



Royal Rangers Gold Medal of Achievement Capstone Project

Student Information

Introduction

As you near the end of the process to earning the Gold Medal of you will be required to complete a Capstone Project. Capstone projects are common features of many educational programs and are commonly used as a means of bringing together everything a student has learned through their course of study and applying that knowledge to a specific project. The objective of the project is typically to help solidify the student's understanding of the material by applying it to real life situations.

The Capstone Project in Royal Rangers serves a similar purpose in that it represents one of the final steps you will complete before earning the Gold Medal of Achievement (GMA). Over the last several years your involvement in Royal Rangers has led you through a process of learning and growing into manhood in the same four ways Jesus grew. These four ways are described in Luke 2:52 and represented in Royal Rangers by the four gold points of the Royal Rangers emblem:

- *Mentally* – through the new knowledge and skills you have developed by earning skill merits
- *Physically* – by earning the required green Healthy Body merit, and by participating in the variety of physical activities involved in many of the skill and leadership merits
- *Spiritually* – through the completion of the “journey to manhood” represented by the brown Bible merits
- *Socially* – through participation in the patrol system of outpost leadership and by completing the leadership merits, including their related service projects and activities

As you now approach the point of earning the GMA you have reached an important milestone. You now come to a place where you are nearing the completion of a major phase of your own personal development (i.e. earning the GMA) while looking ahead to the next phase and beyond (graduation from High School, attending college, etc.). This point in time therefore provides you with a valuable opportunity to reflect on the personal growth and development God has been taking you through, and begin to prayerfully consider where God may be leading you in the months and years ahead.

The Capstone Project represents a process of learning, reflection and self-evaluation, followed by personal goal setting and a public presentation. Although the process is ultimately a private one, between you and God, you will also work with a Project Counselor – a leader, parent, pastor, or other adult - who will assist you through the process of completing the following four steps:

Step 1 - READ: The Research Phase

Read the book *A Guy's Journey to Manhood* by Doug Marsh. Then think through your answers to each of the questions in the "In Your Own Words" sections in each chapter and write them in a personal journal for future reference.

Step 2 - REFLECT: Discussion & Review with your Counselor

Once you have completed the READ step, you now come to the core of your project and begin reflecting on your own personal spiritual growth, in three ways:

- (A) By reflecting on where you've been by reviewing the four ways a guy grows and how your experiences over the last few years have impacted you
- (B) By reflecting on where you are today by examining the disciplines of a disciple
- (C) By reflecting on where God may be leading you by examining your SHAPE for ministry

(A) Where You've Been

Discuss with your Project Counselor the book you read in Step 1. Your counselor can be a valuable tool in helping you understand what you have read and applying it to your own personal experiences. Then think about how the content applies to the experiences you have had in Royal Rangers over the last three years and the ways in which you have grown and changed during that time.

- In what ways have you experienced MENTAL growth? What have you learned? Are there areas of knowledge you would like to improve in within the next few years?
- In what ways have you experienced PHYSICAL growth? What is the condition of your physical health as compared to a few years ago? In what ways could your physical condition be improved?
- In what ways have you experienced SPIRITUAL growth? To what degree has your knowledge and understanding of scripture improved? How consistent are you in performing the disciplines of a disciple, such as regular church attendance, personal daily devotional time, prayer, and sharing your faith with others?
- In what ways have you experienced SOCIAL growth? Have you made some new friends or become better friends with some old ones? How do you feel you're growing in leadership and teamwork?

(B) Where You Are

It's important for every Christian to periodically take a self-evaluation of where they are in their spiritual development. Take a few moments to reflect on each of the following "disciplines of a disciple" and discuss them with your Project Counselor. Note that these are not requirements to complete the project. They serve merely as a way of assisting you with your personal spiritual assessment and may help to identify areas where additional attention may be needed.

- Do you have a growing personal relationship with Jesus Christ? Have you asked him to be your Savior and Lord? Do you daily try to live your life in obedience to His Word?
- Have you been baptized in water? Do you know what it represents?
- Have you been baptized in the Holy Spirit? If not, are you actively seeking the baptism? Do you understand what Holy Spirit baptism is and why it is valuable to a Christian today?
- Have you developed the habit of daily personal devotions, including Bible reading & prayer?
- Have you shared your faith with anyone lately? Are you prayerfully seeking opportunities to share your faith? Are you prepared with scripture references for when the opportunity arises?
- Are you faithful in attending church? Are you involved in your church through service in areas outside of Royal Rangers?
- Do you financially support the ministries of your church through tithes and offerings? Do you know what tithes and offerings are and the differences between the two?

(C) Where You're Going

Take time also to reflect on your SHAPE. The acronym S.H.A.P.E. is often used to refer to a person's unique combination of traits that "shape" them for a particular type of ministry. Consider each of the following and write your answers in your personal journal for use as a reference in the next phase of your project. If you would like to read more on the concept of SHAPE refer to Rick Warren's popular book, *The Purpose Driven Life*®, chapters 29-35, or other similar resources.

S – Spiritual Gifts: What spiritual gifts do you believe you have been given? Refer to 1 Corinthians 12 for more info on spiritual gifts.

H – Heart: What are you passionate about? What do you really believe in, or really enjoy doing? What makes you smile?

A – Abilities: What are you good at?

P – Personality: Are you an outgoing "people person" or a more quiet "deep thinker"? Are you the kind of person that likes to get things done, or are you usually more satisfied with just "going with the flow"?

E – Experiences: What experience have you had, good and bad, that could give you clues as to what kind of work or ministry you are best suited for?

Step 3: PLAN: Goal Setting

The final step in the process is to set clear goals you would like to achieve. Based on your answers to the previous questions, make a list of specific goals for yourself that will help to continue your growth in all four areas previously mentioned. Be sure to spend time in prayer while making this list. This is an important time for you to develop an ear for hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit as He begins to reveal to you the direction He has for your life. You were created for a purpose, and SHAPED with a unique set of traits and experiences to enable you to be the special person and fill the unique role God had in mind for you the day you were created. Spend some private time with God and let Him begin to reveal His plan to you.

Step 4: PRESENT: Public Presentation

Now that you have gone through the process of looking back over where God has brought you and have set some clear goals for where you believe he is leading you, it's now important to share what you've learned with others. This sharing of your thoughts really serves two purposes: it helps to solidify in your mind everything you have learned, and it serves as a testimony and encouragement to others who will come behind you. This presentation can be the most beneficial part of this entire learning process because it will help you to establish in your mind the path on which God is leading you to while serving to challenge and encourage those around you as they follow their own spiritual paths.

The form of your presentation is up to you, using any medium you are comfortable with. For some, this may be a written essay. For others, it may be a song, poem, painting, or illustration. For others still, it may be a devotional message delivered orally to your group, a Sunday school class, or church. The medium chosen is only significant in that it gives you a method of communication that you're comfortable with in effectively sharing with others what God has done for you, and where He is leading you. However, it is recommended that your parents, pastor or youth pastor, and your rangers leaders be included in the group to which you are presenting.

Keeping it Going

Once your project is complete it's important to keep your final project notes on hand for future reference. You are on a journey with God and it's important to keep track of what you're learning along the way so you can refer back to it in those times when the path ahead seems unclear. You may be

completing this phase of your journey, but you're still got a long way to go. But don't get discouraged. God will get you there. Just keep the faith.

Final Thoughts

The most important thing to keep in mind as you work through your project is the purpose you're pursuing. As stated in the introduction, the purpose of the capstone project is to give you the opportunity to reflect on the personal growth and development God has been taking you through during your time in Royal Rangers, and begin to prayerfully consider where God may be leading you in the months and years ahead. Although there is no fixed time frame within this project should be completed, in order to get the greatest benefit from it you'll want to allow enough time to really think through your responses to the questions in the book and your plans for the future. As with any endeavor, the benefit you receive from this project will be a direct result of the effort you put into it, so don't get in a hurry. Take your time and do it right, and remember, "The greatest reward for a man's toil is not what he gets for it, but what he becomes by it." (John Ruskin, 1819-1900).

Keep in mind that your project must include each of these components as described above:

- ✓ Read the book, *A Guy's Journey to Manhood*, by Doug Marsh.
- ✓ Reflect on the questions in the book and discuss them with your Project Counselor.
- ✓ Plan your journey by setting personal goals for the future
- ✓ Present your plan to others using a medium of your choice.

Although it not required, consider writing an article about your experience and what you've learned and sharing it with others as a testimony of what God is doing in you, and as an encouragement to others doing similar projects. Send your article to your district and the national Royal Rangers office for consideration for publication in newsletters and online news feeds. We'd all love to hear about it.

*Being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you
will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.
Philippians 1:6*