



## Managing the Atmosphere of Your Outpost

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, He created an atmosphere around this planet. That atmosphere is one of the most unique features of this planet and enables it to support life in ways no other planet we've ever discovered can. Our atmosphere protects us from harm and maintains an environment necessary to sustain life.

Every boy is living in an atmosphere defined by the environment around him. The situations he faces each day and the people he encounters define that atmosphere. Some boys live in a safe, healthy atmosphere that promotes health and growth. But for others, the atmosphere they experience each day may be toxic—full of anger, criticism, or abuse.

As Royal Rangers leaders, we are regularly given divine opportunities to shape the atmosphere of a boy's life. Although our ability to influence the experience he has at home or school may be limited, we have a central role to play in creating the atmosphere he will experience when he walks through our doors.

I know from my own discussions with boys or parents that many of our boys get beat up every day. Not in the physical sense but in the words thrown at them by their peers, parents, or others in authority. I want my outpost to be a place where a boy knows he will be safe, valued, nourished, and encouraged by a healthy atmosphere. I want him to know that no matter what he may experience elsewhere, this is a place where he is wanted and loved, a place where he experiences joy that fills his heart with good things that counteract all the junk he may be hearing elsewhere.

- If a boy has been told, "You're dumb and stupid," I want to be the one who tells him, "That was a great idea you had. You're a pretty smart guy."
- If he's been told, "You're ugly. You're too fat, or you're too skinny," I want to be the one to say, "You're looking good today."
- If he's been told, "You're annoying. Nobody likes you, and you don't have any friends," I want him to hear from our groups, "We're glad you're here. You're a fun guy to have around. You belong with us. We're all friends here."

If you think your boys aren't hearing this kind of junk—think again. You may be surprised to learn that the boy you thought had it all together and was liked by everyone is getting beat up regularly by someone's cruel words. Every boy needs to know he is important. Every boy needs to know he is valued. Every boy needs to know he is loved and accepted exactly the way he is.

What kind of atmosphere will a boy experience when he walks through your door this week? As God shaped the atmosphere of our planet around us, so you have the power to shape the

atmosphere your boys will experience. Let's make sure it's one that is healthy and encouraging. That's a good place for all of us to live.



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