**Council Fire Opening Ceremony #2**

**The Four Winds/Directions-version 2**

**Overview:** Council Fire Openings set the stage for a great and memorable council fire for your program. It is written to be used at the beginning of a Longhouse council fire gathering. Featured here is an ode to the 4 Winds or the 4 Directions. Although the physical setup is somewhat complex, it is especially striking when performed at Longhouse ceremonies.

The central fire is a heavy & large log-cabin style with 4 smaller fires built in teepee style. Make the smaller fires from split kindling that has been allowed to soak with starter fluid or about 15 minutes. The points of each teepee fire can be topped with feathers and fluffs. For authenticity, use yellow for East, red for West, white for North and green for South. A torch is needed for the Fire Starter person who lights each fire upon instruction. An alternate would be to have each fire magically ignite when the spirit of each fire is invoked. To involve more people, have a Big Brave at each of the 4 Winds fires and as each wind/direction has completed his part, has passed the torch to the next wind/direction.

There is one special torch prepared to light the 4 smaller fires. This special torch can be specially decorated but should include 12 strands of golden cord at the base of the handle. This strands correlate to the script of the ceremony.

Regarding the “loaded Eagle Feather” mentioned within, this is a large Eagle feather with a tiny bag of flash powder taped onto the base of the stem. When the Chief goes to throw the feather into the fire, the bag is concealed in hand, is not visible in the dark and adds ballast to help it fly into the fire. The bag melts almost instantly when it hits the fire, setting of the flash powder.

**Participants:**

* Chief: Ceremonial Leader
* Great Elder (or Sachem)
* 4 Torchbearers have been pre-selected to come forward to the smaller fires when instructed at the council fire gathering.

**Relevant Ceremonial Pieces:** You may wish to incorporate this ceremony with other ceremonial components to form your full ceremony. The following are basic suggestions. Your creativity is your limit.

* Parade to Ceremonial Location
* Inductions
* Officer Inductions
* Special Awards
* Ceremonial Closing

**OPENING CEREMONY**

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|  | *The method in which the main fire is to be lit is pre-determined. It can either be lit by “magic” means or by the Torchbearer igniting it.* |
| Sachem | *(Standing before the unlit council fire)* Oh great fire, long go when our forefathers fought the animals, you were our protection. From the cruel winds of winter, you were our warmth. From the darkness of night, you kept us safe. During all the ages, your mysterious flame has been a symbol from the Great Spirit to his children. So tonight, we light our fire in remembrance of the Great Spirit’s gift to us. Great Spirit above, send us fire… Fire for life, Fire for light, Fire for peace and friendship. *(Main fire ignites)* |
| Chief | We give thanks for this precious flame and, as our fore smoke rises to Thy teepee, may it serve as a trail between us.  See! To the flames I sacrifice this eagle feather. It is offered humbly as a sign of our thanks. |
| Chief | *(Tosses a loaded eagle feather into the fire which momentarily gives off a puff smoke as the flash powder ignites)* |
| Chief / ALL | *(Chief shouts the Longhouse salutation, then all repeat/shout in approval)* |
| Chief | Wakanda, the Great Spirit is pleased and smiles upon his children. As you see, there are 4 smaller symbolic fires around our council fire. From them all, reach twelve rays, twelve golden strands that we call the law of the woods.  Torchbearers, come forward and stand by your symbolic fire. *(PAUSE)* |
| Chief | *(Lights the torch and carries it to the South fire and hands it to the torchbearer)* |
| Chief | From this Great Central Fire, we light this South fire, the Lamp of Beauty. *(PAUSE)*  From it are these three rays:  **Be Clean**-Both yourself and the place you live in.  **Understand and Respect Your Body**-It is a temple of the Great Spirit.  **Be the Friend of all Harmless Wildlife**- Conserve the flowers and the woods. |
| Chief | *(Chief takes the torch from the South torchbearer and walks to the West fire, handing the torch to the torchbearer)* |
|  | From this Great Central Fire, we light this West fire, the Lamp of Truth *(PAUSE)* |
|  | From it are these three rays:  **Be Truthfu**l-Hold your word of honor sacred, and others will respect you.  **Play Fair**-Foul play if treachery  **Be Reverent**- Worship the one Great Spirit and respect all worship of Him by others. |

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|  | *(Chief takes the torch from the West torchbearer and walks to the North fire, handing the torch to the torchbearer)* |
| Chief | From this Great Central Fire, we light the North fire, the Lamp of Fortitude. *(PAUSE)*  From it are these three rays:  **Be Brave**-Courage is the noblest of all gifts.  **Be Silent**-While your elders are speaking, and otherwise show them respect.  **Obey**-Obedience is the first duty of those that wish to learn |
|  | *(Chief takes the torch from the North torchbearer and walks to the East fire, handing the torch to the torchbearer)* |
|  | From this Great Central Fire, we light this East fire, the Lamp of Love. *(PAUSE)* |
|  | From it are these three rays:  **Be Kind**- Do one act of unselfishness each day.  **Be Helpful**-Do your share of the work.  **Be Joyful**-Seek the joy of being alive. |
|  | *(Chief takes the torch from the North torchbearer and tosses it into the Great Central Fire.)* |
| Chief | Torchbearers, you may return to your tribes. *(PAUSE)* |
| Sachem | Our fires have been lit. The Great Spirit looks upon us and is pleased. The spirits of the four winds are with us. Let us conduct ourselves with dignity and show our pride in being Native Sons & Daughters. |
| Chief | I now declare this council of the (**Longhouse Name**) Longhouse to be open. Let us begin. |

Contributed by: Unknown