

INTERNATIONAL ORDER OF RAINBOW FOR GIRLS

Genesis 9:12 & 13 (Holy Bible)

- A Brief Biographical Sketch -

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The International Order of Rainbow for Girls was founded in 1922 in McAlester, Oklahoma, USA. Rainbow is similar to its 'sibling' Orders, DeMolay (for boys), Job's Daughters, and 11 other such orders, in that it is a Concordant Masonic (Co-Masonic) Order, meaning that it was created by a member of Masonry or Concordant Masonry and is sponsored by a local Masonic Lodge, Order of the Eastern Star Chapter or Order of the Amaranth Court and for teenage children who have at least one parent who is a Mason, Eastern Star or Amaranth member. However, any girl between the ages of 11 and 20 may join Rainbow if she is sponsored by two Rainbow Girls who are either active members in good standing or Majority Member status, and at least one adult who must be a member in good standing of either the Masonic Lodge, Order of the Eastern Star, or Order of the Amaranth.

Like all other Co-Masonic Orders, Rainbow has all the same 'morals and dogma' as Masonry except in a sugar-coated, watered-down form. The 'content' is the same, but the 'packaging' is different. Examples of similarities between Ancient Free and Accepted Masons and Rainbow Girls is that they both have rites of divestiture, rites of circumambulation, rites of investiture and rites of illumination. The adult sponsors hope that Rainbow girls will eventually join the Order of the Eastern Star when they are old enough for membership.

It is estimated that there are 1,500,000 Rainbow members, including inactive Majority Members. There are approximately 1,900 Rainbow assemblies in 46 states of the USA (exceptions are South Dakota, Delaware, Utah and Wyoming) and Japan, Germany, Panama, Philippines, Brazil, Australia (both New South Wales and Queensland), and Canada. Italy is in the beginning stages of establishing Rainbow in their country. Rainbow headquarters are located in McAlester, Oklahoma, USA. Local

groups are called Assemblies, and each state holds an annual Grand Assembly. The national body is called Supreme Assembly.

The ritual for the International Order of Rainbow for Girls was written by a prominent 33^o Mason named Rev. W. Mark Sexson. After observing DeMolay meetings, Rev. Sexson realized the need for a similar Order for girls which would set forth the truths of Masonry. The first Rainbow initiation was given to a class of 171 girls on April 6, 1922. This ceremony was performed in the auditorium of the Scottish Rite Temple in McAlester, Oklahoma, USA, by the regular officers of South McAlester Chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star.

Rev. W. Mark Sexson has this to say about Rainbow, "The Order of Rainbow for Girls with its fine personnel of membership throughout the world, with the color and the beauty of its meetings, seems to be a direct answer to the world's inquiry for light and happiness. Rainbow is one of the modern organizations that stands supported by dignified and time-honored sponsorships, having received the endorsement of many Grand Lodges and Grand Chapters. It holds aloft the high standards of character building which really challenge its members to reach a little higher every day that life may be filled with charm and power, and that each day may be a challenge to each other: that they move a little higher and reach out a little farther to find the true secret of happiness and arrive safely at the end of their colorful dream to find the pot of gold."

Potential Rainbow members go through a screening process. This involves having an Investigating Committee consisting of 2-3 Rainbow members and the Mother Advisor visiting the potential member and her parents in her home. The candidate's petition is then balloted on by the Assembly, just as with the Masonic Lodge (white balls elect, black balls reject).

Only recently parents and guardians with no Masonic affiliation have been allowed to accompany their daughters to non-public Rainbow meetings. Most Rainbow Funeral Services and Installation of Officers ceremonies are open to the public.

The Assembly consists of a total of 20 officers and members including a Chaplain, Drill Leader, Choir Director, Recorder, Treasurer, Musician, Confidential Observer, and Outer Observer, in addition to the offices stated previously. Seven of these offices are elective positions, i.e., Worthy Advisor, Worthy Associate Advisor, Charity, Hope, Faith, Recorder and Treasurer (the last two being for one year terms). The Worthy Advisor presides over the meetings and is assisted by the Mother Advisor (elected by the Advisory Board to serve a one year term) who is an Eastern Star or Amaranth member.

Each Worthy Advisor selects a Mason to be the “Rainbow Dad” for her term which lasts four months. Like all Co-Masonic Orders, a Mason must be present at *every* meeting.

Rainbow holds two official meetings each month. Girls wear regular dresses (nothing strapless or black) to the business meetings and white formals to the initiation meetings. In addition, each Worthy Advisor plans three projects for her term, those being a fun project (skating, slumber party, ‘kidnapping’ party), a service project (serving a Masonic dinner banquet, helping in the community, etc.), and a money-making project. There are two “Mini-Grand” Assemblies which meet at various places throughout the state, one in the spring and one in the fall. Grand Assembly is held annually, and its Grand Officers and Grand Representatives are selected from local assemblies of that state from girls who have shown leadership ability. Supreme Assembly is held once every two years and its Supreme Officers are Past Grand Worthy Advisors from across the nation, and they hold these offices for life.

Rainbow has two degrees. The Initiatory is given to all girls who are initiated into the Order. The Grand Cross of Color is an honorary degree given to Rainbow Girls, Eastern Star members and Masons who have given of themselves above and beyond the call of duty to further Rainbow.

There are three Rainbow ‘holidays’ that are celebrated including April 6th (the anniversary date of the founding of Rainbow, celebrated by attending a church service at the church of the Worthy Advisor), July 8th (Founder’s Day, which is the birthday of W. Mark Sexson, author of the Rainbow ritual), and November 15th (for Grand Cross of Color members). In addition, each state celebrates the anniversary of the person who organized Rainbow in their state. For example, Iowa Rainbow Girls celebrate November 4th, which is the birth date of Grace B. Sprecher, by joining hands around the Rainbow altar and renewing their Rainbow vows.

Rainbow Girls are told that “at the end of every rainbow is a pot of gold, and what else could this be except the satisfaction within the soul of every person when they have achieved some good deed” (from, “Rainbow Is...”). The ritual depicts the candidate being initiated as in search of the pot of gold at the end of the Rainbow.

The Rainbow ritual is based upon Genesis 9:12 & 13 of the Holy Bible, “This is the token of the covenant which I make between me and you, and every living creature that is with you, for perpetual generations; I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the Earth.”.

There is one bow station for each of the seven colors of the rainbow, and each is given a name. The first station is Love, which is symbolized by the color red. Orange is Religion, yellow is Nature, green is Immortality, blue is Fidelity, indigo is Patriotism, and violet is Service. During her initiation, the candidate is escorted by the Sister of Faith to each of these stations where she receives their corresponding lectures. The Sisters of Hope, Charity, and Worthy Associate Advisor also address the candidate before she receives the Secret Work of the Order from the Worthy Advisor.

“The Rainbow program teaches ten outstanding lessons: a belief in the existence of the one true and living God; the great truths in the Holy Bible; to seek dignity of character; a conception of the higher things in life; effective leadership; the importance of church membership; patriotism; cooperation with equals; love of home and above all, SERVICE to humanity.” (From “What Is Rainbow?, pg. 3) Rainbows purpose is “to offer an opportunity for every member to learn how to relate to all age groups and share friendships and responsibilities with them.” (From “Rainbow Is...”, pg. 1)

“After the active Rainbow years if a girl is in good standing in the order she is presented with a majority certificate which enables her to attend all meetings for the rest of her life, but she does not hold office or vote. If she should marry before she reaches the age of 20 she is presented with a marriage majority.” (From “What Is Rainbow?, pg. 5)

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