

The Importance of Fraternity

The Knights of Columbus was founded by Father Michael J. McGivney as a society to promote fraternity among Catholic men. That fraternity - the sense of brotherhood among members and the families of members - remains, along with Catholicity, a defining characteristic of the Order.

To maintain a strong, friendly and fraternal atmosphere among Knights and their families, councils should conduct programs and activities that build camaraderie, pride and solidarity among members. These fraternal activities/programs don't have to be complex. The key is establishing unity among all council members, to strengthen the bond that is a pillar of the Order - fraternalism. Here are a few suggestions from the Supreme Council that you can follow or use as an inspiration to create your own ways to strengthen the bond between members in your council.

Council Directories

Each year, publish a council directory for distribution to members. Include current listings of supreme, state, district, council and circle officers. List

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each member's name, address, telephone number, e-mail address and birth date. You may also want to feature the names of wives and other personal information such as occupations, the names and number of children, and even their grade level in school. Listing occupations provides a directory of skilled workers (such as plumbers, electrician and accountants) who are members and free advertising for the Knights who provide the services. Include a yearly calendar of council activities inside the directory's front cover.

Honor Achievers

Sponsor periodic "Recognition Nights" to honor outstanding members. Pay tribute to those Knights who participate in council project or show exceptional leadership, and those with perfect attendance at meetings, events, and functions.

Present them with a plaque or some other appropriate award, such as one of the many certificates available from the Supreme Council office. See the *Knights of Columbus Certificates* flyer (#2640) for a listing and images of available certificates. This certificate is "Certificate of Appreciation" (#1579) that can be presented to any member in "gratitude for his dedication, loyalty and inspirational leadership"; a "Giver of Life" certificate card (#1444A - English only) for members who regularly participate in council-sponsored blood drives; a "Knight of the Month" certificate (#1476) and a "Knight of the Year" certificate (#1545). Recipients should be chosen for exemplary service to Church, community, council, family and youth. These certificates are available for 25 cents each.

A generic certificate (#2898) is also available in English and Spanish. The certificate's multipurpose design (which includes a full-color Knights of Columbus emblem) was developed in response to numerous requests for certificates for special programs. By using a personal computer and a laser printer, councils can easily design their own pro-

fessional-looking certificates at a reasonable cost for any occasion.

Help Members Facing Hardship

Your council may consider paying dues for members in real need who are unable to pay. These Knights may have been unemployed for an extended amount of time or be unable to work because of medical reasons. A man should never have to give up his membership in the K of C because he is unable (not unwilling) to pay dues.

Knights can also help a member finding new employment by helping him write a resume, practicing job interview techniques with him, or just letting him know about job opening. Councils can also help Knights facing difficult times by aiding with chores around their homes or simply driving them to medical appoints.

Remember that charity begins at home, so make an effort to assist needy Knights and their families.

Commemorate Special Moments

One way to promote fraternity is to simply recognize the important moments in the lives of members, Squires and people who are important to your council by sending Knights of Columbus greeting cards. Birthday (#757), Anniversary (#1484), Get Well (#1483), Sympathy (#1932), Thank You (#2010), and Congratulations (#2087) cards are available with envelopes in English, French and Spanish from the Supreme Council Supply Department for 25 cents each. Please use a *Requisition Form* (#1) when ordering.

Remember the Sick and the Departed

Make it a policy to include prayers during meetings for Knights and family members who are ill. Arrange for council members to

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visit a brother Knight or family member who may be hospitalized, living in an extended care facility, or homebound. Pray five decades of the rosary with the person to lift his or her spirits. Offer to assist family members of a hospitalized Knight by driving them to the hospital for a visit. Offer to stay with the homebound Knight or family member while caregivers go out for shopping, a movie or some other activity.

When a Knight or a member of his family becomes seriously ill or is hospitalized, send out postcards or put a listing in the council's newsletter, asking that this individual be remembered in the prayers of his fellow Knights. Encourage members to telephone, write to or visit the Knights or family members who are hospitalized or sick at home.

The death of a loved one can be devastating for a family. At such times, Knights can help ease the suffering of the families of deceased members in many ways. By attending the wake service for a deceased Knight or a Knight's family member, council members show that brotherhood is an integral part of the Order. A *Knights of Columbus Memorial Service* prayer manual (#2942) is available in English, French and Spanish for \$1.00 (limit two per order). Also, present the family of the deceased with a *Resolution of*

Condolence (#1450, English; #1450F, French; #1450S, Spanish). These portrait-shaped resolutions are available from the Supreme Council Supply Department for 25 cents each. They can be presented in portrait-shaped folders (#4101, English; #4103, French; #4109, Spanish) which are available for \$1.80 each. Council members can also assist survivors by helping at a post-funeral brunch or luncheon.

Once the funeral is over, Knights should continue to be of service to a deceased member's widow and family. Invite them to council activities, especially memorial Masses for departed members. Stay in touch with the widow to see if there is any work that needs to be done around her home such as roof repairs or repainting. Be sure that she remains on the mailing list for the council newsletter. Offer to help her prepare her yearly income tax return or with repairs to her car. Provide her with transportation when needed.

Without its fraternal and Catholic nature, there wouldn't be much left to the Knights of Columbus. This fraternity, or sense of brotherhood, is the "unwritten" benefit of membership. It's something that is easy to take for granted, but needs the effort of each and every member to stay alive. Help keep Father McGivney's dream alive by remembering and practicing fraternity!

Go for the Century Club Award!

Strive to win the Century Club Award in the final months of the fraternal year. Here are the requirements:

1. Quota will be a membership increase of at least 100 additions over deductions processed and recorded at the Supreme Council between July 1 and June 30.
2. Additions will be credited for new members, juvenile to adult membership, reinstatements, reactivations, readmissions and reapplications.
3. Deductions to be charged against the quota include all suspensions and withdrawals.
4. Net gain or loss to be affected only by numbers 2 and 3 above. Transfers in or out of the council and deaths will not count toward or against the quota.

There is no application form to be completed for the award. It is automatically awarded to a council by the Supreme Council when the above requirements are met. To qualify, new councils must record an increase of at least 100 members over the

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Keeping Members Interested

The key to success in any council is keeping members interested, excited and active. One way you can do this is by encouraging members to participate fully in council activities.

Here are some ways to show continuing interest to new and established members and to help them become active participants in your council:

- Call and/or e-mail members and remind them of meetings.
- Offer to provide transportation to members who would like to attend council functions but don't have the means to get there.
- Answer questions. Members will ask why council activities are done in a certain way and if things can be changed. Provide them with sufficient information.
- Inquire about the particular interests of the members through membership surveys.

- Help new members make new friends in the council by introducing them to all fellow Knights. Friendship is a great strength in any organization.
- Do all you can to help members feel important to the council.
- Get members' names in the council's newsletter, both when they join and as they begin to take an active role.
- Be sure members' names are always spelled correctly, whether in the membership directory, on a name tag at a meeting, or in a news story.

Establishing caring and concerned relationships among council membership will encourage your members to participate in council activities. By showing interest in new and old members alike, your council will be confirming its commitment to the membership, and will increase their willingness to assist in the programs necessary to help the Church and the community.

One-On-One Recruiting Works!

The fraternal year is winding down, and it's the perfect time for your council to finish up strong in all its recruitment efforts. The Order offers many different ways to recruit new members into your council, but one way that has been tried and true is one-on-one recruiting.

Sometimes the hardest thing about recruiting is taking the first steps, but recruiting a new member can be as easy as asking them to join. In conversations an individual is seeking information from you, but more often than not, it may be up to you to "strike up" that conversation and promote your council to a prospect. Members find out that it is very common for individuals to not join the Knights simply because they were never asked, so by taking the initiative and starting up a conversation, you are taking the first steps in recruiting on a one-on-one basis. Be ready at all times to talk about your council and the Order. Make sure you have pamphlets handy in your car and a Form #100 in your pocket so you will have just what the individual will be looking for.

If you are confident and knowledgeable, you will be able to answer their questions, no matter what direction the conversation goes. The Knights of Columbus has a lot to offer anyone who wants to help his community, Church, family or himself. It is up to you to be knowledgeable about your council and the Order; you will see that from simple conversations, your one-on-one recruiting will begin to pay dividends.

Make sure you get all the pertinent facts about the prospect while talking with him, including:

- His complete name and address
- Facts about his job
- His parish affiliations and activities
- Friends he has among present council members, and
- Information on his wife and children.

These facts can branch off into many different areas: the Order's benefits, service projects, community involvement, and social events. Be prepared to answer any question a

prospect may ask in order to make your council look its best. As the saying goes, "You've only get one chance to make a first impression," so make sure you have all the answers, and all the necessary materials ready at your disposal:

- A **Membership Document** (#100);
- Information on initiation fees and dues;
- Copies of various informational flyers including **Family Fraternal Benefits** (#2761), **Make a Difference** recruitment poster (#4498), the **Knights of Columbus Overview** booklet (#4425; limit: 50/order), and any other appropriate council publications;
- Facts on the Order's insurance program;
- The Order's Web site, www.kofc.org, so they can research more on their own.

While random conversations can lead new members to your council, preparing and targeting individuals by developing a prospect list can reduce labor and let you concentrate on people who have already expressed interest. Start with names, addresses and telephone numbers of potential Knights in your community. Use suggestions from current members, a parish roster (with the pastor's permission), and any other available resources.

Once your list is finished, telephone each prospect to see if he is interested in learning more about the Order. If so arrange for a visit to his home.

During the home visit, have the prospect (and his wife if he is married) review promotional materials. Make sure to bring a recruitment video (such as **Experience of a Lifetime** or **Founding to Future**), the **Member/Spouse Fraternal Benefit** flyer (#2773), **Columbia** magazine, council newsletters and other items of interest.

After making their pitch and answering any questions, the recruiters should ask the prospect to join and assist him in completing the **Membership Document** (#100). The

proposer should then follow through with the new member by escorting him to his First Degree exemplification and his first council meeting.

Remember that one-on-one recruiting is personal. The individual must understand that you are not looking for numbers as much as for individuals like him. Let the prospect know that he is wanted as a member, and know how his membership can enhance his life - providing direction and inserting him into a fraternity, a bond of friendship and family.

Century Club

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number of members recorded on the Notice of Institution. A minimum of 30 members is required.

There is still time! Your new council can be part of this prestigious club. Set your sights and go for it!



Give Parents a Time-out

All parents need a night out once in a while. But, for many reasons, it's not always easy to find a dependable sitter to watch the children. To help ensure a safe environment for your community, and to offer a service to council families, Knights can offer to 'baby-sit' in an effort to lessen the workload of brother Knights.

Make a point to have a sitting program for council members to watch council children, so parents can get a chance to see a movie, enjoy a restaurant, have a little private time, or celebrate an anniversary. It is a great opportunity for the council "family" to pitch in for one another, bringing council families closer and giving a needed break for parents.

To start up a program, you will want to, depending on the size of your council, designate a number of council members for each week or weekend of the upcoming month. Two or three couples could watch a number of youngsters for an evening or after-

noon. Additionally, individual council members, their wives, or even their older teenage children could step in and baby-sit while the parents get a night to themselves.

Consider taking the youngsters to a nearby playground area, or installing some swings and a sandbox on the council's property. Provide snacks for the kids - bringing the milk and cookies could be the parent's fee for the baby sitting. Older children in the council families may want to gain experience as a sitter or simply enjoy the experience of contributing to the work of the council.

Offering this service through your council is an excellent and economical way to give parents and children a much needed break in routine. Look into providing that break to the dads in your council. They will return from their night out refreshed and appreciative.

Schedule and Conduct First Degrees

Maintaining a steady flow of membership is a challenge all councils face. To successfully maintain constant recruitment, an organized schedule of degrees is essential. In this way candidates are promptly advanced into Knighthood.

Sponsoring a certified First Degree team or participating on a district degree team is a great opportunity for your council and its members. If these opportunities are taken, your council can schedule exemplifications at your leisure. Having a degree team allows you to maintain your membership flow. To start a team, council members need to memorize the parts in the *First Degree Ceremonial Booklet* (#532). Order the booklet by using the requisition form on page 37 of the *Council Report Forms* booklet (#1436). Send the form for approval to the Supreme Council Ceremonials Department. Once the First Degree team is ready, the district deputy certifies it.

Remember to schedule First Degrees frequently - at least one every

other month. Publicize the schedule in the council newsletter and Web site, parish bulletins and Web site, diocesan and community newspapers and Web sites, and any other source.

Councils should present the *Campaign Degree Honoree Certificate* (#2919) to the honoree of each exemplification. Also, each man who receives a degree during the campaign should be given the *Campaign Degree Certificate* (#2920). Both certificates are available free of charge from the Supreme Council Supply Department.

Once an honoree is chosen and a degree date is set, contact candidates in advance to confirm attendance. Offer them a ride if necessary. Be sure that the candidate's proposer is present with him throughout the exemplification.

When possible, schedule First Degrees around the time of Second and Third degrees. This will encourage prompt advancement of the new Knights to the further degrees of membership.

SHORT TAKES

RSVP

The *Refund Support Vocations Program Refund/Plaque Application* (#2863), found on the Order's Web site at www.kofc.org and on page 27 of the *Council Report Forms Booklet* (#1436), must be completed and submitted to the Supreme Council office between now and June 30. The canceled check for the donation must be attached to the application. Applications without copies of the canceled check(s) or proof of a check being cashed by a recipient will not be honored. Councils must submit the application to qualify for the refund and/or the plaque award.

Fourth Degree Awards

Remember that assemblies which have conducted four or more patriotic programs during the fraternal year are eligible for the Supreme Council Civic Award. The Civic Award application is found on the Order's Web site at www.kofc.org and on page 7 of the *Assembly Report Forms Booklet* (#325). Submit the form to the Knights of Columbus Supreme Council Department of Fraternal Services before June 30.

Columbian Award

The *Columbian Award Application* (#SP-7) must be submitted to the Supreme Council office by June 30. It is located on the Order's Web site at www.kofc.org and on page 29 of the *Council Report Forms Booklet* (#1436). Submission of the Columbian Award application is essential to qualify for the Star Council Award. Each fraternal year the Order recognizes council achievements in membership recruitment and retention, service programming and promotion of the insurance program through the Father McGivney, Columbian, Founder's and Star Council awards.

Check out our Web site
www.kofc.org