

# *On The Level*

**Guide to a successful  
Masonic information program**



Masons of California





# On The Level

✓ **On The Level** information program builds awareness and candidates

Staging an *On The Level* Masonic information program will benefit a lodge in several important ways:

- Raise awareness in the community
- Attract potential new members
- Promote member involvement

It also provides the opportunity to do two important things:

- Correct misconceptions about Masonry
- Dispel the myth of secrecy by inviting non-Masons to the lodge

The bottom line is that Masonic information programs work. When planned and executed well, they can become the lifeblood of the lodge because being “on the level” with guests builds membership.



# Planning

## and managing a successful Masonic information program

### ✓ Plan ahead

A Masonic information program is a special event that requires thorough advance planning.

- At a minimum, a three-month lead time is required for a successful event.
- Schedule a date while the lodge's calendar is being set for the year.
- Other lodge activities can build momentum for the Masonic information program. Schedule this program for about a month after another public event, such as a fair, teacher recognition dinner, or scholarship awards. Publicize the upcoming *On The Level* program and take the names and contact information for those interested in receiving an invitation.
- Establish a budget for the program that includes both publicity and the costs for staging the event.
- Appoint a chairman for the event and assign at least three members to the committee.
- The chairman and his committee should thoroughly review this guide and become familiar with the presentation, script, and other tools included in this kit.
- As a way of promoting and generating enthusiasm for the event, a committee report should be made at each stated meeting prior to the event.

### ✓ Achieving a great turnout

Members are the key to successful attendance. Those who attend generally are the men personally invited by a Mason. Encourage lodge members to invite one or two prospective members and their families.

Stress the importance of extending the invitation to wives and family of both Masons and non-Masons.

Remind members that we may ask a man if he has considered membership in the fraternity, if he would like to have more information to help him make such a decision, and if he has questions about Masonry. An invitation to attend an *On The Level* program should let the potential member know that the program will include specific information about the fraternity and that his questions will be answered.

It is important that the members either drive their guests to the event or meet them at the door so they are comfortable as visitors to the lodge.

If your guest list includes men with young children, plan a way to accommodate children during the event so that both parents can attend.

### Tip for Success!

Oceanside - San Dieguito Lodge No. 381 holds monthly information nights. They have initiated 20 members in less than two years as a direct result.



# Publicity

- ✓ Promoting the event within the lodge is the most important and beneficial method of ensuring a good attendance. Publicity should begin as soon as the date is selected and be repeated until the event.

Encourage members to talk about the event – word of mouth is the best advertising – and invite prospective members and their families. A personal invitation from a member will get the best response.

Extend an invitation to the men on the lodge's prospective member list developed in the *Pass It On* program.

In addition, use other tools available to the lodge to extend an invitation and advertise the event:

- Post an invitation or announcement on the lodge website
- Publicize in *Trestleboard*
- Post on lodge activity calendar
- Post an invitation on the exterior of the lodge building
- Place an announcement/invitation in local newspaper (see **USE THE TOOLS ON THE CD**)
- Mail or e-mail invitations to members and encourage them to send to their guests (see **USE THE TOOLS ON THE CD**)
- Place an ad on public access TV

## **USE THE TOOLS ON THE CD**

### **Postcard invitation**

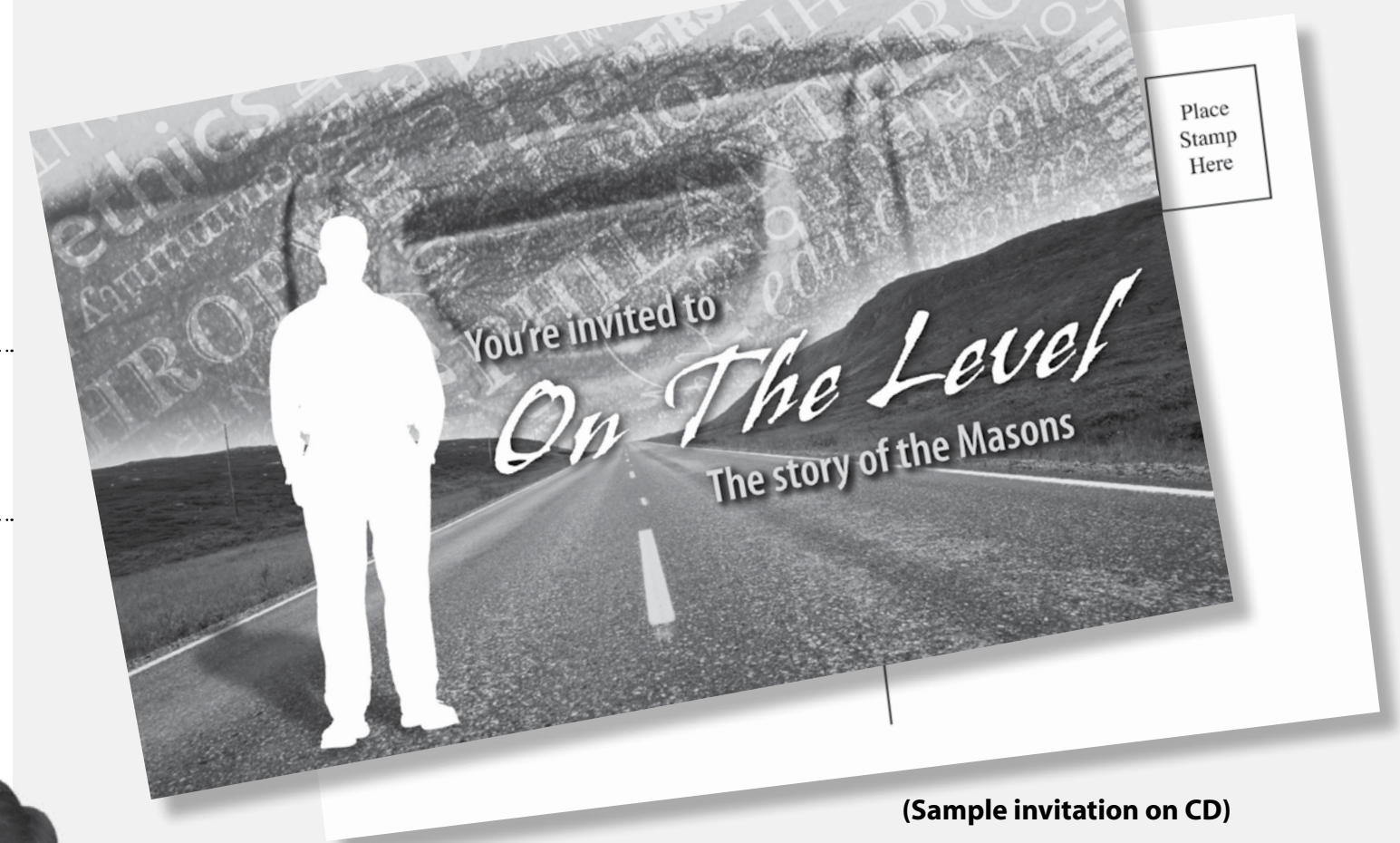
Fill in the variables on the postcard invitation template found on the CD, print it, and mail. (See sample, page 7.)

### **Press release**

Fill in the variables on the sample press release found on the CD and print out on lodge letterhead. E-mail, fax, or deliver to newspapers. (See sample, page 7.)

### **Flyer/advertisement**

Fill in the variables on the flyer/advertisement template found on the CD and use as a flyer, newspaper ad, post to lodge website, or fold and mail.



**(Sample invitation on CD)**

## **(Sample press release on CD)**

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: (mo/day/yr)

Contact: (lodge secretary name, phone, e-mail address)

*(Lodge name) Masonic lodge community open house*

(CITY), CA – The community is invited to *On The Level*, a Masonic information program and open house at the (lodge name) Masonic lodge (street address) on (day of week and date) at (time).

The event is open to men and their families who would like to know more about Masonry or who are interested in membership. (If food will be served, insert specific information.)

For reservations, go to (lodge website) e-mail (e-mail address) or call (phone number).

General information about the Masons of California is available at [freemason.org](http://freemason.org).







### Tip for Success!

At the Hollywood-West Valley Lodge No. 355 annual information night, the wife of a past master shares her perspective of the craft and addresses the ladies about their involvement with the lodge.

# A program that fits your guests

✓ The Masonic information program is an opportunity to invite the public into the lodge and correct misconceptions about the fraternity.

The overall message should be “Freemasonry...who we are and what we do.” To make the message more appealing to your guests, determine what about your lodge has the most interest to potential members in your community. It could be a historical perspective, focus on family, community involvement programs, or some other aspect of the lodge that is interesting. Adapt the program to fit these interests.

Consider your potential members’ needs when determining when to hold the program. Evenings work for some, others prefer weekend events. If you hold more than one Masonic information program a year, schedule one for an evening and one for a weekend day, then compare attendance.

The event works best when the program is simple, with a tight focus. Remember, most of the guests know very little about the fraternity and can easily be overwhelmed with jargon or bored with details. Here are some tips to keep your guests tuned to the message:

- Use the *On The Level* PowerPoint and script to deliver the overall message about Masonry.
- If the presentation is held in the lodge room, don’t take time explaining the stations, altar, officers’ jewels, and other regalia.
- Use terms attendees can relate to, keeping Masonic jargon to a minimum.
- To keep the program succinct, only take the time to introduce the master. Officers, past masters, or dignitaries should circulate during the social time and introduce themselves one-on-one.
- Stick to information about Masonry in general; don’t take too much time explaining concordant bodies.
- Limit the total presentation to 30 minutes or risk losing the audience’s attention.
- Respect your guests’ time and keep the event on schedule.



# Using the *On The Level* presentation and script

- ✓ Hold the presentation portion of the program in the room that is most conducive to projecting the *On The Level* presentation on either a screen or a wall and that will accommodate seating for all attendees.

Having the presentation in the lodge room helps to dispel perceptions of secrecy, particularly if a very brief explanation of the room arrangement is given.

The *On The Level* presentation has been thoughtfully designed to provide those not familiar with Masonry a positive yet succinct overview of who we are and what we value. Depending on the speed of the narration, the presentation will take between 20 and 25 minutes.

Appoint the most knowledgeable and gifted speaker among the lodge members to narrate the *On The Level* presentation using the accompanying script. Ask another member to operate the projector to assure it is in sync with the narration.

The narrator is to ask for guest questions at the end of the presentation. Be prepared in case no one responds by having one or two members ready to ask questions. Two suggested questions are:

- Why is the leader of the lodge called worshipful master?
- Where is the national treasure?

## USE THE TOOLS ON THE CD

### Customize the PowerPoint for your lodge by doing the following:

- Upload and save the PowerPoint on the CD to a computer.
- Add bullet-point text to the two screens titled as follows:
  - ▶ Local philanthropic and community programs (slide 7)
  - ▶ History of the lodge (slide 10)
- Save the presentation to a laptop for projection.

### Customize the script for your lodge by doing the following:

- Upload and save the script document found on the CD to a computer.
- On your saved copy
  - ▶ Insert brief remarks about your lodge's philanthropic, community service, social, and family programs on page 4.
  - ▶ Insert lodge name, year founded, and any interesting facts about the lodge and its ties to the community, page 5.
  - ▶ Insert lodge's application fee, page 10.

### Tip for Success!

In San Diego County, a Masonic information program is held twice a year at the Scottish Rite Center for all area lodges and their prospective members and families.



# The Logistics

✓ Be prepared for your guests

- Make sure the lodge building is clean inside and out and well-lit.
- Request reservations so you know how many to expect.
- Station enough members at the door to greet the number of guests you anticipate.
- If a guest arrives unaccompanied by a member, assign a brother to be the guest's host for the evening.
- Prepare name tags from the reservation list and give them to the potential members and their families when they arrive.
- Prepare name tags for members that are distinctly different from the guests', such as color.
- Position a table at the door with Masonic literature for guests to pick up.

## Tip for Success!

Don't put the membership information/application packet on the literature table. Assign distribution to a few members stationed near the door who can hand packets to guests who request them as they leave.

Your guests will want printed information about Masonry that they can read later. Putting too many brochures and flyers out on a table is confusing and unfocused. In this case, less is more. Three pieces contain all the information a guest needs at this point.

Order a supply from the Grand Lodge supply room:

- Wallet brochure
- Recent issues of California Freemason magazine
- Member information/application packet

You will need the following equipment for the event:

- Lapel-clip microphone for presenter
- Laptop for projecting *On The Level* presentation
- Projector
- Screen or blank wall
- Handheld microphone for taking audience questions (if room is large)
- Two sets of name tags – one for non-masons' and their families, one for members and their families

## TOOLS TO USE

The wallet brochure provides an overview of Masonry.

- Fill in area on back with phone number or e-mail of lodge membership development contact.

The membership information/application packet contains a brochure and an application.

- Write your lodge name and number at the top of the application. On the reverse, in the box at the bottom, write the fees for degrees (total of all three) and the total payment required with submission of the application.

## THE FOOD OPTION

If space and budget permit, consider serving food either before or after the presentation. It can be a sit-down multi-course meal, a BBQ, a pizza party, or some other theme appropriate for your lodge and the community. An alternative is to serve appetizers and beverages.

The decision about when to serve food (before or after the presentation) is determined by what will work best for your lodge and guests. Some lodges serve a sit-down dinner first and save dessert for after the presentation. Other lodges find that giving the presentation first, and then serving food works well.

Members of Eastern Star and the youth orders could assist in preparing and serving the food, extending the involvement of the Masonic family in your community.

If a meal is served, request that officers sit at separate tables so they are dispersed and mingling with as many guests as possible.



# Sample schedule

**for a 6:00 p.m. start. All times and activities are suggestions.**

## **With dinner**

- 6:00 Social time; officers and members circulate among guests
  - 6:20 Assemble in dining room
  - 6:30 Emcee introduces self and master
    - Invocation
    - Pledge of Allegiance
  - 6:45 Serve dinner
  - 7:15 Members who brought guests introduce themselves and their guests  
(If there are a large number of guests, just acknowledge and welcome them)
  - 7:20 Break; reconvene in lodge room
  - 7:30 Presentation
  - 8:00 Questions and answers
  - 8:15 Tour of lodge
  - 8:30 Serve dessert; encourage conversations to continue
- Adjourn when appropriate

## **With appetizers and dessert**

- 6:00 Assemble in room set up with food and some chairs
    - Social time; officers and members circulate among guests
  - 6:30 Move to lodge room
    - Emcee introduces self and master
    - Members who brought guests introduce themselves and their guests  
(If there are a large number of guests, just acknowledge and welcome them)
  - 7:00 Presentation
  - 7:30 Questions and answers
  - 7:45 Tour of lodge
  - 8:00 Serve dessert; encourage conversations to continue
- Adjourn when appropriate





