

Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons



OF THE STATE of CALIFORNIA

Dear Royal Arch Companion:

My name is Carlos H. Gonzalez. I am the Grand Chapter Membership Chairman, the Grand Chaplain of the Grand Chapter and a Past High Priest of Signet Chapter No. 57 in Van Nuys, California. Our Chapter has welcomed over 218 members since 1998 when the attached Recruitment Program was implemented.

I hope your Chapter can benefit with the same results we did. Please feel free to contact me if you need further assistance.

Sincerely,

Ex. Comp. Carlos H. Gonzalez
Signet Chapter No. 57 RAM of California
or by e mail to elysian418@aol.com

THE GONZALEZ METHOD

Carlos Gonzalez, Grand Chapter Membership Chairman

Step 1: Membership Committee

I strongly urge the formation of a Membership Committee in your Chapter. A recruitment effort is certainly not a "one man show". It requires the assistance and expertise of all Chapter members. Who should be in your Membership Committee? Members of your Chapter who are active in their Blue Lodges. Past High Priests of your Chapter or newly exalted Companions, all members must be active Blue Lodge Masons.

Step 2: Obtain a list of Blue Lodges in your area with the name of the Worshipful Master.

Step 3: Send a letter to each Master addressed to the Secretary briefly indicating your desire to make a presentation at their next Stated Meeting. You will address the Brethren regarding York Rite in general and the Royal Arch Degrees in particular and will invite them to join Your Chapter No. 123 of Royal Arch Masons. Mention that your presentation will not exceed 15 minutes. If possible have them announce your presentation in the Lodge Trestleboard as the Guest Speaker for the evening. I wrote a message for the Trestleboard of one of the Lodges I visited (copy attached).

Please forward this paragraph to Masters who may not be sure what to write or how to announce your visit. Instruct the Master to let you know the date of the Stated Meeting in which you will be Speaker.

When you receive the answers from the Lodges you may have more than one Lodge wanting your delegation on a certain day. Please arrange the groups deciding who goes where and who will be the Speaker.

Step 4: Presentation Day

If the Lodge has a dinner please be there and introduce yourself to everyone. Wear your red coat and Chapter Officer badge. Do not show up for the presentation and leave. Your presentation must be in the tiled meeting, not at the dinner table. Be in the meeting when they open, when they transact business and when they close. Stay after they close for a few moments. Staying after the meeting is very important. Brethren will approach you with questions after your presentation. If a member of your Chapter is a member of this particular Lodge you are visiting, please have him introduce you to the audience as the Presiding Officer of Your Chapter No. 123 visiting them to talk about York Rite and Royal Arch Masonry. If your Chapter members wear red coats please wear them for the presentation. It can cause a nice impression among prospective members. Encourage members of your Chapter to join in the effort. Try to avoid going by yourself.

Step 5: Your presentation

- Make sure everyone can hear you. Approach a microphone in the East if necessary.
- First thank the Brother who introduced you, thank the Master for inviting you and briefly introduce yourself and your Delegation.
- Begin by defining the York Rite of Freemasonry indicating that it is not only the oldest but the largest rite of Freemasonry composed of Chapters of Royal Arch Masons, Councils of Cryptic Masons and Commanderies of Knight Templars.
- Mention that when the 2 Grand Lodges in England united in 1813, from where modern Masonry derives, they defined the Degrees of Masonry as "Pure Ancient Freemasonry consists of but three degrees, Entered Apprentice, Fellowcraft and Master Mason, including the Supreme Order of the Holy Royal Arch"

- Why should you become a Royal Arch Mason? Because it will give you the opportunity to further your Masonic Knowledge. The story of the three Degrees of Blue Masonry, according to most students of Freemasonry, is incomplete. The Royal Arch Degrees, inspired in the teachings of the Old Testament, are a natural continuation of the Legend of Hiram Abiff from the Master Mason's Degree in the Blue Lodge. It culminates with the recovery of the long lost Master's Word which is shared with all candidates. The circumstance in which it was discovered is also beautifully explained in the Royal Arch Degree.
- Mention that the Royal Arch has 4 Degrees. The Mark Master, Past Master, Most Excellent Master and Royal Arch Degree. I would not get into much detail about each of the Degrees. Remember your presentation must be brief. Later on you will be presenting everyone with a brochure published by the Grand Chapter of Royal Arch Masons in California entitled "An Introduction to Royal Arch Masonry" which is excellently written and describes the Degrees in greater detail.
- Mention all Master Masons are eligible to join the Royal Arch. You do not have to be Catholic or from a Judeo Christian religion to join. I have been asked, "Can Jewish People join the Royal Arch? There seems to be some misunderstanding that only Catholics can join the Royal Arch.
- Tell them that you do not need to have a Proficiency to advance in the Degrees. This is very important. It is another misunderstanding going around.
- Tell them your Chapter has monthly Stated Convocations from September to June and that your presence will always be welcome but in no means mandatory. Many people think that you MUST attend every meeting.
- Tell them, if applicable, that a dinner precedes the Meetings, that Ladies are welcome and that the dinner charge is \$_____
- Tell them that the Degree Fee is a one-time fee of \$_____ and the Yearly Dues are \$_____. Does your Chapter pro rate Yearly Dues? If so, let them know.
- I presented everyone with a Membership Kit. This kit contained a flier (see enclosure). Use a color printer and make color copies if possible. Make sure your flier looks nice and lively. If you like the attached flier please call me at 323-876-4713 or fax me the information at 323-845-1661 with the name of your Chapter, the date and place of the Degrees and I will have an identical color flier for you. I will mail it to you so you can make copies. Attached to the flier was the brochure "An Introduction to Royal Arch Masonry" published by the Grand Chapter of California. If you need copies of this Brochure please contact Ken Hope, our Grand Secretary, at 562-436-8271 and he will mail them to you. Also attached was a generic York Rite Application and my personal card with my name, home address and phone.
- Inform the Brethren to let you know if they know of someone else, who is not at the meeting, who would be interested in joining the Royal Arch. Give those Brethren an extra Kit for that Brother. Tell them to have this Brother call you if he has any questions.
- I always left 3 additional Kits with the Lodge Secretary for those who were not able to attend your presentation and might be interested in joining your Chapter.
- Have some post paid envelopes addressed to you in your coat pocket. Some people will complete the Application and give you cash or a check. Some will mail the Application and check to you later.
- Tell them that, as in the case of Applications for Blue Lodges, their Application must be balloted in a Stated Convocation. Tell them that there are no Investigating Committees members calling you for an interview.
- Be ready to write names and phone numbers of all those who tell you are interested to join. You want their name and phone to give them a call if you did not receive their Application and Degree Fee.

- Ask if anyone has a question. If so, please be brief with the answer. Thank them for their time and attention and ask the Master's permission to circulate the Kits. Let everyone know you will remain in the Lodge Room after closing to answer any further questions.
- Remember that new members in your conferrals are a great source for more new members. Candidates do enjoy the Degrees. Candidates do enjoy being recognized when they come to your dinners. Candidates love the feeling of being part of your Chapter and participating in your events. They will "spread the word" about your Chapter and will bring new members. Candidates from our first conferral in 1998 brought Candidates for the second, and so on. Allow me to tell you a story. One of our Candidates from our first conferral, a wonderful Master Mason belonging to a Lodge in our building received his Degrees in February & March. He was so impressed by our Ritual and the warmth of his reception in our Chapter that he went back to his Blue Lodge, a Lodge with a high percentage of members belonging to the Jewish Faith. He brought five Candidates for the third conferral in July and four for our fourth conferral. I went to a Stated Meeting of this Lodge and heard him talk to others about how he enjoys being a member of Signet Chapter. That is all it took. Now we have ten members of this Lodge spreading the word and bringing new members to our Chapter.

Step 6: Receiving Applications.

If you receive an Application in the mail please call the Brother and tell him you have received it. Remind him of the date of the conferral of the Mark Master Degree and invite him and his Lady to your next Stated Convocation Dinner.

Step 7: Stated Meeting Dinner (s) prior to the conferrals.

Call for everyone's attention and introduce the Brother and his Lady as a candidate for your Chapter's next Degree conferral.

Step 8: Candidate reminder

Make sure each Candidate receives a letter saying that his petition to Your Chapter No. 123 was favorably balloted and that the Degrees will take place on ____ at ____ AM/PM with dinner starting at ____ .

Step 9: After the Royal Arch Degree

This is the most important step of all. I sent a personal letter from me as High Priest, congratulating them on their advancement. I told them about the scheduled Social Events at Signet Chapter for the remainder of the year and invited them to join with their Ladies (copy attached). It is my opinion that the challenge is not only "to bring new members to our Chapters" but also "to have them come to interesting meetings", "participate in our Degree Team, join in your Social Events" and also "join your Line of Officers". I am also very pleased to say that my King has selected 3 Companions Exalted in 1998 to serve as Master of the First and Second Veils and Sentinel in his Line for 1999. That is a great encouragement not only for the nominee but also for the rest of the Companions exalted this year.

Our first conferral of Degrees in February/March was done over three days. The MM Degree on one, the PM and MEM on a second date and the RA on the third. In our third conferral on Saturday July 11 we conferred all four Degrees on one day. I spoke with Candidates from the two conferrals and their response was that they preferred a one-day conferral instead of a three-day conferral. A one-day conferral can be stressful on your Degree Team, if you have a Companion participating in more than one Degree. But, you will avoid problems if a Candidate that can come for one Degree but then cannot make it to another due to a previous commitment.

Comments:

Saturdays seemed to be an OK day for most of my Candidates.

We have the richest Degrees in Masonry. Our Ritual is of 'outstanding beauty' and each of us is indeed very proud of being a Royal Arch Mason. Let's share the pride in our Ceremonies and the warmth of our Organization. Less than 8 percent of Master Masons in California join Royal Arch Masonry, so we have indeed a large number of potential Candidates waiting for our approach.

I see Membership Drives having a "snowball" effect as far as membership in our Chapter. I will not be surprised to see a lot more Candidates in the years to come. A little time and dedication to membership in the next years will continue generating many new members. I was recently handed hundreds of pages containing addresses of Master Masons sorted by Zip Codes. There are literally thousands of names. I plan to share this information with our Membership Committee for and approach these worthy companions with a mailer. I hereby offer other Chapters in California the pages with Zip Codes in your area.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at elysian418@aol.com

Cordially,

CARLOS H. GONZALEZ

Membership Program Recommendations (Summary)

1. Appoint a Membership Committee
2. Set up a date for the conferral of all Royal Arch Degrees for your Chapter with your own Degree Team or join forces with other Chapters in your area to form a Joint Degree Team. Find out whether a Chapter in your area is conferring the Degrees for you to send Courtesy Candidates.
3. Prepare a flier advertising the Degree conferral.
4. Send letters to all Masters of the Lodges in your area indicating your desire to make a 15 minute presentation in their next Stated Meeting regarding the Royal Arch Degrees. The letter must be sent to the Secretary but addressed to the Master of the Lodge. Include a flier from point 3.
5. Make the presentation following the guidelines in the Membership Report.
6. Follow up on Applications.
7. Send letters to the Applicants after their Application has been favorably balloted in your Stated Convocation also reminding him the date, place and time of the conferral.
8. A phone call to the candidate 2 days before the conferral will be helpful.
9. After the candidates are Exalted Royal Arch Masons please send them a letter congratulating them and informing them the date, place and time of your Stated Convocations and other meetings. Extend them and their Ladies a cordial invitation to your meetings.
10. Introduce the Candidates and their Ladies on the first day they join your Chapter for a scheduled meeting. Make sure everyone greets them.
11. Offer candidates to take part in stations if possible and participate and Degree conferrals. Keep them busy. Try by all means possible to have them participate in your activities.

SAMPLE MATERIALS

Signet Chapter No. 57

Royal Arch Masons of California

invites you to join us as one of our Candidates for the Conferral of the
Royal Arch Degrees at
Van Nuys Masonic Center

Van Nuys Masonic Center
14750 Sherman Way in Van Nuys

Saturday May 4th 2002

Breakfast at 7:30 am followed by the Degrees and a free lunch.

For an Application and additional information please contact
Jose A. Fiss at [insert actual address, phone number & email address] OR
Carlos H. Gonzalez at [insert actual address, phone number & email address]

Suggested message for a Trestleboard publication:

On our Stated Meeting of _____ our Lodge will welcome a group of Companions from _____ Chapter No. ____ of Royal Arch Masons of California. Royal Arch Chapters are spread throughout Asia, Africa, Europe and Australia and in the US we have over 750,000 members in 3,000 Chapters. The Degrees of the Royal Arch are four, the last of them being the Royal Arch Degree often described as "the root and marrow of Freemasonry". It is the story of Jewish History during some of its darkest hours. Jerusalem and the Temple are destroyed. The people of Israel are held captive as slaves in Babylon. Candidates for this Degree represent those set free to return home and engage in the noble and glorious work of rebuilding the city and the Temple of God. It is during this rebuilding that they make a discovery that brings to light the greatest treasure of a Mason The long lost Master's Word.

_____ Chapter No. ____ will confer these Degrees on _____ at _____ in _____.

Please join Capitular Masonry and further complete the Lessons of the Master Mason Degree.

Letter sent to the Lodges I visited

Date: _____

Bro. _____

Secretary of _____ Lodge No. _____

Firstly I would like to introduce myself. My name is _____ and have the honor of being _____ in _____ Chapter of Royal Arch Masons of California. We meet at _____.

I am proud to say that _____ Chapter has for _____ years been a beacon of Capitular Masonry in _____.

Royal Arch Masonry is much embedded in the Ancient History of the People of Israel and our four Degrees exemplify the construction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem climaxing with the discovery of the Long Lost Master Mason's Word.

I would like to have the honor of visiting your Lodge for your Stated Meeting in the month of _____ or _____, at your convenience, accompanied by other members of my Chapter and make a presentation about Capitular Masonry and share literature with the Brethren. At the same time I would like to invite your Members to join our Chapter in the conferral of the Royal Arch Degrees that we will hold on _____. We will serve a free breakfast (or We will start the conferral at) _____ am/pm.

Thank you for your time and attention and I personally look forward to visiting your Lodge.

Sincerely,

**Letter sent to each new member after receiving
all the R.A. Degrees.**

Date: _____

Companion _____

Address _____

Address _____

Dear Companion (first name):

As High Priest of _____ Chapter No. ____ I want to extend to you the congratulations of your Chapter for being Exalted a Royal Arch Mason on _____. I hope you were truly impressed by the Degrees and the additional Masonic Instruction you received.

I would like to share with you some information regarding our future Chapter meetings. They all take place at _____ Masonic Temple located at _____. Our Stated Convocations fall on the _____ day of each month. We serve dinner (or free dinner, if that happens to be the case) to all Chapter members (and their Ladies, if that be the case) at ____ am/pm. We then gather for the meeting itself and we conclude around ____ am/pm.

Our next Stated Convocation will take place on _____ and I would like to have the honor of your presence. Other Social Events scheduled for this year are the following. (Please list the events such as Night Out at a local Restaurant, or to see a play at the local theater or the Reception for the Grand High Priest, etc) and your participation is indeed very welcome.

I am also pleased to enclose two applications for membership in our Chapter and two brochures entitled "An Introduction to Royal Arch Masonry" for you to share with a Master Mason friend who may be interested in joining our Chapter. All applications must be accompanied by a check for \$____ payable to _____ Chapter to cover the Degree Fee. Please do not hesitate to call me if you need additional applications or brochures.

It is indeed a great pleasure as High Priest of _____ Chapter to welcome you and your Lady to our "Chapter Family" with my sincere hope that your association with Capitular Masonry is long and enjoyable.

Sincerely,