

**THE YMCA OF GREATER
WHITTIER CAMP ARBOLADO
RAG/LEATHER PROGRAMS**



*We build strong kids, strong families,
strong communities.*

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INDEX

The Story of the Rag	Page 1
The YMCA of Greater Whittier Rag/Leather Programs	Pages 3 to 7
The Meaning of the Rag/Leather	Page 8
The Counseling Process	Pages 9 to 13
Rag Counseling for the Non-Christian	Page 14
How to Help Rag/Leather Candidates See God	Pages 15 to 16
86 Ways to Say “Very Good”	Pages 17 to 18
Rag/Leather Society Traditions	Pages 19 to 20

THE STORY 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 of 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 were given Red Rags as an advanced recognition. Blue Rags were given to most of the boys. They were called out a campfire, and bandannas were tied around their necks.

In 1915, the story of King Arthur and his Knights suggested a ceremony of "Knighting" other 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 '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 Rolan 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 making known to the boy his selection for membership. Up to that time, boys had been called out at campfire and give a list of requirements to be learned 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 should be tied in with this ceremony.

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

The Rag has had a long and eventful life for 35 years. It has changed in many ways, but fundamentally it is still an instrument to aid in the building of Christian character in 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 selection of Ragers.

Sheldon Swenson, Conley Davies and others proposed that the Rag should be a challenge

THE STORY OF THE RAG (Contd)

available to every camper who sincerely accepted it after sharing with a counselor its meaning in meeting his/her personal needs.

Throughout its long history the Rag as a challenging symbol of strength of Christian character, leadership and service has been the key to the spirit of Christian fellowship at Camp Arbolado. The concept of “award” has changed over the years, to a philosophy that Rags are challenges – not to be “given” but to be “accepted.” Various challenges have been added, so that there are now seven Rag steps. A specific Rag color is used to identify each Rag step. These steps are designed to provide new challenges as one grows and matures.

The Rag program can be as meaningful for adults as it is for youth, and continues to be an effective tool for counseling and motivation toward positive change. The program is open to all people of all religious faiths. Its symbolism is God-centered, sacred and personal.

THE YMCA OF GREATER WHITTIER CAMP ARBOLADO RAG/LEATHER PROGRAMS

The YMCA Rag and Leather programs are some of the most effective tools available to the camp counselor and program/directing staff. They are designed to help campers and adults take a closer look at themselves in relationship to their own strengths and weaknesses, their religious beliefs, and to those around them. The Rag and Leather programs can be a major factor in creating an atmosphere in which positive change can take place.

The Rags and Leathers are outward symbols of the acceptance of an inner challenge for Christian growth. The Camp Arbolado Leather program is designed for campers between the ages of 8 and 11 years old and consists of four basic steps (see Table 1). The Rag program is intended for campers 12 years or older and consists of seven steps (see Table 1). Like the Rags, Leathers themselves have little monetary value. Candidates receiving Rags or Leathers need to do the following:

1. Obtain one-to-one counseling with a **qualified** counselor. In the Leather program, a qualified counselor is a camp program/directing staff member or cabin counselor. In the Rag program, thorough, effective and serious counseling is absolutely vital. Therefore, to reflect both National YMCA Rag Program guidelines and ensure proper counseling, a qualified Rag counselor is one of the following:
 - a. For Blue Rag candidates, a qualified counselor is a program/directing staff member or cabin counselor at least 16 years of age who is a Blue, Silver, Brown, Gold, Red, Purple, or White Ragger. Furthermore, if the person doing the counseling is a Blue Ragger, then he/she must have been a Blue Ragger for at least one full year. Campers may not counsel campers for the Blue Rag.
 - b. For campers/adults accepting the challenge of the Silver, Brown, Gold, Red or Purple Rags, a qualified counselor is a fellow Ragger who is at the same or further step than the Rag the candidate is accepting. Furthermore, if the counselor is at the same step (color) level that the candidate is being counseled for, then the counselor must have been a Ragger at that step for at least one year.
 - c. For adults accepting the challenge of the White Rag, a qualified counselor is a fellow White Ragger.
2. Obtain a Rag/Leather study guide for the specific step/shape of Rag/Leather being accepted.
3. Undergo a formal ceremony for the presentation of the Rag/Leather.

THE YMCA OF GREATER WHITTIER CAMP ARBOLADO RAG/LEATHER PROGRAMS (Contd)

A candidate may request a specific counselor who meets the above qualified counselor requirements, but the counselor must fully understand the Rag program and the challenges embodied in the particular Rag step. The Rag/Leather study guides/cards contain poems, sayings, Bible Scriptures, etc. along with questions to help the candidate fully understand the meaning and challenges associated with each Rag/Leather step.

The Rag program should not be seen as a progression to be accomplished in a certain time frame. Ragers should work on one level of challenges until they are ready to accept more. The responsibility to live up to these challenges fully rests with each individual. A Ragger must be honest with him/herself and God and seriously reflect when determining if they have met the challenges of their current Rag, (both personal and challenges specific to the Rag step) and are truly ready to take on the challenges of the next Rag step. This is not so much a problem with adults and older teen campers as it is with younger campers. Younger campers often may not have the maturity level necessary to make an honest and true assessment. Thus, it becomes imperative that the counselor guides the candidate in this self-assessment process when counseling younger campers. It is no shame or reflection of incompetence/failure if during the counseling process a candidate decides that he/she is not truly ready for the next Rag step.

For the younger campers, accepting the challenge of the next Leather step each year they come to camp is common. However, since the Rag program requires a much higher maturity, commitment and seriousness level and carries with it much deeper and complex challenges than the Leather program, taking more than one year to complete each Rag step is quite common.

Each Rag step, identified by a specific Rag color, entails two distinct sets of challenges:

1. To grow closer to God by living a specific set of Christian attributes (themes).
2. Personal growth or self-improvement.

The first area is universal and thus is the same for all Ragers accepting a specific color Rag. A different set of Christian attributes is emphasized with each Rag color. The second challenge is unique to each individual, determined by each Ragger evaluating his/her own personal weaknesses/shortcomings and then selecting an area for self-improvement. The personal growth challenge chosen should affect the Ragger's life to such a degree that the Ragger can feel a significant change within him/herself and others can experience this change. The personal growth challenge for a Rag does not have to relate to the specific universal theme of a particular color Rag.

THE YMCA OF GREATER WHITTIER CAMP ARBOLADO RAG/LEATHER PROGRAMS (Contd)

Unlike the Rag program, each Leather entails a personal challenge that is directly linked to the universal theme of the specific Leather step. The camper examines his/her personal weaknesses/shortcomings **WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE SPECIFIC THEME OF THE LEATHER STEP** and then chooses a personal challenge, which reflects that theme. The personal challenge chosen should be something that a young child can realistically achieve and fully understand.

Since the Rag program is a YMCA program, its roots and emphasis are Christian based. However, the Rag counseling materials and ceremonies can be modified to reflect other faiths, such as Jewish, Moslem, Buddhist, etc... The Rags themselves are normally produced with a Christian cross at the center of the Rag emblem. If several months lead time are given and special arrangements made with the chosen counselor and Camp Arbolado Rag program director, then it may be possible to have a Rag made with the symbol of the candidate's faith in place of the cross. For example, the Star of David could be used in place of the cross for Jewish faith.

Steps are not skipped in the Rag or Leather programs. For example, if a camper is 10 years old and has not been to camp before, he/she must first receive the Triangle Leather and progress toward the Square Leather the following year (age 11). He/she would then be eligible to pursue the Rag program after an additional year (i.e., age 12). Thus, a camper who begins the Leather program after age 8 will be eligible to consider pursuing the Blue Rag before he/she has completed all four Leather steps.

THE YMCA OF GREATER WHITTIER CAMP ARBOLADO RAG/LEATHER PROGRAMS (Contd)

TABLE 1: The Order of the Rag/Leather Acceptance

Rag/Leather Step	Universal Challenge Associated With Each Rag/Leather	Minimum Age
Triangle Leather	To grow in Mind, Body and Spirit	8
Square Leather	To grow in Mind, Body, Spirit and Friendship	9
Circle Leather	To become close to God through appreciation, love and concern for all of His creation. This includes the earth, all living things, and all people.	10
Arrowhead Leather (Arbolado unique)	To grow in self-discipline and responsibility	11
Blue Rag	Loyalty to God, country, one's best self and the Raggars' Creed	*12
Silver Rag	Respect and appreciation for the principles that Christ gave to the world, your country, other people, and yourself	*13
Brown Rag	Serve God, humility, become more aware of the needs of others	*14
Gold Rag	Understanding of others, concern for others	*15
Red Rag	Sacrifice of time, talent and personal will	*16
Purple Rag	Challenge to live the best life possible	*18
White Rag	Dedication to a life of Christian service	*21

***NOTE:** Physical age alone does not determine this requirement. These numbers are the minimal ages when candidates may consider pursuing a particular Rag step. In order to be eligible for any Rag, the candidate must possess the proper level of maturity to fully understand and take serious responsibility for the challenges contained in a particular Rag step.

THE YMCA OF GREATER WHITTIER CAMP ARBOLADO RAG/LEATHER PROGRAMS (Contd)

THE MEANING OF THE NAME “RAG/LEATHER”

- Implies humbleness by signifying that it has no value in itself apart from the meaning it holds for the individual.
- The Rag is a triangle tied in a square knot of friendship, forming a circle of friendship linking the candidate with God.

WHO CAN BECOME A RAG/LEATHER BEARER?

Every camper or adult who wants to accept the challenge of the Rag or Leather is eligible. Each candidate is encouraged to take a “look” at himself/herself and establish goals for better living.

Rags and Leathers are not reserved for those who are “good” or “cooperative.” They are not given as a reward for appropriate behavior, but can instead be a most effective tool in urging an individual to work toward a vision of what he/she might become and what changes might occur for the better.

SOME WAYS YOU MIGHT MAKE THE RAG/LEATHER MORE MEANINGFUL FOR YOUR CAMPERS

- Impress upon your campers the idea that this is a “challenge.” The Rag/Leather is merely an outward symbol of the acceptance of an inward challenge for Christian growth.
- The Rag/Leather is a mark of dedication, not achievement.
- Find some time to spend alone with each of your campers. Help them determine their own personal challenge for growth.
- Keep talking about the importance of the universal challenges associated with the theme of each color Rag and the candidate’s personal challenge. Relate the challenges to the camp objective, to the candidate’s attitude, behavior, etc... Help the candidate develop a plan for successfully meeting those challenges.
- If a camper/Rag candidate acts disinterested, find out why. (A camper/adult may be frightened regarding “hazing,” etc.). The Rag and Leather ceremonies are serious ceremonies and the blindfold used in them serves merely to blot out the outside world distractions so that each candidate can concentrate on the ceremony.
- Help each camper/adult in studying the requirements of each Rag and Leather. Meaning is more important than knowing how to recite all the words.
- Talk with each camper/Rag candidate again before the ceremony.
- Plan ahead of time what you will say to each of your candidates as you tie their Rag or Leather during the ceremony. Emphasize the person’s strong points, challenging him/her to overcome weakness. Express your friendship.
- Back in camp, keep reminding the candidate of the accepted challenges.

THE YMCA OF GREATER WHITTIER CAMP ARBOLADO RAG/LEATHER PROGRAMS (Contd)

- Show each camper/adult, by your example, what a Ragger should be - not necessarily always what you might be, but constantly trying to be

When a camper/adult wants to accept the challenge of a Rag and you feel that he/she is not serious or possesses the necessary maturity level, discuss it. Indicate why you wonder about the sincerity. Attempt to postpone the decision for a day or two. Use it as a means of “helping” the candidate. Keep testing the worthiness of the candidate’s actions and motivations by questions. Finally, when all is said and done, if a camper/adult wants to accept a challenge, he/she should be permitted to do so. We are unable to judge the worth of another. If you are uncomfortable counseling a camper/adult whom you strongly feel does not possess the necessary seriousness and/or maturity level for a particular Rag step, you may ask the candidate to seek an additional counselor to complete the counseling process.

Camp staff should be properly trained on the Rag/Leather programs before a camp session starts so proper counseling happens at camp. Do not understress the importance of the Leather Program. Both Leathers and Rags are equally important growth tools. The Rag/Leather programs need to be briefly introduced to the campers the first night at campfire or other camp-wide activity/assembly. A follow-on detailed discussion needs to happen within 2 days by the cabin counselor (if he/she is a Ragger). If the cabin counselor is not a Ragger, then a camp program/directing staff member should do this instead.

THE MEANING OF THE RAG/LEATHER

We refer to our Rags as rags because that is exactly what they are --- worthless pieces of cloth. Similarly, Leathers are worthless pieces of animal skin. You couldn't sell your Rag/Leather; they aren't worth much money. Your Rag/Leather has only the meaning YOU give it.

THE RAG/LEATHER IS NOT

1. A decoration
2. An award for achievement
3. A reward
4. A "pat" on the back
5. Measuring myself by others
6. "I AM FIRST"
7. Self-centered
8. I am good, or being good
9. Knowing about God, talking about God
10. Sight (seeing things as they are)
11. A status symbol
humility

THE RAG/LEATHER IS

1. A symbol
2. A challenge for growth
3. A responsibility
4. A "push" forward
5. Measuring myself by God
6. "I AM THIRD"
7. God-centered
8. I want to be better
9. Knowing God, talking to God
10. Vision (seeing things as they ought to be)
11. A personal calling to

THE COUNSELING PROCESS

There are many areas and skills involved in the counseling process that make for a meaningful experience for both you and those you are counseling. The process involved here can be applied to Leathers and Rags. **Spend quality time in counseling.**

CLIMATE SETTING

The first and one of the most important aspects of your job as a counselor for the Leathers and Rags is to set up the proper mood. All that follows will depend on what happens in the beginning.

Here are some things you can do to make sure that the climate is right:

- Set aside a block of time that won't be interrupted.
- Make sure you and the person you are counseling are by yourselves.
- Choose a location away from camp distractions, such as at Chapel, the creek, etc...
- Identify your feelings about the person that you're counseling. Do you really like the person? Do they know it?
- Share your feelings about the individual and what you appreciate about him/her. Be specific.

Here are some statements that characterize a good beginning to a counseling session:

- "I've been looking forward to talking to you about your Rag/Leather."
- "I've enjoyed getting to know you in camp, and I'm glad I have the opportunity to talk to you about your challenges"

Counseling for Leathers may be done as a cabin group during devotions, cabin time, etc., or individually. Counseling for Rags, however, must always be done individually since it requires a much higher maturity and seriousness level and carries with it much deeper, complex and highly personalized challenges.

TENTATIVE PERSONAL GROWTH CHALLENGE AND UNIVERSAL CHALLENGES

After the mood and climate has been set, the counselor would then begin talking with the candidate about the kind of personal growth challenge he/she would like to take and the universal challenges associated with the particular Rag/Leather step.

THE COUNSELING PROCESS (Contd)

Personal Growth Challenge

Very often, the initial personal growth challenge is the “tip of the iceberg,” and with further conversation, a more in-depth personal growth challenge will emerge. For example, the initial personal growth challenge might be stated as “I want to do better in school,” or “I want to help Mom or Dad more,” or “I want to stop beating up on my sister.”

Very often, these statements are only what the candidate believes the counselor wants to hear. This is a trust formation stage and very important to the counseling process.

Here are some statements that might help or clarify the candidate’s feelings:

- “What type of person do you want to be at the end of your personal growth challenge?”
- “We all have things that we would like to change. Can you talk about what that is for you?”
- “I like the way you care, but I’m wondering if there is something you’d like to change about yourself?”

Formulating a good personal growth challenge is an intensive journey of self-discovery and inward reflection for the Rag/Leather candidate. It requires the candidate to truthfully and thoroughly examine his/her personal weaknesses, faults and failures. For young children, this may be especially difficult since they often do not possess the necessary skills. Thus, the counselor’s ability to be an effective guide or mentor in the candidate’s self-evaluation process is crucial. The difficulty of the personal growth challenge must reflect the candidate’s age, maturity level, and available resources.

Universal Challenge

Each Rag/Leather step stresses a particular Christian theme and associated challenges. Study guides (Rags) and cards (Leathers) contain poems, sayings, Bible excerpts, etc. to help the candidate understand the various facets of the characteristic Rag/Leather theme. In addition, questions are asked to help the candidate focus on the associated challenges. Before a candidate answers these questions, the counselor should explain/stress each poem, saying, Bible excerpt, etc. in detail and make sure that the candidate fully understands what is being asked by each question. Once this is done, the candidate is to go back and spend some reflective time alone to answer the questions. When completed, the candidate is to return to the counselor to discuss his/her answers.

For the Leathers, the personal growth challenge is to be formulated within the framework of the universal theme of the particular Leather step. For Rags, the personal growth challenge can be independent of and thus not reflect the universal theme of the particular Rag step if desired.

THE COUNSELING PROCESS (Contd)

CLARIFICATION AND PROBING

This next session is the real “meat and potatoes” of counseling. This is where the counselor must listen actively to exactly what the candidate is saying. Here are some suggestions:

- Let the conversation flow naturally - don't force it.
- Don't lecture.
- Let the individual do actions as well as words.
- Become sensitive to actions as well as words.
- Don't be afraid of silence.
- Be helpful in allowing the individual to talk about what is more important to him/her.
- Don't be judgmental. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers.
- “How does it make you feel?”
- “I really understand that. What would you like to do about it?”
- “What would you like to do when you feel that way?”
- “What could you do when you feel that way?”

If the personal growth challenge is a tentative one, this process may help in identifying the more important personal growth challenge to the individual. Typically, the final personal growth challenge becomes one like:

- “I want people to trust me more.”
- “I want to be able to be more honest with people.”
- “I want to learn to accept more responsibility.”
- “I want to be more involved with my family and friends.”

At the end of this session, the candidate needs to fully and clearly understand the universal challenges (theme) and emphasis of a particular Rag/Leather as well as his/her own personal growth challenge. The candidate must clearly understand the implications and scope of these items in their personal, daily life. For the Rag program, the personal growth challenge should affect the candidate's life to such a degree that he/she can feel a significant change within him/herself and others can experience this change.

SUMMARIZING

Your job at this point in the process is to help the individual summarize what he/she has said, and what you have heard. At the end of this process, you both should come to joint realization of just what the personal growth and universal challenges (theme) associated with the particular Rag/Leather step are. Here are some statements that might be helpful:

THE COUNSELING PROCESS (Contd)

- “I’ve been hearing you say the same thing in different ways. It seems to me that you’re saying _____. Is that right?”
- “What does everything you’ve been saying mean to you?”

IMPLICATIONS

After you agree on what the personal growth challenge is to be and fully understand the universal challenge (theme) and emphasis for the particular Rag/Leather step, it’s important for you to make agreements as to what this means “back home.” How is that person you’ve been counseling going to be different after camp?

Here are some suggestions you can make to continue this process:

- Agree to meet during the rest of the week of camp.
- Identify a few risks that need to be taken after camp that you can help with.
- Reassure the individual that they can accomplish what it is they want to do and offer your time to help in any way that is agreeable to the both of you.
- Counselors need to write down and keep track of the people whom they’ve counseled and their personal growth challenges.

During the implication process, it is important that the candidate formulate a decisive, workable, achievable plan for meeting his/her personal growth challenge and the universal challenges associated with a particular Rag/Leather step. The plan must have sufficient details so that the candidate can measure his/her progress, proceed with an organized approach and known “action items,” and reflect his/her age and available resources. A good plan should also be flexible enough to allow room for contingencies and unexpected changes in the candidate’s personal circumstances over time.

CLOSURE

The final step is to close in the most positive way possible. This doesn’t mean your contact is over, only that this closes the first step in a continuing process.

Some statements that may help are:

- “I feel like I know you even better, and I like you even more.”
- “I know you can accomplish what you want. I’m glad I could talk with you.”
- “I’m really looking forward to tying your Rag/Leather.”

RAG COUNSELING FOR THE NON-CHRISTIAN

The Rag Program is a valuable counseling opportunity. It need not be the only opportunity as other camp and group activities offer many opportunities for spiritual growth. It is important that values counseling be part of the candidate/counselor relationship.

It is not necessary to dwell on the differences between faiths. It is important to be willing to discuss the importance of spiritual growth for all people. Stress the similarities like:

- One God.
- The importance of truth, faith, love, honesty and fidelity.
- Living by a moral code shaped by social and personal beliefs.
- The Golden Rule --- every major religion has one
- Mutual respect and understanding

The Rag program is Christian in nature, but open to all faiths. Thus, its focus is on Christian character development. The cross in the emblem is there because the Ragger Program was founded as a Christian program based on Christian values. However, from its inception, it was meant to include all faiths in challenging individuals to grow closer to God. Just as the YMCA was founded on the Bible verse John 3:21, "That all may be one," so also was the intent of the Rag Program to encourage all to grow spiritually.

Most spiritual journeys require many steps in a process of growth and experience. We need to accept people where they are in their faith journey while encouraging them to grow further in their knowledge, application and commitment.

Ask the Rag candidate to explain in his/her own words what the challenges and symbols mean. Then each person will be better able to explain it to others. The Rag should not be taken in secret and hidden from parents or friends, or its purpose is misunderstood.

Be willing to discuss beliefs, and to ask for help from others. No one has all the answers, but all of us can understand the need for personal growth in spiritual matters. Also, the Rag Program is not necessarily for everyone. It should be entered into as a positive personal choice.

HOW TO HELP RAG/LEATHER CANDIDATES SEE GOD

This is the biggest challenge that faces us as leaders. Camp provides us with an unmatched opportunity to help campers and adults discover for themselves the existence of God. Whenever we are successful in this high goal, we are truly doing the fullest measure of YMCA leadership and service. We may plant a seed in each camper/adult that will grow and later develop into spiritual insight, growth and strength for them. In doing this powerful task, we also cannot help but strengthen our own philosophy or plan of life --- our own spiritual goals are thus strengthened and raised.

Well, how do we do it??????

Going to Chapel is important, but the mere going is next to worthless --- UNLESS you are contagiously enthusiastic about Chapel, and about the minister and about the stories and songs for the day.

Telling your club devotional story faithfully each day is important and is an absolute must as part of your job as a YMCA leader; but it, too, is not nearly as important as other features you can use.

Let God's own words speak to the candidate by reading and discussing selected passages/sections from the Bible concerning Christian living and values.

Your own example, your own plan of life, your own treatment of others, your own conduct at all times is one of the most efficient ways to teach campers/adults of God, of Christ and of the desirability of "doing the best one knows how to do."

Then, there's the informal ways of discovering God --- through wise encouragement of observation of all things about you and your campers:

By observing, others can see:

- The interrelationships of all things.
- The variety and complexity of the universe (leaf varieties).
- The orderliness of the universe (not chaos).
- The sense of power in the physical world (the mountains).
- The immensity of the universe (the stars).
- The wonder of life (growth in plant and animal).
- The beauty of God's world.
- The wonder of creation (seeds --- look-like brothers).
- God, in and through all of these things, as He reveals Himself.

Finally, there is the pregnant moment when you carefully select an answer or point out a truth - or make a suggestion - or provide a willing ear - or kneel in prayer with another person --- who needs you so much, as well as Him.

HOW TO HELP RAG/LEATHER CANDIDATES SEE GOD (Contd)

"YOU CAN PREACH A BETTER SERMON WITH YOUR LIFE THAN WITH YOUR LIPS."

86 WAYS TO SAY “VERY GOOD”

1. Good for you!
2. Superb!
3. You did that very well
4. You’ve got it made
5. Terrific!
6. That’s not bad!
7. Couldn’t have done it better myself
8. Marvelous!
9. You’re doing fine
10. You’re really improving
11. You’re on the right track now!
12. Now you’ve figured it out
13. Outstanding!
14. That’s coming along nicely
15. I knew you could do it
16. Good work
17. You figured that out fast
18. I think you’ve got it now
19. I’m proud of the way you worked today
20. Tremendous!
21. You certainly did well today
22. Perfect!
23. Nice going
24. You’ve got your brain in gear today
25. Now you’ve got the hang of it
26. WOW!
27. Wonderful!
28. You’re getting better every day
29. You’re learning fast
30. You make it look easy
31. That’s a good boy/girl
32. That’s very much better
33. Super!
34. You did a lot of work today!
35. Keep it up!
36. You’ve got that down pat
37. Congratulations
38. Exactly right!
39. Nice going
40. Excellent!
41. Sensational!
42. You’re doing beautifully
43. You’ve just about mastered that!
44. That’s really nice
45. That’s the best ever
46. That’s great
47. Way to go!
48. That’s the way to do it!
49. That’s quite an improvement
50. Good thinking
51. You’re really going to town
52. Keep up the good work
53. That’s it!
54. That’s better
55. You haven’t missed a thing
56. Fantastic!
57. You outdid yourself today!
58. You’re doing a good job
59. That’s the right way to do it
60. That’s better
61. Right on!
62. Well, look at you!
63. That’s the best you’ve ever done
64. That’s RIGHT!
65. You must have been practicing!
66. Great!
67. Keep working at it, you’re getting better!
68. You remembered!
69. That kind of work makes me very happy
70. You’re really working hard today
71. That’s what I call a fine job!
72. I knew you could do it!
73. I’m very proud of you
74. One more time and you’ll have it
75. Fine!
76. That’s good

86 WAYS TO SAY “VERY GOOD” (CONTD)

77. Good job
78. You really make this fun
79. Good remembering
80. Nothing can stop you now
81. You are doing much better today
82. Keep on trying
83. You are really learning a lot
84. You’ve just about got it
85. I’ve never seen anyone do it better
86. You are very good at that

RAG SOCIETY TRADITIONS

Throughout the long history of the YMCA Rag/Leather programs, several traditions have developed. Most are adhered to by the YMCAs using the program. While they do not affect the program's value as a counseling tool, they do add much of the feeling of "society" that Ragers/Leathers have traditionally shared.

THE SQUARE KNOT (RAGGERS)

At the Rag ceremony, the Rag is tied in a square knot, symbolizing the foursquare life of the Ragger: Physical, Spiritual, Social and Mental. Also, the person who has already received the Rag usually ties the Rag.

THE RAGGER'S HANDSHAKE

Similar to many fraternity handshakes, the Ragger's handshake is done with a normal grip but with the little fingers interlocked. The interlocking of the little fingers symbolizes the unity that exists between Ragers. The handshake is given and explained to the new Blue Ragger at the ceremony by the person tying his/her Rag or the Keeper of the Point.

THE RAG/LEATHER CEREMONIES

While the concept of "secret ceremony" no longer applies, it is still considered traditional that Ragers attend only ceremonies for Rags that they have already received. In addition to tradition, a practical reason for this is that the impact of a person's own ceremony can be lessened if he/she has already attended that ceremony or read it.

For Leather ceremonies, have campers who are already at the same or further step than the Leather ceremony being conducted help as much as possible. Let them be readers for various parts of the ceremony, help plan the ceremony itself, etc...

FRIENDSHIP STONE (FOR BLUE RAG CEREMONIES)

For Blue Rag ceremonies, the practice of having each candidate obtain a fist-sized rock which they can carry with them into the ceremony is helpful in stressing that each Ragger is an important part of the Rag family. If a stone is removed from the stone emblem within Ragers' Point, a noticeable void and loss of continuity is visible within the emblem. Similarly, when a member of any family becomes disconnected from that family, then the family is significantly weakened and incomplete. Another emphasis of the Friendship stone tradition has to do with the maintenance of the stone emblem at Ragers' Point. Without care and maintenance, natural forces such as rain, snow, plant life, etc. would soon destroy the stone emblem. Continually replacing and adding stones is part of that maintenance. Similarly, members of a family must nurture, care and "maintain" each other if the family is to remain strong.

RAG SOCIETY TRADITIONS (Contd)

If desired, each candidate may use a permanent marking device/method to write their name and the current date on one face of the rock they have carried and return later to add it permanently to the circle part of the stone emblem at Ragers' Point, marked side down.

POSITIONS ON THE STONE EMBLEM AT RAGGERS' POINT

At the Rag ceremonies, as well as on other occasions, when a Ragger visits Ragers' Point, each Rag carries with it a traditional position on the emblem. These are:

Blue & Silver.....	Kneeling on the right knee outside the circle
Brown & Gold.....	Kneeling on the left kneel inside the circle, but outside the square
Red & Purple.....	Kneeling on both knees inside the square, but outside the triangle
White.....	Kneeling or standing inside the triangle

Usually, you don't enter the parts of the emblem until you have accepted that Rag, except if you are building a Point yourself.

PICTURES

We encourage only pictures taken with your heart and mind. Preferably no cameras.

RAG KNOT

It is not to be untied, but if it comes untied, ask another Ragger to tie it for you. The Ragger retying it for you needs to be at the same or further step in the Rag program. Same is true for a Leather, except that any camp staff member or the camper's parents may retie it.

AT HOME

Hang your Rag/Leather somewhere special at home.