



Planning and Executing an Open House



Open Houses can provide a successful way to excite potential members. If done right, these types of events can deliver a positive first impression and a familiar format for parents. This allows the potential members and parents to meet members and advisors and learn about your activities.

1. *Greeting Guests*

- a. Having a sign-in sheet. This allows you to keep track of who attended your event and gives you contact information to be able to follow up afterward! Make sure that everyone signs in and provides the following information:
 - i. Prospects – Name, School, and phone or email if comfortable
 - ii. Parents – Name, address, phone, and email
- b. Neat casual dress. This means khakis or jeans and a DeMolay polo or t-shirt. Chapter polos are always a great way to show professionalism and that you are a team. It is essential that those who visit are comfortable and not overwhelmed, so suits and regalia are not recommended.
- c. If your Chapter doesn't already have name tags, make sure everyone is wearing one before the event starts and have your attendees create one as well when they sign in. If you used an RSVP system, make name tags for those who responded so they can just pick them up at check-in.
- d. Have brochures, flyers, petitions, posters, and your Chapter's calendar available for attendees to take with them.

2. Food

- a. Providing food and drink items will encourage a warm and inviting atmosphere for your attendees. This will cause them to sit and open the opportunity for you to have a one-on-one conversation with them and sell DeMolay.
- b. Food is always a tricky hurdle with what to provide at every event. We recommend having a variety of simple snacks that would work for the most common food allergies, etc. Trying to accommodate every possible scenario would be almost impossible but showing that you have made an effort for those that would be the most common can go a long way in building a relationship with potential new members and their families.



3. Presentation

- a. Whenever possible, have active DeMolays as the presenter(s) for your program. The more we allow the youth to lead the event, the more parents and youth will see that we really mean when we say that we are youth led.
- b. We recommend having a short presentation on our youth protection policies to help both parents and youth understand that safety is our top priority. This part of the presentation could be co-led by a youth and adult, or an adult should at least be prepared to assist in answering questions and clarifying information.
- c. We encourage you to utilize the open house presentation template from DeMolay International. It includes lots of opportunities to customize the presentation with local events and examples while also providing a framework and tying your Chapter back to the international brotherhood and history of DeMolay.
- d. Ask several members to be prepared to speak about their experiences in DeMolay. They are the best ones to explain how DeMolay has impacted them, what they have learned while being a member, or what their favorite activities have been.

- e. After the presentation, provide an opportunity for potential members to complete petitions if they choose. If time is available, you may also be able to hold a quick Chapter meeting to elect and obligate them. At a minimum, make sure they have your calendar and an invitation to your next fun/social event. Don't make them wait too long for that event or they may lose interest!

4. Promotion

- a. Invitations are an effective way to invite people in the community to your open house. They provide a personal touch that makes the recipient feel they are significant; this will entice them to want to attend even more. These should include:
 - i. Letter from the Chapter with basic info such as a brief history, the age range of DeMolays, the purpose of our organization, what unique events your Chapter has done, scholarships your members have received in the past year, or your Chapter provides for its member. Incorporate the branded DeMolay logo, stars and shield, and the Chapter Advisor contact information. A sample letter is available on DeMolay.org in the resources section.
 - ii. Business cards. These are found on www.shopdemolay.org, can be a very effective way to provide contact information and provide a professional look to your Chapter and its members.
 - iii. Refer potential DeMolay families to BeADeMolay.org. Packed with information geared to the potential member and their family, this website also allows them to fill out an interest form to get more information, or even to submit an electronic petition.
 - iv. Include a flyer for your open house in the invitation. It is important to remember that the invitation may be the first contact that this parent and potential member are receiving on behalf of your Chapter; first impressions are essential.
- b. Your Chapter should develop a flyer to properly promote any event your chapter has. For an open house you will want to include the following information.
 - i. Location. you want your guests to know where they are going. Make sure to watch terms such as temple, fraternity, and prospect party, instead use building, youth leadership organization, and open house.
 - ii. RSVP information going to the Chapter Advisor. It is essential to know how many attendees you will have to plan food and space accordingly. Your Chapter will want the RSVP's to be a week before the event at the latest.

- iii. Dress code. You do not want your guests overdressing or underdressing, if they do either of these, it will cause them to feel out of place and not welcomed.
- c. Now that your Chapter has developed a flyer, it is time to get it out to your community and not just the people you are sending the invitations to. Here is a list of potential places to leave those flyers.
 - i. Local Businesses – The majority of local businesses have community boards for people to post flyers and other promotional material.
 - ii. Social Media – This is an easy way to distribute information. There are community, county, as well as local business social media pages that allow you to post your flyer. Consider creating an event and having members invite their friends. It is important to remember that this should not be your primary way of promoting your open house, nor should it be used as an RSVP tool.
 - iii. Contact information from members – Have each of your active DeMolays provide ten names of friends or family members. These potential attendees will be more comfortable with coming, given that they will have someone they are familiar with at the open house. A guide on how to brainstorm these names can be found on our website under downloads, **“DeMolay 10 most wanted”**.
 - iv. School Rosters – This may be an option for your Chapter depending on local and state laws. To find out if this is available, contact the local schools district(s), and they may give you contact information for those who attend that school in that age range. If the school does not provide this information, you can always ask them if your Chapter can speak or pass out flyers at a school event.



5. Follow Up

- a. Send thank-you notes or emails to the parents and potential members who attended.
- b. If you didn't receive a petition from the potential member at the open house, be sure to let them know when you need it for them to be included in the planned initiation. Make sure you are ready to do an initiation within 2-3 weeks of the open house. If it will be longer than that because of a special event (Grand Master's class, conclave, etc.) make sure that you let the potential families know of the special event and have another social/fun event in between if you can.
- c. Continue to follow up with potential members and their families, making sure they know which Chapter events they can attend prior to his initiation.

