

### Is Freemasonry an international order?

Freemasonry exist throughout the free world, however, each Grand Lodge is sovereign and independent in its own jurisdiction. While they follow the basic principals of the fraternity, each Grand Lodge may have a different way of passing them on to their membership. There is no international governing body of Freemasonry.

### Are women allowed to be members?

Membership in the fraternity is restricted to men. When Freemasonry was first founded, all the early stone masons were men, as women held a different position in society at that time.

### Are members required to wear regalia?

Wearing regalia is a historical and symbolic aid. Like a uniform, it designates its membership as a symbol of service, brotherly love and positions of authority.

### How many degrees are in Freemasonry?

Ancient craft masonry consist of the first three degrees known as the "Blue Lodge." They are the Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft, and Master Mason Degrees. There are many other Masonic organizations that add to the basis of the craft and further expound on illustrating the principles of good moral character and education. Some of these degrees are numerically superior to the third degree, but this does not affect the fact that they are additional and in no way superior to that of the "Blue Lodge."

### How much does it cost to be a Freemason?

Members pay annual dues which covers the cost of his membership and administrative cost of the Lodge. These dues are determined by the subordinate Lodge and range from \$30-\$150. Members are also encouraged to give to charity.

## History of Freemasonry

No one knows for certain how old the Masonic Fraternity might be. Scholars do ,however, understand that it arose from stonemasons' guilds throughout the 13th-15th Centuries. The language and symbols used in Freemasonry's rituals can be traced back to this era.

In 1717, four local lodges in London, met to establish the first Grand Lodge of England. Records since this time have been more complete. Over the next few hundred years, Freemasonry spread throughout Europe and the American colonies. Over time Freemasonry has spread to a world-wide organization promoting social fellowship among its members and encouraging personal reflection and educational growth. Its membership has included notable brethren such as George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, John Hancock, Andrew Jackson, and Paul Revere

The Grand Lodge of Mississippi, F. & A. M., was founded in 1818, although the first Masonic Lodges existed while Mississippi was still in its territorial state. Since this time, Freemasonry has grown to stretch over the entire State of Mississippi, including over 200 subordinate lodges and over 15,000 members.

For more information contact us or visit our website at

[www.msgrandlodge.org](http://www.msgrandlodge.org)

# The Secrets of Freemasonry



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Free & Accepted Masons

## What Is Freemasonry?

Freemasonry is the world's largest secular, fraternal and charitable organization. It teaches moral lessons and self-knowledge through participation in a progression of allegorical and meaningful ceremonies.

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## Is Freemasonry a “secret” society?

No! However, like those of many groups, our lodge meetings are private and only open to our membership. The goals and aims of Freemasonry are available to the public. Meeting places and times are published and are known, and in many cases our buildings are used by local community groups for activities other than Freemasonry. Our membership is encouraged to openly speak about the fraternity.

## What are the Secrets of Freemasonry?

The secrets of Freemasonry are the traditional modes of recognition, which are not used as a means of discrimination, but solely as a test of membership. These recognitions apply to members who are visiting a lodge where they may not be known.

## What happens inside of a Lodge meeting?

Our meetings are divided into two categories. As in any association, there is a certain amount of administrative procedures— minutes of the preceding meeting, motions and resolutions, finances, election of officers, news and correspondence. These “Stated” meetings are held once a month to conduct business of the Lodge. “Special” meetings are held at the discretion of the Worshipful Master, for the purpose of admitting new members, annual installations of officers, or even Masonic funeral services.

## What is the ritual?

The ritual is a shared experience which binds our membership together. It uses aspects of allegory, drama and symbolism to impress on the candidate the principles and teachings of good moral character and brotherly love.

## Do Freemasons take an oath or obligation?

Yes. Candidates take a solemn oath or obligation concerning their conduct while in Lodge and in society. Each member makes a promise to keep confidential the traditional modes of recognition. Freemasons swear no allegiances to their fellow brethren or to Freemasonry, but rather promise to support each other in their time of need, only if that support does not conflict with their duty to God, country, family, or their selves.

## Are Freemasons expected to give preference to other Masons at the expense of non-members? (i.e. jobs, promotions, contracts, etc...)

No. On entering into the bonds of the fraternity, each candidate must state that he expects no material gain from his membership. The candidate is also reminded throughout various parts of the ceremonies that using his membership for material gain would be a misuse of the fraternal relationship. The Book of Constitutions, often presented to the new members, contains rules and guidelines governing the abuse of membership which could result in his suspension or expulsion from the fraternity.

## Do Masons only look after one another?

No. Freemasonry has always been involved in charitable activities. We provide support not only for widows and orphans of Freemasons, but also for many others inside of our communities. Local Lodges are encouraged to give support to its local causes.

## What role does the Holy Bible play in a Lodge?

To our members the Holy Bible is The Volume of Sacred Laws. Masonry is strictly non-sectarian and open to men of different faith who express a belief in a Supreme Being, the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and who also possess good moral character. Freemasonry does not instruct its membership in what their religious beliefs should be, nor does it offer any means of salvation. Freemasonry deals in the relationship of men to men. Religion deals in man's relationship to God.

## Why do some churches dislike Freemasonry?

Certain elements within church organizations have misunderstood Freemasonry's secular rituals with religious liturgy. Although some organizations have criticized the fraternity, Freemasonry has always admonished its membership to seek active participation in their own religion.

## What part does Freemasonry play in politics?

Each member is entitled to his own belief on politics and state policy. Freemasonry will never express a view on either, as the discussion of politics within Masonic meetings is strictly prohibited. Any Masonic group claiming involvement in political matters are not recognized to be following the fundamental principles of Freemasonry.

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