

Grand Lodge of Wisconsin
“Adopt a Youth Group”
Lodge Support Resources
Launch: June 4, 2016



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Introduction

As Freemasons, we are aware of a special bond between Freemasonry and the Masonic Youth Groups. In recognition of this special bond, and in accordance with the Grand Lodge of Wisconsin’s Strategic Plan, we are formalizing a new initiative to more broadly encourage interaction between the lodges and youth groups. In Wisconsin those dominant Masonic youth groups are DeMolay and Job’s Daughters. If a lodge wishes to use this initiative to start a Rainbow for Girls Assembly, please contact the Junior Grand Warden to ensure proper coordination. Remember that activities with the youth groups also count on your LEA (Lodge Excellence Award) submittal each year.

We know that there are other good youth organizations, but our communications have historically had a restrictive tone with respect to support of Masonic youth organizations. Many of our lodges that are distant from Masonic Youth Groups today do not support youth groups at all. Some Lodges have taken the initiative and leverage other relationships to work with youth groups such as Cub Scouts or Boy Scouts. This initiative will encourage all lodges to establish relationships with a youth group, preferably Masonic related, but any youth group supporting similar values will be acceptable. Much of the content of this paper will be adaptable to non-Masonic youth groups. The advantages and benefits from support of non-Masonic youth groups is that it could lead to development of new regional development of Masonic youth groups.

To encourage the relationship to more than a casual one, the lodge and youth group will both enter into a fun adoption style agreement to formalize their new relationship. There needs to be a minimum donation from the lodge of \$100, but more is better. The youth group needs to keep the lodge updated on their activities at a minimum. Other activities are encouraged. You can find other ideas later in this support resources document. There are versions of the adoption declaration certificates for both the lodge and youth group, and after signature are proper for display in each’s location. Refer to Appendix B for more details on the certificates.

Be sure to treat the certificate signing as a special event to demonstrate to the youth group how important the relationship is to your lodge. Invite local Grand Lodge Officers, communicate the dates to the District Deputy Grand Master for inclusion in his periodic newsletters, and be sure to take pictures and send associated details to the editor of the Wisconsin Masonic Journal. You can even treat it as being so meaningful that a special Masonic pen is used by everyone to sign, and possible have lodge brothers & guests

bid on the pen, with proceeds going to the youth group and their activities. This event should be a precursor of events to come!

Masonic youth group benefits to society

- Encourage members to be actively involved in their church, school, and community.
- Place a tremendous emphasis on the importance of the family, and on the authority of the parent.
- Make no claims to a unique or exclusive knowledge of truth. Members profess belief in one God, are encouraged to pursue and grow in their own family’s faith tradition. They teach religious *tolerance and respect*, which does not imply accepting or embracing the beliefs of others, but simply affirming their right to hold those beliefs. As a result, members hold a wide variety of differing beliefs, which are not dictated by the group.
- Work cooperatively with other community groups toward common goals and worthwhile services.
- Emphasize service to others through giving of their time, their talents, and their financial resources.
- Invite and encourage parents to be involved in all of their youth’s activity with the group, whether as a guest, or even as a volunteer leader.
- Encourage independent thinking, initiative, and leadership. Good team members are co-leaders, not mindless followers.

Manpower

As a leader of Masons in your circle of influence, you have a wealth of manpower available to help in projects or special activities to benefit youth on a jurisdictional or local level. Promoting the need for Masons to serve as adult leaders is one way to help. Recruiting Masons to work on specific projects is another. You have a group of officers working with you who could be assigned to distribute information about youth groups during their travels. These same officers can probably help identify fertile ground for the establishment of new youth groups. These men can see organizations with young officers, and an interest in youth, and can recommend them to you. You can also appoint committees of interested Masons to help promote and organize your youth support program. Challenge neighboring appendant Masonic bodies — the York Rite, Shrine and Scottish Rite to also get involved in your youth program. In this way, you will reach many of those Masons who have become more involved in the appendant and concordant bodies. Managing this resource properly can provide a valuable source of assistance in all your activities, especially on behalf of youth.

Communications

As a Masonic leader, you have available to you various forms of communication to the Masons in your Masonic community. By using these vehicles to spread information and inspiration about the Masonic-related youth groups, you will help eliminate the problem of Masons being totally unaware of the youth program. See to it that every issue of your official publication includes an article about your youth program, or the youth groups in general. (You can assign a "youth reporter" to write these articles.) Publish or distribute forms by which Masons can refer the names and addresses of children, grandchildren and neighbors as potential members of the youth groups. In your written communications to your officers, remind them that "youth" is a priority during your term, and encourage them to get involved and promote the program in their travels.

Encourage your subordinates to include meeting dates of youth groups in their monthly bulletins. Use the communications resources already available to you to help spread the word about the importance of youth.

Facilities

Many Masonic communities have beautiful facilities available for meetings, conventions, special ceremonies, etc. which could be made available for very important youth programs. These facilities may only be made available on special occasions, but by permitting youth groups to use them, you reinforce their place in our Masonic family. Many Lodges have fine facilities which could be used regularly by the youth groups for properly supervised activities. Making these available, at low or no rental fees, if feasible, can certainly help our youth groups. Try to think of the Masonic youth groups as a church youth group-- how many churches charge their youth rent to meet in their buildings?

Programs

Try to involve the Masonic-related youth groups in some of your traditional social and service programs. How can they expand the scope of some of your activities? Bring representatives of the youth groups to your meetings. If you participate in any public parades, be sure the youth groups march with you. Can you incorporate a youth choir in any public ceremonies? Perhaps they can get involved with you in community or Masonic service projects. Ask your subordinate groups to have a contingent of local youth group members available to greet you when you make a formal visit, or have them on hand during refreshments following the meeting. Use this resource, the programs you already have scheduled, and then give the young people greater exposure to Freemasonry, and greater visibility within your Masonic community.

Technology

Each Masonic community has available certain administrative aids which might also be helpful to the leaders of the Masonic-related youth groups. Perhaps the availability of a photocopier, or a printing press, or audio-visual equipment could greatly improve their volunteer administration of the youth program. Of great value might be the availability of a computer system, with the capability of recording membership data and providing mailing labels and youth group rosters. Perhaps you or your officers have had contact with a Brother who is enthusiastic about his personal computer system and might make it available to the youth group leader. Since the leaders of these youth groups are volunteers, any technological assistance you can provide to help them manage the information they need would greatly improve their time and availability to promote membership growth and activities.

Finance

If available to you, financial assistance may be an appropriate means of helping the youth groups. Some Masonic Communities provide a cash subsidy to the annual budgets of the youth groups. Others sponsor trophies for annual competitions, or provide scholarships. Some Masonic Communities have established fund-raising campaigns on behalf of one or more of the youth groups. Some have gone as far as forming non-profit corporations or foundations through which tax exempt contributions can be managed. Only you can determine how far you can go in helping to finance the youth groups, or even your own youth program. This is not the only resource you should consider, and its availability will not make or break your youth program.

The benefits of working with youth groups

- Many lodge members participate in joint events and find the experience and the interaction with the youths very rewarding.
- All of the youth orders make us proud by developing wonderful youth leaders who set a fine example of Masonic values in the community.
- The DeMolay Chapters produce many strong candidates for our lodge over the years.
- There are many examples of members of Job's Daughters that get brothers or fathers interested in joining the fraternity (or if the brother is younger, join DeMolay). We also have many examples of Daughters as they get older marry men that that are influenced to become Masons.
- Our local youth orders are very active and connected to each other, to our lodge, and to the community. They are able to use lodge-offered events as supplements to their own activities, where they have the opportunity to interact with lodge members aged 18 to 90. If they need special support for an event or project, they know they can count on it from us.

Your lodge will feel a great sense of accomplishment from all the good you do for our youth groups, who we consider an important part of our Masonic family.

Checklist for a successful youth support program established by your Masonic community

Masonic Community could mean your local Lodge and affiliated organizations, or it could mean the state-wide, regional or district Masonic organization over which you preside. This is a step-by-step outline of the actions you must take in order to develop a meaningful and effective program of youth support. It is important for you to acquire an understanding of the primary needs of the Masonic-related youth groups. Only with this understanding can you hope to develop an effective program. Study those primary needs, match them to your resources, and start on your special program.

- Understand the primary needs of the Masonic-related youth groups in your Masonic community:
 - Adult participation and supervision
 - Publicity — general public and the Masonic community
 - Membership referrals — names of qualified young people to contact for membership
 - Quality programs which will attract young people
 - Financial assistance, if available.
- Publicly announce "Youth Program" as one of your personal priorities. By using the power and prestige of your office to emphasize the importance of supporting the Masonic-related youth groups, you will improve the perception of these groups held by the average Mason.
- Establish structure for planning your youth support program, by appointing a committee, aide, director, coordinator, foundation, etc., to implement your plans.
- Evaluate the resources of your Masonic Community to determine what is available to apply to your program. (See paper: "What Have We Got To Offer?")
- Set long-range and short-range goals for youth support programs.
- Develop plans for action.

- Implement plans to specifically demonstrate "instant success," building on each successful activity to generate enthusiasm for the program.
- Encourage your successors to establish support of youth activities as a long-term priority of your Masonic community.

How we can support our youth groups

- *Budgeting and financial support:* Encourage new masters to make room in the budget for youth group support. With those funds, the lodge is able to pay for the youths to attend leadership camps, annual conventions and other local programs.
- *Web site:* Provide Web hosting and webmaster support so that each of your youth groups has a public presence. Many lodges already have their own Web pages, linked from our Grand Lodge Web site, to post their calendars, newsletters, and group information.
- *Youth-friendly lodge events:* Plan youth-friendly events year-round. During the holidays, for example, invite your youth orders and their families to the annual Christmas party, and charter a bus for youths and lodge members to go caroling together to our widows' or older members' homes.
- *Strong lodge presence:* Our members need to sit on advisory boards and councils for all youth orders, and frequently participate in official visits to youth order meetings and special events.
- *Joint projects:*

HOW-TO: Increase your lodge's involvement with local youth orders

This how-to list will help you evaluate how your lodge can be more active with its local youth orders. Consider which activities would be easy additions to your lodge's usual regiment, which would garner the most support and participation from lodge members, and which would be the most useful for your local youth orders. Refer to Appendix A for lots more ideas!

Lodge events

- Invite youth orders and their families to officer installations, cornerstone ceremonies, holiday parties, and other lodge events
- Hold an event night just for youth orders to answer any questions they may have about Masonry
- Ask for youth orders to participate in serving meals at special events and/or stated meetings
- Ask youths to create fliers and posters to publicize lodge events

Youth order events

- Provide transportation and supervision for youth order activities
- Encourage lodge attendance at youth order fundraisers and events
- Plan frequent member visits to youth order meetings

Shared events

- Host a youth appreciation night at the lodge honoring adult and youth leaders
- Involve youth orders in Child ID booths, fundraisers, and other lodge volunteer projects
- Sponsor a special event like a holiday dance or a game night for all of the youth orders in your area, and let them lead the planning process so that it reflects their needs and desires
- Sponsor a young adult drivers' safety class
- Provide scholarship manuals at youth order meetings and offer help applying for Masonic scholarships

Trestleboard and Web site

- Allot space for youth orders to submit articles and photos to the lodge Trestleboard
- Include youth order contacts and upcoming activities in your Trestleboard and online calendar
- Include a fundraising note in your Trestleboard to solicit financial help for local youth orders
- Provide Web hosting and webmaster support for youth order Web sites
- Add links to your lodge Web site to local and statewide youth order Web pages

Financial support

- Make room in the lodge budget for youth order support
- Put out a donation jar at stated meetings and lodge events to benefit local youth orders
- Offer compensation for youths to serve dinners/wash dishes at stated meetings and other lodge meals
- Buy tickets for youth order fundraisers, even if you cannot actually attend
- Sponsor youth leaders to attend their respective leadership camps
- Sponsor youth orders to attend their state conventions

Adult leadership

- Meet regularly with the adult leadership of the youth orders to offer support, celebrate accomplishments, and discuss common concerns
- Urge lodge members to join youth order advisory boards and councils
- Help identify future adult leaders* to ensure a successful succession plan when current leaders step down

Appendix A: 101 Things you and your lodge can do for Masonic Youth Groups

1. Sponsor or co-sponsor a local chapter, assembly, or bethel
2. Invite a group to give a program at your lodge
3. Allow a group to serve or help for lodge dinners as a fundraiser.
4. Tell your child, grandchild, niece, nephew, or neighbor about the Masonic Youth groups and encourage them to join.
5. Offer a "scholarship" for attendance at an annual session or other conference.
6. Send cards of congratulation to newly elected youth group officers.
7. Complete training as an advisor for a youth group and be available as a "backup"
8. Provide transportation to events.
9. Sponsor the printing of their newsletter or other publication.
10. Provide a link on your lodge's website to the youth groups.
11. Offer to buy a meeting suit or gown for a youth who can't afford one.
12. Visit a regular meeting, degree conferral, or installation of officers, and report on it to your lodge.
13. Sign as a Masonic Sponsor on a petition for membership.
14. Serve as your lodge's youth representative.
15. Ask your lodge's youth representative for information about the local groups and their meetings/needs.
16. Serve on an Advisory Council, Board, or Guardian Council.
17. Help a youth member learn a ritual part (their ritual is written, so you needn't know the part beforehand)
18. Provide help with costuming, makeup, floor-work or rehearsal for degree conferrals.
19. Don't just wait for "problems" to communicate with your local group... send them a note when they do something right ("Thanks for leaving the kitchen so clean after your spaghetti dinner...")
20. Offer a professional skill or hobby that may be helpful to the group, or offer to teach them how to do it themselves.
21. Hold a joint social, athletic, or fundraising event with a chapter, or start an annual event (the "Bowling Challenge", for example).
22. Wear a youth group pin, t-shirt, or emblem to show support, and be prepared to tell people what it is!
23. Sponsor a statewide competition held by one of the youth groups.
24. Offer to sponsor a new piece of ritual equipment or to replace or refurbish old equipment.
25. Put up flyers or brochures for youth groups in your lodge building, or in your place of business, if possible.
26. Include youth group leaders as invited "dignitaries" for public lodge events.
27. Read the "Masonic Youth Minutes" cover to cover!
28. Contribute to one of the many scholarship funds to assist Masonic Youth in furthering their education.
29. Be a mentor to a local youth -take an interest in what they do.
30. "Brag" about positive experiences with Masonic youth to other Lodge members.
31. Attend a meeting of the advisory board/council for a youth group to get to know the advisors and needs.
32. Read a book or take a "correspondence course" offered by the youth groups to learn more about them.
33. Sponsor the making of sports jerseys, jackets, t-shirts, or other "wearable PR" for a local group.

34. Say hello to everyone you see wearing a youth group emblem and identify yourself as a Mason. Encourage their involvement!
35. Include youth calendars or flyers in a Lodge mailing.
36. Post a schedule of youth events in a prominent area of your lodge building.
37. Offer the youth group space for a bulletin board in the lodge building, to display photos and other memorabilia of events. Then keep up with the postings!
38. Hold a testimonial dinner for youth group leaders or members with notable accomplishments.
39. Put a youth group emblem on your car, and tell everybody what it is.
40. Offer to provide a Masonic education program, or program on your profession or hobby, at a youth group meeting.
41. Offer to bring refreshments for a youth group meeting.
42. Make a financial gift to the operating budget of a local youth group.
43. Offer Masonic service opportunities to youth, like "odd jobs" around the lodge building.
44. Invite youth to go with Lodge members to visit shut-in members or widows.
45. Find out about special needs in families of local youth, like medical needs, home repairs, etc. - and get your lodge involved in meeting that need.
46. Do you teach or have a specialty subject? How about offering tutoring or homework help for youth groups?
47. Offer to teach a special skill, like car maintenance, basic carpentry, et cetera, as a special youth group activity.
48. "Adopt" a needy family for the holidays, and involve youth in shopping and delivery of gifts.
49. Offer to act as "photographer" for youth functions.
50. Hold a fundraiser or special fund drive in your lodge specifically to benefit youth. How about a Lodge "yard sale" with youth participating?
51. Provide a new or used computer for a local chapter to use for record keeping and publications.
52. Recommend capable Lodge members to youth groups as Advisors.
53. Buy or donate tickets to a Shrine Circus for a local youth group to use for prospective members.
54. Sponsor a blood drive in your community, and invite youth group members to recruit donors and volunteer at the drive.
55. Have a special presentation at your Lodge on the charities of the youth groups. Help support one or more of them!
56. Start a scholarship fund in your Lodge for local youth.
57. Coach a Masonic Youth group sports team.
58. Donate a piece of athletic equipment to a local youth group.
59. Allow a local youth group to use your Lodge's FAX or Phone number for messages/contacts.
60. Consider waiving Lodge rental fees for youth groups, or paying them on their behalf if your Lodge doesn't own the Temple.
61. Ask a youth group to hold a Masonic "Shadow Night" where Lodge officers sit with Youth Group officers to learn about their work.
62. Sponsor and organize a "career night" in which Lodge members provide information to local youth about career options.
63. Include youth groups in publicity opportunities, especially contributions to other youth groups or to schools. Ask that youth groups be mentioned in press coverage.

64. Be prepared to answer questions/concerns about the nature and purpose of Masonic Youth groups.
65. Introduce youth group members to your eligible relatives and neighbors to give them the opportunity to recruit.
66. Consider organizing interested Masons to open a new Chapter, Bethel, or Assembly, or to reorganize one that used to exist in your area.
67. Arrange for Youth Group Road Signs (provided by the Grand Lodge) to be posted with your Lodge sign in the community.
68. Write an article or make a report to the WMJ on a success of your Lodge's youth program, so other Lodges can follow your example.
69. Have a special program or dinner to recognize and honor youth group advisors in your area.
70. Sponsor the purchase of one or more books about the youth groups to be placed in a local public or school library. Arrange for a press release.
71. List area youth groups in your monthly Lodge notice or other publication.
72. Offer to assist your Lodge Youth chair with his job responsibilities, or to serve on the Lodge Youth Committee.
73. Play the piano/organ or provide other music for youth group meetings, degrees, or other ceremonies.
74. Recognize members of your Lodge who have received various honors from the Masonic Youth Groups.
75. Scottish Rite? Don't throw away old costumes or sets! Offer them to DeMolay first!
76. Commandery? Offer to provide an honor guard for special occasions.
77. Put a "DeMolay/Job's Daughters/Rainbow meets here!" sign on the outside of your Lodge building.
78. Start a "Student of the Month" program with your local high school/middle school. When an honoree is a member of a youth group, see that that gets mentioned in the announcement at school. Provide all honorees with literature about the Masonic Youth Groups.
79. Offer to do a specific job for a youth group's advisory board: for example, you might be the treasurer, web master, lodge liaison, or legal advisor of the board, even if you can't regularly make youth group meetings and events.
80. Ask youth groups to make your Lodge aware of their "sickness and distress" lists, and send a card or note to sick members.
81. Offer to pay the advisory council registration fee for Lodge members who serve a youth group, or give a "discount" in their annual Lodge dues.
82. Encourage or assign new Lodge members to attend area youth group meetings to familiarize themselves with the groups and the opportunities they provide.
83. Have Lodge members attend youth group functions on a "rotating" basis to see that your Lodge is always represented there.
84. Host a family dinner or picnic for all the Masonic-related groups in your community, so they can get to know and help one another.
85. Invite local Advisors and Senior DeMolay's to participate in degrees when a Senior DeMolay joins your Lodge.
86. Shrine clown? Offer training and assistance in clown makeup and other skills for the Rainbow clowning program.
87. Make Masonic Youth Group information part of your ongoing Masonic Education program.
88. Include youth group activities on your Lodge calendar and notices.
89. Help a local youth group organize a prospect party or other recruiting effort.

90. Sponsor a local youth (whether a Masonic Youth group member or not) to an annual youth conference.
91. Notify PA DeMolay when a petitioner for degrees in your Lodge is a Senior DeMolay. Invite DeMolay Advisors to participate in the degree conferrals.
92. Media connections? Help youth groups make contacts with local newspaper, radio, and cable access for placement of public service announcements and news items.
93. Provide a display case or shelf in your Lodge for local youth groups to display awards, trophies, and historical items.
94. Attend a public installation of officers and bring your family and friends.
95. Arrange to visit a youth program by speaking to the state level youth group adult leadership, to see what exciting programs your youth are having.
96. Offer to provide a program for youth groups on what Masonry is about and what Masons do.
97. Invite a local youth group to use your swimming pool, fishing/hunting cabin, or other facility for a getaway or social event.
98. Make regular visits to Masonic Youth Web Sites to stay informed and look for service opportunities.
99. Remember Masonic Youth programs or the WI Masonic Youth Foundation in your estate planning.
100. When in doubt, call a youth group and ask, "What can I do?"
101. Pass on this list to another Mason and encourage him to help too!

Appendix B: “Adopt a Youth Group” Declaration Certificates

Attached to this appendix are the certificates for both the lodge and the youth group in a Microsoft PowerPoint file. Images of the certificates are shown below. If you are not comfortable modifying them for your use, find someone in lodge (probably one of the younger members!) to help you. Be sure to insert the proper icon for the youth group on their version of the declaration certificate. Some samples are found on page 3 of the PowerPoint file. Just copy and replace the temporary icon that exists on that certificate.

You will find places to put the lodge name and number, Worshipful Master’s name, and the Junior Warden’s name. If you have a youth group committee chairman and want that brother to be the co-signer, feel free to edit the certificate. You will also find places for the youth group name and number, the current youth group leader and the current adult advisory leader.

If available, before signing, have the certificates printed in color so they can stand out when framed and placed on the walls of the Lodge and youth group facilities. As mentioned in the introduction to this document, be sure to treat the signing of the declarations as a special event with an official photographer and a table for signing.

To open the slides for modification or saving to your own computer, right click on each slide and select Slide Object, then Open, then save it to your desired location. The file is also be available from the Grand Lodge web site.



Sample Youth Group Symbols for Declaration

