

Big Brother Reveal Guide



Big Brother reveals and "family nights" are among the most anticipated moments in a new Member's fraternity experience. However, they are also among the most mishandled. Done well, these events deepen bonds and pass on the best of your Chapter's culture. Done poorly, they become focused on hazing and drinking, and ultimately, can ruin lives. Use this resource to help build celebrations that are worth remembering for the right reasons.

REMEMBER: ANY FORM OF HAZING DURING FRATERNITY EDUCATION OR BIG BROTHER EVENTS DEGRADES THE FRATERNITY EXPERIENCE.

The following are common examples of fraternity hazing. If you notice similarities with local traditions, it's time for a change.

NO Big Brother/Family drinks

Gifting alcohol to an Associate Member or Big Brother. This creates a power dynamic around the consumption of alcohol, and can be an extremely dangerous tradition.

NO Drinking Games or Case Races for Associate Members

Pressuring Associate Members to participate in competitive drinking events constitutes hazing regardless of whether participation appears voluntary.

NO Scavenger Hunts with Degrading Tasks

Sending Littles on scavenger hunts that require embarrassing, illegal, or demeaning acts exploits their eagerness to impress their new Big Brother.

NO Physical Harm Disguised as Tradition

Activities like being burned by a cigarette, branded, or subjected to any physical pain are hazing regardless of how long the "tradition" has existed.

NO Wearing Specific Clothing or Items

Requiring Littles to wear specific articles of clothing meant to embarrass or single them out runs counter to the dignity the Fraternity claims to uphold.

NO Coerced Secrecy About the Night's Events

Requiring Littles to conceal what occurred during Big/Little Night from Chapter leadership, the university, or other Members suppresses accountability and is a defining characteristic of hazing.

Plan the BEST Event You Can

Focusing on these four criteria will help make your celebration the **BEST** it can be: **B**rotherhood, **E**xperience, **S**afety, and **T**radition. None of these exist in isolation. A night that honors tradition but ignores safety isn't traditional; it's reckless. A night focused only on fun and lacking intentional Brotherhood isn't a celebration; it's a party with a different name.

Brotherhood

Big Brothers are more than a title. They represent a Chapter's living family tree. This structure offers personal connections in an overwhelming web of relationships. A Big Brother is a mentor, a champion, a check-in, and a constant. He is someone who celebrates your wins and holds you accountable when you fall short.

Ask yourself: Does this event reflect what a Big Brother actually is?

The reveal itself is only a moment. What matters is the relationship. Your event should give Bigs and Littles space to actually talk and begin laying the foundation of a real friendship.

Experience

Associate Members are watching. They are learning what it means to be a Brother in your Chapter. The Big Brother reveal is one of their most formative early experiences. This event will demonstrate your Chapter's values, culture, and maturity. A thoughtful and organized event shows Brotherhood seriously. A chaotic and wild event is performative at best and harmful at worst.

Ask yourself: What story does this night tell a new Member about who we are?

The experience should model mentorship in action. That means Bigs show up prepared. Make sure they know something meaningful about their Littles. Maybe they even have a thoughtful gift or letter and are ready to be fully present for their new Little.

Safety

More than just the environment you create, it's about how you act and treat one another.

There is no shortage of tragic fraternity stories that began on nights exactly like this one. "Family nights," Big Brother reveals, and similar events have a well-documented history of escalating beyond anyone's intentions. This is often due to peer pressure, one-upmanship, and a lack of structure. These are alcohol-free events, without exception. Chapters should approach them with the same seriousness they would apply to any high-risk activity.

Tradition

Tradition is one of the most powerful forces in fraternity life and one of the most easily corrupted. The challenge with tradition is that it often carries the weight of "we've always done it this way." The question isn't whether to honor tradition. **It's which parts of the tradition are worth keeping.**

Practical Safety Principles

No alcohol. Period. These events are alcohol-free. This is not a suggestion or a guideline. It is a firm requirement. Any Member who shows up intoxicated or attempts to introduce alcohol should be removed from the event immediately.

Establish a clear timeline and endpoint. Open-ended nights invite escalation. Know when the event starts, what happens during it, and when it ends.

No pressure, no coercion, no exceptions. Any element of the event that involves pressure on new Members to perform, to participate in something uncomfortable, or to endure anything against their will is hazing. It doesn't matter how it's framed or how long it's been done.

Keep it on-site or in a controlled location. Avoid moving between locations late at night. Controlled environments are far safer.

Do not dismiss Bigs/Littles to do whatever they want without structure.

Just because alcohol or hazing isn't involved on your watch doesn't mean it isn't happening at all. You should still set clear expectations and consequences around the Big/Little relationship.

Remember: Safety is not the enemy of a great night. A Chapter that keeps its Members safe demonstrates exactly the kind of Brotherhood you should be celebrating.

Have a plan for emergencies. Work with the High Iota to understand the Emergency Response Plan. Make sure someone is always reachable. Brief your Members before the event.

Designate event coordinators. At least two Chapter Members should be explicitly assigned to oversee the event from start to finish. These are not babysitters; they are responsible leaders. This is a great opportunity for the High Kappa (Fraternity Educator) and High Phi (Ritualist) to work with the High Iota (Risk Manager).

Evaluating Traditions

Take away the elements of a tradition that involve pressure or secrecy. What's left? If the answer is "not much," that tradition likely came from harmful elements and needs to be shaped into something better. If the answer is a meaningful and genuine bonding experience, then that core is worth preserving and building around.

Questioning tradition takes courage and is a demonstration of Lambda Chi's values in action. Brothers who ask the hard questions are building a strong and healthy legacy for future Members. The goal is to pass on values, not freeze a Chapter in time.

When evaluating a tradition, ask:

- Does this reinforce the values of Brotherhood, mentorship, and respect?
- Could we do this exactly as-is in front of our campus administration, parents, or a reporter?
- Is anyone being pressured, embarrassed, or put at risk?
- If we removed this element, would the night lose its meaning?

If a tradition fails these questions, it's time to build something better.

Safe and Meaningful Ideas for Big/Little Brother Programming

The following activities are designed to be safe and memorable. They can be adapted to fit your Chapter's size and culture.



Big Brother Ceremony

Use the Big Brother Ceremony to bring in a formal element. You can find it in the Resource Library in the myLambdaChi Portal. Ceremonies mark a milestone moment in time. This demonstrates the Chapter's dedication to its new Members.



Letter Exchange

Before the reveal, each Big writes a personal letter to his Little. He shares why he wanted to be his Big and one piece of advice for the journey ahead. Littles can write back that night or in the days following. This creates a memento that both Members can keep, and it sets a tone of sincerity from the first moment.



Structured One-on-One Time

After the reveal, schedule 20–30 minutes of dedicated Big/Little time before any group activity begins. Give pairs a prompt or two to guide conversation. "Tell your Little about a mistake you made as a new Member and what you learned," or "Ask your Big what Brotherhood means to him." This prioritizes the most important relationship in the room.



Chapter Story Night

Host a storytelling event where older Members share meaningful stories from their time in the Chapter. Not crazy stories, but real ones. Share moments of growth, Brotherhood, and challenges. This connects new Members to the Chapter's living history and models what long-term Brotherhood looks like.



Family Tree Ceremony

Create a visual representation of the Chapter's family tree and unveil it during the reveal. When a new Little is matched with a Big, they can see the full lineage they're joining. This is a powerful reminder of the generational Brotherhood.



Collaborative Activity or Service Project

Plan a service event for Bigs and Littles to do together. Shared effort builds real bonds faster than a hangout. It also gives pairs who might feel awkward something to do together while they're still getting to know each other.



Family Dinner

Make reservations at a local restaurant, or have food delivered, and intentionally place Big/Little families together to share a meal and get to know new Members of the family tree.



Athletic or Game Night

Organize 2v2 games, with Bigs and Littles serving on the same team. This could be basketball, cornhole, video games, etc. Events like this take the pressure off starting a new conversation by introducing something else to focus on and keeping it fun.

Final Note

The best Big Brother celebrations don't need to be elaborate. They need to be intentional. When you take the time to plan an event that is safe, structured, and centered on genuine Brotherhood, it sends a message to every new Member in the room: this Chapter takes care of its people.

That's the tradition worth passing down.

