



**A Parents' Guide to DeMolay...**  
... the answers to commonly asked questions



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# Foreword

So, your son is now a member of the Order of DeMolay...  
... and you're wondering what he's getting himself into.

Any parent who is concerned for the overall growth, development and well-being of their son, and who may not already be acquainted with what Florida DeMolay is all about, naturally has plenty of questions.

Since its founding, well over a million young men have become members of DeMolay. Many have gone on to become household names in their chosen profession. DeMolay provided them with skills otherwise unattainable for young men... leadership skills. However, as each of these young men began his association with DeMolay, there was a concerned parent or guardian in the background, asking questions.

This booklet was prepared to give you answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about DeMolay. A few minutes to review the information provided here will give you an overview of the history, values, operation, sponsorship and activities of a Chapter of Florida DeMolay.

The questions answered here are generally arranged in categories. However the answer to a question in one category might contain information that would generally fall into a different category. In those cases, to save reading time, the information will only be presented once.

You may have questions other than those answered here. They may be questions of a general nature, or questions specifically related to the Chapter your son has joined. Whatever your questions, please feel free to contact Florida DeMolay Administration at [administration@fldemolay.com](mailto:administration@fldemolay.com). We can also put you in contact with a local Chapter.

We appreciate your willingness to learn more about how this character-building and leadership-development organization has supplemented the growth of thousands of boys into positive, productive men and quality citizens in their communities.

Please read on.



## What is DeMolay?

DeMolay International is the world's largest fraternal organization for young men aged 12 to 21. It is specifically designed to provide a good moral environment to young men while teaching leadership skills. The ultimate aim is to build better young men who will, in turn, become better men, citizens, husbands, fathers, friends and leaders in the future.

## How did DeMolay get started?

In 1919, while employed as the social services director for the Scottish Rite bodies in Kansas City, Missouri, Frank Sherman Land hired a teenager by the name of Louis Lower to perform odd jobs around the building. Soon, Land found that Lower's father had died a short time before and that the young man missed having the guidance that a father would provide. Land suggested that Lower invite some of his friends to the Scottish Rite Temple to discuss starting a club. Within a few days, Lower brought eight of his friends to a meeting. The nine young men agreed that the idea of a club was a good one. Soon, the "Order of DeMolay" was born. Within three years, Chapters had been established in 39 of the then 48 states (Florida included) and in the District of Columbia.

## Where did the name *DeMolay* come from?



Jacques DeMolay was born in France in 1244. At the age of 21, he became a member of the Knights Templar, a group originally called the "Poor Fellow Soldiers of Jesus Christ." Sanctioned by the Pope and the Church Council in 1128, their purpose was to guard the road between Jerusalem and Acre (the port on the Mediterranean). Because of church sanction and the fact that they fought valiantly in several crusades, the Knights Templar were a popular group among the people. The name Knights Templar became synonymous with heroism. In 1298, Jacques DeMolay was elected Grand Master of the Templars. Over the years, the organization amassed great wealth, and King Philip of France became concerned that they would use their power and wealth against him. False charges were pressed against DeMolay and the Templars by the King in order to brand them as criminals. On orders of the King, Jacques DeMolay and hundreds of members of the Knights Templar were arrested and thrown into prison. During his seven-year imprisonment, DeMolay was tortured repeatedly in attempts to get him to betray other leaders and members of his beloved Templars, and he consistently refused. Eventually, he was sentenced to be burned at the stake on March 18, 1314. DeMolay died a martyr to loyalty.

The original nine members of DeMolay selected the name in honor of Jacques DeMolay and his high principles of fidelity.

## What are the requirements to join?

The requirements are few, but each is important. To be a member of DeMolay, a young man must:

- ⊕ Be between the ages of 12 and 21;
- ⊕ Be of good character and reputation;
- ⊕ Have a belief in God, a Supreme Being or Deity;
- ⊕ Submit an application for membership (petition); and
- ⊕ Attend a 2-part initiation ceremony.

## What is the initiation ceremony like?

The DeMolay initiation ceremony is the celebration of a young man's commitment to better himself by becoming a DeMolay. This orientation and explanation sets DeMolay apart from other organizations, because young men present it to all new members, as a Chapter.

The ceremony itself contains two sections, or "degrees." The first is called the *Initiatory Degree*. It is a solemn event during which the young man is acquainted with the founding principles of DeMolay. The second section, called the *DeMolay Degree*, is a play portrayed by DeMolay members. The subject of the play is the story of Jacques DeMolay, who lived in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. The play teaches loyalty to beliefs, family, friends and commitments - important values for today's youth.

### The Vows of a DeMolay

**Humbly and sincerely,**

- ⊕ **I promised to be a better son;**
- ⊕ **I promised to love and serve God, my country and my fellowmen;**
- ⊕ **I promised to honor and protect every woman;**
- ⊕ **I promised to slander no one;**
- ⊕ **I promised to aid and uphold the public schools;**
- ⊕ **I promised to be loyal to my friends and Brothers;**
- ⊕ **All of these things, and more, I did promise!**

## What is the ritual of DeMolay?

The ritual of the Order of DeMolay is truly what sets it apart from other youth groups. The ritual is a series of ceremonies, each of which has a symbolic meaning intended to inspire the young men who belong to the organization to be better citizens, better friends and better men. Included in these ceremonies are the standard ways of opening and closing meetings, inducting new members and installing officers. The DeMolay ritual was written in the early 1920s by Frank Marshall, a prominent Mason and reporter for the Kansas City Star newspaper.

## How does the life membership process work?

For each member initiated, a fee is paid to DeMolay International. This fee places the new member among the “life members” of the organization. No annual dues are collected from the members. Members are asked, however, to support their Chapter’s fund-raising projects, since a portion of the money raised by the Chapter must be paid annually to DeMolay International to cover the cost of insurance, and another portion may be paid to the state DeMolay association, to cover a portion of the costs of services provided by the state organization.



### ***A comment on DeMolay:***

*"I feel a great sense of obligation and gratitude toward DeMolay for the important part it played in shaping my life. Its precepts have been invaluable in making decisions, in facing dilemmas and crises, in holding on to one's faith and ideals, and in meeting those tests which are best borne when shared with others in a bond of confidence."*

## What types of activities does a DeMolay Chapter have?

Within certain parameters, the activities of a DeMolay Chapter are limited only by the imagination of its members. Members of DeMolay plan and hold social functions, fund raising or civic service projects, athletic activities and much more. Insurance regulations prohibit activities which can lead to one or more of the “3 I’s”: Injury, Illegal activity or Immoral activity. However, Chapter activities have a wide range of activities from which they can choose as they plan.

## Why haven't I heard of DeMolay?

Often DeMolay Chapters become so involved in planning, organizing and enjoying their activities, they overlook promoting their Chapter within a community as they should. Additionally, in this television age, the news would rather focus on the bad acts of young people rather than those concerned about themselves and their communities – like DeMolay members.

If you have not heard of DeMolay, perhaps you have heard of some of the persons who were DeMolays in their youth. These famous alumni include Walt Disney, actor John Wayne, comedians Tommy and Dick Smothers, pro-football quarterback Frank Tarkenton, Dan Rather, Willard Scott, owner of the San Diego Chargers Alex Spanos, former Governor Reubin Askew, Florida Lieutenant Governor Jeff Kottkamp and news legend Walter Cronkite. Many of these individuals and other community leaders credit part of their success to DeMolay.

## How does a young man learn good character in DeMolay?

Upon joining DeMolay, he will interact with other young men and Advisors of quality, who are dedicated to upholding the aforementioned virtues. Young men act more upstanding when in the company of other quality young men. Acting in an upstanding manner becomes a habit, which demonstrates good character now and serves to mold a mature way of thinking as he attains manhood.



**I think young people need these skills, but do the members *want* to learn them?**

Few young people are mature enough to desire this type of training without some type of fun. When DeMolays tell their friends about the organization, they discuss the fun aspects. DeMolays have a great deal of fun! Chapters routinely have dances, plan or attend sporting events, hold fund raisers and interact with our two sister organizations.

**How do DeMolays learn leadership skills?**

DeMolay prides itself on preparing young men for their careers. While education is vitally important, DeMolay supplements it with specific training. A process of executing increased responsibilities helps teach acute leadership skills. The Chapter elects officers each term, to run and plan Chapter meetings and functions. Here are some examples:

|                               |                                      |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Master Councilor.....</b>  | <b>President</b>                     |
| <b>Senior Councilor .....</b> | <b>1<sup>st</sup> Vice President</b> |
| <b>Junior Councilor.....</b>  | <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President</b> |
| <b>Scribe.....</b>            | <b>Secretary</b>                     |

Members may move through the ranks and obtain higher offices, depending on their level of interest and commitment, much like positions in the business world. Each position carries additional responsibilities. If he participates, some of the things your son will learn in DeMolay, preparing him for leadership positions, are:

- ⊕ Public Speaking;
- ⊕ Appearance and image maintenance;
- ⊕ How to plan and execute events, such as banquets and dances;
- ⊕ How to run a business meeting (Parliamentary Procedure);
- ⊕ How to prepare agendas; and
- ⊕ How to assign, utilize and execute Committees.

## **How much time does it take to be involved with DeMolay?**

The young man is invited to all events and can spend as much or as little time as he desires. Most Chapters have at least two meetings per month to plan their activities. There is no requirement to attend functions; however, we hope that the parents will enforce (at least) a six-month trial period. Usually after six months, the young man is familiar enough with DeMolay to see the enjoyment and benefits of membership.

## **Can you stop being a member if you don't like it?**

Yes, you can stop participating. A member will remain on our membership roll until he turns 21. Being on this roll entitles all members to participate in DeMolays programs if they desire.

## **What is the organization of DeMolay?**

In the United States, DeMolay is organized by jurisdictions, which are usually bound by state lines. Each jurisdiction is under the direction of an Executive Officer, who coordinates the activities of Advisors to assist the Chapters in their operation. Each jurisdiction follows the same guidelines set forth by DeMolay International in order to provide a quality experience for young men, which is in harmony with moral and legal standards. In Florida, the Executive Officer has set up an Executive "Staff," composed of several members of the International Supreme (DeMolay) Council, the governing board of all DeMolay International.

## **Is DeMolay a tax-deductible charity?**

DeMolay is recognized as a 501(c)3 charity by the IRS. Therefore, all contributions to the organization are tax deductible. Additionally, our adult workers may deduct certain expenses incurred by volunteering for a Chapter (such as gas, tolls, lodging, etc). For more information, or to make a tax-deductible donation, please contact your local Chapter or Florida DeMolay.

## **What activities are offered on the State (Jurisdictional) level?**

**Annual Statewide Conclave & Mini Conclave** – These are the culmination of a whole year of activities, and are widely considered to be the most fun to be had in DeMolay. DeMolays from across the jurisdiction come together for business planning, athletic and ritual competitions, banquets, dances, fun events and brotherhood.

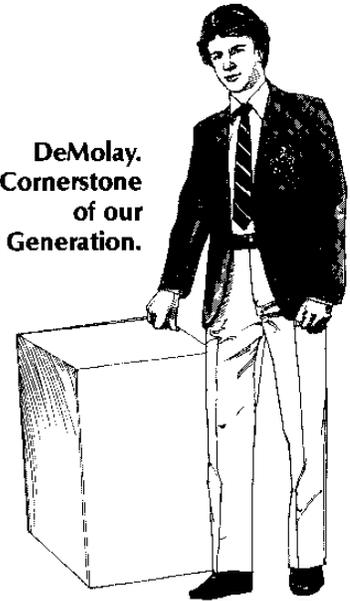
**Statewide initiations** – Initiation ceremonies are held throughout the state, and are usually named in honor of a long-time supporter of DeMolay. The State Officers travel to these initiations and unite with their Brothers in performing these ceremonies.

## What will be expected of a young man who joins DeMolay?

His involvement in DeMolay is intended to be both fun and rewarding. As with any organization, there are ways for him to maximize the benefit from his membership:

- ⊕ **Get involved.** He will be expected to attend Chapter meetings and activities, and to get involved in helping make decisions regarding the Chapter.
- ⊕ **Approach his involvement with a positive, helpful attitude.** His approach should include a willingness to learn, to help others learn, and to be a part of the Chapter's team. Every DeMolay member has had life experiences that have taught him lessons and given him a unique perspective on issues. Together, the members and their Advisors share perspectives and learn from each other as they make decisions which affect the operation and future of the Chapter.
- ⊕ **Put the precepts of DeMolay into practice in his daily life.** The guiding principles of DeMolay (Love of Parents, Reverence for Sacred Things, Courtesy, Comradeship, Fidelity, Cleanness and Patriotism) may seem "out of fashion" in today's society, but that does not mean they are without merit. A young man who can impress these beliefs in his daily life will be "ahead of the game" as he approaches manhood.
- ⊕ **Learn about DeMolay.** Part of being a good member and team player is being familiar enough with how it operates and being able to tell others about it. He will have the Leader's Resource Guide (handbook), and can take the "Leadership Correspondence Course" to learn about DeMolay. Parents, friends and others are also encouraged to take the L.C.C.

DeMolay.  
The Cornerstone  
of our  
Next Generation.



## What rules must members abide by?

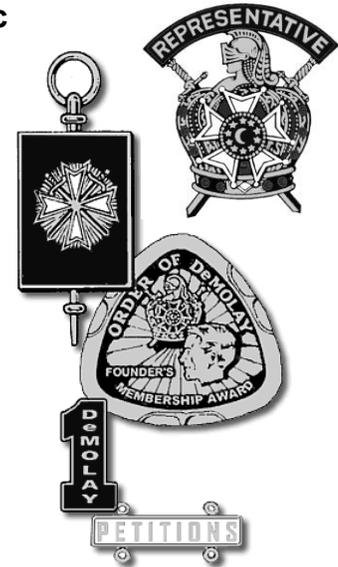
While there are specific rules governing specific situations in each Chapter, these are a general description of some universally adopted rules:

- ⊕ The presence and/or use of alcohol and/or illegal or controlled drugs is prohibited at all DeMolay functions. The only exception is for a medication prescribed by a medical doctor and reported to the Advisory Council as necessary with the proper dosage, description, etc.
- ⊕ The possession of any type of weapon is prohibited.
- ⊕ Aggressive, disruptive or destructive behavior has no place at a DeMolay function. DeMolays are responsible to the Advisors in attendance.

## What awards and achievements are offered?

By participating in various aspects of DeMolay programs, members can earn several forms of recognition for their achievements.

- ⊕ **Merit Bars** – Unique to each DeMolay member, his merit bars will show his participation in one of nineteen categories of DeMolay life. These include Athletics, Attendance, Civic Service, Conclave, Correspondence Course, Fine Arts, Fund Raising Installing, Journalism, Masonic Attendance, Masonic Service, Membership, Merit, Priory Membership, Religion, Ritual, Scholastics and Visitation. Each level of bar awarded is represented by a different color (white, red, blue, purple & gold).
- ⊕ **Representative DeMolay** – The first step to leadership development is learning the skill of self-evaluation. The Representative DeMolay (RD) award is a self evaluation test completed by the young man after he has been involved more than six months. The test causes the member to analyze his own progress in areas of his life, such as scholastics, religion, current events, etc.
- ⊕ **Membership Awards** – A member can earn awards for recruiting their friends into membership in DeMolay as well. A #1 pin will be awarded for one new member; a merit bar for each increment of three; the Founder's Membership Award for 5, and the Blue Honor Key for ten new members.



## Where else are there DeMolay Chapters?

Approximately 700 DeMolay Chapters operate throughout the world, including all 50 of the United States, Canada, Brazil, Australia, Germany, Japan, Italy, Aruba and the Republic of the Philippines.

## Is DeMolay a religious organization?

No. Among the requirements for membership is the belief in a Supreme Being, but not one of a particular doctrine, sect or denomination. A young man's religious convictions are his own. DeMolay members include those that follow Christians, Jews, Mormons, Hindus, Buddhists, Moslems and others.

DeMolay does not involve itself in religious discussions. It merely recognizes the importance of a faith in the lives of young men. The virtue of Reverence for Sacred Things seeks to remind our members to rely upon and use their own faith in life.

## **A DeMolay's Code of Ethics**

**A DeMolay serves God.  
A DeMolay honors all womanhood.  
A DeMolay loves and honors his parents.  
A DeMolay is honest.  
A DeMolay is loyal to ideals and friends.  
A DeMolay is courteous.  
A DeMolay is at all times a gentleman.  
A DeMolay is a patriot in peace as well as war.  
A DeMolay is clean in mind and body.  
A DeMolay upholds the public schools.  
A DeMolay is a good citizen.  
A DeMolay preserves our high standard.**

### **Why does DeMolay allow members of all religions to join?**

The value of having membership across the religious spectrum is in the opportunity it provides for members of one religion or denomination to understand the perspective of others. The diversity of this country provides opportunities to be introduced to faiths, cultures and traditions from around the world. By allowing young men of different backgrounds to participate it prepares them to reply upon their faith and respect the faith of others - they will value the culture and traditions of others while standing confidently upon his own beliefs.



### **Why does DeMolay use a Bible as a part of its Chapter furnishings?**

The Bible is used as a symbol of the spiritual foundation that all DeMolay members are required to have before they can join – a symbol of the religious liberty. It is not intended to represent an endorsement of the Christian religion over any others. A DeMolay's belief in a particular religious doctrine is something that is between him and God. It is something that must be arrived at through deep consultation with his family, his pastor or others whose opinion he values, followed by his own deep thought and prayer. Generally, the holy book of the predominant religion of that nation or area is the spiritual guide book used in the local DeMolay Chapter room. However, should a Chapter's membership include members from more than one religion, more than one holy book may be used in DeMolay ceremonies.

## Is there a way for the members' parents to be involved?

Absolutely. Many DeMolay Chapters have parents' clubs. Working under the general supervision of the Advisory Council, this group of parents and friends of the Chapter work to support and encourage the activities and projects of the Chapter. These clubs often assist the Chapter by helping maintain degree costumes, providing transportation to and from Chapter and State DeMolay activities and providing refreshments for the members to enjoy after their meetings, among other things.

*\*Please visit [www.fldemolay.org](http://www.fldemolay.org) for rules and restrictions regarding transportation and other regulations.*

### DeMolay Parents' Creed



I believe in the glorious heritage of youth,  
its aspiration and splendid promise.  
I believe in the courage, honor and innate  
decency of our young people.  
I believe in our sons –  
I believe in the principles of the Order of DeMolay  
as exemplified in its work of guiding our  
boys to better, nobler, knightlier manhood.  
And I pledge my loyal support to the organization  
so far as I am able.

*Written by Mrs. Jennie Schirmer, DeMolay Mom in Duluth, Minnesota*

## Who supervises the activities of a DeMolay Chapter?

Activities and projects of a DeMolay Chapter are supervised by a group of men and women who comprise the Chapter's Advisory Council. Most often, this body is made up of Masons from the sponsoring organization, Senior DeMolays (members who have past their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday) and parents of the current DeMolay members. Ultimately, the Advisors are responsible for overseeing all aspects of the operation of the Chapter, including supervising Chapter programs, planning and executing activities and serving as a "hearing board" on disciplinary matters involving the members.

## Who sponsors DeMolay Chapters?

Most DeMolay Chapters are sponsored by a group of Freemasons, a Masonic Lodge, or some appendant Masonic group such as the Scottish Rite, the York Rite or the Shrine. Lately, other Civic Organizations have been allowed to sponsor Chapters. The responsibilities of the sponsoring body are: to provide the Chapter a place to meet; to provide adult leadership and guidance through maintaining an active Advisory Council; to assist the Chapter whenever and however needed.

## Who are the Masons?

According to legend, the earliest Masons were craftsmen such as stonecutters and metal workers in ancient Egypt and in medieval Europe. They formed guilds and pledged to protect and assist the families and the property of members of the guild who were away in foreign lands plying their trade. While it cannot be proven that this was the origin of what has become the fraternal organization known as the Free and Accepted Masons, this is the belief that some have.

Still others believe that today's fraternal order is descended from the Knights Templar, a medieval group of soldier monks who guarded the highways worshippers traveled into and out of the Holy Land. In either case, the modern Masonic Order has roots that go back at least 700 years. Today's Masons are men who have banded together for mutual improvement in an organization whose basic tenants provide its members a framework in which to improve themselves morally and spiritually while giving back to the community through the conduct of various community service and charitable undertakings. Traditionally, the caliber of men who see membership in the Masonic Order are among the most charitable and civic minded individuals in any organization.



## Are the Masons a secret organization?

No. After all, in town after town, Masonic meeting halls are prominently marked. In many locations the meeting time and day of the local Lodge is published in the newspaper; hardly a way for a “secret” organization to operate. In addition to these things, many of the ceremonies and instructional talks used by the Masonic groups are published in books that can be purchased. Primarily, three things have contributed to the impression that the Masons are a secret organization: 1) The meetings of the local Lodges are restricted to members only; 2) The fact that Masons have certain modes of recognition that are kept confidential. Not revealing the modes of recognition provides Masons who do not know each other personally a way to determine that the other is indeed a member of the fraternity; 3) The fact that, unlike most other organizations, men are not usually asked to join Masonry - they should first express an interest in joining to a Mason.

## How did DeMolay and Masonic Lodges come to be associated?

The founder of the Order of DeMolay, Frank S. Land, was himself a Mason. As the DeMolay organization began to grow and new Chapters were being formed in the 1920s, Land realized that each DeMolay Chapter would require a group of quality men to provide guidance and supervision for the young men. He felt that requiring DeMolay Chapters to be sponsored by a Masonic Lodge or group of Masons would ensure community-service-oriented men to serve with the Chapter.

## What is the meaning of the DeMolay emblem?

Every part of the official DeMolay emblem has its significance to a member of the Order of DeMolay.



The Rubies and the Crown honor the founder, Frank S. Land, and the nine young men whose ties of friendship drew them together in the formation of the Order of DeMolay. The original emblem was surrounded by pearls, which were replaced by rubies as each reached their heavenly reward.

The Helmet is emblematic of chivalry, without which there can be no fineness of character.

The Crescent is a sign of secrecy and constantly reminds DeMolays of their duty not to reveal the secrets of the Order, nor to betray the confidence of a friend.

The Five-Armed White Cross symbolizes the purity of intentions to always remember the motto of the Order: "No DeMolay shall fail as a citizen, as a leader, or as a man."

The Crossed Swords denote justice, fortitude and mercy. They symbolize the unceasing warfare of DeMolay against arrogance, despotism and intolerance.

The Stars surrounding the Crescent are symbolic of hope, and should always remind us of those obligations and duties that one DeMolay Brother owes to another.

**Who should I contact for more information?**



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