

ANTLERS' RITUAL OF INSTITUTION OF A LODGE

The Institution of a Lodge may be a public ceremony. The incoming members, in consultation with their advisors, should have selected their officers in advance, and their names should be given to the Acting Grand Secretary in advance, before this ceremony is conducted.

The officers conducting the Institution should be addressed as Grand Lodge Officers. They should be Elk members, or visiting Antler Officers from another Antlers Lodge. At the opening of this ceremony the presiding officers will be seated at their respective stations, wearing the jewels of their office.

All spectators shall maintain the utmost decorum throughout the presentation of the ritual.]

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(One Rap)

Grand Exalted Ruler:

Fellow Elks, Antlers and guests, we have assembled here to forge another link in the great chain of fraternity that constitutes the Antlers of the Benevolent and Protective order of Elks—an organization that exemplifies Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity, as well as love and respect for our families and for our great nation. These values are shared with us by the Fraternity of Elks. The master builders who established our great order have given us a precious gift. Today we are gathered here to renew our commitment to the ideals that inspired those who came before us. Our purpose is to establish a new Antlers Altar, which shall stand at the center of all of the meetings and ritualistic ceremonies of this new Lodge.
Please stand.

(Three Raps)

Grand Exalted Ruler:

The Grand Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

Grand Chaplain:

[From his station, without advancing to the Altar].
Almighty God, we come before thee as thy most humble children, and ask your gracious blessings on this gathering of Elks, and on this ceremony which will bring an Antlers Lodge

to this deserving community. We pray that you will guide these Antlers, so that they will always bring honor and renown to themselves, their families and their nation. Grant that this Lodge will prosper and that it will ever be inspired to the service of others. We ask this in thy name. Amen.

All: Amen.

Grand Exalted Ruler: Grand Esquire, you will now proceed to construct the new Antlers Altar.

[The Grand Esquire shall proceed in a direct and orderly manner to the front center of the First Vice president's Station, and say:]

Grand Esquire: Grand Esteemed Leading Knight, I come to you for the emblem of this station, our American Flag.

Grand Exalted Ruler: Please salute our Flag.

Gr. Est. Leading Knight: *[Hands flag to Grand Esquire, salutes flag, and says:]*
Place this flag lovingly besides the new altar, and may its beauty increase the devotion of these Antlers to all that it represents.

[The Grand Esquire shall then take the Flag, step back one pace, and then proceed in a direct and orderly manner to a position one pace in front center of the altar, and say:]

Grand Esquire: This is the Flag of our country, emblematic of the cardinal principle of our Order—Charity. I now place it beside this altar to be a constant inspiration to these Antlers.

[The Grand Esquire then places the Flag in its stand, to the right of the altar, steps back one pace, and salutes the flag.]

Grand Exalted Ruler: Please recite with me the Pledge of Allegiance.

All: I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands: one nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.

Grand Exalted Ruler: At ease, and all audience members may now be seated.

[The Grand Esquire will step back one pace, and then proceed in a direct and orderly manner to the front center of the Second Vice President's Station, and say:]

Grand Esquire: Grand Esteemed Loyal Knight, I come to you for the emblem of this station, the Book of Law.

Gr. Est. Loyal Knight: *[Hands Bible to Gr. Esquire, and says:]*
Place this Bible upon the Altar Grand Esquire, where it will ever teach the Antlers the lessons of Justice.

[The Grand Esquire shall then take the Bible, step back one pace, and then proceed in a direct and orderly manner to a position one pace in front center of the altar, place the open Bible on the Altar, and say:]

Grand Esquire: This is the Bible. I now place it upon this Altar that it may ever inspire the Antlers to provide equal Justice to all, and to teach them to obey constituted authority.

[The Grand Esquire will step back one pace, and then proceed in a direct and orderly manner to the front center of the Third Vice President's Station, and say:]

Grand Esteemed Lecturing Knight, from you I seek the Antlers of Protection.

Gr. Est. Lecturing Knight: *[Places hands upon the Antlers]* Let these Antlers be placed upon the Altar where they may ever cast their shadow of Brotherly Love over all in this Lodge.

[The Grand Esquire shall then take the Antlers, step back one pace, and then proceed in a direct and orderly manner to a position one pace in front center of the altar, and say:]

These Antlers, emblematic of our Order are now added to this Altar, that they may ever remind the members of this Lodge of the protection afforded through Brotherly Love.

[The Grand Esquire then places the Antlers in back of the Bible and with the Antlers facing the First Vice President's station. He then steps back one pace, and says:]

Grand Exalted Ruler, the Altar has now been constructed.

[Then the Grand Esquire returns to his station in a direct and orderly manner and remains standing.]

Grand Exalted Ruler:

And now cause the light of the Star of Fidelity to shine down upon these emblems in proof of our continuing devotion to the principles of Charity, Justice and Brotherly Love.

[Star is lighted]

May the light of that Star never grow dim, but always serve as a beacon to the members of this Lodge.

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(One Rap)

[All officers, except the GER are now seated.]

Grand Exalted Ruler:

At this time I would now like to introduce _____, for the purpose of presenting _____ Antlers Lodge No. _____ with their Charter.

[The Lodge Charter shall be presented by the State Association official designated by the State President, such as the State Antlers Committee Chairman.]

State Assoc. Officer:

[Standing at his chair] I'd like to request that the Advisors to this Lodge of Antlers accompany me to a position before the Altar.

[The State Officer shall proceed to a position before the Altar, facing the Station of the GER. The Antler Advisors will join him at the Altar.]

It is now my distinct honor to present _____ Antlers Lodge No. _____ with this Charter. Possession of this document shall bestow upon this Lodge all of the rights and privileges of an Antlers Lodge of the New Jersey State Elks Association, of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks. It shall be the solemn duty of each one of the officers of this Lodge to safeguard this Charter at all times. Congratulations.

[The Officer presents the Charter. Advisors place the Charter upon the Alter, and all return to their seats. The GER rises.]

Grand Exalted Ruler: Now in the name and by the authority of the New Jersey State Elks Association I do proclaim and declare _____ Antlers Lodge, No. _____, duly Instituted. And as long as this Lodge possesses their official Charter, they shall be entitled to all of the rights and privileges of an Antlers Lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.

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(One Rap)

Grand Exalted Ruler: Having completed this portion of the program for the Institution of _____ Antlers Lodge, No. _____, we shall now proceed to the Initiation of all new members of this Lodge of Antlers.

Grand Exalted Ruler: *[If any changes in personnel are needed, the GER says the following. If no changes are needed, proceed directly to the Initiatory Ritual.*
I now ask that the Initiatory Team members take their stations for the Initiation of the candidates for _____ Lodge No. _____.

[The Initiatory Ritual is now conducted for all new members of the Antlers Lodge. Upon conclusion, if an officer other than the acting GER is presiding, the gavel shall be returned to the Grand Exalted Ruler who conducted the Institution Ceremony.

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(One Rap)

Grand Exalted Ruler: We shall now proceed to the Nomination and Election of officers for the ensuing year. Grand Secretary *[rises]*, you will now read the roster of officers who have been nominated for office by the members and advisors of this Lodge of Antlers.

Grand Secretary: Grand Exalted Ruler, it is my pleasure to read the following list of nominees for office in this Antlers Lodge for the year _____. *[Reads list]*.

Grand Exalted Ruler: If there is no objection, the Grand Secretary is now directed to cast one unanimous ballot for the election of these nominees.

Grand Secretary: Grand Exalted Ruler, I cast one unanimous ballot for the election of the officers who have been nominated to serve _____ Antlers Lodge No. _____, for the year _____.

Grand Exalted Ruler: * (One Rap) [*Grand Secretary is seated*] I now declare that the officers of _____ Antlers Lodge No. _____ have been duly elected for the year _____.

[The Installation of Officers Ceremony is now conducted. After that ceremony is completed, continue with the sections below:]

Grand Exalted Ruler: To conclude these ceremonies I now call upon the Grand Chaplain to offer a final prayer. Please Stand.

Grand Chaplain: [*From his station:*] Almighty God, we thank thee for all of the accomplishments of this session. Grant that this Lodge of Antlers will thrive and become a source of strength to this community, that the officers will serve with distinction, and that the members will be successful in all their endeavors. Grant also that all who are in attendance today will return safely to their homes and families with a renewed dedication to the principles of our Order. We ask this of You in all sincerity and reverence. Amen.

Grand Exalted Ruler: I now declare all of the ceremonies incident to the Institution of this Antlers Lodge now closed.

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(One Rap)