



Whittling licence – safe with a penknife

AT A GLANCE



Place

Outdoors, seating with plenty of space between people



Key idea

Learning the key knife rules, whittling a stick for campfire bread and earning a whittling licence



Effort

Materials 15 min · Preparation 20 min



90 minutes



6–12 children, 1 leader per 4 children



8–12 years



penknife with a locking blade



Materials

- ☐ one penknife per child, ideally with a locking blade (only with parents' permission)
- ☐ first aid kit with plasters
- ☐ fresh, finger-thick sticks of hazel or willow
- ☐ prepared licence cards
- ☐ sit mats or tree stumps



Schedule

0–15'

Knife rules – Discuss and demonstrate the rules together – only then is a knife opened.

15–25'

Safety circle – Each child stretches out their arm holding the closed knife and turns round: nobody else may be inside this circle.

25–65'

Whittling – Peel the bark from the top end and carve a point for campfire bread – always away from the body.

65–75'

Licence test – Each child shows: opening, closing and passing the knife safely, and whittling away from the body while sitting.

75–90'

Devotion – Isaiah 64:8: "We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand." God shapes us patiently – like we shape our stick.



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How it works – simply explained

- 1 Whittle only while sitting, elbows on knees, always away from your body.
- 2 Nobody but you is inside your safety circle.
- 3 Anyone who stands up or walks closes the knife.
- 4 Pass a knife only closed or handle first; a knife is never thrown.
- 5 Whoever shows the rules gets the whittling licence – whoever breaks them puts the knife down for a while.

 **Example:** "Can you see how a plain stick is slowly turning into something useful? That is how God deals with us – patiently, bit by bit."

Safety

- Get parents' permission beforehand; use only knives with a locking blade or simple children's whittling knives.
- Enough leaders: no more than four children per leader; first aid kit to hand.
- Collect the knives after the session or store them safely; follow your group's rules and the law on carrying knives.

Variations

- Instead of a bread stick: carve a small wooden spoon or a pendant.
- Use the sticks for campfire bread that same evening.

Something to think about

Where has God already been patiently "whittling" you?