



**LEADERSHIP
DEVELOPMENT
COURSE**

Grand Lodge Committee on Leadership Services F. & A. M. New York

MASONIC CHARITY

PURPOSES of the LESSON:

- * To develop a concept of charity that will motivate all of us to recognize the necessity to be involved in charitable actions.
- * To clarify the obligation of all Freemasons to participate as fully as possible in charitable activities.
- * To enable Freemasons to know the forms, extent and generosity of Masonic Charities.

INTRODUCTION:

- * Charity is the cement that binds together our Fraternity and determines the levels of morality that exist within our civilization. It binds together the Brotherhood of man under the Fatherhood of God by recognizing that He is in all humankind and that all of us are truly one.
- * Friendship, Charity and Brotherly Love are the foundation tenants of our honored Fraternity.

DEFINITIONS:

- * The obligation to help the poor and the needy and to give to them gifts is stated many times in the Volume of Sacred Law, **The Great Light in Masonry**. Biblical law dictates some form of tax to benefit the poor (Deut. 15:7 10). Charity is the force for good which all religions promote.
- * Charity is an attribute of God Himself. "For the Lord your God, He is God of gods and Lord of lords...He doth execute justice for the fatherless and widow and loveth the stranger giving him food and raiment." (10:17 18) This theme is well developed by the Psalmist. Other religions provide their words to support the same concepts.
- * The derivation of the word is from the Latin root "carus", meaning "dear." This is the root form of "caritas", meaning "benevolence." The loving disposition means that one thinks favorably of others.
- * Greek terms are "Eros" and "Philos", indicating differing forms and levels of love. "Agape" indicates the highest form of sacrificial love. It is the willingness to give of ones' self for the sake of others.



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- * Charity as "justice" is a fundamental key to recognizing the righteousness of the act of benevolence.
- * Maimonides explains seven levels of charity. He indicates that there are selfish forms of charity. These attempt to control those receiving it. There are those at the highest level that give anonymously without the recipient or the giver being known to each other. The highest form of charity is not to give alms but to help the poor to rehabilitate themselves. Freemasonry and its concordant bodies practice the highest forms of charity.

MASONIC CHARITY:

Freemasonry obligates us to give charity to other Masons, their widows and orphans. Modern Freemasonry expands this concept to include all humanity. Masonic bodies and related organizations provide support for medical research, schizophrenic research, hospital and medical centers for burns and orthopedic services, eye and eyeglasses, muscle disease research, educational scholarships and many others. Freemasonry supports many community service programs such as the Child Identification Program and the Drug and Alcohol programs, as well as Drug Free Zones near schools. The Masonic Brotherhood Fund supports numerous projects related to charitable works.

All organizations related to Freemasonry support charity -- our youth programs including De Molay, the Rainbow, Constellation and Triangle organizations, the York Rite and Scottish Rite, the Grotto and the Shrine. There also is the Order of Eastern Star, the Amaranth and various other women's and men's organizations.

Masonic Brotherhood Fund

The Masonic Brotherhood Fund supports The Masonic Medical Research Laboratory, The Masonic Home, The Livingston Masonic Library and Museum, The New York DeMolay Foundation, The National Masonic Drug and Alcohol Abuse Foundation, The George Washington National Memorial in Alexandria, Va., The George Washington Masonic Shrine at Tappan, N.Y., Service and Rehabilitation programs and Masonic Benevolence for the needy.

Masonic Medical Research Lab

The Masonic Medical Research Laboratory was built in 1957 on the grounds of the Masonic Home in Utica, NY. It is administrated by a Board of Directors who are elected by the members of Grand Lodge at the Annual Communication of Grand Lodge. Elections are for staggered terms to promote continuity. A paid Director and other staff members conduct the research, apply for grants, write their findings and conduct all the functions to operate the facility.



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Research has been conducted in the past on Cancer, vision, Coronary heart disease, muscular dystrophy and gerontology in general. The Laboratory has received world recognition for its work in heart disease. Presently basic research is concentrated on studies in cancer, heart disease, hypertension and blood.

Concordant Masonic Bodies

The various Concordant Masonic Bodies each has its own special fund to support a charity or charities. A sampling is as follows:

The Grotto -- Humanitarian Foundation of the Supreme Council of the MOVPER for the Treatment of Dental Deformities of Cerebral Palsy children.

The Shrine -- The AAONMS has three burns centers and 19 crippled children's hospitals throughout the United States.

Scottish Rite-AASR-NMJ -- Schizophrenia Research Grants, College Scholarships and the Museum of Our National Heritage at Lexington Mass. This includes a Library.

Royal Arch Masons -- RAM Medical Research Foundation for Cancer Research. Also RAM Education Foundation, College Scholarships.

Knights Templar -- Eye Bank foundation, Education Foundation, student loans and medical student grants.

Council of Cryptic Masons -- Parkinson's Disease Research Grants.

Order of Eastern Star -- Home for the Aged at Oriskany, New York and various other charities.

Masonic charity is given at the highest level to those in need. Over \$2 million a day is given to charitable causes by Freemasonry in the United States. We give freely without expecting a return or overt recognition. Freemasonry gives us an opportunity to meet the highest human need, that of altruism. What better way to make humankind better? We share our strength with our human family and make the world a better place to live, raise our children and assure the success of future generations. Yes, we take good men and make them better. And they, in turn, create the ripples on the sands of time that serve all of humanity.



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Notes: