

Guiding Adolescents towards Adulthood



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ACLE Melbourne Oct 2nd 2008



Does your school....

- Have disaffected students?
- Have students who don't seem to grow up?
- Have students whose role models provide poor examples of healthy adulthood?
- Have students who bully or are bullied?
- Have boys who perform academically below their capabilities?
- Spend a lot of resources managing inappropriate student behaviour?



Does your school support its adolescents by....

- Acknowledging and celebrating their transition from childhood to adulthood?
- Offering a mentoring program?
- Providing physical, emotional, social and spiritual challenges?
- Revealing to them how gender is constructed?
- Genuinely listening to them and hearing them?
- Allowing them to share their dreams and doubts?
- Providing an alternative model of healthy adulthood?



The Questions

- When did you become a man or woman?
- What guidance did you have?
- Who was the most influential guide in your adolescence?
- Whose stories of successful adulthood did you hear?



Richard Rohr - Franciscan priest

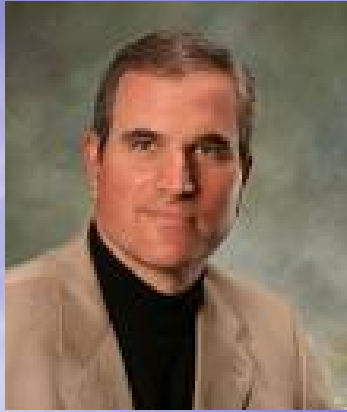
'Boys to men: rediscovering rites of passage for our time,'

'It seems that it is only the recent West that has deemed it unnecessary to "initiate" young men. Otherwise, culture after culture felt that if the young man were not introduced to "the mysteries," he would not know what to do with his pain and would almost always abuse his power. It looks like they were right.'

Default Rites

- Vandalism
- Gang activity
- Drink driving
- Sexual activity
- Suicide attempts
- Extreme risk-taking





Leonard Sax
'Boys Adrift'



'If we fail to provide boys with pro-social models of the transition to adulthood, they may construct their own, in some cases gang initiation rituals, street racing and random violence may be the result'



Lisa Graham McMinn

'Sexuality & Holy Longing: Embracing Intimacy in a Broken World.'

'Rites of passage can connect changing identity, sexuality, longings, and the passage of time in ways that strengthen relationship with others, with community, and with God.'



*A society that doesn't treat the
journey of boys into men with
respect and dignity runs the risk of
losing its masculine spirit.*



The Need

- Society -
 - Lack of fathers (Father Hunger)
 - Loss of rites of passage/initiation
 - Lack of sound adult role models
- Schools –
 - Predominantly female primary school staff
 - Desk-oriented learning
 - Standardised testing leading to academic fast-tracking and decreased focus on practical subjects and social-emotional learning



Peter Ellyard - Futurist

Aust. Conference Lutheran Education
Adelaide, 28 September 2004

*“I propose that Year 9 be totally reconstructed.
The traditional program should be scrapped and
replaced with a comprehensive Preparation for
Adulthood program”*



The 5 Rite Journey Outcomes

- CONNECTION
- CONSCIOUSNESS
- COMMUNICATION
 - CHALLENGE
 - CELEBRATION

All five outcomes are found within each term's focus:

Relationship with Self
Relationship with Others
Relationship with Life
Relationship with the World



The Rite Journey Framework

Seven steps of the *hero's journey*

- The Call (& Longing)
 - The Departure
 - The Following
 - The Challenges
 - The Abyss
 - The Return
- The Home-Coming



Ceremonies & Celebrations

Each of the 7 steps incorporates a ceremony or celebration that leads the students to acknowledge their personal journey towards adulthood.



Step 1: The Calling

This ceremony recognises that there is a deep yearning in each boy to become the best man he can be, and at a significant natural location the boys are called to begin

“The Rite Journey”





Step 2 : The Departure

This ceremony occurs at an information evening where the parents are asked to give their blessing to their son's teacher who will be a guide on the journey ahead.





Step 3: The Following

This step refers to the development of a mentoring program where the students are both mentored and act as mentors.





Dr. Michael Resnick

Professor of Paediatrics, University of Minnesota

“young people who have a feeling of connectedness with parents, family and school have lower levels of smoking, drinking, other drug use, suicidal thinking, risky sexual behaviour and exposure to violence.”



Step 4: The Challenges

- Emotional risk taking (share own story)
 - Push-ups (improve max. by 50%)
 - Master Juggling
 - Experience Caving
 - Solo Experience in solitude
 - Complete a local fun run
 - Board breaking (Rock and Water)
- Public performance (song, drum, chant)
- Expression of self (song with power-point)
 - Major mentoring project presentation



Step 5: The Abyss

This ceremony is the Solo Experience.
Each boy spends a night camping in the bush
totally by himself.





Step 6: The Return

This ceremony occurs at the end of the year and acknowledges the skills the boys have learned to carry with them towards manhood.





Step 7: The Home-Coming

The final ceremony is returning home – coming back to the community – a symbolic returning to their parents.



The Rite Journey Structure & Content

- Yr 9
 - Single sex classes
 - Approx 18 - 24 students
- Same teacher for 'The Rite Journey' and if possible at least one other class
e.g. Physical Education / English / SOSE



Curriculum Content

The following topics may be covered during the year:-

- Personal Biography
- Gender Identity and Construction
- Feelings and Beliefs
- Love, Relationships and Sexuality
- Anger, Bullying, Depression and Violence
- Stillness, Silence and Solitude
- Risk Taking
- Communication
- Mentoring

The topics are explored using a variety of initiatives:

- Rock & Water program
- Journal Writing
- Drumming
- Meditation
- Adventure Camps
- Juggling
- Talking Sticks





The Rite Journey requires teachers who are happy to:

- Love
- Laugh
- Listen
- Be honest
- Be authentic
- Be vulnerable
- Show integrity
- Be consistently fair
- Be good role models
- Have clear boundaries
- Not sweep issues under the carpet
- Work on their own personal development



Student Responses

Thankyou for:

- Helping me to understand myself and how to understand others. Also for helping me to unlock a piece of myself.
- A great year. I've learned a lot and it has helped me mature.
- I believe I have found where I stand.
- Teaching me so many things to remember for life. Thanks for the opportunity to let us go on camp and to experience being by ourselves. You have taught me to listen more, be confident and be more mature.
- I can now express myself more deeply than I thought.
- Everything this year and I want you to know that this year has been a life changing experience and I will never forget it.
- Making this year such an enjoyable year by teaching us important stuff but also making it fun. You have changed the way I am and made me into a better person.



The Rite Journey for Girls

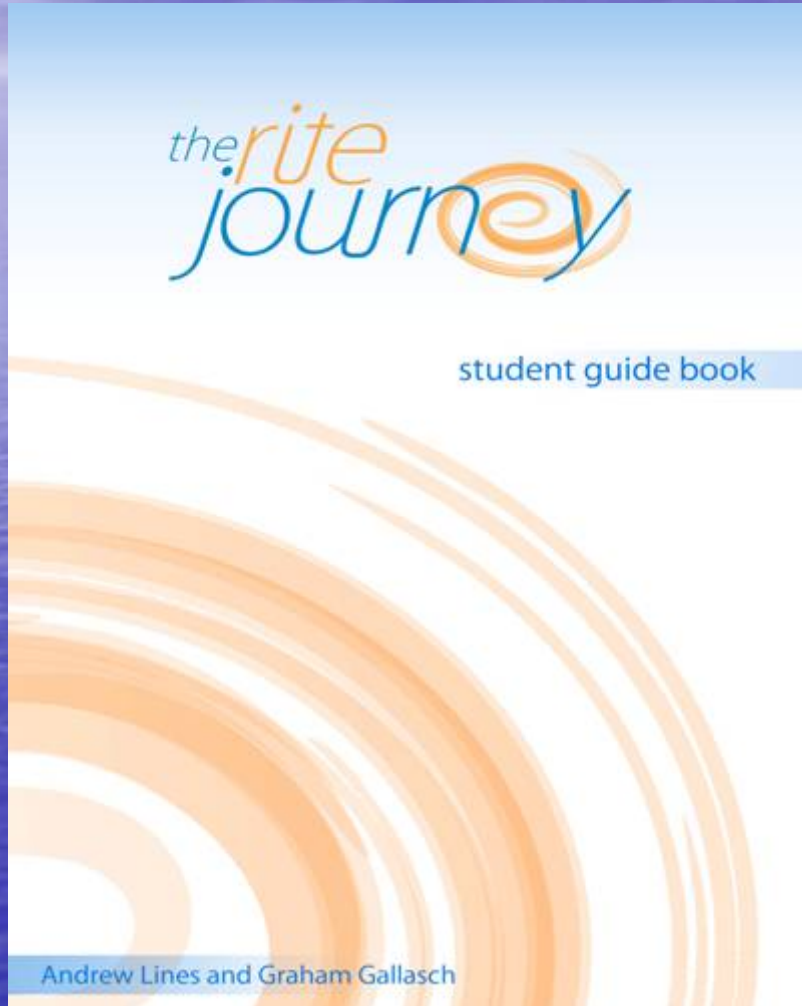
The Rite Journey was developed as a response to a clear need for boys but it became clear that not all girls have a suitable introduction into womanhood.

The Rite Journey for Girls sees a number of the elements varied to suit female students.





Student Guidebook



The Guide Book is a 120 page document that guides teachers and students through their year long journey.



Michael Currie
Author, 'Doing Anger Differently'



"The best (school-wide boys' development) programs are integrated into the school curriculum and involve substantial and weekly contact over a year or two. Shorter programs than this appear to have little effect."



Steve Biddulph
Author, 'Raising Boys' and 'Manhood'

" The Rite Journey is one of the most exciting and well conceived ideas in boys' education for a very long time.

It builds community among fathers, mothers, and teachers which would otherwise have been absent, and from this strength offers boys a real chance to become parts of something larger and long term. "



Authenticity

helping develop whole people



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Michael Gurian

"The Wonder of Boys"

"How many of our sons go through a second birth into manhood that is guided and honoured by families, the society as a whole, as a spiritual passage, central to the welfare of the boy, his family, community and culture?"

Principles of The Rite Journey

- Show students by example that they are loved and saved children of God
 - Offer a healthy rite of passage for adolescents
- Have a same-gender teacher-guide to promote a passage towards and an example of responsible, respectful adulthood
 - Acknowledge & develop the whole person
- Allow for single sex classes to cover gender-specific issues
- Develop strong relationships – student to student & student to teacher
 - Incorporate mentoring from “elders”
 - Confront students with their own talents and abilities
 - Move students beyond “self” towards “others”
- Celebrate the physical, social, emotional and spiritual growth of students throughout the year
 - Nurture self esteem of students
- Help students understand that individual rights should be balanced by reciprocal responsibilities and service to others