

The Structure of Freemasonry

American Freemasonry resembles two sets of stairs that begin and end together, as this chart of Masonic structure shows. A Mason's first step is to become an Entered Apprentice. He climbs to the third step where most Masons stay. If he wants to go on in Masonic hierarchy, he enters either the Scottish or York rites. Many authorities say the Scottish Rite was begun by Scots emigrés in France; the York Rite is named after York, England where, by legend, the first Masonic body was organized.

In the Scottish Rite a Mason climbs 30 steps, or degrees. The name he takes on at each degree is written on each step in chart. Where there are two names the top is used by northern Masons, the italicized one by southern Masons. Some figures a Mason meets in Rite ceremonies stand on the steps (from bottom): King Solomon, King Cyrus, acolyte, George Washington, Sultan. Each degree teaches a moral. To earn degree candidate learns the moral and participates in ceremony dramatizing it. A 32° is the

highest degree a Mason can earn. The 33° is awarded by the Supreme Council, ruling body of the Rite.

A Mason in York Rite advances 10 degrees, known by name and not by degree number. On chart are figures he meets at each degree or the degree symbol. Figures are: temple workman, Past Master (Virtual), Israel tribesman, High Priest of Jews, King Hiram of Tyre, Knight of Malta, Knight Templar, equal in prestige to 33° in Scottish Rite.

Under the arch are organizations allied to Freemasonry. Master Masons are eligible for Grotto and Tall Cedars of Lebanon. Girls with a Mason in the family can join Job's Daughters or Rainbow Girls; women, the Eastern Star; boys, DeMolay. Only 32° Masons or Knights Templar can join the Shrine. Shriner's wife can be a Daughter of the Nile.

Most important of many Masonic symbols are the open Bible with square and compass on it (left); Solomon's temple (below Bible); and the G with the all-seeing eye inside (upper right). In the U.S. the G stands for God.

SCOTTISH RITE

