

“Initiate the boys before they burn down the village just to feel its warmth” – Zulu saying

Why Rites-of-passage?

Historical Rites of Passage

All communities and tribes throughout all of history performed rites of passage with their boys. Intuitively these tribes learned over generations that boys needed to learn hard lessons that were carefully crafted by their communities to help them transition from boy (ego-centric) disposition to a good man (other's centric). In modern times, young people will pursue rites-of-passage for themselves to help affirm identity, except without good adults, they will be destructive and/or demeaning. More info on the why can be found from some excerpts of Richard Rohr's book '[Adam's Return: The Five Promises of Male Initiation](#)', or from Arne Rubenstein's Ted Talk [here](#).

How Rites of Passage?

Rites of Passage are designed to disrupt the comfort of the boy's self-centred world. The world of an adult brings great responsibility, challenges, and threats that would crush a boy. Men who have not made this transition are beset by anxiety, addictions, and chaos as they avoid becoming who they are meant to and need to be for themselves and their communities. Disruption is not comfortable. Commonly on Gents Camp initiates will feel like giving up on the second or third day. This is normal. This actually makes the final 'Calling Out' ceremony all the more meaningful as they will have achieved something remarkable on the inside and out.

Risk Management

All activities on Gents Camp are risk managed. However, if you wish to know the details of what we do, then we have complete transparency and can send you the description of these and how we risk manage them. If your son has an anxiety condition or some other mental health predisposition, we should chat before camp.

After Camp

Rites of Passage are designed to help a transition into a new status in a community. This requires that the community that they return to are aware and uphold a clear sense of this status; responsibilities and privileges. What is a man? What does a man do? These are challenging questions in today's society that is highly individualistic and has deconstructed traditional notions of roles. We are not advocating for a return to 1950s roles of men in communities, but we are supporting and advocating for men in communities to take ownership of this endeavour and finding inspiring answers to these questions and role modelling them. A couple suggestions:

- Have your son stand up in your church/community the Sunday after Gents Camp and mark the event in some significant way.
- Discuss with this young man what role he will play in helping the boys following him. In the Gents Community, we have introduced the idea of '[The Thin Red Line](#)' as the place of greatest need for men to take responsibility in their community. They will need to stand in formation with a 'Company of Heroes'. This is where good men stand with them