



*American Values.  
Hometown Roots.*

## CONDUCTING AN “OPEN” MEETING

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How we open, conduct, and close our meetings should be representative of our beliefs and principles. When a meeting includes a large number of guests, we sometimes choose to conduct what is commonly referred to as an “open meeting.” This alternative meeting format generally omits the “taking up of the word” and may shorten the agenda of the meeting at the master’s discretion.

This can and should communicate respect for our guests while, at the same time, offering them a glimpse of “how the Grange works.” Experience shows that many appreciate seeing “American Values” in action.

The forty-sixth edition of the 2013 Subordinate Grange Manual provides what is called an “Alternative Opening and Closing” which could certainly be used when holding an “open meeting.” Any degree or ritual quotations in this summary are from that manual. This summary is designed to assist masters who desire to conduct an open meeting.

### **OPENING THE GRANGE**

Common courtesy would suggest that the master make a few introductory remarks and explain at least the use of the gavel. “Welcome to our Grange... as we formally open this meeting you will see some long-standing ritual and practice... all you really need to know is that two raps of the gavel mean the officers stand, three raps of the gavel mean all stand, and one rap means all sit.” (While this should be brief and upbeat, it may be appropriate to suggest cell phones be put on vibrate, etc.)

**Master** calls to order and asks “Worthy Overseer, are we ready to begin?”

**Overseer** states, “Worthy Steward, please prepare for our work.”

**Steward** states, “My assistants will open the Bible upon the altar.”

**Assistant and Lady Assistant Steward** open the Bible following the usual procedure.

From this point, the opening follows the usual outline:

- Opening prayer
- Opening song
- Salutation
- Overseer proclaiming the Grange open
- Salute to the flag

### **ORDER OF BUSINESS**

Depending on the type of meeting, the “order of business” from that point can be changed with some items omitted. For example, when a meeting is held to present a community citizen award, it would

perhaps make sense to omit things like the secretary's report, treasurer's report, committee reports, etc. The full agenda is:

1. Roll call of officers
2. Reading of records of last meeting
3. Proposals for membership
4. Balloting for candidates
5. Conferring degrees
6. Reports of standing committees
  - a. Legislative
  - b. Agriculture
  - c. CWA
  - d. Youth
7. Junior
  - a. Community Service
  - b. Deaf (Family Health and Hearing)
  - c. Membership
  - d. Others
8. Report of Special Committees
9. Report of Grange services
10. Communications
11. Have the reports of the Pomona and State Grange been duly and promptly made?
12. Bills and accounts including treasurer's report
13. Unfinished business
14. New business
15. Is any member sick or in distress?
16. Lecturer's program
17. Suggestions for the good of the order.
18. Optional reading and adopting of the minutes

### **CLOSING THE GRANGE**

I find no significant difference in closing an open meeting.

**Master** asks **Overseer** if the "labors of the day are complete" and Overseer responds.

**Assistant and Lady Assistant Steward** close the Bible following the usual procedure, **Steward** secures the implement case.)

- Closing song
- Salutation
- Overseer proclaims the Grange closed
- Chaplain offers benediction
- Master confirms Grange is closed

*The 2013 Subordinate Grange Manual is available through National Grange..*