

# My First Royal Rangers Campout

It happened before I knew it. My pastor, William Kirschke, approached me, stood mere inches away, and said, “Ken, we need you to be a Royal Rangers leader.”

I could never say “no” to him.

Though I love the outdoors, there were few less suited for taking a group of boys on that first wilderness camping outing — even though, as a young adult, I was just second in command.

That first experience was all about taking the boys to a remote fishing spot where they would catch tons of fish and we would eat them fresh surrounding a crackling campfire.

Fish flesh would never touch our lips on that trip.

Arriving at our starting point, we parked the vehicles, loaded our backpacks, and started up the hill. Up and down we went, making several turns where the woody hillside dictated. The boys were already complaining when, an hour or so into our hike, we came upon a road. I cautiously walked back around the bend and there — a few hundred feet away — were our cars.

(Note to self: “Next time bring compass.”)



Today, the Royal Rangers ministry is bigger and better than ever, reaching boys and their families in many nations.

We got back in the cars and drove to the real starting point.

(Note to self: “Next time check map more carefully.”)

After successful arrival and camp set up, a small group of us set off to find the hidden lake, which we were sure was nearby.

We never found it.

(Note to self: “Next time get better map.”)

But somehow the Lord helped us salvage the trip, and it became a beneficial and learning time for all.

The adventures I shared with the boys got increasingly better after that slow start. We actually found a place to catch fish.

Some of the boys were from families in the church. But several were from unsaved or unchurched families. I drove a circuit to pick some of them up for our Wednesday meetings — and saw their lives turned to Jesus. Royal Rangers also became the reason some of their parents eventually came to church — and to a relationship with Jesus Christ.

Today, the Royal Rangers ministry is bigger and better than ever, reaching boys and their families not only in the U.S., but in many nations of the world.

This issue celebrates the half-century mark of this great ministry.

Ken Horn

Email your comments to [pe@ag.org](mailto:pe@ag.org).