

rites of passage

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“Rights of passage was a great way to help us as individuals to bond and form new relationships and help us evolve to be more independent. We got introduced to our near future and got to experience what our lives would be like in the following years to come.”
Jordan Colby

During the last three weeks of Term 2, Year 9 students at Oxley College completed the inaugural residential programme, Rites of Passage where they studied in museums, galleries, universities, theatres and the historically rich urban environment of Sydney’s CBD.

The Rites of Passage Sydney programme has been designed around psychologist Michael Carr Gregg’s identified needs for 14 and 15 year olds: emancipation from parents; strong, healthy friends; vocational direction; and a strong sense of personal identity.

Oxley has developed a cross-curricular academic programme around the theme “Identity – Telling Your Story”. It includes tours, workshops and lectures at Macquarie University, University of Technology Sydney, Art Gallery of NSW, ABC Studios, Foreshore Authority, Observatory Hill Education Centre, Museum of Human Disease, the Opera House, Museum of Contemporary Art, Australian Film and Television School and Cockatoo Island.

The purpose of this innovative programme is to expose students to ideas, people and phenomena that could never be accessed in a conventional classroom. We want to ignite students’ passion for what the future holds and the learning journey they are on.

The Rites of Passage programme for Year 9 makes a significant transition towards life as a senior student. After the exhilaration of starting high school and before the challenge of the Higher School Certificate, the Rites of Passage programme provides an unforgettable, transitional moment in the lives of Oxley students.

www.rite-of-passage.info

“What happens behind the camera for a foreign correspondent is really dangerous and confronting. You are not aware of this when you see them reporting on TV”. Olivia Donovan

“Rights of passage was a great way to develop more independence than I already had.” James Rapp

“Hearing a Jewish woman share her story with such openness and the reality of how these events affected her and her families’ lives gave us a real understanding and a different perspective.”
Olivia Davies



“We have discovered our strengths and weaknesses through different challenges.”

Year 9, for the last three weeks of Term 2, went on quite the adventure. An adventure of inspiration, comradeship, and more importantly, our rite of passage.

Why? Because according to some of the leading psychologists, there are four things that every teenager needs. Firstly emancipation from parents, which in itself was a challenge for most, just simply being away from families.

The next goal was for us to have a sense of direction and an idea of what to do once we were thrown into the outside world after high school. To achieve this goal we went to a wide variety of universities in Sydney, such as the University of Technology, The Australian Radio and Film School, NIDA, University of Sydney and also Macquarie University. We attended classes at each institution and participated in university life. These places really inspired us to strive and gave us an idea of what we wanted to do as a profession.

And that leads into our third need, which is having a sense of identity. We’ve discovered our strengths and weaknesses in challenges such as the orienteering on Cockatoo Island. We’ve found out how our society works in trips like the ABC studios tour, and we’ve even found how we as students fit into our ever-changing society, like in our observations around Millers Point. Everywhere we went we studied a new way of thinking about identity. We studied genetics and memory at Macquarie, what the ancient world tells us about who we are today, the relevance of indigenous art and culture to our Australian identity and our physical bodies at the University of NSW. Every day as we went from place to place we were subtly encouraged to expand the way we think about who we are.

And the experiences don’t stop there. In our three weeks in Sydney we were audience members in Q and A, scavengers in a room full of diseased body parts, freaked out on the Harbour Bridge, amazed by the performances of Les Miserables and Bangarra, spun by a speeding jet boat and customers at more than thirty different cafes. Not to mention the basketball game we had on the roof of a building in the middle of the city. It doesn’t get more amazing than that.

And whilst these were all extremely fun, they all built on our final goal, friendship. I can safely say that after this journey there isn’t a person in our year who feels they don’t know everyone in the year. By doing many team building activities, we have truly bonded as a year group.

So if there was one word to describe my feelings after Rites of Passage, I guess it would be inspired. We’ve been inspired to follow our dreams, make good friends, get out of our comfort zones and propel our selves into the wild world. It doesn’t get more inspirational than speaking to a 95 year old man who had survived not one but three concentration camps.

But this trip didn’t organise itself. I’d like to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff and others who have given up there time to help us and make the trip as amazing as possible. And in particular on behalf of our year I would like to thank Mrs Tregenza for putting in the hours and enthusiasm to carry out the seemingly impossible task of bringing back 60 Year 9s all in one piece from a trip to Sydney, a trip that we will never, ever forget.

Speech by Ben Hutchings (Year 9) at the final Term 2 Assembly.

Link to Year 9 Rites of Passage video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mashtSagL8w>

"We got taught the morals of life in three weeks, we discovered ourselves in lots of different ways. We formed a new level of independence which brought us together closer as a year. These three weeks have opened a new chapter into our lives. Many chapters to come..." Harry Baillieu

