

Ancient man considered fire to as divine and therefore performed various rituals in honour of God of Fire. Woodsmen who used to eat fruits of trees, yams and meat in raw form, got accustomed to boil or roast them after discovering how to make fire. Since then fire has been an essential thing in our lives. We need fire to cook our food and for various other activities in our day-to-day life.

In the previous lesson you gained knowledge about knots and lashings which are useful in outdoor activities as well as in your day-to-day activities.

From this lesson you can gain knowledge about how bonfire displays can be used as an effective means of spending leisure time.

Occasions where bonfires are used

The following are examples for occasions where a bonfire is made.

1. During outdoor activities
2. In night camps
3. In scouting camps
4. During excursions

Factors that should be taken into consideration when building a bonfire

When making a bonfire it would be dangerous to do it without planning. There are several factors that should be taken into consideration when making a bonfire.

1. Permission should be obtained from the owner or the relevant authorities of the land in which the bonfire is expected to be built.
2. Climatic and weather conditions should be taken into consideration.
3. People in the immediate surroundings should be kept informed.
4. Firewood required for the bonfire should be collected prior to the day on which the bonfire is made.
5. Valuable timber should not be used for making the bonfire.
6. If insects are found on the pieces wood, they should be removed.

7. When the bonfire is burning, the participants should not be wearing dresses of which any part is likely to be blown by the wind.
8. Keeping a wet sack, water baskets, and some fresh foliage ready for use in an emergency situation.
9. It should be ensured that the bonfire that is built is not too large.
10. After the event is over, the bonfire should be put out properly and the place should be cleaned well.
11. Safety of all participants should be ensured.

How a bonfire should be made correctly

- Clear the area where the bonfire is planned to put up.
- If there is grass in the place where the bonfire is made, sods of turfs should be cut off from the ground and placed aside.
- Put up a safety wall around the fire using big logs.
- Make an entrance using wood as shown in the figure 14.1 leaving space to go near the fire.



Figure 14.1

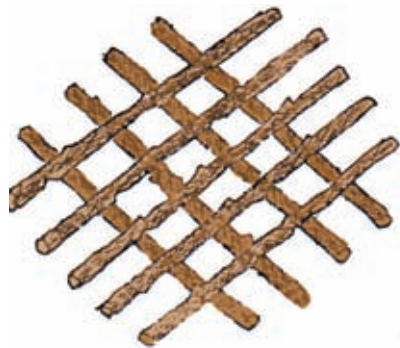


Figure 14.2

- After that, take some pieces of wood and lay them on the ground in the center of the area surrounded by the safety wall as shown in the figure 14.2.
- Lay some sawdust, hay, dried grass, wood shavings, or thinly torn pieces of dried coconut sheaf on the pieces of wood laid on the ground.
- Then pile up the firewood properly on the pieces of wood that have been arranged on the ground. When piling up the firewood, enough space should be left between pieces of wood.

Types of bonfires

Bonfires are given different names as follows based on the way the pieces of firewood are piled up for making the bonfire.

1. 'A' fire
2. Reflector fire
3. Rectangular fire
4. Pyramid fire

Making bonfires

'A' fires



Figure 14.3

An 'A' bonfire is built by placing three logs of firewood either horizontally or vertically as shown in the figure and then by piling up pieces of firewood on them.

Reflector fire



Figure 14.4 - Reflector fire

To build a reflector fire, two poles are held in vertical position and logs of firewood are tied to the poles as shown in the figure. Then, three logs are placed on the ground with the two poles forming a rectangular shape. The bonfire is built by piling firewood inside the rectangular shape. This bonfire can also be built by placing granite or some other shiny stones around it so that heat and light is reflected. Reflector bonfires can be used to keep the food hot and also to keep the campsite hot.

Rectangular fire



Figure 14.5 - Rectangular fire

Rectangular bonfire is built by placing pieces of firewood inside a structure that is made by placing logs in a rectangular shape as shown in the figure.

Pyramid fire



Figure 14.6 - Pyramid fire

To build the pyramid fire, a few pieces of firewood are placed on the ground parallel to one another and then another tier is made on them by placing pieces of firewood across them. In this manner several tiers of firewood are placed one on top of the other changing directions. Use shorter pieces of firewood to make upper tiers, so that a pyramid shape is created.



Activity

Collect information about different uses of bonfires and about the objectives of holding bonfire displays and present them to the class.

Benefits of making bonfires

- To provide light
- To minimize the cold or to generate heat
- To cook or roast different kinds of food
- To be safe from wild animals or to drive animals away
- To be used as a signal
- For recreation and enjoyment
- To build up solidarity
- To develop presentation skills
- To develop creativity
- To find relief from weariness at the end of day's work
- To exchange views
- To discuss information
- To review the work done during the day and plan future work
- To share knowledge
- To present participants' talents
- To reflect the culture of the participants
- To plan future works



Figure 14.7



Figure 14.8

Bonfire displays



Figure 14.9 - Bonfire displays

On most occasions lighting the bonfire is done in the form of a display. They are called bonfire displays.

Bonfire displays are seen mostly during scout camps and during outdoor activities and outdoor camps. When making the bonfire, particular attention should be paid towards ensuring that a small bonfire is made and that there is sufficient space around the fire for participants to enjoy presenting their songs and dances without any disturbance. Bonfire displays should be held maintaining proper discipline and safety under the care of a responsible person. Also, a leader should be appointed to handle the bonfire display. Arrangements should be made to finish a bonfire display within a period of one hour or one and a half hours and it is sufficient to allocate a maximum of five minutes for each item. The display should end with the singing of national anthem.

Songs that can be sung at bonfire displays

Punchi suda

*Punchi suda pedure indan
Andanna gaththa
Amma....Amma....
Ane asarana daruwa*

Biththare

*Biththare sudu made – biththare kaha made
Biththare sudu made kaha made
Biththare kaha made – biththare sudu made
Kaha made sudu made puduma de*

Ging gang goolie goolie

*Ging gang goolie goolie goolie goolie watcha,
Ging gang goo, ging gang goo.
Ging gang goolie goolie goolie goolie watcha,
Ging gang goo, ging gang goo.
Hayla, oh hayla shayla, oh hayla shayla, shayla, oh-ho,
Hayla, oh hayla shayla, oh hayla shayla, shayla, oh.
Shally wally, shally wally, shally wally, shally wally,
Oompah, oompah, oompah, oompah.*

Seeya bulath vita kotai

*Seeya bulath vita kotai – rasa katha kiyai
Rasa katha kiyai – bulath vita kotai
Raja raja raja raja katha – gama gama gama gama katha
Raja katha gama katha danne seeyamai.*

Allaapan maalu

*Allaapan maalu goda edapana maalu
Modara velle maalu kanna rasai maalu
Paname godai goda panamai
Enna ganna maalu*

Apart from these, patriotic or classic songs, too, can be sung during bonfire displays.



Activity

Organize and hold a bonfire display with the guidance of your adults.

Summary

Fire is used today for cooking and for various other purposes. In outdoor activities bonfires are used for various activities.

When making a bonfire, there are several factors that should be taken into consideration so that the safety of the person making the fire as well as that of the others is ensured.

Bonfires are named as 'A' fire, reflector fire, rectangular fire, and pyramid fire based on the way pieces of firewood are piled up for building the fire.

Having a bonfire in the form of a display is called a bonfire display. Bonfire displays are useful for enjoyment and to develop creativity of the participants and achieve many other objectives.

Bonfire display should be organized, maintaining proper discipline and safety.



Exercise

1. State the factors that should be taken into consideration before making a bonfire.
2. List the names of the bonfires of different shapes.
3. State benefits that can be gained by bonfires.
4. What are the occasions bonfire displays are held?
5. Compose a song that is suitable to be sung at a bonfire display.