

Campfire Tales

Faith Festival

By Jane Angha

Time: 90 minutes

Objective: To gather the parish community on a summer evening for a campfire – retelling stories from Scripture that will intrigue, delight, and surprise.



Supplies and Preparation

- Bible
- Musician, guitar and easy songs (See Resource 3)
- Hospitality – ingredients for S'mores, sticks or skewers to roast the marshmallows, lemonade, and ice water
- Hand wipes
- Nametags, markers
- Permit for campfire on church property, if necessary
- Fire pit, logs, matches, fire extinguisher, first aid kit, flashlight
- Sound system for game leaders, if necessary

Note: If a sound system is not needed, have a whistle, bell, or some way to gather people and get their attention at the end of each game.

- Be sure restrooms are open with the lights on.
- Provide copies of *Peace is Flowing Like a River* or create a poster or multiple posters with the lyrics

Note: The author of this hymn is unknown. There is no known holder for the copyright.

Peace is flowing like a river,
Flowing out of you and me;
Flowing out into the desert,
Setting all the captives free.

This song is also available at: <http://www.spiritandsong.com/compositions/8247>

- *Optional:* Provide glow sticks or glow necklaces for the children to wear, just for fun!

Prepare in Advance

- Invite people to help with prayer and to read the Scripture passage.
- Invite three people to be storytellers for the night (see Resource 4).
- Invite someone to lead music for prayer and for campfire songs (see Resource 3).
- Invite people to welcome and greet participants.
- Invite people to help prepare and serve refreshments.

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- Invite middle or high school youth to lead two games with the group. Use the links provided in this outline if you are unfamiliar with the games suggested.
- Use Resource 1 to organize the helpers for this event.
- Use Resource 2 to help you with your publicity and advertising.

Welcome (5 minutes)

Greeters should be stationed at different places to welcome and help participants make name tags and get settled. Welcome the community in these or similar words:

Welcome! We are so happy you have joined us for the campfire tonight. Don't you love being with friends on a nice summer night just being around the campfire and talking? There is a tradition with campfires – you are supposed to cook hot dogs and s'mores and tell ghost stories! Have any of you done that before? Well, tonight we have some stories to tell too – not ghost stories, but ones you might like because of the suspense and mystery! And it wouldn't be a campfire without s'mores. So let's get started. We really need to get to know each other and it's so nice out tonight – why not play a few night games?

Opening Community Builder (15 minutes)

Invite the game leaders to the front, introduce them and let them lead the two games. With people of all ages, it may be a little chaotic, but the idea is just to have fun!

Consider these options:

Simon Says

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_Says

Mr. Fox What Time is It?

<http://www.wikihow.com/Play-What's-the-Time-Mr-Wolf>

Red Rover, Red Rover

http://www.gameskidsplay.net/games/strength_games/redrover.htm

After the games, provide a transition to the next activity:

This was a fun way to get to know each other! Part of being a parish family is feeling like we belong and having fun together. Tonight is all about that! Let's gather by our campfire and continue the fun!

Tales from the Bible (40 minutes)

Provide an introduction for the storytelling time:

What a perfect summer night! We played some great games, and now we are going to hear from some storytellers around our campfire. We will hear a few incredible stories and then stop to have some snacks. We will end our evening with a campfire prayer before we head home. Our stories tonight aren't ghost stories or scary stories that you might tell around a campfire, but our Bible is full of some amazing adventures! Let's hear one of those stories!

Introduce the first storyteller.

When he or she is finished, ask some questions about the story:

1. Who were the characters in the story?
2. What was going on in the story?
3. What did you learn about God?
4. What is the lesson for us in the story?

Introduce the next storyteller. Ask similar questions after the story is finished and then if the crowd isn't too restless and seems engaged, have the last storyteller come forward.

Finish with questions and then invite those gathered to share a story they might know or retell their favorite Bible story.

Refreshments and Songs (25 minutes)

After a few of these stories, invite people to go to the snack table to get instructions and supplies from the helpers. Provide a few safety tips about the campfire and s'more making. Safety first! Invite participants to make s'mores and get something to drink. Be sure that if it is dark, the children know where they can and cannot go!

After everyone has made their s'mores, invite participants to re-gather. Have the guitar player/musician lead some campfire songs and simple songs for people to sing along.

After 20 minutes or so, gather participants back for final thoughts and prayer.

Campfire Prayer (5 minutes)

Invite participants to join in prayer:

What a great way to spend a summer evening – storytelling, playing games, and just being together as a community! Let's end our evening with a prayer.

Have the song leader lead the opening song: *Peace is Flowing Like a River*.

Gathering Prayer

Prayer Leader:

Lord, we thank you so much for our campfire evening. You blessed us with each other's company, stories of faith, and faithful people. Be with us as we end our day; bless us with good rest, renewed faith, and joy. We ask this in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Reader 1: Colossians 3:12-17

Prayer Leader:

In our prayer we are reminded to be grateful and to bring our needs before our loving God. For what shall we pray tonight? Our prayer response will be **Lord, hear our prayer.**

Provide a prayer intention and lead the community in the response. Invite others to share intentions. After several intentions are shared, provide these comments:

Prayer Leader:

As a community and family, the stories we heard tonight help us understand more about our Catholic heritage, how God has been a part of our history for thousands of years, and how we should live today. We should come to know the stories in Scripture just like we know the stories of our own families! We have lots of stories, prayers, traditions, rituals, and celebrations that teach us how to be Catholic. It is important for us to be witnesses to the world about the good things God has done. One of the most special traditions and prayers is the Our Father. Let's hold the hand of the person next to us and pray together as God's family.

Lead the community in praying the Our Father.

Close the prayer in song by reprising *Peace is Flowing Like a River*. This time, sing the song in rounds.

Provide closing comments and words of thanks:

That ends our evening together. Thank you to our storytellers, song leaders, and hospitality ministers for helping make our campfire night so much fun! Thanks to you for coming! We hope to do this again soon. Good night!

Resource 1

Job Descriptions

Leader

- Schedules event
- Advertises in bulletin, website, fliers and more
- Invites people to help with evening
- Leads the session and prayer time
- Secures all supplies needed for the event
- Invites people to help set up/clean up
- Thanks the team after the event

Hospitality

- Gathers supplies for snacks and refreshments: lemonade, graham crackers, marshmallows, chocolate bars, ice, water, hand wipes
- Invites people to bring items
- Manages the set up and clean up

Music

- Chooses music for campfire songs
- Leads music for prayer and around the campfire
- Arranges for necessary equipment (microphones, speakers)

Resource 2

Advertising

Start advertising four to six weeks in advance. You can have people sign up with an RSVP or just come...whatever fits your parish personality and style. Post an invitation to the campfire in a variety of ways:

- The parish website
- Facebook Event invite
- Twitter
- Take home notes
- Mass email

For the Bulletin:

Everybody loves a summer campfire and night games! Bring your family, neighbors and friends to our Campfire Night! We will hear some stories around the fire, make s'mores, of course, and have some fun playing games together! [Add date, time, and location.]

Resource 3

Traditional Campfire Songs

(Click on song title to follow the link.)

[Ain't No Flies on Us!](#) – Andrew Queen
[Boom Boom, Ain't It Great to Be Crazy?](#) – Traditional Folk Song
[Come and Go With Me](#) – Traditional Song
[Down by the Riverside](#) – Traditional Folk Song
[Going On A Bear Hunt](#) – Traditional Chant
[The Green Grass Grew All Around](#) – Traditional
[I Love the Mountains](#) – Campfire Song Lyrics
[John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt](#) – Traditional
[Kumbayah](#) – Traditional African-American Song
[Little Cabin in the Woods](#) – Traditional
[The Little Green Frog](#) – Jim Rule
[The Love Round](#) – Traditional Campfire Song
[The More We Get Together](#) - Traditional/Jim Rule
[The More We Get Together](#) - Traditional/Marla Lewis
[The Paw Paw Patch](#) – Traditional
[The Riddle Song](#) – Traditional
[Three Short-Necked Buzzards](#) – Traditional/Colleen and Uncle Squaty
[We Circle Around](#) – Traditional Arapaho Native American Song
[We Shall Not Be Moved](#) – Traditional
[We've Got the Whole World in Our Hands](#)
[Worms](#) – Andrew Queen
[My Red Wagon](#) - Traditional



Resource 4

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Stories to Tell

1. Jonah and the Whale: Jonah 1:1 - 3:10
2. Prodigal Son: Luke 15:11-32
3. David and Goliath: 1 Samuel 17:1-58
4. Daniel and the Lion's Den: Daniel 1:1 - 6:28
5. Paul's and Silas' Escape from Prison: Acts 16:16-40

To prepare for the evening, storytellers should read the Scripture, put it into their own words, and practice it several times.

For an idea of a way to retell a Scripture story, see this video of ValLimar Jansen retelling the story of the Woman at the Well:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nCw2kpaF1IQ>