

THE CEREMONY FOR THE OPENING & CLOSING OF CAMP

OPENING CAMP CEREMONY

The Council fires are laid under the supervision of the Scoutcraft Director.
In each fire is secluded a chemical device for setting the logs ablaze.

The announcement is made during the supper hour that all Scouts will assemble at the main flag pole at 8:15 p.m. and await orders from members of the Central Staff. At a given signal the campers will proceed in silence to the Council Ring and will be directed to their seats. Upon entering the Council ring, the fires will not be lit and the Scouts will be directed by flashlight.

At a signal from the Campfire Master of Ceremonies, an Indian suddenly appears and he will give the following talk:

This forest is my home
Here I have lived from generation to generation,
and here I will remain for all time to come.
I will be here while you are here-I will be here when you have gone.
This is my home, but to you it must ever be a borrowed paradise.

Take from my wilderness only what is needed.

Let no axe or knife mar living tree,
Or hands uproot the flowering herb.
Keep my waters clean and pure and of my wild creatures kill none.

Keep your camp clean and orderly.
Guard your fires well, and protect my forest.
Move beneath these trees with stealth, and listen to their voices;
For their voice is my voice.
Learn to love them as I have loved them.

Forsake the boisterous, the lying, and the quarrelsome tongue,
That peace may be here.
And when the hour arrives to depart, leave, that you may be welcome here again.

(Indian speaks the following lines, and gives sign language symbols with underlined words)

I give you the wild animals of the forest
I give you the trees of the woods
I give you the flowing waters
I give you the blue skies above
I give you the Council...Fire!

At the word "Fire" the Indian gestures heavenward. Simultaneously the string(s) tipping the chemicals is pulled the starting the fire(s).

The red glare dims and the Indian fades into the branches of the trees. The Council fire program proceeds as planned.

CLOSING CAMP CEREMONY

(To be used at the end of the final Council fire)

The program of the Council fire is over and it is time to go. The Campfire master of Ceremonies at his place beside the fire, has led the group singing "Round the Blazing Council Fire's Light" or the Scout Vespers and the last note has slipped away in communion with the night.

From the distance comes the call of the Indian as a spirit speeding through the tree tops. The Indian appears once again; he stands statue-like waiting as in judgment.

CAMP DIRECTOR: (facing the Indian) They have done their best, Oh judge of our hearts.

There have been times, when in moments of weakness,
a few have marred our days here with acts of selfishness.
But most of them, and most of the time, they have lived firmly by the code of the Scout.
Do not judge them harshly, Oh Chief, for they do not have the wisdom of your heart.

INDIAN:

My eyes have been on them all these days.
I have seen them in weakness and in strength.
My heart has rejoiced with the many who have been true-these are my brothers
But I will not forget those who have failed.
I will wait, to watch them on the trail ahead.

CAMP DIRECTOR: The trail ahead, Oh chief, grows steep and rough

Where even those of proven strength shall have need of greater strength
And those who have shown weakness will surely stumble and fall.
Give them your wisdom, that in times of greater need they may follow the Scouting way with
greater courage.

INDIAN:

That I cannot give, for a man must find his own wisdom.
He must search for it in the solitudes, when he has earned a welcome there.
He must make room for it in his heart, by living courageously true to an ideal
It will grow into his spirit when selfishness gives way to wisdom
For wisdom and selfishness cannot dwell together in the same house.

But his I can give

My Indian brothers often had need of strength greater than themselves
To give them strength they carried upon their hearts a sachem filled with tokens of great spiritual
meaning
In times of weakness they had only to clutch it to their breasts to feel its meaning and to gain its
strength

I give you my sachem. (he throws a leather pouch to the ground at the feet of the camp director)
In this sachem is represented in the form of a camp emblem, my totem of great spiritual
meaning.

(turning toward the Scouts) Be as strong as my oaks and as humble as the dust beneath my feet,
not knowing all you benefit

Be guided throughout your days by the spirit of my Council fire, for the trail of a man who walks
towards the light is never faint from his own shadow.

The chief quietly departs. In the silence the Indian's call comes once again from the hills, in benediction and farewell. Folding his arms, the Camp Director pronounces the Scoutmaster's Benediction and dismisses the Scouts who leave the council ring in silence.

Scoutmaster's Benediction:

And now, may the Great Scoutmaster
Of all good Scouts
Be with us
Until we meet again