

FarmHouse International Fraternity

Chaplain Resource



Revised Fall 2005

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THE CHAPTER AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

The FarmHouse International Fraternity has established the Chapter Award of Excellence as our minimum standards program. It is designed to recognize Chapters that are operating at the performance level outlined in our By-Laws, policies, and handbooks. The criteria for the Chapter Award of Excellence are built upon basic expected performance in the various areas of chapter operations. As an officer of your Chapter, the criteria within your responsibility are identified in the box that follows.

10. Spiritual Development (4 points)

_____ *The chapter attended church as a group at least once during calendar year. (1 point)*

Church: _____ **% brothers/pledges attending:** _____ **Date:** _____

_____ *Besides chapter church, chapter meal prayers and prayer/devotion at chapter meetings, the chapter conducted at least two other activities to build men spiritually this year. (2 points)*

Activity: _____ **% brothers/pledges attending:** _____ **Date:** _____

Activity: _____ **% brothers/pledges attending:** _____ **Date:** _____

_____ *The chapter is submitting a 2005-06 Chapter Programming Award application for spiritual development. (1 point)*

I. INTRODUCTION

An important role in FarmHouse chapters is that of the Chaplain. One of the many ways that FarmHouse BUILDS MEN is spiritually. A quick review of our history details the beginnings of the fraternity at a YMCA bible study in 1905. Moreover principles of Christianity provide the entire basis for our Ritual of Initiation. It is therefore not surprising that as an organization FarmHouse Fraternity is heavily influenced by our faith and that spiritual growth is one of our 4-Fold areas of development.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES

Chaplain

As a leader in the chapter, the Chaplain provides opportunities for FarmHouse brothers to grow spiritually. He sets the example of living the Gospel publicly and daily; serving as an example to which every FarmHouse man should imitate. The Chaplain's role is also closely tied to supporting our Ritual and assisting members.

- Selects a scripture reader for each chapter meeting.
- Responsible for the invocation at all special events, such as the Founders' Day Dinner.
- Aids members in reflecting upon religion and an individual's place in society. In particular, he assists members in appreciating and understanding their own Christian faith.
- Motivates members to share their faith publicly with others and act on it.
- Publicize campus and community religious events to brothers.
- Organizes chapter visits to chapter members or others close to the chapter while in the hospital.
- Ensures that cards and other signs of support from the chapter are sent to members/parents who are sick or who have had a death in the family.
- Coordinates the remembrance of deceased chapter members and other notable FarmHouse friends on an annual basis.
- Work closely with the Community Service/Philanthropy chairman so brothers also have a physical outlet for tangible results as they explore their spiritual development.
- Represent the chapter at any campus and community religious meetings that may affect the chapter.
- Plan spiritual retreats and ensure that there is a spiritual component to the Brother's retreat
- Be available to assist brothers to find spiritual counseling.

Chapter

Fostering individual spiritual growth is a major component of what FarmHouse aims to accomplish throughout its chapters. Nearly all chapters conduct a bible study and attend church together as a group at least once a year. Our Ritual is tied entirely to Christian Bible verses and FarmHouse is an organization heavily composed of Christian men. While there are certainly brothers of different faiths within FarmHouse, these brothers have been initiated into our organization with the same Ritual that every FarmHouse man has participated in before him. While the debate will continue on whether FarmHouse is a Christian organization or an organization with Christians in it, there is no doubt that FarmHouse members within each chapter can benefit from discussing the role that faith and spirituality can play in his life and in society.

III. BUILDING MEN SPIRITUALLY

In today's society, the spiritual side of personal development and growth, especially during the collegiate experience is often overlooked. However, in FarmHouse, spiritual growth is one of our four pillars of Building FarmHouse Men. And while it is not something as easily measured as grades or gains in physical fitness, spiritual growth is the key to a man's ability to make moral decisions that impact his community and truly be a leader with integrity.

Developing that capacity in a man will be far more important in later years than any particular score on a biology or history exam. Not that the other aspects of a man's persona are not important, but without an adequate spiritual understanding of himself, his future decisions and choices will not make him feel complete and leave him without any greater sense of purpose. FarmHouse can help young men discover the deeper purpose that will give all of their intellectual, physical, and social accomplishments meaning and keep them grounded in ways that remain to their best self and the ideals of FarmHouse.

Ideas to Promote Chapter Spirituality

- Maintain contact information and post a schedule that identifies the locations of the worship services for various religious organizations and encourage brothers to attend these services together.
- Organize a weekly service for brothers.
- Distribute information on organizations such as Alcoholics Anonymous, suicide hotline, campus counseling, etc. and speak with individual brothers about using these services.
- Hold a "fireside" or "pass the gavel" with the chapter to build unity or to air complaints and improve chapter morale.
- Organize holiday dinners (i.e. Thanksgiving, Easter, etc.).
- Act as a mediator in brothers' arguments.
- Invite guest speakers to your chapter to speak on current events, religious issues, etiquette, career management, etc.
- Send cards/flowers to brothers or their families or alumni during times of illness or mourning.
- Serve as a counselor for members to come to with personal problems; provide direction or make inquiries for the person they can contact for further guidance. Keep all conversations confidential and make sure that everyone knows that all conversations will be private.
- Invite leaders of campus religious organizations to make brief presentations prior to Chapter meetings or to have dinner with the chapter.
- Share a weekly moment of silence for loved ones in need.
- Organize weekly Bible studies (these could be conducted with alumni or other Greek organizations).
- Conduct chapter retreats. This allows the chapter to get away from the stress of campus life and/or reconcile differences among members, etc.
- Post inspirational verses, stories, poems, etc. on the chapter house bulletin board on a weekly basis - have brothers come up with their own and share at chapter meetings.

Conducting a Bible Study

There are many forms and varieties of bible studies that can be educational and done in a respectful manner. One common form of bible study is the "Sabbath School" format. In this format, the Chaplain will prepare a list of scriptures on a particular subject and have each person in turn read a scripture, after which he or others may comment. The scriptures selected should speak for themselves. Participants can often add color and meaning by stating what the scripture says in their own words, and how it relates to their lives. The Chaplain can stimulate discussion by asking questions, re-reading or having the scripture re-read, and then stating or asking someone to state an answer.

When studying the Bible, participants should always ask and answer these two questions: "*What does the Scripture say?*" and "*What does it say to me?*" Usually 1 to 1½ hour for the bible study is sufficient to discuss the topics and, of course, if the group desires, a particular topic can be revisited in the future. A summation of what has been discussed during the bible study should be performed by the Chaplain followed by a prayer and/or common meal.

Common Bible Study Pitfalls to Avoid

- The Chaplain should not dominate the session by taking all the time talking. Preaching a sermon and closing the service and leaving is certainly not an effective way of teaching. Not everyone grasps the contents of the message immediately. Discussion often helps to clarify what was said.
- Lack of preparation leads to lack of learning. As Edison said of his inventions, so a Chaplain can say of an inspired message; that it is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration. Are you willing to put forth the effort to make a bible study effective?
- Participants who lead the discussions off on tangents can disrupt and confuse the others. Don't allow this to happen!
- Don't argue. Argumentation has no place in worship services. Love does not argue and seek to have its own way. Few have learned to allow others to believe a little different than they do. Read Romans 12:1-10. This should be our attitude in every bible study.
- Not listening to others results in not learning, with zero benefit to you and others. The study has been only a forum for your own ideas, not a learning session for new ideas. This goes for both the preparer and participants of the study.

The “F-A-R-M-H-O-U-S-E” Bible Study

Some Chaplains have found it extremely useful to utilize the Ritual as the basis of their chapter’s bible study. Examining each of the values that the letters in our fraternity name represent provides a great way to weave an individual’s beliefs with the fraternity. Whether the chapter’s Bible Study is on a weekly basis or on a monthly basis, the brothers will broaden their spirituality as they study the Ritual of our Fraternity. This type of Bible Study is also highly effective when alumni and new members are participants as well; inasmuch the bonds of brotherhood are strengthened for all.

- Faith** *"Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."* Hebrews 11:1. It means faith in your God; in your fraternity and its members; faith in your school, your state and your nation. In Matthew 17:20 Jesus said, *"if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'move hence to yonder place', and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."* Never lose faith in yourself, if you would hold the faith of others. Be faithful to the ideals of FarmHouse and its program.
- Ambition** Ambition is the unseen force which drives men to success, to rise above their environment and to achieve the impossible. Have ambition which is content not only with making a satisfactory record in college, but also seeks to render service to humanity through science and its application. Strive to foster that ambition which leads a man ever onward in the belief that he may somehow contribute to the betterment of mankind.
- Reverence** Reverence must be cultivated if we are to be true brothers. *"Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe..."* Hebrews 12:28. Let us revere our God, our parents, and our brothers with whom we associate. Unless we cultivate such a reverence, we cannot learn the true joys of brotherhood, the foundation of a successful fraternity.
- Morality** We must constantly work to learn better how our every act may affect ourselves and others. Genuine moral living involves intelligent love and esteem for our associates. Unless we possess strong affection for others, we cannot come to know that which is most worthwhile in making for the highest character in man. Every narrowing of love, every encroachment of egoism, every act of selfishness, means just so much blindness to that which is good and fine. Let good moral conduct cease to be a virtue and become an involuntary duty.
- Honesty** Honesty is fundamental to character; it is the basis for all worthwhile endeavor; for how can we believe in one who is not strictly honest? In college we expect honesty in the classroom, on the athletic field, as well as in every relationship between men. *"Therefore, putting away falsehood, let everyone speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another."* Ephesians 4:25. Throughout life, one of the greatest tributes that can be paid to a man is to have it said that he is honest.
- Obedience** Obedience to God's principles is one of the bulwarks which gives stability to our Fraternity. Obey the mandates of the chapter, the regulations of your school and country. In doing so, always obey the teachings of the MASTER.

- Unity** Unity is fundamental to a successful fraternity. With unity a fraternity stands through times of stress as though bound together with bands of steel. Without unity, failure results. *"Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity."* Psalms 133:1. See to it then that you, by hard work and unflinching sacrifice, help weave those individual threads of noble character that bind us together in an effective and worthwhile organization.
- Service** A loyal brother in FarmHouse must render service to his Fraternity and to his brothers if his Fraternity is to grow and prosper. *"For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love be servants of one another."* Galatians 5:13. See to it that you render service to God; to your profession; to your fellowmen; to your country; and to your school all the days of your life. The very essence of successful living is based on the Christian ideal of service.
- Excellence** *"...whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything of praise, think about these things."* Philippians 4:8. A primary goal of our Fraternity is to excel in our profession. Maintain the high standards of excellence as set forth by our Founders and the many members of our organization who have preceded us. The basis for success is education. Education is the knowledge of how to use the whole of one's self. Strive, therefore for the fullest development of knowledge in your profession; in the building of character, in furthering high moral standards; the development of essential skills; and the furtherance of good health; so that no impediment may hinder your progress to the highest pinnacle of success in life.

Counseling

There will be occasions when the Chaplain will be called upon by a member to listen to his problems. These problems may be of a very confidential nature. These issues are never trivial and most certainly are important to the member who carries them. He may not wish to share them with his family, his significant other, Minister/Pastor/Priest or anyone else, but he needs someone to talk to – frequently that someone will be the chaplain. As chaplain, the best thing you can do is listen and be supportive. More often than not, the member will find the answer to his issues by simply talking openly about them to someone he can trust. This part of the Chaplain's duties should be kept strictly confidential. However, if there is any concern that a member's life is in jeopardy, then contact a professional counselor immediately for assistance.

IV. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Six Essential Keys to Spiritual Development

"May my soul bloom in love for all existence." -Rudolph Steiner

The great teacher and spiritual leader Rudolph Steiner spent his lifetime searching for keys to living more consciously. He boiled down the wisdom of generations into six clear, powerful, simple guidelines. The Chaplain who understands these will be better able to help his brothers develop a more aware and spiritually developed life.

1. Control of thoughts. We must master our thoughts, particularly our train of thought. Just consider the way thoughts whirl about in our souls, how they flit like will o'-the-wisps; one impression arises here, another there, and each changes our thinking. It is not true that we govern our thoughts; our thoughts govern us completely. We must reach the point where, at a given time in the day, we can become so absorbed in a thought that no other thought can enter and disturb our soul. In this way, we hold the reins of thought life for awhile.
2. Control of our actions. Here it is necessary, occasionally at least, to act in ways that are not precipitated by anything external. Whatever is initiated by our place in life, our profession, or our situation does not lead more deeply into higher life. Higher life depends upon such intimate matters as one's resolve to do something that springs completely from one's own initiative--even if it is something absolutely insignificant. No other actions contribute anything to the higher life.
3. Equanimity. People fluctuate back and forth between joy and sorrow. Thus we allow ourselves to be rocked on the waves of life. We must reach equanimity and steadiness. One must become steadfast and even-tempered.
4. Understand every being. Nothing expresses more beautifully what it means to understand every being than the legend passed down to us by a Persian story. Jesus was crossing a field with his disciples, when they encountered the horrible-looking decaying corpse of a dog. Jesus stopped and looked at it with admiration, saying, "What beautiful teeth this animal has!" Within the ugly, Jesus found an element of beauty. Try always to approach what is wonderful in every phenomenon of outer reality. You will see that everything contains an aspect that can be affirmed.
5. Complete openness. Most people judge new things according to the old things they already know. But we must not confront a new communication immediately with our own opinion. We must instead always remain alert for the possibility of learning something new. We must develop the ability to listen, because it enables us to encounter matters with the greatest possible openness.
6. Inner harmony. We receive this after we have developed the first five keys. Those who have the other qualities are also inwardly harmonious.

Spiritual Development Quotes

"There is only one journey. Going inside yourself." -Rainer Maria Rilke

Life is a spiritual journey. When we look at it that way, we can finally begin to make sense of our world. We can understand why we suffer and how we can ease our suffering. And we can at last allow ourselves to experience the love, joy and peace that is our birthright.

"The authentic self is the soul made visible." -Sarah Ban Breathnach

Sages through all time have advised, "Know thyself." The spiritual journey is one of getting to know and experience who we really are: spirit in form.

"Spiritual maturity is a lifelong process of replacing lies with truth." -Kurt D. Bruner

Spiritual development begins to make sense when we realize we have both a personality and a soul. While our personality identifies with limitation, our soul knows itself to be limitless. Our challenge is to bring the personality and soul together in harmony.

How to Lead Conversational Prayer

Group prayer was a characteristic of the early Christians. We read in Acts 12:12 that Peter went to the house of Mary where many were gathered for prayer. Remember that the purpose of prayer time is to communicate with God. It should never be viewed as a "chore" or as a time to "preach" to one another. The Chaplain should take a role in ensuring brothers participate in prayer.

Conversational Prayer

In order to foster a spiritual journey for FarmHouse members, Chaplains may find it beneficial to use the technique of conversational prayer. During a time of conversational prayer, the group members talk to God the same way they would talk to a friend who is in the room with them. Members should use everyday conversational language. Encourage the group (especially a group unfamiliar with group prayer) to feel free to pray sentence prayers, expressing only a brief thought in six words or so. They don't have to pray long, elaborate prayers. Everyone is free to pray, or not to pray, as the Spirit directs. Don't be concerned about silence—allow God to speak to you and the other individuals in the group during times of silence. Several different ways of leading conversational prayer are discussed below. You could choose one of these methods to guide the prayer time or several to provide variety.

(1) Leader-introduced topics.

Introduce a prayer topic or request, one at a time. The group will then pray about this topic or request. When finished, the leader will introduce another topic or request. Both the number and types of topics introduced may vary. It is always helpful to designate a specific person to close each time. This helps insure that the prayer time will not bog down when everyone has had the opportunity to pray if they so desire. Some possible topics for prayer:

- Thanksgiving. Thank God for: His love, His forgiveness, the beautiful day, ways He is working in different lives, etc.
- Thank God for something that has happened in your life in the past 24 hours.
- Please help ... "(yourself or someone else)."
- Thank God for how He will meet those desires and requests.

(2) Shared prayer requests.

Allow the group to share prayer requests.

- As a prayer request is offered, you could ask another member to be responsible to pray for that request during the prayer time. This ensures that each person's request will be prayed for by at least one other person.
- You might want to have group members record on a sheet of paper each request as it is given. They could then refer to the list during the group prayer time as well as throughout the week as a reminder to continue to pray for one another.
- You could allow group members to volunteer to pray for requests without assigning them or writing them down. The group would then rely on their memories during the prayer time.
- You may wish to pray for each request as soon as it is given, before the next request is shared.

(3) Pray through Scripture.

This method allows the group to use one or more passages of Scripture as a prayer guide. You can choose any passage that you feel will be appropriate. Here are some examples:

- Choose a Psalm of praise, such as Psalm 103, Psalm 145 or Psalm 150.
- Teach the group to pray using the following procedure:
 - a. The first person reads a phrase or an entire verse aloud, pausing to pray a simple prayer as inspired by the Scripture and led by the Lord.
 - b. Other members of the group join in audibly or silently agree.
 - c. The next person reads a different verse, pausing to pray aloud as he is impressed by the Lord.
 - d. Continue the same way around the group.

(4) Use the "ACTS" Acrostic.

You can simply describe the format below, or you could also explore the concept at length through one or more Bible studies on each word. The format goes like this:

Adoration: Worshipping and praising God, exalting Him in your heart and your mind and with your words. Some ideas:

- Praise and Pray through a Psalm
- Sing
- Use a list of God's attributes to praise Him for who He is

Take time to adore God, praising Him for His attributes such as His loving kindness, His holiness, His compassion, His majesty, etc.

Confession: Agreeing with God concerning any sins He brings to mind in order to restore fellowship with Him. (*Note: Always pray silently during personal confession.*) Confession can follow the following steps:

- Review 1 John 1:5–9.
- As you spend time adoring God, He will bring to mind what you need to confess.
- Allow time (let God speak to each person about any unconfessed sin).

Thanksgiving: Giving thanks to God for who He is, what He has done, what He will continue to do in your life and what He is doing in the ministry; a prayer expressing gratitude. Look at verses such as 1 Thessalonians 5:18, Ephesians 5:20, Psalm 108:3, Psalm 50:23. Then, spend time in thanksgiving.

Supplication: Imploring God by means of a petition or an entreaty. Read Philippians 4:6–7; Psalm 116:1–2. Lead the group in supplication by praying aloud.

With ACTS, Be creative! The above is not a formula or something set in concrete. You can switch the elements around, eliminate some of them or do something completely different. ACTS is a place to start and to spur ideas. Prayer should never be boring or monotonous—try to make it a fun time where those who come leave feeling refreshed and renewed. Use scripture often during the prayer meeting.

(5) Use the “PRAY” acrostic.

This may be developed in the same way as ACTS.

Praise.

Repent.

Ask for someone else.

Your own needs.

(6) Pray for the fulfillment of the Great Commission, using Scripture.

Win people to Christ through prayer.

- a. Pray that God will prepare individuals’ hearts to understand and respond to the gospel (John 6:44).
- b. Pray that God will motivate believers to share the gospel with the unbelievers (Matthew 9:37–38; Colossians 4:3).
- c. Recognize that Satan has blinded and captivated the unbeliever, and acknowledge (claim) Christ’s victory over him (Ephesians 6:12, 2 Corinthians 4:3–4, 2 Timothy 2:25–26; John 3:8).

(7) Build people in Christ through prayer.

- a. Thank God for them (Philippians 1:3).
- b. Pray for deliverance from evil (unprincipled) companions (2 Thessalonians 3:2).
- c. Pray that they will walk worthy of the Lord (Colossians 1:10).
- d. Pray for wisdom and revelation in knowledge of Christ (Ephesians 1:17).
- e. Pray for them to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner person (Ephesians 3:16).
- f. Pray for their unity in the Spirit with other believers (John 17:23).
- g. Pray that their love may abound and that they may approve the things that are excellent (Philippians 1:9,10).
- h. Pray for boldness and opportunities to present the gospel to others (Colossians 4:3, Ephesians 6:19,20).
- i. Pray that they may be completely mature and be fully assured in all the will of God (Colossians 4:12)

(8) Use hymns.

Sing a hymn prayerfully, and afterwards, use the words of the hymn to guide the prayer time.

(9) Use the attributes of God.

Select one or more attributes of God, and spend the time meditating on those attributes and praising Him for His attributes. Share answers to prayer and spend the time thanking God for the answers and His faithfulness.

Sample Prayer Requests

- That Christian students, professors and administrators would confess their sins to God, truly repent and choose to live righteous lives filled with the Holy Spirit.
- That non-Christians would be open to the gospel of Christ and that God would draw many of them to Himself.
- That God would raise up strong bold Christians in every area of campus. (Dorms, Fraternities, sororities, student government, minority groups, athletes, etc.)
- That evangelistic surveys and outreaches could be done in every dorm, fraternity, sorority and athletic team on campus.
- That Christians of different races would be “united in spirit, intent on one purpose.”
- That a sweeping spiritual awakening would revive believers and bring large numbers of unbelievers to Christ. That the presence of God would be sensed all over campus.
- For an increasing eternal-rather-than-temporal perspective on campus.
- That graduating seniors would go where God calls them. That they would not just “do what they want to do” seeking security and or materialism. And that eventually hundreds of students would graduate from your campus to serve God as full-time missionaries, staff members, pastors, etc.
- That the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20) would become the most important mission for every Christian on your campus and that Christians would be pioneers of faith.
- That God the Holy Spirit would cause all back-biting and criticism to cease among believers on campus.
- That spiritual awakening on campus would also affect the community. That the churches would become aflame for God and that hundreds of students would be attending every week.
- That many campuses nearby would be touched by your zeal and love for Christ.
- That the greatest skeptics of Christianity on campus would be won to Christ.

Other Resources

Make sure that the members of the chapter know of all of the various support networks for men of faith on campus through the inter-religious faith office or department of student activities. There will be counselors of many faiths who can help brothers develop themselves spiritually and provide guidance. Additionally these offices should maintain information on missions and other philanthropic projects in the area.

Make sure brothers know where the local Christian bookstore is and try to keep philosophical texts in the chapter library as well:

The Purpose Driven Life by Rick Warren

The Art of Happiness by the Dalai Lama

Wild at Heart by John Eldredge

Encourage FarmHouse brothers to visit “Today’s Word”. It is an online resource that provides a verse by verse study of the Bible by Dr. Grant Richison. Each study expounds a passage, forms a principle out of that passage and shows how to live that principle in life.

<http://word.crusade.org/word/word.php3>

Modifiable Weekly Bible Study Posters are available from Campus Crusade for Christ:

<http://godsquad.com/squadroom/posters/wkmeet2.htm>

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Campus Crusade for Christ

Start Now! A Book of Soul and Spiritual Exercises by Rudolph Steiner