

Making Merits Interactive



Since its inception in 1962, the Royal Rangers program has been an outdoor, action-oriented program. Our aim, as stated in the 1998 edition of the Leaders Manual, is *"to instruct, challenge, and inspire our boys in the areas of Bible doctrine, Christian service, moral conduct, and basic beliefs of our church through interesting activities the boys enjoy."*

It has long been understood that boys need activity and learn best in an environment rich with hands-on activities and student participation. It is, therefore, essential that the weekly Royal Rangers meeting be a place where boys are given the opportunity to learn by interactive means and to be directly involved in a variety of physical activities. Lecture sessions with PowerPoint presentations where the boys' primary means of participation is limited to listening and writing should be avoided. In order to maximize our effectiveness, it is essential that we utilize methods of instruction that are most effective for teaching boys.

With these thoughts in mind, consider the following as tips and alternatives when teaching your next weekly meeting:

- Whenever possible, complete merit requirements orally as a group rather than in written format. Requirements beginning with words like "explain," "list," or "tell" do not need to be completed in written format but may be completed as a group discussion. Every boy present may then receive credit for having completed that requirement.
- Allow essay requirements to be satisfied orally by short individual presentations to the group. This will satisfy the purpose of the requirement (i.e., knowledge of the subject) while avoiding a written format that could be a major obstacle to younger boys. For those who aren't comfortable with oral presentations or when the size of the group makes this option unsuitable, the boys may create illustrated reports by researching and assembling collages of photos or images with captions describing the subjects. Outpost leaders are empowered to determine when the requirements for an award have been adequately met.
- Look for ways to get the boys physically involved in the learning process. Requirements that begin with "demonstrate" should always involve physical activity not merely explaining or writing a response. "Sit and listen" times should be limited to approximately 1 minute per year of age. For example, a typical 7-year-old Ranger Kid can "sit and listen" for no more than 7 minutes, while a 12-year-old Adventure Ranger may be attentive for about 12 minutes. Look for ways to utilize the "hear, see, do" principle of instruction. Let the boys hear you explain how to do something, see you demonstrate the skill, and then do or practice the skill themselves.
- Provide opportunities for the boys to complete requirements as a group or patrol. Interaction with friends makes any task more fun and enhances learning for everyone.

It should be noted that the requirements for the merits cannot be changed and should be completed as written. The handbooks and workbooks are

still necessary resources to direct and track each boy's progress through the advancement system. However, the methods used to satisfy requirements should be flexible, allowing for differing abilities and maturity levels of boys.

As Royal Ranger leaders, we enjoy a tremendous privilege to serve our Master Ranger, Jesus Christ, through the ministry of Royal Rangers. Along with any privilege comes responsibility. It is our responsibility to provide our boys with an "action-packed, life-changing ministry" that will "instruct, challenge, and inspire" them in their personal growth and achievement as they daily grow into the image of Christ.



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