

Ritual, Brotherhood/Sisterhood, Club

Developed by Sigma Chi Fraternity

Modified by Mari Ann Callais, Ph.D.

Purpose: To challenge chapter members to evaluate and to be honest with where they see the priorities of ritual, brotherhood/sisterhood, and club (party) in their chapters and in their lives.

Items needed: Ritual Book, Beer Bottle, and Baseball Cap (or something with fraternity/sorority letters)

How to facilitate: Ask for volunteers, do not force someone to do the activity.

Instructions: Ask the person to put in whatever order where the three concepts are in their chapter. They can put them in any order:

- Can put in the order of where it really is in their chapter
- Put in order that they would like it to be
- Where it is for them and where they think that it is for their chapter members
- Where it was and where it is now

Ask volunteers to come up to the front of the room and place the 3 items in order and then to explain why they put them in that order.

You can choose to do the activity a number of different ways.

The ultimate goal of the activity is to help the chapter members open discussion to talk about what is important to their chapter and to talk about how to find balance in what they do as a chapter and as individuals.

The ultimate outcome is that the activity would facilitate a positive change in the role of ritual and the teaching of ritual.

Remember, ritual must be taught - it can't be assumed that it will just be important to everyone.

How to Evaluate the Role of Ritual in Your Chapter

What is ritual? What do most feel is considered ritual? Initiation, The Creed, Motto, other ceremonies?

What is its meaning?

What do most of our members believe ritual is really about?

What do you and the members of your chapter believe is the purpose of ritual?

Who is responsible to learn it, know it?

Who is responsible to live it?

What is the difference between performing ritual and practicing or living ritual?

How can ritual be taught?

Importance and meaning of the ceremonies

How to live ritual

How to hold one another accountable by understanding and using the concepts found in the ritual

Why are the performance, the attire, and the equipment important to how the ritual is received?

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"Cool Symbols, So What Do They Mean to Me?"

Discussion of Ritual Equipment Activity

Developed by
Mari Ann Callais, Ph.D.

One of the ways that a chapter can assess what role ritual has in their experience is to actually discuss the initiation or other ceremonies and to make it applicable to their daily lives. This activity will allow a chapter or a small group of members of a chapter to have a "living our ritual" discussion and help to make sense of ritual as more than just a ceremony.

Activity

Time: Allow approximately 2 hours for discussion

Set up:

- A. Dim the lights in the room - use low lighting or candles.
- B. Make certain that you are in a secure room as if you were conducting a ritual ceremony. Have everyone sit in a circle or semi-circle with ritual equipment either on a table or on the floor in the middle of the room.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does our ritual ceremony/ceremonies state that these symbols mean or represent? Go through each symbol and read a description of the symbol from the ritual book.
2. What do these symbols mean to you?
3. Why do you think that our founders chose these particular symbols?
4. Give examples as to what these symbols mean in your life?

At this point, the moderator of the activity should try to get the members to open up about their interpretation of the symbols and what they mean to them.

Example: Say an ordinary brick is one of the symbols. (This is just an example and has no relevance to any particular group.)

Have the group talk about what is the significance of a brick?

What is it made of?

How is it made?

By itself it is just a brick, but when put together with other bricks, it creates a foundation, a home, a walkway, etc.

What happens if it is cracked?

What if the mortar is not mixed well and it does not hold?

How does the brick reflect the lives of our individual chapter members and/or our chapter?

These are just examples, but it will help the chapter members to begin to see that the symbols in the ritual are not just symbols, but have a direct link to their day to day lives.

5. At this point, you may read a special part of the ceremony, maybe a poem that is included that has special meaning or is everyone's favorite part.
6. Conclude with everyone saying the Creed or Motto.
7. Ask everyone to make a commitment to living these symbols and values. May want to do a rededication of their vows.

This activity was developed to help facilitate a discussion of your ritual. It is the creation of the author and not reflective of any particular fraternity or sorority.

THE GREEK THAT'S WRITTEN THERE

Author Unknown

It makes little difference the size of your badge, whether it's large or small.
And if it is plain or brilliant with jewels is of no concern at all,
But the vows that you took along with your badge,
Have you worn them constantly, quietly,
deep in the heart of you where no one looks in to see?
Have you touched the stars you reached for once in your own small piece of sky?
Have you striven for the honorable, the beautiful, the high?
What difference, then the shape of the badge, be it diamond or heart or square
The important thing is how much do you love the badge that you chose to wear?



STAR FISH STORY

As an old man walked along the beach at dawn one morning, he noticed a young girl up ahead of him picking up starfish and flinging them into the sea. Finally catching up to the girl, the man asked her why she was doing this. The girl answered that the stranded starfish would die if left there in the morning sun.

"But the beach goes on for miles, and there are millions of starfish," quibbled the old man. "How can your effort make any difference?"

The girl looked down at the starfish in her hand before throwing it into the safety of the ocean waves. "It makes a difference to this one," she said.

THE BRIDGE BUILDER

by William Allen Droomgoole

An old man, going a lone highway,
Came at evening, cold and gray,
To a chasm, vast and deep and wide.
Through which was flowing a sullen tide.
The old man crossed in the twilight dim;
The sullen stream had no fears for him
But he turned when safe on the other side.
And built a bridge to span the tide.

"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim near,
"You are wasting strength with building here;
Your journey will end with the ending day;
You never again must pass this way;
You have crossed the chasm, deep and wide
Why build you the bridge at evening tide?"

The builder lifted his old gray head
"Good friend, in the path that I have come,"
he said,
"There followeth after me today
A youth whose feet must pass this way.
This chasm that has been naught to me
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be.
He, too must cross in the twilight dim;
Good friend, I am building the bridge for him."



Ritual

Read It!
Learn It!
Teach It!
Live It!

YOU NEVER KNOW

Helen L. Marshall

You never know when someone
May catch a dream from you.
You never know when a little word
Or something you may do
May open up the windows
Of a mind that seeks the light-
The way you live may not matter at all,
But you never know - it might.
And just in case it could be
That another's life, through you,
Might possibly change for the better
With a broader and brighter view,
It seems it might be worth a try
At pointing the way to the right -
Of course, it might not matter at all,
But then again - it might.



From Ritual to Reality

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