

# Period of Instruction on the Ceremony of Initiation



Our Ceremony of Initiation is a highlight of our member experience—whether hearing it for the first time as a new member or sharing the experience as a current sister. The ceremony is more than a formality. Hearing the words reminds us all of the meaning behind our emblem, our five virtues, our Objects and Aims and the promises we each made as we joined P.E.O.

## After a Favorable Ballot

- President appoints a preacceptance counseling committee to meet with the candidate before she decides to accept. They review:
  - The vows she will be asked to make and answer with “I do” or “I am.”
  - She may choose whether her hand is on her heart or on the Bible when taking her vows.

## Planning for the Ceremony of Initiation

- The Ceremony of Initiation is only presented at an in-person meeting.
- President asks chapter preference for officer attire (all white or white tops/black slacks or skirts).



- A chapter may confer the ceremony on up to three candidates at one time.
- Each candidate is to have made a personal decision as to whether to place her hand on her heart or on the Bible when taking her vows.
- The location for initiation must be a place that can be restricted to only P.E.O. members during the ceremony.
- Photos and microphones are not allowed during the ceremony and no photos of the initiatory emblem are allowed at any time.
- Current chapter officers, or appointed proxy officers may present the Ceremony of Initiation.
- If one officer holds the booklet, all must hold the booklets. The only exception is the president who may be without a booklet if she has memorized her part. No booklets are necessary if all have memorized their parts.
- Practice the ceremony prior to conferring it.

## Preparing for the Ceremony of Initiation During the Meeting

- The guard's responsibilities
  - Sets the mood for the ceremony.
  - After the president announces the next business in order is initiation, the guard announces the name(s) of the candidate(s), the recording secretary provides the balloting information from the minutes for the candidate(s) and the guard clears the table and removes the chairs.
  - The guard makes three trips into the meeting room:
    1. Brings in the initiatory emblem with the letters facing the guard, placing it in the center of the table so the letters will face the president; proceeds around the table to loosen the ribbons under the emblem points; she does not reach across the initiatory emblem.
    2. Places the emblem pin on the table, the Bible on the table and then opens the Bible. The Bible is to be on the table regardless of if it will be used for vows.
    3. Brings in the gavel. The gavel should be at the left of the Bible.
- When the gavel is placed, this is the signal for the officers to take their places. The guard waits at the circle until the president instructs her to conduct the candidate(s) to the table.
- The guard escorts the candidate(s) into the circle. The guard stands by the side of the candidate(s) to assist.
- When revealing the ribbons, the vice president places her booklet (if used) on the table and is the only one touching the emblem. She should steady it as the ribbons are pulled by gently holding the point of the emblem.
- Ribbons are held waist high as each officer speaks about her assigned virtue; at the conclusion of that virtue, she lowers the ribbon. The ribbon is raised when she introduces her virtue and then continues to be held aloft as the chaplain adds a statement and through the officer's response. The ribbon is lowered to be even with the tabletop. The chaplain only raises her ribbon when she gives her remarks on the virtue of Truth and through her response to the corresponding secretary.
- After the chaplain's prayer, each officer places her ribbon ring on the table next to the star tip with the tassel on the ribbon.
- When directed, the guard places the President's Book at the right of the Bible for the initiate(s) to sign.
- After the initiate(s) signs (sign), the guard removes the President's Book and steps back into the circle.



## After the Ceremony of Initiation

- When the final Ceremony of Initiation is complete, the guard folds the ribbons once over the top of the emblem, placing one hand under the emblem and the fingers of the other hand on top to prevent the ribbons from slipping. The guard makes two trips out:
  - Removes the emblem.
  - Removes the Bible and gavel.
- The guard's final responsibility is to arrange the table for the president to resume her place.