

J2Manhood: Final Ceremony

Man and his relationship to: *God and his World*

Character/Fruit of the Spirit: *Perseverance and Trust*

The Foundational verse: *2 Timothy 4:5, 7-8*

"But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry . . . I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing."

Event: *Survival Weekend.*

Life Application: *Crossing over into manhood, while learning to lean on the Lord for the wisdom, perseverance and power to finish the race.*

Symbol: *Survival Kit or Survival Knife or Walking Stick or Compass*

Key Elements to Incorporate:

- Burning individual, personalized lists of childish behaviors: symbolizes 1 Corinthians 13:11.
- Letters of encouragement from other men: grandfathers, uncles, friends
- Foot Washing: Reveals a father's servant heart to serve his son, and the expectation that his son will serve others with the same heart.
- Father's Blessing
- Trek from departure point to destination while traversing a physically challenging obstacle course requiring teamwork and perseverance: symbolizes crossing over into manhood. At each of four checkpoints the boys will receive clue/tool/verse/encouragement from the dads.
- Dad's to facilitate discussion drawing out the key teachings of the verses below and the lessons the boys learned over their trek and over their year-long journey.

Preparatory outline of the weekend

- Tell the boys a hint or two about their Final Ceremony. We gave them three words: 'wilderness survival' and 'weekend'.
- Give each of the boys one or two of the foundational survival skills (see list below under Facilitator's notes).
- Skills to discuss with spiritual truth symbolized:

- Psychology of survival: human mind prone to anxiety, doubt, fear. God says he will never leave us nor forsake us and to take courage; He says do not worry about anything (Deut 31:8 & Philippians 4:4-7).
- Orienteering with map, compass, forming a navigation route: Looking to God's word as the navigation guide to abundant life. (Psalm 119:105 "Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light to my path.")
- Construct wilderness shelter: Protection from the elements; symbolizing putting on the "full armor of God." (Ephesians 6:10-16)
- Fire starting: Securing the warmth we need to survive; "Hebrews 12:29 "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,²⁹ for our "God is a consuming fire."
- Water procurement/treatment: John 7:37 "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink."
- Food procurement: John 4:34 "My food is to do the will of the One who sent me."
- Each dad will facilitate a discussion on one or two of these survival skills/spiritual truths. The idea is to ask questions which will draw out the boys' experiences as related to each of these skills.

Ceremony Notes

- Included in full in the Agenda.

Agenda and Itinerary

Friday

- 3:45 Pick-up boys from school; all ride in suburban (one father already at ranch setting up)
- 6:30 Arrival at camp site (SW corner)
Task Assignments (firewood, food acquisition, shelter building or tent set-up)
- 7:30 Dinner prep → Dinner together
Mission assignment: Survive until we return on Sunday a.m.
Ceremony: Boys burn their list of childish behaviors
Dads give sons the verses related to survival to meditate on during their journey
- 9:00 Campfire time

Saturday

- 6:30 Boys awake to begin their journey
- Hunt for rabbits, squirrels, dove (bow hunt only—no guns)
 - Acquire water → Purify by boiling or tablets (depending on boy's preparation)
- 9:00 Begin trek to Checkpoint 1
- May hunt, search for supplies, etc. along the way
- 10:30 Arrive: Checkpoint 1 (SE corner hill top)
- Hike to high point to get geographical/topo bearings.
 - Find, dig up and open the buried treasure box containing letters to each son, map to next checkpoint, and snacks with water
 - Boys to read letter addressed to them
 - Read verses again—meditate on the one speaking to you
 - Consider: Why do you need men in your life like the men who wrote you letters?
 - Fill canteens with water—purify with tablets
 - Orient with map, plot course to next checkpoint, resume journey no earlier than 12:00
- 1:30 Arrive: Checkpoint 2 (NE corner hill top)
- Hike to high point to get geographical/topo bearings. Use your binoculars to view this majestic creation. You are at the highest point on the wilderness.
 - Find, dig up and open the buried treasure box containing letters to each son, map to next checkpoint, and snacks with water
 - Boys to read letter addressed to them
 - Read verses again—meditate on the one speaking to you
 - Consider: How is this trek symbolic of your life's journey with the Lord—and His greater reward for you?
 - Fill canteens with water—purify with tablets
 - Orient with map, plot course to final destination, resume journey no earlier than 2:00

- 3:00 Arrive: Destination Camp Site (NW corner pond)
- Find, dig up and open the buried treasure box containing letters to each son, map to next checkpoint, and snacks with water
 - Boys to read letter addressed to them
 - Read verses again—meditate on the one speaking to you
 - Fish in big pond for dinner
 - Build shelter from available foliage and/or provided materials (tarp, rope, etc.)
 - Build fire
 - Purify water, cook dinner
 - Consider: Are you ready to make the crossing over to manhood?
- 6:00 Dad's arrive on the scene to the surprise of boys
- Act like we are simply 'checking in' on the boys. Ask about food and water supplies; ask about where they plan to build shelter and with what materials. Invite boys to join us for dinner.
- 7:00 Share dinner and stories; leave around dark to prepare for return
- 8:00 Final Ceremony (detailed timeline/outline below)

Sunday

- 7:00 Rise, morning devotional and prayer of thanksgiving for the weekend, the heart-binding moments, the life-long memories, the close knit friendships, and the journey yet to come. Breakfast of champions. Break camp, clean up/burn trash. Leave place like you found it.
- 9:00 Depart for home.

Detailed Timeline of Final Ceremony

8:00 Fathers re-enter camp after nightfall with gun shots and torches blazing; fathers wearing face paint (black streaks) and skull caps (bandanas) that we will use to wash feet.

First Part: Discussion of Journey and Verses

- "Young men, we have come here tonight for a very special ceremony, one that will only happen once in your lifetime. Welcome to the fellowship of real men. We think you are each eligible and worthy to enter our fellowship, provided you make that choice. Before we extend that formal invitation, we want to discuss with you what you've learned over the last year."
- Each dad will facilitate a discussion about what boys learned on their journey as related to each of the four verses
 - Paul (Deuteronomy 31:8)
 - Psychology of survival (anxiety, fear, uncertainty, doubt) is the same as the spiritual condition of the lost *and* of those believers who face struggles, suffering, loss and/or adversity
 - Draw out the boys anxieties, fears, uncertainties and doubts experienced along the journey
 - God's promise in the verse: The Creator of the universe has gone before you, clearing your path; He promises to walk that path with you, warning you of dangers ahead and opportunities to seize; He promises to never leave you nor forsake you regardless of your transgressions.
 - Marlis (Psalms 119:105)
 - How does God speak truth, conviction and encouragement to us?
 - Relate the orienteering tools (map, compass, sun and north star to navigate your route) to God's tools (His word, His Spirit, His children to help you navigate your life).
 - Todd (Ephesians 6:10-11)
 - Tonight would be a long night without shelter. Do you know of any culture that survives without shelter?
 - What do we need shelter from?
 - External elements (heat, cold, rain, snow, ice, wind, etc) = symbolic of external temptations from peers, culture, enemies, Satan
 - Internal elements (protect our heart from our flesh, from our selfish will, from our desires for fleeting pleasure, etc)
 - Psalms 18:2 "The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take **refuge**, my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."
 - Our part of abiding in the Lord? Put on the full armor of God . . .

- James (John 7:37)
 - Water procurement and treatment: Must have water to survive, but that water must be pure (contaminated water can make you sick or die) and must also be continually replenished (we are usually walking around dehydrated, both physiologically and spiritually)
 - Broken and empty cisterns concept (we look for life-giving "water" in all the wrong places); remember our I Am Third activity at Ausley's lake house.
 - Only one place—Jesus himself—to receive living water. He invites us to drink abundantly. When we do, something weird happens: We don't alleviate our thirst, we actually become thirstier! The more of Jesus we get, the more of Jesus we want.

Each Dad calls his son to put wood on the campfire and then to depart with him (for the foot washing and father's blessing).

Second Part: Foot Washing

- Zach, please sit down and remove your socks and shoes. (Dad removes whatever garment with which he intends to wash feet) If you recall, Jesus humbled Himself for his disciples—and for you—with every moment of His life. (Dad begins to wash son's feet) I want you to know (talking points):
 - I'm your biggest fan
 - I'm always here for you—and desire to partner with you.
 - My role as father must change from telling you what to do, to coaching you how to make your own decisions.
 - The Lord calls me to pull you up alongside me, to walk together in passionate pursuit of purity and truth and humility and integrity.
 - Jesus said after washing his disciple's feet: "Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."
 - "This means I will call upon you to adopt this same humility with Mom, Coston and everyone in your life." (Drying his feet during this segment)
 - Remove the basin and ask Zach to stand. Grab his hand for a firm handshake while giving him my blessing.

Third Part: Father's Blessing

- "Zach, I have so many things I want to say to you because you are such an incredible young man." Proceed with words from the Spirit and your own heart; those words should capture the essence of "You're my son, whom I love. With you I am well

pleased. You have so many wonderful qualities . . . which I know will make you an man of God."

- Because you are such a gift to me, I want to pass on to you a special gift that my father gave me. Would you accept this rifle of mine, presented to me when I was around your age, as my gift to you. (Dad and son embrace, the dad leaves son to return to the fire.

Fourth Part: Call to Manhood

- Each dad asks his son to lead him back to camp/fire.
- Once all are gathered, father initiates the Call.
- Boys on one side of fire, dads on the other.
- Ceremony - "Welcome into the fellowship of men."
 - Around the fire, standing together. Dad discusses the Cortez boat burning story and then the significance of the final journey today. "Baker, Cooper, Josh and Zach, you have left the boy behind at the first campsite. You have now crossed over. There is no going back, the "boats have been burned." No longer will you be a boy, you are now a Young Man."
 - Line up in order opposite of each other Baker, Cooper, Josh and Zach.
 - Father calls son's name. Father asks the question, "Do you now confirm your decision to enter into manhood, to reject passivity, to accept responsibility, to lead courageously and to expect the greater reward, God's reward?"
 - Son responds.
 - Father, "Then step forward into the path of manhood, come to me and receive the Blessing." Son walks to his father and father says, "This is my beloved son, _____ in whom I am well pleased. You have become a young man and entered into the fellowship of men. You have what it takes to be a man and I believe in you. I am committed to you for life, that you might fight the good fight, finish the race and keep the faith. I seal this blessing tonight with the handshake of a man and the embrace of a father." Other dads give handshake and embrace.
 - Each dad repeats for each son in order as listed.
 - Todd asks each young man to pray as they feel led and I'll close.

Closing Ceremony Blessing (Todd)

- Baker, Cooper, Josh and Zach: While the Journey2Manhood is now coming to an end, the journey OF manhood is just beginning. As you have put childish ways behind you, you will now be challenged to lay hold of God and the promises of God to become all He intends you to be.
- Now it is time for you to run the race of your destiny, to be a man as God has created you, to reject passivity, to accept responsibility, to lead courageously and to expect the greater reward - God's reward. As Paul said in 2 Timothy 4:7-8, let us at the end of our lives be able to also proclaim "I

have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day."

Let's pray:

- Father, in Philippians 4 we recall the words of Paul who said, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Father, let us rejoice in you for the blessings you have given us in Baker, Cooper, Josh and Zach. Father, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving we ask for your blessings upon each of them. We know you have called them to greatness. We ask that you would guard them from the evils of this world and you would keep them close to you. Lord, just as Paul wrote, we also pray, may give them the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of You, having the eyes of their hearts enlightened, that they may know what is the hope to which You have called them, what are the riches of Your glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of Your power toward those who believe" (Ephesians 1:17-19). AMEN

Transition to story time and laughter around the fire

- Paul: Men, let's now sit back and enjoy some fellowship around the fire.
- Each dad prepared with funny stories to tell from the journey.