



Naming...

Names are fundamental to individual and cultural identity, and place emphasis on what is important to us as individuals and identifying shared values. Woodcraft Folk activities identify trees and plants, things in nature we value. 'Folk names' also link us to history, heritage, and cultural traditions of Woodcraft.

Beyond simple identification, names can influence how individuals are perceived by others and how they perceive themselves, potentially shaping self-esteem and aspirations. Finding your names can help young people to find their own identity, think about what is important to them as individuals and as a group, as well as a fun activity.

Send us your stories

Naming at Camp 100 and for our 100th Anniversary



At Camp 100 we ran a naming activity at the Trailblazer tent based on a tradition started at the beginnings of Woodcraft and formalised by Badger in the 1960s, with a ceremony which can be carried out by leaders or by the young people themselves:

“Badger was very explicit in telling us why we had folk names, that it was to give us all a sense of equality, not only between the boys and the girls, but between the children and the adults. There was no Sir or Miss or Mrs or anything. All the names were equal.

We were encouraged to choose a name which had some connection with our character, or our build, or our colouring, or something, and he would say, as an example, Leslie Paul chose the name Little Otter because he had dark sleek hair and he was an excellent swimmer.” - Joan Pover, 2000





Naming Ceremony - devised by John (Badger) Colbert

THE WOODCRAFT FOLK NAMING CEREMONY

Comrades and Friends

We are gathered here in this Council Circle

Before this Council Fire

So that we may give a name to this our.....(sister/brother).

Little one,

Whom the earth has given us to train and protect,

Welcome to our Council Circle.

Here you are among friends,

Who rejoice that a little is come to takeher/his place

In the great and glorious fight for a better world,

As one of the great fellowship of Woodcraft,

Here, little, we pledge ourselves to so order our lives,

That they will be a worthy example for you to follow

My little one,

You are entering the Green Company,

Pledged to building a new world order of peace and friendship,

Between the peoples of the world,

Where swords shall be beaten into ploughshares,

And spears into pruning hooks,

Where the Lion shall lay down with the Lamb -

- and a little child shall lead then,

Child of the Folk

We will teach you to grow strong like the pine,

To live kindly, to love the sun and follow the trail,

You shall drink from the crystal pool

And the earth shall be your strength.

Little, as yet you are weak, We will be the strong arm around you

Little, as yet you do not see, We will be the eyes that watch the world,

Little, as yet you do not speak, We will speak on your behalf.

Little, as yet you have no Woodcraft Name.

We will give you a name among us:

No longer shall you be known as(Paper with old name is thrown on the fire)

Henceforth you shall be known as(new name)

..... thou art

..... thou shalt be

..... thou shalt be for evermore,

(Birchbark with new name given to parent)

----- ADDRESS TO FOLK PARENT

Welcome, You have been chosen,

To fill the honoured role of Folk,Mother/Father

It is my duty to remind you of your obligations to....(new Folk name),

Namely, that you will at all times so keep the Law,

And so conduct yourself, that your example will help ..her/him

To become a worthy comrade of the Green Company,

And a loyal member of the World Family,

Will you swear - by Ashen Stave - so to do ?

If so answer "I will"

(Written by 'Badger' Colbert 1948, with slight amendments by Barbara Colbert 1986)

For Camp 100 we removed 'Little' and references to gender. We also prepared example Folk names to help start people thinking, working in friend groups to find their Folk name.

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2025

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