SUGGESTED RITUALISTIC OUTLINE

ONE-DAY YORK RITE FESTIVALS

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by
THE INTERNATIONAL YORK RITE COUNCIL

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ONE-DAY YORK RITE FESTIVAL

In order to confer all of the York Rite in one day, it is necessary to abbreviate certain portions of the ritualistic work. It is very important that each candidate receives all of the teachings of each Degree and Order without subjecting him to a tiring experience that will cause him to remember his physical fatigue and discomfort longer than the spiritual lessons portrayed.

Our concern for the candidate's welfare, both mental and physical, should be uppermost in our minds at all times. We want him to understand and appreciate the beautiful and dramatic philosophy of York Rite Freemasonry. Let us assume that we have a class of twenty-four candidates.

*Open on Royal Arch – Call On and Call Off*

**DEGREE OF MARK MASTER**

Twenty-three candidates are seated in some suitable location in the Lodge Room in such a position that they may see and hear all that transpires.

The first section of the Degree is conferred in its entirety on the participating candidate. The M.O. and candidate retire to the preparation room, leaving the balance of the class seated. The second section proceeds in the usual manner, except for the four passages of scripture which are read by the R.W.M. as the S.D., and the candidate makes four circumambulations of the room. The ritual continues as printed through the working tools without exception. The class will rise during the obligation and repeat it with the examplar.

The lecture and charge may be deleted, but the parable of the vineyard will conclude the Degree in the normal way.

**DEGREE OF PAST MASTER**

No opening ceremony except declaration. The twenty-three candidates will remain in the room so that the ceremony may continue without interruption, and the participating candidate may be presented by the S.D. in the usual manner. The Degree will continue in the regular manner, up to the charge, which may be omitted. The class will rise and repeat the Obligation.

**DEGREE OF MOST EXCELLENT MASTER**

No opening ceremony except declaration. The first section of the Degree proceeds in the regular manner, except that the six scriptural readings are given as the S.D. and the candidate make one circumambulation of the room. As before, the remaining candidates rise for the Obligation.

The candidates should be seated during the second section of the Degree in
such a position and manner as to afford them a clear view of the scene portrayed. Care should be taken to ensure ample room for the entrance of the three processions. (One procession may be used instead of three, combining all of the articles of furniture and H.V. used in the ceremony.) There should be no delay between sections. A prologue may be used, and there should be music for the procession(s). The lecture and charge may be deleted, and the retiring march of the characters will conclude the Degree. (Normally the entire cast would remain in the room to maintain the beauty of the scene thus created, until the lecture and charge are completed, and then retire in a formal march with appropriate music.)

 Declare labor resumed in (Tabernacle) Royal Arch Degree

DEGREE OF ROYAL ARCH MASON

The candidates should retire from the room so that they may be properly received as they enter the room to receive the Royal Arch Degree. All but three candidates should be seated in such a manner and position that will enable them to see and hear all that transpires.

The printed ritual should be followed without further alteration until after the Obligation (in which repetitions are omitted) and the Chapter is seated. The P.S. omits all of the journey except the last two paragraphs on page 107 which concludes the first section.

The second section, beginning on page 107, should be given as written with the possible exception of the last portion of the instructions given by the three veilsmen beginning with the “words of explanation are found.”

It is suggested that a representation of the “ruins of the first temple” be represented within the Chapter room so that all candidates may see and hear everything concerning the exchange between the three active candidates and the two officers - C.H. and P.S. Bring up all discoveries at one tune.

The Degree should continue according to the ritual without exception through the Apron Lecture and stop there. The lecture and charge may not be given. (All ritual can thus be rendered in two and one half hours.)

COUNCIL DEGREES

Only the Royal and Select Master Degrees are required for the completion of the Cryptic Rite and for advancement to the Orders of the Commandery. The Super Excellent Master Degree should be scheduled at a later date.

DEGREE OF ROYAL MASTER

The ritual of this Degree begins in the normal manner, but the candidates do not make the eight circumambulations of the room, and the eight passages of
scripture may be omitted. One candidate may represent the class which is seated where each member may observe the entire proceedings. The lecture is not given.

DEGREE OF SELECT MASTER

All candidates except one remain in their seats for the simple declaration that the Council is closed on the Degree of Royal Master and is duly at labor on the Degree of Select Master.

The participating candidate enters the room by way of the sleeping Ahishar. The work continues without alteration to the lecture. The lecture and charge are not given. (All ritual can thus be accomplished in less than 1½ hours.)

DEGREE OF SUPER EXCELLENT MASTER

The class should be told that they will be expected to return at a future date to receive the Super Excellent Master Degree, which is considered by many to be the most dramatic and spectacular Degree in all Freemasonry. (One hour required.)

The work to this point can be accomplished in about three hours. To do this, all preparations and as many settings as possible should be made in advance to insure a minimum of delay between scenes and Degrees.

COMMANDERY OF KNIGHTS TEMPLAR

ILLUSTRIOUS ORDER OF THE RED CROSS

Grand Encampment regulations permit a short form conferring of the Order of the Red Cross under certain circumstances. It is suggested that for the purposes of a one-day York Rite Festival, this expedient be employed.

ORDER OF MALTA

Grand Encampment regulations permit a short form conferring of the Order of Malta under certain circumstances. It is suggested that for the purposes of a one-day York Rite Festival, this expedient be employed.

It is the feeling of many that there is justification for conferring the first two Orders in short form to expedite and enhance the desirability of a successful one-day York Rite Festival.

ORDER OF THE TEMPLE

It is suggested that the J.W. conduct the entire class through the ceremonies of the C.R. at the same time. There are other abbreviations which can be used and which will not destroy the teachings or the benefits of the Order of the Temple.
A mold for appropriate “cups” to be used during the fifth L. so that all of the class may participate in unison has been located, a manufacturer has not. Availability and price information expected in near future. With careful handling, the work of the Commandery can be accomplished in a period of two to three hours, depending on the number of abbreviations and the care and planning which go into the portrayal of the work.

**OBSERVATIONS**

It is becoming the general consensus of opinion that there is a place in our thinking for one-day York Rite Festivals. All are agreed that this type of ritualistic expedient is not intended to replace the normal full form conferring of Degrees and Orders at other times during the year.

It is generally believed that many busy men, from farmers who find it almost impossible to leave their fields for several days at a time or at an early hour on seven or eight different occasions to receive the Degrees to business and professional men who cannot always leave their offices for a similar period of time, find it impossible to participate in the York Rite in the normal manner. Conversely, we are aware that one-day festivals seem to attract goodly numbers of brethren who might not otherwise petition the York Rite. While membership alone is not the goal of the York Rite, we must have both numerical and financial stability in order to promote the high ideals of York Rite Freemasonry.

Two and one half hours will be ample for the Commandery portion of the entire ritual of the York Rite. This offers festival planners a total of six and one half hours (6½) for all of the ritual. Add to this two 15 minute breaks, one in the morning and one in the afternoon, and 45 minutes for lunch and we find less than eight (8) hours consumed in the entire festival.
The International York Rite Council, established in 1968, is a continuing organization for the cooperative advancement of the York Rite of Freemasonry. Its membership consists of the Masons occupying dais positions in the three bodies including the Grand Recorders and Secretary.
Additional copies of this outline may be secured from the General Grand Secretary of the General Grand Chapter, R.A.M., International; the General Grand Recorder of the General Grand Council of Cryptic Masons International, or the Grand Recorder of the Grand Encampment of Knights Templar, U.S.A.

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