

Ceremonies

Time to Celebrate Girl Scouting

Ceremonies mark special Girl Scout events throughout the year. They can celebrate major transitions, such as bridging to another level or getting your Girl Scout pin, commemorate your accomplishment when you earn awards, or simply mark the beginning or end of your group's meeting. You can also plan a ceremony around a theme, such as friendship or nature, which you wish to explore in thought, words, or song. Whatever the purpose, every Girl Scout ceremony enables girls to share in a special part of Girl Scout history and create their own special memories.

Important Ceremonies in Girl Scouting

Opening and Closing ceremonies signify the beginning and end of a meeting. The closing ceremony may be as simple as a hand squeeze around the circle or a song.

Flag ceremonies can be part of any activity that honors the American flag.

Ceremonies for Girl Scouts Holidays

Founder's Day or Juliette Low's Birthday on October 31 is a time to remember the important role Juliette Low played in the development of the Girl Scout Movement in the United States.

Girl Scout Birthday ceremonies can be held on or near March 12, the date Juliette Gordon Low started Girl Scouting in the United States of America in 1912. Girl Scout Week begins on a Sunday and includes March 12. Girl Scout Week celebrations can be family-oriented.

Thinking Day ceremonies are held on February 22. Thinking Day ceremonies are usually connected with international friendship. A Girl Scouts' Own ceremony with a theme about the Baden-Powells would also be appropriate. It is a time to impress girls with the vastness of the worldwide movement of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. Thinking Day ceremonies frequently include the giving of the pin of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) to invested Girl Scout girls and adults. Thinking Day is also an opportunity to contribute to the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund.

Court of Awards ceremony honors Girl Scouts' accomplishments. The girls receive Journey insignia, badges, leadership awards and any other recognitions earned during the year. The ceremony is usually girl-planned and includes parents. The ceremony may also include a Thank You and recognition to consultants and others who were instrumental in providing help to the girls working on their projects.

Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award ceremonies honor Girl Scouts who have earned the highest awards for Girl Scouts. The Bronze Award ceremony for Juniors is usually held at the troop/group level or combined with council recognition. Girl Scout Silver Award ceremony honors Girl Scouts who earn the Girl Scout Silver Award and is often combined with the Girl Scout Gold Award ceremony at the council level. The Girl Scout Gold Award ceremony honors Gold Award Girl Scouts who have earned the highest award in Girl Scouting and often takes place at council level.

Girl Scouts' Own is a girl-planned program that allows girls to explore their feelings around a topic, such as friendship or The Girl Scout Promise and Law using the spoken word, favorite songs, poetry, or other methods of expression. It is a quiet, reverent, and sharing expression of the common aspirations of each girl. It should be inspirational to all attending but is never a religious ceremony.

Investiture ceremony welcomes new members, girls or adults, into the Girl Scout family for the first time. Girls receive their Girl Scout, Brownie Girl Scout, or Daisy Girl Scout pin at this time.

Pinning ceremonies help celebrate when girls receive age-level Girl Scout pins.

Rededication ceremonies are an opportunity for girls and adults to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Bridging ceremonies mark a girl's move from one age-level of Girl Scouting to another. Fly-up is a bridging ceremony for Brownie Girl Scouts who are bridging to Junior Girl Scouts. Girls receive the Girl Scout pin along with their Brownie Girl Scout wings.

Hints for Ceremonies

1. Devote sufficient time to planning the ceremony. Good ceremonies have a clear purpose and enrich the meaning and mood of the ceremony.
2. Use your Journey Leaders Guide and the Girls Guide to Girl Scouts to help plan your ceremony. There is also a resource list included in this resource guide.
3. Take safety precautions when using candles or fires, or when constructing bridges or platforms. Refer to Safety Activity Checkpoints for advice.
4. Add personal elements to traditional ceremonies. Use favorite poems, songs, stories and sayings, or write something of your own.
5. Consider the role of colors and symbols that you might use in your ceremony.
6. Observe flag etiquette when doing flag ceremonies.

Resources

Girl Scouts - GSUSA's website has further information on ceremonies.

www.youtube.com - Search for Girl Scout ceremonies videos for ideas.

pinterest.com - A great place to search for Girl Scout ceremony ideas.

Your Troop Support Specialist team is always a great resource. Email us at customercare@girlscoutsgwm.org.

Ceremony Planning Worksheet

*Ellen Tjarks
Girl Scouts of DuPage County Council
Naperville, Illinois*

With all the talk of “does someone have a ceremony for . . .,” I thought I’d post something that has helped our girls plan their own ceremonies. I’ve used it with Brownies, Juniors, and Cadettes. Give each girl her own copy. The worksheet has the following:

- Name of Ceremony
- Purpose or Theme
- Date of Ceremony
- Time
- Place of Ceremony
- Length
- Who will attend?
- How will the ceremony begin?
- What songs, poems, quotations will be included?
- What activities will be included in the main part of the ceremony? Will people speak? Will badges or other awards be given?
- How will the ceremony end?
- Who will do each part?
- Who will record the ceremony for your troop’s archives or records?
- What decorations or props are needed?
- Who will bring the items?
- What refreshments will be served?
- Who will bring them?
- What will refreshments cost?
- Who will pay for them?
- When will a rehearsal be scheduled for the ceremony?

Girl Scout Readings for Ceremonies

(Great for investiture, rededication or awards ceremonies)

Girl Scout Gorp Ceremony (A ceremony and a snack all in one!)

Materials needed:

- A small table
- A large bowl
- Ingredients for the Gorp mix as listed below in separate bowls
- A large spoon for mixing
- Cups for making individual servings after the ceremony

Girls should step forward to the large bowl, read their lines, and add their ingredient to the bowl.

CEREMONY

1. *Have you ever wondered what goes into making a Girl Scout? Well, we have a recipe to make to show you what we're all about.*
2. *Girl Scouts come in all colors, from cities and towns. Every Girl Scout's a sister no matter what she looks like or how she sounds. I am starting our mix with these colorful M&Ms.*
3. *Some of us are tall, and some of us are small. When we get together, size doesn't matter at all. I am adding pretzel thins and marshmallows.*
4. *With our words and our actions, we show that we care. We try to do our best to be fair and square. I will add Chex Cereal to our mix.*
5. *Sometimes we act a little "nuts," we love to joke and play. We'd love to put a Girl Scout smile into everyone's day. So I am adding a whole bunch of nuts.*
6. *When we get together, we make circles so round. It's our never ending friendships to which we are bound. I will add Cheerios to our mix.*
7. *When we're planning and working, we just don't stop, we keep ourselves busy; all around we will pop. Next we add some popcorn.*
8. *We respect all God's creatures, if they're big or they're small. The earth is our home, and there is room here for all. So for all the little creatures, I add some Goldfish crackers.*
9. *It was 1912 when Juliette Low started us off, and like the girls back then, we're just "chips off the old block." So for all of us, I add some candy chips. (chocolate, butterscotch, peanut butter, etc.)*
10. *We get a "kick" out of learning and doing new things. And a "kick" out of helping others and spending time with friends. I am adding Kix Cereal to our mix.*

11. When we were Daisies and Brownies, we were fresh, new and rare, but now we're Cadettes (can also substitute Jrs. or Srs.) and have experience to share.

Added together, the number of years our girls have spent in Girl Scouting comes to ____.

So for all the years we've spent in Girl Scouting, I am adding raisins.

**Here I thought we could add up all the years the girls have been in Girl Scouts and quote that number.*

12. Now we stir to the left and we stir to the right. We mix it together with all of our might. We welcome our troop to another great year, and hope the memories they make, they will always hold dear.

Leader: Now that our recipe is complete, we look upon what we have created. Each of the ingredients went into our recipe separately, just like each of the girls came into the troop separately. As the ingredients mix together to form one dish, our girls mix together to form a troop. But even as we look upon our mix, we can still see each ingredient as separate and unique. Our girls bring each of their own unique talents and characteristics to our troop to make it what it is.

Girls sing: When're you make a Gorp Mix, consider well its ingredients, and when made, in it we can see ourselves!

Pass out Gorp mix, serve drinks, mingle, etc.

Submitted by Lynn from Massachusetts

G is for the color Green

Paula Barnett
Junior Troop Leader
Ocoee, Florida

G is for the color Green that Juniors wear with pride
I is for the great Ideas that grow from deep inside
R is for Respect we have for all of God's creations
L is for our Loyalty and Love for our nation

S is for the Sisterhood that reaches 'round the world
C is for the Changes that bring us to women from girls
O is for the Oath we made that Scouts call Promise and Law
U means that it's Us who will give service for a cause
T is for the Teamwork that makes 15 act as one
I is for Integrity and pride in what we've done
N is for the Number of our troop - 9-0-2
G is for the Girl Scout way we do the things we do

Together this is Girl Scouting
It was a great year to remember
And to recall with fond remembrance
What we've done since last September.

We wear our pins and badges
To represent the work we've done
We wear our vests and sashes
To show that we are one

Although it seems we've just begun
Fall will soon be here
And so we'll add another star
And start another year.

If anybody wants to adopt this, you'll have to rewrite the part that contains our troop number. Unless, of course, your troop ends with a "2" also!

Flowers

"Welcome to our ceremony. Today we are here to show our belief in the Girl Scout Promise and Law and to recognize the achievements of our girls.

"This candle that I light shall shine forth as a symbol that a Girl Scout is true to God* and her Country.

"The second candle shall shine forth as a symbol that a Girl Scout's greatest desire is to serve.

"The third candle shall shine forth as a symbol that a Girl Scout will try her best to live up to the Girl Scout Law.

Flowers have always played an important part in human life. From the earliest times they have been given as signs of love and respect and have been used in ceremonies of all types. The flowers in this ceremony represent the ten parts of the Girl Scout Law. Girls, please join me in reciting the Girl Scout Promise.

I will do my best to be:

honest and fair,
This part of the law is represented by the white chrysanthemum. It shows truth, honor, trustworthiness, equality and fairness

friendly and helpful,
The zinnia represents thoughtfulness about friends, while Baby's Breath represents generosity.

considerate and caring,
Together, a red and a white Rose stand for a warm and caring heart.

courageous and strong,
The garlic plant, grows anywhere and has a strong flavor. It represents courage and strength of character and body. The Indian paintbrush shows cheerfulness even in difficulty.

and responsible for what I say and do,

The gladiola symbolizes strength of character, maturity, and responsibility. Binding it with straw, we show that we honor our word and keep our agreements.

and to

respect myself and others,

The white Rose and white zinnia show that we hold ourselves worthy and good. Winter Greens symbolize the harmony we try to keep between ourselves and others.

respect authority,

The daffodil represents careful thought, attention, and concern. With the daffodil, we are saying that we hold others in high regard.

use resources wisely,

The foxglove shows thriftiness.

make the world a better place,

The cattail represents the peace we are trying to bring to the world when we help others. The Caladium shows the great joy and delight we take in the world around us.

and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

With the striped carnation, we are saying that we think about those Girl Scouts and Guides who are not here with us. It helps indicate our love for our fellow Scouts and Guides.

Four-Winds

North Wind:

I am the North Wind. People say I am cold, but to [girl's name] I will always bring the warmest weather because she has been true to the Girl Scout Promise and has lived up to the Girl Scout Law.

South Wind:

I am the South Wind. I wish you all success in Girl Scouting. Over hill and dale, I have carried stories of [girl's name] and her experiences. As a Girl Scout she has been happy, willing, and fair—a credit to her troop and community.

East Wind:

I am the East Wind. I wish you well. I have spread the story of [girl's] fun and happiness in Girl Scouting with her troop, and of how she lived up to the Girl Scout Promise and was fair and helpful.

West Wind:

I am the West Wind. I would like everyone present to know that [girls name] did not walk the trail to the [award] alone. She had the wonderful help and guidance of her parents, [mother's name & father's name]. Parents, continue to help your girls achieve and grow into young womanhood!

Spirit Candle – Opening

This candle represents the spirit of Girl Scouting. It burns throughout our meeting to represent the friendship and fun we enjoy together.

Look to the flame and see its challenge to you:

- ... to do more than belong... Participate.
- ... do more than care... Help.
- ... do more than believe... Practice.
- ... do more than be fair... Be kind.
- ... do more than forgive... Forget.
- ... do more than dream... Work.
- ... do more than teach... Inspire.
- ... do more than live... Grow.
- ... do more than be friendly... Be a friend.
- ... do more than give... Serve.

Bless you for being just who you are — Girls are great!

Nobody Told Me

Reader 1:

Nobody told me I would really feel part of something so big, so wonderful, that when we said the Promise together tonight that I would mean every word. Will I ever know all the words? You'll learn them, I was told.

Reader 2:

Nobody told me that while I worried and fretted about "doing the right thing at the right time," I would now be looked upon as "knowing all the answers" by the younger scouts. What if they won't listen to me? They'll learn from you, I was told.

Reader 3:

Nobody told me I would really have to cook on an open fire. "I don't know how to scramble eggs or put up a tent." You'll learn, I was told. Nobody told me that I would really want to go camping again. You'll learn, I was told.

Reader 4:

Nobody ever told me that I would become queasy or that my voice would crack when I led the Flag Ceremony. "But, I've never done a flag ceremony," I said. What if I forget the words? You'll learn, I was told.

Reader 5:

Nobody told me that the Laws were made to help us become better people. How will I learn to get along with so many girls, we're all so different? You'll learn, I was told.

Leader:

Nobody told me that getting to know these girls would be so much fun. Nobody told me, I learned.

In Unison:

We are Girl Scouts. Four words, but, behind them, hundreds of feelings and thoughts. We are Girl Scouts because we love the out-of-doors, singing, reading, learning how to make things, and because we enjoy sharing with our friends in Girl Scouting. Nobody told us that we would make so many friends! Nobody told us. We learned.

Readings for Flag Ceremonies

I am Old Glory! — A Reading for Retiring Worn-out Flags

I am a symbol of your country, of the principles for which you stand. Men and women have defended me with their blood and their lives because I stand for all that is good in your country. I have become the emblem of your unity, your power, your thoughts, and purpose as a nation. I have become a symbol of a growing, changing nation. I am the banner of glory from the past, and like your country, I have a great future. I have no other character than that which you give me from generation to generation. The choice is yours.

I have flown in majestic silence above the hosts that execute those choices, whether in peace or war. And even through silence I have spoken to you—voices from the past of those men and women who went before you, and from those records they've written about me. Those same records describe the character of those who eternalized my colors. My blue field is a symbol of their faith and glory. My red stripes denote their sacrifice and bravery - even the loss of their life-giving blood. My white denotes their purity of heart and mind.

But tonight, my colors reflect my years - for I am faded, tattered, and worn. Rather than reflect misunderstanding upon those characteristics and colors for which I have flown, I must be retired so that fresh colors might be raised. The only proper retirement of my emblems is to return to the earth through fire, for fire symbolically denotes the presence of God.

For more than ten score years, I have been the banner of hope and continue to be an enduring banner of the United States of America. Freedom for generations after generation of Americans. Men have followed me into battle with unwavering courage. You have looked on me as a symbol on national unity. You have prayed that you and your fellow citizens might continue to enjoy life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. So long as you love liberty more than life itself, so long as truth, justice and charity for all remain rooted deeply in human hearts, I shall continue to be the enduring banner of the United States of America.

But tonight, I bid you adieu.

American Flag Recipe

Ingredients:

6 Girl Scouts

1 cup of blue paper bits

Stars or glitter

American flag

1 cup of red paper bits

1 cup of white paper bits

Large pot

Large spoon or stirrer

Set up:

Girl Scouts form semi-circle around pot. American flag is folded and hidden in pot. Each girl is holding the ingredients that she adds.

1. We are going to fix a treat that is really grand; And make for you a recipe...the greatest in the land.
2. First, we'll put in a heaping cup of red for courage true, (Adds red paper bits to pot)
3. And then we'll add for loyalty, a dash of heavenly blue. (Adds blue paper bits to pot)
4. For purity, we will now sift in a layer of snowy white. (Adds white paper bits to pot)
5. We will add a pinch of stars to make it all come out right. (Adds stars or glitter to pot)
6. We'll stir and stir and then you will see, that what we have made is... (Takes up stirrer and pretends to mix, taking care not to disturb the Flag)

It's Just a Piece of Cloth

It's just a piece of cloth, that's all it is
Just a piece of cloth.
But when a little breeze comes along, it stirs and comes to life
And flutters and snaps in the wind, all red and white and blue ...
Then you realize that no other piece of cloth could be like it.
It has your whole life wrapped up in it ...
The meals you eat, the time you spend with your family,
The kind of things boys and girls learn at school,
The strange and wonderful thoughts you get in church.

Those stars on it ...
They make you feel just as free as the stars
in the wide, wide, deep night.
And the stripes ...
they are the bars of blood
To any dictator who would try to change this way of life.

Just a piece of cloth, that's all it is
Until you put your soul into it and give it meaning;
Then it is the symbol of liberty and decency
and fair dealing for everyone.

It is just a piece of cloth
Until we breathe life into it,
Until we make it stand for everything we believe in
And refuse to live without it.

The Red, White and Blue

What does our flag mean to you?
Does it mean just colors - red, white and blue?
Just a piece of cloth that proudly waves
From buildings tall and soldier's graves?

Or does it mean people like you and me
Who love this land of liberty?
People whose skins may be brown or white
But bravely work for freedom and right?

Can you see in its folds mountains and hills
Wide flowing rivers and picturesque hills?
Fields that are golden with ripening grain
And cowboys roaming across the plain?

Cities with skyscrapers stately and tall
And towns and villages large and small?
Farms that supply our tables with food
And orchards and forests that yield fruit and wood?

These are the things in our flag that I see
Symbol of a nation that loves liberty
So to our flag let us pledge to be true
God bless you and keep you, dear Red, White and Blue

© 1997-2001 GirlScout.NET! All Rights Reserved

Scouts' Own Ceremonies

A “Scouts’ Own” is an inspirational ceremony, usually built around a central theme, such as friendship, world peace, save the earth, or appreciation of the world around us. Just about any topic consistent with the principles and program goals of Girl Scouting is appropriate. The important thing is that it be the work of the **girls** themselves—from start to finish.

In execution, a “Scouts’ Own” can range from lively to somber. The intent is generally serious, however, and usually reflective. Texts used can be spontaneously made up or taken from existing literature. If readings from sacred works (scripture) are incorporated, girls should be encouraged to choose passages that are less likely to offend (such as not referring to the Deity by a name identified with a specific religion). [Remember *pluralism*.]

Here are suggestions that can help make a “Scouts’ Own” successful:

- Hold it somewhere away from normal activities. In a meeting place, go to a corner that is not otherwise used.
- Have a *gateway*. As the group files into the Scouts’ Own area (single or double) through this gateway, nobody speaks unless absolutely necessary (and then only in hushed tones). This makes it a serious ceremony, rather than a get-together with a lot of chatter.
The gateway can be two chairs, two people or a chalk line on the floor. The idea is that you are going to a special place to have a special kind of ceremony.
After the ceremony is over, the group returns through this gateway silently.

This information is from the following website compiled by Neil Savage

<http://www.kidslist.uc.edu/kidslist/gs/neil/scown.html#preface>

Scouts' Own Theme: "Girl Scouts"

All: Sing "Girl Scouts Together"

Girl 1: **G** is for Girl - that's why we are here

I is for Interest - without that we wouldn't care

R is for Ready - to start to take our place in the world

L is for Living - the Girl Scout way

Girl 2: **S** is for Seeking - to learn, to explore

C is for Country - we'll try to do our share and more

O is for Obligation - to live up to the Promise we've made

U is for Unity - together, one for all

T is for Trust - without that, we'd all fall

All: I am a Girl Scout

Girl 3: I have a Promise. It has three parts. Girl Scouts and Girl Guides all over the world are sisters and friends in this Promise.

All: Repeat the Girl Scout Promise

Girl 4: I have a Law. This is the code by which I try to live. This law should be used daily in every Girl Scout's life -- in all she does in work and play.

All: Repeat the Girl Scout Law

Sing "Whene'er You Make A Promise"

All: "I am a Girl Scout"

Girl 5: I have a motto - "Be Prepared." This means that I can be depended upon, whenever I am needed. This is my duty -- to be ready when called upon.

All: I am a Girl Scout

Girl 6: I have a slogan "Do a good turn daily." I will try to help other people.

All: I am a Girl Scout

Girl 7: I have a sign. This I give whenever I repeat my Promise. It is important to stand erect to show my pride in belonging. This reminds me to think straight and to realize my duty as a citizen. I give the Girl Scout sign to other Girl Scouts and Girl Guides because it is the sign of friendship. The three fingers stand for the three parts of the Promise.

All: I am a Girl Scout

Girl 8: I have a uniform and am proud to wear it. It must be neat at all times. When in uniform, I try harder than usual to obey the Girl Scout Law.

All: Sing "On My Honor" © **1997-2001 GirlScout.NET! All Rights Reserved**

“The Book of Trees” Scouts’ Own

Reader:

Those of us who are here tonight are fortunate enough to have come in contact with the organization which believes in making a “friend in need, a friend indeed.” Let us all imagine that we are in a great forest. The clearing through which all Girl Scouts must enter is our ethical code. All who enter must make the Girl Scout Promise. But once inside, we find many paths - all leading to a way of life on which we can build a wholesome future. In Girl Scouting, we are able to help all our girls take this trail.

Girl 1: Reading from the Book of Trees:

Girl 2: I am the Oak Tree - As sturdy and long-lived as I, so is a Girl Scout’s honor.

Girl 3: I am the Holly Tree - Constantly green and holding tight to my leaves as a Girl Scout is ever loyal.

Girl 4: I am a Birch Tree - With my bark and my wood, I am useful and help others as every Girl Scout does.

Girl 5: I am a Linden Tree - My heart shaped leaves are like the hearts of Girl Scouts who are friends to all and sisters to each other.

Girl 6: I am the Aspen Tree - My leaves softly whisper “Courtesy is Thoughtfulness” as every Girl Scout knows.

Girl 7: I am the Elm Tree - Sheltering the little folk of the woods in my gracious branches and roots, I am a friend to all animals, just as every Girl Scout.

Girl 8:

I am the Poplar Tree - Tall and straight as a soldier who obeys orders, so does every Girl Scout.

Girl 9: I am the Maple Tree - Brightening the spring, my leaves gay in the fall, I am as cheerful as a Girl Scout.

Girl 10: I am a Hickory Tree - Tough of wood, I keep my nuts stored in strong, tight cases, just as a Girl Scout is thrifty.

Girl 11: I am the Dogwood Tree - In the spring, I stand clean and beautiful in the face, as does a Girl Scout, clean in thought, word and deed, so stands in beauty.

All: (The Conservation Pledge) I give my pledge as an American to save and faithfully defend from waste the natural resources of my country - its soil and minerals, its forests, waters and wildlife.

All: Sing “This Land is Your Land”

© 1997-2001 GirlScout.NET! All Rights Reserved

Scouts' Own
Theme: "Promise and Law"

Entire group recites the promise

Each girl tells what the Promise means to her

Divide girls into pairs or equal groups, one for each part of the Law. Each group tells what their phrase of the Law means to them.

Song: "Girl Scouts Together"

Short story or poem

Song: "When e'er You Make A Promise"

Choral Reading:
(Have cards with letters on front and "reading" on back for girls to hold)

What the Promise and Law mean to a Girl Scout:

- P** stands for **Partnership** with God and our fellow man
- R** means **Responsibility**, which when accepted, makes us a better person
- O** is **Opportunities**, many opportunities that come to us through Girl Scouting
- M** is for **Moments** that we'll treasure always
- I** stands for **Individuality**, the mark of a strong person
- S** symbolizes **Service**, the keynote of Girl Scouting
- E** might be **Experiences**, little things and big ones, too. Maybe that (fill in here with two special troop experiences that happened during the year).

- L** stands for **Laughter**, an effective medicine for all aches and pains, emotional and physical
- A** symbolizes **Adventure**, the kind of thing that can change an ordinary day into a momentous one
- W** means **Work**, good and simple, without it we could not live - merely exist

All: And remember always, a smile is the trademark of a Girl Scout

Song: "Green Trees" and "Taps" © 1997-2001 GirlScout.NET! All Rights Reserved