

CEREMONIES



A Guide for Program Aides

CEREMONIES FOR GIRL SCOUTS

Why Ceremonies?

Ceremonies in Girl Scouting are used to honor special occasions, recognize accomplishments, or simply begin or end a meeting or activity.

A ceremony provides a means of expressing feelings and values, be it on friendship, patriotism, service, beliefs, or whatever.

A ceremony can be informal and take only a few minutes, it can be formal and require much advance preparation, or any place in between.

Most Girl Scouts decide to have several ceremonies throughout the year. Some "special" ones include: Investiture, Girl Scout Week, Thinking Day, Parent's Night, Court of Awards, etc.

What to Include

There is no standard procedure for a Girl Scout ceremony, but all should have an opening, carry out a purpose, and a closing. The age of girls involved, season of year, location, and purpose of the ceremony will help determine what is done.

It is a good idea for troops to build a repertory of songs, readings, poems, and quotations to be used in different ceremonies.

Following are some ideas that might be part of a ceremony:

- Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Original works written by girls
- Poems – read individually or a choral reading
- Songs – sung by the entire group, special chorus, or hummed in the background
- Readings/quotations
- Candle lighting
- Flag ceremony

How to Plan

Leaders will naturally have to give many suggestions to girls for the first several ceremonies. After the girls have experienced a few ceremonies, they will begin to have ideas and suggestions of their own.

Explain the purpose of the ceremony and have the girls talk about appropriate behavior during a ceremony. Discuss the form the ceremony will take. Asking these questions may help:

- Where will the ceremony take place?
- How will it begin?
- What will the main part be?
- What songs, poems, etc. will we use?
- How will we end?
- Who will do each part?
- What equipment do we need? Candles? Decorations?
- Who will get/buy the supplies?
- Who will lead the songs?

Preparing for Ceremonies

Sometimes ceremonies require little or no advance preparation. The quiet sign might be used to get everyone's attention and then the leader of the ceremony gives direction.

Other ceremonies require a great deal of preparation. The entire troop may need to learn a song or practice a choral reading.

Girls will gain confidence by "walking through" the mechanics once or twice. Each girl should know the exact order of events and exactly what she is to do.

For example:

- Does everyone walk in together?
- Do we sit or stand?
- Do we come up front for our part?
- Who do I follow?
- How do we disperse at the end?

Parts of the ceremony may be announced as it goes along, or you may need to have no announcements. If a girl forgets, however, or reads out of order, you can get them back on track with a few words, "Jane will now read a poem on friendship".

Make a final check just before beginning the ceremony (if applicable):

- Is everything in place?
- Are the pins/awards here?
- Is the list of names here?
- Are the candles and matches ready?
- Is the campfire laid and water pail handy?
- Am I and the girls well groomed and in correct attire?

Preparing for Guests

Ceremonies are a nice time to invite guests, parents, other troops, sponsors, etc.

Girls should arrive about one half hour before the guests so they have plenty of time to prepare.

Be sure some girls are acting as hostesses.

Someone should give a short explanation of the purpose of the ceremony.

If guests are to take part in the ceremony, don't forget to give them accurate directions.

If you are using a horseshoe formation, make the open end toward the audience.

Five Basic Questions to Help You Create Your Own Ceremonies

1. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS CEREMONY?

Does a flag ceremony have a deeper purpose than the open a meeting? Does an investiture have a purpose beyond taking in new members?

2. WHAT IS YOUR THEME?

Sometimes the theme is dictated by the ceremony. The theme of a flag ceremony is My Country. The theme of an investiture might be the oaths or law of your organization. But it is fun, sometimes to choose a different kind of theme, and then plan a ceremony around it. How about themes like My Friends, Trees, or The River?

3. WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT THE THEME?

Suppose your theme is My Country. How do you feel about your country? That you are proud to be an American? That you are thankful for the sacrifices others have made? That you would like to make the idea of freedom a reality to every American?

4. WHICH ONE THOUGHT DO YOU WANT TO EXPRESS IN THIS CEREMONY?

Even though each person has many different feelings about complex subjects like My Country or Nature, the most effective ceremonies convey only one central thought. Which one feeling do you want to express in this ceremony?

5. HOW SHALL YOU EXPRESS YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS?

Shall you use poems? Songs? Stories? Shall you try to create a special atmosphere? Shall you use some kind of symbolism? What kind? Shall you share you own experiences?

From "My Keys to Creative Ceremonies"
By Myra Nagel

WORLD PIN



PRESENTATION

Flag Ceremony

Pledge of Allegiance

O Beautiful Banner

LEADER: "These are the flags of our country, and of our World Association, to which we pledge our loyalty and honor. The World Flag is one of the signs of the unity of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts."

FIRST: "The leaves of the trefoil are an emblem of friendship among the people of the world."

SECOND: "I place my leaf with the hope that we may clasp friendly hands around the world."

THIRD: "I place my leaf for those who come from high mountain regions. May the world know what it means to be safe."

FOURTH: "This leaf I place for those who come from farms, plantations and ranches, with the hope that hunger shall be driven from places far and near."

FIFTH: "The stars in the leaves of the trefoil symbolize the Promise and Law of the Girl Guides and Girl Scouts."

SIXTH: "The vein is the compass needle which guides to better Scouting."

SEVENTH: "The flame-like base completes the whole. I put it here with the hope that there will one day be life abundant for all ages, races and creeds. May this flame encircle the world with good will."

LEADER: "May this pin, which is the emblem of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, bring you a feeling of belonging to a world-wide organization. Today, in every member country, this emblem points the way to brotherhood, friendliness and good citizenship."

FOOTNOTES: - The World Pin is worn above the Girl Scout Membership Pin. When not in uniform, one may wear the World Pin with the Girl Scout Pin.
- Thinking Day, February 22, is a most appropriate time for presentation of the World Pin.

- This particular ceremony was done by having a large replica of the World Association Pin made out of plywood and the parts of the trefoil all fitted in together. This suggestion may be adapted with other materials.

CANDLELIGHT INVESTITURE OR REDEDICATION

- PROPERTIES:** Small table, three large and ten small candles in holders, matches, a wooden or cardboard trefoil on which the Girl Scout Law is written; a Girl Scout pin for each girl being invested.
- ORDER:** Three girls light the three large candles while explaining as follows --
- First girl:** "The three candles represent the Girl Scout Promise. This candle I light shall shine as a symbol that Girl Scouts are true to God and their country." (lights first candle)
- Second girl:** "May the light of the second candle shine as a symbol that a Girl Scout's greatest desire is to serve." (lights second candle)
- Third girl:** "And may the light of the third candle shine as a symbol that Girl Scouts are true in their ideals as interpreted by the Girl Scout Law." (lights third candle)
- Fourth girl:** "The trefoil, which is the Girl Scout emblem, lies before you. We will place before it the ten candles representing the Girl Scout Law."

Ten girls, chosen previously, come up to the table. Each recites one part of the Law. Each one takes a small candle, lights it from a large candle, and, as she replaces it in the holder, recites the part of the Law assigned to her.

CLOSING CEREMONIES USED BY GIRL GUIDES IN OTHER COUNTRIES:

- DUTCH BENEDICTION.** (Said in unison by troop in friendship circle) "I'm a link in the golden chain of world friendship, Scouting, and I must keep my link strong and bright."
- DAYLIGHT TAPS.** (Composed by British Girl Guides) "Thanks and praise for our days 'neath the sun, 'neath the stars, 'neath the sky. As we go, this we know, God is nigh."
- NATIVE AMERICAN BENEDICTION.** "May the Great Spirit, in the future, as in the past, be in our hearts, as in our prayer."

APPROPRIATE AND TRADITIONAL GIRL SCOUT SONGS ARE GOOD ADDITIONS TO AN INVESTITURE OR REDEDICATION. FOR INSTANCE:

MAKE NEW FRIENDS (May be sung as a round)

*Make new friends,
But keep the old;
One is silver,
And the other gold.*

GIRL SCOUTS TOGETHER

*Girl Scouts together, that is our song,
Winding the old trails, rocky and long.
Learning our motto, living our creed,
Girl Scouts together in every good deed.*

*Girl Scouts together, happy are we;
Friendly to neighbors far o'er the sea;
Faithful to country, loyal to home,
Known as true Girl Scouts wherever we roam.*

The official Girl Scout songbooks are excellent sources for other musical selections.

Flag Ceremonies for Girl Scouts

Do not be overwhelmed by the number of words contained herein - there are so many different situations and variations on the theme, and we have tried to touch on most of them. Read this and then adapt as flexibly as you wish to fit your particular situation - the only mandatory items for a flag ceremony are respect and dignity for the flag itself.

Always remember that flag ceremonies must not be allowed to become meaningless habits, but that each one should be carefully planned as an individual event to be carried out with dignity and respect due to the symbol of this nation.

The number of girls in the color guard may vary with each occasion, according to such things as the event itself, the number of flags to be included, the size of the room, the number of girls who wish to be involved with it. There is always one color bearer who carries the National flag, and at least two escorts for it. If more than two are used, group them in pairs behind one another, and with odd one (if necessary) at the back. Each other flag needs a bearer but no escorts. Troop and World Association flags are appropriate for troop use. If you plan to use flags of other nations, remember that when flags of two or more nations are displayed they should be flown from separate staffs of the same height, and the flags should be of approximately equal size. International usage forbids the display of the flag of one nation above that of another in time of peace.

Red sashes are placed over the right shoulder and tied on the left hip in a square knot for each flag bearer, and around the waist and tied on the left hip for escorts and the Scout-in-Charge. Sashes are not essential. Tying the sash this way for the bearer makes it possible for her to put some of the flag's weight on her shoulder by placing the staff through the sash, though this is seldom done and should be practiced before trying it in public.

Duties of the color guard. The color bearer rivets her respectful attention on the flag she carries (rather than on herself) to see that it flies free and does not brush against anything or become caught or soiled. The escorts' concern is with the National flag - to carry it if anything happens to its bearer (should the bearer faint, someone else takes care of her while the escorts carry on with the flag) and to protect it from disrespectful treatment, which they can best do in the troop by setting an attentive and respectful example. But they could also note those troop members whose behavior during the flag ceremony indicates that they do not understand what the flag symbolizes. The escorts are not concerned with any other flags in the color party which are of less importance than the National flag. If there are two escorts they may walk either beside or one pace behind the color bearer, one on either side of the flag or group of flags. Girl Scout flag escorts do not carry rifles - or drawn pocket knives. If there are more than two escorts they walk in pairs behind one another a pace apart, the first pair one pace behind the color bearer.

Other flags. The National flag is carried on the marching right (the flag's own right) of another flag, e.g. troop flag, or in front of the center of a line of two or more other flags.

Turning. To maintain the correct position of the National flag in relation to other flags, the color guard cannot perform an "about face" to reverse their direction, but must "wheel" or perform a "threading" maneuver, always turning around the right shoulder. Each of these methods of turning needs practice to maintain dignity, but are impressive when done well.

The whole color party should walk in step with the color bearer and maintain their relative positions to one another without crowding. At no time does any member of the color party remove her attention from the

Are there any announcements - Only brief important items should be included here. If there are many things to be said to the assembled group, request that the girls remain where they are until after the color guard has been dismissed and returned to the group.

*Post the colors -----Which means to place the flag or flags in stands which have previously been put in the desired spot. The color bearer takes a step back to her original place in the party, and in step with the whole group moves to face the stand or stands. The bearers of the troop and other flags move alone to their flag stands and place each flag in its stand, and each bearer remains at attention in this spot, facing the stand in which the National flag will be posted, last of all. The color bearer steps to her stand and posts her flag. She steps back to her place between the escorts, and at some small pre-arranged signal she gives, the whole color guard salutes the National flag crisply for a count of say, 10, and remains at attention.

*Color guard, dismissed ---If the flag has been posted, the guard now reforms its entire group and walks out of the room in formation, to remove and fold their sashes and return to the horseshoe. If they are still carrying the flag, and it is not to be posted, the color bearer takes one step back to her original place, and the guard leaves the room in formation, puts away their flags and sashes and returns to the group. If there are further lengthy announcements, these are now made, and the leader signals the Mistress of Ceremonies when all is finished.

*Girl Scouts, dismissed ---Previous instructions should have been given, if needed, about leaving the horseshoe in an orderly file manner, following the Mistress of Ceremonies, so that the group retains its respectful attitude even through dismissal. Try not to have the girls break up like a flock of startled sparrows in all directions.

INDOORS, WITH THE FLAG ON A STAFF

- As a closing when the flag has been posted at the front of the room during the meeting.

*Girl Scouts, attention - Wait until everyone is at attention.

Are there any announcements - Get all these over with before the flag ceremony begins, but remember that the color guard needs to hear them too.

*Color guard, advance ---This previously assembled group walks to a position facing the National flag in its stand.

*Color guard, present the colors - At a sign from the color bearer, the whole party gives a crisp salute to the National flag. The color bearer takes a step forward, picks up her flag, and steps back to her place. The bearers of other flags go to their flags, pick them up, and return to their places. The whole group moves to face the audience or horseshoe, turning with a right wheel if necessary, and the color bearer takes one good step forward to "present" the colors.

*Girl Scouts, the flag of our country, salute - as in Ceremony 1.

-OR-

*Girl Scouts, the flag of our country, pledge allegiance - as in Ceremony 1.

5. The flag should not be embroidered on personal items nor printed on anything designed for temporary use and then discarded. (This covers patches and stick-ons!)

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, try an encyclopedia and the following small booklets:

The Flag and Flag Etiquette - North Carolina National Guard
133 Fayetteville Street
Raleigh, North Carolina

Our Flag - DOD Pam 5-6a - Department of Defense, Office of Armed Forces Information and Education,
Washington, DC