



Girl Scout Ceremonies

Girl Scouting is filled with special memories and events. Ceremonies heighten the significance of special times and create a way to share them with the important people in a Girl Scout's life. 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. 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.

The Girl Scout 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!

Types of Ceremonies

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

- Investiture - Welcomes 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 - To begin or end 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:

- Juliette Low's Birthday - October 31
- Thinking Day - February 22nd
- Girl Scout Birthday - March 12th
- Girl Scout Week - the week of 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 them.
2. Add personal elements. Use favorite poems, songs, and stories or let the girl create something new to incorporate.
3. Use care and follow safety guidelines 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.

Planning

Planning should include the girls' ideas and input, and planning responsibilities should expand increase as the girls get older. Keep in mind that different program 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:

1. What is the purpose? (Recognition? celebration?)
2. What type of ceremony? (Investiture? Scouts Own?)
3. Where will the ceremony take place?
4. What date will it be on?
5. How long will it last?
6. Who will attend?
7. Do we want to make or buy invitations?
8. Will we have refreshments? (If so, what will we have?)
9. What will be the theme?
10. What will we do for an opening?
11. How will we express the theme? (songs? skits? presentations?)
12. What will the sequence of the ceremony be?
13. Who will do each part?
14. Do we memorize or use 'cue cards'?
15. What equipment, props, etc. do we need?
16. Who will bring the equipment, etc.?
17. How will we set up the room/area?
18. What will we do for the closing?
19. Who will clean up?
20. Have we forgotten anything?