

The Gray Areas

Some things to think about when putting on a campfire program

- As with everything else in Scouting, it is our responsibility to maintain the highest standards of character and positive moral values.
- For some reason, many leaders who would not tolerate their Scouts telling off-color or offensive jokes, drinking, throwing water on each other, or other “un-Scoutlike gutter entertainment” behavior, find it appropriate to glorify this type of unacceptable behavior at campfires.
- Every element of the campfires should support character development, citizenship, and moral fitness.
- You may say, “Things are said worse in daily conversation at school.”
Response, “All the more reason Scouting should maintain its safe haven from such behavior.”
- All skits will be screened for appropriate content in advance, and adults should not be afraid to jump in and stop an offensive skit in a tactful way. One example of interrupting a skit is by yelling, “Spam Check! Everyone check your seats for wild spasm!” In the confusion, the offensive performers will be cleared from the stage and the next act will be introduced.
- Oftentimes, just changing a word or two of a song or skit can make it acceptable. For example, instead of having a gang of blood thirsty “Injuns” or motorcycle riders attack the two sleeping Scouts in that popular skit, make it a swarm of “mosquitoes.”
- The following “Grey Areas” should send up a red flag for leaders to rethink. Remember, if an act is the least bit questionable, it is probably best to forego it.

1). Embarrassing, insulting, demeaning skits:

Examples: the big jerk skit, sucker on a stick skit, ugliest man in the world skit. These can be OK if the “target” has given permission in advance.

Concerns: self-esteem, social approval, loss of respect, rudeness.

2). Violence/Suicide skits:

Examples: reporter looking for a story skit; any skit where someone gets beat up or killed.

Concerns: making light of violence or suicide in an area where both are escalating concerns.

3). Water skits:

Examples: any skit where water, in any amount, is thrown on people

Concerns: self-worth and self-esteem; teaches that this behavior is acceptable; may be too cold to be wet; may damage clothing or personal belongings.

4). Toilet Humor: skits where any references to bodily functions (urination, defecation, vomiting), or underwear and/or toilet paper

Examples: elephant, horse, dog skit where animal urinates on ‘victim,’ skits where participant eats what is to be dog waste, papers for the movement skit, JC Penny skit (OK if done in shorts).

Concerns: none of these things contributes to developing Scouting’s ideals and values.

5). Alcohol/Drunkenness:

Examples: Lily the Pink, Mountain Dew (OK if done with a Mountain Dew can), other obvious drinking songs.

Concerns: BSA stance is that alcohol is the most abused drug in the age group we serve and should not be condoned nor glorified.

6). Sexual Innuendo and “Over the Edge” Female Impersonations:

Examples: over-accentuating certain body parts or any reference to sexual behavior of any type.

Concerns: sexual harassment, embarrassment, disrespect of females; not in keeping with the Scout Oath/Law.