Workshop: Ritual 101: A Review of the Meaning and Purpose of Ritual

Overview
The Ritual of our Fraternity is more than a standard set of words and activities. Our Ritual ties our past to our present and sets the tone for our future. In this workshop, we discuss the need for ritual, how it can and should be incorporated in many aspects of chapter life, and review key Ritual services.

The workshop consists of four parts: Performance of Opening Ritual (Introduction), whole group discussion of Ritual and the Ritual Services Manual (Definition of Ritual), a review of Initiation (Initiation), and a closing discussion (Conclusion).

Purpose
The purpose of this workshop is to increase member understanding of and respect for Ritual in Alpha Gamma Delta and to improve member performance of Ritual services.

Participants
This workshop is appropriate for any initiated member of Alpha Gamma Delta.

Materials
- “Opening Ritual” Service from the Ritual Services Manual
- “Initiation Service” from the Ritual Services Manual
- Resource Sheet 1 ~ Scripture Reading for “Opening Ritual”
- 5 tables arranged according to room set up for “Initiation Service”
- Rose Bowl, 9 12-inch white tapers, 9 candlestick holders, framed copy of Armorial Bearings
- CD of Alpha Gamma Delta music and a CD player

Resources
- Ritual Services Manual
- Member Development Team Handbook: “Our Living Purpose”

Workshop Timeline
This workshop is designed for a 45-minute time block.

Facilitator’s Notes
This package provides you with the tools necessary to present an educational workshop to meet the purpose(s) stated above. A complete workshop script is enclosed. Activity components provide a brief description of how the activity should be handled. All of the information is written and organized in a manner which is intended to generate the desired outcomes. Please do not skip any components or deviate from the script. All items in italics indicate statements and directions that should be spoken aloud to the participants.
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Special Instructions
Prior to the workshop, the facilitator should review the “Opening Ritual” service in the Ritual Services Manual and the Scripture passage selected for the service. The facilitator will assume the duties of the Ritual Coordinator in the “Opening Ritual” service.

The facilitator should determine a method for selecting nine participants to serve as the participating officers in the walk-through of the “Initiation Service”.

Workshop Script and Activities

Part 1: Introduction (10 Minutes)

As members enter the room, instruct them to take a seat anywhere in the room. As the workshop begins, ask members to stand, leave their materials on their chairs, and move to the outer edge of the room to form a circle. Once the circle is formed, begin the script.

Welcome to Ritual 101. Let’s begin our workshop in the way we begin every chapter meeting in Alpha Gamma Delta by conducting the “Opening Ritual” service.

Follow the “Opening Ritual” service.

Thank you. Please be seated.

Part 2: Definition of Ritual (5 Minutes)

“Grant, O Lord, that we may believe in our hearts the words we have said and sung with our lips and steadfastly fulfill in our lives.” This powerful statement we recite at the end of “Opening Ritual” and also at the conclusion of our “Initiation Service” sums up the need for all of our Ritual services. Our Ritual helps us focus our hearts and our heads and our lives on the words that make up Alpha Gamma Delta. By its nature, Ritual helps us to understand and abide by the words of our Purpose.

Ritual is a routine or a “prescribed form for conducting ceremonies” in our Fraternity. We regularly recite the Purpose and other words of our Fraternity during our Ritual services. We follow a standard format for the services as printed in our Ritual Services Manual. When we recite the words of our services, the words take on special meaning for us as members. The words and elements of our services mean nothing to individuals outside of our Fraternity, as Ritual in and of itself is not secret or sacred, and it is not religion. Religion is an expression of faith in and worship to God or a higher power. Our ritual services, like “Opening Ritual”, may include prayers or other words used in religious activities, but they are not services of worship.

The words we recite or sing during our Ritual services help keep us focused on our Fraternity and on ourselves as members in that Fraternity. Ritual is the “tie that binds”. It ties our present to our past – to the ideals and vision of our Founders - and steers the course for our future. Ritual guides our thoughts and actions as members.
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What does it mean to be a member of Alpha Gamma Delta? What are our responsibilities as members? What are our benefits of membership? The answers to these questions lie in the core document of our Fraternity: our Purpose. The Purpose defines the ideal woman envisioned by our Founders. By reciting or reflecting on our Purpose during our ritual services, we ask and answer questions about our Alpha Gamma Delta membership, and we set the tone and direction for activities in our chapters, in our classrooms, in our workplaces, in our homes, and in our communities.

Part 3: Initiation and Ritual Review (25 Minutes)

Our Purpose is explained during the “Initiation Service”. Let’s review that service as well as the new Ritual materials you received at this TLC. Since the Ritual services are an important part of Alpha Gamma Delta, please safeguard all Ritual materials and perform the services as prescribed in the materials.

Direct the participants to the Table of Contents in the Ritual Services Manual and then to the Chapter Programs and Opening Ritual sections. Answer any questions that may arise, limiting the discussion to approximately 5 minutes.

Call the pre-selected nine participants forward with their Ritual Services Manual. Direct them to the appropriate places around the designated Initiation tables.

Direct all participants to the Initiation Service section. We will walk-through an initiation service. Please hold any questions you have on Initiation until after the walk-through. Let’s look first at the Preparation Checklists.

Review the Preparation Checklists and highlight the need for rehearsals and memorization of parts, the new music CD, the non-sacred nature of the robes, the appropriate attire for all members, the use of regular room lighting, the circular nature of the walking during the service, and the proper use of candles and what to do if candles are prohibited in the building where the service is being performed.

Direct the herald and co-herald to walk through the service, stopping at each table to demonstrate the proper way for officers to walk around the tables. Demonstrate the grip, emphasizing that the words are recited separately from the administration of the grip. Highlight any other parts of the service as deemed necessary.

After the walk-through is complete, allow approximately 10 minutes for questions.

Part 4: Conclusion (5 Minutes)

Thank you for your participation in and attention to our Ritual services. If you have additional questions this weekend about any of the services, please write them down. We’ll collect them and try to answer them at our meals.

I hope you have a better understanding of and appreciation for our Ritual. I also hope that you will remain focused on the words of our Purpose and will fulfill them in your lives.
Resource Sheet: Scripture Reading for “Opening Ritual”

A Reading from the Book of Proverbs, Chapter 4, Verses 7 through 9

The beginning of wisdom is: get wisdom;

at the cost of all you have, get understanding.

Extol her, and she will exalt you;

she will bring you honors if you embrace her;

She will put on your head a graceful diadem;

a glorious crown will she bestow on you.