

ANTLERS' INITIATION RITUAL

[The Initiating Officers shall be Antler Officers. It is also permissible for visiting officers from another Antlers Lodge, or for Elk officers to assist in the ritual by assuming any of the positions, as needed. The Initiating Officers shall occupy their respective stations at the opening of the ceremony, wearing the Jewels of such station.

The room shall be set-up and arranged with stations and Altar as for a regular Lodge meeting. The Altar shall be pre-arranged, as for an Antlers' ceremony.

The Initiation ritual should normally be performed as part of a regular Antlers' Lodge meeting, or as part of another Elk or Antler ceremonial occasion. It is permissible for outside visitors to be present during this ceremony.

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

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(One Rap)

President: Brother Secretary [*pauses, Secretary rises and then the President continues*]. Are there any candidates awaiting Initiation?

Secretary: Yes President _____. Candidate _____ (*and # _____ other Americans*) is/are in the anteroom, and await Initiation into this Lodge.

President: Have they been duly elected to membership?

Secretary: They have, President _____. (*Secretary resumes his seat*).

President: Sergeant-at-Arms (*pauses, Sergeant-at-Arms rises and then the President continues*). You will retire to the anteroom, prepare the candidates for Initiation, and conduct them to the door of the Lodge.

[The Sergeant-at-Arms proceeds in an orderly manner to a spot in front/center of the Altar, and approximately one pace away from it. He salutes the flag, by placing his right hand over his heart. He then turns and proceeds in a direct and orderly manner to the door of the Lodge. At the conclusion of the Sergeant-at-Arms' salute the Inner Guard rises, approaches the door in a direct and orderly manner, and opens it in time for the exit of the Sergeant-at-Arms, In addition, the President shall now be seated. When the Sergeant-at-Arms has exited, the Inner Guard closes the door and returns to his station in a direct and orderly manner, and is seated. When the candidates are prepared for Initiation the Sergeant-at-Arms will give a rap at the door. The Inner guard shall rise and proceed directly to the door, and open it.]

- Inner Guard:* Who seeks admission?
- Sergeant-at-Arms:* The Sergeant-at-Arms with _____ candidates who desire to become members of _____ Antlers Lodge No. _____, of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks.
- Inner Guard:* Are you satisfied that these candidates are worthy of Initiation into our Order?
- Sergeant-at-Arms:* I am satisfied, and I request that you report this news to the President.
- Inner Guard:* (*Closes the door, turns to face the President, takes two paces forward and says*) President _____. (*Pauses until the President rises*), The Sergeant-at-Arms is in the ante room with _____ candidates, who desire to be Initiated into our Order.
- President:* Please admit them.
(**** gives three raps. The Inner Guard shall then return to the door, open it, and step to the side. The Sergeant-at-Arms shall enter with the candidates and lead them in one full circle around the Lodge room, passing each of the stations, and then assemble before the altar, facing the President. The President and the Chaplain shall then proceed in a direct and orderly manner to a position three paces in front of the Altar, equidistant from the center, with the president on the right and the Chaplain on the left.*)
- President:* The Chaplain will lead us in prayer.

(*The Chaplain takes two oblique steps to the right, to a point one pace from the center of the altar, and says*)
- Chaplain:* Let us pray. (*All officers shall bow their heads in unison, including the Chaplain*)
Our Father, who art in Heaven, grant that Thy gracious benediction shall fall upon this gathering of your sons and daughters. Bless these candidates and inspire them and us with love of family, of our Order, and of our Country. Give us strength to perform our daily duties honorably and unselfishly; lead us in the way of truth, and fill us with devotion to the cardinal principles of our Order, Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity. We ask all this in Thy name. Amen.
(*All officers, except the Chaplain, shall repeat Amen. After the prayer all officers shall raise their heads. The Chaplain shall take two steps back to his former position, while the President simultaneously steps forward two oblique steps to the center of the altar.*)

President: Sergeant-at-Arms, you will place the candidates in position to assume the solemn Obligation of our Lodge, their left hands over their hearts, and their right hands uplifted above the altar, upon which rests the Holy Bible.

(The Sergeant-at-Arms steps behind each candidate, places their hands correctly, then returns to a position one pace to the right of the line of candidates, and one pace back.)

Sergeant-at-Arms: The candidates are in position.

President: Do you believe in God? *(After each candidate answers in the affirmative),* You will each say "I" pronounce your name in full, and then repeat after me: I _____

(The President shall not say his name after saying "I". During the obligation all officers and members shall direct their attention towards the President, remain silent, and stand in an attentive and respectful manner. The candidates shall repeat each phrase after the President.)

OBLIGATION

I _____, of my own free will, do hereby solemnly promise and swear that I will support and uphold all of the rules and regulations of _____ Antlers Lodge No. _____ of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks; That I will always remain steadfast and honest with every member of this Lodge;

And that I will always aid and assist any and all of its members to the best of my ability.

I also promise and swear that I will always uphold the Constitution and laws of the United States of America;

And that I will always respect and defend our nation's flag.

I swear to never reveal any of the secrets of this Antlers Lodge, unless it be to another member, duly entitled.

I pledge that I will always conduct myself in such a way that, by my example, all are inspired to a greater love and respect for home and family. Finally, I promise to exemplify the motto of the Antlers: Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.

If I break this Obligation, may I be declared unworthy to continue my membership in this Order.

And may God help me, and keep me steadfast, in this my solemn and binding obligation. Amen.

(All of the officers shall also repeat "Amen.")

President: At ease. One truth should be made known to you before you proceed further. We, as Antlers, strive to prove that we are not cold or indifferent to the higher and better things of life. Like all good American citizens, we love our country, and the principles upon which it is founded. But, in addition to promoting the virtues of citizenship, we also know the debt we owe to our parents. The Antlers designate the hour of ten O'clock as a memorial to those who gave us our being.

Twilight, and then the hour of ten,
That brilliant point on the dial of time
Which, with Antlers, is the setting
For the most precious of all gems,
The jewel of parenthood.

If our parents are living,
Endeavor today to see all that they are,
And have been to us,
And let them know of it.
Be kind to them while you may.
If our parents have passed from this world,
Venerate their memory
In your every action and thought.

At this sacred hour for Antlers,
Let each of us breathe
The sweetest sentiment of all,
To our Beloved Parents.

*(The President and Chaplain now return to their stations, and the President gives one rap *)*

President: Sergeant-at-Arms, you will now conduct our new members to the station of the Third Vice President for further instruction.

(The Sergeant-at-Arms takes the arm of the first new member, and leads all candidates around the Lodge room, until they come to the station of the Third Vice President, where they pause.)

Sergeant-at-Arms: Third Vice President (*this officer rises, and the President takes his seat, in unison*), by order of the President I now present these new members for further instruction.

(The Sergeant-at-Arms takes one step back, and the Third Vice President takes one step forward)

Third Vice President: My fellow Antlers, I welcome you to this station, which is representative of Brotherly Love. This virtue is best exemplified by Loyalty, which means devoted allegiance. Always strive to be sincere and steadfast, whether in fair weather or in foul, to our Country, to our parents, and to one another. I earnestly commend you to always practice Brotherly Love and Loyalty. *(The Third Vice President now takes one step back, turns his head to the Sergeant-at-Arms, and says),*
Sergeant-at-Arms *(pauses until this officer takes one step forward)*, you will now conduct these new members to the station of the Second Vice President, for further instruction.

(The Sergeant-at-Arms takes the arm of the first new member, and leads all candidates around the Lodge room, until they come to the station of the Second Vice President, where they pause.

Sergeant-at-Arms: Second Vice President *(this officer rises, and the Third Vice President takes his seat, in unison)*, by order of the Third Vice President I now present these new members for further instruction.

(The Sergeant-at-Arms takes one step back, and the Second Vice President takes one step forward)

Second Vice Pres.: My fellow Antlers, I welcome you to this station, which is representative of Justice. This virtue is best exemplified by fair play and good sportsmanship. These noble qualities should abide with you throughout life. Endeavor to be not only a good winner, but a graceful loser. Should any questionable situation arise, ask yourself this question: "What is the right thing to do?" Conscience will answer that you must not take any unfair advantage, but that your act must be fair, even though it may seem like a sacrifice. You may be assured that if you make choices that are fair and just, that you will be repaid many times over throughout your life. *(The Second Vice President now takes one step back, turns his head to the Sergeant-at-Arms, and says),*
Sergeant-at-Arms *(pauses until this officer takes one step forward)*, you will now conduct these new members to the station of the First Vice President, for further instruction.

(The Sergeant-at-Arms takes the arm of the first new member, and leads all candidates around the Lodge room, until they come to the station of the First Vice President, where they pause.

Sergeant-at-Arms: First Vice President *(this officer rises, and the Second Vice President takes his seat, in unison)*, by order of the Second Vice President I now present these new members for further instruction.

(The Sergeant-at-Arms takes one step back, and the First Vice President takes one step forward)

First Vice President: My fellow Antlers, I welcome you to this station, which is representative of Charity. This virtue is typified by unselfishness. Throughout our lives we must strive to share with others some of the many gifts with which we are endowed. It is through giving away some of ourselves that we are made most whole and strong. There must be no room in our lives for unkind words, or to bear malice towards others. The lesson that Charity teaches us is to forgive and forget. Further, Charity is at the cornerstone of our Antler motto: Do unto others as you would they should do unto you.”

(The First Vice President now takes one step back, turns his head to the Sergeant-at-Arms, and says),

Sergeant-at-Arms *(pauses until this officer takes one step forward)*, you will now conduct these new members to the station of the President, for further instruction.

(The Sergeant-at-Arms takes the arm of the first new member, and leads all candidates around the Lodge room, until they come to the station of the President, where they pause.

Sergeant-at-Arms: President _____ *(this officer rises, and the First Vice President takes his seat, in unison)*, by order of the First Vice President I now present these new members for further instruction.

(The Sergeant-at-Arms takes one step back, and the President takes one step forward)

President: My fellow Antlers, let me first congratulate you on your election to membership in this great fraternity. Although the Antlers are a social organization, it has a serious purpose. The lessons it teaches are intended to make all of us better family members, and better citizens. True Antlers will always conduct themselves in a manner reflecting credit upon their family, their Order, and themselves. The station of the President is emblematic of Fidelity, a virtue that should ever burn brightly within your hearts and minds. First and foremost is the obligation of Fidelity that we all owe to our families, and in particular, to our parents. I charge you to always remember that our families are the foundation upon which our lives are built.

Secondly, I charge you to remember the debt of loyalty that we owe to our great nation. May the principles that guided the formation of our country, always be the same principles that guide each of us on the journey that lies ahead. As the Sergeant-at-Arms now presents you with our American flag, I charge you to preserve it as a memento of this occasion, and may it ever stimulate you to the performance of your full duty in the preservation and defense of all it represents. *[As the President is speaking the last line the Sergeant-at-Arms takes a step forward, turns to face each new member, and presents each one with a flag. He then returns to his former position at the side of the candidates]*

[When the Sergeant-at-Arms has returned to his position, the president continues]

By virtue of the authority of my office, I now declare you to be members of _____ Antlers Lodge No. _____, of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, of the United States of America. *[Speaking to the other Lodge members]* How do we greet these fellow Antlers? *[Applause]*. You may now be seated.

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(One Rap)

[The Sergeant-at-Arms leads the new members to a seat.]