

Webelos Den Campfire Planning

Learning Objectives	As a result of this training experience, participants should be able to <ul style="list-style-type: none">• List differences between pack campfires and den campfires.• List ways den campfire involvement is different from a pack campfire.• List some activities appropriate for den campfires.• Describe how a den campfire is organized.• Incorporate Scouting's positive values into the campfire program.
Trainer Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study the training outline.• Review the information on campfire safety in the <i>Webelos Handbook</i>, <i>Webelos Leader Guide</i>, and <i>Cub Scout Leader How-To Book</i>.• Practice and time your presentation in advance to help you stay within the time limit.
Materials	33122, <i>Group Meeting Sparklers</i> 33222, <i>Cub Scout Songbook</i> 33221B, <i>Cub Scout Leader Book</i> , Chapter 32, "Outdoor Activities" 33832A, <i>Cub Scout Leader How-To Book</i> , Chapters 4 and 5 33696A, <i>Campfire Program Planner</i> 34095A, <i>Stories for Around the Campfire</i> 33529, <i>Trail and Campfire Stories</i> 33853A, <i>Webelos Leader Guide</i> 33452, <i>Webelos Handbook</i>
Handout	33696A, <i>Campfire Program Planner</i> (two per person)
Time	25 minutes

Introduction Point out that a pack campfire program is very similar to a pack meeting. There is a master of ceremonies and den participation, group participation, recognitions, and inspirational moments. So even if you have not attended a pack or troop campfire or taken a course in campfire planning, it is easy to understand the principles of a pack campfire.

Den Campfires Explain that den campfires have a different character from large pack campfires and are more like a den meeting. Ask participants to think of ways a den campfire might be different from a pack campfire. List the responses on a whiteboard or flip chart.

Include the following:

- Small-group campfires can have higher levels of individual involvement. Because the den is small, the den campfire also is small. When only 12 to 16 people, perhaps, are in attendance, it is hard not to become involved.

- Fewer people are available to be in a skit. Elaborate skits involving the entire den are not usually possible. Although the boys could create a skit for the parents, the group dynamics are much different from having an audience of 50 or 60.
- The den campfire has a more relaxed atmosphere with time, possibly, for idle talk.
- Because people are usually closer to each other at a den campfire, it has a much less formal style.
- The fire can be an easy distraction. People have a tendency to stare at the fire and enjoy its relaxing effect.
- Boys are more likely to want to fiddle with the fire if not reminded of the rules.
- It is easy to hide a tendency to avoid participation at a large pack campfire, but less easy in a small group. Some parents may not wish to participate.

Involvement in the Campfire

Note that with large, organized pack campfires, the den is usually only a small part of the overall campfire presentation, whereas a den campfire with parents demands a constant high level of group participation.

Additionally, parents may not be used to participating. In pack campfires, parents may participate only as a group, whereas in a den campfire they may need to participate individually.

Be sure not to put anyone on the spot. Never use games or activities that would embarrass an individual. Avoid “elimination” games or activities.

Positive Values

Point out that one of the important elements of Scouting is fun. When using humor and fun in Scout activities, leaders should keep in mind that amusing and entertaining program elements are excellent opportunities to reinforce and teach the values of Scouting—to both youth and adults. The fun and humor of these program elements must not, however, detract from nor contradict the philosophy expressed in the Cub Scout Promise and the Law of the Pack.

Everything we do with our Scouts—including songs, skits, and ceremonies—should be positive and meaningful and help teach the ideals and goals of Scouting. Cheers, songs, skits, stunts, stories, games, and ceremonies should be positive, build self-confidence and self-esteem, and be age-appropriate.

Wasteful, ill-mannered, or improper use of food, water, or other resources is not appropriate.

Point out that as leaders of the Boy Scouts of America, it is our responsibility to model the values of the organization and set a high standard for appropriateness in all Scouting activities. When making decisions, resolve to follow the high road philosophy: if in doubt, take it out.

Boy Behavior

Be sure to establish fire rules early, and determine what happens when these rules are violated. Also be sure parents understand the rules so they don't accidentally break the rules either.

- Den Campfire Safety** Be sure the fire lay is safe and use a small campfire that can be fed by an adult, rather than a large campfire that can get out of control or would be inappropriate because of the proximity to the tents.
- Be sure adequate water is on hand to extinguish the fire.
- Be sure the boys know the rules. No flaming sticks including marshmallows and other food items that could start a flame. Nothing comes out of the fire.
- Campfires should not be a part of a meal, but rather a separate event.
- Campfire Ideas** Ask the question: "Given the character differences between a pack campfire and a den campfire, what are some of the types of activities that could be planned?"
- List the responses on a flip chart or chalkboard.
- Campfire Lighting Ceremony** Although an adult should light the campfire, it would be appropriate for the boys to stage a ceremony or dedication of the campfire. This could be discussed in advance, and the denner and assistant denner could be asked to provide a simple dedication or ceremony.
- Songs** Probably the best all-around activity at a small-group campfire is singing. There are lots of resources available to help you plan and conduct a sing-along. Start with the *Cub Scout Songbook*.
- Stories** Stories can be a wonderful addition to any campfire, but caution should be used to not scare the Webelos Scouts. Stories should be meaningful and have a point. Perhaps some of the adults could share some interesting, meaningful stories, but they should be short stories.
- Recognition** This is an excellent time for boy recognition that falls outside of the scope of pack recognition. Perhaps recognition could be made for some of the day's achievements or a Good Turn.
- Skits** Small two- or three-person, preapproved skits would be appropriate. The boys could conduct the skits for their parents.
- Closing Ceremony** Plan a formal closing ceremony to bring the campfire to an end.
- Organization of the Den Campfire Here is a sample den campfire plan:
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| • Opening | 5 minutes | Leader and boys |
| • Songs and skits | 20 minutes | All—fun and active |
| • Recognition | 10 minutes | Leader—slow the pace |
| • Inspirational story | 5 minutes | Leader—quiet |
| • Closing | 5 minutes | Leader—quiet |
- It is easy in a small-group setting to allow the boys to get too overactive. This will make it more difficult for them to get to sleep. It is smarter to keep the den campfire somewhat low-key.
- If the leader controls the second half of the campfire, it can be kept slow and quiet.

**Length of a
Den Campfire**

Small campfire programs should last only 30 to 45 minutes, depending on the time they are started. If you have had an active program during the day, most boys and adults will be tired. After the official campfire closing, plan to get the boys to bed.

Den Assignment

Explain that the campfire tonight will be conducted by each den at its own campsite. Therefore, each den is responsible for planning and conducting a small-group campfire program. Also explain that there will be guests at each of the den campfires.

Tell the dens what time their campfires should start.

Note to presenter: Tonight's campfires would be an excellent time to recognize the dens for attending the course. Small tokens of attendance or certificates could be presented, therefore reinforcing the recognition aspect of the campfire. If this is planned, explain to the dens that they should allow time in their schedule for a presentation at the end of their campfire.

Summary

The leader has a big role in planning, controlling, and conducting the den campfire.

Because of the proximity of the boys to the fire, the rules for safe conduct around the fire need to be established before the campfire is started.

Some parents may not wish to participate but, because of the small group, it is more difficult for them to avoid participation.

Keep den campfires small, and campfire activities relatively low-key. This will avoid the possibility of boys running or tripping into the fire.