



New DeMolay Development Guide

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Welcome to DeMolay

Standing outside of your first DeMolay meeting can be intimidating. You have no idea what's about to happen, they keep asking you questions and you signed a paper saying you want to join. But you must have a lot of questions yourself.

Don't worry, DeMolay is more than a dark room, walking in circles and using big words. DeMolay can give you leadership skills, public speaking ability, chances at college scholarships, lifelong friendships, and will help you grow into a strong, productive, capable young man.

Chances are you don't remember a single word that was said during your Initiation in DeMolay other than "*what you put in to DeMolay you will get out of it, ten times over.*" But you'll have plenty of time to learn the hidden lessons and meanings of the Order as you spend more and more time with your Chapter and Brothers.

For now, and for the purposes of this book, we will be focusing on what to do with the information you've just received, how to make the best foundation for your time in DeMolay, how to learn everything you need to know to make DeMolay a positive experience, and finally how to make a name for yourself in your Chapter, in your League (County), and in your Jurisdiction (State). By the time your second meeting comes around you'll be able to hit the ground running.

So you've just been Initiated, now what?

You've just been initiated and you have no idea what that means. That's okay, Rome wasn't built overnight. By chance, do you remember that long, candle lit ceremony in the dark room? In DeMolay that's known as an "Initiatory Degree." Its purpose is to summarize the precepts (the seven virtues that those other DeMolay talked to you about when you walked around the room) and other things that will help you become a great DeMolay and a great young man. But your job doesn't stop there, it's only just beginning. Your task now is to take these lessons to heart and commit them to memory.

What the heck!?! You never signed up to memorize stuff! And you have to perform it all from memory in front of all of these strangers!?! To be short, yes. But every member that has ever joined DeMolay since its origin in 1919 has recited this exact ritual in the exact same fashion. It doesn't even have to be word-for-word, as long as you understand what each lesson means and you begin to contemplate how you can apply it to your own life, then the lessons have served their purpose.

Every Chapter has several capable members or advisors that have plenty of experience with your "*Proficiency*" and know what it takes to memorize it and are very happy to help you. Remember, the quicker you get it memorized, the faster you can move on to the final step of being a fully recognized, fully qualified DeMolay, but that comes later.

The next Degree

The final step in becoming a DeMolay is to do the same sort of thing you just did. Only this time instead of taking a symbolic journey through your life, you will witness a play of sorts; depicting the final trial of *Jacques DeMolay* (The man our order is named after). This time, your obligation in the middle of the dark room will be about committing yourself to becoming a better person still, and a few more lessons from what you just witnessed.

However, this is still a while away, and you have plenty of time to prepare yourself for that. By the time you get that far, you'll already basically be a full DeMolay anyway, so it's more of a graduation ceremony than an intimidating performance in the middle of the room like the first time.

If you were Initiated at a "Membership Class", then you would have seen both the Initiatory and DeMolay degrees in the same day. In this case, you won't start working on the DeMolay Degree Proficiency until after you have completed the first one.

Taking the First Steps

Here we are at your second or third meeting and you're ready to give your "Proficiency" to the Chapter and your whole family came to watch you. But there's one thing you didn't prepare for. There's a full hour before the meeting and you're in a room full of strangers you never expected you'd have to talk to. One guy has a silver necklace around his shoulders, another has an apron around his waist, and everyone else is sitting at tables deep in their own conversations. What do you do?

Usually, someone will approach you and involve you in the group and get things going for you, but you should be ready to make first contact on your own. Surprisingly a large amount of other DeMolay in your Chapter already know your name and know many of the things you like and even what your favorite subject is in school. Odds are they even have similar interests to you so it's just a matter of introducing yourself, and starting a conversation. *In this building you are among friends you have yet to meet.*

Well would you look at that, it's meeting time already and it's only felt like ten minutes. Commonly even as early as your second meeting, new brothers are asked to fill offices for the meeting which may or may not require memory work.

For instance, a *Steward*, which either opens the bible or puts the school books on the altar and gives a sentence about why he does so, or *Standard Bearer* who has no lines but must carry the flag during the pledge of allegiance. These “Scripted” parts of the meeting are called “*Ritual*”. Don’t worry, if you are asked to do anything, it will be short and your Chapter will never ask you to perform ritual from memory without giving you proper notice. And again, an advisor will be there to help and guide you through your part.

After *opening* it’s time for your *Proficiency*. Hope you didn’t forget it because the floor is yours and all eyes are on you. You’ll have one brother on the other side of the altar asking you the proper questions and to help prompt you, but aside from that you get to be in charge of the entire room and it’s rare to have that level of authority often, especially so early in your DeMolay career.

In the next short while you’ll have finished your first complete meeting and you can revel in a good night’s work. But don’t fly too close to the sun, you still have a lot of work to finish in the next couple weeks, first of all is your DeMolay degree which your Chapter should be putting on for you very shortly.

Becoming Part of the Chapter

Over the next six months or so you will naturally be meeting new friends both within your Chapter, and while meeting with members of other Chapters, it is important to engage as many people as you can because odds are; these are the brothers that will be your closest friends over most of your DeMolay career and even in to your adulthood. There are many places where you can meet hundreds of boys and girls and among them your newest friends, such as dances or sporting events or League meetings or even *Conclave*, our annual DeMolay convention where every Chapter and every available member of DeMolay come together for a weekend of business and comradeship.

Back at home, in your Chapter, you'll soon have something called an "*Installation*" where the officers of a Chapter are installed in to their new positions, and typically most members move around and assume new responsibilities and learn new ritual so they can become well rounded. Also, the "*line officers*" consisting of *the Master Councilor*, *Senior Councilor* and *Junior Councilor* commonly move up and the current Master Councilor exits office and assumes a position elsewhere in the Chapter. In DeMolay, we believe that our leaders are only as good as the rest of his officers, but also that any of the officers are capable of leadership.

If you work hard and do well with the responsibilities you've been given by your Master Councilor and advisors, they'll reward you with the honor of an office requiring more attention and responsibility such as the *Chaplain* who gives the prayers for all in attendance, or the *Marshal* who conducts any and all guests of

honor in the Chapter, or one of the two *Deacons* who maintain order in the Chapter and work closely with the Councilors. The more work you ask for, and the more opportunities you are given, the more qualified you will become, and the faster you will achieve it and you'll find yourself ready to lead your fellow brothers soon enough.

Turning DeMolay from a Club to a Family

All of this takes patience. We're talking about all of these grand things and moving very fast, it's easy to forget the reason DeMolay exists; the Chapter. If the Chapter fails, then DeMolay will fail as it will have no reason to keep operating.

If every DeMolay brings in three of his friends, one to replace you when you become too old, and two for positive growth, and they become as committed as you are, DeMolay will remain strong. DeMolay will even reward you with the Founders Membership Award, which proves your commitment to the order and to your brothers by finding and initiating five of your own friends. Even more valuable is the Blue Honor Key which is given only to those who are responsible for ten new initiates, and there are even more acknowledgments beyond that.

There is no difference between your friends in your public life and your friends in your DeMolay life. If you ask me, they should be one in the same. If all of your friends join the ranks of DeMolay, they will all enjoy the same privileges you enjoy and will simply multiply it.

Though it is not a requirement, nor is it written explicitly in our ritual book, our main purpose is to spread the value of our order, and the more people that are exposed to it, the higher chance one will join and will greatly benefit from the opportunities and lessons we offer, as well as gain the brothers and father figures our order was built with.

Making Sure DeMolay Lives On

Even with a large amount of members, DeMolay will not survive without leadership. Every six, or twelve month term, the best officers we have for the job relinquish their power to those leaders waiting for their chance. But when the leader leaves his office and no one steps up to take the reins then our Chapters and leagues will suffer with an unprepared stand in, or will have the same leader consecutively which leads to the same style of leadership all over again and there will be a lack of ingenuity and a surplus of routine.

It is imperative that you support your councilors while you're learning your way in the Chapter, believe it or not if your Chapter has about 10 members, you'll be needed for leadership in less than 3 years. That's only 6 terms of office before you're in an election and you start to assume real responsibilities and your peers and even your current authority figures will be looking to you for guidance.

Leadership is not for everyone, and it helps to remember that it is very possible that you might not ever be a league president or even a master councilor of a Chapter as sometimes there is too much competition to stand a chance, or you become too old, however you do not have to be an elected officer to be a leader, there are many avenues you can take to be a leader in DeMolay.

The main thing that all leaders need to do with or without a title is to inspire their friends and brothers to greatness, to commit all of their work within the order to the benefit of all whom are part of the order, and to ensure a bright future for your Chapter, your order, your family, and yourself.

The best way to make sure DeMolay lives on is to carry their teachings in to your very life and to practice its teachings whenever possible so that they may become ingrained in the fabric of your being and that the pure virtues of our order become natural to you and everyone you come in to contact with will benefit from our lessons. That is our golden purpose, however implicit and indirect it may seem.

Conclusion

After your Initiation, and after reading this guide, you should be more than prepared enough for the rest of your DeMolay career. You'll learn the finer points of leadership such as Robert's Rules of Order, or how to run a Chapter as a leader, and how to publicly speak and to organize your ranks as you experience more within our order. You will never be done learning before you are long aged out of DeMolay, but if you do not have the sturdiest foundation on which to govern your life, then DeMolay has failed you. Take advice from all who are willing to give it, and live your life with an open mind and a fair scale and DeMolay will be the greatest thing you will ever encounter in your life.