

Girl Scout Ceremonies

Girl Scouting is filled with special memories and special times. Ceremonies will heighten the significance of special times, allowing girls to share these moments with others in a memorable way. Ceremonies are an integral part of Girl Scouting. They help to reinforce values, pass on traditions, recognize accomplishments, strengthen friendships, and give life to the beliefs set down in the Promise and Law.

Whatever the purpose or origin, ceremonies provide opportunities for girls to share their feelings and reflect on what they have accomplished individually or together. Like much of Girl Scouting, there are few hard and fast rules for planning and carrying out ceremonies; what really counts is that the occasion has special meaning for the participants.

Types of Girl Scout Ceremonies

Several kinds of ceremonies have become part of the Girl Scout tradition. These include:

- **Investiture** - to welcome new members into Girl Scouting
- **Rededication** - members renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law
- **Court of Awards** - Girls receive recognition for special accomplishments
- **Bridging** - Girls celebrate passage from one level of scouting to the next

Other types of ceremonies that sometimes take less planning, or may even happen spontaneously:

- **Flag Ceremony** - to honor the Flag of our Country
- **Opening/Closing** - the beginning or end of a meeting
- **Scouts Own** - a quiet ceremony with a theme expressing feelings or ideas
- **Campfires** - for fun, friendship, or to celebrate a happy experience

Girls may want to celebrate special Girl Scout days with a ceremony. These special times include:

- **Juliette Low's Birthday** - October 31
- **Thinking Day** - February 22nd
- **Girl Scout Birthday** - March 12th
- **Girl Scout Week** - the week including March 12th
- **Leader Appreciation Day** - April 22

Girls may also want to celebrate other religious, cultural or national holidays. The possibilities are endless.

Tips for Successful Ceremonies

1. Include the girls in the planning. The ceremony should be something that is meaningful to the girls.
2. Add personal elements to the ceremony. Use favorite poems, songs and stories or let the girl create something new to incorporate.
3. Use precaution when involving candles or fire.
4. Use the Journey Adult Guides and The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting to help the girls plan their ceremonies.
5. Observe flag etiquette when the girls hold flag ceremonies

GSCTX Ceremonies Tip Sheet



Planning

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.

Here are some questions to ask the girls and also some ways girls at each age level can be involved in ceremony planning:

What is the purpose? (Recognition? celebration?) _____

What type of ceremony? (Investiture? Scouts Own?) _____

Where will the ceremony take place? _____

What date will it be on? _____

How long will it last? _____

Who will attend? _____

Do we want to make or buy invitations? _____

Will we have refreshments? (what will we have?) _____

What will be the theme? _____

What will we do for an opening? _____

How will we express the theme? (songs? skits? presentations?) _____

What will the sequence of the ceremony be? _____

Who will do each part? _____

Do we memorize or use 'cue cards'? _____

What equipment, props, etc. do we need? _____

Who will bring the equipment, etc.? _____

How will we set up the room/area? _____

What will we do for the closing? _____

Who will clean up? _____

Have we forgotten anything? _____

The GS Ceremonies your troop performs will be an enduring memory for the girls in your troop. Enjoy planning and performing ceremonies with the girls and they will remember them fondly and forever!

For more information about Girl Scout ceremonies visit

<http://www.girlscouts.org/program/basics/traditions/ceremonies/>