

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

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 PURPLE RAG

Acceptance of the Purple Rag is an acceptance of dedication toward high and noble living in whatever Christian service opportunities that come your way.

When you became a Red Ragger you challenged yourself to sacrifice of time, talent and personal will. 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 Raggars.

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.

PSALMS 25: 20-21

“O keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in Thee. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on Thee.”

1. How can you put purity and integrity more fully into practice in your daily living?

PROVERBS 12: 17-19; 15:4

“He that speaketh truth showeth forth righteousness; but a false witness deceit.

The lip of truth shall be established forever; but a lying tongue is but for a moment.

A wholesome tongue is a tree of life; but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.”

2. How can falsehood and deceit undermine your purposes and goals?

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 Purple Ragger?

JOHN 8:31-32

“If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciple, And you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

3. How can truth make one free?

How do I plan to do this?

MAN IS SOMETHING TO BE SURPASSED. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO SURPASS HIM?

- b. In living a high and noble life, what attitudes should a person have?
Why?

"THE ROAD NOT TAKEN" (ROBERT FROST)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I ---
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

8. Courage does not follow rutted pathways. What does one gain by taking the more difficult path in life? Explain.

ISAIAH 61:1-4

“The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to bring good tidings to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the eyes to those who are beyond; to grant to those who mourn in Zion, to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a spirit of heaviness; that they may be called oaks of righteousness. The planting of the Lord, that He may be glorified.”

4. What areas of concerns, existing today, could you help correct?

PSALMS 46:1-2

“God is our refuge and our strength; a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be changed, though mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam; though the mountains tremble with its tumult.”

5. How can one be strong enough to do what one knows is needed now?

SOLITUDE" (ELLA WILCOX)

Laugh, and the world laughs with you;
Weep, and you weep alone,
For the sad old earth must borrow its mirth,
But has trouble enough of its own.
Sing, and the hills will answer;
Sigh, it is lost in the air;
The echoes bound to a joyful sound,
But shrink from voicing care.

Rejoice, and people will seek you;
Grieve, and they turn and go.
They want full measure of all your pleasure,
But they do not want your woe.
Be glad, and your friends are many;
Be sad, and you lose them all, ---
There are none to decline your nectared wine,
But alone you must drink life's gall.

6. Prepare a concise statement as to your own quest for life.

Feast, and your halls are crowded;
Fast, and the world goes by.
Succeed and give, and it helps you live,
But no person can help you die.
There is room in the halls of pleasure
For a long and lordly train,
But one by one we must all file on
Through the narrow aisles of pain.

7. High and noble living constantly entails hard and difficult choices which each of us must make alone. The morally correct choice often carries with it suffering and personal sacrifice.

a. Why do suffering and personal sacrifice often result from morally correct choices?