

Admission

CAMP FIRE GIRLS
AND
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH



Foreword

By the Most Reverend Richard J. Cushing, Chairman of the Department of Youth of the National Catholic Welfare Conference.

It is with genuine pleasure that I endorse the Camp Fire Girls. Our country is indeed blessed in possessing constructive and educational leisure time programs for its youth. I am especially pleased to commend those programs which recognize and contribute to the development of a child's religious life. Youth serving agencies follow the best traditions of the American way in this respect. In the policies and practices of the Camp Fire Girls, the Church and the Catholic home perceive a close adherence to the American pattern which places religion as a cornerstone of the character-building process.

In renewing the endorsement of the Youth Department, National Catholic Welfare Conference, I wish to extend my cordial greetings to the officials and members of Camp Fire Girls, with the hope that Catholic groups may find in this program a useful means of serving our Catholic girls.

+ Richard J. Cushing

Archbishop of Boston

Camp Fire Philosophy

In becoming a member of a Camp Fire group, a girl states: "It is my desire to become a Camp Fire Girl, to serve God and my country, and to follow the Law of the Camp Fire which is 'Worship God, Seek Beauty, Give Service, Pursue Knowledge, Be Trustworthy, Hold on to Health, Glorify Work, Be Happy.'"

This recognition of the spiritual influence in the lives of young girls is basic to the philosophy of Camp Fire and makes it readily adaptable as an integral part of a Catholic youth movement. Each part of the Law is definitely related to Christian living, encourages an appreciation of God's creation, emphasizes the dignity of the individual, and recognizes that service to our fellow men is the practical expression of effective Christian living. "Whether you eat, or whether you drink, whatsoever you do, do all for the glory of God."

Primary Purpose Most Catholic

The purpose of the Camp Fire organization, as stated in its Constitution, is "to perpetuate the spiritual ideals of the home," and "to stimulate and aid the formation of habits making for health and character." One of the cardinal principles of Camp Fire is the belief that homemaking is woman's major responsibility and opportunity, and that in this career of homemaking she makes her greatest contribution to American



life. This demands unique capacities and skillful preparation. Hence, much emphasis in the Camp Fire program is placed on home craft and all crafts directly related to the home, for all of a girl's skills, interests and experiences are needed in building the kind of a home which is wholesome, happy, efficiently managed, and best suited to the development of Christian virtues. Camp Fire wishes to encourage and assist the initiative and activity of the Church, whose successes in this field have been clearly demonstrated by history and experience.

Catholic Participation in Camp Fire

From the earliest days of the organization, Catholic girls and Catholic women have used this program with effectiveness. With the creation of the Youth Department of the Bishop's National Catholic Welfare Conference, Camp Fire sought more formal approval than mere participation. Camp Fire wished a more active church participation, and Catholics in Camp Fire wanted the blessing of the Hierarchy on the possibility of this program being integrated beneficially into a parish youth program. This approval was given in the following letter from his Excellency, Most Reverend John A. Duffy, late Bishop of Buffalo, and then Episcopal Chairman of the N.C.W.C. Youth Department.

Mr. Lester F. Scott, National Executive
Camp Fire Girls, Inc.
88 Lexington Avenue
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mr. Scott:

I have had the literature which you so kindly sent me on the Camp Fire Girls carefully studied.

The action of the National Council of Camp Fire Girls on October 9, 1942, in amending the constitution to insert the words, "Worship God" before the words, "Seek Beauty" in the Law of the Camp Fire Girls, together with the preceding preamble adopted last year in which a girl says when she joins the organization: "It is my desire



to become a Camp Fire Girl, to serve God and my country, and to follow the Law of the Camp Fire, etc.” indicates a manifest desire on the part of Camp Fire Girls, Inc., to cooperate with the Youth Apostolate of the Church which deserves admiration and commendation.

I am confident that the program of the Camp Fire Girls will prove useful and valuable for our Catholic girls as a wider use is made of the program.

The Youth Department of the N.C.W.C. will be pleased to act as an adviser with the National Camp Fire Girls, Inc., in matters of policy and procedure affecting Catholic participation in the Camp Fire program. The Youth Department further would welcome the service of the Associate Youth Director of the Archdiocese of New York as liaison officer between the Youth Department and the Camp Fire Girls, Inc., providing this arrangement meets with the pleasure of the Archbishop of New York.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN A. DUFFY

Bishop of Buffalo

Bishop Duffy then sought and obtained the services of the Associate Youth Director of the Archdiocese of New York to serve as liaison between the Youth Department and Camp Fire.

Camp Fire Organization

Camp Fire includes girls from seven to eighteen. The three age groupings are: Blue Birds—7 to 9; Camp Fire Girls—10 through junior high school; Horizon Clubs—senior high school.

Activities in the three age groups vary according to the interests and development of the girls, but the underlying philosophy of the programs is the same.

LOCAL COUNCILS are made up of ten or more women and men who are concerned with the educational and recreational opportunities which their community provides for its young people. Many pastors of all denominations are numbered among the members of Camp Fire Councils. The Local Council engages a trained executive and maintains a Camp Fire office. Funds are obtained through the Community Chest or other welfare associations, through individual contributions or money-raising projects.

LEADERS AND SPONSORS — Blue Bird Leaders, Camp Fire Guardians, and Horizon Club Advisers, are women eighteen years of age and over who like and understand young girls. They are chosen in a variety of ways—by the Church or sponsoring institution, by the Camp Fire staff and Council Extension Committee, and by the girls themselves. In a church-sponsored group the leader is chosen by the pastor, or his designated representative, with the approval of the Camp Fire executive or Extension Committee. Where there is an executive, she and her staff give training and supervision to the leaders. Where there is no executive, correspondence courses are given to the leaders. (There is no



charge for these courses.) These are supplemented by special training courses given by the National Field Staff and by a series of workshops for leaders conducted each summer in Camp Fire camps throughout the country.

Camp Fire groups are *sponsored* by individuals, by institutions and by club groups. Individual sponsors may be either men or women. Sponsors insure continuous group leadership, help with the activities of the group, provide meeting places and funds for special projects. Camp Fire itself does not sponsor any groups. It is really more a movement than an organization, which offers a program and service to any institution or person who wishes it. More than a fourth of the Camp Fire groups are sponsored by churches and synagogues.

THE GROUP—Camp Fire groups are composed of from six to twenty girls. Girls of all races and creeds may belong to Camp Fire. If, however, a church, as the sponsoring group, wishes to limit the membership of its Camp Fire groups to its own membership, this is permissible. In some cases with the approval of the sponsoring institution and the Camp Fire executive, it is permissible to include more than twenty girls in the group. However, groups should be kept small enough to give sufficient attention to the needs of the individual girls within it. (In the division for older girls, Horizon Clubs, the membership is 10-30.)

PARENTS—The highest percentage of Camp Fire leaders comes from the mothers of Camp Fire Girls. Mothers have found the Camp Fire program a helpful means of increasing mutual understanding and comradeship between themselves and their daughters. For this reason many Camp Fire groups meet in homes, even some which are church-sponsored. Where the group meets in the church, every effort should be made to interest the mothers and fathers in the activities of the group. The assurance that her church and her parents are interested in her

good times, her accomplishments and activities is a most potent factor in influencing a girl's wholesome development.

Camp Fire—Church Relationships

Close cooperation between Camp Fire Girls and the Church is mutually beneficial. Church sponsorship adds the religious emphasis not by mere addition but by the actual implementation and evolution of the basic philosophy and tenets of Camp Fire. The Church gives the group continuous leadership and good supervision, provides a meeting place and a host of interested friends. Camp Fire gives to the Church a varied and interesting character-building program for its girls. Naturally, Camp Fire Girls, Inc., and Church leaders are aware of this and are co-operating closely.

Since the program is for girls of all races and creeds, the girl's training in her particular religious faith is left to her parents and church leaders. Local Councils are directed to schedule all community-wide activities in public buildings to which girls of all faiths may come.

The National Board of Camp Fire Girls includes in its membership representatives of the three major faiths—Protestant, Catholic, Jewish.

In Camp Fire camps provision is made for the attendance of girls at churches of their choice. If it is not possible for girls to attend nearby



churches, arrangements are made for ministers, priests, and rabbis to conduct services in the camps. Camp Fire activities scheduled for Sunday are in keeping with the day.

Religious Program

The opportunities for religious expression in Camp Fire are based on the seven crafts—Home, Creative Arts, Outdoors, Frontiers, Sports and Games, Business and Citizenship. Each one of these may be interpreted in terms of the Catholic belief, so as to be a positive enrichment of a girl's life.

Community Groups

In community groups which include girls of many denominations, the girls are urged to participate in the activities of their respective churches. They are awarded Camp Fire honors for so doing. In some cases community groups meet in space provided by a church, even though the Camp Fire group is not sponsored by the church. Such groups are conducted on the same non-sectarian basis as groups meeting in homes, schools, and other institutions.

If a Camp Fire group is organized and sponsored by a church, its activities should be closely integrated with the local church program. The priest is the spiritual leader of the group. The girls are awarded honors for service to the



Church. In these groups Camp Fire leaders working in close collaboration with the priests are careful to avoid conflicts with other church activities in which the girls would be expected to participate and do not promote activities which are contrary to the doctrines of the Church. If the Church is interested in adding some religious requirements for progression in Camp Fire, in addition to those regular requirements of the Camp Fire program, it is permissible to do so. It is recommended that these requirements be kept simple, meaningful, and within the capabilities of the girls.

How to Organize a Church-Sponsored Group

If the pastor of the church is interested in having a Camp Fire group as a part of the church program, he should:

1. Get in touch with the local Camp Fire office and ask that a field worker be sent to discuss the organization of a group. This may be done directly or through the Diocesan Youth Department. (If there is no Camp Fire Council in the community, write to Camp Fire Girls, Inc., Field Department, 88 Lexington Avenue, New York 16, N. Y., for information.)

2. If there are a Local Council and executive in the city, arrange a meeting with the chairman of the Extension Committee, the local executive, and the pastor.

3. Discuss at this meeting how the program of a Camp Fire group may best be integrated into the total Church program for the particular age groups, including all church activities in which girls share; what Church organization should sponsor the group; arrange a meeting between the Camp Fire representatives and this sponsoring organization.

4. Meet with the Camp Fire representatives and the sponsoring organization to select a

Sponsoring Committee of at least three members, who will work with the Local Council to select a leader for the Camp Fire group. The leader must be at least eighteen years old, and have those qualifications of leadership which will inspire the confidence and cooperation of the girls, the parents, and the Church.

The Sponsoring Committee is an important part of sound organization. To be properly a parish organization, the Camp Fire Committee should be selected from a parochial perspective. Those men and women who are best known to the pastor for their parish interests will be of most assistance in the proper formation, supervision, and stability of the group. The teaching Religious can be of incalculable assistance. Their devotion to Catholic youth and their eminent qualifications in pedagogical science make them the most desirable of committee consultants. The principal of the parochial school is the child specialist in the parish. Try to win her help.

5. Arrange a meeting for the parents of all girls of Camp Fire age. At this meeting the leader and the sponsors will be introduced, and the parents will have their questions answered, both as to the program and purposes of Camp Fire Girls and as to their own participation in the success of the group.

6. Meet with the girls to organize the group. An exhibit of Camp Fire equipment will help to make this a more interesting meeting to the girls who will want to see the insignia, honor beads, service costume, etc.



Probably about four meetings will be needed to complete organization. During this time the group will select a group name, elect group officers, and appoint committees and fulfill the requirements for membership, which, for Camp Fire Girls, are:

1. Be ten years of age.
2. Pay annual dues of one dollar.
3. Learn the Law of the Camp Fire Girls and repeat it as a group, saying: "It is my desire to become a Camp Fire Girl, to serve God and my country, and to follow the Law of the Camp Fire, which is:

Worship God

Seek Beauty

Give Service

Pursue Knowledge

Be Trustworthy

Hold on to Health

Glorify Work

Be Happy

When these requirements have been met, the group will fill out an application for Charter and send it to Camp Fire Girls, Inc., 88 Lexington Avenue, New York 16, N. Y. In cities where there is a Camp Fire Local Council, this application should go through the local office.

If the Camp Fire executive wishes to organize a group in a church, she should:

1. See the pastor, explain the Camp Fire program and secure his approval and interest.

See preceding paragraphs for other steps.

The same steps should be followed in organizing Blue Bird groups and Horizon Clubs. Re-

quirements for membership in these groups are as follows:

Blue Birds

1. Be seven to nine years of age.
2. Pay annual dues of ~~three cents~~ \$1.00

Horizon Clubs

1. Be in senior high school or fifteen years of age.
2. Pay annual dues of one dollar.

A Selected Bibliography of Camp Fire Girls Publications

*Handbook for Guardians of Camp Fire Girls**

A guide for Guardians of Camp Fire Girls. Part I is concerned with the discussion of leadership techniques and aids for the understanding and sympathetic guidance of growing girls. Part II consists of activity material for program development. Price, postpaid, 75c.

*The Book of the Camp Fire Girls**

Written for girls, this book contains a complete outline of the Camp Fire program, and suggests "a thousand and more" things for a girl to do to develop new interests and enlarge her horizons, or to increase her skill and enjoyment of hobbies and interests already begun. Price, postpaid, 60c.

*The Blue Birds Book (Junior Program)**

Tells how to organize a group, and how to conduct a program of creative play activities, simple craft work, games, music, dancing, dramatics, and the many other interesting activities that girls from 7 to 9 enjoy. Price postpaid, 50c.

*Horizon Club Program Book (Senior Program)**

Both Horizon Club Advisers and members find this book useful. It contains program material on personality development, good times, community service, and vocational exploration. Price, postpaid, 60c.

The Camp Fire Girl

A magazine of news and program suggestions for Blue Bird, Camp Fire and Horizon Club groups. Issued monthly except July and August. Single copies, 10c; annual subscription, 75c. (Each registered leader and assistant, upon payment of dues, receives a year's subscription. This is renewed annually upon receipt of dues.)

Price List of Program and Extension Materials

Available without charge from National Headquarters of Camp Fire Girls, 88 Lexington Avenue, New York 16, N. Y.

* Order from Camp Fire Outfitting Company, 197 Greene Street, New York 12, N. Y.



Symbolism of Cover Decoration

Predominant in the decoration of the cover is the cross, universal symbol of Christianity. On the right and left are decorations composed of symbols as used by Camp Fire Girls. These are based on Indian design because of its pictorial simplicity, but other symbols, traditional or original, could be used for the same purpose—to express an ideal.

The artist has made her own adaptation and interpretation of symbols to express the Camp Fire Law:

Worship God (everlasting life)

Seek Beauty (the appreciative eye)

Give Service (the warming sun)

Pursue Knowledge (aspiring thought)

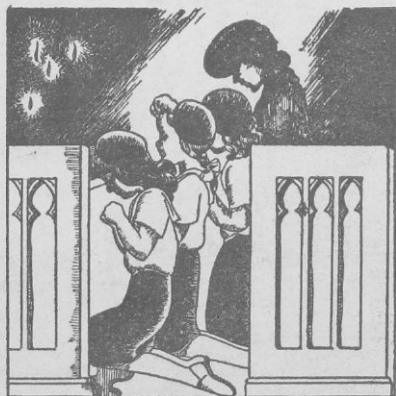
Be Trustworthy (steadfast star)

Hold On To Health (challenging mountain)

Glorify Work (tilled earth)

Be Happy (home—the person who is at home with God and man is truly happy)

In a similar way Camp Fire Girls use whatever symbols are most meaningful to them to express their aspirations and incorporate them in a design with which to decorate their personal belongings.



Camp Fire Girls, Inc., 88 Lexington Avenue
New York 16, N. Y.