



LEVEL 3: UNIT RESOURCES

Shape > Members Action Plan > Your Personal Statement

If you are likely to be discussing Freemasonry with people who are not Freemasons, or the Royal Arch with Craft Masons, it is important to be in a positive frame of mind, proud of your membership, honest and clear about what membership means to you.

It helps to consider these issues in advance, to clarify your own thinking about the subject.

This document will help you prepare a succinct “personal statement” to address questions such as, “What is Freemasonry?” or “Why are you a Freemason?” or “Why should I join the Royal Arch?” Another thread, “Explaining to others what membership means to you” [see support document], offers guidance how to use this when speaking with those who are not Freemasons.

GUIDANCE FOR LODGE AND CHAPTER MEMBERS

- You can use a “personal statement” whenever you have an opportunity to get across your personal positive message about the Craft or Royal Arch.
- A thirty-second statement is ideal, as many people have a very short attention span and their interest needs to be grabbed before they move on to something else.
- Typical scenarios where personal statements can come in useful are at social occasions such as parties, when meeting someone during a journey or when in a queue with them.
- Creating a personal statement is worth doing before you plan to raise the subject of Freemasonry with others, especially if you think they may be interested in joining.
- When a Freemason mentions the Craft to anyone who is not involved, responses such as the following might be expected:
 - “What is that all about?”
 - “Isn’t that a secret society?”
 - “Why do you want to be a member of that?”
- When a Royal Arch Mason mentions the Royal Arch to a Craft Mason, the following responses may be expected:
 - “What is it all about?”
 - “What will it give me that I don’t already have?”
 - “How does that differ from [other Order]?”
- Remember that no person can define what Freemasonry is, nor speak on behalf of the Craft or Royal Arch.
- This is because Freemasonry means different things to different people, so developing an understanding of it is a very personal thing.
- Therefore, each personal statement will be unique. Each of us must prepare our own.



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- Recent research has also found that people tend to become Freemasons for one or more of nine reasons:
 - i. History and tradition
 - ii. Respect and status
 - iii. To be a “Better man”
 - iv. Pure curiosity
 - v. Mystic interest
 - vi. Escape!
 - vii. Family connection
 - viii. Because of a friend
 - ix. Social altruism.
- Start by thinking about what you especially enjoy about the Craft or Royal Arch, including all its different aspects, and what makes you proud to be a Freemason.
- Remember that what you find enjoyable and appealing may not strike a chord with the person with whom you are speaking.
- Therefore, try to include personal, developmental, social and community elements, to bring breadth to your statement.
- Include any brief anecdotes that bring your experience to life. For example, the care the members of my Lodge had for me and my family when I was seriously ill left a deep impression on me and my wife / partner.
- If you are struggling to find your own way of expressing a personal statement, have a look at the UGLE and SGC websites, or that of your Province. There are also more and more podcasts and videos available, in which members discuss what attracted them.
- Your statement must be personal to you, so don’t learn something by rote or just copy someone else’s. If you do, and the conversation develops as you hope, you will soon be found out!
- The answer given to any of the above questions does not have to address the specific question directly. It can be constructed to get across the point that you wish.
- The best personal statements create positive impressions, do not include defensive responses, and use positive language.
- Positive language refers to what you want people to think, rather than what you don’t.
- It avoids phrases such as “It is not X” because as soon as you mention “X” that is what the other person will think about.
- To illustrate this point, if I say to you “It is not a kangaroo” you will now be thinking of kangaroos – the very thing I wish you avoid thinking about.



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- In the same way, the phrase “Freemasonry is not a secret society, it is a society with secrets” only emphasises, and puts in peoples’ minds, one word – secrets; the very word and thought you wish to avoid.
- Therefore, talk about what Freemasonry – or the Royal Arch – is, not what it isn’t.
- Try to relate your comments to what you know the other person finds interesting or is seeking in their life.
- If the other person asks further questions or seeks any clarification, the conversation can continue with you giving honest and personal answers.
- You may find it helps, once you have written your own personal statement, to practice explaining it in a conversation with another member, or with a supportive family member.

WHAT NEXT?

The next thread in the Building Together, “**Identifying potential new members**”*[see support document]*, builds on this one.

Later, in the **Attract Members** element, we will make use of the above material by considering how you can “**Explain what Freemasonry means to you**”. *[see support document]*”