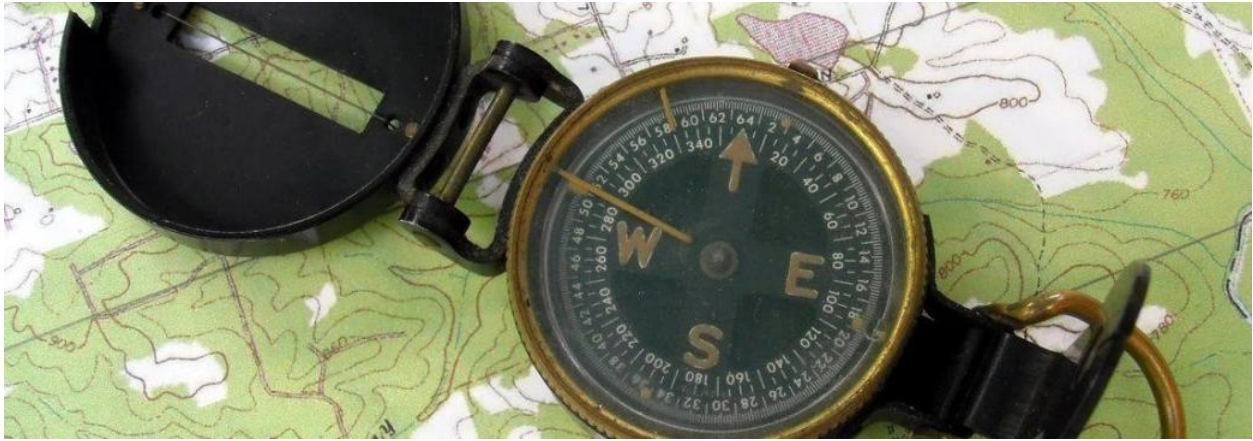


Annual Program Planning



The Royal Rangers program provides churches with a powerful tool for developing boys into Christlike young men. But as with any program, the full benefits of the program are only achieved as the result of a well-planned and well-conducted process. A systematic process of planning and preparation is therefore essential to the success of any outpost.

The following represents a suggested program planning process that can help to insure your outpost is achieving the greatest results of your efforts. The process requires time and effort to complete but it will be time well spent, resulting in a program than that provides leaders, parents, and boys with a roadmap for success while minimizing the stress and challenges of trying to throw things together week by week.

This process should be done well in advance of the beginning of your activity year. If you plan events based on the calendar year, begin planning in the fall, well before the business of the holidays begins. If you plan based on the school year, early to mid summer may be your best time, provided all necessary leaders are available. Regardless of when you conduct your planning process, be sure to allow enough time to complete the process and distribute the results before the year begins.

Step 1: Prepare the Calendar

Before you begin making plans for the coming year, take time to gather the relevant dates for all activities that are already on the calendar. This would include dates such as:

- Church events that your boys or leaders may be involved in, such as kid's camps or youth retreats
- District, regional, and national Royal Rangers events your members might participate in
- Community events you might want to be a part of such as fall festivals or Christmas parades

Add these events to a central calendar. This could be a large planning calendar on the wall or a shared electronic calendar online such as Google Calendar. Online calendars enable you to share your information with anyone involved and insure everyone has the most up-to-date information.

Step 2: Review Last Year

Once you have your initial calendar created, the next step is to review last year to identify events you may want to do again or do differently. As you review last year ask these questions:

- What activities did we do last year?
- Which ones went well & everyone enjoyed? Which one's were more of a challenge?
- Which events do we want to repeat? What changes would we like to make?

Take care not to spend too much time on this review process since the focus of the meeting needs to be on planning for next year.

Step 3: Brainstorm Ideas

Now it's time to begin brainstorming ideas for next year. Remember that when brainstorming, all ideas are welcomed. Evaluation of each idea will come later. Ask your group:

- Has anyone heard of a new activity that our group might like to do?
- Are there any special facilities or resources available to us that we've not tried yet? For example, if you're near a lake, do we have access to a boat for water skiing? Or if you're near a major sports center, would our boys be interested in attending a ball game? What about zoos, art galleries, concerts or theme parks?
- What kind of skill or interests are represented by the men in our church or community? Many men would be glad to share their skills, hobbies, and interests with boys if they were asked. Are any of your men carpenters, doctors, web designers, auto mechanics, artists, coaches, musicians, collectors, app developers, cyclists, or backpackers? All of these skills, and many more, represent topics relevant to Royal Rangers advancement.

Key Point: Effective outposts provide activities in all the core competencies of the program – outdoors, sports, trade skills, technology, and arts. Provide something for every boy!

This information can easily be collected through use of the “Program Capability Assessment” process. This process provides a way for outpost leaders to identify both the interests of their boys as well as the skills represented by the men and

women of the church and community. The two lists are then compared to identify activities that may be the most suitable for your group.

Step 4: Form the Plan

It's now time to begin finalizing your plan. Discuss and evaluate each suggested activity.

- Is it appropriate for our group?
- Can it be done safely?
- Do we have the skills, equipment, and leadership needed to do it effectively?
- Is it something the majority of boys want to do? Remember that it might not be realistic to expect every boy to get excited about every activity. That's why providing a diversity of activities is so important. Every boy should have the opportunity to participate in some activities he really enjoys, even if there are other activities he enjoys less.
- What costs are involved? How will the costs be covered?

Identify the skill merits and related activities you plan to do each month in each age group and create a merit teaching schedule for the entire year. Depending on the size of your outpost and the activities involved, some activities could be done together. The girls from Girls Ministries could possibly be included in special activities as well

Step 5: Make Assignments

A key part of the success of your plan is getting multiple people on board to make it happen. Successful outposts are seldom the result of one or two leaders but typically involve a variety of people making valuable contributions.

- Enlist the people who submitted skills surveys to present their skills at designed times, according to your merit teaching schedule.
- Identify the equipment and facilities needed for each merit and activity and identify who will collect them.
- Enlist parents to assist whenever possible. Royal Rangers activities are a great way for moms & dads to do fun things with their boys.
- For each event, identify the person in charge so everyone knows who to go to with questions or needs for that event.

Step 6: Get the Word Out

One of the most important steps in your annual planning process is that of distributing your plan to everyone involved. Parents, leaders, boys, pastors, and anyone involved in leading a merit or activity all need to be made aware of your plans. And as updates occur, they need to be clearly and efficiently communicated as well. Keeping parents informed is essential to insure your boys attend events and activities consistently, particularly if costs are involved.

Once your plans are made it's important to implement a process for regularly reviewing and updating it. Changes are bound to occur as situations change throughout the year so a good deal of flexibility is always in order. But having a plan in place will put your outpost on a firm foundation for a successful year and minimize frustrations and miscommunication.

By following these simple steps in developing an annual program plan your outpost will be well positioned to provide an effective mentoring ministry to the boys of your church and community throughout the coming year. Remember to be in prayer as you complete each step of the process and seek the Lord's direction as He leads you to building your program into an effective ministry. As

we partner with His Spirit we will see great things take place in the hearts and minds of boys.



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