

RITE 13

RITE 13 - What is it? I can tell you what I know about it, but I have a very strong feeling that it needs to be **experienced** before any of us can begin to understand the full meaning of Rite 13. To begin, Rite 13 is a ceremony that is part of the Journey To Adulthood (J2A) curriculum we are using with our youth at Fork Church. It is a ceremony that takes place in church on a Sunday morning. It is a ceremony in which the youth, their parents, and you (members of Fork Church) participate.

Let's begin by taking a look at J2A's history. We go back 25 years to when a group of program developers discovered that many cultural and religious customs included a "Rite of Passage" for young people on or about their 13th birthday. Most of us are familiar with Bar/ Bat Mitzvahs celebrated in the Jewish faith. Getting ready for J2A's Rite 13 could be a process designed somewhat like the Bar Mitzvah preparation (study, discussion, and expectations).

Twenty-five years ago most children turned 13 while in the 8th grade at a Junior High School. Today Middle School has replaced Junior High and many youth turn 13 while in the 7th grade. It's all because of changing the month when a child turns 5 and is eligible for kindergarten. So much for background: at Fork Church our Youth will participate in Rite 13 to celebrate their completion of Middle School and, most importantly, for all of us to recognize the gift of womanhood or manhood that God bestows on each one of them.

Rite 13 takes place in the church during a Sunday Morning service. It involves our youth, who have celebrated their 13th birthday, their parents and **YOU**, members of the congregation at Fork Church. We are celebrating with these young people their transition from childhood to womanhood and manhood, which are gifts from God.

These youth are on their way to becoming adults. Adulthood is something to be earned. It is the content of the J2A curriculum.

What are “*womanhood and manhood*”? Again, I can only answer this question from my own experience. You may come to other conclusions. To me, womanhood and manhood are gifts from God and they describe what makes each of us the wonderful children of God that we are. Someone once said to me that the most our parents could have hoped for before we were born was a boy or a girl. But God had the unique person who is you or me in mind. That wonderful uniqueness, those wonderful inborn talents and abilities that make each of us children of God is what we are celebrating in the Rite 13 ceremony. We celebrate these young people as “God’s Beloved”.

I invite each of you to come on April 22nd to the 10:00am service to participate with our youth and their parents in this Rite 13 celebration. Bring an open mind, and open heart, and open arms to embrace something you may have already witnessed before in the life of Fork Church and the lives of our youth. By your presence you will also be fulfilling one of the promises that you make each time that we have a Baptism at Fork Church. At each baptism we (members of the congregation) answer “we will” to the following question: “Will you who witness these vows do all in your power to support these persons in their life in Christ?” By being present at this celebration we will all help support our Youth as they continue their Journey to Adulthood under the umbrella of Fork Church.

Boo and Jim Smythe

Fork Church’s Book of Wisdom

In the spirit of such book’s as “Life’s Little Instruction Book” we are compiling advice from the people of Fork Church. Please use the space below to give a small bit of advice (one sentence or less) to our youth who will be celebrating an important rite of passage (“Rite 13”) on Sunday April 22nd. Your advice can be something practical, like “Don’t go to bed with gum in your mouth” or something more profound like “Be content to be who you really are”. Both are important to know!!

Please identify yourself by your first name and your stage in life. For example – Bob, Age 41, Susan – mother of toddler.

Please put your completed form in the offering plate or return to Boo or Jim Smythe or Rev Bill Wells by Wednesday, April 18th. Thank You!

