

Dear Eastern Star Chapters:

Message from Patricia C. Darby - General Grand Chapter Committee Member on Membership for all the New England States.

On Saturday, Nov 4, 2023, I had the honor of being the Guest Speaker at the International Weekend held in Burlington, Vermont. I would like to pass along to you the highlights of that speech so that you can select some ideas for your Chapter and help grow our Order. The question was asked: "What is the number one feature of Eastern Star that is most important to you?" Each table discussed their ideas and here were the answers: Love of Family (Eastern Star IS a family), Friendship, Fellowship, Support, Leadership Skills, Love of our Lessons and the Ritual, Charity, Service, Social Enjoyments, Food, Travel and Community Outreach.

These are the benefits of being a member and you can share these with a potential new candidate. You would never meet some of these wonderful people if it were not through Eastern Star. Also, we care for each other in times of joy and sorrow.

When was the last time your Chapter initiated a new member? Was it 3 months, 6 months, one year, two years, or three years or more? I know that we want our Chapters to grow and our beautiful Order to prosper well into the future. So how do we find new members? I am going to give you some ideas which I do hope that you will try.

- Attend Masonic Installations - when they ask if anyone else would like to speak at the end, stand up and bring Congratulations from your Chapter and offer to support them in an event or fundraising activity or to serve a dinner.
- Compliment their Installing Suite - just like we do in Eastern Star. This WORKS and we have read several petitions from this endeavor.
- Bring brochures with you to give to those interested in Eastern Star and be sure to use the tear-away cards to get their information.
- Masonic Open Houses - Attend your Masonic Open Houses and maybe the Masons might not join but they might have Wives, Mothers, Sisters or Aunts that might be interested so get into conversations with them. If the Masons won't let you have a table, then take brochures with you to hand out if the need arises.
- Open Meeting - this is where each Officer tells about their duties from a script and the Presiding Officer can tell about what activities you do - let others know that we DO HAVE FUN!!!! The Open Meeting can provide an overview of the Order, our charities and projects. Invite past Rainbow Girls, wives of new Blue Lodge members with their husbands. You can provide a brunch or luncheon. All Chapters should have social events such as a picnic with the Masons in the Summer, a Sleigh Ride in the Winter to name a few.
- Develop GOOD RELATIONS with your Masons in your entire district. We are fortunate this year as the Grand Master and his wife are members of our Order and the Grand Master spoke at our Grand Chapter Installation in May and in his remarks spent some time speaking about Eastern Star. He is very supportive, and I am hoping that this will filter down to the Masonic Lodges in our State.
- May Baskets - We had a Worthy Grand Matron that suggested that the Chapters make May Baskets and take them to the Police and Fire Departments. My own Chapter did this and had a picture in the newspaper. A woman contacted our Chapter after seeing this. Get the Eastern Star name out there by participating in Sidewalk Sales and have a Banner with your booth.
- Collect toys for an agency that gives gifts to for Christmas. Get a picture donating your toys to this agency.
- Invite the Masons for a Dinner. It could be a Potluck, or a more formal dinner for a special Holiday and you could also invite Rainbow and DeMolay. You could ask each group to do something for entertainment.

- Do a Murder Mystery Dinner - There are scripts out there that cost almost nothing, and you do the characters. These are very humorous and lots of fun.
- Do a Fashion Show with members of your Chapter being the models. Write an invitation to all the wives of the Masons in your area and you just might get a new member. Use dress shops in your area or make up your own outfits.
- ASK someone to be a member. The most often used reason people do not join an organization is because no one ever asked them. A woman can now join on a first or second cousin.
- Appoint a Publicity Chairman so that the name of your Chapter is out there in the public's mind as much as possible. Submit articles to the local newspaper.
- Appoint a Membership Chairman in your Chapter and call on this person at each meeting to speak. However, remember that it is the duty of ALL of the MEMBERS to increase our Chapters.
- Have an OPEN INSTALLATION - Send the Masonic Lodges in your area an invitation. Mention that they will learn a lot about the good deeds of Eastern Star and be more knowledgeable of how we are similar to the Masons.

Once they join - how do you retain them?

- Give them a New Member Booklet which helps them to learn certain facts about the way we do our meetings. Treat them with gloves showing kindness and patience.
- New Member Challenge Award. In Massachusetts our state Membership Committee devised goals to be given to them after their Initiation. There are 5 required actions and 3 optional where they must complete two of them. We also have the Star Challenge Achievement Award to encourage current members to get involved. These are both under Membership on our Massachusetts site and I would encourage you to look at them and try them to stimulate your members.
- Have a MENTOR - this could be the person that signed their petition who is already their friend and someone they know. I have a sheet called "Suggested Activities for a Mentor." Let me know and I will send it to you.

Other Ways to Increase Membership:

- Review your list of INACTIVE MEMBERS. Have a night to honor them and give them a gift.
- Evaluate recent new members - are they coming? Remember you have a window of 6 weeks to 3 months to "activate" a new member or most likely they will be lost.
- FUNDRAISING - a great way to get members involved.
- Have an ATTENDANCE PRIZE - at each meeting and you MUST be present to win.
- Have a PIE NIGHT for a collation. You could also have themed collations for a special holiday.
- Have INTERESTING PROGRAMS after your meetings. It could be as simple as giving everyone 2 note cards and asking them to write down 2 facts that no one would know about them and then guess who it is. This will generate many laughs.
- Have a POUND AUCTION.
- Have a TRIVIA GAME.
- Have a FRIENDSHIP NIGHT with other Eastern Star Chapters in your area. Get to know each other and form bonds of good will.
- Have GREETERS at each Chapter Meeting.
- Does your Chapter want to grow? Set a goal of how many new members you want to have in one year. This could be by Affiliation or by Initiation. What jumped out to you? Discuss among your members and try one or two of the ideas presented and see progress made.

I would be glad to send any of you the resources that I have available. These include the brochures: The Way of Life, The Synergy of Fraternalism (written by a District Deputy of Masons) and shows how Eastern Star and Masons are very much alike, Why Should I Join Eastern Star - also written by a District Deputy, our tear-away cards to be used when you speak to someone who could join, The New Member Yellow Booklet, 50 Ways to Increase Membership. and Suggested Activities for a Mentor.

Let's grow each of our Chapters for 2023-2024. Dream, Believe, Make Plans, Implement them and you will SUCCEED.

In Fraternal Love,
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