

Rainbow Girls and the Masonic Family: United for Youth

What is Rainbow?

The International Order of the Rainbow for Girls is an organization for girls between the ages of 11 and 20 that builds poise, confidence, and character. Girls learn leadership skills, the value of service to others, and the importance of citizenship. Assemblies meet monthly to perform ritualistic work, engage in service activities, and socialize.

Rainbow's start in the Masonic Family

Rainbow was founded in 1922 by Rev. W. Mark Sexson. Rev. Sexson served the Grand Lodge of Oklahoma as Most Worshipful Grand Master in 1928-29 and the Grand Chapter of Oklahoma as Worthy Grand Patron in 1925-26. During this time, he became familiar with the Order of DeMolay and believed an Order for girls that was also based on the truths of Masonry was needed. South McAlester Chapter OES requested that he write the Ritual of such an Order. They then exemplified the degrees on April 6, 1922, and initiated 171 girls in the auditorium of the Scottish Rite Temple in McAlester, Oklahoma.

Rainbow has maintained its close ties with Masonry, the Order of the Eastern Star, and now Amaranth and White Shrine. Most assemblies meet in Masonic Temples, and any of the Orders can sponsor an assembly. However, girls do not need a connection to an Order to join Rainbow. Rev. Sexson saw the wisdom of allowing girls from outside the Masonic family to be exposed to the Orders' teachings and good works. As long as a girl is sponsored by a member of any of the Orders, she may join Rainbow. This membership policy has benefited Rainbow, and the Masonic family as well; more than a few men have become Masons because their daughters were Rainbow Girls, and many girls join the women's Orders. The youth are both the present and future of our fraternal organizations.

Rainbow's Teachings

Rainbow teaches seven core lessons: Love as our connection to God, Religion as our path to God, Nature as an exemplification of the Divine, Immortality as the reward of a life of service, Fidelity as trueness to one's self and others, Patriotism as the duty of every citizen, and Service as our duty to our community and to each other. The words of the Sisters of Faith, Hope, and Charity give added meaning to these lessons. While the examples of Rainbow's lessons come from the Holy Bible, a girl needs only to believe in a Supreme Being to join Rainbow.

Rainbow in Ohio

While our core lessons have remained the same since Rev. Sexson wrote our ritual, Rainbow's practices have changed slightly over the years to reflect contemporary issues. As do many churches and youth organizations, Rainbow has a Youth Protection Policy to protect both the girls and adult advisors. In particular, approved advisors chaperone all Rainbow activities.

At our annual Grand Assembly, the girls enjoy three days of ritualistic work, various competitions and awards, and lots of fun and fellowship.

Our commitment to service is stronger than ever. Girls can be involved in service projects at both the state and local levels. For example, recent statewide service projects have included the Fisher House at Wright Patterson AFB, Relay for Life, Habitat for Humanity, Miracle Flights, and the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. Local assemblies participate in various aspects of these projects, as well as service related to their own communities and churches. Ohio Rainbow also provides college scholarships to deserving Rainbow Girls from throughout the state.

For more information on Rainbow in Ohio, visit our website at www.ohiorainbow.org. If you have questions about Rainbow or helping a girl join, contact Ohio's Membership Chairperson, Maribeth Metzler, at 513.678.7275 or metzlems@email.uc.edu.