

# Mentoring Boys in the Season of COVID-19



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One of the blessings of living in the Midwest is the opportunity to experience the full array of seasons every year. From hot and humid summers to cold, icy winters, we experience it all. While changing seasons of weather can be comforting, changing seasons in life can often bring fear, worry, and uncertainty. Our nation and the world are experiencing a pandemic like we've never seen before. It has affected millions, impacting our jobs, schools, churches, communities, and families. However, in this season of uncertainty, the value of mentoring boys into the men of God they were created to be has never been more important.

This season of pandemic has impacted the way we do church, have school, and go to work in many ways, but it has not diminished the need for guiding our boys into Christlike manhood. Obviously, the opportunities for physical gatherings will vary depending on the conditions and restrictions in place within your local area, but many Royal Rangers leaders are finding creative ways to stay connected with their boys and are continuing the mentoring process in spite of the circumstances.

It's important to remember that although the pandemic has affected us all in some way that it has impacted some more than others. Some of your boys may be experiencing significant challenges with school, at home, or elsewhere that you may not be unaware of.

- Consider the high school boy who is worried about losing his senior year of football, an experience he's dreamed of for years, because it may now simply not be taking place.
- Consider the boy whose grandmother is in the hospital on a ventilator, struggling for every breath. Her recovery is entirely uncertain, and he quietly worries about her every day.

- Consider the boy whose parents both lost their jobs in the economic downturn, and the family is now in danger of losing their home and more. Where will they live? Where will they go?

Your boys may be experiencing real situations like these, and although your prayers may be all you can offer on their behalf, just being there to listen when they're ready to talk about it can play a big role in helping them through this difficult season. Take time to listen, to learn, to talk to parents and be aware of their needs.

I attended a camp in Arizona several years ago with the theme "It's All About the Boys." That was a good theme for them, and it's a good thought for us now. Your primary role as a Rangers leader is **not** to get that boy to his next achievement or advancement, conduct the next online meeting, or keep your records up to date. **It is to be that boy's friend and pastor** who loves him and cares about everything he cares about. We are to laugh when he laughs and cry when he cries (paraphrase Romans 12:15). That's mentoring—learning together to trust God even when life doesn't make sense. In the process, the Spirit of God somehow provides an unexplainable comfort (paraphrase Philippians 4:7) and brings you both a little bit closer to the image of God you were created to be.

Remember. It's all about the boys. They need you now more than ever.



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