

Campfire Ceremonies

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Campfire Ceremonies

Four Spirits Campfire Opening

Four speakers as North, South, East and West

Signal all around fire for silence.

Each speaker enters from the appropriate compass point.

North: I am the spirit of the North where the great game of Guiding began.

South: I am the spirit of the South and I spread the love of Scouting & Guiding to the world.

East: I am the spirit of the East and I spread the friendship of Scouting & Guiding to the world.

West: I am the spirit of the West and I spread the worth of Guiding & Scouting to the world.

All: Together we join in the fire of friendship.

Follow with Ashes Ceremony, if desired, and then singing, ending with Taps.

The Campfire Ash Ceremony (Ashes of Friendship)

THE HISTORY: The taking of ashes from one campfire to another is a ceremony done by Girl Scouts, Girl Guides and Boy Scouts all around the world. The main purpose of these ashes is to bring to all Scouts and Guides the international aspect of the world of scouting. Ashes taken from a campfire are sprinkled into the flames of the next campfire. The next morning when the ashes are cold, they are stirred and each Scout/ Guide present at the ceremony takes some to mix with the next campfire. Each Scout/Guide keeps a list of all of the campfires that they have sprinkled their ashes in. If more than one

Scout/Guide brings ashes to the campfire, the lists are combined and the dates and places of all campfires are recorded and passed on. As Girl Scouts, Girl Guides and Boy Scouts travel, the ashes circle the globe. It is a tradition that only those actually present at the campfire can receive ashes from the ceremony to carry on to another campfire.

THE CEREMONY: We carry our friendships with us in these ashes from other campfires with comrades in other lands. May the joining of the past fires with the leaping flames of this campfire, symbolize once more the unbroken chain that binds scouts and guides of all nations together.

With greetings from our brothers and sisters around the world, I will add these ashes and the fellowship therein, to our campfire. Will anyone with campfire ashes please come forward and join me.

(Wait for others)

The ashes I spread into this campfire carry memories of past campfires dating back to _____

I will now charge these ashes to the campfire.

So that you may pass these ashes on and share them with others at your next campfire, you will be given a history of where these ashes have been. (Recite history of ashes added to fire)

Wishing Pot Ceremony

A wishing pot ceremony is an indoor version of wishes thrown into a campfire. We use our troop's Dutch oven for the wishing pot, but any container that is fireproof and plenty big enough to hold all the wishes would be okay. Do be careful to set it on a heat-proof surface. :)

Everyone is given a small piece of paper and a pencil, and asked to write down her wish. This can be a wish for someone who is leaving, a wish for her own future, a wish for the troop. Wishes are private. No one knows the wish except the person who writes it. When a girl is through writing, she folds her paper to seal in the wish.

The wishes are collected and placed in the pot, or each girl comes to the pot and throws in her wish. After the wishes are collected, everyone is told that she must concentrate on her wish, in absolute silence, from the time the fire is lit until it goes out. Then the fire is lit. (It is effective, but not necessary, to turn out the lights at this point.)

After the fire goes out, the leader can say something appropriate such as "Believing in our wishes makes them come true" or "A wish is a prayer. The smoke carries our prayers to God." Then everyone gathers round the pot for a final circle and friendship squeeze.

This was a very special send-off for our troop member who is moving. Almost everyone cried. We have also done this very effectively in the past at a slumber party in January to begin the new year. It could probably be done equally well in the fall when school starts again, or in the spring when girls who won't be meeting over the summer will be separating for three months.

Variations are to throw wishes into a campfire (when leader secretly adds a handful of coffee creamer to make a "poof" or sugar to create colored flames) or to make wish boats (candle on a small piece of wood) to float out to sea or across a lake. With the wish boats, girls watch them silently until the last flame goes out. Wish boats, which were a tradition at one summer camp where I worked as a counselor in the 1960's, are now discouraged because of environmental concerns.

For Thinking Day two years ago, we did a different version. Instead of using a pot, we gave everyone a votive candle in a baby food jar. (At the Dollar Tree store here, we can buy a box of ten "tea light" candles for a dollar.) We then sat on the floor in a circle, turned out all the lights, and passed a lighter from person to person. Each person said, "My wish for Girl Scouts and

Girl Guides everywhere is . . ." and lit her candle. When all the candles were burning, we asked the girls to concentrate on their wishes in silence for a few minutes and then blow out the candles. After blowing out the candles, we stood up and did our final circle and friendship squeeze.

Campfire Ashes

Legend has it that Baden-Powell would always take a small amount of ashes from the campfire and spread these ashes into the next campfire. Ashes taken from a campfire are sprinkled into the flames of the next campfire. The next morning, when the ashes are cold, they are stirred, and each Guide or Scout takes some along to mix with her/his next campfire. If more than one Guide/Scout brings ashes to the same campfire, the lists are pooled, with the dates and places of all campfires recorded and passed on.

It is tradition that only those present at the ceremony may carry the ashes from that ceremony

Charge of the Ashes

May the spirits of past campfires be here with us tonight, carrying fellowship in these ashes from other campfires, thus uniting us with friends and comrades in other lands.

[Now, sprinkle saved ashes over fire]

May the joining of the dead fires with the leaping flames of our campfire tonight symbolize once more the unbroken chain that binds Guides and Scouts around the world. Fond greetings to Girl Guides and Girl Scouts of all nations, everywhere.

How to Add Color and Special Effects to a Fire

Note: Please test before using with the girls and make sure you teach the girls fire safety.

Borax = Light Green Flame
(laundry)

Potassium Chloride = Purple Flame
(water softener salt)

Sodium Chloride = Orange Flame
(table salt)

Magnesium Sulfate = White Flame
(Epsom salts)

Sugar = Tiny Sparks

Powder Coffee Creamer = Small Sparkly Sparks

So, then how do you get the chemicals into the fire? Well, throwing the powder in gives a burst of color, but then quickly dies out. You might want to do this for special effect when telling a story. But, to make the colors last longer, I've created wax patties fire starters.

Don't use these patties if you want sparks, just toss the dry chemical on.

- Melt old candle wax in a double boiler.
- Get a bunch of small paper dixie cups.
- Pour about 1/4 inch of chemical into each cup.
- Pour melted wax into the cup to just cover the chemical and quickly stir it with an unfolded paperclip or other small stir rod. This is to thoroughly coat all the chemical.
- Let thoroughly cool and then peel or cut off the sides of the paper cup. I leave the paper bottom on.

Toss one of these patties into the hottest part of the fire and it will melt and the show begins!

Mixing different chemicals will not make a new color. Just add one single type at a time or put different kinds in different places.

You can always use the old way of sliding a length of garden hose inside a piece of copper tubing and tossing that in the fire.