

## WHAT YOU CAN SAFELY SAY TO A NON-MASON ABOUT MASONRY

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We can safely say anything about Freemasonry we want to except (A) the methods of our initiation, (B) our obligations, (C) some signs, (D) grips, and (E) passwords. We can tell about what we do, what we believe, and what we stand for.

Let us expand on what we could or would say to a non-mason. First, I would tell what a Mason is. A Mason or (Freemason) is a member of a Fraternity known as Masonry or (Freemasonry). A Fraternity is a group of men who join together because: a) there are things they want to do in the world, b) there are things they want to do inside their own minds, and c) they enjoy being together with men they like and respect.

### WHAT IS MASONRY

It is a voluntary association of men. It is a system of moral conduct. It is a way of life. It is the oldest fraternal society in the world. It is religious in its character. It teaches the Golden Rule. It seeks to make good men better men. It teaches morality through symbolism. It uses secret rites and ceremonies to instruct its members. It is based on a firm belief in the Fatherhood of God, the Brotherhood of Man and the Immortality of the Soul. Its purpose is to improve humanity as a whole, each Mason being charged to walk uprightly before God and man, and by his rectitude of conduct, encouraging others to conduct themselves in a like manner. Masons are proud to proclaim that their Fraternity consists of men bound by bonds of Brotherly Love and Affection, universally applicable throughout the world.

### WHAT MASONRY IS NOT

It is not an insurance or benefit society. It does not solicit members. It is neither a religion nor a creed. It is not organized for profit. It dictates to no man as to his beliefs, or his religion. It seeks no advantages for its members through business or politics. It is not a secret society, as it does not conceal its existence, membership or purposes.

### WHAT IS A LODGE

The word "Lodge" means both a group of masons meeting in some place and the room or building in which they meet. Masonic buildings are also called "temples" because much of the symbolism Masonry uses teach its lessons, and comes from the building of King Solomon's temple in the Holy Land.

## WHAT GOES ON IN A LODGE

Meetings include the business of the Lodge, degree work and discussions of charitable projects.

Teaching of Masonic symbolism and, of course, it's always good to spend time with friends who you can trust completely.

## WHAT DOES MASONRY DO

The most common answer is "we take good men and make them better." Some thought must be given on how this is done. Masonry teaches by symbolism and allegories, taught in degrees. A degree is a stage of level of membership. It is also a ceremony by which a man attains that level of membership. The ceremony is a sacred play, just like in a theatre. The theatre is the oldest known means of teaching, especially the teaching of abstract ideas. It was one of the principal means of instruction in the Middle Ages as well as in ancient Greece and Rome. Freemasonry borrows this technique of theatre to make its lessons more impressive, and to aid the candidate in forming the beginning of what it is hoped will be a long-term pattern of study and thought. Degrees, like the symbols and allegories, are designed to raise questions and help people think. Masonry believes that each man must think for himself, come to his own conclusions, and act according to his own honor and integrity.

But Masonry also does charitable work such as Shrine Hospitals and the different charities of the York and Scottish Rites. But you need to also tell what happens in your Blue Lodge, how Masons try to help and care for other Masons and their families. You need to give a personal example of this.

## WHY AM I A MASON

In my case this is an easy question to answer. I am a fourth generation Mason dating back on my father's side to my great grandfather who joined a lodge in 1860. But when you talk to a non-mason, you should tell why you personally became a Mason.

## WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A MASON

Being a member of the Brotherhood of masons means:

- a) Being a part of an unbroken tradition that stretches 500 years.
- b) Sharing the values of a nation's founding fathers.
- c) Becoming a better person while helping to improve the quality of life for others.
- d) Forming deep and lasting friendships.
- e) But most of all, being a Mason means the kind of deep satisfaction that comes only from selfless giving, from doing for others without asking or expecting anything in return.

## WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP

A person who wishes to join Masonry must be a man, sound in body and mind, who believes in a Supreme Being, is at least the minimum age required by the Grand Lodge of his state and has a good reputation.

## HOW DOES ONE BECOME A MASON

When a man decides he wants to be a mason, he simply asks a Mason for a petition or application.

## SUMMARY

You may say that Masonry accepts good men and endeavors to improve them. You may say that Masonry teaches moral lessons derived from the Old Testament literature through the use of symbols and allegory. You may say that masonry is a philosophical society of friends and brothers which strives to teach by degrees, high standards of personal living. You may explain to your friend that we are involved in charitable endeavors, and that each of the many different organizations within the Masonic family are dedicated to some worthy cause such as heart and cancer research, college scholarships, childhood language disorders, eye and diabetes research, and many others. These organizations collectively contribute in excess of two million dollars per day.

All of these things you can safely say to a non-mason about Freemasonry.

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