

Chapter Excellence Ideas from 2018 Reports

Charity and Service

“Quiet Money or Loud Money” --Some chapters have an additional donation basket at the refreshment table to collect “quiet money” or “loud money” for special projects such as help for a member in need, a local charity, or a special purchase for the chapter or Temple.

Learning About Our Seniors’ Needs -- A chapter in NE Ohio asked a representative from the Medina campus of the Ohio Masonic Home Resource Center to do a training in the Masonic Volunteer Program, so they could be better informed about ways to help members who are ill or shut-in.

Santa Breakfast for Charity -- Consider hosting a community “Breakfast with Santa” to benefit needy families at Christmas time. Charge a nominal fee to help pay for cost of food and craft materials, with the rest of the proceeds going to a local charity. Instead of charging for the event, you could also ask for donations of new toys or nonperishable food items for needy families. One chapter does a pancake breakfast with the Easter Bunny, also for charity

Feed the Team (or the Scholars) -- Some chapters expose young people (and their parents) to Masonry and Eastern Star by preparing a pre-game dinner for the local football team. Another chapter hosted the banquet and induction ceremony of the school’s National Honor Society. And another chapter treated the members of the girls basketball team and their parents to a spaghetti dinner before the tournament season began. (The latter event resulted in a request for a petition!)

Benefit Dinners -- Several chapters have hosted benefit dinners for community residents who needed assistance with medical bills, or for children who need medical equipment.

Respond to First Responders -- A chapter contacted police/fire departments in the county and asked how they could be of service. Using their responses as a guide, they took homemade pie and ice cream to a local fire station, gave a police station a grocery gift card, and served lunch to another group. They also presented “First Responder” coins to all the firemen and policemen, as well as several EMTs.

Holiday Trees for Nursing Homes -- A chapter partners with a local church to prepare 750 lighted and decorated mini holiday trees for every nursing home resident in Knox County. Chapter members personally delivered the trees, along with hand-made cards, and visited with the residents.

Backpacks for Needy Children -- A Chapter volunteered their services to a local charity to fill and deliver backpacks of food and supplies to needy school children at a nearby elementary school, to make sure they had enough to eat through the weekend. The chapter sold 400 sandwiches to earn more than \$800 to support the backpack project.

Books for Needy Children -- Several chapters have collected new or nearly new books for elementary children who have few, if any, books in their home to read. One chapter sent a letter to the Masonic lodge with a list of suggested books and/or authors and asked that they share it with their wives, children and grandchildren so they could participate in the charity. A great way to show potential members the charitable aspect of Eastern Star membership!

Sympathy for the Family -- One chapter sends a meat and cheese tray to families who have lost a loved one who was a member of the chapter, i.e. for the visitation at the funeral home.

Card Signing and Card Making -- Several chapters have members sign cards for homebound and hospitalized members, for a more personal touch. Others create hand-made cards for them. The card-making sessions are great for fun and fellowship, too!

Fun Run For Charity -- A chapter sponsored a public Fun Run, complete with tee-shirts and award certificates, to raise more than \$1,500 to fight drug abuse through the local D.A.R.E program

Fellowship and Social Activities

Get to Know Your Members -- One chapter asked members to complete an “All About Me” questionnaire (includes items like favorite color, music genre, band, TV show, comedian, dessert, restaurant, childhood memory, OES memory, etc.) One or two are chosen to be shared with membership at each meeting. (could also be subject of an article in chapter newsletter).

Find the Member Who.... --Many chapters use a sheet of various statements and ask members to find a person that fits the statement and have then sign the sheet. Statements could include: *I own a boat, I'm on a diet, I served more than once as WM, I have been a Grand Officer,* etc. Great ice breaker for Friendship Night or just an activity to help your members get to know each other better!

One-Pound Auctions -- Many chapters have one-pound auctions of various items ranging from a paper weight or lovely vase to a one-pound can of beans. All are cleverly wrapped to disguise the contents and then auctioned to the highest bidder. Proceeds can be designated for a special charity or chapter project.

Share Your Collections -- For after meeting “entertainment,” one chapter had a “collection night,” asking members to share samples of what they collect, and explain why. Another nice way for members to get to know one another on a more personal basis.

Power Point Report of Grand Chapter Session -- One chapter member gave a power point presentation of the Grand Chapter session, including Friday night opening, Saturday night banquet and entertainment, and Sunday installation.

Eclipse Party -- For a Friendship Night, one chapter hosted an “Eclipse Party” in August, 2017, with eclipse-themed decorations, entertainment and food.

Member Reunion -- One chapter had a “Member Reunion” night at a chapter meeting. Members who had not attended chapter in awhile were called and a personal invitation was mailed from the WM. Rides were provided as needed.

Who Inspires You? As an after meeting activity, the WM asked several members to share their Eastern Star stories and talk about members who had inspired them and/or impacted their lives.

Happy Birthday To Us! To celebrate the chapter’s birthday, refreshments after the meeting featured different cakes assigned to tables representing four different quarters of the year. January-March had carrot cake; April-June had pineapple upside down cake; July-September had apple-dapple cake, and October-December had red velvet cake. Members sat at tables for their birthday month but, after singing Happy Birthday to the chapter and cutting the cakes, members started swapping tables to try different types.

What's On Your Phone? One chapter had an after-chapter activity where members earned points depending on what was on their cell phone. Some of the items listed were related to Eastern Star, i.e. if you had a photo taken during a chapter activity, or if you had a text from the Worthy Matron.

Put the Icing on the Cupcake! -- For Friendship Night, one chapter provided unfrosted cupcakes, various colored frostings, sprinkles, etc., for members and guests to decorate. Another chapter decorated Valentine cookies as an after-chapter program.

Dinner and a Movie for Widows -- One chapter took Masonic widows out for dinner and a movie. No cooking, and everybody had a great time.

Officer Excellence

Games to Educate -- Many chapters develop trivia sheets, word searches, etc., to “educate” members about a specific Star Point, or anything related to Eastern Star. A fun way to spark conversation at the refreshment tables!

Memorization Tips -- A Past Matron presented tips on memorization, including breaking the work into smaller sections, visualization, creating acronyms (i.e. PIE for present, introduce and escort), practicing in front of a mirror, etc.

Keep Everyone in the Loop -- In several chapters, the WM and Secretary of one chapter develop the agenda through emails back and forth. Then a copy is emailed to the chapter line officers before the meeting, to keep everyone in the loop!

OES Homework -- One chapter gives members “homework” at each meeting -- a puzzle or quiz about some aspect of Eastern Star. Members are asked to bring their completed homework to the next meeting, and then their name is put into a drawing to win a basket of goodies at the end of the year.

Grand Law Tic-Tac-Toe -- Another chapter uses a Tic-Tac-Toe board to quiz members on Grand Law. Members were divided into two teams, and the WM created a list of questions related to Grand Law. The team giving the correct answer gets to place an X or O on the Tic-Tac-Toe board (a white board).

What's Wrong Here? -- A Worthy Matron set up chapter but included several errors. As members gathered for the meeting, they were asked to go to the chapter room and check for five “mistakes” in the set up (for instance, Adah's scarf was tied to the sword in a bow, the ballot box was at the AM station, the Bible was placed in the left corner of the altar, etc.). Then, using the Book of Instruction, each error was explained, giving the page location.

Membership and Public Relations

Flag for Habitat for Humanity House -- One chapter presents an American flag and flagpole to the new owners of Habitat for Humanity houses in the area. It is part of the ceremony dedicating the house.

Membership Pin Presentations -- Several chapters compile an OES history of members who are receiving membership pins, including date of petition, names of members who signed their petition and investigated them, WM and WP who presided at their initiation, offices held, Past Grand Appointments, etc. If members cannot attend the meeting to receive the pin, the history is sent to them along with the pin. One chapter reported that they closed chapter and removed emblems from the pedestals so that family members who are not members of the Order could come into the meeting for the presentations.

“You Are A Star” as Orientation Tool -- A chapter used the “You Are A Star” brochure in an orientation meeting with new members. The meeting is conducted by the Associate Matron and Conductress, who performs the signs and passes. Then they take the new members to lunch!

Dinner with Candidates -- Several chapters have a pot luck dinner before meetings when initiatory work will be done, and invite the candidates to come for dinner. It gives them a chance to meet and fellowship with chapter members before their initiation, so they are less nervous.

Boning Up On OES -- Some chapters invite the “Star Pal” or mentor of new members to attend when they provide an orientation for new members. They also open the event to any “old” member who wants to bone up on OES procedures and information.

Joint Awards Night -- An OES chapter and Masonic lodge hold an annual joint awards night, to present service pins and other awards, and to honor an outstanding member of the community.

Secret Sisters (and Brothers) -- A chapter invited members to participate in a secret sister program, selecting the name of another member that they would remember with cards at holidays and occasional gifts, delivered anonymously. A Secret Sister revealing is scheduled at one of the meetings.

Pie It Forward -- A Worthy Matron brought two homemade pies to her meetings and gave them to two members, asking them to do something nice for any member of their choice who has not been attending meetings. The idea is to brighten their day, let them know we are thinking of them and would love to have them join in chapter activities more often.