
Freemasonry in plain English.

This leaflet outlines some plain English explanations of Freemasonry and is intended as a guide to Freemasonry for our members and the public whenever the topic of Freemasonry is raised. You will find background information on Freemasonry and answers to the most popular questions about the Craft.

The aim is to give Freemasons confidence in knowing what can be said publicly, and comfort in knowing how to speak about the Freemasonry experience. Anyone can have a copy of this guide, but as a Freemason, the best way to speak about the Craft is in your own words. Familiarize yourself with this content so you can talk to others with authenticity and sincerity; so that your message suits your audience and reflects your life as a Freemason. Being knowledgeable of the Craft, and speaking comfortably, honestly and plainly will help you feel prepared to speak up for Freemasonry at any time and in any place.

What is Freemasonry?

Freemasonry can be described as, "*a brotherhood of good men meeting and working in harmony; applying strong moral and ethical values to personal, family and community behaviour and upholding a code of protecting and caring for others.*"

More simply, "*Freemasonry gives men of good character the opportunity to make themselves even better.*"

Who can become a Freemason?

Freemasonry accepts men of good character, strong moral virtue and a profound commitment to improving themselves.

Basic guidelines for candidates to Freemasonry:

- must be 21 years old (no upper age limit);
- must possess and declare a belief in a Supreme Being; all faiths are accepted;
- must be an upright, law-abiding citizen and able to afford modest fees without detriment to his family or livelihood.
- must be willing to provide personal character references and accept a background check before petitioning for membership.

Contact your local lodge for more information, or find a lodge by visiting the website of the **Grand Lodge of British Columbia and Yukon.**

freemasonry.bcy.ca



Speaking of Freemasonry...

A public guide to answering the most popular questions about Freemasonry.



The Guiding Principles of Freemasonry:

At the foundation of our Craft are the noble qualities and virtues that form the ideal of a Freemason. A philosophy of life that guides a Freemason to fulfil his duty as a man, a subject, a husband and a father. Our principles are often summarised in these three core virtues:

- Brotherly Love (humanity and compassion)
- Relief (charity, benevolence and support)
- Truth (honesty, courage and integrity)

The **tenets** of Freemasonry promote tolerance, care, kindness, honesty and trust. These timeless virtues are as relevant to the world today as they were 300 years ago when the organization was established. Freemasonry aims to advance universal and lasting happiness for every person.

A **lodge** is a group of Freemasons typically formed by geography. Meetings are often held in a building dedicated to this purpose. Each lodge is led by a **Worshipful Master** and his officers who manage the affairs, business and ceremonies of the lodge.

The members, or **brothers**, meet once or twice monthly to advance lodge activities related to community, charity, fellowship, special events and to support the development of new members.

New members who become **candidates** pass through three stages of education, each accompanied by a ceremony rooted in masonic tradition to reach full membership as a **Master Mason**. The process instils in each new member the history, principles and ideals of Freemasonry.

The social part of Freemasonry: fellowship.

Every lodge strives to widen fraternal associations and create new friendships. Lodges lead an active social life for the benefit of each member, his partner and often his family and some events that are open to friends and non-Freemasons.

Fellowship

Freemasonry induces strong bonds among members and produces life-long friendships. Members enjoy mixing and working with men of high integrity and strong principle.

Self-development

Lodge life provides men with many interesting opportunities to develop practical skills such as organisational leadership, project management, and public speaking.

Family

Most lodges offer social events and activities that introduce a Freemason's partner and family to a wider social circle.

Benevolence

An essential element of Freemasonry is the care for the needs of other Freemasons and the community. Freemasons promise to be aware of the needs of those around them.

Life-balance

Amid life's stressors and pace, Freemasonry is an oasis of calm and order that provides a mental and social refreshment where busy men find diversion and relaxation.

Community

Freemasons are active contributors to their communities through charitable giving and community events.

What's it like to be a Freemason?

Benevolence has been the core of the Freemasonry tradition since the founding of the first lodges. Support for people and community is the most publicly visible activity of a lodge and is among the strongest attractions for new members.

Lodge life also focuses on personal development through education in moral lessons, the arts and sciences. New Freemasons learn the history and principles of the Craft through three **degrees** which represent man's progression in life from ignorance to knowledge to wisdom. The names of the degrees recall the Craft's roots in stone masonry: Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craft, and Master Mason.

While Freemasons share a common bond of brotherhood and a professed belief in a Supreme Being, the Craft accepts all religions and celebrates the differences and diversity of each member. Freemasonry promotes individual freedoms, supports societal harmony, equality and respect for the family as the foundation of society.

What Cannot Be Shared?

Freemasons protect the means of authenticating their membership in the Craft. This tradition stems from the days of pre-literate stonemasons who had to prove their credentials before they could build cathedrals, bridges and other significant structures.

