Initiation Ceremony and Child Political Identity Education

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Abstract: The initiation ceremony is a large political ceremony organized by primary school. The purpose of initiation ceremony is to let the recipients feel oneself formally joined the sacred group, and confirm their identity of young pioneers, to produce a sense of organizational identity. This repeated ritual performance is also a way for school to make a political education for children. In this process, school should selectively filter children's experience, consider the characteristics of children's growth, and provide suitable space for children's moral life.

Introduction

The join-in ceremony for most schools is very grand. The school is trying to build a sacred space through rituals, and build bridges between children and the young pioneer organization. Educators hope to get the kids to truly experience becoming a glorious young pioneer through ritual process, and let them produce a collective consciousness. The initiation ceremony is also considered to be the most important part of the young pioneers’ life.

Ritual Participant

The ritual structure includes elements such as the giver, the recipient, the ritual symbol, and the ritual environment. During the ceremony, the ritual activities, the social status of the donor, the sacredness of the ritual symbol, and the solemnity of the ritual environment will affect the ceremony.

During the initiation ceremony, the donor is a leader with strong authority. The school invites leaders to participate in the initiation ceremony to highlight the importance and significance of the ceremony to show the seriousness of the initiation ceremony. Leaders are typically representatives of the meaning of the ceremony, the aim of which is to promote the level of activities in people's mind. The school also highlights its achievements in this way. Senior students who attended the ceremony and wore red scarves were also the part of the ritual. The recipients were all the students in the first grade, and they were target of the initiation ceremony. They were dressed in uniform school uniforms. They were serious and earnest but still curious and immature. The parent or family member of the recipient is another important witness who assists the recipient in their entry. The ceremonial symbol of the team is red scarf, and wearing the red scarf is an important part of the initiation process. Red scarf, drum roll, greeting team flag, saluting, these are the signs and symbols of the young pioneers. Furthermore the ritual designers will pay special attention to the selection and design of the physical space of the ceremony. The selection of ritual environment is mainly to highlight its symbolic value, and the ritual environment has some abstract meaning.

Wearing a Red Scarf

Wearing red scarf for new players is another important part of the team's ceremony. The seniors of the young pioneers wore bright red scarves and walked to the designated place to wear the red scarf for the new players. This direct contacting with ritual symbols or objects is a reinforcement of the recipient's participation. Wearing a red scarf also has certain application requirements: elder players saluted to the newer members of the red scarf and tidy it up, new players reply to the old players. The flow of this identity behavior makes them fully realized receiving red scarf is solemn
and sacred. The recipients received a red scarf and was officially awarded another status as a young pioneer. In this process of identification, the meanings and symbols of the red scarf are directly reflected. In this process children exchange their understanding of the red scarf.

**Oath and Slogan**

As a political ceremony, the initiation ceremony is an essential political education behavior. The educator asked the child to recite the oath at the swearing ceremony, so that the children who attended the ceremony could stand up and take the oath. The swearing-in scenes were also created for ritual purposes, with the aim of making the ritual participants develop a collective excitement. Designers expect the team ceremony can form another solemn meaning space. In this space, the willingness of sacrificing themselves for some kind of lofty ideal determination was formed and expressed.

The oath link is trying to make everyone rise to a sense of nobility. It is the first time that the children experience the solemn, "I will be a member of the Chinese young pioneers, I make a pledge under the flag: I love the communist party of China, love the motherland, love people, study hard, exercise hard, and be ready to make contributions to the communist cause." Children recite the oath under the flag, pledging allegiance to the motherland, and making promises or statements. In this space, educators try to make the children focus on emotional attention, and give them a feeling of excitement and universal feeling, let them believe that they are belonging to a group which is always right, their pursuing is reliable, and believe that such a lofty ideal will bring them a promising and bright future and world.

**The Representative Speaking of the Newer and Elder Team Members**

Another part of the initiation ceremony is the representative speaking of the newer and elder team member. The school will offer expectations and demands to the new members of the young pioneers on the ceremony. These requirements are often represented by student representatives, namely representatives of elder players and representatives of newer players. The elder players and the newer players are carefully selected by the school, and the content of the speech is strictly controlled. The elder players have to look to the new players and tell them what they should do and how they should behave. The new players will express their feelings about becoming a young pioneer and express their determination and efforts. In this new and old alternating space and time dialogue, the children complete the sacred ceremony.

Representatives of newer and elder players have been given certain expectations. Their speech can be formally presented at the ceremony after being repeatedly reviewed and modified by the educator. Notes must express the performance of the children in the future and should have a consistent moral standards, which is exactly what they learn in the future or should follow the criterion of social life. With the help of student representatives, it expresses educators' expectations of children's behavior through appropriate gestures, actions and words. The precepts were ultimately created by the main participants. This is no longer a simple individual talking, but a concrete, personified group of people talking. By saying that, they have reorganized their rights and obligations as young pioneers.

**How the Initiation Ceremony Works on Child Political Identity Education**

The initiation ceremony is an important political education event for the school. The ritual is designed to transform individuals' identity who are about to change from one identity to another in formal form, from one state to another. The ceremony consists of a series of symbols of different combination in a certain field, according to the principles of different procedures, expressing some means which has an important impact on people's ideology, person's behavior to the activities of the specification. During the ceremony, a sense of collective meaning, purpose and value will be generated. Young pioneer ceremony is designed to expect the team to produce a sense of belonging and a sense of pride.
Ceremony involves both physical and mental activities. Ceremony is closely linked with the body, it is a way of physical self understanding, which can be used as knowledge of body and behavior, because almost all ceremony will have participants body movements. The ritual is the symbolic movement of body, which is carried out in a certain historical and cultural context. The ritual uses bodies of children and adolescents to achieve its educational and social effects. In the actual ritual activities, the presence of body and spirit makes the sense of ritual and solemnity come true. The purpose of the political ceremony in the school field is to stimulate students' collective sense of belonging. Therefore, in school education, ritual activity becomes one of the most important ways of political education. During the initiation ceremony of the young pioneers, the educators expect the new players to take part in the initiation ceremony, learn how to take the oath, how to make the team salute, and perform spiritual baptism in the body. From a spiritual perspective, rituals affect not only the individual who is receiving the ritual, but also the other bystanders who are about to receive it. Ritual practices in schools introduce children and adolescents into the social order that contains intrinsic value.

Ritual is also a form of identity. Ritual participants identify themselves by acknowledging the ritual. The purpose of the initiation ceremony is to enhance the identity and belonging sense of the team members, but the existing practice of the young pioneers often involves more external details and less internal perception. Most rituals are carefully rehearsed, landscaped, structured and standardized. Dr Hong Ming Pointed out that ceremony need help the young pioneers break through cognitive impairment, to obtain the practice knowledge of the young pioneers. After the young pioneers carry out "through ritual", the individuals will be considered to have acquired another special "ability" or identity, and also subject to certain regulations.

**Ideal Choice for Children's Initiation Rite**

The initiation ceremony of the young pioneers is a milestone in the growth of children, and is a kind of expected growing experience. The ceremony could give each child emotional positive energy, and make them feel confident, passionate. Children's team ceremony is a kind of political education, which should be conducive to children's moral development, and provide for children personal life and public space. On a personal level, educators should guide children to think and choose actively, rather than keep telling them what to do or how to do. These public living spaces should be the space for children to show themselves. Therefore, after the initiation ceremony, the young pioneers can play their own advantages and organize various colorful activities that are full of children's breath, so that children can devote themselves to various activities.

In school's initiation rite, there should be a limit on how schools make political education for children. First, it should consider the age of the child, which should not impair the natural growth of children. Professor Liu Tie-fang proposed "school education should let the children individual directly face all the achievements and failures in the public life of school, the joys and sorrows, which will inevitably enlarge the achievements and failures in the development of children's school life. Therefore, there should be a prudent approach to education.

Secondly, schools should consider the content of the political education, namely the school education should be according to the characteristics of children's growth. The young pioneer education can be the carrier of moral education, but it is only an enlightenment in politics. It needs to be carried out in a way that is suitable for the development of children. In addition to doing two things, Wu-Xiong Huang said: “the third thing that can be done is to leave a blank. Leave more time and space for students to create, interact, meditate, fantasize, express themselves, and do all kinds of creative work.” School activities should be full of free breath. So that children do these things not in order to get a reward or to be afraid of punishment.

Thirdly, the school should also consider the form of education, which cannot be applied to children in the form of education which is not suitable for children. The ideal political education should be associated with the moral growth of children. The young pioneers education should give children a sense of direction in moral space in a way that is suitable for children, so that children
can learn to identify what is good or what is bad; what is worth doing and what is not worth doing. From the point of view of child growth, the solemnity of the ceremony should not make children remember anything abstract, but to leave some good memories for children, and leave a mark of morality.

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