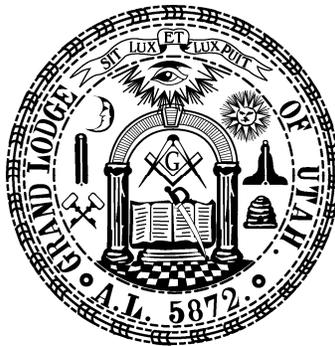


GRAND LODGE EDUCATION MODULE

Creating Sustainable Growth

Prepared by Lorenzo Tibbitts, Grand Lodge Education Committee

December 2009



2010 Education Committee Mission Statement

Enlighten, stimulate and strengthen the bonds of Masonic Brotherhood through knowledge and education.

GENERAL NOTE: The intent of the Education Module is to spark discussion and not in reading a presentation. The Education Modules are not required to be lengthy as long as they promote discussion and involvement between the presenter and the audience.

THE MOST WORSHIPFUL GRAND LODGE OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS OF UTAH
Creating Sustainable Membership Growth

A Utah Grand Lodge Educational
Prepared by Lorenzo E. Tibbitts
Grand Lodge Educational Committee

Notes to the Presenter

- This educational consists of both presentation (lecture) and lodge discussion.
- To ensure open and unfettered participation, you should gently guide the discussion to ensure that each participant makes their point, but does not inhibit others from having their say.
- You should not judge any of the issues raised by members of the Lodge during the discussion, nor should you allow others to argue with the expressions of any brother. You should ensure that all who wish to speak have an opportunity to make their point.
- You should enlist the assistance of several of the brothers in the Lodge who are comfortable reading out loud in public to read the quotes in the “Attention Activity” portion of the Educational. (Don’t coerce anyone who is uncomfortable reading in public!) This will focus the attention of the brothers and start the participation process.
- To ensure that the Lodge feels comfortable contributing to the discussion, you should prepare the officers of the Lodge to either contribute immediately, or abbreviate their remarks, depending upon the willingness of Lodge members to participate.
- Ask the Lodge Secretary or someone else to take notes of the brother’s responses and comments for the later use of the Lodge Leadership.
- You should make it clear that this is only the beginning of the effort to create sustainable growth in your lodge.
 - Encourage them to make other comments by email or phone to any of the elected officers of the Lodge.
 - You should also indicate that if they wish their comments to remain anonymous, those elected officers will share those concerns with the other officers of the Lodge without compromising their identity.
- Do not feel like you need to memorize the lecture portions of this educational. Study the material and present it in your own words, using this as an outline of your remarks rather than a script.
- You may choose to replace the case study on retention with one of your own.

Attention Activity

[Note: For ease in printing and distributing, these quotes are reproduced in the last two pages of this educational.]

“Instead of worrying about whether (Dan Brown’s book) *The Lost Symbol* will create members, we should hope that we could create Masons.”

Cliff Porter
The State of Masonry

“I can state without fear of contradiction that fraternal membership is not now the norm. All fraternal organizations have suffered during the last half of the Twentieth Century; some have declined to the point of virtual disintegration.”

S. Brent Morris, 33° Grand Cross
Voting With Their Feet

The general quality of our business meetings is so poor as to discourage even the most engaged Mason. I often am forced to attend bad business meetings in my professional life and I endure them mainly because I am paid so handsomely to do so. Why would anyone think that I volunteered to sit in meetings that are even less productive and meaningful than those meetings?”

Lon Tibbitts, 32°
Utah F&AM

Odd Fellowship has been declining since about 1950, the York Rite since 1957, Freemasonry since 1959, and the Scottish Rite since 1978.”

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“A Lodge is a lot like filling a bathtub with an open drain. If the water pouring in is not greater than the water that is draining out, then that Lodge is dying and it is only a matter of time until it is gone.”

R.W. Brother John Liley, 33°
Grand Lodge of Utah

“There used to be a time when it meant something to be a Mason, it showed a level of class.”

A. C. Green, Historian
Dallas Morning News, March 1984

“We have for the last two decades been concentrating our best leadership ability on an issue which we perceive to be the greatest threat against our integrity – the loss of our quantity ... we have probably changed Freemasonry overall more in the last 20 years than was done in the prior 250, and what have we accomplished? We certainly have not stopped the decline in numbers for which reason we made the changes.”

R.W. Brother Thomas W. Jackson
“What are we trying to save?”

*“...we must move forward both individually and fraternally. We encourage you to think carefully about how you invest your time, which is everyone’s most valuable asset, and we ask you to use your time on programs and actions that are uniquely Masonic. As we work together, we must ask each other how a program, a meeting, or an event improves and demonstrates our experience of being a Mason. **We have not a moment to lose.**”*

from *It’s About Time*
by The Masonic Information Center

Presentation

I. Membership since 1900:

In 1900, there were 839,000 Freemasons in the United States. By 1959 that number had grown to more than 4 million Masons, but by 1995 it had shrunk to just less than 2.2 million Masons and as the shrinkage has continued, last year (2008) there were less than 1.5 million Masons in the United States.

Let’s put that in more understandable numbers. In our heyday, 1959, almost 1 in 8 men in the United States was a Mason. Fifty years later, 1 in 100 men is a Mason, and in Utah, where we lag the rest of the U.S., only 1 in every 500 men is a Mason.

But today, we face a great opportunity. For the first time since 1959, we see renewed interest among college-aged men to join with us despite, or perhaps because of the explosive growth of social media.

A number of popular books and movies, including *The Da Vinci Code*, *National Treasure*, *National Treasure II*, and most recently, *The Lost Symbol*, have raised both the awareness of, and regard for, The Fraternity.

This heightened awareness and regard is creating an increase of those who are aware of and are investigating us.

II. The Parable of the Bathtub:

In R.W. Brother Liley’s example or analogy of the Bathtub, we need increase the in-flow of new members, slow or stop the outflow of members, or do both to change the level of membership. Remember, without any new growth, death will eventually decimate any lodge.

Let’s take a moment to expand on R.W. Brother Liley’s example and call it “The Parable of the Bathtub.” First, let us put a stopper in the drain and examine the water flowing into the tub.

Remembering that we don’t meet in a Lodge but that we meet as a Lodge, let’s envision

the bathtub as the entire Lodge organization, the hot water as our engaged and interested candidates and brothers, and the cooled water as those who have either died, were only curious, or who are disengaged, disinterested, or disillusioned.

Ideally, we fill a tub with comfortably hot water. Once filled with hot water, bathtubs contain warm water that naturally cools over time. To have a long and satisfying soak, we are required to occasionally drain some of the cooled water and reheat the balance with new hot water.

We want brothers to have a long, satisfying experience because the true personal benefits of Masonic membership come over time.

We expect to lose those who pass away, for one of our purposes is to help the individual Mason prepare himself for this very eventuality. But other members cool and leave well before that eventual day and we'll call this "premature cooling."

To further complicate things, when we refill a tub, sometimes we've exceeded the water heater's capacity and the water we add is only mildly warm. We know that no matter how well we investigate, some come to us for the wrong reasons and soon leave us.

Few of us want to sit in a tub of cold water for very long!

As you can plainly see from this parable, to have and give everyone a great Masonic experience, we cannot talk about membership growth without talking about membership retention. We will do both today.

III. Question and Discussion [about 2 minutes]

"Why do men come to us?"

Note: Some of the answers could include:

- 1) Curiosity
- 2) To learn the secrets of a Master Mason
- 3) To meet and associate with other good men
- 4) To be better men
- 5) To be serviceable to their fellow man
- 6) For fraternity and to find friends

IV. Formula for New Membership Growth

Once awareness and curiosity cause a potential candidate to approach us, the formula to prepare and encourage them is well-established.

Best practices include:

1. *Holding regularly scheduled Meet-Ups,*
2. *Appointing a "Front-door" committee to shepherd these potential candidates to the point of petitioning,*

3. *Performing timely elections,*
4. *Effective investigations, and*
5. *Quality Rituals, followed by,*
6. *Appointing dedicated coaches or mentors, and*
7. *Assimilating the newly raised brother into the Lodge organization.*

V. Discussion [about 5 minutes]

How are we doing? Which elements of this formula need to be improved in our Lodge?

[Note: The secretary or some other brother should record the responses of the brethren.]

VI. Instruction:

Our leadership is committed to making the needed improvements we've talked about today. In the coming days and weeks, our elected officers will implement the needed changes and improvements. If you have not felt comfortable sharing your concerns here today, please email or call any of the elected officers, and if you wish your identity to remain anonymous, be assured the elected officer you contact will address your concerns with the Officer Corps without revealing your identity. I hope you will be willing to help with this effort.

VII. Retention

While the formula for new growth is well-established, our shrinkage over the last fifty-years proves that the formula for retention is less well-known.

It is very frustrating to expend tremendous effort to properly prepare, elect, initiate, pass and raise new candidates just to lose more Masons than we make. And that sense of frustration doesn't change if we are raising large numbers of Masons.

Perhaps a look at the micro-view will illustrate the magnitude of the problem we face:

[Note: you may replace this case-study with one of your own.]

On Nov. 10, 2006, in one of our growing Utah Lodges, 10 men were initiated. They all seemed to be quite well prepared and were properly investigated. But three years later, only three Master Masons are actively engaged.

All were assigned coaches, and all were invited, but two never met with their coaches, and have not returned to a single Lodge meeting since. Five were passed. Four were raised.

One of those four resigned. He said that it was not what he thought it would be, but his resignation also came at the end of a period of increasing agitation and frustration marked by conflict with other Masons.

Exactly three years later, only 30% are active and engage Masons. And this matches the generally accepted nationwide percentages!

To create sustainable growth, we need to do something to “slow the flow” out of our Lodges. We need to do what we can to prevent that “premature cooling” I spoke of earlier.

Why do Masons become disinterested, disengaged, or disillusioned? Well, there are several reasons, but generally it is one of eight things.

It has been observed those Brothers who leave us:

- 1) Have not found the answers they expected,*
- 2) Were disappointed with the experience,*
- 3) Faced family conflict,*
- 4) Failed to find a friend,*
- 5) Felt unnoticed or unappreciated,*
- 6) Were “burned out,”*
- 7) Were offended by other brothers, or*
- 8) Found our meetings meaningless, boring or too time consuming.*

VIII. Discussion [about 10 minutes]

How are we doing as a Lodge? What frustrates you? What do we need to do to improve our Total Lodge Experience?

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IX. Instruction:

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Thank you.

Printable Quotations:

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Cliff Porter

The State of Masonry

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