

Shriner Primer

Introduction If you do not think golfer Arnold Palmer, astronaut Edwin “Buzz” Aldrin, country crooner Brad Paisley, race car driver David Ragan and possibly your neighbor, co-worker or friend have anything in common, you need the Shriner Primer. And if you think the only thing



Shriners – those guys in the odd-looking, tasseled, red hats in your local Independence Day parade – do is ride around in tiny cars, you really need the Shriner Primer. Consider the following 20 pages our version of the CliffsNotes® on Shriners International. Spend a few minutes perusing this booklet, and you will have a better insight into the Shriners fraternity and Shriners Hospitals for Children®. If you are interested in giving back to your community, having fun and involving yourself with a greater purpose, read on.

Shriners of the Times

Simply put, Shriners International is a fraternity. It all started in Manhattan back in 1870, when some members of Freemasonry, which is widely considered to be the world’s oldest fraternity, were hanging out at their favorite restaurant. The guys felt like their band of brothers needed a little spicing up. They thought Masonry, which traces its roots to stonemasons and craftsmen of the Middle Ages (more on page 4), was a tad too focused on ritual. These guys wanted a fraternity that stressed fun and fellowship. Leave it to an analytical mind – Walter M. Fleming, M.D. – and an artistic type – Billy Florence, an actor – to take that thought and run with it. Florence conceptualized the idea for the organization after attending an Arabian Nights themed party while touring Europe. Fleming added the structure to Florence’s proposed pomp-and-circumstance, drafting the fraternity’s name, initiation rites, rituals and rules. Together, the men designed the new fraternity’s emblem, devised a salutation and determined the red fez with a black tassel would be the group’s official headgear. And local Shriners chapters, it was decided, would be called “temples.” The new organization would be called the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine (AAONMS). It was later renamed Shriners International. The first temple, Mecca Shriners, was formed in New York City in 1872. Word of the new group spread fairly quickly, thanks to a pretty good public relations campaign – even without the Internet or cell phones. As membership grew rapidly, a governing body known as the Imperial Council, AAONMS, was formed. Temples were established in Canada, Mexico and Panama. More recently, temples have been established in Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Germany and Brazil, and more interest is developing throughout the world. Today, there are hundreds of thousands of Shriners who belong to nearly 200 temples and thousands of sponsored clubs located throughout the world.

Shriners are Masons

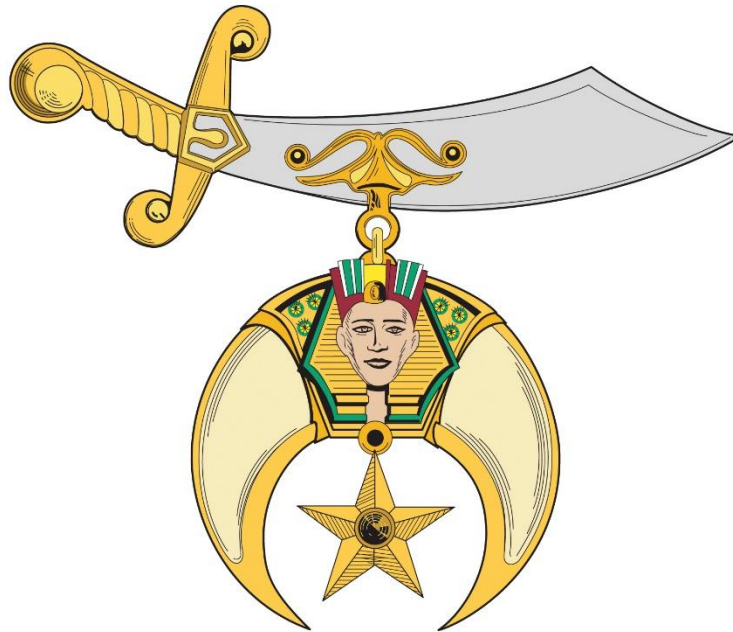
To become a Shriner, a man must first be a Master Mason. It has been suggested that AAONMS formed an anagram of "A MASON." The fraternity of Freemasonry (hereafter, Masonry) is the oldest, largest and most widely known fraternity in the world. It is impossible to Google the exact date Masonry began, but we do know its philosophies date back hundreds of years to the time when stonemasons and other craftsmen gathered after work in shelter houses, or lodges. Over time, the men organized into Masonic guilds, and the tools of their trade – the square and compass – became the symbol of their brotherhood. Time passed, and the need for operative stonemasons declined. So, Masonry evolved into an organization that began to accept members who were not craftsmen. Today, Masonry is built upon a foundation of improving character and strengthening communities, though the square and compass are still the symbols of the fraternal brotherhood. Just as Shriners have temples, Masonry has a basic organizational unit called the Lodge. (Groups of lodges are organized under governing bodies known as Grand Lodges.) Masons are required to progress through a series of Masonic ceremonies, known as degrees. Once they have completed the third and final degree, members are titled Master Masons. Once a Mason earns the Master Mason title, he can join the Shriners fraternity, as well as several other Masonic organizations. In short, all Shriners are Masons ... but not all Masons are Shriners. Masonry takes good men and makes them better. Shriners take Masons and make the world better.

Shriners Terms & Titles

Some have a hard time wrapping their heads around the rituals, symbols and terminology used in the Shriners fraternity. What is an Imperial Potentate? How about a Divan? And what is up with the fezzes? Fez-iquette Let's start with the fez – the rhombus shaped, tasseled, red hat most commonly associated with Shriners. The fez was adopted as the official headgear of Shriners in 1872. Named after the town of Fez, Morocco, where it originated, the hat seemed to portray the theme the original founders of the fraternity were looking for. Today, the fez is worn at Shriners functions and in parades and outings as an effective way of gaining exposure for the fraternity. It is not unlike wearing a baseball cap to support your favorite team. You may also see Shriners wearing fezzes in public awareness campaigns promoting Shriners Hospitals for Children

The Emblem

Just like Mercedes-Benz is known for its three-pointed star symbol, Shriners International is known for its emblem. Carrying on the theme, the emblem is a Crescent formed by two claws of a tiger, united at the base in a gold setting. In the middle is the head of a sphinx The Crescent hangs from a scimitar, while a five-pointed star is beneath the sphinx.



Greetings and Salutations

Since 1872, Shriners have used the salutation “Es Selamu Aleikum,” Arabic verse for “Peace be with you!” The response: “Aleikium Es Selamu,” or “With you be peace.” The Chain of Command Now on to the Shriner hierarchy. To better understand it all, it helps to begin at the local level. The officers who run each temple are called the Divan. For Shriners, the elected Divan officers serve as the Board of Directors for each temple. The top dog in the Divan is known as the Potentate, defined as “the chairman or CEO of the Board of Directors.” The second in command is called the Chief Rabban, followed by the Assistant Rabban, High Priest & Prophet, Oriental Guide, Treasurer and Recorder. Within each temple there can be any number of “clubs” or “units” formed for a certain purpose or to serve Shriners in a specific geographic area. The best-known examples are the units of clowns and motor patrols (the “little-car” guys), often the most visible in the community. There are also clubs and units for people with various other interests, as well. From golfing and boating, to classic cars and motorcycles – there truly is something for everyone. New units and clubs can be formed to meet the changing needs and interests of temple members. A group of Representatives from the temples convenes once a year to make policy decisions and create legislation regarding the fraternity and philanthropy at an annual convention. These Representatives may be elected to the Imperial Divan, the 12-member governing body of Shriners International. The chief executive officer of Shriners International is the Imperial Potentate, who serves a one-year term.

Can my Family Participate?

Temples are broadening their base by providing unique opportunities for families. With Potentate approval, nobles, their ladies and children may participate in civic parades. Ladies and youth also have several ways to be involved: » Ladies' organizations include Daughters of the Nile, Ladies Oriental Shrine of North America, Shrine Guilds of America Inc., and the Order of the Eastern Star. » DeMolay International (for young men, ages 12 to 21); Job's Daughters International (for young ladies, ages 10 to 20); and The International Order of the Rainbow for Girls (for young ladies, ages 11 to 20). For more information on these organizations, please contact your temple office or the office of membership development.

Shriners' Creed

Shriners believe in God and that He created man to serve His purposes, among which is service to others in His name. We believe that care for the less fortunate, especially children who suffer from burns and crippling diseases, is our institutional calling. We are patriots, each willing to serve his country with fidelity and courage. We cherish independence under law and freedom with responsibility. We honor family. We respect our parents, wives and children. We should instill in our children the tenets of this creed, and the heritage from which it emanates. As individuals, we pledge ourselves to integrity, virtue and nobility of character. Our intentions will be honorable, our relations will be trustworthy and our spirits forgiving of each other. As brothers, we offer each other fraternal affection and respect. Together, we support each other in adherence to this creed, so that we may positively impact our communities. As Shriners, we look beyond ourselves to serve the needs of others, especially children in need of specialized medical care. We believe Shriners Hospitals for Children to be the world's greatest philanthropy, and we support its "temples of mercy" with spirit, time, talent and means.

Shriners Hospitals for Children

As membership and interest in the Shriners fraternity grew in the early 1900s, so did the call for establishing an official charity. In 1919, during a polio epidemic, the Imperial Potentate-elect pitched the idea of establishing a hospital to provide free care for children with orthopedic conditions. The idea was mulled over and, in 1920, a committee was established to explore the idea. This committee concluded there should not be just one hospital; there should be a health care system throughout North America that provides specialized pediatric medical care regardless of the families' ability to pay. It was an idea that appealed to Shriners, who, as we know, like to do things in a big way. The first hospital opened in Shreveport, Louisiana, in 1922. Orthopedic, Burn, Spinal Cord Injury, and Cleft Lip and Palate Care Today, there are 22 Shriners Hospitals for Children. The majority specialize in providing orthopedic care – treating injuries and problems of the bones, joints and muscles – as well as complicated conditions, such as osteogenesis imperfecta (brittle bone disease), and the orthopedic effects of spina bifida and cerebral palsy. Four hospitals specialize in providing medical care to kids with burn injuries. Shriners Hospitals for Children entered the field of burn care in the 1960s after recognizing a lack of medical expertise in the field. The health care system treats children with acute burns; conducts reconstructive and restorative surgeries on kids with healed burns; treats children with severe scarring that limits mobility; and also helps kids with scarring or facial deformities caused by burns. Spinal cord injury care is provided at three Shriners Hospitals for Children. These hospitals provide long-term rehabilitation and intensive physical, occupational and recreation therapies for children with spinal cord injuries. Shriners Hospitals for Children officially established a cleft lip and palate program in 2005. Available multidisciplinary 19 services include surgery, orthodontics, hearing, speech and psychological therapies, and additional supports. Some of our hospitals provide care for multiple service lines. Outstanding Research “Today’s research is tomorrow’s patient care” is a well-known saying at Shriners Hospitals for Children. All 22 Shriners Hospitals for Children are involved in some form of research. Shriners Hospitals for Children has research affiliations with major universities. Generally, these investigations focus on improving and expanding treatments for severe burns, understanding complex musculoskeletal disorders, and improving techniques used to treat both mobility problems and spinal cord injuries. Educational Opportunities Shriners Hospitals for Children takes an active role in medical education. Most of our hospitals have residency or teaching affiliations with other hospitals or universities. Shriners Hospitals for Children also provides training in other medical areas, including nursing, physical and occupational therapy and orthotics and prosthetics. While there are many elements to Shriners Hospitals for Children, there is only one purpose: to improve the lives of children. Receiving Care Children up to age 18 are eligible for care at Shriners Hospitals for Children if there is a reasonable possibility they can benefit from the specialized services available. Acceptance is based solely on a child’s medical needs. No Barriers to Care Thanks to generous Shriners and other donors, Shriners Hospitals for Children provides all care and services regardless of the families' ability to pay.

Discover your inner Shriner

Shriners come from all walks of life. We are plumbers and professors, salesmen and CEOs. We are fathers, uncles and sons. We are also brothers and friends. When you become a Shriner, you become a part of a brotherhood of men committed to family, engaged in ongoing personal growth, and dedicated to providing care for children and families. While our backgrounds and interests may be diverse, what binds us together are shared values and a desire to have fun, do good and build relationships. Becoming a Shriner is easier than you think. The rewards will be far more than you expect. For information about joining Shriners International, please visit www.shrinenet.org, email membership@shrinenet.org, or call 813-281-0300.