

With a hope that we hadn't forgotten anything we headed for our campsite on Clear Creek.

I had heard of a barrel full of monkeys, but this is nothing compared to a bus full of talking, shouting, wiggling, scuffling, teasing boys. Since it was hardly proper for the leaders to jump up and down and pull their hair, we composed ourselves, smiled indulgently and tried to keep order.

At last we arrived at the campsite, a small meadow overlooking a rushing stream and surrounded by tall trees and rugged hills. I never saw a bus empty out so fast in my life. In a few moments the meadow was littered with various camping equipment. With the help of my two lieutenant commanders we assigned tent sites and began to set up camp. I had forgotten how excited boys could become over the simple task of pitching tents. Except for a few swayback tents, loose stakes, and crooked poles, the boys did a fair job. Details were assigned such as digging fire pits and gathering wood.

With camp set up, the boys were divided into three groups with an adult leader in charge of each, and taken on a nature study and exploration hike. The hills and woods soon echoed with joyful shouts upon new discoveries. An animal, a bird, an insect, a fossil, a cave, the bleached bones of an animal—unimportant things? Not to these boys. They were naturalists, geologists, archaeologists, and explorers, making new discoveries.

Back in camp we ate our evening meal. It's amazing how many hamburgers one boy can eat on a campout. Come to think of it, I had three myself.

Twilight was falling when we finished cleaning up. Fireflies flittered about as we made our way to the council fire. There is magic in the atmosphere of a campfire. The flickering flame, the crackling wood, the crickets in the background... you seem to be in a different world. There is a bond of fellowship here that only the camper knows.

How boys can sing around a campfire! It matters little if they are off key, it's volume that counts as they give vent to inner contentment and joy. A few stunts, more songs, and then devotions. The devotion was very simple. We told them how Christ changed a certain boy's life. We explained the simple plan of salvation. As the invitation was given to the boys who wanted to accept Christ we were unprepared for the response. Suddenly several boys were standing before me. There was Jimmy, our biggest discipline problem; Gary, whose father was a drunk; Ben, the sarcastic wise guy; Tim, the quiet shy boy, and others. They stood looking up at me with searching, questioning eyes. I felt very humble when I prayed for Christ to come into their hearts.

A leader who has looked into the shining face of a boy who has accepted Christ for the first time will never be the same. I was no exception. Suddenly all the work, time, and effort invested in Royal Rangers paid off. I felt ashamed of the moments of discouragement and frustration when I questioned, "Is this program worth the effort?"

These are the thoughts that fill my mind and heart as I look up at the stars. A prayer wells up from my heart and forms on my lips. "O God, I thank you for a program like Royal Rangers and for what it can do for its members. I'm so grateful for the privilege of being a leader and for the opportunity of ministering to boys." <<<<

# What the Royal Ranger Program Means in Our Church

By J. F. HERRING

YOU MAY ASK, "IS A BOYS PROGRAM WORTH ALL THE time, effort and money expended for it?" As coordinator for the Royal Ranger program in our church I can confirm that *these things are most worthwhile*.

The Royal Ranger program makes a unique contribution toward youth evangelism that cannot be duplicated by any other means.

I have been able to evaluate this program from many angles. From every aspect it has been a great blessing to our church.

## UNTAPPED RESOURCES

Every assembly needs the vigor and enthusiasm of its boys. Much progress in fulfilling the Great Commission has been lost because of untapped resources. If we will ask God to reveal to us the gigantic potential of our boys, we will not be disappointed.

For example, I cite one project in particular. After a thorough examination of the proposed project with the outpost officers, we set our goal. We thought it to be reasonable and yet challenging. Prayer, work and a keen insight by the leaders into the potentials of a boy aroused the vigor and enthusiasm of the boys. It was like tapping an artesian well of enthusiasm. The goal we had set was reached more than 10 times over.

## UNCOVERED NEEDS

Whether a boy attends church or not, there are deeply embedded needs that must be met. For instance, Randy was a clean-cut, intelligent young fellow who had been very regular in attending church. He came from a good family and some of our best teachers had not been able to lead Randy to accept Christ. In a few months, during one of the instruction periods in the Royal Rangers, in the atmosphere of a pure, unrestrained burden for boys, he accepted God's plan of salvation for his life.

## UNIMPRESSED LEADERS

The ministry of visitation can and should be enjoyed by all Christians. However, it appears that the majority are unimpressed by the importance of this great work. They are therefore separated from conditions and circumstances which constrain one to work and pray for the salvation of souls. These unimpressed leaders of any church are weights. They are hampering the spread of the gospel.

Not long ago, I drove by the home of one Royal

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