

FRIDAY NIGHT CEREMONY

The Friday night ceremony commences with fun awards. Staff wears their staff shirts to demonstrate the importance of this particular evening program. Volunteers may wear any regular or camp shirt they wish, as long as it meets the dress code. We thank and say goodbye to all the volunteers, and awards are given to individual campers and cabins. The evening culminates with some very old and moving traditions.

Awards: Dog tags are given to one cabin in each circle with the most points earned during the week. Each year the dog tags are unique, giving the campers an incentive to try to earn them each year. These represent not only that the cabin has earned the most points throughout the week, but also that they have bonded in fellowship as a cabin.

Iwahelaya: After all the awards are given out, the ceremony takes a more somber tone. An older volunteer, or someone who has been coming to camp for several years, comes to the front with a special book and recounts the history of camp. Campers who are returning are invited to sign the book, as the year they first attended camp is called. **Only those who have been to camp before are allowed to sign.** Some volunteers have been coming for more than thirty years, and it is always touching to watch them walk to the front and sign yet again. This is the one tradition that dates back to the start of camp – over 40 years ago. During the book signing, counselors come to the front and sing slower songs that have been reserved specifically for this occasion. What does Iwahelaya mean? If this is your first year at camp, you will have to wait until next year to find out.

Candle Lighting: After all returners have signed the book and Friday night songs wrap up, the camp moves to the flag pole where each camper, staff, and volunteer is given a candle. (If it is raining or thundering, the ceremony may be conducted in the Craft Hall.) Each cabin is called and the Counselors come forward to announce the environmental pledge their cabin has made to help preserve our environment. They light their candles and return to their cabin group and proceed to light all the campers' candles. This continues through all the cabins and volunteers until every person in camp is holding a lit candle. All candles are extinguished at once and placed back in the plastic bags.

Special Meeting: When the candles are blown out, cabins are dismissed to their respective circles for a campfire. Volunteers will be asked to meet in the Dining Hall for a special meeting. The highlight is an ice cream social as a thank you to the volunteers.