

Common Threads Embers

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Theme: Examining the common threads in all of our lives.

Age of campers: 8-11

Time allotted/actual: 60 minutes

Location: Anywhere with ample space to sit and talk comfortably

Props/Materials/Symbols: String or thread that you can break into three long strands.

Prep done: Set up materials and space in advance. Set the thread in a pile in the middle so that it is difficult to tell which strands lead to where. Do not knot.

Opening/Mood set: Ask everyone to start thinking about stories from their lives (appropriate). They can be funny or interesting or experiential in any way.

Questions/Activities:

1st activity: Begin by quickly playing the game where two people speak one word at the same time, then speak an associated word, and try to eventually say the same word at the same time. The idea is that the next word chosen is a refinement of the previous words and material, such that the two people move closer to the same word by listing words that are in a similar vein to what they last said. Do a couple rounds, and then move on.

2nd activity: Ask everyone to sit around the pile of strings and have them reach in and pick one strand to hold onto. Make sure everyone has a hold of one before you try to unravel it. When each string has a couple of holders for it, ask each person to share a story from their life, and the other camper(s) holding it can listen and try to remember whether they have had a similar experience in life. When the first story is over, the next camper can talk about the story that it reminded them of. Do a couple of rounds of this before debriefing.

Closing: Explain and process the idea that although they are from many different backgrounds there are many common threads that run throughout all of our lives, and now that we are together we can begin to craft a single common thread out of our experience here at camp.

Were other people involved? None needed.

Thoughts on pacing? If the campers are interested in just telling stories with each other, go ahead and let them. The intention of this embers is to create a comfortable space for sharing with each other. Regardless of whether the stories are about themselves from the start, the beginnings of connections come from moments like these.

What would you change next time / what did you learn / how would you enhance it? This can be a great embers for reconciling differences between campers who come from radically different backgrounds and struggle with each other because of it.

Camper feedback: All positive.