

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

LOYALTY

1. Loyalty to God (Four Square Life)
2. Loyalty to country
3. Loyalty to one's best self
4. Loyalty to the Ragers' Creed

THE SILVER RAG

RESPECT & APPRECIATION

Respect and appreciation for: (Christian Decision)

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

THE BROWN RAG

SERVICE

1. Serve God (Service to Others)
2. Humility
3. Become more aware of the needs of others

THE GOLD RAG

BENEVOLENCE

1. Understanding of others (Understanding Others)
2. Concern for others

THE RED RAG

SACRIFICE

1. Sacrifice of time (Leadership and Humility)
2. Sacrifice of talent
3. Sacrifice of personal will

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

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

THE RAG 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 humility

THE BLUE RAG

Acceptance of the Blue Rag is an acceptance of loyalty to God, Country, one's best self, and the Ragers' Creed.

"RAGGERS' CREED" (To be memorized)

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.

1. Acceptance of the Blue Rag is an expression of a desire to have a more God-like personality. The traits in a person's character that make him(her) more God-like are:

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.

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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.

2. The Rag is a symbol of growth. How can you grow more God-Like in all your relationships?

MARK: 28-31

And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked Him, "Which Commandment is the first of all?" Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One, and 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 your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.'"

3. Each rag represents a special character trait. The blue symbolizes loyalty. How can you be more loyal to God? To others?

4. How can belief in God affect your life? Others lives?

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 Blue Ragger?

How do I plan to do this?

NOTHING IN LIFE IS TO BE FEARED, IT IS ONLY TO BE UNDERSTOOD

c. How does the beauty of nature interpret God to you?

"YOUNG AMERICA"

I'm proud of this America in which I had my birth;
To me it is the finest land of any on the earth.
I'm proud to know the stars and stripes floats over great and small.
And gives, regardless of their race, security to all.
And for the blessed privilege of being safe and free.
I'll try my best to make my country proud of me.

5. How can you be a better American and be more loyal to your country?

d. How can you get along with others better, despite their culture or beliefs?

"MYSELF"

I have to live with myself and so,
I want to be fit for myself to know;
I want to be able, as days go by
Always to look myself in the eye.
I don't want to stand with the setting sun
And hate myself for the things I've done.

I never can hide myself from me;
I see what others may never see;
I know what others may never know
I can never hide from myself and so,
Whatever happens, I want to be
Self-respecting and conscience free.

6. How can you be more loyal to your best self and ideals and still be loyal to friends who may hold different values?

Y LAWS

Be reverent	Be loyal
Be self-controlled	Play a team game
Be dependable	Play the game clean
Be thorough	Seek health
Be kind	Do my whole duty

7. The four square life embodied in the rag emblem signifies physical, mental, social, and spiritual growth.

a. How does good health affect happy living?

b. How can you develop inner beauty? Is it dependent on outward beauty?