



**REFRESH...RENEW...REIGNITE...  
REVITALIZE...RECONNECT**  
**Lions Orientation Refresher Series**  
**“Our Illustrious History”**



## Our Illustrious History

We all recognize the importance of new member orientation, but did you know that periodic overviews are beneficial for even the most seasoned, active Lion? This Orientation Refresher Series has been developed to facilitate “re-orientation” in your club. Each session can be presented by the club president or membership chairperson in approximately 10-20 minutes. This series makes a great presentation for club members during meetings, or can be conducted in a small group setting. The sessions are all similarly designed and include presentation suggestions, session materials and interactive exercises.

This series is designed to **REFRESH** members’ knowledge of Lions Clubs International, **REVITALIZE** their enthusiasm for helping those in need, **RECONNECT** them with their reasons for becoming a Lion and **RENEW** their commitment to membership development, extension and leadership initiatives.

### Planning

This refresher series is easy to plan and conduct. However, there are a few simple steps you can take to ensure that the presentation runs smoothly and has maximum impact for members.

**Scheduling** Series sessions can be scheduled intermittently throughout the year or presented once a meeting for five meetings. They can also be made into mini-workshops that are given at a separate time and place. However, for greatest effect, it is suggested that they be used during a regular club meeting when a majority of the membership is likely to be in attendance.

**Customizing the Presentation** Each guide has a presentation outline with notes, content, suggestions for localizing content when appropriate and exercises. Also included are **Try This!** suggestions to add an additional twist or element to the presentation. Present the series sessions as is, and they are effective tools for reigniting members’ passion for serving those in need. However, if you desire, individual parts of the series may be personalized to suit your presentation style.

**Create Anticipation** It is a good idea to create anticipation for this series by explaining to members the importance of “keeping the edge sharp” and refreshing their knowledge and commitment to the association. Be enthusiastic and let them know that these brief series sessions will have a big impact on their membership in Lions.

**Materials** These series sessions are easy to plan and implement, and use minimal resources. Some segments have reproducible items that should be copied for distribution during the presentation. It is also an excellent idea to encourage participants to have paper and a pen for taking notes. (You might want to have a few extras on hand in case someone has forgotten.)

**There are five segments in the Refresher Series, which cover the following topics:**

- **Our Illustrious History** – Where we came from and where we are going
- **Purpose & Ethics & You** – The basic tenets of the association and how they guide those dedicated to service
- **Your Club, Your District** – Specific information about the local club and district, and how the individual Lion fits into the picture
- **Your International Association** – Details about the association at the international level, how it impacts the individual Lion and available resources
- **Membership Development, Extension and Leadership** – Explores the available avenues for expanding Lions club membership through recruitment and new clubs, as well as leadership opportunities for members

# Session 1: Our Illustrious History

## Session Suggestions/Outline

**1) The Importance of “Re-orientation”** Even the most experienced, dedicated Lion can benefit from a review of the foundations of the association. Together, through these sessions, members will review different aspects of Lions Clubs International to help reconnect them with why they became Lions and help them set personal goals for continued development.

**2) The Importance of Knowing Our History** The distinguished history of Lions Clubs International forms the foundation for nearly everything Lions clubs do today. From our humble beginnings to our commitment to sight initiatives, there is a significant basis for all our humanitarian services. Knowing and understanding our history gives us perspective and helps keep our dedication for community service thriving.

**3) Test Your Lions IQ** Before you begin, administer this short quiz to see how much about Lions your members already know. A reproducible test is included in this guide.

**4) Review Test Answers** Refer to the answer key included with this guide. Members receive one point for each correct answer.

- 10 points...Perfect score! You know your Lions history!
- 8-9 points...This session is sure to fill in the few gaps in your Lions history knowledge.
- 6-7 points...There are some areas that could use some brushing up. Pay close attention during this session and we'll get you on track.
- 5 points...You got half the answers correct. Time to learn the rest!
- Less than 5 points...It doesn't mean you aren't a dedicated or valuable Lion, but it is time to learn the basics and gain a broader outlook for the volunteer services we provide.

**5) Lions History** Use the content portion of this guide to review the milestones in Lions' history. Included is a handy “At a Glance” chart that lists the most critical dates in Lions' history.

**6) Discussion Points** You can use these questions to stimulate thought and interaction during the presentation. There are no “right” or “wrong” answers to these questions.

- There were other clubs in existence when Lions clubs were formed. What do you feel made Lions clubs different?
- What do you think is the most significant point in Lions history and why?
- Lions embraced Helen Keller's challenge in 1925. The association is now largely defined by its remarkable dedication to blindness prevention. What Lions sight initiatives do you think have had the biggest impact, and why?

**Try This!** Interested in giving your members some take-home materials to reinforce what they have learned during the session? Photocopy the presentation content pages of this guide for a handy history lesson. Another idea is to supplement your presentation with materials from International Headquarters. Publications are available for downloading from the association's Web site. Visit the resources section at [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org).

Suggestions for this presentation include the Lions Clubs International Fact Sheet (PR 799), Lions Clubs International History (PR 800) and The Lions...We Serve (ME-4).

- Community service is at the heart of Lions clubs. How do you think being an international organization impacts what we bring to our local communities?
- How would you describe Lions clubs to a friend?
- What do you think has changed about Lions clubs throughout the years?
- How has our history brought us to where we are today?
- What does “We Serve” mean to you personally as a Lion?

## Session Content

**History:** Lions Clubs International began as the dream of Chicago insurance executive Melvin Jones. He believed that local business clubs should expand their horizons from purely professional concerns to the betterment of their communities and the world at large.

Jones’ own service group, the Business Circle of Chicago, agreed. After contacting similar groups around the country, an organizational meeting was held on June 7, 1917, at the LaSalle Hotel in Chicago. The new group took the name of one of the groups invited, the “International Association of Lions Clubs”. A national convention was held in Dallas, Texas, in October of that year. Thirty-six delegates representing 22 clubs from nine states were in attendance. The convention began to define what the association was to become. A constitution, by-laws, objects and code of ethics were approved. Among the official objects adopted in these early years was one which read, “No club shall hold out the financial betterment of its members” as its object. The object has remained one of the association’s main tenets ever since.

Dr. W. P. Woods, of Evansville, Indiana, USA was elected as the first president. Guiding force and founder Jones was named acting secretary, thus beginning his relationship with Lions that ended only with his death in 1961.

Just three years after its formation, the organization became international when the first club in Windsor, Ontario, Canada was established in 1920. Clubs were later organized in Mexico, China and Cuba. By 1927, membership stood at 60,000 in 1,183 clubs.

In 1935, Panama became home to the first Central American club; the first club in South America was reorganized in Colombia the following year. Sweden, then France, brought Europe into the association in 1948. Japan had clubs by 1952, and the so-called “Eastern Bloc” was unblocked in 1989 with the formation of clubs in Hungary, Poland and Estonia. In 1990, a club was chartered in Moscow and today over 100 Lions clubs are demonstrating the value of service in countries once closed to voluntary action.

**Try This!** Do you like using PowerPoint or other computer-driven presentation software? Create your own graphics to enhance the course material. You may also use a large dry-erase board, paper and easel or overhead transparencies to add visual elements.

Perhaps the single event having the greatest impact on the association's service commitment occurred in 1925 when Helen Keller addressed the Lions at the international convention in Cedar Point, Ohio, USA. It was there that she challenged Lions to become "knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness."

In 1990 Lions launched their most aggressive sight preservation effort to date, SightFirst. The more than US\$140 million-plus program strives to rid the world of preventable and reversible blindness by closing the gap between existing health care services and those that remain desperately needed.

Broadening its role in international understanding, the association helped the United Nations form the Non-Governmental Organizations section in 1945, and continues to hold consultative status today. Each year, during the Lions Day with the United Nations ceremonies, an award is presented to the grand prize-winner of the Lions International Peace Poster Contest.

Another significant event in the association's history occurred in 1987, when Lions Clubs International became one of the first service club organizations to admit women as members.

Since those first years, the association has grown to include 1.4 million men and women in more than 45,000 clubs located in 193 countries and geographical areas.

**Try This!** Would you like to add an audio-visual component to your presentation? If your district has a video-lending library, borrow one of its tapes about the association. Videotapes are also available for purchase from Club Supplies at International Headquarters. "Down the Street and Around the World" is recommended for this course.



## **At a Glance**

### **Lions Clubs International History Timeline**

- 1917:** Association founded in Chicago on June 7 by businessman Melvin Jones
- 1920:** Association became international with the formation of the first club in Canada.
- 1925:** Helen Keller challenges the Lions to become her “knights of the blind in the crusade against blindness.”
- 1945:** Association helps form the Non-Governmental Organizations section of the United Nations.
- 1968:** Lions Clubs International Foundation is established.
- 1987:** Lions Clubs International becomes the first service club to admit women as members.
- 1988:** Lions International Peace Poster Contest is introduced.
- 1989:** First Lions clubs organized in former “Eastern Bloc” countries.
- 1990:** SightFirst, a major blindness prevention initiative, is launched.
- 1997:** Phase I of SightFirst China Action, an program to confront cataract blindness and establish eye clinics in China, is launched.
- 2002:** Phase II of SightFirst China Action is launched.
- 2002:** Lions clubs chartered in China.

**Who are the Lions?** Lions are men and women dedicated to serving those in need, whether in their own community or halfway around the world. In addition to humanitarian service, they enjoy fellowship and develop leadership skills.

**The Name “Lions:”** The official name of “Lions” is “The International Association of Lions Clubs” or simply “Lions Clubs International.”

**Mission Statement:** To create and foster a spirit of understanding among all people for humanitarian needs by providing voluntary services through community involvement and international cooperation.

**Motto:** The Lions motto is “We Serve.”

**Slogan:** Liberty, Intelligence, Our Nation’s Safety.

**Official Colors:** Purple and gold were chosen when the association was founded in 1917. Purple represents loyalty to country, friends, to one’s self and to the integrity of mind and heart. It is the color of strength, courage and dedication to a cause. Gold symbolizes sincerity of purpose, liberality in judgment, purity in life and generosity in mind, heart and commitment to mankind. Often, a dark blue is used in place of purple.

**Official Emblem:** The current Lion emblem (or logo) was adopted at the 1919 convention. Today, Lions worldwide are recognized by it. It consists of a gold letter “L” on a circular purple (or blue) field. Bordering this is a circular gold area with two lion profiles facing away from the center. The Lions face both past and future – showing both pride of heritage and confidence in the future. The word “Lions” appears at the top, and “International” at the bottom.

Always wear your Lions emblem pin proudly. And remember, since it is a registered trademark in most countries, it may never be used for commercial or fundraising purposes without prior permission from the Legal Division at International Headquarters.

**International Fellowship and Understanding:** It may appear that the language barrier would make international understanding almost impossible. But international understanding and friendship (or fellowship) is a matter of spirit rather than language. Lions throughout the world communicate with one another through club activities that create and foster a spirit of understanding among the peoples of the world.

## Test Your Lions IQ

1. What is the association's motto? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What are the official colors of Lions Clubs International? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Who founded the association? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What did Helen Keller challenge the Lions to become? \_\_\_\_\_
5. Who was the first president of Lions clubs? \_\_\_\_\_
6. Where was the association founded? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What is the association's slogan? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What was the second country to form a Lions club? \_\_\_\_\_
9. When was the association founded? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Who is the current international president? \_\_\_\_\_

- Key**
1. We Serve
  2. Purple and gold
  3. Melvin Jones
  4. "Knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness"
  5. Dr. W.P. Woods
  6. Chicago, Illinois, USA
  7. Liberty, Intelligence, Our Nations Safety
  8. Canada
  9. June 17, 1917
  10. \_\_\_\_\_

## Notes



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