

Making that First S'more

1. If you have young girls in your troop, consider having your marshmallow roast during the daylight. It is easier to keep an eye on the girls and eating sugary things right before bed isn't a good idea.
2. Discuss fire safety before the camping trip and again at camp before lighting the fire.
3. Have the girls repeat the rules back to you so that you know that they have been listening.
4. The campfire area is defined as the stone ring containing the fire, as well as all the space between the fire ring and the benches/logs/stones which people sit upon.
5. NO running in this area! Ever. Even when there is no fire.
6. No balancing/teetering or other horseplay on the campfire ring logs. When singing action songs around a campfire, have everyone stand behind the logs, if possible.
7. Have the fire tenders gather safety equipment (bucket of water, shovel) before lighting the fire and have them explain what to do about flying embers. A wool blanket is also an excellent thing to have on hand for safety.
8. Have the fire tenders check to be sure everyone is wearing proper clothing, hair is tied back and nothing is dangling from necks. (Have everyone bend forward for the dangle test.) If someone has a long pony tail, have her tuck it in the neck of her coat or shirt. Ponchos and shirts and coats with long puffy sleeves are not safe around a fire. Also, be careful with Polar fleece type fabric. If a spark lands on it, it will melt the fabric and might stick to the skin.
9. No one touches, pokes or adds wood to the fire except the designated fire tenders.
10. The fire is always attended.
11. Bring only about 6 roasting sticks (four if the fire ring is small). This minimizes the number of sharp objects that are being waved around in the dark. It also minimizes the crush of bodies around the fire.
12. Before the girls roast marshmallows, demonstrate what to do with a flaming marshmallow and what might happen if they swing it around to show you that it is on fire. Younger girls should point their roasting fork and flaming marshmallow close to the ground and wait for it to burn out. Older girls might carefully blow it out.
13. Remember that stick cookery takes patience, some skill and the ability to withstand smoke in the face.
14. Only the girls with roasting sticks in hand are allowed to stand by the fire. Once a girl has roasted her treat, she sits down to eat it. Remind the girls that the metal roasting forks stay hot for a few minutes after use.

15. If you are making s'mores, assign an adult or PA to be in charge of handing out the supplies. If you don't, you might end up with graham crackers broken into a million pieces and a big, sticky mess that falls on the ground and then ends up on the bottom of your shoe.
16. Have the fire tenders demonstrate the proper way to distinguish the fire.

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