

The Tools to Help Young Men Strengthen Their Muscles of Faith

While both male and female students were impacted by the numerous negative effects of COVID, Trail Life USA CEO Mark Hancock says boys were hit particularly hard.

It is traditionally perceived that girls learn faster than boys, and Hancock says the pandemic set boys back even further both academically and spiritually.

“Boys and girls are different. And let’s face it, teaching girls is easier,” Hancock says. “They are less active and noisy, they are more generally compliant, and they are better suited to listen attentively, reflect competently and respond correctly when asked to do what they are told.

“Boys were designed by their Creator to be doers. They struggle when required to sit down, be quiet and pay attention for prolonged periods of time. Boys need action and purpose. Hands-on problem solving, action, outdoor exploration and adventure make men out of boys because that is how boys grow—through activity and experience.”

The New York Post recently published a piece titled “Why American boys are failing at school—and men are losing in life.” And, the 2020 American Family Survey shows a comparable trend in churches where learning approaches are different. According to the survey, only 36% of parents believe churches are serving their sons well.

“Adam was not created in the beauty and security of the Garden of Eden,” Hancock says. “He was created in the wild, and placed in the garden with a mission. He was to go and ‘fill the earth and subdue it.’ God made man to explore, conquer,

lead, face dangers and overcome obstacles with the tools, heart and power God instilled in him as a man.”

That where Hancock says Trail Life comes in. The organization is not only geared toward character development for young men, it’s goal is to produce godly and responsible husbands, fathers and citizens—something that is sorely lacking in today’s American culture.

“We are teaching boys to fulfill God’s purpose and obey His commands each time we put them in a situation where they must solve problems and overcome the difficulties life throws at them,” Hancock says. “Whether a rock wall or a pandemic, boys grow and learn through challenge and conquest.

 “The same principles apply to developing character and strong faith in Christ. Reading and hearing about God are important, but the muscles of faith are strengthened through action. James 2:17 states, ‘Faith without works is dead.’ As boys experience God through service and adventure, as they rub shoulders with mentors, as they face challenges and pray and see answers, faith becomes personal. Instead of knowing intellectually about God, boys come to actively know God.”

Trail Life USA motivates young men to grow on a personal level to become role models and leaders among their peers. It’s something that Hancock says young men today aren’t getting in a traditional classroom setting.

“There is a time for a book and a desk, and there is time for experience and adventure,” he says. {eo}

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