

THE MEMBERS' PATHWAY

STEP 3: APPROACHING PROSPECTIVE CANDIDATES

STEP GUIDE

This Step provides guidance to help Lodge members approach prospective candidates and respond to their questions. It follows that in which Lodge members identify prospective candidates who they believe could be approached about Freemasonry. It is the first Step in the Pathway in which an individual non-Mason will have been contacted. *Note: the approach is not an invitation to join; the candidate must still ask to become a Freemason and acceptance will depend upon his suitability.*

[An Introduction to the Members' Pathway](#) explains the Member's Pathway and how this Step fits within its framework.

GUIDANCE FOR LODGE MEMBERS

- All activities in this Step should comply with the [edicts of the Grand Lodge](#).
- Some Freemasons are uncertain about discussing Freemasonry with non-members. In many cases they don't know:
 - what they can say about the Craft, or
 - what they can do to ensure that any approach is not misunderstood or considered as inappropriate solicitation of members.
- To clarify, a Freemason is free to disclose his membership to anyone on any occasion, providing it would not seem that he is seeking personal or business advantage in doing so.
- A Freemason is free to discuss any aspect of Freemasonry, and their experience of it, that he wishes, providing he does not breach his obligation to keep the traditional modes of recognition private and providing he does not describe the detail of our ceremonies.
- Those who make the initial approach to a non-member, to ascertain their interest in Freemasonry, may well become that person's proposer or seconder. However, this is not always the case.
- Before mentioning Freemasonry to anyone else, create a succinct "[personal statement](#)" about the Craft and your experience of it and have it ready for those occasions when it might come up in conversation.
- Be ready to discuss Freemasonry if it comes up in conversation, by drawing on your own experiences and what you enjoy about it.
- Be willing to give honest and personal answers to questions.
- Identify opportunities when you might be able to mention Freemasonry to the person you have in mind as a prospective candidate.
- The following conditions create good opportunities for mentioning Freemasonry:
 - When both parties are relaxed and paying attention to each other
 - When there has already been an exchange of personal information
 - When there is likely to be time to have a conversation without risk of early interruption.
- Open the discussion by asking, "What do you know about Freemasonry?"
- Be ready for both positive and negative responses, including incredulity or even ridicule.
- If it is apparent that the other person has no interest at all they will tend to drop the matter, change the subject or state that they do not want to discuss the topic.
- In such instances accept this outcome and move on to discuss something else.

- If the other person engages with the topic, draw on your personal statement to continue the conversation.
- Among other things you could mention:
 - Your motives for joining.
 - What you enjoy about Freemasonry.
 - Details of your own Lodge(s).
 - Your family's involvement in Freemasonry.
- As each member's experience of Freemasonry is different and personal to them, no one else's will be the same as yours. Similarly, a person's motives for joining and his interests within the Craft may be very different from yours and those of other members.
- It is worth speaking from a personal point of view and making it clear that different people derive different types of satisfaction from Freemasonry. This will come across as sincerity and conviction.
- The document "[What can we discuss](#)" offers further guidance on discussing Freemasonry with non-Masons.
- Draw from material held on Solomon, UGLE's online repository of learning materials, and especially the section, "Seek & learn: About Freemasonry", to help you answer questions.
- If Freemasonry has not featured in the other person's life he may not want to spend a great deal of time on the subject initially. It is unlikely that the first discussion will be in any real depth.
- He might prefer to carry on when he has thought it over and even done some initial personal research.
- End the conversation by giving him something physical, such as a leaflet or a card containing website or contact details, and by agreeing to discuss the issue further if and when he is ready to do so. A Lodge Profile (see Step 1) can easily be used as the basis for a suitable leaflet.
- If he does not mention the subject of Freemasonry again for some time, it is acceptable, as per the edict from the Grand Lodge, to raise it on one more occasion.
- This might come in the form of an invitation to attend a Lodge social event or "[White table](#)" meeting. These also create opportunities to involve the prospective candidate's partner and other family members, for them to meet other members, to visit Freemasonry premises and to ask questions and engage in discussions about Freemasonry.
- More detailed and personal discussions are likely to follow before anyone might wish to commit to applying to join the Lodge.
- The Freemason conducting these discussions might wish to have ready access to other resources.
- One particularly useful text that can be helpful at this time is the words of the "[Charge to the Initiate](#)". On 10th June 2015, in his address to the Quarterly Communication of Grand Lodge, the Pro Grand Master, MW Bro. Peter Lowndes, said:

"I believe there are certain passages [in our ritual] that we should be proud to show to non-members, most particularly members of our families, and top of my list would be the Charge to the Initiate."
- Once the prospective candidate has indicated that he is interested in becoming a Freemason then the guidance and techniques covered in Step 5 can be followed, to prepare him for interview.

Note: For ease of reading, throughout the Members' Pathway we refer to Provinces. All references to Provinces should be taken to apply equally to Metropolitan and District Grand Lodges / Chapters.

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