

Campfire Program

BASIC PHILOSOPHY:

The campfire is designed to be an extension of the Art of Welcome. A well-run campfire is a terrific way for this new ephemeral community of students, staff, chaperones, and teachers to laugh and sing together, breaking any ice that still needs breaking. There are several details to look at to achieve maximum fun and bonding.

SAFETY:

This is the first area to consider in any activity. Some of the questions you should ask yourself include: Where is your performance located? Are there any safety concerns or hazards in your location? How big of a fire is safe? Do you have a fire tender? Are they making smores and how can this be facilitated safely? How will you put the fire out?

ORGANIZATION AND PLANNING:

One the first morning of program, generally after all other sign-ups have been done, the staff will sign up to lead campfire activities. One or two naturalists will sign up to organize the campfire list, while another will sign up to make the fire; however, the list making can become a more collaborative effort with more staff becoming involved.

Some things to consider in planning your campfire performance: Do you have a campfire list? Is it in a place where all staff can see it without the audience seeing it? Is there an MC? Is someone responsible for time fillers like special claps? Do you have extra material in case you have more time? Do you have all your supplies – fire starter, costumes, instruments, song boards, etc.?

ENERGY FLOW/ BALANCE & ACTIVITIES:

The flow and balance of your campfire are important factors to consider when planning a great performance. Where you schedule high and low energy songs, silly skits or thought provoking stories can play a big role in the success of your campfire. The show should have an intro, a planned high point or two, and a gradual decrease in energy, culminating with a quiet story and/or a quiet song. It's a good idea to strive for a balance of activities, between songs and skits, with perhaps a story or two. There needn't be a perfect 50/50 mix of songs and skits.

Factors about a specific audience including age, maturity level, ability, school culture, etc. should influence what songs or skits you do, including the relative number of each. Let's remember, too, to get the students and chaperones/teachers as involved in skits/songs as possible-whether on the stage or in their seats.

Another goal should be to avoid "dead air" as much as possible; that is, to move directly from one performance to the next, keeping something going on stage at all times. One way to achieve this is to have some staff or the MC prepared to jump in to do some fun and creative "claps" or tell jokes. Even if you are not assigned a role, know that all staff are responsible to maintain the flow. Additionally, the staff should consult with one another when needing to cut activities due to time constraints. Practicing songs and skits as best as possible before campfire is preferred. Please keep in mind that the person signed up for the song or skit is the leader, if you would like to help or participate please check with the assigned leader first.

FUN VS. EDUCATION:

Although we are an outdoor school and perform many songs that are educational it is not generally necessary that *everything* we do at campfire be educational- remember, the primary goal is to bond through fun, and the nature of that fun can simply be, well, fun.