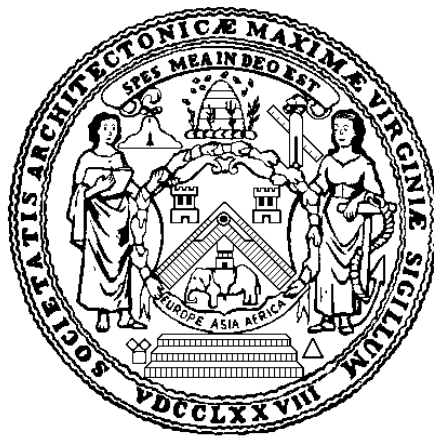


# Entered Apprentice

## *Educational Proficiency Manual*



**Grand Lodge of Virginia  
A.F. & A.M.  
2007**





**Grand Lodge of Virginia, AF&AM**  
**Entered Apprentice**  
*Educational Proficiency Manual*

There is nothing in this pamphlet that is in any way restricted. However it is NOT intended to be given to the candidate. This material is to be used as a study guide. The information contained herein is to be covered in a conversational discussion-type setting either with individual candidates or in a group. This approach is designed to encourage and stimulate thinking, and promote discussion about Freemasonry and who and what we are, what we stand for, what we teach and try to inculcate, and why. Ever remembering the only real purpose of our Fraternity is to Make Good Men Better.

**Grand Lodge of Virginia AF&AM**  
**2007**



**Grand Lodge of Virginia AF&AM**  
**Entered Apprentice**  
*Educational Proficiency Manual*

*There is esoteric work associated with this degree that has been handed down mouth to ear over the generations and is not proper to be written in this manual. You will be assigned a Mentor or Catechism instructor to teach you this work as well as to assist you with the information in this manual.*

***Part I: The Ritual of the Degree***

**EA-R1    What does the term, Entered Apprentice (EA) mean?**

Entered Apprentice refers to someone who has received the First Degree in Masonry. It also refers back to the days when builders had beginners who were learning their work, and called them apprentices. Often these were young men of good reputation who were willing to listen and learn. It is said that apprentices were brought into Lodges of builders to be evaluated by the members, and if they were accepted, they were considered to be Entered Apprentices in the Lodge and allowed to learn the Craft.

## **EA-R2 Why do we use this term now?**

Freemasonry uses many terms that refer to the days of the operative Masons who actually built the cathedrals and other large buildings in Europe. The Entered Apprentice in Masonic Lodges today, who has just begun his instruction in Freemasonry, symbolically represents the Entered Apprentice of those times.

## **EA-R3 What happens to Entered Apprentices?**

In the past, the builders' apprentices were expected to learn the building craft and if they did that successfully, they were advanced. Similarly in our Lodges today, if the Entered Apprentice learns what he is required about Freemasonry, he will advance to the Degree of Fellowcraft.

## **EA-R4 What is expected of Entered Apprentices today?**

Entered Apprentices are expected to abide by the rules of Freemasonry, show humility in their speech and actions, and industriousness in learning more about our Craft.

## **EA-R5 Where is a man first prepared to be made a Mason?**

We say he is prepared in his heart, because becoming a Mason involves a commitment to

become a better person, and to help to make the world a better place. The heart, figuratively speaking, is the seat of man's affections and desires. Freemasonry is about building better character, so the first thing anyone must do to become a Mason is to be prepared in his heart to become a better person.

**EA-R6    How are Entered Apprentices then prepared?**

They are said to be duly and truly prepared. This phrase means wearing special garments furnished by the Lodge to emphasize our concern with the equality of all candidates, and our interest in a man's internal qualities rather than his wealth or ability to afford expensive clothing. Duly and truly prepared also means not having certain items on your person, and wearing certain other items in a prescribed way, as Masons have done over the years.

**EA-R7    Why are these things done?**

Most of the lessons of Freemasonry are taught by the use of symbols. Many of the ways in which candidates are prepared for their degrees, and all of what goes on during the conferral of the degree is meant to symbolize how to be a better person and how to help others to become better people.

## **EA-R8    What is a hoodwink?**

It is a blindfold and a symbol of darkness denoting the fact that the candidate has not yet had the opportunity to learn the lessons of Freemasonry. The darkness of the hoodwink is displaced by the light of understanding when the candidate learns the lessons of Freemasonry.

## **EA-R9    What is meant by the length of your cable tow?**

A cable tow is a strong rope or cable that was used to lift a heavy object or tow a ship. It was said to be a league or three miles in length. We use it as a symbol of our Masonic obligation to each other. It symbolizes the tie that binds every Mason to every other Mason, and it is as long and as strong as each Mason determines it to be, given his reasonable ability to help or respond. It also is a symbol of the external restraints that are placed upon all of us during our lives, and above which we should try to rise.

## **EA-R10   What happens in the Entered Apprentice Degree at the entrance of the Lodge?**

Actions are taken by or on behalf of the candidate, questions are asked and specific answers are required. All of this is part of a solemn process — your initiation into Freemasonry, and is designed to



teach you, the new Mason, some of the principles of our Order.

**EA-R11 What is the meaning of the manner in which a man is received when he enters a Lodge in the Entered Apprentice Degree?**

When the Senior Deacon stops the candidate just after he enters the Lodge, a certain ceremony is performed that symbolically, never physically, shows the significance of the entrance into the Lodge. This symbolizes the importance of the obligations to which he will shortly assent. It also reminds each man that every act has consequences, rewards, or penalties.

**EA-R12 Why does Masonry ask in whom a candidate puts his trust?**

A fundamental principle of Freemasonry is a belief in God. It is necessary, in order to become a Mason, for each candidate to state that he puts his trust in a Supreme Being. However, no Mason is to ask any further questions about any other Mason's religious beliefs. Freemasonry respects each man's religious beliefs, whether he is Christian, Jewish, Moslem, Hindu, Buddhist, or other religious faith.

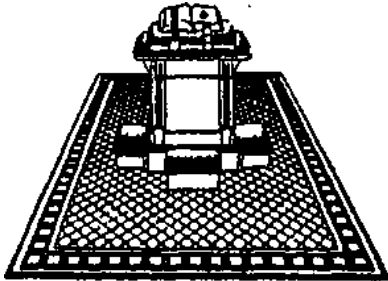
### **EA-R13 Why are Lodges dedicated to the Holy Saints John?**

Because of the religious traditions in this country when Freemasonry was established in Virginia, Lodges are said to be dedicated to the Holy Saints John: Saint John the Baptist, representing morality, and Saint John the Evangelist, representing love. These are two important principles of Freemasonry and Masons are to live their lives within the bounds of the precepts of love and morality. In England, for example, Lodges are now dedicated to King Solomon. Some Grand Lodges have selected other personages who represent important precepts of Freemasonry.

### **EA-R14 What is the Masonic significance of the East?**

The place in the Lodge where the Worshipful Master, the presiding officer, sits is symbolically called the “East,” even if it is not actually the East, because of the way the Lodge room is said to be situated. Because the sun rises in the East, and in reference to the East wind that led Moses through the Red Sea, the East is symbolically a place of light and learning. The Senior Warden sits in the “West” and the Junior Warden in the “South.” No officer of the Lodge sits in the North, which symbolically is considered a place of darkness in the Lodge.

### **EA-R15 What is the purpose of an altar in the Lodge?**



The altar with the Holy Bible is the place where candidates are brought to light. We place the Bible in the center of the Lodge to represent that it should be at the center of our lives. We place the Square and the Compasses on the Bible to symbolize the spiritual and intellectual truths of Freemasonry and together they are called the Three Great Lights in Masonry. If a candidate worships using a different Holy book, that book is placed on the altar in addition to the Holy Bible when he receives the Degree.

### **EA-R16 What do the Square and Compasses represent?**

They have many symbolic meanings in Freemasonry and, when placed together, they form the most common symbol of Freemasonry itself. The Square symbolizes morality, truthfulness, and honesty. The Compasses symbolize self-restraint, skill and knowledge.

### **EA-R17 What are the three Lesser Lights in Masonry?**

They are the Sun, Moon, and Worshipful Master, and are represented by three lights placed in the East, West, and South around the altar. No lights

are placed in the North because sun or moonlight did not shine on the North side of King Solomon's Temple. These lights also symbolize that the Worshipful Master should rule and govern his Lodge as reliably and orderly as the Sun and Moon rule and govern the day and night.

**EA-R18 What does a Lodge represent, and what is its form?**

The Lodge is said to represent the world. In another sense, it represents the universality of Freemasonry because its form is said to be an oblong square that extends from East to West and between North and South, as high as from earth to Heaven, and as deep as from its surface to its center. These dimensions signify how extensive a Mason's charity should be.

**EA-R19 What is a Masonic obligation?**

Obligation is another word for oath, affirmation, or promise. In the Masonic Degrees, candidates are asked if they will agree to be obligated to undertake certain duties such as helping their fellow Masons and fellow humans. This is a very solemn and important part of each degree. It is an outward sign of a man's sincerity. If a man violates any of his promises, especially a Masonic obligation, other Masons consider him to be a man without honor and unworthy of respect.

**EA-R20 What are the physical penalties included in the Masonic obligations?**

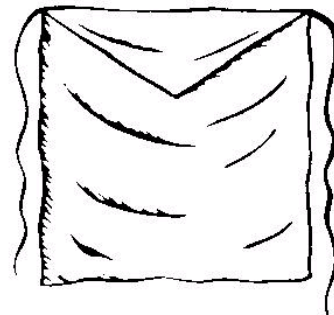
Centuries ago, to show how serious they were when they swore to do certain things, people stated that if they did not keep their promise, they hoped they would die or suffer certain penalties. As a matter of tradition, Masonic obligations retain such statements, but they are purely symbolic.

**EA-R21 What happens if a man violates any of his Masonic obligations?**

He might be reprimanded, suspended, or expelled from Freemasonry, and his former Masonic Brethren might consider him disgraced. No man is ever to be harmed, physically or mentally, by Freemasons, even if he has violated his Masonic obligations.

**EA-R22 What is the purpose of the Masonic apron?**

The Masonic apron has many symbolic meanings. The apron symbolically points to man's physical and spiritual nature. Historically, builders' apprentices wore aprons to protect their clothing. Masons today wear their aprons to symbolize the fact that they are trying to protect their characters and improve themselves. The apron was a symbol that the wearer owed service to another, and symbolizes today that



Freemasons owe a duty to help their fellow man. The white color of the apron symbolizes innocence and purity, characteristics of a man's nature for which we should strive. Masons hold that the Masonic apron is more honorable than any other decoration they could receive, because of the importance of the lessons it teaches about character building.

### **EA-R23 What is the Rite of Destitution?**

When candidates are brought into the Lodge, they are asked to remove all metals or minerals on their person, in accordance with ancient practices during initiation. In modern Lodges, it teaches Masons that they should not bring anything into the Lodge which might disturb peace and harmony, and that we are all viewed as equals in the Lodge, regardless of our wealth or position in society. Symbolically, it also teaches that every man should leave his passions and prejudices outside the Lodge, and work to eliminate prejudices and to restrain passion. The Rite of Destitution also teaches that even if a man is not wealthy, he still should try to help those who are less fortunate than he. Charity is one of the most important lessons of Freemasonry.

### **EA-R24 Why are Entered Apprentices placed in the northeast corner of the Lodge?**

Traditionally, the foundation of a building, the place where construction begins, is called the northeast corner. An Entered Apprentice is considered to be

starting the process of building his Temple, or character, so he is placed in the northeast corner at the start of his Masonic journey. It symbolizes that he has left the darkness of his previous experiences, and is moving toward more light, or knowledge, symbolized by the East and stands midway between the symbolic darkness of the North and the light of the East.

### **EA-R25 What are the Working Tools of an Entered Apprentice?**

The Working Tools are the 24-inch Gauge and Common Gavel. These tools were used by the operative builders to construct their works, but in Freemasonry they are said to have more noble symbolic meanings. The 24-inch Gauge is to teach us to use the hours of the day for important purposes, improving our lives and the lives of those around us. The Common Gavel is to be used symbolically to smooth out the rough spots in our characters so we can become better people, by building our own moral edifice, which is our character.

### **EA-R26 Why is there a lecture at the end of the Degree?**

The lecture more clearly conveys the lessons and meanings of the degree, which might not be obvious.

### **EA-R27 What are the rights of an Entered Apprentice in Masonry?**

Entered Apprentices can attend Entered Apprentice Lodge meetings and have the right, indeed the duty, to learn more about Freemasonry and become proficient in the Entered Apprentice Degree. When an Entered Apprentice has learned what is required of him, he can receive the Fellowcraft, or second Degree in Masonry. He is not entitled to any other rights and benefits of Freemasonry.

### **EA-R28 What does tiling mean?**

This word indicates the closing of the Lodge door and keeping the meeting private to all except Masons. The Lodge officer who stands just outside the door to permit only Masons to enter, is called the Tiler. This term is sometimes spelled Tyler.

### **EA-R29 What are the requirements to be an Entered Apprentice?**

A man must come to Freemasonry of his own free will and accord. This means that he has not been coerced to join, and wants to be a Mason to better his own character. Becoming a Mason should be something you want and not what someone else wants for you. You should be of good moral character, respected in your community, and at least 18 years old. Two Masons must sign your petition.



**EA-R30 Why are all candidates dressed in the same manner for the Degree?**

This is to signify that it is the internal and not the external qualities of a man that Masonry regards.

**EA-R31 What pillars support our institution?**

The three great pillars that support our institution are wisdom, strength and beauty: wisdom to plan, strength to support, and beauty to adorn what we do.

**EA-R32 What do the three principal rounds of Jacob's ladder represent?**

They represent Faith, Hope and Charity, and extend from Earth to Heaven. The greatest of these is Charity because Faith may be lost in sight, Hope ends in fruition, but Charity extends beyond the grave.

**EA-R33 What is the furniture of a Lodge?**

The Holy Bible, Square and Compasses. The Bible symbolizes our devotion to God, the Square represents the Master and symbolizes the moral conduct expected of the Worshipful Master and the Brethren. The Compasses symbolizes the need to restrain our passions and desires.

### **EA-R34 What are the Ornaments of a Lodge?**

These are the Mosaic Pavement, indented Tessel, and Blazing Star. The Mosaic Pavement represents the ground floor of King Solomon's Temple, and its black and white pattern indicates that life is checkered with good and evil. The indented Tessel that surrounded the pavement reminds us of the manifold blessings and comforts that support us. Deity is symbolically represented by the Blazing Star.

### **EA-R35 What are the three immovable jewels of a Lodge?**

We use the term, "jewel," to symbolize what is precious to Freemasonry. The three immovable jewels are the Square, Level and Plumb. The Square is worn by the Master, and teaches morality. The Level is worn by the Senior Warden, and teaches equality. The Plumb is worn by the Junior Warden, and teaches rectitude of life. They are called immovable because these three "stationed" officers generally do not leave their assigned positions in the East, West, and South.

### **EA-R36 What are the three movable jewels of a Lodge?**

The movable jewels are the rough Ashlar, the perfect Ashlar, and the Trestle Board. A rough Ashlar is a rough stone reminding us of our

roughness by nature. The perfect Ashlar is one that has been shaped and polished, reminding us of what we hope to become by education, our own endeavors, and the blessing of God. In ancient times, the Trestle Board was used by the Master workman to draw his designs for constructing buildings. Today we refer to the Holy Bible as our Trestle Board, because it contains the designs to build our life. We also call the bulletin sent by the Worshipful Master to the members of the Lodge the Trestle Board.

**EA-R37 Why are Lodges situated East and West?**

King Solomon's Temple was situated East and West to remind us of the East wind that led Moses safely through the Red Sea into the wilderness and also to receive the first rays of the rising sun. Our Lodges are situated East and West in commemoration of King Solomon's Temple.

**EA-R38 What is the first lesson you were taught in Freemasonry?**

You were taught to be a good man and true. In this context, think about the ritual just before entering the Lodge for the first time and immediately after you entered.

**EA-R39 What is the symbolism of chalk, charcoal and clay?**

Entered Apprentices are to engage in learning about Freemasonry with freedom, fervency and zeal, represented by chalk, charcoal, and clay. Chalk freely marks everything it touches. Charcoal when properly ignited will melt any metal. And clay constantly reminds man that as from it he came so to it, at last, he must return.

**EA-R40 How are Entered Apprentices to respond to anyone inquiring of becoming a Mason?**

They are not to encourage him unless they think he will follow our principles and submit to our laws. In that case, they may refer him to those who have authority to recommend him to the Lodge (a Master Mason), that the honor, glory, and reputation of the institution may be firmly established.

## ***PART II: HISTORY & PHILOSOPHY***

### **EA-H1 Why were you asked, “In whom do you put your trust?”**

You were asked to undertake an important obligation concerning your duties to your Brethren, your Lodge and the Fraternity and, if you did not profess a belief in a Supreme Being, we would not consider the obligation you took to be binding on you.

### **EA-H2 What are the tenets of our Profession and why?**

The tenets are Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth. To do our work as Masons, we need to respect people in every station in life and provide them relief, if required. We also need to realize that truth and justice are the foundations of every virtue. These tenets allow us to make our connections with people from all walks of life and to deal courteously and fairly with them.

### **EA-H3 What three great duties are Masons charged to practice?**

They are your duties to God, your neighbor, and yourself: To God, in never abusing his name and employing him in all your good works; to your neighbor, in doing unto him as you wish he would do unto you; and to yourself, in avoiding those

things that may impair your faculties or debase your character.

**EA-H4 How were you instructed to act as a member of the community?**

You are to be a quiet and peaceful citizen, true to your government and just to your country. You are not to practice disloyalty or rebellion but submit to legal authority and conform with cheerfulness to the government of the country in which you live.

**EA-H5 How are you to respond to anyone who degrades Masonry and wishes to get into an argument about it?**

You are not to enter into arguments with those who are ignorant about Freemasonry, but this prohibition should not mean that you or more informed Brethren should not set the record straight to correct misstatements about Freemasonry.

**EA-H6 What do Ancients and Moderns In Freemasonry mean?**

After the first Grand Lodge was founded in London in 1717, some Masons came to feel that this Grand Lodge, known as the Moderns, was not doing what it should. They founded another Grand Lodge in England, which called itself the Ancients or Antients, because they felt they were preserving the older traditions of Freemasonry. These two rival

Grand Lodges existed in England for about 80 years. Each one chartered Lodges in North America and elsewhere, until they merged in 1813 and became the United Grand Lodge of England, which exists to this day.

**EA-H7 What is meant by enlightenment in Freemasonry?**

For Masons, enlightenment means improvement by learning in order to become better people. The Enlightenment was a period of history during the 18th century, when society seemed to take more of an interest in using science and logic to improve society, using rational thinking. Prior to that, society in general appeared static and unchanging. Enlightenment thinking held that each man and all of society could improve. Many feel the Enlightenment led directly to such historical events as the American and French Revolutions and to greater freedom for all individuals. Some feel that Freemasonry is a product of the Enlightenment and, in fact, is the very embodiment of the concepts that became accepted at that time.

**EA-H8 What is meant by the universality of Freemasonry?**

Freemasonry, with its philosophy of tolerance and individual liberty, is open to all men who profess a belief in God, and are of good moral character,

without regard to race, nationality, religion or politics.

**EA-H9 What role has Freemasonry played in the history of our country?**



Many of the prominent figures of the American Revolution were Masons. The ideals of Freemasonry – democracy and individual freedom are those upon which our country was founded. George Washington was Worshipful Master of his Lodge and wrote many letters over the years showing his support of Freemasonry. Benjamin Franklin was the Grand Master of Pennsylvania. Throughout our country's history, many prominent men were Masons, including 14 Presidents of the United States. Harry S. Truman was Grand Master of Missouri and a very enthusiastic Freemason throughout his adult life.



**EA-H10 What is the ritual of Freemasonry and where did it come from?**

Ritual consists of the language and ceremonies used in Masonic Lodges to open and close meetings, confer degrees, and do other work in a manner considered proper for Masons. The Masonic ritual is somewhat different in each state and country. No



one is certain where it came from, but, in its present form, it started in England in the early 1700's and has changed very little since then.

### **EA-H11 Why is the language of Masonic ritual different from ordinary language?**

Since our ritual was developed in the 1700's and earlier, it is in the language and style that was used in that period. Our way of speaking has changed, but Masonic ritual maintains the older words for the sake of tradition.

### **EA-H12 How did our Masonic ritual develop?**

In the late 1700's, William Preston, an Englishman, rewrote and compiled much of the Masonic ritual that until then was different in each Lodge. In the early 1800's, Thomas Smith Webb rewrote much of the Preston ritual for use in America. In Virginia, the ritual was standardized in 1821 and formally codified in the "Text Book" (now known as the "Manual of Work") by John Dove, a Past Grand Master and Grand Secretary of the Grand Lodge of Virginia in 1845. The Grand Lecturer and the Committee on Work are responsible for teaching the standard ritual in all our Lodges in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Although the ritual in each state in the United States is slightly different, Masons visiting Lodges in other

states will recognize the basic similarity. In some other countries, Masonic ritual is very different from ours.

**EA-H13 What are Masons supposed to keep secret and what can we tell others about Freemasonry?**

Almost everything about Freemasonry can and should be discussed by Masons with their family, friends, and others. We should proudly tell everyone about the ideals of Freemasonry, its history, its support of brotherhood and charity, its promotion of democracy, individual rights, and its opposition to bigotry and prejudice in any form. Masons can also tell others about when and where meetings are held, who the members and officers are and just about anything else – except for the signs, tokens and passwords or the part of the ritual that is not written. There are very few secrets in Freemasonry; it is not a secret organization.

**EA-H14 What are Grand Lodges and Lodges?**

A Grand Lodge is the governing body in each Grand Jurisdiction such as a state or a foreign country. The Grand Lodge establishes Lodges by granting them Charters or Dispensations and make the rules governing Freemasonry in that Grand Jurisdiction. Lodges are local bodies of Masons; there are more than 300 Lodges in Virginia ranging in size from a

couple of dozen to several hundred members, who enjoy each other's company, and meet at least once a month to conduct their business, plan their projects and other activities, and participate in Lodge programs, for example, featuring speakers on Masonic philosophy, history, or other subjects. They also conduct Degree work. Lodge meetings must include a certain number of Master Masons assembled in the Lodge room, with a Holy Bible, Square and Compasses on the altar and with a Charter or Dispensation in the room.

**EA-H15 Where can you find the rules that govern Lodge activities?**

The Grand Lodge of Virginia is governed by rules adopted by the Brethren, and codified in a book called the *Virginia Methodical Digest*. These rules govern how the Grand Lodge operates, how each Lodge operates, and how individual Masons are expected to act. Each Lodge has by-laws that describe certain procedures that must be followed by the Lodge. There also are Masonic traditions that Masons are expected to follow.

**EA-H16 Who are the principle Lodge officers?**

The Worshipful Master (worshipful means honorable) is the leader of the Lodge. There also is a Senior and a Junior Warden. These three officers are called the Stationed Officers.

### **EA-H17 Who are the other Lodge officers?**

The Treasurer and Secretary have duties that are obvious from their titles. The Senior Deacon and Junior Deacon have specific responsibilities, including assisting the Stationed Officers, conducting candidates during degrees, greeting visiting Masons, and attending the door. The Chaplain leads the Lodge in prayer. The Junior and Senior Stewards prepare the candidates and are in charge of refreshments. The Marshal conducts public ceremonies. The Organist or Musician plays music during Lodge meetings and degrees, and the Tiler guards the entrance to the Lodge.

### **EA-H18 What is meant by line officers?**

Elected officers generally progress from each position to the next higher position in the Lodge each year. For example, the Junior Deacon usually becomes the Senior Deacon the following year, then Junior Warden, Senior Warden and finally Worshipful Master. Thus, these officers are sometimes referred to as the progressive line.

### **EA-H19 How are Lodge officers selected?**

The Worshipful Master, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Treasurer, Secretary, Senior Deacon and Junior Deacon are elected by the Brethren; the other officers are appointed by the Worshipful Master.

## **EA-H20 What is the role of the Worshipful Master of the Lodge?**

He is similar to the president of an organization with full power to run the Lodge, subject only to the rules of the Grand Lodge under which the Lodge operates. Even though a Worshipful Master has plenary power in the Lodge, he must constantly think about and promote the welfare of the Lodge as a whole and all its members. The Worshipful Master is responsible for arranging the programs in the Lodge, seeing that the degrees are conferred properly, and in every way ensuring the successful operation of the Lodge.

## **EA-H21 Why does the Worshipful Master wear a hat in the Lodge?**



The Worshipful Master is in charge of the Lodge, and wears a hat to symbolize his authority, in much the same way as a King wears a crown.

## ***PART III: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS***

### **EA-F1    What is the definition of Freemasonry?**



There is no official definition since no one person can speak officially for all of Freemasonry. Masonic writers have provided some definitions, but none is considered official by Masons everywhere. One of the most widely used and generally accepted definitions is that Freemasonry is the Brotherhood of Man under the Fatherhood of God. It is up to each Mason to further define what Freemasonry means to him.

### **EA-F2    What are some well-accepted ideas about Freemasonry?**

Most Masons would probably agree that Freemasonry is a Fraternity that has existed for centuries and attempts to bring in men who are of good character and who want to improve themselves and help society become a better place for us all. They also would agree that Freemasonry is a system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols. Here, allegory implies that the symbols have no one meaning; therefore, each man can use the meaning for the symbol that helps him best. Freemasonry also is a way of life and an organization to make good men better. Masonic

scholars have focused on Freemasonry as a way to learn more about God's plan for each of us, and by emphasizing tolerance and the responsibility of each person to help others, encourages men to live together in society in a peaceful manner. Each Mason can use some or all of these principles to clarify the meaning of Masonry to him and help him to improve himself and become a better person.

### **EA-F3     Why do men join Freemasonry?**

There are many different reasons: most men are interested in fellowship and a social setting in which to get to know more good men and spend time with them. Others want to learn more about Masonic philosophy and ideals and how to improve themselves. Many want to perform charitable work in their communities. Some want to do several of these things in the context of an organization that has existed for centuries attempting to improve our communities and the society in which we live.

### **EA-F4     What are the main characteristics of Freemasonry?**

It is a social organization in that it promotes brotherly interactions and fraternal enjoyment of the company of its members. It is a charitable organization in the sense that it is not organized for profit or for the financial benefit of its members or anyone else. It is devoted to the betterment of each

man and all of society. It is educational in that it teaches by certain ceremonies and rituals, lessons promoting morality and brotherhood. It is religious only in the sense that only men who profess to believe in Deity or a Supreme Being are admitted as members, and because Masonry urges each man to practice his own religion.

**EA-F5     How does Freemasonry attempt to accomplish its goals?**

Masonic ritual in the degrees teaches lessons about how people should interact with one another. Morality, charity and tolerance toward all people are taught through the use of symbols and allegories, and fictional stories that teach lessons. Freemasonry also teaches men to be better by showing examples of Masons who practiced and continue to practice the Masonic precepts of helping other people, of accepting all as brothers, and of promoting democracy and freedom for all people.

**EA-F6     What are the goals and teachings of Freemasonry?**

There is general acceptance that the goals of Freemasonry include making men into better people and being more moral and helpful in their communities. Freemasonry teaches basic values: honesty and fair dealing with everyone, charity and help for those in need, and control of our passions.



Most of all, Freemasonry teaches us to remember that we are all the children of God, brothers and sisters with all humanity, regardless of race, religious or political beliefs, gender, physical or financial condition, or any other outward differences.

**EA-F7     Aren't these teachings so basic that we don't need Freemasonry to promote them?**

It sometimes seems that everyone says they support these goals, but unfortunately many do not follow them; this has been true in all times. It may be difficult, for example, to be honest and fair in every way with every person we meet, but as Masons we must strive to meet this ideal. We might forget about people needing moral support, such as those who are ill and alone, those needing financial help, and those needing our support to help them accomplish an important task. But even when it is inconvenient for us to give this support, Freemasonry teaches that we should try to provide it.

**EA-F8     How did Freemasonry start, and how did it evolve?**

No one knows how Freemasonry started. It is a Masonic tradition that the builders of cathedrals and other large buildings in the middle-ages formed guilds which later accepted others as members. The

builders were called operative Masons and those who used builder's tools to teach moral lessons were called speculative Masons. Speculative means those who think about such things as philosophy: why man is here, what is our purpose in life, and how should we live our lives. Traditionally, over time speculative Masons came to dominate the operative Lodges, and eventually they shaped Freemasonry, as we know it today.

**EA-F9    How did Freemasonry as we know it, start?**

In 1717, in London, England, representatives of four Masonic Lodges met, and formed the first Grand Lodge. Of course, Masonic Lodges existed before then, or else how would those four Lodges have started, but there is no written record with additional details before 1717. Since that date, we have fairly clear records about the history of Freemasonry.

**EA-F10   How did Freemasonry expand since 1717?**

The Grand Lodge, formed in 1717 in London, started new Lodges by granting them Charters or Dispensations. Some Lodges in turn formed new Grand Lodges in other countries, and now Freemasonry exists in almost all parts of the world. There are estimated to be about 4 million Masons in

the world, with about 2 million of them in the United States. There are Grand Lodges in each of the states of the U.S. and the District of Columbia, with about 13,000 chartered Lodges under those Grand Lodges.

### **EA-F11 How did Freemasonry develop in our country?**

Soon after Freemasonry began its modern existence in London in 1717, Masons started coming to what were then the colonies in North America and founding Lodges here. Some of these Lodges were chartered by one of the Grand Lodges in England; others were founded by the Grand Lodges of Scotland or Ireland. Masons founded some Lodges without a Charter from any Grand Lodge. Gradually, Masonry grew in America and, after the American Revolution, Grand Lodges were founded in each state. As additional states joined the union, additional Grand Lodges were founded with the Lodges in each state being under the jurisdiction of the Grand Lodge in that state. Freemasonry in Virginia can be traced to the early part of the 18th century. At least nine Lodges were active in the Commonwealth when the Grand Lodge of Virginia was formed in 1778. John Blair, a member of Williamsburg Lodge No. 6, was elected as the first Grand Master.

## **EA-F12 What occurs in Masonic Lodge meetings?**

At some meetings, we conduct the Masonic ritual. The ritual consists of ceremonies called Degrees that are designed to teach the moral lessons of Freemasonry. At other Lodge meetings, we conduct the business of the Lodge, have speakers on various topics of interest to our members, and have discussions to promote Masonic education and help us be better people.

## **EA-F13 What happens in Masonic Degrees?**

The candidate – the person who will become the new member – is the central character in the ceremony. He is treated in the most kindly and respectful way at all times. There is no hazing or harm of any sort. During the progress of the degree, the candidate is expected to observe and listen to what is occurring in order to learn some of the moral and character building lessons of Freemasonry. These lessons are so important, and there are so many deeper meanings in many of the Degrees that many Masons watch the Masonic Degrees as often as they can and learn more each time they see them performed.

**EA-F14 What does it mean to say that Masons are Brothers?**

Freemasonry teaches that there is a special bond between Masons, brought about by our shared experiences with Masonic ritual and teachings and by certain obligations we have accepted to help and support each other, and to try to do everything we can to assist our Brother Masons. We try not to become angry with another Mason, but if we do, we go out of our way to resolve our differences. We should never harm a Brother Mason or anyone else and always seek to treat our Brethren exactly as we would want them to treat us.



**EA-F15 Does the idea of brotherhood extend further?**

Yes, Masons are taught that the principles of Freemasonry are to extend beyond the Fraternity and that a Mason should treat every human being with respect, honor, kindness, charity and friendship.

**EA-F16 How do you know when to rise and when to be seated in a Lodge?**

In general, when the Worshipful Master raps his gavel once, this rap indicates that all the Brethren



should come to order. When he raps twice, the officers (and only the officers) rise. When he raps three times all the Brethren stand. When all are standing and the Worshipful Master raps once, everyone is seated. If the Worshipful Master addresses a member of the Lodge by name, he should stand, salute the Worshipful Master in a manner taught in the degree, then listen to instructions. If you wish to speak in Lodge, or if you need to leave the Lodge before it is closed, you should wait for an appropriate time, then rise, wait until the Worshipful Master recognizes you, salute the Worshipful Master, and speak.

**EA-F17 Can a Mason enter a Lodge meeting after it has begun?**

Yes. Identify yourself to the Tiler outside the door and prove that you are a Mason in the manner in which you were taught. Wait until the Tiler has informed the Lodge and has been instructed to admit you. When you enter the Lodge, approach the altar, salute the Worshipful Master, and then follow his instructions.

**EA-F18 What is the role of prayer in Lodges, and how are prayers offered?**

The Chaplain offers a nonsectarian prayer at the beginning and end of the meeting and at appropriate times during a meeting, for example, when we are

remembering a member who has recently died. Masons offer their prayers to the Great Architect of the Universe, meaning to the God that each of us individually recognizes. At the end of a prayer, Masons say: “so mote it be,” which means, “so may it ever be,” indicating that we agree with the intent of the prayer.

### **EA-F19 Why do we use signs, tokens and passwords?**

Freemasonry, just as other organizations, has ways of identifying its members to one another. It is important for Freemasons to memorize the signs, tokens and passwords, so we can prove to other Masons that we are members of the Craft. Each of the signs, tokens, and passwords has a symbolic meaning and teaches us something important about Masonic philosophy. Understanding how to do the signs, tokens, and passwords properly, and executing them with dignity, is an important way to show respect for Freemasonry. Masons have given their word not to disclose these signs, tokens and passwords to non-Masons.

### **EA-F20 Does a Mason have an obligation to attend Lodge meetings?**

Masons should attend as many Lodge meetings as they can. However, there is no attendance

requirement, and no penalty for failing to attend a certain number of meetings.

**EA-F21 Are there subjects that cannot be discussed in Lodges?**

Yes. Religion and politics are prohibited subjects in Lodges, and as a matter of good taste, around Lodge meetings. These two subjects can cause disputes and disharmony. One of the main points of Freemasonry is to provide an oasis from the discord and divisiveness of the world, where men can come together and enjoy each other's company in peace.

**EA-F22 What are actions that are considered un-Masonic?**

A high morale standard is expected of Masons. Thus, criminal actions, particularly those involving violations of fundamental moral laws, violation of the obligations in the Degrees, or of any of the requirements of the *Virginia Methodical Digest* would be considered un-Masonic.

**EA-F23 How can I expand my knowledge of Freemasonry?**

There are thousands of books, articles and short papers published about Masonic philosophy, history, ritual, jurisprudence, and all other aspects of Freemasonry. Many are written in a lively, popular manner, and some are very scholarly or difficult to



read. There are also many magazines about Masonry. Many are inexpensive and very informative. A quick search on the Internet using a search engine can yield a wealth of information.

**EA-F24 What are some books Entered Apprentices can read to learn more about Free Masonry?**

*The Craft and Its Symbols*, by Allen E. Roberts, published in 1974

*A Comprehensive View of Freemasonry*, by Henry W. Coil, published in 1954

*Freemasonry in American History*, by Allen E. Roberts, published in 1985

*The History of Freemasonry in Virginia*, by Richard A. Rutyna & Peter C. Stewart, published in 1998.

*Introduction to Freemasonry*, by Carl H. Claudy, published in 1931

*Masonic Philanthropies: A Tradition of Caring*, by S. Brent Morris, 2nd edition published in 1997

*Masonic Membership of the Founding Fathers*, by Ronald E. Heaton, published in 1965

**EA-F25 Think through what you have learned from this Manual, and see if you can answer the questions below.**

What is Freemasonry?

What are some of the goals and teachings of Freemasonry?

What is a Masonic Lodge?

Who are the key officers in each Lodge?

Who is the presiding officer in a Lodge, and what are his responsibilities and authorities?

What is the difference from operative and speculative Masons?

Is Masonry a secret organization?

What are the few secrets and what are the many subjects Masons are encouraged to talk about?

Are men of every religion permitted to become Masons?

How does a man prepare himself to become a Mason?

What is the purpose of the altar in the Lodge, and what items are placed on it?

What is the EA obligation for and what should we learn from it?



*Masonic labor is purely a labor of love  
he who seeks to draw Masonic wages  
in gold or silver will be disappointed.  
The wages of a Mason are earned and paid  
in their dealings with one another,  
sympathy begets sympathy,  
kindness begets kindness,  
helpfulness begets helpfulness,  
and these are the wages of a Mason.*

*Benjamin Franklin*