

What Do We Talk About?

Your visit with a petitioner should NOT be a series of questions and answers. It is a casual conversation which will allow you to determine if the petitioner meets the membership qualifications, moral standards and character to be a member of the Order of the Eastern Star.

Ask questions about job and family, as you would with any new acquaintance. What are their hobbies? How do they spend their free time? Sometimes you will discover information that will help the Worthy Matron select an appropriate mentor or Star Pal for the petitioner.

Most importantly, remember that the purpose of the visit is not just to “investigate” the petitioner, but also to answer any questions she/he may have about the Order of the Eastern Star and your particular chapter.

The answers you give to their inquiries will help them prepare for their initiation and their role as a member. Let them know what we are all about -- the work that the Order does around the community and the world, and the types of charitable and social activities of your particular chapter. Be sure to point out that the level of satisfaction they will have as members depends on their willingness to participate.

What Can We Say About Initiation?

Petitioners will naturally be curious about what will happen after the visit and, more particularly, the initiation ceremony.

You can advise them that they will be notified in writing once balloting has occurred. On occasion, the Worthy Matron has already “penciled in” a date for initiation. If you are aware of this date, it might be nice to mention it, so they can keep the date open on their calendar.

You can explain that an oath of secrecy is a part of the initiation ceremony. (This could conflict with some religious faiths, so the petitioner should be aware.)

You can advise them to wear comfortable shoes, since the ceremony will require a good bit of walking, as long as the candidate is physically able to do so.

You should explain proper attire for the chapter room -- dress or skirt for ladies and coat and tie for men.

You can tell the petitioner that the initiation is a beautiful ceremony based on stories of women in the Bible.

Most importantly, you can assure them that they will find a room full of people who are anxious to meet them and become their friends.



Guidelines for the Investigating Committee

Why Me?

Congratulations! You have been appointed to the Investigating Committee! It is an honor and a privilege to be asked to serve -- and an important duty.

Investigating Committees are entrusted with the important task of ensuring that the petitioner meets the qualifications for membership and has the character that is required to preserve the reputation of our beautiful Order.

Committee members also have the privilege of meeting our future members, and their impression of YOU is just as important as your impression of them. Be prepared to answer questions about your chapter and our Order!

Who Can Investigate?

Ohio Grand Law requires that three members serve on an Investigating Committee of a petitioner for the degrees, including at least one Brother. The same applies to a petition for affiliation. Any member of the Chapter may serve on the committee except the Worthy Matron, Worthy Patron, and the members who signed the petition.

In both cases, the petition “lays over” until the next stated meeting. At that meeting, the committee members should meet with the Chapter Secretary to sign the petition, to verify that they have performed their duties, and to indicate a favorable or unfavorable impression.

How Do We Begin?

Once you have been assigned to the Investigating Committee, talk with the sisters and/or brothers who recommended the petitioner. Ask them to share any information that may help you become acquainted with the candidate’s background and interests.

As soon as possible, the chairman of the Investigating Committee should contact the petitioner(s) to set up an appointment at a time that is most convenient for the petitioner. A last minute rush to “get the job done” before the next meeting does not give a good impression of you or your chapter.

Remember, it is likely that the members who recommended the candidate told them when the petition would be presented, and explained that she/he could expect a call and a visit. They will be waiting to hear from you, so don’t make them worry and wonder.

The Brother on the Investigating Committee is responsible for verifying the Masonic affiliation of the candidate. He can do this by checking the dues card at the time of the visit (if the petitioner is a Mason, or the wife of a Mason). Another option -- that can be done before the visit takes place -- is to contact the Secretary of the Lodge cited on the petition, or the Grand Lodge office. The Masonic relative cited on the petition must be a member in good standing. If deceased, he must have been in good standing at the time of his death.

Where Do We Meet?

Whenever possible, try to arrange the visit in the home of the petitioner and ask her/ him to include their spouse and other immediate family members to be there, so that they can learn about the OES, as well.

A visit that takes place in the home will help you gain some insight into the petitioner’s personal life:

- Does the home life appear to be happy?
- Do the surroundings and appearance indicate that the petitioner can afford the initiation fees and dues of the Order?
- Does the family support the petitioner’s desire to join the Order?

Qualifications for Membership

Keep in mind the general requirements to become a member of the Order. Generally, the members recommending the petitioner will have confirmed most qualifications. However, during the course of your visit, you may learn of other family members, or friends who have an interest in Eastern Star, but may be unsure they meet the requirements.

Before meeting with the petitioner, brush up on your knowledge of the required relationships, etc., so that you can give complete and accurate information.

For details on membership requirements, see the Red Book pages 36-38.