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FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
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## INDUCTION CEREMONIES

### OPTION I

"Let all tongues be silent, let all eyes be watchful, let all ears be attentive, and let all hearts be joyful.

"Adventure Guides, welcome to the [year] Induction Ceremony of the \_\_\_\_\_ Expedition of the \_\_\_\_\_ YMCA. The induction ceremony is a very important tradition because it gathers all returning Circles together to be counted and recognized and is also a time to welcome new Circles into our Expedition.

"One of our traditions is the relating of the history of the program so that we might understand its roots and appreciate its value. The first program was started by Mr. Harold S. Keltner, a St. Louis YMCA director. While on a hunting trip to northern Canada, Mr. Keltner had an Ojibwa Indian as a guide, a man by the name of Joe Friday. One evening, as Mr. Keltner and Mr. Friday sat around their campfire, Mr. Friday said, 'The Indian father raises his son. He teaches his son to hunt, to track, to fish, to walk softly and silently in the forest, to know the meaning and purpose of life and all he must know, while the white man allows women to raise his son.' These comments struck home with Harold Keltner. Upon returning to St. Louis, he made arrangements for Joe Friday to work with him at the Y.

"Mr. Friday spoke before groups of YMCA boys and dads in St. Louis, and Mr. Keltner discovered that fathers and sons had a keen interest in the traditions and way of Native Americans.

"Taking to heart the words of Joe Friday, and being greatly influenced by the work of Ernest Thompson Seton, a great lover of the outdoors, Harold Keltner conceived the idea of a father and son program based on the strong qualities of Native American culture and life. These qualities included dignity, patience, endurance, spirituality, feeling for the Earth, and concern for the family. In 1926, he organized what was then called the first YMCA Indian Guide Circle in Richmond Heights, Missouri. The first group was led by Mr. William H. Hefelfinger.

"After World War II, the rise in YMCAs that served the whole family, the need for supporting young girls in their personal growth, and the demonstrated success of the father-son program nurtured the development of father-daughter, mother-son, and mother-daughter programs. Over the years, the program has evolved to what we know today as Adventure Guides.

"The purpose of this program is to foster understanding and companionship between a parent and child. The aims are:

1. to be clean in body and pure in heart,
2. to be friends forever with my dad/mom/son/daughter,
3. to love the sacred circle of my family,
4. to listen while others speak,
5. to love my neighbor as myself,
6. to respect the traditions and beliefs of all people, and
7. to seek and preserve the beauty of Our Creator's work in forest, field, and stream.

"Our pledge is, 'We, Adventure Guides and Explorers, through friendly service to each other, to our family, to this Circle [or Expedition], and to our community, seek a world pleasing to the eye of Our Creator.

"And our motto, Friends Forever, means that a parent and child have a close, enduring relationship in which there is communication, understanding, and companionship. The YMCA Adventure Guides program encourages such a relationship by providing a means for parent-child pairs to share enjoyable experiences, observe and learn about one another, and develop mutual respect.

"The years encompassed by this program are crucial. At this point, vital communication between a parent and a child can be created and built upon. But the initiative to keep communication open lies with the parent. The parent must be willing to invest the time, patience, and effort.

"Parents, by being here tonight, you are taking an important step in a journey with your children. Your role is to guide your children. You must treat your child with dignity and respect."

"Now, I see many faces here, and I recognize they are the established Circles of our Expedition. I wish to recognize them. As I call your Circle name, please stand and greet the Expedition loudly with our motto, Friends Forever." Call each Circle by name, greet them with the motto, and have them return it warmly.

"You will all notice that there are no strangers here, though there might be some friends you haven't met. It is good to have new friends in our Expedition. Please return to our Expedition gatherings.

"Now, parents and children, take the [necklace] you were given when you arrived here and turn to face each other. Parents first, place your child's [necklace] over his or her head and repeat our motto.

"By these simple acts of understanding and companionship, I declare you all members of the \_\_\_\_\_ Expedition of the \_\_\_\_\_ YMCA. I close this ceremony by having all of you join hands and repeat our program pledge.

"We, Guides and Explorers, through friendly service to each other, to our family, to this Circle [or Expedition], and to our community, seek a world pleasing to the eye of Our Creator."

## OPTION II

### Station 1: Presentation of leather cords

#### Supplies Needed:

- 150 leather cords (75 cut to adult length and 75 cut to child length)
- *Friends Forever: The Guidebook for Members of YMCA Adventure Guides*
- Station leader: "In order to receive your leather cord, you must answer this question:
- What is the motto of our program?"

Wait for group to answer, "Friends Forever." If they don't know the motto, ask them to look in the Friends Forever guidebook.

"As each of you tells me the motto, I will give you this special piece of leather. Hold on to this strap, as it will be the cord that holds your experiences together."

*As children and parents say the motto, give them a piece of leather.*

*Silence. Group and read aloud:*

"Each day you are beginning a journey.  
Some journeys, you begin with your friends by your side.  
Some journeys you begin with your family by your side.  
Some journeys you begin with your father [mother] by your side.  
Some journeys you begin on your own.  
Tonight, you will begin a journey with your dad [mom] along this trail.  
Good luck on your journey."

As you walk to the next station, introduce yourself to all your new friends and have parents introduce themselves to other parents. Give them your real name as well as your program nickname, and have each person share with the other his or her favorite flavor of ice cream.

*Send group along trail to station 2.*

**Station 2:** Presentation of arrowhead to child

Supplies Needed:

- 75 Blue arrowheads with holes in the crest

Station leader:

"Each day you are beginning a journey.  
This station is for the children in your Circle.  
I need all children to step forward."

"You have begun this trail with your dad [mom], but there are some parts where you must walk alone. Will you promise to always try your best to do these things? If yes, repeat after me."

*Read each line and wait for them to repeat.*

"I promise to be clean in body and pure in heart."

"How will you do this? Can you give me an example?"

*Wait for an example.*

"I promise to be friends forever with my father [mother]."

"How will you do this? Can you give me an example?"

*Wait for an example.*

"I promise to love the sacred circle of my family."

"How will you do this? Can you give me an example?"

*Wait for an example.*

"I promise to listen while others speak."

"How will you do this? Can you give me an example?"

*Wait for an example.*

"I promise to love my neighbor as myself."

"How will you do this? Can you give me an example?"

*Wait for an example.*

"I promise to respect the traditions and beliefs of all people."

"How will you do this? Can you give me an example?"

*Wait for an example.*

"I promise to seek and preserve the beauty of Our Creator's work in forest, field, and stream."

"How will you do this? Can you give me an example?"

*Wait for an example.*

"Well done! You have passed your test. Because you have agreed to abide by these promises, you earn a blue arrowhead to represent the blue of the skies from where Our Creator will always watch over you."

*Give each child an arrowhead.*

"As you walk to the next station, parents, tell your child one thing he [she] does that you are most proud of. Tell your child one of your happiest memories of a time the two of you spent together."

**Station 3:** Presentation of arrowhead to parent

Supplies Needed:

- 75 Green arrowheads with holes in the crest

Station leader: "This station is for the parents in your Circle. You have begun this trail with your child, but there are some parts where you must carry the load for the group. As your child journeys along the path to become a grown-up, you will need the help of your family, your friends, and your community. Will you promise to always try your best to do these things? If yes, repeat after me."

*Read each line and wait for parents to repeat.*

"I promise to be clean in body and pure in heart."

"How will you do this? Can you give me an example?"

*Wait for an example from the group.*

"I promise to be friends forever with my child."

"How will you do this? Can you give me an example?"

*Wait for an example from the group.*

"I promise to love the sacred circle of my family."

"How will you do this? Can you give me an example?"

*Wait for an example from the group.*

"I promise to listen while others speak."

"How will you do this? Can you give me an example?"

*Wait for an example from the group.*

"I promise to love my neighbor as myself."

"How will you do this? Can you give me an example?"

*Wait for an example from the group.*

"I promise to respect the traditions and beliefs of all people."

"How will you do this? Can you give me an example?"

*Wait for an example from the group.*

"I promise to seek and preserve the beauty of our Creator's work in forest, field, and stream."

"How will you do this? Can you give me an example?"

*Wait for an example from the group.*

"Well done, parents. You have passed your test. Because you have agreed to abide by these promises, you earn a green arrowhead to represent the green of the earth, where God has called us to do good work in His name. The best work you can do on this earth is in the eyes of your child."

*Pass out an arrowhead to each parent.*

"As you walk to the next station, walk with your child, and children, tell your parent one thing he [or she] does that makes you happy. Also tell him [or her] one thing he [or she] does that makes you laugh."

**Station 4:** Presentation of bead to child

Supplies Needed:

- 75 blue beads

Station Leader: "Boys [girls], step forward. As your journey continues, you will need your friends to help you along your way. Again, what is our motto?"

*Wait for someone in the group to answer.*

"'Friends Forever' is as important for you and your dad [mom] as it is for you and your friends in your Circle. Clap your hands if you answer yes to these questions."

"Do you promise to be friendly with one another?"

*Wait for hands to clap.*

"Do you promise to listen while your friends are talking?"

*Wait for hands to clap.*

"Do you promise to respect your friends and their feelings?"

*Wait for hands to clap.*

"Do you promise to care for your friends?"

*Wait for hands to clap.*

"These friends will be there for you, just as you have pledged to be there for them. You have, with your promise, each earned a blue bead for your efforts."

*Pass out beads to children.*

"You are now a group, a circle of friends. As you walk along the trail to the next station, share with one of your fellow Circle members what your favorite TV show is. Share with another Circle member your favorite thing you did this summer."

**Station 5:** Presentation of bead to parent

Supplies Needed:

- 75 green beads

Station leader:

"As your journey continues, you will need your friends to help you along your way. Again, what is our motto?"

*Wait for someone in the group to answer.*

"'Friends Forever' is as important for you and your child as it is for you and your fellow parents who are in your Circle. Clap your hands if you answer yes to these questions."

"Do you promise to be friendly with one another?"

*Wait for hands to clap.*

"Do you promise to listen while your friends are talking?"

*Wait for hands to clap.*

"Do you promise to respect your friends and their feelings?"

*Wait for hands to clap.*

"Do you promise to care for your friends?"

*Wait for hands to clap.*

"These fellow parents will be there for you, just as you have pledged to be there for them. You have, with your promise, each earned a green bead for your efforts. Take a bead and present it to another parent in your Circle."

*Pass beads out to parents.*

"Your journey is almost complete. It will take laughter to help you on your way. As you travel to your next station, share your favorite joke or funny story with someone in your Circle."

**Station 6:** Exchange of arrowheads and formation of necklaces

Supplies Needed:

- No new supplies are needed, but have extra cords, arrowheads, and beads on hand in case they were dropped and lost.

Station leader:

"You have almost completed your journey. You have come a long way since your journey began, and it is time to complete the process. So far, you have a leather cord, an arrowhead, and a bead, and your parent has the same thing."

"If you dropped anything along the way, there are extra supplies here. Get what you misplaced so you have all the items you need."

*Wait for them to get supplies.*

"The leather cord you received for agreeing to abide by the motto of our program. You have earned this. It is yours.

"The arrowhead you received for agreeing to abide by the aims of our program. Children, you were given a blue arrowhead in honor of what?"

*Wait for them to say, "the sky."*

"To help your dad [mom] remember your promise, we will now present our arrowheads as gifts to our parents. Get your arrowhead and face your dad [mom]. Repeat after me.

"Dad [mom], I give you this arrowhead

To remind you of our promise to be friends forever;

- To remind you of our promise to do what is best
- For each other
- For our family
- For our Circle
- For our community."

"Now, give your arrowhead to your dad [mom]. Parents, put your arrowhead on your necklace."

"Now, dads [moms], it is time to give your arrowhead away.

"To help your child remember your promise, present your arrowheads as gifts to your sons [daughters]. Get your arrowhead and face your child. Repeat after me.

"Son [daughter], I give you this arrowhead

- To remind you of our promise to be friends forever;
- To remind you of our promise to do what is best
- For each other
- For our family
- For our Circle
- For our community."

"The beads you earned will remind you of the arrowhead you presented. Use these necklaces to hold other beads and arrowheads that you earn in your Circle meetings. Wear these necklaces as your ticket to our Expedition ring.

"Now it is time to assemble for our campfire."

Have all Circles form a line.

- The Expedition leaders should head up the line.
- Circle members should wear their necklaces with appropriate beads.
- Remind Circles this is a solemn event. ("There is no talking allowed as we enter the Expedition ring.")
- Have groups line up by Circle.

The Expedition Elder leads the Circles to the edge of the woods. He [she] stops, and the Circles wait for permission to enter the Expedition ring.

Elder: "O, [Expedition name] leader \_\_\_\_\_ and your Junior Navigator (son/daughter) \_\_\_\_\_, I bring friends to our Expedition ring.

Expedition leader: "O, [Expedition name] Elder \_\_\_\_\_ and your Junior Navigator (son/daughter), \_\_\_\_\_, who are these members that you bring to our Expedition ring?"

Elder: "I present the \_\_\_\_\_ Circle. They have completed the journey of initiation and have earned their necklaces."

Expedition leader: "Do you find them deserving of entering the Expedition ring?"

Elder: "I do."

Expedition leader: "Welcome, friends, to our Circle. Enter and find a place for your Circle to rest."

*Repeat the above ceremony for each Circle.*

*As final groups sit, all admire the fire.*

Expedition leader: "These Circles seem most worthy of our Expedition! Welcome to our Expedition. You are all welcome. However, each Circle needs a leader."

"Will each Circle's Navigator and his or her Junior Navigator please step forward?"

*Circle Navigators and their sons or daughters step forward.*

Expedition leader: "Circle Navigators and their Junior Navigators: You are most welcome to our ceremony. Please step forward to be received. All of our YMCA Adventure Guides, please join in welcoming each of these."

"What is your name?"

"Welcome, \_\_\_\_\_."

"What is the name of your Junior Navigator?"

"Welcome, \_\_\_\_\_."

"What Circle do you represent?"

"Welcome, \_\_\_\_\_."

*Repeat the ceremony for each Circle Navigator.*

"Circle Navigators, you have been called to lead your Circle.

"Do you promise to follow the aims and goals of our program?"

*Wait for an answer from them all.*

"Do you promise to do all you can to keep your Circle informed of events and outings?"

*Wait for an answer.*

"Do you promise to remember that this program should be fun?"

*Wait for an answer.*

"Then with the authority of [Expedition name], I recognize you as leaders for our Expedition. I wish you luck and courage on your journey. Your first task will be to pass two magic kernels of corn to each of your Circle members.

"We will now make a great offering to the fire to be brought up in smoke to the heavens. As we throw our kernels into the fire, let us promise to hold our friends, families, and Circle members close to us and to be friends forever. Repeat with me, and throw your corn into the fire. 'Friends forever.'"

"Now, please be seated for a few announcements."

*Present announcements (and s'mores!).*