

"Camp is a magic show, and the counselors are the magicians."

During orientation, we introduce our counselors to this idea. I thought about this last night at Trojan-Spartan initiation. What does being a Trojan or Spartan mean? Beyond the confines of Camp Champions - nothing. In fact, if you think about it, the idea of initiating children into "tribes" named after Hellenic civilizations is odd to say the least.

Yet it can come to have great meaning and generate fun and excitement.

Or it could induce cynical mockery.

The difference between the latter and the former option is simple - how much magic can the counselors create?

Last night, we put on a wonderful magic show. As I was on the boys' side, I will describe what I saw, but I can assure you that the girls have a similarly impressive show.

We began at slightly before sunset. The returning campers broke up into their respective teams and "painted up" with the Trojans painting blue and the Spartans red.

The first time (uninitiated) campers gathered together on the pickleball courts, removed their shirts and lined up from the youngest to the oldest.

Meanwhile, under the Parthenon (the covered gym on the boys side) we set up 2 bleachers, a portable firepit and 12 Senior Campers holding tiki torches to illuminate the ceremony. Behind the firepit stood two other Senior Campers, each holding a pan with paint in it - one blue and one red. Between them, Shirley Sir (all 6' 2" of him) stood with a black cloak and his face painted half Trojan Blue and half Spartan Red. He would officially mark the campers into their tribes. I stood behind Shirley Sir dressed all in white with white face paint.

The Spartans and Trojans enter accompanied to majestic music from the "Last of the Mohicans" soundtrack. By the way, I highly recommend this music - it is excellent. Also, it will freak out your camper to hear it at home!

The tribes file in without words and take their places on the bleachers.

We then play music from the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy that is powerful and a touch ominous. It is this music that accompanies the new campers as they enter the Parthenon. Once in place, Jeremy Klaff Sir (the Aquanaut division leader) reads each camper's name and announces his tribe.

When the tribe is announced, two things happen. First, their new tribe all chants a cheer to recognize and welcome the new member. The camper then steps forward and Shirley Sir places a red or blue handprint on their chest to signify their tribe.

Once all the campers have been initiated, Shirley Sir silently steps back and I step forward. I have two responsibilities.

First, I read the Trojan-Spartan legend. We are posting the legend as another article for you to read. After I read this, I drop the paper into the coals and make a short speech as it ignites.

I share the following:

- Once you are a Trojan or a Spartan, you are a Trojan or Spartan "for life"
- This is one of camps longest-standing traditions, dating all the way back to 1967
- We honor the boys and men who have before us by competing with passion and compassion, with spirit and respect.
- There is no glory in competing against an unworthy opponent. Your opponent is worthy of your respect.
- During the games, you will compete well and enthusiastically, but when the games end, we are not Trojans and Spartans, but all Champions and cabinmates.

We then dismiss each tribe separately to their meeting fires where they are taught cheers by their leaders.

In short, a neat magic show!

### One Other Act of Magic

We used our powers to do something remarkable - we made Saturday into Sunday and Sunday into Saturday!!

On Sundays, we usually sleep an extra 75 minutes, have Trojan Spartan games, and end the day with Vespers (a time of reflection on our community and its values).

But this Sunday is July 4<sup>th</sup>, and we want to celebrate the event with a different schedule. We want to end with fireworks rather than Vespers. We want to have a full day that starts at 7:30 rather than 8:45. In other words, we need our Monday-Saturday schedule for our celebration.

We thought about celebrating Independence Day today, but realized that we would be having Vespers while the rest of the people on the lake were watching fireworks shows and riding around. We determined that this would be disruptive to our campers.

So the easiest thing to do is to declare that today is Sunday and tomorrow Saturday. To be honest, I like the fact that camp can do this. Where else can you see Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Sunday, Saturday, Monday???

Steve Sir