

Camp Fire Handbook

Summer 2026

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1. The Five logs of Campfires

These are five features of a great campfire for children.

Repeat after me

They're a really useful tool as everyone can join in even if they've never heard the song before.

Also known as call and response, examples are:

- Boom Chicka Boom
- Crazy Moose
- Yellow Bird



Try to mix them up (i.e. don't do call and response one-after-the-other-after-the-other). Try to vary the style: You can have too much of a good thing.

Repetition

Verses that repeat themselves but often have a final line or a twist which is different, they're super quick to pick up and sing along to. Examples include Peel Banana, BINGO, Jaws, The Song that Never Ends.

Restrained (c)rudeness

Children laugh at things that are unexpected, this might be toilet humour poo, or surprising things. Examples include Peel Banana, Boom-Chicka-Boom (Does my bum look big in this), Yellow Bird.

Reverse power

Youngsters love to see leaders being the butt of a joke. You might want to check it's fine to check with leaders that they're ok with playing 'victim' before the campfire. For example, Shake your Booty, The Song that Never Ends.(Scouts).

Reverence

You've a fire with embers, it's something magical to stare into the rich red glows. Towards the end, move to calmer more reverential songs. For example, Kum-Ba-Yah, Auld Lang Syne, Wild Mountain Thyme.

2. How long should it be?

The following are rules of thumb for length

- ✓ Squirrels: Up to 30 minutes
- ✓ Beavers: Up to 50 minutes

- ✓ Cubs: Up to 60 minutes
- ✓ Scouts / EXU Up to 90 minutes

That said, it's about quality and not quantity. If you've only got 45 minutes of material, then do it and finish with success. Stop while the going is good.

You don't need to lead all the songs – you will often have other adults, young leaders or older scouts who are happy to pitch in a song or two.

3. The journey of energy we go on together

You want youngsters to have great fun – so there'll be lots of energy and fun.

However, you don't want youngsters making lots of noise as they return from the campfire circle to their campsite or building. Other groups may be settling for the evening. Therefore, you build your campfire routine around building up to be most noisy or raucous about 80% of the way in.

Then you choose songs to lower the energy and promote calmness

For example, a campfire might look like this:

1. Fun
2. Fun
3. Fun
4. Fun
5. Fun
6. Loud (if you must)
7. Fun
8. Fun or chilled
9. Chilled
10. Reverential

Campfire list

1. Pizza Hut
2. Bingo/Splat
3. The banana song
4. Crazy Moose
5. Song that never ends
6. Boom Chicka Boom
7. Jaws
8. Sally and Nigel walking through the forest
9. Oh You'll Never go to Heaven
10. Auld Lang Syne

4. Tips on crowd management

- ✓ Move quickly between songs.
- ✓ Pause for long enough for laughter or excitement to subside before speaking.
- ✓ If you can avoid telling youngsters off, please do so. Rollockings kill the energy and fun. If there's a problem, have a quiet word with another grown up and ask them to subtly deal with it.
- ✓ To get attention, speak louder than them, then quickly come down in volume.
- ✓ To get attention, use pauses, silence, body language, body position.
- ✓ Start a sentence that is irresistible for them to hear... OK!... The next song.... Is called...
- ✓ If they make noise.... 'Hold on' and repeat. Think what it's like to be that kid there for the first time... Not everyone knows, so I'll say again, this song is called...

5. Keeping the fire going

The person leading the camp fire needs to concentrate on keeping the energy going. That means that they shouldn't really be adding wood on to the fire to keep it going. This should be a different leader to the one leading the campfire.

The fire does not need to be enormous – only enough to give people warmth, give light and be a focus point. Enormous campfires roast the campfire leader and cook the front row. They also waste lots of time building them.

Sadly, enormous fires are sometimes more to do with the vanity of the builder than the benefit of the audience. Knock that on the head “We could do with you back to help serve for tea, so let's just have a very measured size.”

Even with a sensible sized campfire, it's useful to have a drink – you still get toasted.

6. Loud Songs

Shouty Songs (e.g. Charlie Had a Pigeon) are fine, but they knacker your voice for the next day. By all means use them, but for your own voice, then use them sparingly.

7. Opening Song

A traditional first song is Campfire's Burning. It uses the tune of the trad London's Burning song. Or, go with something that has actions, rhythm and (in subsequent verses) has humour like Pizza Hut.

8. Risk assessment

Your risk assessment will include

1. **Behaviour:** (Control measures = ditch more active songs and switch for calmer ones (e.g. You'll never go to heaven), curtail length if it starts to get too giddy, disperse grown ups to sit near groups of youngsters that are getting too giddy).
2. **Fire fighting:** You'll need at least one water bucket to chuck if fire gets out of hand.
3. **Fire spreading:** Keep your wood pile(s) far enough away from the fire that the camp fire will not ignite the wood pile.
4. **Debris:** Check for debris on the ground on the fire that could be tripped over.
5. **Safe walking back:** Youngsters should bring torches so that they can safely walk back to your site/ building at the end
6. **Warmth:** Youngsters should bring clothes warm enough for the nighttime end of the campfire and not the light time start!
7. **Extinguishing fire:** It's typically best to extinguish the fire at the end of the camp fire rather than let it burn away. Do not leave fire unattended to burn away.

9 The songs

Pizza Hut

An action song that is very well known.

A pizza hut, a pizza hut, Kentucky fried chicken and a pizza hut

A pizza hut, a pizza hut, Kentucky fried chicken and a pizza hut

Mcdonalds, Mcdonalds, Kentucky fried chicken and a pizza hut

Other verses

1. Snotty nosed cub/know it all scout/a leader (furious face & voice, pointing angrily)
2. Tall girl guide, tiny little brownie, leader (bossom)
3. _____'s tiny car, _____ big jeep, _____ (fast person)
4. Vindaloo, lots of water, the toilet.

Peel Banana (Action song)

(Beavers / Cubs)

Peel banana. Peel, peel banana (x4)

Chop banana. Chop, chop banana (x4)

Eat banana. Eat, eat banana (x4)

OOOOOOOOOH!

Poo banana. Poo, poo banana x 4

(Hesitant & mischievous look...)

Scoop banana. Scoop, Scoop banana (x4)

Fry banana. Fry, Fry banana (x4)

Eat banana. Eat, eat banana (x4)

OOOOOOOOOH!

Poo banana. Poo, poo banana (x4)

(Hesitant & mischievous look...)

Scoop banana. Scoop, Scoop banana (x4)

Roast banana. Roast, roast banana (x4)

Eat banana. Eat, eat banana (x4)

OOOOOOOOOH!

Poo banana. Poo, poo banana (x4)

(Hesitant & mischievous look...)

“Erm... I think maybe that’s enough nana for today... .. Only joking:

Scoop banana. Scoop, Scoop banana (x4)

Blend banana. Blend, blend banana (x4)

Drink banana. Drink, drink banana (x4)

OOOOOOOOOH!

Poo banana. Poo, poo banana (x4)

(Hesitant & mischievous look...)

“Erm... I think that’s definitely enough... nana... for... to-day...”

Bingo/Splat

Bingo is a traditional children's song.

Verse 1

There was a man who had a dog and Bingo
was his name-o

B-I-N-G-O

B-I-N-G-O

B-I-N-G-O

And Bingo was his name-o!

The clapping version is the classic way to perform it with children. Each round drops another letter and replaces it with a clap!

Verse 2

There was a farmer had a dog, and Bingo
was his name-o

clap-I-N-G-O

clap-I-N-G-O

clap-I-N-G-O

And Bingo was his name-o!

Verse 3 has clap-clap-N-G-O and so on until verse five has 5 claps.

Jaws

(Squirrels / Beavers / Cubs)

Baby Jaws beep beep beep beep

As you sing the words, clap finger and thumb together like they are the opening and closing jaws of a shark.

Then

- Mummy Jaws
- Daddy Jaws
- Grandma Jaws
- Grandad Jaws

Twist

At the end, tell the audience that there's some sad news... Bingo got into an accident... then break straight into song...

There was a man who had a dog, I hit him
with my pick up truck

S-P-L-A-T

S-P-L-A-T

S-P-L-A-T

I hit him with my pick up truck

Then it's the same idea as before, but this time you clap one letter at the end each time.

So, the next verse is:

There was a man who had a dog, I hit him
with my pick up truck

S-P-L-A-clap

S-P-L-A-clap

S-P-L-A-clap

I hit him with my pick up truck

Then S-P-L-clap-clap and so on.

I saw a bird

(Cubs / Scouts / Explorers)

I saw a bird (I saw a bird)
With a yellow bill (With a yellow bill)
It landed on (It landed on)
My windows sill (My windows sill)

I coaxed him in (I coaxed him in)
With a (item of food) (With a (item of food))
And then I (did unexpected thing to the bird over two lines)

E.g.

I coaxed him in (I coaxed him in)
With a slice of bread (With a slice of bread)
And then I bit (And then I bit)
Off his little head (Off his little head)

Other verses

With a chunk of meat / crushed.... his little feet
With a drink of juice / Fed him... to my pet moose
With a bowl of stew / Flushed him down... our upstairs loo
With a can of tizer / popped him in... my liquidiser
With a tin of spaghetti / chopped him up with my machete

Boom Chicka Boom

(Squirrels, Beavers, Cubs, Scouts)

Repeat after me song. It's the same (or very similar) verse repeated but with light twists each time via tweaking lyrics or via actions)

I said a boom-chicka-boom (audience repeats back)
I said a boom-chicka-boom (audience repeats back)
I said a boom-chicka, rocka-chicka, rocka-chicka boom (audience repeats back)
Aha (audience repeats back)
Oh yeah (audience repeats back)
One more time (audience repeats back)
_____ style. (audience repeats back)

Race Car Style

I said a vroom-chicka-vroom
I said a vroom-chicka-vroom
I said a vroom-chicka, rocka-chicka, rocka-chicka vroom
Aha, oh yeah etc...

German Style

Ich sprach boom-chicka-boom x2

Ich sprach boom-chicka, rocka-chicka, rocka-chicka, boom

Ah hah

Oh ja

Noch ein mal

_____ style.

Cub style

Normal lyrics, but it's the actions that are different.

Pretend to be picking at your nose to find a bogey, then when saying "Aha" look at your finger as if you've just discovered a bogey and then once you've said oh yeah, put your finger in mouth to eat the bogey.

Mum style (pretend to put make up on, use high pitched voice)

I said a boom boom-chicka-boom

I said a boom boom-chicka-boom

I said does my bum look big in this? (point to backside)

I said does my bum look big in this? (point to backside)

DOES MY BUM LOOK BIG IN THIS? (vigorously point to backside)

Leader Style

I said a boom boom-chicka-boom

I said a boom boom-chicka-boom

I said shouldn't you be in bed by now?

I said shouldn't YOU be in BED by now?

SHOULDN'T YOU BE IN BED BY NOW?

Thunderstorm style: I said a boooooooooom chicka boooooooooom

Ghost style: I said a wooooooooo chicka wooooooooo

Army style: I said a BOOM!-chicka-BOOM!

Whisper style: All the normal words, but just very quietly

To finish off your last verse...

Ah ha

Oh yeah

No more times

That's the end.

Crazy Moose

(Beavers / Cubs)

There was a crazy moose	(there was a crazy moose)
Who liked to drink a lot of juice	(who liked to drink a lot of juice)
There was a crazy moose	(there was a crazy moose)
Who liked to drink a lot of juice	(who liked to drink a lot of juice)

Chorus

Singing way-oh, way oh	(singing way-oh, way-oh)
Way-oh, way-oh, way-oh, way-oh	(way-oh, way-oh, way-oh, way-oh)
Way oh, way oh	(way oh, way oh)
Way-oh, way-oh, way-oh, way-oh	(way-oh, way-oh, way-oh, way-oh)

v2. The moose's name was Fred / He liked to drink his juice in bed (x2)

v3. He drank his juice with care / But he spilled some in his hair (x2)

v4 (this verse has 4 unique lines)

Now he's a sticky moose / Who's full of juice.

But he's a moose / On the loose

Do actions for each line.

Alice the Camel

(Squirrels / Beavers / Maybe Cubs)

Alice the camel had five humps,
Alice the camel had five humps,
Alice the camel had five humps,
So go Alice go! Bom, bom, bom.

Alice the camel had four humps,
Alice the camel had four humps,
Alice the camel had four humps,
So go Alice go! Bom, bom, bom.

Repeat counting down until:

Alice the camel has no humps,
Alice the camel has no humps,
Alice the camel has no humps,
Because Alice is a horse!

If you're happy and you know it

(Squirrels / Beavers)

If you're happy and you know it clap your hands (Clap Clap)

If you're happy and you know it clap your hands (Clap Clap)

If you're happy and you know it and you really want to show it

If you're happy and you know it clap your hands (Clap Clap)

Repeat with:

Slap your knees

Stamp your feet

Shout we are

Do all four!

Song That Never Ends Song

(Beavers / Cubs / Scouts)

This is the song that never ends.

It just goes on and on, my friend.

Some people started singing it, not knowing what it was.

And, they'll be singing it forever more, only just because...

(Repeat forever)

For Scouts?

You can do this for scouts, but because it's a bit more childish than streetwise 12 and 13 year olds will tolerate, you may need a hook, For example...

- "Leader X if I could get all the scouts to promise to be quiet after 11pm, would you like that."
- "If they did that, would you be willing to do something kind for them in return?"
- "Would you be willing to do some Irish dancing – just while we sing this next song – remember they'll promise no noise after 11pm?"
- Then ask scouts if they'd agree to that to see Leader X dancing.
- Once you've set up, then say the next song is called 'The Song that never ends' and start singing whilst the leader is dancing their Irish jig.
- Stop the song before they collapse.
- You may want to run the idea past the leader before your campfire to make sure they consent.

Charlie had a pigeon (loud)

(Cubs / Scouts)

Charlie had a pigeon, a pigeon, a pigeon,
Charlie had a pigeon, a pigeon that flew.
It flew in the morning,
It flew in the night,
And when it came back it was covered in...

Each verse gets louder than the last. The restrained rudeness comes from the fact that you never actually sh*te. When you want to finish, sing "...it was covered in feathers."

Everywhere I go (loud)

(Beavers, Cubs, Scouts)

Everywhere I go	(Everywhere I go)
People stop and ask me	(People stop and ask me)
Where d'you come from	(Where d'you come from)
So I stop and tell them	(So I stop and tell them)
I'm from Sheffield	(I'm from Sheffield)
Mighty, mighty Sheffield	(Mighty, mighty Sheffield)
And if they can't hear us	(And if they can't hear us)
We shout a little louder	(We shout a little louder)

- Beavers: Repeat x 4
- Cubs/Scouts: Repeat x 5

Do all five

The field mice song / Sally & Nigel walking through the forest

(Cubs / maybe Scouts)

Uses the tune of Oo-de-lally ("Robin Hood and Little John Walking thru the forest...") from Disney's Robin Hood film from 1973.

This is a reverse-power song. For Sally and Nigel, insert the names of two of your leaders on camp. For Akela, insert the names of one of your leaders on camp.

Sally & Nigel walking through the forest

Scooping up field mice and bashing them on the head.

Along came Akela, walking through the forest

Don't you scoop up field mice and bash them on the head.

Sally and Nigel, I'll give you **three more chances**.

And the very next day...

Sally & Nigel walking through the forest

Scooping up field mice and bashing them on the head.

Along came Akela, walking through the forest

Don't you scoop up field mice and bash them on the head.

Sally and Nigel, I'll give you **two more chances**.

Next verse, the same but ends with **one more chance**.

Then, the same but end with **no more chances**.

Then, it switches for the punchline...

And the very next day...

Cub Leader Akela walking through the forest

Picking up field Sally and bashing her on the head.

Cub Leader Akela walking through the forest

Picking up Nigel and bashing him on the head.

To end just say something like "I hope we've all learned an important lesson today – never ever, ever pick up field mice and bash them on the head."

Oh you'll never go to heaven

(Cubs, Scouts, Explorers)

Oh you'll never go to heaven	(Oh you'll never go to heaven)
In a baked bean tin	(In a baked bean tin)
'Cause a baked bean tin	('Cause a baked bean tin)
has baked beans in	(has baked beans in)

Oh you'll never get to heaven
Oh you'll never go to heaven in a baked bean tin
'Cause a baked bean tin has baked beans in
I ain't gonna grieve my Lord no more

I ain't gonna grieve my Lord no more
I ain't gonna grieve my Lord no more
I ain't gonna grieve... my Lord no more

Subsequent verse can be offered by participants or pick from these:

Oh you'll never get to heaven, in a jumbo jet
'Cause the Lord aint got, no runways yet

Oh you'll never get to heaven, in red and white
'Cause the Lord our God's, a Unitedite

Oh you'll never get to heaven, in Akela's bra
'Cause Akela's bra, won't stretch that far

Oh you'll never get to heaven, on a blade of grass
'Cause a blade of grass, will cut your elbow

Oh you'll never get to heaven, in Ian's car
'Cause Ian's car, stops at every bar

If I go to heaven, before you do,
I'll dig a little hole and smile to you.

Sometimes you can throw in extra ones that are silly or surreal but relevant to the day's events. For example, singing that day's local football score:

Oh you'll never get to heaven, in white and blue,
Sheffield Wednesday 1. Watford 2.

Final verse

And that's the end, the preacher said,
As he closed his book, and went to bed.

Wild Rover

(Scouts / Explorers)

A traditional folk song with a tub thumping chorus that's easy to pick up.

I've been a wild rover for many a year
And I've spent all my money on whiskey and beer
And now I'm returning with gold in great store
And I never will play the wild rover no more

Chorus

And it's no, nay, never
No, nay never no more (clap, clap, clap, clap)
Will I play the wild rover
No never no more

I went into an ale house I used to frequent
And I told the landlady my money was spent
I asked for credit, she answered me "Nay"
Saying "Custom like yours I can have any day"

I took out from my pocket gold sovereigns bright
And the landlady's eyes opened wide with delight
She said "I have whiskey and wines of the best
And the words that I spoke, they were only in jest"

I'll go home to parents, confess what I've done
And I'll ask them to pardon their prodigal son
And if they forgive me as oft times before
Then I never will play the wild rover no more

Wild Mountain Thyme

(Scouts / Explorers)

A traditional folk song. A nice intro is to say "I find this song so beautiful... It's the kind of song that I could listen to whilst staring into the rich red embers for hour upon hour.

O the summer time is here, And the trees are sweetly blooming,
And the wild mountain thyme, Grows around the blooming heather.
Will ye go, lassie, go?

Chorus

And we'll all go together
To pull wild mountain thyme
All around the blooming heather
Will ye go, lassie, go?

I will build my love a tower, Near yon pure crystal fountain
And on it I will pile, All the flowers of the mountain
Will ye go, lassie, go?

Chorus

If my true love she were gone, I would surely find another
Where wild mountain thyme, Grows around the blooming heather
Will ye go, lassie, go?

Chorus x 2

Kum-Ba-Yah

(Cubs / Scouts / Explorers)

Kumbaya my Lord, kumbaya
Kumbaya my Lord, kumbaya
Kumbaya my Lord, kumbaya
Oh Lord, kumbaya

Someone's singing Lord, kumbaya
Someone's singing Lord, kumbaya
Someone's singing Lord, kumbaya
Oh Lord, kumbaya

Other verses

- Someone's praying
- Someone's laughing

- Humm the melody

Humour verses (use sparingly as you are singing this for calm and reverence)

- Someone's snoring
- Someone's soaking wet
- Someone's eaten my crisps (action: furious face, point accusingly at one leader)

Finish by repeating first verse

Auld Lang Syne

(Cubs / Scouts / Explorers)

- Auld Lang Syne is a traditional Scottish poem by Robert Burns, and is usually sung at New Years Eve.
- **The core idea** "Auld Lang Syne" translates from Scots as "**times gone by**" or "**days of old**". The central question it asks is: should we forget old friends and old times, or should we remember and cherish them?
- Robert Burns produced it in the late 1700s and said it was adapted from a song an old man had taught him. So the original words could date back to the 1600s or maybe before. That means the language could be 500 years old.
- To make it understandable to 21st century children, this is an more Anglicised adaptation of the poem.
- Cross over your hands in the chorus to shake hands with the people next to you.
- Use a slow tempo as a calming end to the campfire.
- Everyone tends to join the chorus and you sing any subsequent verses alone.

Verse 1

Should auld acquaintance be forgot, And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot, For the sake of auld lang syne?

Chorus

For auld lang syne, my dear, For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet, For auld lang syne!

Chorus

V2

And there's a hand, my trusty friend, And give's a hand of thine,
We'll take a cup of kindness yet, For auld lang syne!

Then chorus, repeat V1 and chorus twice again.

Other verses

We two have run about the fields, And pulled the flowers fine,
But we've wandered many a weary footstep, since auld lang syne.

We two have paddled in the stream, From morning sun till dine,
With seas between us, waves have roared, Since auld lang syne.

10. Where else to look for songs?

1st Holgate Song Book has an A-Z of campfire songs

<https://1stholgatescoutgroup.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/1st-Holgate-Song-Book.pdf>

OR Google 1st Holgate song book

The Scout Association also have a list of songs

<https://www.scouts.org.uk/volunteers/running-your-section/planning-your-programme/outdoor-in-24/campfire-songs/>

Classic songs

This Old Man	+
On Top Of Spaghetti	+
At The Stores	-

Verse 1

There are snakes, snakes, snakes,

Big as garden rakes,

In the stores! In the stores!