



GIRL SCOUT CEREMONIES

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.

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.

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.

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
- [Girl Scout Promise and Law](#), motto, slogan
- Lighting candles and campfires
- Quotations
- Thoughts expressed by individuals
- Original writings

An excellent source for more ceremony ideas and how to organize these various events is the *Let's Celebrate!* book, available in the Girl Scout - Illinois Crossroads Council [Shops](#).

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.

Ceremony Planning Worksheet

Name of Ceremony:

Date:

Time:

Length:

Setting:

Purpose:

Theme:

Audience:

Introductory Remarks:

Songs, poems, quotations included:

Props needed:

Formations used:

Opening Section:

Main Section:

Closing:

Participants:

Decorations:

Troop archivist/photographer:

Media or Publicity:

Invitations:

Refreshments:

Budget:

Rehearsal:

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

Skit
Personal thought
Symbolism of Trefoil
Poetry or stories
Look in "Magic Pond"
Present membership pins
Present project or art work
Anagram
Presentation of Medals

Closing

Friendship circle
Moment of silence
Special song
Final moment of sharing
Retire flag
Light or extinguish candles
Instrumental music or songs
Girl Scout motto or slogan
Special reading

Props

Bridge
Candles
Flowers
Flags
Simple costumes
Special memento for guests
Art/craft work
Posters
None

Miscellaneous

Music
Guest speaker
Audio visual
Poetry selections
Quotes
Dramatic readings
Demonstrations
Group activity
Dance

Refreshments

Trail mix, roasted marshmallows
Tea & cookies
Fruit salad, cheese & crackers
Pizza & juice
Popcorn, trail mix & soft drinks
Cake & ice cream
S'mores
Ethnic dishes
Sandwiches & juice