

YMCA Rag / Leather Program Re-dedication Ceremony

PRAYER

The Rags and Leathers are the outward symbols of the acceptance of inner challenges for growth. It is a mark of dedication, not of achievement. The spirit of the Rags and Leathers are deeply personal.

HISTORY

The Rag Program began in 1914 at a YMCA summer camp in Oakland, California. At that time boys were chosen to receive a Rag based on health habits, promptness, cheerfulness, morals, trustworthiness, industriousness and helpfulness.

The Rags were simple blue bandanas purchased at the country store. The bandanas were called Rags to signify that in themselves they had no value. Rather, they were only a symbol of the qualities a camper had demonstrated.

In 1930 the Leather Program was developed for children under the age of 12. Leathers are similar to Rags, except at a level more suitable for the younger camper.

By the early 1950's YMCA's changed the focus of the program. No longer is a Rag or Leather given as a reward. An individual can now accept a Leather or Rag to symbolize personal challenges that have been made by that person to change and grow.

Over the years the YMCA Rag / Leather Program has developed into a series of 3 Leathers and 7 Rags, progressively designed to build character and promote personal and spiritual growth.

The YMCA Rag/Leather Program is one of the most effective tools available to the camp leader. It is designed to help campers take a closer look at themselves in relationship to their own strengths and weaknesses, their religious beliefs and to relationships they have around them. It can be a major factor in creating an atmosphere in which positive change can take place.

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CHALLENGES (Have a different person read each challenge)

Triangle	A challenge to Grow in Body, Mind and Spirit.
Square	A challenge to become a better friend and keep good friends.
Circle	A challenge to become closer to God through appreciation, love and concern for the earth that God has created
Blue Rag	A challenge of loyalty to God, country and one's best self.
Silver Rag	A challenge of acceptance of or re-dedication to a Christian way of life or spiritual growth.
Brown Rag	A challenge to Christian service.
Gold Rag	A challenge of understanding and concern for others.
Red Rag	A challenge to sacrifice of time, talent and personal will.
Purple Rag	A challenge towards excellence and noble living in all Christian service opportunities.
White Rag	A challenge for a life of full-time Christian service.

REFLECTION

Let us take a moment to remember our challenges that have been made and after we have done so put on our Leather or Rag to symbolize our re-uniting with those challenges.

CLOSE

Please join me in saying the Ragers' Creed.

I would be true, for there are those who trust me;
I would be pure for there are those who care;
I would be strong, for there is much to suffer;
I would be brave, for there is much to dare.
I would be friend, to all – the foe, the friendless;
I would be giving and forget the gift;
I would be humble for I know my weakness;
I would look up and laugh and love and lift.