

Pledge Lesson # 1

Honored traditions of ESA – Opening & Closing Rituals

As a new member of ESA - you will be going through a 6 months pledge period where you will learn about ESA before you become a full-fledged member of ESA.

This pledge period begins with you receiving half of your pin. It is a **small lamp pin** which is symbolic of "learning." You will receive the remainder of your pin combination at the end of a six month period of time at what we call the "Jewell Pin Ceremony". After receiving that you are no longer classified as a pledge.

Someone will be working with you to complete these pledge lessons. They can be done electronically through the Kansas website, by email, or with a member of your chapter guiding you through. At the end of this period you will receive a "certificate of completion" and be ready to receive your Jewel Pin and full membership in ESA.

As a new member of ESA, It is important to develop a connection with what we do - how we operate - and what are the basic values of ESA. Having said that, please keep in mind that there is a very wide variety of ways that chapters/councils operate, all of which is perfectly fine. We do not lock ourselves into only one pattern of operation. Hopefully you will find it informative as well as useful to learn about ESA. These lessons will be kept short (and simple) so you don't have a lot of information to absorb all at one time.

There will be times when you are asked to read from "**The IDEALS of ESA**" booklet and report back with answers. The "Ideals" booklet is located on the ESA International Website or the Kansas website has access to it as well. It is no longer provided in your pledge packet sent to you (or the chapter) by ESA Headquarters.

The first lesson has to do with the opening and closing rituals of ESA. We begin and end each of our meetings with these verses. These relate the important ideals of your chapter and organization. They speak of **kindness** for each other and our goals of **loyalty**, continuous education for **self-improvement** and **service**. Our

members have said them enough that we know them by heart and **we'd like for you to be able to do that as well.** It gets easier as you go along and if you need to read it out of the book at meetings we don't mind that either until you can recite them from memory.

There are several versions of the opening and closing rituals. In 2010 they began to present different non-gender specific opening and closing rituals at the IC Convention. These were:

OPENING RITUAL: Members of Epsilon Sigma Alpha, we meet again to pledge ourselves anew to the vows of our rituals which we accepted in the golden glow of a candle lighted room. Let us be ever mindful of the responsibilities we pledge to ESA, keep faith with ourselves and each other, and ever worthy to wear the badge that symbolizes virtue, honor, truthfulness and friendliness.

CLOSING RITUAL: Here as we close, may we guide and direct each other so that we remain steadfast in our hearts and faithful to our pledge. May we be reminded of our goals, and as we go our separate ways, may we hold aloft the ray from the lamp of learning that those who follow in our footsteps may be guided by its light.

ESA is working to get things “gender” neutral since we now include men in the membership. It is also permissible to make up your own opening and closing rituals. Begin now to learn these short verses. Hopefully by the end of your pledge training you will be able to repeat these from memory. This is your assignment for Lesson 1.

(If your chapter has their own versions - then learn those instead of these.) Check with your chapter president or pledge sponsor and select the opening and closing ritual that is best for you to memorize.

Two typical opening and closing rituals are included below: We stand for the opening ritual

Opening Ritual

Sisters of Epsilon Sigma Alpha, we meet again to pledge ourselves anew to the vows of our ritual, which we accepted in the golden glow of a candle lighted room. Let us be ever mindful of the responsibilities we pledge to our membership, keep faith with ourselves and our members, be tolerant and sincere and ever worthy to wear the badge that symbolizes virtue, honor, truthfulness, friendliness and levelness.

We stand - form a circle in the room, clasp hands and repeat the closing ritual

Closing Ritual

Eternal Father, master of all good works, guide and direct us that we may remain steadfast in our hearts and faithful to our pledge. May we be reminded that graciousness poise and friendliness are our goals; and as we go our separate ways to ever hold aloft the ray from the lamp of learning that those who follow may be guided by its light.