

Preparing a Man for his Initiation: A QuickStart Guide

This QuickStart Guide is for you if you are:

- The Proposer (or Second) of an Initiate
- The Personal Mentor appointed to work with a Proposer and his candidate
- A Secretary, DC or Tyler of a Lodge initiating a new member
- Any brother wishing to understand this part of the process

Should you refer to any other Resources?

- If you are a Proposer or Personal Mentor, you should also refer to 'Being a Personal Mentor - A Quickstart Guide'
- If you are a Proposer or Personal Mentor, you should also refer to 'Being a Proposer: A QuickStart Guide'
- Be sure to read 'The First Degree or Ceremony of Initiation – A QuickStart Guide' and have a copy ready to give the Initiate immediately after the ceremony.
- Also refer to 'The Members' Pathway' Step Guide for Step 7 'Preparing the candidate for Initiation.'

When will you find it useful?

- In the time running up to and immediately before the initiation of your candidate

Why do we need this QuickStart Guide?

This guide will help you to be a good and considerate Proposer and Personal Mentor of a candidate for Freemasonry and to start the man's masonic journey in the best possible way. Every Proposer must contribute to the care and support of his candidate even when, perhaps because of his lack of masonic experience, the Lodge Mentor has appointed a Personal Mentor to assist in that task. Every Proposer is, therefore, expected to be a Personal Mentor to his candidate, either acting alone or together with a more experienced mason. Below, you will find some suggestions on how to prepare and support your candidate at his Initiation.

The night of a new Mason's Initiation will be one of the most important in his masonic life. It is an occasion which we hope he will remember for all the right reasons. It is important to stress to your candidate that everyone present in the lodge room has experienced the same feelings, anxieties and uncertainties that he might be feeling and that for that reason they are all very much on his side.

One of the ways you can help to reduce stress and help him to enjoy the occasion is to get him properly prepared, both mentally and physically for the big day. Explain broadly what will happen, and what is expected of him. Do not spoil the ceremony or lessen its impact by telling him too much but leave him only pleasant surprises! The following will help you ensure that all goes smoothly:

Timing

Make him aware that the membership of the whole lodge and its visitors will be let down if he cannot attend or if he does not arrive on time. The Secretary, Treasurer and

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Junior Deacon may wish to spend time with him before the meeting so aim to get him there in good time. Giving him a lift to the venue is a nice touch and serves the dual purpose of ensuring he arrives in good time. Please don't leave him on his own at any stage of the evening including before the Lodge is opened.

Dress

Be sure to tell him well in advance of the meeting what he is expected to wear:

- A dark lounge suit (Black / Dark grey / Dark Blue)
- A long sleeved white shirt with no vest or t-shirt underneath
- A plain black tie. (If he buys, or is presented with, a Provincial or Grand Lodge tie he may wear it after his Initiation, but not before.)
- Black shoes (let him know that he will have to remove a shoe.)
- Tell him all about how he will be prepared for the ceremony.
- In particular, warn him about the removal of all money and metal from his person. This includes his belt and shoe buckles (not a good idea), cuff-links, watch, all jewelry including rings, and piercings.
- White gloves (after the ceremony on his return to the lodge).
- You should explain that the preparation is not meant to be demeaning in any way and that each element of it has symbolic meaning which you will be pleased to explain after the meeting.
- This explanation can be part of the first mentoring discussion after the meeting.

Toast to the Initiate

Remember that, as his Proposer, you are expected to propose the toast to the Initiate at the Festive Board. If you are unsure how to go about it, seek help from a more experienced Brother. In general, you should introduce your candidate to the Brethren and welcome him into the Lodge - do not be tempted to embarrass him with lurid stories from his past. Make sure that he is properly prepared to respond to this toast.

Response to the Toast to the Initiate

You must give the Candidate as much help and time as you can to prepare for his response to your toast. While brevity is appreciated there are certain things it ought to contain. The Province suggests that the opening should be limited to 'Worshipful Master, [VW Deputy ... , Assistant ... or just RW Provincial Grand Master, if present] Brother Wardens and Brethren'. He should include thanks to his Proposer and Seconder and perhaps to the Master and Brethren who conducted the ceremony. You should also warn him about Masonic fire even if you don't tell him about the detail beforehand. You may brief him completely. After all, why would we want to make a new Brother look and feel inept in front of the Lodge?

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Money

Make certain that he knows well in advance exactly how much money he must part with on the night for his initiation fees, and annual subscription. He will also need cash to pay for wine, drinks, and raffle. This first meal may be paid for by the Lodge, but he will usually buy his own wine, so you need to advise him how to go about ordering the wine and getting it to his table place before he parades in with the Master.

Regalia

You should advise him that he needs a black tie and a pair of white gloves for his Initiation. The Lodge will usually lend him an Entered Apprentice apron and later, a Fellowcraft's apron. When it is time for his Third Degree, he will need to purchase, in advance, a Master Mason's apron.

Welcome Pack

Make sure that the Welcome Pack has been prepared and can be presented to him at the end of the ceremony. The experience of the ceremony and the meeting can be very exciting, even overwhelming, but it remains intangible unless some material tokens are available to be taken home and considered later. The contents of the Welcome Pack can be used to start your mentoring relationship. The list of suggested items to be included is available from the Provincial Mentoring download page or from the Provincial Mentor.

General

Finally, make sure that he is made to feel really welcome. Never leave him on his own. Introduce him to any members of the Lodge that he doesn't already know. Make sure he knows the protocols to be followed at the Festive Board and where and with whom he will sit. Brief the Brother sitting on his right to speak to him when the Master is otherwise engaged. After the meeting find time to get together and talk through what happened and answer his questions. Use *'The First Degree or Ceremony of Initiation – A QuickStart Guide'* and the resources available from the Mentors' Download page on the Provincial web site to start your mentoring relationship.