add any gestures.

Also speak the ritual aloud; remember, we are literally actors on a stage. Learning should be done at home, in the car or walking the dog - NOT at the LoI. The LoI is designed to explain the meaning of ritual, how to give correct and smart signs, and achieve the correct movements around the Lodge. The use of ritual books at LoI should be minimal.

You will see many WM's look to the DC for guidance throughout their year on when to knock and carry out other functions, and who also have problems in opening and closing the Lodge. By the time you reach the Chair you should know exactly when to knock and what to do and you should certainly know how to open and close the Lodge in all 3 Degrees. There are two reasons for this; first it inspires confidence in your Officers and it clearly shows you are in charge of the evening's procedures. Second and more important if you know the openings and closing thoroughly you can concentrate fully on the ceremony for the evening. As for the business of the Lodge, this should not create a problem. You have an agenda, use it and make any necessary notes on it.

Whichever office you hold you should always be capable of opening and closing the Lodge in the next highest office.

Delivery

All the rules of speechmaking apply with the addition of the drama of the ritual. Some passages cry out for emphasis, let your artistic talents shine through! Use gestures for effect, for example “.to achieve a true balance between avarice and profusion. To hold the scales of justice with equal poise, to make his passions and prejudices coincide with the just line of his conduct ...”

WM: When investing your Officers let everyone hear what you are saying – it is not a private conversation! If you do not then there will be private mumblings among the Brethren who are losing interest. A tip is to have your Officers facing you at a slight angle to your Chair so that you are to some extent facing the brethren and your voice will project further.