

PLANNING A CEREMONY

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PLANNING A CEREMONY

From the earliest times, people have held ceremonies, whether somber or joyful, to celebrate numerous events, such as changes of seasons, births, victories, and deaths. Often ceremonies bind us together as a family or a group. Ceremonies bring meaning to life experiences.

Ceremonies are an important part of the Girl Scout program. They can celebrate major transitions, accomplishments, or just the beginning or end of a meeting. They continue Girl Scout traditions and help to emphasize the values of the Girl Scout Promise and Law. When the girls are young, the leader takes the lead in the planning. The game can be played in full with these girls who are just beginning to learn about Girl Scouts. Then later, when they are more experienced, they can begin to make the decisions and plan their own ceremonies

Girl Scouts also have ceremonies that mark their special events and feelings throughout the year. These ceremonies can be planned on a grand scale to celebrate major transitions during the year, such as bridging, awards, investitures, and end-of-the year celebrations. Or ceremonies can be planned on a smaller scale to celebrate more frequent occurrences – the beginning or the end of a meeting, friendships, sisterhood, and world peace.

Ceremonies should be simple, sincere, and have real significance. Light dignified humor can be an asset. To be effective, the ceremony should be done with care and precision. This is particularly true of a flag ceremony where proper flag etiquette is important. If candles are involved, take care that safety precautions are taken. Flashlights cardboard candles and battery candles can be used by younger troops or in paces where candles are not allowed. And, above all, remember that long, elaborate events often lose their effectiveness.

The ceremonies that Girl Scouts like best are the ones they help create. The girls' involvement gives them a chance for self-expression and a sense of pride.

As an on-going activity, encourage girls to collect their favorite sayings, poems, stories, and songs from the beginning of the Girl Scout year. Those who enjoy writing can create their own poems, stories, and songs while others may want to compose music or make up skits to be used in future ceremonies. A troop/group archivist and photographer can collect materials and photographs throughout the year to be used in future ceremonies, such as "a night of remembering" ceremony.

A ceremony can be divided into three parts: the opening, the main and the closing. Planning usually starts far in advance for the significant ones, like Investiture or Rededication, and quickly for the more common ones like a meeting Opening or Closing. Specifics for planning include the kind of ceremony, its purpose, its theme, opening, closing. Other inclusions are: when, where, who will do it, how to do it, guests, refreshments, equipment needed, decorations, cleanup and budget.

When planning ceremonies, girls can add speaking parts or double up on parts so that each girl has an opportunity to participate. Good ceremonies have a clear purpose and have ingredients that enrich the meaning and mood of the ceremony.

Ideas for Themes:

- Accepting responsibility
- Cheerfulness
- Conservation
- Heritage
- International understanding
- Loyalty
- Nature
- Patriotism
- Service to others
- Beauty

Ways to Express Themes:

- Music and song
- Poetry, stories
- Choral readings, dramatizations
- Dance, creative movement

- Lighting candles and campfires
- Quotations
- Thoughts expressed by individuals
- Original writings
- Girl Scout Promise and Law, motto, slogan

Girl Scouting operates on the principal that girls grow, learn and have fun by making decisions, doing and discovering for themselves. That is why it is important that the girls do as much of the planning for ceremonies as possible. Ceremonies are opportunities for the girls, not the adults, to express themselves. Girls should have a part in making their own memories.

Planning should include the girls' ideas and input. As the girls get older, their responsibility for planning should expand. Keep in mind that different levels and/or groups will have different abilities. Be flexible—let the girls make mistakes and learn from them. It is your function to guide the group and provide an environment for creativity. The Ceremony Worksheet will help with troop planning.

Here are some ways girls at each level can be involved in ceremony planning.

Daisy	Brownie	Junior	Cadette	Senior/Ambassador
Choose a favorite song to sing	Choose a favorite song to sing	Decide on a theme	Decide theme	Plan and put on an area ceremony
Decide who they want to invite	Decide who they want to invite and make invitations	Decide who they want to invite and make invitations	Find songs and readings	Select site and make arrangements
	Set up before ceremony	Find songs and poems	Work with Junior sister troop to plan bridging	Contact participants
	Serve refreshments	Make and serve refreshments	Make own props	Choose what to put in ceremony
	Help clean up	Clean up	Clean up	Conduct ceremony Clean up

Please remember, these are only guidelines. You know the maturity level of your girls better than anyone!

CEREMONY WORKSHEET

Name of the Ceremony _____

Purpose or theme _____

Date of the ceremony _____

Place of the ceremony _____

What will the set up be? _____

Length of the ceremony _____

Who will attend? _____

Who will write the invitations? _____

How will the ceremony begin? _____

What will the main section consist of? _____

What songs, poems, quotations will be included? _____

What formations will be used in presenting the ceremony? _____

How will the ceremony end? _____

What decorations or props do we need? _____

Who will get them? _____

Who will do set up? _____

Who will do each part? _____

Who will record the ceremony for our troop archives? _____

Who will bring the needed items?

Item _____	Who will bring _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Will refreshments be served? What will they be? Who will bring them? How much? Cost?

When will a rehearsal be scheduled for the ceremony? _____

And, afterwards, when will we evaluate our ceremony, we can ask learn what went well, what went not so well, what can we do better next time.

Mix and Match Chart

This chart lists ideas for girls to pick and choose from to create a ceremony. It allows them to combine ideas in dozens of possible ways. For example, they can pick a theme from the first column, match it up with a purpose from column two, a mood and atmosphere from column three, etc. As they move across the chart, they create the foundation for their ceremony.

Theme	Purpose	Mood & Atmosphere	Setting	Opening
Friendship	Girl Scouts' Own	Serious	Park	Flag ceremony
Nature	To honor someone	Lighthearted	Backyard or patio	Candle lighting for Promise & Law
Facing New Challenges	Rededication	Humorous	Council office	Song or dance
Story of Juliette Low	Bridging	Spiritual	Living room	Thought for the Day
Moment of Remembrance	Troop accomplishments	Reflective	Auditorium	Greeting from leader & girls
World Peace	Present awards	Excited	Troop meeting	Procession into horseshoe
Commit to Girl Scout Values	Goal setting	Happy	Mall	Form a circle
International	Welcoming	Sad	Playground	Girls' examples of "Do a Good Turn Daily"
Personal Growth	Religious award	Dignified	House of Worship	Quiet Processional

Mix and Match Chart

Middle	Closing	Props	Miscellaneous	Refreshments
Skit	Friendship circle	Bridge	Music	Trail mix, roasted marshmallows
Personal thought	Moment of silence	Candles	Guest speaker	Tea & cookies
Symbolism of Trefoil	Special song	Flowers	Audio visual	Fruit salad, cheese & crackers
Poetry or stories	Final moment of sharing	Flags	Poetry selections	Pizza & juice
Look in "Magic Pond"	Retire flag	Simple costumes	Quotes	Popcorn, trail mix & soft drinks
Present membership pins	Light or extinguish candles	Special memento for guests	Dramatic readings	Cake & ice cream
Present project or art work	Instrumental music or songs	Art/craft work	Demonstrations	S'mores
Anagram	Girl Scout motto or slogan	Posters	Group activity	Ethnic dishes
Presentation of Medals	Special reading	None	Dance	Sandwiches & juice

Traditional Girl Scout Ceremonies

<u>Ceremony</u>	<u>Who</u>	<u>What</u>	<u>When</u>
Bridging	Girls moving up to the next program age level.	Crossing a real or symbolic bridge as a part of their ceremony. Girls might receive their Bridging patch at this ceremony.	Usually at the end of the membership year.
Candlelighting	Girls and adults who want to reflect on the meaning of the Girl Scout Promise and Law.	Each candle represents a value in Girl Scouting, reflected in the Girl Scout Promise and Law and recited by different speakers.	Used as a ceremony in itself, or as part of another ceremony.
Court of Awards	Girls who have accomplished something, such as completing a service project, helping someone, or earning awards.	The advisor acknowledges each girl with brief words of praise before presenting the award.	Any time after girls have earned awards.
Flag	Multiage level groups, council-wide events, or combined troops.	Honors the American flag, and can open or close a larger ceremony or an event.	Good outdoors or in auditorium settings.
Fly-Up	Brownie Girl Scouts who are bridging to Junior Girl Scouts.	Girls renew their Girl Scout Promise and receive their Junior Girl Scout pin. They can also receive their Brownie Girl Scout wings to show they have "flown up."	Usually at the beginning or end of the membership year.
Girl Scout Gold, Silver, or Bronze Award	Girls who have earned the highest award for their age level.	Special, inspirational ceremonies that may be done on the council level. These warrant extensive planning and media attention.	Usually at the end of the membership year.
Girl Scouts' Own	All Girl Scouts	Ceremonies created and planned by girls to express their feelings on a variety of topics such as friendship, nature, Girl Scout values.	Any time during the year.
International and World Thinking Day	All Girl Scouts	An excellent way for girls to learn about WAGGGS and to reflect on the international, multicultural nature of Girl Scout sisterhood.	Thinking Day, Feb. 22nd and other occasions during the year.
Investiture or Pinning	All new members: girls or adults	Welcomes new members into Girl Scouting for the first time. They are given their Girl Scout pin.	Any time during the year.
Outdoor and Campfire	All Girl Scouts	An opening or closing ceremony at a campfire or other outdoor location. Links Girl Scouts to the environment, and celebrates the outdoor experience.	Usually held on the first or final night of camp.
Rededication	Girls or adults who have already been invested.	To renew the Girl Scout Promise and review the Girl Scout Law, often held along with the Investiture.	Any time during the year.
Religious Award Ceremony	All Girl Scouts, their families, and advisors.	Recognizes Girl Scouts who have completed the Religious Award activities of their particular faith.	Girl Scout Sabbath, Shabbat, Sunday, or some other day in the Girl Scout Week.

Special Day: Founder's Day	All Girl Scouts	To honor Juliette Low's birthday, and to remember her role in founding and developing the Girl Scout Movement.	Founder's Day, October 31st
Special Day: Girl Scout Birthday	All Girl Scouts	To recognize the day Juliette Low founded Girl Scouting in the USA-reenacting her famous phone call to her cousin.	The week in which March 12th falls.
STUDIO 2B Focus Book Ceremony	Girls 11-17	To finalize work on a Focus book topic, receive related charm and/or make presentations.	During or following Focus book activities.
Welcoming Ceremonies	All girls, their families, and new members: girls and advisors.	Welcomes new members to Girl Scouting with a short, informal ceremony that is light in mood and relays the friendship quality in Girl Scouting.	In the beginning of the membership year, or whenever a new girl or leader joins the troop.