

It was many years ago when a young disabled boy sat on the sidelines at a YMCA camp. He cheered his friends on, always wearing a smile and shared all he had to give -- his Christian (God-like) ideals and happy way of looking at everything -- with everyone.

On the last night of camp, a bandanna was tied around his neck as a humble symbol from the campers to recognize his Christ (God)-like way of living. From this small beginning comes the tradition of a little "rag" of cloth, today called the Rag. The Rag represents the desire of its wearer to follow the examples Christ (God) set for us all.

What does the Rag signify? The Rag is an outward symbol of an inner challenge you wish to accept. It is a piece of cloth to remind us of the challenge we accept at camp and continue to carry out while we are away from camp. The Rag is a personal and voluntary way of challenging yourself to improve your way of life. Your promise of improvement is between you and God. The responsibility to live up to this challenge is yours. God will see your success in fulfilling this desire to live a better life; your family, friends, and anyone you meet should see it too.

Now yours to share is the experience of coming close to God through the dedication to become more God-like in your thinking and acting.

Read this book further to decide whether YOU want to become a Ragger and live such a life.

THE RAG

As stated previously, the Rag is an outward symbol of the acceptance of an inner challenge for growth. Its symbolism is God-centered, sacred, and personal. The decision to become a Ragger must rest with you.

Each color has a specific meaning. Linked to the meaning of a particular rag is your personal challenge for growth.

THE BLUE RAG

1. Loyalty to God
2. Loyalty to country
3. Loyalty to one's best self
4. Loyalty to the Ragers' Creed

LOYALTY

(Four Square Life)

THE SILVER RAG

Respect and appreciation for:

1. The principles that Christ gave to the world
2. My country
3. My fellow man
4. Myself

RESPECT & APPRECIATION

(Christian Decision)

THE BROWN RAG

1. Serve God
2. Humility
3. Become more aware of the needs of others

SERVICE

(Service to Others)

THE GOLD RAG

1. Understanding of others
2. Concern for others

BENEVOLENCE

(Understanding Others)

THE RED RAG

1. Sacrifice of time
2. Sacrifice of talent
3. Sacrifice of personal will

SACRIFICE

(Leadership and Humility)

THE PURPLE RAG

HIGH AND NOBLE LIVING

(Noble Life)

THE WHITE RAG

DEDICATION TO A LIFE OF

CHRISTIAN SERVICE

(Life Service)

RAG TIER's WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT:

RAG ACCEPTED BY:

MY RAG WAS TIED BY:

ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE: _____

DATE: _____

MY GUIDE (IF DIFFERENT FROM TIER):

ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE: _____

DATE: _____

THE MEANING OF THE RAG

We refer to our rags as rags because that is exactly what they are --- worthless pieces of cloth. You couldn't sell your rag; it isn't worth much money. Your rag has only the meaning YOU give it. The Rag program is open to people of all religious faiths.

THE RAG IS NOT

THE RAG IS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. A decoration | 1. A symbol |
| 2. An award for achievement | 2. A challenge for growth |
| 3. A reward | 3. A responsibility |
| 4. A "pat " on the back | 4. A "push" forward |
| 5. Measuring myself by others | 5. Measuring myself by God |
| 6. "I AM FIRST" | 6. "I AM THIRD" |
| 7. Self-centered | 7. God-centered |
| 8. I am good, or being good | 8. I want to be better |
| 9. Knowing about God, talking about God | 9. Knowing God, talking to God |
| 10. Sight (seeing things as they are) | 10. Vision (seeing things as they ought to be) |
| 11. A status symbol | 11. A personal calling to humility |

THE SILVER RAG

Acceptance of the Silver Rag is an acceptance of respect and appreciation for the Christian way of life.

When you became a Blue Ragger you challenged yourself to grow as a Christian in some way. Do you feel you measured up to your challenge? In what way(s) was it most difficult?

The Purple Rag was conceived as a new step for 18-year olds and over. It was an advancement and challenge to the good life for those men who were not going into full time Christian service.

The Rag has had a long and eventful life of 35 years. It has changed in many ways, but it is still an instrument to aid in the building of Christian character at YMCA summer camps. The real test of the Rag is in how its members conduct themselves in the year round program of the YMCA, and in their home, school, church and community.

Homer Gould of the Los Angeles YMCA tried changes involving campers in the selection of Ragers.

Sheldon Swenson, Conley Davis and others proposed that the rag should be a challenge available to every camper who sincerely accepted it. Acceptance required sharing with a counselor the meaning associated with a specific color rag and how it tied into the candidate's personal needs.

Over a period of fifty years the Rag has been and continues to be a challenging symbol of strength and Christian character, leadership and service. It is the key to the spirit of Christian fellowship at Camp Arbolado.

THE RAGGERS' 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.

THE HISTORY OF THE RAG

In the summer of 1914, Tom Caldwell, Boy's Secretary of the Oakland YMCA, presented the first Blue Rags to boys living up to certain standards in camp. He conceived the idea of giving a blue bandanna as an award for character attributes such as good health habits, morals, helpfulness, cheerfulness, promptness and dependability. This idea contrasted with the San Francisco 'Y' policy of presenting an athletic award for achievement in certain specified athletic activities. All campers could be recognized socially for constructive attitudes and cooperation.

In the same year, two outstanding boys received Red Rags as advanced recognition. Most of the other boys received Blue Rags. They were called out at campfire and bandannas tied around their necks.

In 1915, the story of King Arthur and his Knights suggested a ceremony of "Knighting" the boys with Rags, and Tom Caldwell was called the "King" of Ragers. Ray Ogden, Associate Boys, Secretary of the Oakland YMCA, suggested "I would be true" as the Ragers' Creed and it was adopted. The ceremony was given on a mountain peak near camp. D.F. Ewings and C.F. Martin wrote a Red Rag ceremony in 1916.

In 1918, Ralph Cole, State Secretary, visited the Oakland the 'Y' camp, recognized the values in the system and suggested the plan to other camps. There were five young men planning to go into YMCA work including Louis Meillette, Bob Hutchison, and Roland Ure. Tom Caldwell wrote a White Rag ceremony for them. Its use was generally restricted to those going into Christian work. Later at a special ceremony in Los Angeles, Louis Meillette presented Tom Caldwell with a White Rag as "King of Ragers" in November 1924.

In 1932, the Los Angeles YMCA under Homer Gould, suggested a new method of telling the boy his selection for membership. Up to that time, boys were called out at campfire and given a list of requirements to learn for a ceremony the following day or so. The new idea was to have all the Ragers called together by the Director and the list read to them. Volunteers were to look up the individuals chosen and bring them to the ceremonial spot without having to learn any material.

The Gold Rag was conceived as a step for 15-year olds and over. The idea was to encourage study of a concern for the economic and social order, to emphasize the inclusive gospel of all races and creeds, and economic groups. The World Service Program of the YMCA was tied in with this ceremony.

1 CORINTHIANS 3: 16-17

“Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him(her). For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.”

1. Why is it important for a Christian to have a healthy body and a clean mind?

PROVERBS 23:7a

“For as he(he) thinketh in his(her) heart, so is he(he).”

2. What does this proverb mean?

MARK 12: 30-31

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this, you shall love you neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.”

3. What do you feel are the major rules for living that Jesus taught?

4. How do you think these rules apply to you and to all nations today?

A RAG IS THE OUTWARD SYMBOL OF AN INNER CHALLENGE YOU WANT TO ACCEPT. YOUR RAG CHALLENGE SHOULD AFFECT YOUR LIFE TO SUCH A DEGREE THAT YOU CAN FEEL A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE WITHIN YOURSELF AND OTHERS CAN EXPERIENCE THIS CHANGE.

PERSONAL CHALLENGE

What personal goal do I want to strive for as a Silver Ragger?

How do I plan to do this?

THE FUTURE WILL BE DIFFERENT IF WE MAKE THE PRESENT DIFFERENT

- b. How can you show better appreciation for these gifts/blessings in your daily life?

"FOR THIS IS WISDOM" (Laurence Hope)

For this is Wisdom; to love, to live,
To take what Fate, or the Gods, may give,
To ask no question, to make no prayer,
To kiss the lips and caress the hair,
Speed passion's ebb as you greet its flow, ---
To have, --- to hold, --- and, --- in time, --- let go!

8. Life is one of God's most precious gifts. True respect and appreciation for your country, self and fellow man come from experiencing life to the fullest, including all the hardships, challenges, joys and sorrows along the way. The principles that Christ gave to the world serve as the road map. How can you live your personal life more fully?

"TAKE TIME TO BE HOLY"

Take time to be holy,
Speak oft with thy Lord.
Abide in Him always
And lean on His word.
Make friends of God's children,
Help those who are weak,
Forgetting in nothing
His blessings to seek.

Take time to be holy,
The world rushes on.
Spend much time in secret
With Jesus alone.
By looking to Jesus,
Like Him thou shall be;
Thy friends in they conduct
His likeness will see.

5. What is prayer?

6. How does Jesus fit into your goals in life?

"BANKRUPT" (Cortlandt Sayres)

One midnight, deep in starlight still,
I dreamed that I received this bill:
(_____ in account with Life):
Five thousand breathless dawns all new;
Five thousand flowers fresh in dew;
Five thousand sunsets wrapped in gold;
One million snow-flakes served ice-cold;
Five quiet friends; one baby's love;
One white-mad sea with clouds above;
One hundred music-haunted dreams
Of moon-drenched roads and hurrying streams;
Of prophesying winds, and trees;
Of silent stars and browsing bees;
One June night in a fragrant wood;
One heart that loved and understood.
I wondered when I waked at day,
How --- how in God's name --- I could pay!

7. We often spend a large part of our lives trying to possess or fretting over things we do not have, especially material items. Instead, we should take the time to reflect on and appreciate the blessings we do have, including those that surround us. Open your vision to all of God's physical creation and matters of the spirit.
- a. What important blessings/gifts have you been given? Do not list man-made material possessions.