



# Rites of Passage Adventure Weekend

BOYS TO MEN has developed a life-changing weekend initiation experience, where boys are invited to look at what is not working and to embrace what is working in their lives. Throughout the weekend, they learn to trust themselves and each other, as well as the staff that supports them through the process. The impact of our program creates a dramatic effect on these young men. They learn skills that allow them to become leaders among their peers. They take risks by being different, telling the truth, and sharing their feelings. And perhaps more importantly their new behaviour gives those around them, their friends, family and communities, permission to do the same.

As part of our program, boys begin their journey with a Rites Of Passage Adventure Weekend (ROPAW) where positive qualities such as integrity, courage, respect, compassion and leadership are modeled by adult male staff. Additionally, many of our Journeyman (boys who have completed a ROPAW), volunteer to staff and assist the new boys entering the program. Through a series of carefully facilitated processes, each boy discovers something of the scope of his own humanity. Boys are challenged and supported in new ways. They gain a deeper

connection to their own integrity, courage, respect, compassion and leadership. They discover these qualities and the ability to manifest them in the world. It is an exhilarating, life-changing experience that many boys say they will never forget. Our ROPAWs take place in wilderness settings. The boys arrive Friday night and leave mid-day Sunday. During the weekend they are guided by mentors who continue to support the J-Men at our bi-weekly gatherings held locally for the next year.



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## Transition in a natural setting

The natural setting encourages participants to recognize the routines and patterns of their lives so that they can make more conscious choices. They have the opportunity to let go of old beliefs and behaviours that may no longer serve them. They discover new qualities and learn how to adopt more roles and responsibilities. The participant has an opportunity to reflect on his life and his new perspectives.

## About Rites of Passage Adventure Weekend Initiations

For countless centuries, it was the role of older men in the community to take the boys out of the arms of the mothers and to guide them into manhood. Somewhere along the way, men lost touch with the calling to steward the young men in their communities. As a result, the youth of today have developed their own forms of initiation in an effort to be seen. The boys of today are in need of men who will invest in them as they continue their “Journey into Manhood”. This period of a boy’s life is filled with challenges and opportunities. With the support of men who see him for who he is, the young man can become more conscious of his world... and of the tremendous potential that is awakening inside him.

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“It is easier to build strong children than  
to repair broken men.” *Frederik Douglass*