

2024 Candle Lighting Program

The Lessons of Grange Membership

Lecturer: The Grange, like other fraternal societies, includes various lessons told and learned through degrees. These are short enactments, like plays, that allow members of the Grange to pass on to new candidates the values of the organization and lessons that can be learned – in the Grange’s case – through the natural world and work of agriculture.

There are a total of seven degrees in the Grange, the first four are performed at the local/subordinate Grange level, while the fifth, sixth and seventh are at the Pomona, State and National levels, respectively.

Our Candle Lighting program this year will help us remember and recommit to these lessons of the first four degrees. (Light main candle.)

Speaker 1: The First Degree is set in the season of Spring; the basic lesson is Faith and there are 4 emblems associated with this Degree. The first emblem is the Ax, and it is the symbol of Perseverance. It is used to cut away obstructions in the fields and to prepare timber for use. Its use teaches us perseverance in overcoming obstacles; for, as by repeated blows it cleaves its way through the hardest wood, so should we by repeated trials surmount every difficulty.

The second emblem of this Degree is the Plow and is the symbol of Preparation and Wisdom. The Plow is used to break up the soil and prepare it for planting. This should teach us to drive the plowshare of thought diligently through the heavy soil of ignorance, and thus prepare the mind for the growth of knowledge and wisdom.

Speaker 2: The third emblem of this degree is the Harrow and is the symbol of Study and Observation. The Harrow is used to pulverize the soil as well as to cover the seed. Let this be emblematic of that course of study and observation necessary to enable you fully to understand your business.

The fourth emblem of the First Degree is the Spade, the symbol of Thoroughness. The Spade we use when we wish to penetrate deeper into the soil than we can with the Plow. It thus becomes the emblem of thoroughness. Whatsoever you attempt to do, strive to do it well.

I light this candle to represent the First Degree of our Order and the Lesson of Faith.

Speaker 3: The Second Degree is set in the season of Summer; the basic lesson is Hope and there are two emblems associated with this Degree. The first emblem is the Hoe, and it is the symbol of Cultivation of the Mind. The Hoe, with which we cut up weeds and stir the soil, is emblematic of that cultivation of the mind which destroys error and keeps our thoughts quickened and ready to receive and apply new facts as they appear, thus promoting the growth of knowledge and wisdom.

The second emblem is the Pruning Knife and is a symbol of Restraint. The Pruning Knife is used by us to remove useless and injurious growth from our trees, plants, and vines, and should remind you of that proper degree of restraint so necessary to improve yourself, to keep your passions within due bounds, and prevent your fancy from leading you astray after the vanities and vices of the world.

I light this candle to represent the Second Degree of our Order and the Lesson of Hope.

Speaker 4: The Third Degree is set in the season of Fall; the basic lesson is Charity, and the emblem is the Sickle. The Sickle is the symbol of Harvest, Prosperity, and Honest Employment. Like all the tools we use, it is ancient and honorable; as an emblem of our Order, there is none more so. It speaks of peace and prosperity and is the harbinger of joy. It is used not merely to reap the golden grain for the sheaf, but, in the field of the mind and heart and soul, to gather every precious stalk, every opening flower, and every desirable fruit. Thus, shall the implement provide a reminder of honorable employment, preaching its sermon of present prosperity and peace, and its prophecy of future plenty and rejoicing?

I light this candle to represent the Third Degree of our Order and the Lesson of Charity.

Speaker 5: The Fourth Degree is set in the season of Winter; the basic lesson is Fidelity, and the emblem is the Agate. The Agate is the symbol of Fidelity. Let the Agate be to you an emblem of Fidelity. May your principles of manhood and womanhood be as firmly impressed as the lasting colors in the stone, and may our friendship be as firm as the stone itself.

I light this candle to represent the Fourth Degree of our Order and the Lesson of Fidelity.

Lecturer: As we continue our Grange membership, let us keep in mind the important lessons of Faith, Hope, Charity, and Fidelity.