



RITUAL ADVISOR HANDBOOK

Sharing the Legacy of DeMolay

New York DeMolay
Updated 9/1/2020

Ritual Advisor Handbook

When “Dad” Frank Sherman Land founded DeMolay he knew that it needed something “more.” It needed a way of sharing timeless values and ideals. He looked to the Masonic Fraternity and decided that a ritual would bring a sense of purpose, seriousness and transmit timeless values to the young men. Over 100 years later, the ritual continues to do just that.

As the ritual advisor, you have been given the important task of mentoring the young men in performing their ritual, learning not just the words, both the meaning and in the process helping the DeMolays with their presentation and presence. We have developed this guide to help you with this most important task.

Thank you for accepting the task and passing along the virtues and values of DeMolay. If you have suggestions on how to make this guide better please do not hesitate to let us know!

Thank you to the Adult Education Task Force and State Ritual Advisor Team for their work on this project.

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Mentoring Youth with Ritual

The approach to education was very different when the DeMolay Ritual was first developed. Straight memorization, what we call rote learning, was the preferred method. Students were drilled to know key facts, similar to how students today learn their multiplication tables. Many advisors can recall having to memorize the names of the presidents, the Gettysburg Address, or the preamble to the constitution. Learning styles today focus more on themes and analytical skills. Learning the ritual may be the first type of work like this that the young man has ever undertaken. In the same way that someone may be naturally talented at baseball, some may be naturally talented with ritual. Others will need to work harder at it. Below are some general suggestions on how to mentor youth with ritual.

1. Make It Fun
2. Develop Reasonable Goals
3. Set standards
4. Have the right tools
5. Hold Practices
6. Quick to praise, slow to criticize
7. Think about learning styles and make room for accommodation
8. Make room for competition
9. Show by example

Make it Fun: Ritual, like other things, in DeMolay should be fun. A young man may know all the lyrics to the latest top 40 hit and are excited to know the songs. That's the same type of fun you should bring to ritual. Your tone and how you describe ritual is important. The more effective ritual advisors talk about "Tradition" "pride" and "teamwork." The less effective ritual advisors talk about "Must" and "need" and make ritual seem like a burden.

Develop Reasonable Goals: No one is going to go from a couch potato to running the New York City Marathon overnight, or at least not successfully. You will want to develop reasonable goals for the DeMolays you are working with. If it is a new member doing a small part like a steward may be a good starting place. Memorizing a preceptor may be a good next step. Remember each DeMolay is an individual and you will want to align each member's goals.

Set Standards: It is critically important that we have standards for the DeMolay ritual. Time and time again, we have seen that people will rise, or sink, to the level of standards that we hold them to. The same is true in DeMolay. DeMolay Ritual is expected to be memorized and performed well. A lot of chapters will do their first meeting of a term with ritual books, but after that the ritual books are put away. By setting that standard DeMolays will rise to the standards that we expect.

Have the Right Tools: The current edition of the ritual is red. Every DeMolay should have one. There are also printed monitors of ceremonies. Using printed sheets or their phones is not acceptable. New York DeMolay also has the floor work simulator on our website to help teach you how to move around the Chapter Room.

Hold Practices: If you had a sports team that never practiced they would almost assuredly never win a game. The same is true with DeMolay Ritual. Hosting ritual practices is key to learning the work and doing the work well. These practices can be informal with food afterward. The best practices become destination events and an activity that the young men look forward to attending. It is also important that DeMolays know to practice on their own. Some chapters have set up a buddy system, where a more experienced member will help a newer member work through the ritual. Or perhaps pair up two new guys to work on it together.

Quick to Praise, Slow to Criticize: When you are first starting out on something you need positive encouragement. The same is true in ritual. You need to be quick to praise good work, and be slow to criticize. The views of adults can be quickly internalized by a young man and can negatively impact him and create feelings of insecurity and further undermine him. Remember the adage, think twice before speaking once.

Think About Learning Styles Every person learns differently. We need to make sure that we are working with each young man's unique learning style. There's more about these on page TKD.

Make Room for Competition: Humans love competition. DeMolay has a number of different ritual contests around the state and within DeMolay International. In addition, you can create competition inside your chapter. This can be done by having a contest at each meeting where two DeMolays square off on doing a part.

Show by Example: Remember when you were a kid and you went to your first professional sports tournament and you saw excellence? The same can be done with DeMolay ritual. Perhaps inviting a State Officer to showcase their ritual skills, or if there is a piece of public ritual that you can have the local masons perform.

What does the ritual mean?

The first time you sat down and read Romeo and Juliet you were probably confused about the words and the characters, but you had a general idea of the story. For our DeMolays they first experienced the story when they took their degrees and frequently young men have so much information coming at them that they do not fully absorb the story or they miss a number of details.

It is a good exercise to talk to the young men about the story of the first degree. The idea that this is an allegory for their lives as they walk around the lodge room like they walk through life and they should instill the virtues and values of DeMolay before they reach manhood. Discuss the symbolism of arriving at the noontime of their life, as well as the symbolism of the station in the west.

For the DeMolay Degree you will probably want to provide a sense of history of how the ecclesial courts of the time worked. Some character explanation is probably also needed. The Master Inquisitor driven by a desire to keep his office and status, the Senior Inquisitor wiser than the others and disliking the task they do, and the junior inquisitor seeking power, being greedy and ambitious.

For the opening of the chapter recognizing it as a call back to the Degrees they took will help the young men better understand it. Having the young men be able to articulate an explanation of the ritual work they do will lend to better understanding of their work.

What makes a good presentation of ritual?

In our experience there are several things that make for a “good” presentation of DeMolay Ritual, we call them the vowels of good ritual, The A, E, I, O, U:

Audible
Energetic
Inspiring
Organized
Understood

Audible: The ritual needs to be heard clearly. Ideally when being presented the speaker is looking at his audience, be it the room at large or the individual, and they can hear him. This also means that the words are spaced out and are not jumbled on top of one another. One chapter far, far away from here they used the approach that if you were not screaming the ritual it could not be heard. This is an important skill to teach as it relates to the public speaking skills.

Energetic: Ben Stein’s deadpan delivery is great in a high school economics class. For the DeMolay ritual you are going to want to bring some energy and passion to the ritual. Avoid the William Shatner style but you get the idea.

Inspiring: The Ritual should inspire the young men to greatness. This means that the presenter looks the part, that the room is set up properly and it is conveyed with the sense of seriousness that “Dad” Marshall had in mind when he wrote it.

Organized: Imagine if you showed up for a baseball game right in time for opening pitch? You wouldn’t have the batting order ready, or the equipment set up. The same is true in DeMolay Ritual. You need to have people set up for the right parts, the equipment ready to go before the event starts. Viewers of the ritual can tell when it is not properly done or organized.

Understood: Does the speaker know the words they are saying? The language of the DeMolay Ritual was written over 100 years ago and some of the words used in it are not commonly used today. It is important that the presenter understand the words that they are saying, as well as the context in which they are performing in a serious frame of mind. The DeMolay Degree, for example, is a serious degree, not a jovial one.

Learning Strategies

Every person learns differently and the approach to ritual should reflect that.

One of the most frequent ways that DeMolays learn ritual is by saying a few words out loud and then adding more words. For example using the pledge of allegiance they would say “I pledge allegiance” and then add “To the flag” so they are doing the entire part over again out loud.

Others learn by recording themselves and playing it back again and again and listening to it. Similar to how a young person may learn the words to the song. This approach may work well for DeMolays who are dyslexic and having an advisor record it for them that they can play back at their leisure.

Others learn by tactical learning. For example, some people who do the Ceremony of Light do a tactile touch with each object. When they touch a Bible or a Candle, it reminds them of the part.

Others write it out on paper like they do in school spelling words. This repetition helps with memorization for some people.

DeMolays may also have a documented learning difference. You may want to inquire of the parents or guardians if they have a learning strategy.

Obligation Card Training

Ever since Dad Frank Marshall first wrote the DeMolay ritual in 1919, ritual work has been an important part of DeMolay. The DeMolay Ritual lays out in impressive language of the timeless ideals and virtues of DeMolay. It is a long held tradition and custom for DeMolays to commit to memory the obligations they took to be better sons, better brothers and better citizens. In DeMolay we call this “being proficient” and a notation is made on your membership record when you have achieved this. New York DeMolay currently requires this to be able to vote on all matters before the State Chapter.

Our hope is that every DeMolay earns his obligation card. New York DeMolay has adopted an obligation card policy. As Ritual Advisor you should work with each of the young men to help them achieve these incredible honor.

The following policies shall be observed in all New York DeMolay Chapters.

An Obligations Card shall be issued in one of the two following methods:

1. Any active DeMolay who, by standing examination in an open Chapter or by an examination of at least three advisors of his chapter or by the determination of The State Ritual Director or his designee, demonstrates that he has committed to memory the obligations and examination queries of both degrees in order to vote or hold elected office. The presentation format of open chapter or by advisors shall be at the discretion of the DeMolay.

2. Any active DeMolay with a documented learning or cognitive challenge who can demonstrate a working knowledge of the Obligations and Examination Queries of the Order will be entitled to receive an Obligations Card. A piece of working knowledge is defined as the ability to name the important concepts in each Degree Obligation, to prove an understanding of the promises made, and to demonstrate the Step, Signs, Password and Token of the Order. The method followed should be consistent with accommodations provided in academic settings, such as an IEP or a 504 Plan. New York DeMolay can provide expertise in learning accommodation plans at the request to the executive officer by an advisory council, a parent, or an active DeMolay. This policy cannot be changed by an Advisory Council or by amendment to the Chapter's bylaws.

A DeMolay or his parent/guardians who feel that proper accommodations have not been given may appeal directly to the Executive Officer. When a member has demonstrated his proficiency using either of these examination formats, he will be issued a proficiency card by the Chapter. Proficiency Cards cannot be issued to any member by any other form of examination other than those set forth above unless approved in writing by New York DeMolay through its Executive Officer.

The Chapter, through its chairman or chapter advisor, shall notify the Director of Ritual upon the issuance of an obligation card. This policy is made to encourage all members to strive to earn their Obligations Card. In the Jurisdiction of New York, it shall NOT be necessary to hold an

Obligations Card in order to vote or hold appointed office within a chapter. Members shall NOT be denied the right to vote on applications for membership, motions, or election of officers. In particular, members should first be encouraged to learn the ritual work assigned to their office, to ensure that the Chapter can properly open and close its meetings and confer degrees. An obligation card is required to hold elective office within the Chapter as of June 1, 2020.

Public speaking

MAKING A BETTER SPEECH

Public speaking is a **SKILL**, not a talent. A skill is something that must be learned and honed over time. A speech is simply an enlarged conversation where the speaker converses with an audience in the same friendly, organized manner one would use in addressing a single person.

So what do you do when you have to make a speech? Most speeches that we are called upon to make, involve a statement of belief, a topic, or a subject that means a great deal to you.

The first step in preparing for your speech is to select your theme. Your theme should be something that is important to you, as the most successful speeches are made when you speak about things that mean something to you personally.

Always start your speech with a **S M I L E**:

S-start. State your theme, belief or topic.

M-I-L-make it live! Explain why your topic is important to you, what it means to you and your life. Expand upon your topic by using an appropriate story to illustrate your point or tell of some experience in your life. Make your audience realize that you are saying is what you believe.

E-the end. You end the speech by bringing together your topic, illustrations, and examples into a final statement of belief.

There are some helpful tips that will be valuable as you prepare your speeches:

1. Talk about a subject you have earned the right to talk about through long study or experience. Your speech should be something you **KNOW** and care about! Don't just spend 5 minutes, 5 hours, or 5 days preparing what you want to say! Let 5 months, or 5 years of your experiences help you. DeMolay helps you prepare because of your participation in your DeMolay Chapter. As you move through the different offices, you will learn additional parts of the ritual. This is great practice for speaking in public. Also taking on a different role during the two degrees will also provide additional practice.

Remember, your topic should be something you feel very strongly about. Be sure that your concept is one that you are comfortable with. Don't pick a theme just because it is what you think it is what others expect to hear. Make your talk your own!

2. Be **EXCITED** about your subject! Everyone can give a superb speech if speaking on a topic about which they are really excited and obviously enthusiastic about.

3. Speak from the heart, not from a book. Many public speakers want to get their topics out of a book or a magazine, or an e-mail, just repeating carefully rehearsed and memorized words, instead of speaking from their own knowledge and convictions. Speaking from the heart includes being willing to let your audience see, feel and hear you emotions (i.e. excitement, determination, happiness and pride). You must really want to communicate you convictions and feelings to your listeners.
4. Talk about your experiences. Tell about little incidents you have witnessed or participated in which make you more aware of the value of your topic. USE EXAMPLES! “A picture is worth a thousand words” applies here. If you are talking about DeMolay being fun, talk about the last fun event your chapter did. If you are commenting on how DeMolay has helped you make friends, say just that. A verbal picture expressed in your speech will remain in your audience’s mind forever. **A word of caution:** Don’t get so involved in your story that you lose your train of thought. Make your points clearly and don’t go off on tangents. Your audience should be able to follow your thoughts without wondering what you are really talking about.
5. Think about what you want to say. Come prepared to speak-don’t count on thinking of something to say as you are standing up to speak. Have an idea of what your topic will be ahead of time. While it is okay to prepare an outline of what you want to discuss, try not to write out your entire speech and memorize it. Play to your personal strengths, whatever helps you best. Many times you will find that a thought on paper needs work before you can express the idea verbally. Practice out loud if possible, record yourself. Talk to the mirror, in the shower, or to your parents or friends. Maybe even the family pet can help. Having notes or cards to prompt you with all that you wish to say about the topic is fine. Practice with those as well. Remember you can always ask your chapter advisors to listen to you as well.
6. Finally, and most importantly, BE YOURSELF! There is no magic mold to use in order to become a good public speaker. We all speak daily, and we all have our own unique ways of expressing ourselves. Each individual uses certain words with certain facial expressions to show that we are ourselves. Don’t try to be someone you’re not. The most that anyone can ask of a person is to be the best you that you can possibly be!

And lastly, remember **KISS-Keep It Simple Silly!** Give yourself the proper time in preparing your speech. Nothing is worse than getting overly involved in details and thoughts that really do not add to your message. Speak to your audience; look around the room as you speak. Establish a nonverbal communication that is positive by making good eye contact, exhibiting good posture, and having made this or another speech before. Take a deep breath, relax, and you’ll be done before you had a chance to get nervous!

Public Speaking Break-out

- Play a public speaking game
- One Minute Speech
 - You pick a topic and then you have one minute to talk about that topic
 - You must use the full minute
- 10 public speaking tips

- S.M.I.L.E./K.I.S.S.

How to Read the Ritual

The Ritual is in plain text so the words are easy to understand. However, there are at times questions of how a person moves. Frequently, we have questions about where is X and where is Z in the officer diagram. X is simply the officers station and Z is the point closest to the walking band. So in the case of the 5th Preceptor, their station (X) is the north east of Letter H, and their Z would be just East of Letter H.

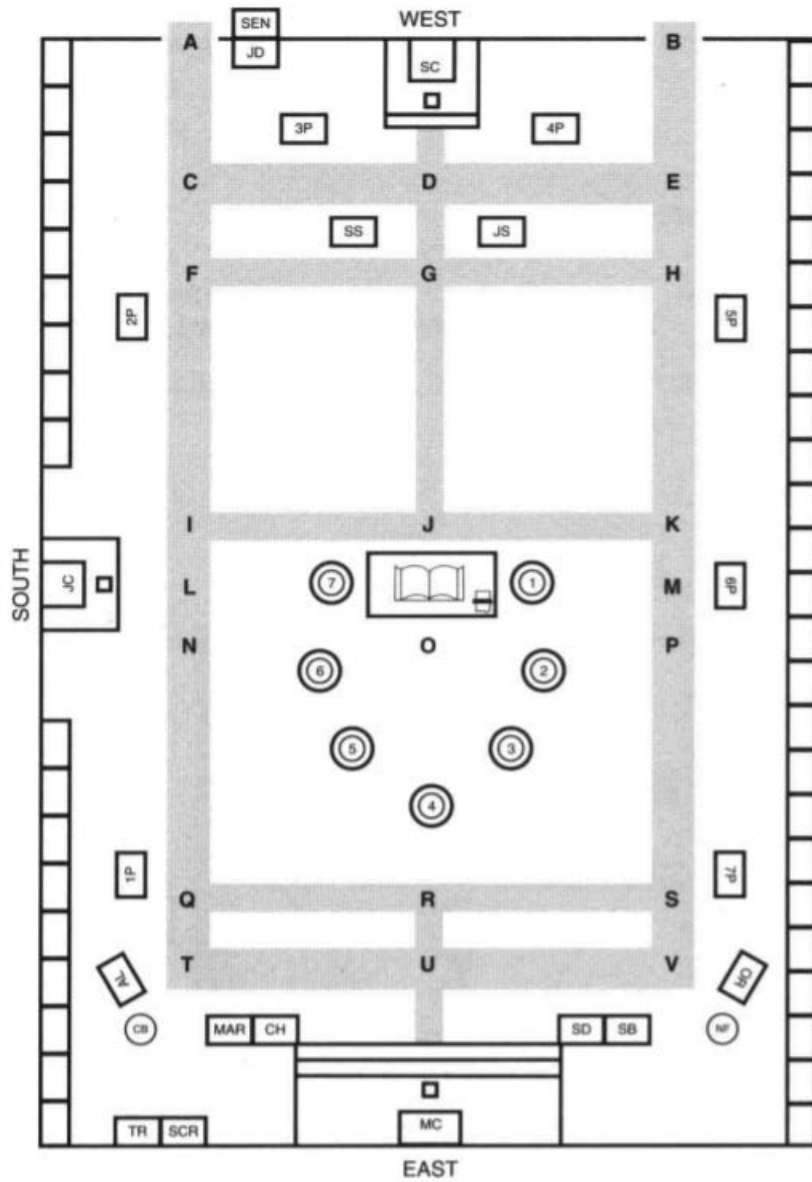


Diagram 1

To make this easier, DeMolay International's Ritual Committee developed a floor work simulator you can download from the New York DeMolay's resource page on the website.

<https://www.nydemolay.net/en/page.php?id=877>

The General Instructions also provide a great deal of information about how to perform the ritual and do the ritual that you can read here:

<https://demolay.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/General-Instructions.pdf>