

Questions Parents Ask

What is “First Rites – Young Men Rising?”

Teenage boys transitioning into adolescence face many challenges – not least trying to figure out what it means to grow into a mature, healthy young man. What is expected of him, now that he is no longer a child? Now that nature is changing his body and emotions in ways that feel strange and exciting? This can be a confusing and disorienting period for boys. Boys test limits, experience frustration with controls and may become physically aggressive.

First Rites empowers boys 13 – 15 years of age to have fun exploring these changes with their peers, through a proven program, under the guidance of young men and elders who have walked this path before.

Who is offering this program?

Illuman DC (Illumandc.org) invites your son to spend three days in the West Virginia wilderness. We use camping and nature-based activities to encourage boys to test their physical, emotional, social, and psychological boundaries through age-appropriate rituals, games, challenges and group sharing. This is the second time Illuman DC has offered First Rites in conjunction with Nicky Wilks of Journeymen (<https://journeymen.us/experience/wayfinders/?portfolioCats=38>).

Guys tell us this experience enhanced their self-confidence, taught them to deal with frustration, and gave them a greater appreciation for the sacredness of nature and other people.

After First Rites – then what?

Boys typically develop **unusually strong bonds of trust** during First Rites. We encourage boys to remain engaged with each other in an ongoing journey to healthy young adulthood.

Faith communities who send two or more guys can provide on-going support, especially if the community **recruits a mature, spiritually grounded man to participate in the rites as a mentor**. All mentors must participate in an on-line 8-hour training produced by our rites partner, Journeymen, and submit to a full background check process. Men who are accepted may participate in the rites and continue as mentors in the community.

Note: This is not a father/son experience but a rites of passage. We will offer a father/grandfather and son/grandson weekend in Spring 2024.

DATES & COSTS

First Rites – Young Men Rising: October 7 – 9, 2023. Fairfax County Schools are closed on Monday, October 9, in observance of Indigenous People’s Day

Register: <https://www.illumandc.org/first-rites-2023>

First Rites Cost: \$400

Costs should never hinder a boy's participation! Email youngillumian@icloud.com to request a reduction in fees. We will work with you to ensure your son can join us.

Parishioner Dan Harris is an elder in Illumian DC and an organizer of First Rites. He would welcome a conversation with you and your son about First Rites (pharris@me.com).