

Farthest North Girl Scout Council

Ceremony Planning Guideline

What is a ceremony? In Girl Scouting there are many types of ceremonies and even more ways of conducting them.

Ceremonies are:

- Used to honor special occasions.
- To recognize accomplishments.
- To begin or end a meeting.

Ceremonies can:

- Provide a means of expressing feelings and values of friendship, patriotism and service.
- Be informal or formal.
- Be large groups or small groups.
- Be long or short in length.

Planning is the key to a successful ceremony! You and your troop decide all of the details of your ceremony. In the beginning, you as the leader will need to give many suggestions and much help with the planning. After the girls have seen and taken part in a few ceremonies they will begin to have more ideas of their own. Regardless of the age and experience level of the girls, they will have input for the planning process and it is important to include everyone in this step.

Here are some questions to help you and your troop in planning your troop ceremony. Ask:

- What is the purpose?
- Where will the ceremony take place?
- Who is invited?
- Will we have refreshments?
- How will we begin the ceremony?
- How will we do the main part?
- What songs, poems, quotations should we include?
- How will we end the ceremony?
- Who will do each part? An Individual? A group?
- What do we need? Candles? Decorations?
- Who will bring them?
- Who will start the songs?

Examples of Girl Scout Ceremonies

Investiture – An investiture ceremony is held when one or more persons join Girl Scouting for the first time. The girl or adult who is being invested makes the Girl Scout promise, receives the appropriate membership pin, and is welcomed into Girl Scouting.

Fly-Up to Junior Girl Scouting – A fly-up ceremony is when Brownie Girl Scouts receive their Brownie Wings from the leader, rededicate themselves to Girl Scouting by repeating the Promise and receive their trefoil pins.

Bridging – A bridging ceremony celebrates girls moving from one program level to the next. Generally a symbolic bridge is used in the ceremony and the girls cross the bridge from level to the next.

Court of Awards – A Court of Awards is held to present Girl Scout recognitions and can be held more than once a year if the girls and leaders wish. While the girls will help with the planning, they will depend on the leader to arrange for the parts of content that reflect the recognition of and pride in the girls' accomplishments.

Candlelight Ceremony – A candlelight ceremony helps to remind people about the words and meaning of the Promise and Law with the use of candles. Safety rules should always be considered when planning this ceremony. Consider local fire laws before using open flames. Help girls to find safe ways to get the same effect. For example, flashlights, electric candle, or “pretend” candles might be used if open flames are prohibited.

Scouts' Own – A Scouts' Own is an inspirational, girl-planned program to express their deepest feelings about something such as the Girl Scout promise, friendship, nature or any ideals or values that have meaning for them. It is usually not a religious ceremony and can take place at any time of the year and in any form.

Flag Ceremony - A flag ceremony is the part of any program that honors the American flag, the symbol representing our country. There is a code of flag etiquette, Public Law 829 for the proper flag display and presentation. This code can be found in the GSUSA publication, *Ceremonies in Girl Scouting* and at any veteran's organization.