

## The Australian Bush Catechism of Camping

**QUESTION:** What is in the camping catechism?

**ANSWER:** The camping catechism offers us **FACTS, DOs AND DON'Ts**, clear, brief and easily learnt with rhyme, rhythm and sense-lines.

### SURVIVAL

1. What do we need to survive in the bush?

To survive in the bush we need water and food, clothing and shelter.

### WATER

2. Where do we find water?

We find water in creeks, springs, and water roots of trees; by digging wells, and by condensation on plastic.

3. How do we purify polluted water?

We purify polluted water by boiling it to make tea or with water-purification tablets.

### FOOD

4. Describe good camping food.

Good camping food is nutritious, cheap to buy, light to carry, easy to package, prepare and wash up.

### CLOTHING

5. What are bush clothes and what do they achieve?

Bush clothes are (working down from head to toes)

hat, shirt, shorts, socks and boots.

They have modesty and dignity, and suit work and weather and honour others.

6. What are hats for?

Hats are for keeping off the sun, rain, cold, falling sticks and stones; for fanning fires, carrying water, and charging head-down through the scrub.

7. Of what should our clothes be made?

Our clothes should be made of cotton, not polyester, but wool for cold, wet and windy weather.

8. Describe good boots.

Good boots are light and tough, grip the ground, fit the foot, and easy to lace and unlace.

9. What other clothes do we need?

Other clothes we need are raincoat, woollen jumper and swimming costume.

10. When do we wear long trousers?

We wear long trousers and even over-pants in cold and windy weather, and scratchy scrub.

11. What if clothes get dirty, wet or torn?

If clothes get dirty, we wash them; wet, we dry them; torn, we mend them.

### PERSONAL GEAR

12. What is basic personal gear?

Basic personal gear is a knapsack, sleeping bag (or blanket), toothbrush, mug, dixie and spoon (and shaving gear).

13. What are pockets for?

Pockets are for handkerchief, pocket knife, matches, string and Rosary Beads.

14. What are handkerchiefs for?

Handkerchiefs are for blowing noses, mopping faces, drying hands, holding hot handles, and bush baths and bandages.

15. Describe a good pocket knife.

A good pocket knife has a big blade with a keen edge but no dagger point, a marlinespike, tin opener, and screwdriver.

16. What use is a staff?

A staff is an extra leg on steep slopes, an extension arm for pointing at things and rescuing people from drowning in water or quicksand, and a weapon for defending the innocent.

17. What extra items must the leader bring?

The extra items the leader must bring are a First Aid Kit, rope and torch, map and compass, watch and whistle.

18. Describe a good knot.

A good knot does not slip or jam.

19. What lights do we need at night?

The lights we need at night are hand-held or headband LED torches.

### FIRST AID KIT

20. What items should the First Aid Kit have?

The First Aid Kit should have 2 crêpe or pressure bandages, 12 band aids, a tube of Betadine Cream, and phials of ammonia and tea tree oil.

21. What are crêpe or pressure bandages for?

Crêpe or pressure bandages are for binding up bleeding, broken bones, sprains and snakebite (pressure bandages best for snakebite).

22. What is Betadine Cream for?

Betadine Cream is antiseptic for cuts, grazes, scalds, burns and blisters.

23. What is ammonia for?

Ammonia is an antidote for bull ant bites and bee stings.

24. What is tea-tree oil for?

Tea-tree oil is for fly and mosquito bites and to soothe cuts and inflamed skin.

### GROUP GEAR

25. What group gear do we need?

The group gear we need is cooking gear, cleaning gear and a tent.

26. What is group cooking gear?

Group cooking gear is enough billy cans and dixies to cook the food on the menu.

27. What is group cleaning gear?

Group cleaning gear is soap, scourer (i.e. pot mit), toilet paper and toothpaste.

### SHELTER

28. How do we sleep warm and dry?

We sleep warm and dry using a tent or cave, or a gunyah of bark or branches.

29. Describe a good tent.

A good tent is rain-proof, roomy enough, light-weight, and needs a floor or groundsheet. It may also need a fly.

### CAMPCRAFT

30. Describe a good campsite.

A good campsite has level grassy ground, no branches overhead, and is out of the wind and above the flood, with wood and water handy.

"Now, it is written — though few be that are wise enough to read before the punishment comes for disobedience — that the wilderness has rules of her own. To follow these without question is to be safe. To violate them is to invite the inevitable." *Northern Light*,s Alan Sullivan.

31. How do we light a fire in the rain?

We light a fire in the rain using dry kindling and graded fuel, with a hat to keep the rain off, and fan it to a blaze.

32. Describe dry kindling.

Dry kindling is tiny sticks which point upwards, or stringy bark or turpentine bark rubbed into bull's wool.

### HYGIENE

33. What is camp hygiene?

Camp hygiene is washing and latrines: wash hands with soap and water before meals and after using toilet paper; wash up utensils in hot soapy water and clean teeth after eating; wash face and hands on rising, and, on long camps, have bush baths.

34. What is a latrine?

A latrine is a bush toilet, a hole, dug with boot, stick or tool, well away from creek and camp. Bury manure and toilet paper, then wash hands.

35. What is a bush bath?

A bush bath is sponging the body all over with hanky, hot water and soap, rinsing well-away from waterways, and a cold plunge in the creek.

36. What does rubbish disposal mean?

Rubbish disposal means that any plastic, tins or glass are taken home, food scraps buried, but paper may be burnt.

### THE LEADER AND GOOD DISCIPLINE

37. What is essential for bush safety and happiness?

Good discipline is essential for bush safety and happiness.

38. What are the two rules for good discipline?

The two rules for good discipline are 'Answer properly when you're spoken to' and 'Obey, straight away'.

39. What must a good leader be like?

A good leader must be both friendly and strict, control the group and look after them, tutor them to look after each other, prevent accidents by Safety First, be able to give First Aid, and find the way there and back.

40. What is the leader's duty before setting out?

Before setting out, the leader's duty is to plan out everything and check the gear; leave every family with written directions of where the party is going, when they'll be back and whom to contact if overdue.

### THE SEVEN DEADLY DANGERS

41. What are the Seven Deadly Dangers which lead to death in the bush?

The Seven Deadly Dangers which lead to death in the bush are getting lost; getting drowned; violent collisions; snakebite; burns; dehydration, heat exhaustion, hyperthermia; and hypothermia.

42. How do we avoid getting lost?

We avoid getting lost by obeying the leader, not splitting-up the party, navigating by creeks and ridges, map and compass, sun and stars, and GPS.

43. How do we avoid drowning?

We avoid drowning by not trying to cross flooded rivers, not swimming in cold or muddy water, not after eating or for too long at a time, not diving because of rocks, snags or weeds, not bombing and breaking people's necks, keeping to shallow water and having a resuscitation officer.

44. What are violent collisions?

Violent collisions are falling over cliffs, or being hit by falling rocks or limbs from trees.

45. How do we avoid snake bite and spider bite?

We avoid snake bite and spider bite by wearing boots at all times, watching where we're walking, not distracting the man in front and using a torch at night.

46. What is the First Aid for snake or spider bite?

The First Aid for snake and spider bite is **bandages**, pressure or crêpe, bound as tight as for sprains from thigh to toe or shoulder to finger; next **immobilize** leg in splints or arm in sling, re-assure the victim, treat for shock and **carry** him to hospital.

(but don't compress red-back bite — it's too painful)

47. How do we avoid burns and scalds?

We avoid burns and scalds by not fooling with fire, and never passing hot things over others.

48. What is the First Aid for burns?

The First Aid for minor burns is to immerse them in icy water; but for major burns to cover them with a clean wet cloth, treat for shock and get a doctor.

49. Between October and March, do the bushfire regulations allow cooking fires?

Between October and March, except during a Total Fire Ban, the bushfire regulations allow cooking fires if cleared around for 3 metres with an adult, or in a permanently constructed fire place cleared around for 2 metres.

50. Recite the seven points on the Camping Checklist.

### CAMPING CHECKLIST:

1. Food: three proper meals a day.
2. Drink: tanking up with lots of tea.
3. Clothing: protection and modesty.
4. Shelter: tents or caves or gunyahs.
5. First Aid: for the wounded and sick.
6. Safety First: avoid accidents.
7. Hygiene: wash body; bury manure and scraps.

The *Bush Boys* series are adventure stories that grew out of *The ABC of Camping* as a "life-situational catechesis":- *Bush Boys* and *Cuthbert* (2 books in 1 volume); *Bush Boys and Bush Rangers*; *Bush Boys on the Move*; *New Boys in the Bush*; *Squiggles and Squinter*; *New Boys Go Bush Again*.