

INITIATION

[Any Subordinate Lodge desiring so to do may utilize the services of a drill team in connection with the ceremony of Initiation, such team to be composed of Members of the local Lodge or of another Lodge. When the ceremony is performed by the regular Officers of the Lodge, the Exalted Ruler shall preside. If the Exalted Ruler be absent, the Esteemed Leading Knight may preside. As an act of courtesy any one of the following Officers may be invited to preside: any Past Exalted Ruler of the local Lodge, the Exalted Ruler or any Past Exalted Ruler of another Lodge, the District Deputy, the Grand Exalted Ruler, or any other Officer of the Grand Lodge.]

[Prior to the beginning of the ceremony of Initiation, the Secretary shall require each Candidate to sign the Question Book (provided the applications are not kept as a permanent record) and pay the balance of the initiation fee and dues for the current period.]

[Smoking is positively prohibited during Initiation.]

Exalted Ruler: Lodge Secretary, [*pauses, Secretary rises and then the Exalted Ruler continues:*] are there any Candidates awaiting Initiation?

Secretary: Exalted Ruler, _____ (*single name or # American citizens*) is in waiting and requests Initiation into this Lodge.

Exalted Ruler: Has the Candidate been duly elected to membership in our Order, and has he/she complied with our laws?

Secretary: He/she has.

[The Secretary resumes his/her seat.]



[All Officers indicate their attention to the Exalted Ruler.]

Exalted Ruler: Lodge Esquire, [pauses, the Esquire turns his/her head to a normal position, straight ahead, rises, steps forward one pace, makes a left turn without stopping then turns his/her head and looks at the Exalted Ruler who continues:] you will retire to the anteroom, prepare the Candidate for Initiation and conduct him/her to the door of the Lodge.

[If there should be more than one Candidate, the foregoing and subsequent responses must be made to conform to the plural. The Esquire shall select such assistants as may be necessary.]

[The Esquire turns his/her head to a normal position, straight ahead and then proceeds in an orderly manner to a spot directly in front center of the Altar and approximately one pace away from it. He/she faces the Exalted Ruler and salutes him/her with the hailing sign. The Exalted Ruler answers with the wave of the hand only at the top of the salute. The Esquire then proceeds in a direct and orderly manner to the door. At the conclusion of the Esquire's hailing sign, the Inner Guard looks straight ahead, rises, approaches the door in a direct and orderly manner, and opens it in time for the exit of the Esquire. When the Esquire has passed through the door, the Inner Guard closes the door and returns to his/her station in a direct and orderly manner and is seated.]

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Exalted Ruler: We are about to perform the solemn ceremony of Initiation; and, as the impressions produced on the mind of the Candidate are likely to be lasting, I earnestly charge you to observe the utmost decorum during its progress. You will refrain from smoking, cease conversation, and so deport yourselves as not to disturb the Officers in charge or distract the attention of the Candidate.

With this reminder of the important work we are about to undertake, I now declare this Lodge ready for Initiation.

Lodge Inner Guard, [pauses, the Inner Guard takes two paces directly forward from his/her station, continuing to look at the Exalted Ruler and turns toward him/her and then the Exalted Ruler continues:] inform the Esquire that the Lodge is prepared to receive the Candidate.

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[The Inner Guard holds his/her position until all the other Officers are seated in unison. Then the Inner Guard turns and proceeds in a direct and orderly manner to the door, opens it completely, being certain that the door is completely open and his/her hands are at his/her sides, before he/she nods to the Esquire, closes the door, and in the most direct and orderly manner returns to his/her station and resumes his/her seat. After giving the Inner Guard time to be seated, five to ten seconds, the Esquire will give a rap (★) for admission at the door. The Inner Guard rises, then proceeds in a direct and orderly manner to the door, opens it completely, being certain that the door is completely open and his/her hands are at his/her sides before speaking to the Esquire and says:]

Inner Guard: Who seeks admission?

Esquire: The Esquire, with _____, who desires to become a Member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

*[If more than one Candidate, then the Esquire, Inner Guard and Exalted Ruler shall omit any reference to individual names, and the Esquire shall substitute "(#) American citizens," and when the Inner Guard addresses the Exalted Ruler, he/she will say, "seeks admission with (#) American citizens," and when the Exalted Ruler addresses the Candidates he/she shall say, "American citizens."]

Inner Guard: Is he/she properly prepared and vouched for?

Esquire: He/she is properly prepared and I, as an Elk, vouch for his/her identity.

Inner Guard: I will report to the Exalted Ruler.

[The Inner Guard closes the door, turns in an orderly manner and takes two paces directly forward from the door, turns to face the Exalted Ruler and says:]

Inner Guard: Exalted Ruler, [*pauses, the Exalted Ruler rises, continuing to look at the Inner Guard and steps forward one pace to a normal position at the station and then the Inner Guard continues:*] the Esquire seeks admission with _____, who requests initiation into our Order.

Exalted Ruler: If he/she is properly prepared and vouched for, admit him/her.



[Only after the Officers have risen in unison and the Exalted Ruler has stepped back shall the Inner Guard proceed in a direct and orderly manner to the door, opens it completely, being certain that the door is completely open and his/her hands are at his/her sides before speaking to the Esquire and says:]

Inner Guard: The Exalted Ruler bids you enter.

[The Inner Guard shall then step out of the path and allow the Esquire to enter the room escorting the Candidate on his/her right. As soon as they have entered the room, the Inner Guard shall close the door, return to his/her station in the most direct and orderly manner, and remain standing. The Esquire conducts the Candidate first past the station of the Loyal Knight and approximately two paces away from it, if feasible, then past the station of the Exalted Ruler approximately four paces away from it, then past the stations

of the Lecturing Knight and the Leading Knight approximately two paces away from them. All Officers, with the exception of the Exalted Ruler, shall deliver their initial charge as the Esquire and Candidate approach their stations, while looking the Candidate in the face. The Chair Officers will deliver the following:]

Esteemed Loyal Knight: Be Just to your fellow man.

Esteemed Lecturing Knight: Ever practice Brotherly Love.

Esteemed Leading Knight: Be Charitable to all mankind.

[The Esquire continues to proceed to place the Candidate in a position in front center of the Altar one pace away, releases the Candidate's arm and says:]

[If there is a larger number of Candidates, they should be arranged in single, or when necessary, double or triple file before the Altar, facing the station of the Exalted Ruler.]

Esquire: Exalted Ruler, I present the Candidate.

[The Esquire then steps back one pace and then the Exalted Ruler now looks at the Candidate, steps forward one pace and addresses him/her.]

Exalted Ruler: _____, you have been duly accepted by the Members of this Lodge as worthy to become united with them in the noble work to which this Order is dedicated. Before proceeding further with your Initiation, it is necessary for you to take the solemn and binding Obligation of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. In this, I assure you, there is nothing which will interfere with your duty to yourself or your family, or conflict with your religious or political opinions. Are you willing to assume such an obligation?

[Candidate replies: I am.]

Exalted Ruler: Do you believe in God?

[Candidate replies: I do.]

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[The Exalted Ruler and the Chaplain shall then proceed in step, in an orderly manner to their positions approximately three paces away from the Altar. The Exalted Ruler shall be on the right, the Chaplain on the left, equi-distant from the center of the Altar.]

[Exalted Ruler looking straight says:]

Exalted Ruler: The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

[The Chaplain steps forward two paces obliquely to the right, to a point approximately one pace away from the center of the Altar and says:]

[All Officers shall bow their heads in unison, including the Chaplain.]

Chaplain: Our Father Who art in Heaven, we have gathered as Thy children, to renew our Obligation of Brotherhood. Prosper us in this labor of love. Bless this Candidate, and grant that he/she may become a true and loyal Member among us, exemplifying the virtues of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity. In all our endeavors for good, lead us and all Elks into the green pastures of knowledge, and beside the still waters of peace. Amen.

All: Amen.

[All the other Officers shall repeat "Amen" in unison. The Chaplain shall not repeat "Amen."]

[After the prayer, all Officers shall raise their heads in unison and direct their attention to the Chaplain. The Chaplain then steps back two paces obliquely to the left, to his/her former position parallel to the Exalted Ruler.]

Exalted Ruler: Lodge Esquire, [pauses, the Esquire steps forward one pace to a position beside the Candidate. The Exalted Ruler continues when the Esquire is in proper position:] place the Candidate in position to assume the Obligation, standing erect, his/her left hand over his/her heart, his/her right hand uplifted above the Altar upon which rest the Holy Bible and the Antlers of Protection.

[The Exalted Ruler steps forward two paces obliquely to the left, to a point approximately one pace away from the center of the Altar. While the Exalted Ruler is moving forward, the Esquire moves simultaneously to place the Candidate in position to assume the Obligation. After placing the Candidate in position, the Esquire then moves to a position beside the Candidate and says:]

Esquire: Exalted Ruler, the Candidate is in position.

[The Esquire then steps back one pace. The Exalted Ruler continues when the Esquire is in proper position:]

Exalted Ruler: [glances around the room and says:] Please be attentive while I am administering the Obligation.

[All lights, except the Star, are to be extinguished until after the Eleven O'Clock Toast. The Organist should play softly the strains of some sacred music.]

Exalted Ruler: The Candidate will say, "I," pronounce his/her name in full, and repeat after me:

[The Exalted Ruler shall not repeat his/her own name after the word "I." During the Obligation, all Officers shall direct their attention to the Exalted Ruler. The Candidate shall repeat each phrase after the Exalted Ruler.]

I, _____, in the presence of God and this Lodge of Elks, do solemnly promise and swear that I will never reveal any of the confidential matters of this Order which have been, or may hereafter be, committed to my charge and keeping.

I will support the Constitution, and obey the Statutes, rules and regulations of this Order, and the By-Laws of _____ Lodge, No. _____, and those of any other Lodge of which I may hereafter become a Member.

I will uphold the Constitution and laws of the United States of America.

I will propose no one for membership in this Order whom I do not sincerely believe to be worthy thereof.

I will ballot for a worthy candidate and against an unworthy candidate when proposed by another.

I will not permit any political, sectarian or personal prejudice to influence me in the slightest degree in the exercise of my right of franchise in the Order.

I will obey any lawful summons sent me by any competent authority of the Order.

I will never apply to the courts for redress in any matter concerning the Order, without first appealing to the councils of the Order.

I will never reveal to anyone, not an Elk, the name of a Member asking or receiving aid or relief from the Order.

I will not, directly or indirectly, use my membership in this Order, nor any emblem, insignia or sign thereof, for business or commercial purposes.

I will never introduce into the Order anything of a political or sectarian character, nor in any way by my conduct bring reproach upon it.

I will always protect our Members, their good names and their families; and I will always respect and defend the purity and sanctity of their homes and firesides.

If I break this Obligation, may I wander through the world forsaken; may I be pointed out as a being bereft of decency, unfit to hold communion with true and upright Members. And may God help me, and keep me steadfast in this my solemn and binding Obligation in the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America. Amen.

[All seven Officers say "Amen" in unison.]

Exalted Ruler: [*While looking at the Esquire, the Exalted Ruler says:*] At ease.

[While the Exalted Ruler steps straight back one pace, the Esquire moves to place the new Member at ease. The Esquire then moves to a position beside the new Member and together they step back one pace. A Member designated by the Exalted Ruler shall then cause the chimes to strike eleven. After the eleventh stroke, the Esquire then says most impressively:]

Esquire: It is the Hour of Recollection.

[The Esquire then steps back one pace and then the Exalted Ruler continues by giving the Eleven O'Clock Toast.]

Exalted Ruler: You have heard the tolling of eleven strokes. This is to impress upon you that with us the hour of eleven has a tender significance. Wherever Elks may roam, whatever their lot in life may be, when this hour falls upon the dial of night, the great heart of Elkdom swells and throbs. It is the golden hour of recollection, the homecoming of those who wander, the mystic roll call of those who will come no more. Living or dead, Elks are never forgotten, never forsaken. Morning and noon may pass them by, the light of day sink heedlessly in the West, but ere the shadows of midnight shall fall, the chimes of memory will be pealing forth the friendly message: "**To Our Absent Members.**"

[Lights turned on.]

Exalted Ruler: [*glances around the room and says.*] For the instruction of this newly-made Member, extend the right hand in token of the renewal of your Obligation.

[With the exception of the new Member, each Member shall extend his/her right hand upon the completion of the words, "renewal of your Obligation" toward the new Member, look at him/her and then the Exalted Ruler continues:]

This is to teach you that while you remain faithful to your Obligation, these hands and the hands of every Elk on the face of the earth will be stretched forth to you in a spirit of fellowship and to relieve your distress should you be overtaken by adversity and misfortune. On the contrary, should you prove unfaithful, these same hands will be clenched [*each Member clenches his/her right hand — not in a threatening manner*] to drive you from our midst and punish you for your infidelity.

[Upon completion of the words, "for your infidelity" each Member shall unclench his/her right fist while lowering his/her right hand. The Exalted Ruler then steps back one pace obliquely to the right to his/her former position parallel to the Chaplain. The Exalted Ruler and the Chaplain now make a right turn simultaneously and step off together, in step, to resume their stations in the reverse manner as they left them. Then the Exalted Ruler gives one rap of the gavel and while all are being seated, the Exalted Ruler shall lay the gavel on the station, step back one pace and say to the Esquire:]



Exalted Ruler: Lodge Esquire, [*pauses, the Esquire steps forward one pace to the side of the new Member and then the Exalted Ruler continues.*] you will now instruct our new Member in the procedures of the Order.

[The Esquire makes an orderly left turn, takes two paces, makes a right turn, proceeds to a position approximately one half the distance and in line between the new Member and his/her station, turns right in an orderly manner to face the new Member, and delivers his/her charge. The Exalted Ruler shall be seated as soon as the Esquire says the words, "The membership card."]

Esquire: The membership card, which will be presented to you by the Secretary, is a means of identification. It shows that you are a Member in good standing in this Lodge. You should carry it with you at all times. You are required to present it in order to gain admission to this Lodge, and without it you cannot gain admission to another Lodge.

