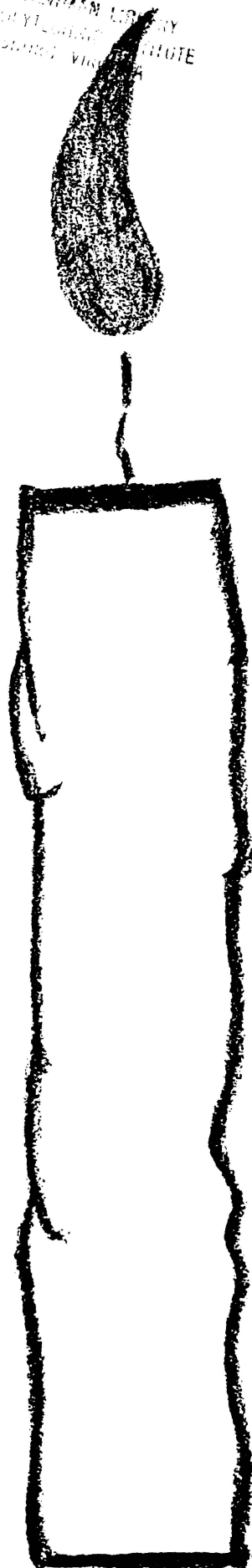


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# 4-H CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY



CIRCULAR 905  
MAY, 1962

ISSUED IN FURTHERANCE OF COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS, ACTS OF MAY 8 AND JUNE 30, 1914, IN COOPERATION WITH THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE. L. B. DIETRICK DIRECTOR, AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE, VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE, BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA

## 4-H CANDLELIGHTING CEREMONY

Evelyn B. Starling, Associate State 4-H Club Agent  
Jack M. Tyree, State 4-H Club Agent

The candlelighting ceremony gives a symbolic description to the meaning of 4-H Club work and helps club members emphasize the ideals of their organization. It is important for all club members to understand the meaning of the ceremony and the meaning of its observance.

The whole atmosphere of a candlelighting ceremony must be one of dignity and beauty, with complete silence on the part of the audience. A short inspirational program preceding the ceremony can set the stage for a receptive attitude on the audience's behalf. All participants should speak distinctly and loudly enough to be heard, and put the feeling of a "sacred trust" in their voice. An effective ceremony will leave a beautiful and challenging memory in the mind of each person present.

Major factors which help insure the effectiveness of the service are:

1. Careful advance planning and preparation by all taking part.
2. Candles, equipment, and other property on hand.
3. Everything in readiness at a well-selected place (where audience can see and hear clearly).
4. Follow through of a complete practice and briefing session with all participants.
5. Clear understanding by all on the procedure to follow (this should be explained again immediately prior to the ceremony).

In Virginia, the candlelighting ceremony has come to be recognized as the procedure for closing 4-H camps and the State 4-H Short Course. Its observance can well be defined as the climax of the week's program.

The following suggestions are provided as a guide for committees to use in developing candlelighting ceremonies. Changes and additions important to the overall effectiveness of each ceremony should be made by the planning committee.

## THE FORMATION

Candle distribution - small candles given to each camper and large candles given to the leader of the ceremony and participants representing Head, Heart, Hands, and Health. Distribution of small candles, for ceremony outlined below, is made when group assembles for service. When service is held as a closing feature of council circle or campfire, candles are distributed after a brief explanation of the candlelighting ceremony has been made.

The group forms a circle.

At camp the group is seated around the council fire or campfire, and at the State 4-H Short Course standing around designated symbol.

The Leader stands within the circle.

The 4-H representatives (2 boys and 2 girls) stand an equal distance apart from each other in the circle.

The firemaker is at the designated place in the circle, and when necessary (as instructed by the leader of the ceremony), moves quietly into the circle to care for the fire.

## THE CEREMONIAL

(The attention of the audience may be secured by the leader making a few statements about the candlelighting ceremony and then stating that "The Virginia 4-H Candlelighting Ceremony will now be observed.")

Leader: "Let us begin our 4-H Candlelighting Ceremony by singing 'The 4-H Hymn.'" (This song should be reviewed or taught to the 4-H group early in the week and practiced often during the week. It is listed in the Virginia "Joyfully We Sing" song book.)

Leader: "If we were asked to express what 4-H Club work means to us, each would tell a different story. Many of us would find great difficulty in putting into words all that would need saying. This is often true of the things that have a real place in our hearts. When words seem inadequate, we symbolize as beautifully as we can what we want to express. It is such a symbolic description of the meaning of club work that we are about to present. (Leader kneels and lights the fire while repeating the following:)"

'Kneel always when you light a fire!  
Kneel reverently, and thankful be  
For God's unfailing charity,  
And on the ascending flame inspire  
A little prayer, that shall unbear  
The incense of your thankfulness  
For this sweet grace  
Of warmth and light!  
For here again in sacrifice  
For your delight.

--John Oxenham

Leader: "Let us sing our Campfire Song."  
(This is another song which should be practiced throughout the week.  
Also listed in "Joyfully We Sing." Tune: "Drink to Me Only With  
Thine Eyes.")

"As the bright flames ascend to heaven,  
O God of love and truth,  
We would in thought with Thee commune  
In love and joy and youth.  
The hills resound with our glad song,  
And echo back to Thee.  
Our thanks receive, for work and health,  
And love and loyalty."

Leader: "Four-H Club work, conducted by the Virginia Agricultural Extension  
Service, aims to help boys and girls develop into useful and desirable  
citizens. Just as this fire requires wood in order to give a bright warm flame,  
so 4-H Club work requires the enthusiastic cooperation of every member and  
leader in order to be of the greatest value to all."

Leader: "From this fire, I light the candle of (name of group meeting in session)."  
(Lights candle.)

Leader: "Four-H Club work kindles high desires. Let us hear anew the meaning  
of the four H'es. Come, Head - H."

Head: (Standing beside leader.) "I pledge my head to clearer thinking!  
(Lights candle.) I would act with good judgment, speak with knowledge, and  
study in order to grow in wisdom."

Leader: "Come, Heart - H."

Heart: "I pledge my heart to greater loyalty. (Lights candle.) I would enrich  
my life with understanding, faith, and confidence in mankind, realizing that  
what I seek in others, I may develop in myself."

Leader: Come, Hand - H."

Hands: "I pledge my hands to larger service. (Lights candle.) May I find  
needed work, that will serve mankind and develop to the utmost my own selffulness  
and power."

Leader: "Come, Health - H."

Health: "I pledge my health to better living. (Lights candle.) That I may find  
joy in my work and play, that I may live fully and well, I would guard as a  
valued possession my strong body, my good health."

Leader: "While we sing 'Follow the Gleam,' let each of us light anew the 4-H  
flame." (Song. Light all candles.)

Leader: "Join me in the 4-H Pledge."

Whole Group: "I pledge my head, etc. . . ."

Leader: "With this pledge on our lips and the flame of 4-H Club work in our  
hearts, let us blow our candles and sing 'Taps,' after which let us go quietly  
and thoughtfully to our cabins or room."

PROGRAM OUTLINE VARIATIONS

When the candlelighting ceremony is held indoors, this statement may be used in place of the second paragraph:

Leader: (holding a lighted candle) "Four-H Club work, conducted by the Agricultural Extension Service, aims to serve boys and girls. Just as this candle, burning before us, sends its light afar, so 4-H Club work requires the enthusiastic cooperation of every member if it is to be of the greatest worth to all."

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When the candlelighting ceremony is held outdoors and candles are to be placed in a body of water, this statement may be used after the 4-H Pledge has been given:

Leader: "As we sing 'Follow the Gleam,' will the members of the tribe follow their Tribal Chief, single file, down the path to the water's edge. Will the other tribes follow in the same manner (list tribes names in the order they are expected to move.). After all have gathered, we will launch our candles and move quietly to the lawn below the flagpole (or whatever place is designated).

Leader: "After all the candles have been launched, let us sit together as a 4-H group, rededicating ourselves to the 4-H ideals." (At this point in the program, a reading or saying by an individual or group can be very effective.)

Leader: (after meditation period) "With the Pledge on our lips and the flame of 4-H Club work in our hearts, let us live up to the ideals of the 4-H Pledge."

Leader: (Begins humming "Follow the Gleam" and the first tribe files out behind Tribal Chief.)

## THE CEREMONIAL

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LEADER: "LET US BEGIN OUR 4-H CANDLE LIGHTING CEREMONY BY SINGING 'THE FOUR LEAF CLOVER. ' (THIS WILL PROBABLY BE ONE OF THE MANY 4-H SONGS TAUGHT TO NEW AND REVIEWED BY OLDER CAMPERS EARLY IN THE WEEK.)

LEADER: "IF WE WERE ASKED TO EXPRESS WHAT 4-H CLUB WORK MEANS TO US, EACH WOULD TELL A DIFFERENT STORY. MANY OF US WOULD FIND GREAT DIFFICULTY IN PUTTING INTO WORDS ALL THAT WOULD NEED SAYING. THIS IS OFTEN TRUE OF THE THINGS THAT HAVE A REAL PLACE IN OUR HEARTS. WHEN WORDS SEEM INADEQUATE, WE SYMBOLIZE AS BEAUTIFULLY AS WE CAN WHAT WE WANT TO EXPRESS. IT IS SUCH A SYMBOLIC DESCRIPTION OF THE MEANING OF CLUB WORK THAT WE ARE ABOUT TO PRESENT." (LEADER KNEELS AND LIGHTS THE FIRE WHILE REPEATING 'KNEEL ALWAYS WHEN YOU LIGHT A FIRE', BY JOHN OXENHAM, SEE PAGE 2)

LEADER: "LET US SING OUR CAMPFIRE SONG (TUNE - "DRINK TO ME ONLY WITH THINE EYES."

LEADER: "FOUR-H CLUB WORK, CONDUCTED BY THE VIRGINIA AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION SERVICE, AIMS TO HELP BOYS AND GIRLS DEVELOP THEMSELVES INTO USEFUL AND DESIRABLE CITIZENS. JUST AS THIS FIRE REQUIRES WOOD WHICH WILL BURN WELL IN ORDER TO GIVE A BRIGHT WARM FLAME, SO 4-H CLUB WORK REQUIRES THE ENTHUSIASTIC COOPERATION OF EVERY MEMBER AND LEADER IN ORDER TO BE OF THE GREATEST VALUE TO ALL."

LEADER: "FROM THIS FIRE, I LIGHT THE CANDLE OF \_\_\_\_\_." (LIGHTS CANDLE.)

LEADER: "4-H CLUB WORK KINDLES HIGH DESIRES. LET US HEAR ANEW THE MEANING OF THE FOUR H'ES. COME, HEAD - H."

HEAD: (STANDING BESIDE LEADER) "I PLEDGE MY HEAD TO CLEARER THINKING! (LIGHTS CANDLE). I WOULD ACT WITH GOOD JUDGMENT, SPEAK WITH KNOWLEDGE, AND STUDY IN ORDER TO GROW IN WISDOM."

LEADER: "COME, HEART - H."

HEART: "I PLEDGE MY HEART TO GREATER LOYALTY. (LIGHTS CANDLE.) I WOULD ENRICH MY LIFE WITH UNDERSTANDING, FAITH, AND CONFIDENCE IN MANKIND, REALIZING THAT WHAT I SEEK IN OTHERS, I MAY DEVELOP IN MYSELF."

LEADER: "COME, HAND - H."

HANDS: "I PLEDGE MY HANDS TO LARGER SERVICE. (LIGHTS CANDLE.) MAY I FIND NEEDED WORK, THAT WILL SERVE MANKIND AND DEVELOP TO THE UTMOST MY OWN SELFULNESS AND POWER."

LEADER: "COME, HEALTH - H."

HEALTH: "I PLEDGE MY HEALTH TO BETTER LIVING. (LIGHTS CANDLE.) THAT I MAY FIND A JOY IN MY WORK AND PLAY, THAT I MAY LIVE FULLY AND WELL, I WOULD GUARD AS A VALUED POSSESSION MY STRONG BODY, MY GOOD HEALTH."

LEADER: "WHILE WE SING 'FOLLOW THE GLEAM,' LET EACH OF US LIGHT ANEW THE 4-H FLAME." (SONG - LIGHT ALL CANDLES )

LEADER: "JOIN ME IN THE 4-H PLEDGE." "I PLEDGE MY HEAD, ETC....."

LEADER: "WITH THIS PLEDGE ON OUR LIPS AND THE FLAME OF 4-H CLUB WORK IN OUR HEARTS, LET US BLOW OUR CANDLES AND SING 'TAPS.' AFTER WHICH LET US GO QUIETLY AND THOUGHTFULLY TO OUR CABINS OR ROOM."

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