Your Campfire Experience

Campfire is an incredibly meaningful experience for reunions and camps. It helps to unite all at the end of the day. Campfires are times to laugh together, sing in harmony, reflect on the day, and settle for a restful night’s sleep. When done well, campfire has something for everyone and puts a punctuation mark on the theme of the day.

In the reunion experience, be intentional with the day’s focus and theme from the first morning devotions through the evening campfire.

- Consider using songs that tie-in with the daily theme.
- Campfire method often uses this pattern: fun songs (high paced and high energy) to transitional singing and then serious songs (slower and more worshipful).
- It is important to have something for everyone at the campfire experience. Keep a list of songs, perhaps a collection of index cards with words to song, that can be added to or modified.
- It is important that as our theology continues to change, so does our campfire liturgy. Consider reviewing *Community of Christ Sings* for hymns and refrains that could be used in campfire settings. Use simple verses that speak to your day or week; don’t feel confined to use the entire hymn.
- Carefully reading through the words and asking “Does this reflect who we are as a people?” becomes an essential part of campfire song selection. Prepare more songs than you will need, knowing the Spirit often prompts a campfire leader in different directions depending on the experience.
- Allow for space between songs. This space allows for spontaneous singing from the group, which is the Spirit breathing with and through us.
- Be sensitive to the make-up of your campfire participants, not only by selecting something for everyone but by being sensitive to gender identity, which includes non-binary transgender individuals and others you may not be aware of in your group. Consider using songs that are not gendered, such as: “I will make you fishers of men” could be changed to “…fishers of all,” or change “My God is so big, there's nothing that He cannot do” to “…there's nothing my God cannot do.”
- Consider the violent language of songs, too. There are plenty of songs to choose. Make sure your campfire experience aligns with your class and worship experiences earlier in the day, whether fun, transitional, or serious.
- Be mindful of the group’s energy as you plan and lead groups through this experience. Reading the energy of the group, they will tell you when they are ready for the next section. Being sensitive to the Spirit’s guidance as well.
- Using creative campfire lighting techniques can create long-lasting memories.
• If there are to be skits done by others, make sure to preview them to check for their content. It can be fun to tease each other; but ensure that no one is being harmed or humiliated by a silly or fun-natured skit that goes too far.
• Usually, campfire happens at the end of the day, but it can also be done as a morning devotion if the day is planned as a “backwards” day.
• Include prayer and testimony time during the more serious part of the campfire. Giving opportunities for testimony, stories, and prayer will help draw the day to a close in a sensitive and meaningful way.
• Share testimonies in the framework of “popcorn responses” to questions such as: Where did you see God today? Where did you hear peace today? Who shared their example of Jesus today? Etc.
• Include new and old songs and lots of rounds!
• Invite children and youth to lead songs, offer testimony, and prayer.
• Encourage campers to retreat quietly from the campfire experience to extend the Spirit of the moment. This also allows the camp to quiet down for bedtime routines.

Thank you to Carla Nilsen, Greater Pacific Northwest Mission Center, and Jerry Dale, Jr., Chesapeake Bay Mission Center, for their ideas and offerings. If you have ideas from your specific area you’d like to share, click here.

We extend our prayers and blessings on this formative and unique reunion experience known as Campfire.