

Purpose of Fraternity

Facilitator Guide

Program Information	
Content Area(s)	Relationship-building, core knowledge of Beta Theta Pi
Core Value (s)	Trust
Length of Program	100 minutes
Recommended time to hold program	First official education meeting for new member class
Recommended Facilitators	If inviting an advisor to attend or facilitate, any advisor would be a good choice for this meeting

Logistics	
Room Set-Up	Chairs for the number of attendees, but set-up should be flexible as some of the activities require space
Audio Visual Needed	Laptop, A/V, Internet (for TED talk)
Collateral Materials	Participant Handouts YES
	Video YES
Supplies Needed	New Member Binders (will vary based on local program)

Session Notes
1. Having a male advisor lead the vulnerability activity, ideally a Beta, sets an excellent tone for the men.

Facilitator Reminders
1. Setting the tone for the vulnerability and crossing the line activities is tremendously important and will dictate how much the new members take away from the session. Make sure to set a serious tone and also make sure new members feel safe enough to share in the environment.

Session Outline

10 min	Review of Post Work (can vary by chapter)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • History & Heritage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You were supposed to have read “Heritage & Destiny” prior to this meeting. This piece is one of many written by Beta Great, Seth R. Brooks, <i>St. Lawrence</i> '22. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are your initial reactions to this essay? ▪ (Turn and buzz) How do the concepts in this essay apply you to individually, and to us as a new member class? How and why are they important to understand? ▪ Do you draw any connections between this essay and the Induction Ceremony? • Guyland Chapter 5 or Guyland Summary Article (both optional) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You had reading from Michael Kimmel’s <i>Guyland</i> as well <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What are your initial reactions to this reading? ▪ How do you see this present on our campus? <p>So, we’re going to spend some time tonight exploring the purpose of fraternity. From the get-go, how do you think Brother Brooks’ thoughts address this topic?</p>

15 min	Song Practice
	<p><i>Facilitator Note: These song suggestions are recommended because they are important songs for ritual, but these can be supplemented.</i></p> <p>We’re starting with song practice today to get our blood flowing a little bit!</p> <p><i>Teach the following songs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marching Along • Wooglin Forever

15 min	The Social Fraternity
	<p><i>Facilitators should have the new members turn to the Social Life of the Fraternity Handout in their new member binder.</i></p> <p>Social Life Of The Fraternity</p>

The fraternity has always been social in its tendencies. It has aimed to bring together “good fellow.” It is presumed that they had brains, but good fellows they must be. In college parlance, neither “sticks” nor “grinds” were acceptable. The ends of the fraternity, publicly expressed and privately insisted upon, have been the cultivation of that faithful friendship which, in theory, at least finds its height of expression in the affection between brothers of the same parents. Its members join during the formative period of their lives – when they are entering upon a new world, the college kingdom – enticing with unknown pleasures and best with unthought-of dangers. It is then that the fraternity appeals to the young man to form a new relation outside of the family ones, which, therefore, he has known as the only type of intimacy: to assume the responsibilities of one of a band of chosen friends, with high aims, with a reputation to maintain, with a reputation to maintain, with a history behind it replete with great names, greater even in imagination than in fact.

We’re going to take some time tonight to really understand our purpose, as a social fraternity and as Beta Theta Pi. If you could, I want you to take a few minutes and read through the paragraph called “Social Fraternity.” Once you are done, quietly find a partner and talk with them about what stood out to you.

Have everyone read this to themselves, and then spend about three minutes discussing it with a partner. After three minutes are up, the facilitator should lead a discussion (10 minutes) based around the original purpose of fraternity.

Alright, bring it back. **Let’s get a few people to share their thoughts...**

- What did you all think about this reading?
- How does it inform our experience as new member?
- What does being a social fraternity mean for Beta Theta Pi?

Some key points to guide the conversation to are:

- *There’s not much reason to hide behind the fact that we are a social group. The fraternity was established as an organization with a goal of escaping the typical college routine of the time and meet with one another for fellowship.*
- *As young men entering college, we are embarking on a formative period in our lives where we are separated from our families and the friendships that we have invested many years building. This statement says that friendship and fidelity are ends instead of means; while we may publicly declare ourselves “brothers,” it is the word “cultivation” here that shows that such a close relationship means continuous growth and interaction.*
- *Use advisors to help you share what they learned from being in a social organization of this kind, the lessons, etc.*
- *What being social actually means is not blacking out but doing things with our social community of peers, like attending meetings.*

	<p>Note that “sticks” are people who are dull and uninteresting and “grinds” are people who only work on their academics and do nothing else.</p> <p>So, what went wrong? Field a few answers and then ask the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. At what point did we lose track of our purpose? And how? 2. How does that affect Greek Life today and us as fraternity men? <p>The image/execution of Fraternity today is not the same as at the time of our founding. This next activity will help inform the true purpose of intended fraternity in today’s world.</p>
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10 min	<p>The Objects of Beta Theta Pi</p> <p>So, we’ve talked a bit about what our intended purpose was as a social fraternity, but let’s take some time and learn about the true purpose of Beta Theta Pi. In a minute, I’m going to ask you to turn this paper over. On the back of this sheet are what is commonly referred to as the “Objects of Beta Theta Pi.” These objects represent our founding purpose.</p> <p>I’m now going to give you 10 minutes to read through the objects and respond to the prompts at the bottom of the page. When you’re done, look up at me.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Objects of Beta Theta Pi</p> <p style="text-align: center;">It shall be constituted as hereinafter provided and shall have for its objects the promotion of the moral and social culture of its members, the establishment of confidence and friendly relations among the universities and colleges of the United States and Canada, in securing unity of action and sympathy in matters of common interest among them, and the building up of a fraternity that recognizes mutual assistance in the honorable labors and aspirations of life, devotion to the cultivation of the intellect, unsullied friendship, and unfaltering fidelity, as objects worthy of the highest aim and purpose of associated effort.</p> <p>Now, let’s split up into groups of four to discuss the follow questions:</p> <p><i>Split the group up into groups of four and give them a minute or two to discuss the following questions.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What key words or phrases stick out to you? Underline them. 2. Based off of the key words and phrases, what is the purpose of Beta Theta Pi? 3. As new members of Beta Theta Pi, what can we do to ensure a purposeful experience? <p>It’s obvious that over time fraternities have lost their way in terms of values then and now. So, how do we succeed in staying true to our purpose in a system that is otherwise “lost” or “broken”?</p>
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CUSTOM	Vulnerability Activity
	<p><i>Facilitator Note: There are a few ways you can approach this next portion of this meeting. Talking about something like vulnerability is critical to creating strong relationships so it should be done in this meeting. Below are two different vulnerability activities that work well to accomplish the goal of this meeting. You can do one or both activities. If you choose to do one, there is an option to fill the other time with some local chapter education (local history, officer structure, etc.). If you're willing to go a little longer than 100 minutes for this meeting, then you can absolutely do all three activities (Option A The Power of Vulnerability, Option B Crossing the Line, and Option C Local Lore).</i></p>
30 min	OPTION A: The Power of Vulnerability
	<p>Link: https://www.ted.com/talks/brene_brown_on_vulnerability</p>
VIDEO	<p>How many of you have heard of Ted Talks? What are they? Yeah, essentially Ted Talks are a conference sponsored by a non-profit that goes by the slogan... "ideas worth spreading." We're about to watch a Ted Talk called "The Power of Vulnerability." While you're watching this, I want you to think about how this connects to everything we've covered already tonight.</p> <p><i>Facilitator will play video. After the video the facilitator should ask the following questions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What, if anything, stood out to you about this idea of vulnerability? What's your reaction to it? 2. What role do you think vulnerability plays in the Beta experience? 3. How do you think vulnerability applies to the development of brotherhood? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are one of many fraternities and sororities on this campus with the same access to all the same resources, so what makes us different? We all think, act and communicate in the exact same way, but how should (does) Beta do it so differently? <p><i>Help facilitate the conversation to a point where they are saying/understanding: "We do it based on our values (a.k.a. "what we believe"). Being able to live wholeheartedly."</i></p> <p><i>These questions should be asked in a pair and share. The italics are suggested answers if the men are struggling.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does it mean to do whole hearted people look like? <i>A community of connectedness, courage, compassion</i> • What are we afraid of (in life, relationship, etc.)? <i>Hit on the point she makes to lean into the discomfort of the fear.</i> • Why did Beta choose you? <i>It is our cause, our purpose, our beliefs. It's why we exist. It's our purpose.</i> <p>We're building a brotherhood here, a community, a home away from home. We're building a place where we can be our true selves and know that we are enough. In order to remain grounded in our purpose and not lose sight again of what we're intended to do, we must be confident and courageous in our purpose. That, my friends, is powerful beyond measure.</p>

30 min	OPTION B: Crossing the Line
	<p><i>Facilitator Note: This activity is incredibly powerful, but you should make sure you are prepared to facilitate it. If you are not familiar with it, consider asking a brother who is to facilitate this, or even an alum or advisor.</i></p>
	<p>Have everyone stand in a circle and dim the lights</p> <p>Guidelines:</p> <p>"Over the next half hour or so, we will share some of our experiences and vulnerabilities with one another. This will demand a safe atmosphere. To insure that we remain sensitive to one another's feelings, we need to follow two critical guidelines.</p> <p>The first involves LISTENING. Let's have silence throughout the exercise – no talking, snickering, giggling, etc. Silence will allow all of us to participate fully. Silence will also enable us to experience our personal thoughts and feelings more clearly."</p> <p>The second guideline is RESPECT. It is imperative that we respect the dignity of each person who is here this evening. Everything that is shared should remain confidential. Nothing that is offered should leave this room.</p> <p>I need a nod of the head to indicate that you understand the importance of our keeping an atmosphere both silent and respectful...</p> <p>Before we begin there are several other guidelines that we need to consider.</p> <p>NO PRESSURE. "No one here is under any pressure to respond in any particular way to any of the questions. If you have any doubts about sharing some part of yourself, you should feel perfectly comfortable with your decision not to step into the center."</p> <p>One final point. Each of the categories I use will have some GRAY AREAS. If you find yourself stuck in a gray area, simply define the words from your own point of view. In other words, define the terms as you yourself understand them when thinking of yourself. For example, suppose the question asks everyone who is religious to step into the center. If you think of yourself as religious, then the word fits, regardless of whether or not someone else would use the word "religious in the same way, and regardless of other meanings the word might have. If you have serious reservations about the clarity or meaningfulness of any particular category, then the best things to do is to not step into the center.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For each category, the facilitator will say: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "Please step in the center if you (insert Crossing Statements from below)" ○ "Thank you" – participants will return back to their spot ● Does any of you have any questions now? Once we get started you must remain quiet. <p><i>As the facilitator, feel free to add or subtract statements if you choose to.</i></p> <p>Crossing Statements (Step into the center if...)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● You identify as a man

- You are someone who is 21 or under
- In the past year you have been in a relationship and been hurt
- You feel that you have not formed a close friendship with someone at college
- You are Catholic
- You are Protestant
- You are Jewish
- You are Muslim
- You are some other religion
- You are an atheist or agnostic
- You are a person of color
- You know little about your cultural heritage
- You wish you had more money
- You consider your family as working class
- You consider your family as middle class
- You consider your family as upper class
- You have felt embarrassed about the economic class your family is in
- You come from a family of four or more children or you are an only child
- You live independently of your parents
- You have taken primary responsibility either for raising another member of your family or caring for an elderly member of your family
- You have low self-esteem
- You would like to lose 10 or more pounds
- You feel lonely
- You feel physically unattractive
- You consider yourself a Democrat
- You consider yourself a Republican
- You consider yourself a socialist
- Your parents have either divorced, separated or never married
- At least one of your parents has died
- You feel estranged or unconnected
- There have been times when you have seriously felt that, if you could choose, you would not choose the ethnicity into which you were born
- You find yourself thinking about food considerably more often than you want
- You have a medical problem
- You have a learning disability
- You have a physical disability
- You have questioned your sexual orientation
- You have experienced the effects of alcoholism in your family
- You have experienced the effects of drug addiction in your family
- You have had a sexual experience that you regretted
- You have experienced suicidal thoughts at some point in your life
- You have cried at least once this year
- You have cried at least once this year for someone or something other than yourself
- Since you started at [UNIVERSITY], you have learned something new about yourself
- Since you started at [UNIVERSITY], you have laughed at yourself at least once

	<p><i>Discussion:</i> <i>Break the men into groups of four and ask the following questions.</i></p> <p>Thank you all for participating in that activity with me. I appreciate your honesty and vulnerability. Let's get into groups of four and discuss a couple questions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the movement of others influence you? • Did you find yourself making judgments of others? • How did you feel when there were very few of you in the center of the circle? <p>Thank you for sharing in your small groups. Now, let's bring it back to the whole group and answer a couple more questions. <i>Reconvene as a large group and take answers to the following questions.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you learn about yourself through the activity? • What kind of feelings did you have as you participated? <p><i>Allow conversation in large group to go on as long as it seems to be productive or as time allows. This is the first space that they have to be vulnerable and start establishing bonds of friendship.</i></p>
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20 min	Local Lore
CUSTOM	<p><i>Facilitator Note: This time can serve as an opportunity to do some education on the local chapter, rather than on Beta Theta Pi as a whole. This time does not have to be used for this, but local history is important so we wanted there to be a chance for this to emerge.</i></p> <p><i>If there is nothing prepared on the history, a helpful alternative could be a chance to review the officer and cabinet structure with the new members. What are the exec positions, committees and cabinet positions, and what do they do? How do elections work? You could also let them know who the local advisors are.</i></p>

5 min	Post Work (will vary based on local education plan)
	<p>Your Post Work for tonight's meeting will be emailed to you later this evening. Please take some time to consider the important questions we ask of you in this post work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage and History <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All Are Outposts – Inter Fratres • Son of the Stars <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Chapter 1 – Privileges / Responsibilities of Membership in Beta Theta Pi ○ Chapter 2 – Origin of Greek / Interfraternal Movement ○ Chapter 3 – The Founding Years ○ Chapter 9 – Heraldry: Beta Badge, Signs, Logos and Symbols