

my sister my responsibility



a program by zeta tau alpha
preventing and confronting hazing

Bringing The Creed to Life

Developed by Dr. Mari Ann Callais, Speaker and past national president of Theta Phi Alpha

The Creed is a testament to who we say we are. A great way to understand *The Creed* is to see what our members think that it means in their terms.

Each week at chapter meeting, take 5 to 10 minutes to discuss one line of *The Creed*. Choose the line that you wish for them to discuss. If you want to use this activity at a chapter retreat, you can discuss each line of *The Creed* and what it means to your members.

Founders: Who Would They Be Today in Your Chapter?

Developed by Dr. Mari Ann Callais, Speaker and past national president of Theta Phi Alpha

Zeta Tau Alpha has nine Founders.

At the beginning of each semester, have the chapter elect the nine seniors (or other members) whom they believe emulate the values of the fraternity.

Once or twice a month, have them put on skits, develop fun activities, etc. to teach the values or elements from the Ritual to the chapter during meetings. The chosen members could do this as one group, smaller groups or individuals.

Give them a designated time frame to do this activity and make certain that they keep them appropriate, engaging, and fun.

Cool Symbols, So What Do They Mean To Me?: Discussion of Ritual Equipment, Symbols and Meaning

Developed by Dr. Mari Ann Callais, Speaker and past national president of Theta Phi Alpha

INTRODUCTION

One of the ways that a chapter can assess what role Ritual has in a member's experience is to actually discuss Initiation or other services and how the symbols used in these services are applicable to their daily lives. This activity will allow a chapter or a small group of members to have a "living our Ritual" discussion and help them to make sense of Ritual as more than just a ceremony.

DISCUSSION

Make certain you are in a secure room as if you were conducting a Ritual ceremony. Dim the lights in the room. Have everyone sit in a circle or semi-circle with the Ritual equipment either on a table or on the floor in the middle of the room.

Discussion Questions

When facilitating these questions, try to get as many members engaged in the discussion as possible. This might mean that you have to call on people. Hopefully, they will open up and discuss openly and honestly.

What does our Ritual service state these symbols mean or represent? Go through each symbol and read a description of the symbol from the College Service Book.

- What do these symbols mean to you?
- Why do you think that our Founders chose these particular symbols?
- Give examples as to what these symbols mean in your life?

At this point, the moderator of the activity should try to get the members to open up about their interpretation of the symbols and what they mean to them. For example, say an ordinary brick is one of the symbols. (This is just an example and has no relevance to the Ritual.)

- What is the significance of a brick?
- What is it made of?
- How is it made?
- By itself it is just a brick, but when put together with other bricks, it creates a foundation, a home, a walkway, etc. What happens if it is cracked?
- What if the mortar is not mixed well and it does not hold?
- How does the brick reflect the lives of our individual chapter members and/or our chapter?

An example like this will help the chapter members to begin to see that the symbols in the Ritual are not just symbols, but have a direct link to their day to day lives.

CLOSING

You may read a special part or poem in Initiation that has special meaning or is everyone's favorite part.

Conclude with everyone saying *The Creed* or motto. Ask everyone to make a commitment to living these symbols and values. You may want to do a rededication of the Oath they took in Pledging or Initiation.

Evaluating the Role of Ritual in Your Chapter

Developed by Dr. Mari Ann Callais, Speaker and past national president of Theta Phi Alpha

INTRODUCTION

In order to understand and know how to apply the Ritual to all that we do as a chapter, we need to talk about it. The following questions should be discussed in small groups and then discussed in a large group.

Break the chapter up into groups—name them for various fraternity terms or Founders and send them throughout the room. It would be helpful if each group had a facilitator whom you have educated to coordinate the discussion. Each group should appoint a recorder to share its responses with the larger group during the closing discussion.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

- What is Ritual? What do most feel is considered Ritual? Initiation, *The Creed*, motto, other ceremonies?
- What is its meaning?
- What do most of our members believe Ritual is really about?
- What do you and the chapter members believe is the purpose of Ritual?
- Who is responsible to learn it, know it?
- Who is responsible to live it?
- What is the difference between performing Ritual and practicing or living it?
- How can Ritual be taught?
- What is the importance and meaning of our ceremonies?
- How do we live Ritual?
- How do we hold one another accountable by understanding and using the concepts found in our Ritual?
- Why are the performance, the attire, and the equipment important to how the Ritual is received?
- If we understand our Ritual, how do we not follow it? How do we haze our new members, violate our policies, and allow our sisters to be put in compromising situations?

You may want to ask a question that is relevant to something specific going on with your chapter.

CLOSING

Bring the chapter back together and ask for feedback from the small group discussions. You may need to actually ask these questions again and ask groups to share their responses.

Ritual, Sisterhood, Party?

Developed by Sigma Chi Fraternity, Modified by Dr. Mari Ann Callais

Items needed

- *Ritual Book*
- *Baseball cap (or any item with fraternity letters)*
- *Beer bottle (empty)*

PURPOSE

To challenge chapter members to evaluate and to be honest with where they see the priorities of Ritual, sisterhood and partying in their chapters and in their lives.

ACTIVITY

Ask for volunteers; do not force someone to do the activity. Explain that the book symbolizes Ritual, the cap symbolizes sisterhood and the beer bottle symbolizes partying.

Ask each volunteer to come to the front of the room to put the three objects in the order according to the following questions. She should move them around for each set of questions if necessary.

- Where are the priorities really in the chapter?
- Where would you like the priorities to be?
- Where are the priorities for you?
- Where do you think that they are for other chapter members?
- Where were the priorities were (a year ago, two years ago, etc.)?
- Where are they now?

Ask volunteers to explain why they put them in that order.

The ultimate goal of the activity is to help the chapter open discussion about what is important to their chapter and to talk about how to find balance in what they do as a chapter and as individuals. The ultimate outcome is that the activity would facilitate a positive change in the role of Ritual and the teaching of Ritual.

CLOSING

Remember, Ritual must be taught—it can't be assumed that it will just be important to everyone.

Every member in this organization should read the Ritual to really begin to understand the meaning of the organization. The Ritual book is a private document and the Ritual chairman has a copy for any member who wants to read and review. The Ritual is the foundation of our sisterhood, which encourages us to be responsible sisters.