

# Ceremonies in Girl Scouting



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## Introduction

There are many ceremonies in the Girl Scout program. They are important to girls and are used to honor special occasions or to recognize an accomplishment. They can begin or end a meeting, or can simply provide a memorable experience to take home with them from a troop meeting, event, or camp.

A ceremony can be held inside or outside, for the troop alone, or for their parents or community. People participating in them can be: standing, sitting, grouped in a circle, assembled in a horseshoe, positioned in facing lines, or gathered around a campfire (real or imaginary).

Ceremonies can be a formal presentation or a very casual happening. They can be long or short, planned well in advance, or a spur of the moment activity. Whatever a ceremony includes, it should be up to the group conducting it to use the ceremony as a means of expressing their feelings and values.

You as the leader may have to give many suggestions and help with planning, but as the girls see and participate in a few ceremonies, they will begin to have ideas and develop traditions of their own.

The ceremonies in this guide are intended as sample ceremonies. If the girls wish to change or add ideas of their own – wonderful! There is not a “right” or “wrong” way to conduct a Girl Scout ceremony.

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## Ceremony Basics

No matter what kind of ceremony you plan – whether very simple or quite elaborate – planning is essential for the ceremony to be meaningful. While there are few hard and fast rules for planning ceremonies, each one has these four basic parts:

- THEME:** Selecting an appropriate theme can make the ceremony more meaningful.
- OPENING:** Can be used to welcome guests, tell the purpose of the ceremony, and/or set the mood for the occasion.
- MAIN PART:** Focuses on the reason you have gathered people together. Could include things like: poems, songs, choral readings, candle lighting, and more.
- CLOSING:** Summarizes and gives closure to the ceremony. This could include: a friendship circle, brief good-bye speech, a thank you to special guests, and/or closing songs.

Not every ceremony needs to have the same format. Also, most of the ceremonies in this guide are not complete from beginning to end. Adapt them to meet the particular needs of your troop. Hopefully, these ceremonies will be only starting points to stimulate the thought process to create new material.



## Ceremony Symbols

Arch	the entering of a different phase or atmosphere
Bridge	a crossing over
Dove	peace
Eagle	courage
Flag	the banner of the troop, Girl Scouting, state, or country
Friendship stick	we are sisters to every Girl Scout
Friendship circle	the unbroken chain of friendship with Girl Scouts
Girl Scout Handshake	hello, welcome
Lighted candle	symbol of individual light
Pebble	nature
Tree planting	respect for the earth
Quiet sign	quiet
String	the human line binding all humanity
Trefoil	the three parts of the Girl Scout Promise
Wishing Well	hopes and dreams
Blue	piety and sincerity
Green	youth and hope
Orange	strength and endurance
Purple	high rank and royalty
Red	bravery and courage
Silver/White	faith and purity
Yellow/Gold	honor and loyalty
Black	grief or sorrow



## Principal Girl Scout Ceremonies

CEREMONY	DESCRIPTION	ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS
<a href="#">Opening and Closing</a>	The beginning or ending to an activity or meeting.	Beginning a meeting or event. Ending a meeting or event. Goodnight closing at camp, etc. Can be formal or informal. These are often quite short, 5-10 minutes.
<a href="#">Investiture</a>	Welcomes new members – girls and adults – into Girl Scouting for the first time.	A new member: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• makes the GS Promise.</li> <li>• receives the GS pin.</li> <li>• is welcomed into Girl Scouting.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Rededication</a>	An opportunity for girls and adults to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.	Invested members renew the GS Promise. This ceremony is often combined with an investiture.
<a href="#">Court of Awards</a>	A ceremony recognizing accomplishments. Girls receive insignia they have earned.	Insignia are usually presented by the troop leader. An explanation of the accomplishment for which insignias stand should be included. Program consultants might be recognized at this time.
<a href="#">Bridging and Fly Up (Fly Up is for Brownies only)</a>	A ceremony held when you “cross the bridge” from one program level to another. In addition, Brownie Girl Scouts “Fly Up” to Juniors.	Girls bridging to the next level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• receive the appropriate Girl Scout pin for their level.</li> <li>• if bridging to Brownies, girls receive the fly-up wings.</li> <li>• receive a membership star.</li> <li>• receive the Bridge to next level patch, if earned.</li> <li>• are rededicated with their troop.</li> </ul>

<a href="#"><u>Girl Scouts' Own</u></a>	A quiet ceremony with a theme expressing feelings and ideals. Called a Scouts' Own Ceremony because it is planned by the girls and their leaders. It is not a religious service although it might have a spiritual theme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Centered around a particular theme</li> <li>• Expression of ideals through words, poetry, music, simple drama, etc.</li> <li>• It is traditional to walk in silence to and from the site of the ceremony.</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award</u></a>	Honors Girl Scouts who have earned these <a href="#"><u>higher awards</u></a> and is usually held at the troop/group level or combined with council recognition.	Girls can be presented with their letter of congratulations as well as special items earned (different for each level). These ceremonies often showcase the girls' completed projects. May include a thank you to sponsors.
<a href="#"><u>Flag Ceremony</u></a>	A flag ceremony can be part of any activity that honors the American flag.	<p>This ceremony:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• can be indoors or out.</li> <li>• may be formal or informal.</li> <li>• can be part of the opening or closing ceremony.</li> <li>• contains elements that should be followed according to code such as proper display and carry of the flag.</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Flag Retiring Ceremony</u></a>	A special ceremony to dispose of an American flag that is tattered and worn.	A very special ceremony that has some proper flag etiquette and code that will need to be followed.



## Ceremony Planner\*

Use the following chart to aid in the planning of your troop's ceremony:

Purpose:			
Theme:			
When:			
Where:			
Guests:			
	Activities	Props	Who is Responsible
Before Ceremony:			
Opening:			
Main:			
Closing:			
Evaluation:			

\*Let the girls plan and lead as much as possible, appropriate for their age level.

## Opening & Closing Ceremony



Opening and closing ceremonies don't have to be elaborate. In fact, most troops do some sort of ceremony at the beginning and/or ending of each meeting. Opening ceremonies can include:

- ◆ Reciting the Promise
- ◆ Reciting the Law
- ◆ Posting the US flag
- ◆ Some troops post a troop flag which can be special ordered – contact the Girl Scout [Shop](#) for questions
- ◆ Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance
- ◆ General announcements
- ◆ A time to tell what has happened in the girls' lives since last seeing their Sisters
- ◆ Any or all of the above depending on time!

Similarly, closing ceremonies are usually just as informal as openings and might include:

- ◆ General announcements
- ◆ Distribution of any information going home to parents
- ◆ Retiring the US Flag
- ◆ A Friendship Circle
- ◆ A time for anyone to tell what they enjoyed about the meeting
- ◆ Closing songs (such as “Make New Friends” or “Taps”)
- ◆ Any or all of the above depending on time!



## Investiture & Rededication

Especially during the fall, Girl Scouts rededicate themselves to the Girl Scout Promise and Law and invest new members into the organization. In the spring, many girls bridge\* to a new program level.

Because girls are officially members of GSUSA as soon as they register, you cannot deny a girl the opportunity to wear the Girl Scout pin. However, there is an old Girl Scout tradition that girls receive and wear their pins for the first time at an investiture that you may want to use if you plan to invest your girls very early in the year.

Another old Girl Scout tradition holds that pins presented at an investiture are pinned on upside down and are not turned upright until the wearer has done a good ‘turn’ or deed.

\*See components of a Bridging Ceremony in the [GSUSA Bridging Guide](#).

## Candlelight Ceremony

Before you hold a ceremony involving an open flame, make sure that your facility is aware of the open flame situation and that your environment is safe. If your ceremony is outside, make sure that there are no fire restrictions currently enforced in your community.

Materials: Candle Holder with thirteen places or holes; fourteen candles (three of one color representing the three parts of the Girl Scout Promise, ten of another color representing the Girl Scout Law, and one used to light the candles); matches or lighter; note cards containing the Promise and Law (one card for each part of the Promise and Law)

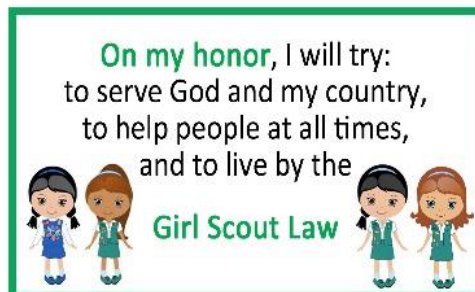
*Arrange participants in a horseshoe formation around a table with ceremonial candles. The open end of the horseshoe should be towards the audience. Give the first girl a candle and light it. This is the candle that will be used to light all the others. Give the other participants one of the note cards.*

Girl 1: Explains the meaning of “investiture” and/ or “rededication”. *Before each girl states her part of the Promise and Law, her candle is lit from the candle held by Girl 1.*

Girl 2: The Girl Scout Promise: On my honor, I will try to serve God and my country

Girl 3: To help people at all times

Girl 4: And to live by the Girl Scout Law.



Girl 5: The Girl Scout Law: I will do my best to be honest and fair  
Girl 6: friendly and helpful  
Girl 7: considerate and caring  
Girl 8: courageous and strong  
Girl 9: and responsible for what I say and do.  
Girl 10: And to respect myself and others  
Girl 11: respect authority  
Girl 12: use resources wisely  
Girl 13: make the world a better place  
Girl 14: and be a sister to every Girl Scout



Leader: At this time the girls of Troop XXXXX will rededicate themselves to the service of Girl Scouting.

*All returning members are called forward. They recite the Girl Scout Promise; adults greet them by exchanging the Girl Scout handshake with each girl. The girl returns to the horseshoe.*

Leader: Now our new members will be invested into Girl Scouting.

*Leader, or one of the rededicated girls, calls each new girl and adult forward. Each new member then recites the Girl Scout Promise, individually, or as a group. The new members are welcomed into Girl Scouts and they receive the appropriate Girl Scout pin, give the Girl Scout handshake, and return to the horseshoe formation.*

There are many variations of this Candlelight Ceremony. If your girls are too young to light candles, or if candles are not allowed where you meet, small flashlights can be substituted. Before or after the ceremony a troop may choose to have a flag ceremony or sing a song.\*



\*Popular [GS songs](#) often sung at ceremonies can be found at the end of this guide.

## Flag History & Etiquette

We honor our country's flag at a flag ceremony and show that we are proud of being citizens of the United States of America. Girl Scout ceremonies have a dignity that makes you feel proud to take part in them.

The flag ceremony is the only Girl Scout ceremony that has specific rules that must be followed. These rules are set by the [Federal Flag code](#); Public Law 94-344 dated July 7, 1976.

The American Flag should be placed in the center and higher when displayed with a group of state, local, or organizational flags flown from staffs (flag poles). The American Flag is also positioned to the right of other flags (if you were to hold the flag while facing an audience, your right side would be the flag's own right)

When flown from a staff on a speaker's platform, the flag should be placed on the speaker's right. If placed elsewhere than on the platform, the flag should be to the right of the audience as they face the platform.

The flag, when carried in a procession with other flags, should be either on the marching right or, if there is a line of other flags, in front of the center of that line. At no time should another flag cross in front of the American Flag during a flag ceremony.



**Salute the flag of the USA by placing your right hand over your heart**

**When other flags are presented, do not salute them**

### When to Salute:

1. You give the pledge of allegiance.
2. The moment the flag passes in front of you in a parade.
3. From the moment a flag starts being raised up a pole until the moment it reaches the top.
4. From the moment a flag starts to be lowered on a pole until both clasps are in the hand of the color bearer.
5. When the flag is present and "The Star Spangled Banner" is played. If you sing, stand at attention.

## Flag Protocol

- The Flag must only be displayed from sunrise to sunset, unless it is illuminated
- When it is raining, an all-weather Flag can continue to be flown
- The National Flag should never be displayed with the Union (blue field) down, except as a signal of dire distress
- Do not use the Flag as a portion of a costume, clothing, handkerchief, or other decorative item
- Take every precaution to prevent the Flag from becoming soiled; it should not be allowed to touch the ground, nor to brush against objects
- A flag that has become soiled may be washed according to the care instructions for that particular type of material
- A flag that has become tattered or worn should be destroyed by a dignified method, preferably by burning using proper procedures (a flag burning ceremony is detailed in this guide)

A complete Flag Code, Public Law 829-77th Congress, is available from the United States Government Printing Office, Washington D.C. Important excerpts from the code are available in a booklet available from your local American Legion.



The Color Guard may consist of any number. Ideally there should be at least two Color Guards for each flag. The minimum is one Color (Flag) Bearer and one Color Guard.

**Color (or Flag) Bearer** - One per flag, if more than one flag is present.

Hold staff (pole) at 30° angle in front of body, or hold folded flag (with point away from body) in front of body at waist level. Girls may wear red sash over right shoulder, tied in a square knot on left side of waist. The Flag Bearer is responsible for putting flag in, or taking flag from, stand, or raising/lowering flag from flagpole.

**Color Guards** - Stand on each side of the Color Bearer. They watch to see that the flag does not touch the ground. Girls may wear red sash around waist tied in a square knot on left side. One or more members may assist flag bearer in posting/retrieving the flag from the stand/pole.

**Caller** - Only member of Color Guard to speak.

The Caller gives directions to audience and commands to Color Guard. Girls may wear red sash, same as Color Guard.


**Line Leaders** - Usually part of an outdoor Color Guard. They lead the audience into/out of the desired formation (usually a horseshoe in Girl Scouts).

## Flag Recipe Opening Ceremony

An opening ceremony appropriate for informal occasions and simple enough for younger girls.

**Props:** Strips of red, white, and blue (paper or felt), white stars (paper or felt), large bowl and spoon, folded United States of America flag

**Participants:** Four to eight people



Person #1: We are going to fix for you a treat that is really grand, and make for you a recipe, the greatest in the land.

Person #2: First we'll put a heaping cup of red for courage true.

Person #3: And then we'll add, for loyalty, a dash of heavenly blue.

Person #4: For purity we'll add a layer of snow white.

Person #5: And sprinkle in some stars to make it come out right.

Person #1: We will stir and mix and then you will see what we have made is-

Everyone : "OLD GLORY".

Two girls pull out the folded American flag. Holding it by the top corners, they present it to the audience. All other participants stand at attention with hands over heart. From this point, continue with a simple flag ceremony, such as the Pledge of Allegiance and a patriotic song.

## Flashlight Flag Ceremony

**Materials:** 4 Flashlights, 1 Narrator, 4 Flashlight Bearers, 1 Flag Bearer, Color Guards  
*Color Guard advances with Flag and posts Colors. Lights are turned out so that the room is in total darkness. Flashlight bearers turn on flashlights and direct light toward flag.*

**Narrator:** What you see here tonight represents the past, present, and future. The stripes of Old Glory stand for the original thirteen colonies. The stars represent the present 50 states. The light and warmth of the four lights you see shining remind us of the four great freedoms - Freedom of the Press, Freedom of Assembly, Freedom of Speech, and Freedom of Religion. Eliminate any one of these freedoms and our world would become darker and colder.

*Narrator calls out the four freedoms slowly. As each is called, a flashlight is turned off until the room is again in total darkness.*

**Narrator:** In this world of potential cold and darkness, of rule by a few, stands the United States of America. Here the Four Freedoms do exist and are an example of warmth and light for all. Will you please join us in the salute to our flag?

*Turn flashlights back on and direct light toward flag. Recite the Pledge of Allegiance.*

## Basic Flag Ceremony

### Opening Flag Ceremony

Please stand for the presentation of the flag

*If you have an “audience”, such as at an Investiture/Rededication Ceremony (parents, invited guests, etc.), this is the signal that the ceremony is about to start.*

#### **Girl Scouts Attention**

*This is the signal that the girls should be ready to start.*

#### **Color Guard Attention**

*If the Color Guard has been standing “At Ease”, it comes to “Attention”. It is also a signal to be ready to start.*

#### **Color Guard Advance**

*Indoors - The Color Guard carries the flag(s) toward the front of the room and stands in front of the flag stands.*

*Outdoors - the Color Guard carries the flag to the flagpole*

#### **Color Guard, Post the Colors**

*Indoors - The Color Guard places the flags in the stands, the American Flag last.*

*Outdoors - the Flag Bearer attaches the flag to the rope and quickly hoists the flag, the American flag is raised first.*

#### **Color Guard, Honor your Colors**

*The Color Guard salutes the Flag and then returns to “Attention.” The Pledge of Allegiance, songs, poems, Girl Scout Promise, are done now.*

#### **Join me in the Pledge of Allegiance**

#### **Color Guard Dismissed**

*The Color Guard walks to the back of the room, or away from the flag pole.*

### Closing Flag Ceremony

Please stand for the retrieval of the flag  
*If you have an “audience”, such as at an Investiture/Rededication Ceremony (parents, invited guests, etc.), this is the signal that the ceremony is about to start.*

#### **Girl Scouts (or Horseshoe) Attention**

*This is the signal that the girls should be ready to start.*

#### **Color Guard Attention**

*If the Color Guard has been standing “At Ease”, it comes to “Attention”. It is also a signal to be ready to start.*

#### **Color Guard Approach**

*Indoors - the Color Guard walks toward the front of the room and stands in front of the flag stands. Outdoors - the Color Guard walks to the flagpole*

#### **Would you all please join me in the singing of Taps**

*Singing Taps, poems, other songs, are done now, if desired.*

#### **Color Guard, Honor your Colors**

*The Color Guard salutes the Flag and then returns to “Attention”*

#### **Color Guard, Retrieve the Colors**

*Indoors - the Color Guard removes the flags from the stands, the American Flag first. Outdoors - the Flag Bearer lowers the flag slowly and with dignity. The Color Bearers fold the flag(s).*

#### **Color Guard Dismissed**

*The Color Guard carries the flag to the back of the room, or carries the folded flag to an appropriate place.*

## Flag Retiring

When the U.S. Flag becomes tattered or worn, it should be disposed of by either burial or burning. Girl Scouts most often conduct burning ceremonies to dispose of tattered flags. You may contact your local American Legion or Veterans of Foreign Wars to perform the ceremony for you. If the troop would like to complete this ceremony on their own, we recommend this be completed by older girls and/or adults.



This is a very solemn ceremony and should be done with the utmost respect and reverence for the flag to be retired. Explain this ceremony **thoroughly** to the girls so that they don't go home and tell their parents that they "burned a flag at Girl Scouts."

## Ceremony of Final Tribute

Only one flag should be used in the ceremony, which is representative of all the flags to be burned in the service. The remainder of the flags collected should be incinerated.

The ceremony should be conducted out-of-doors, preferably in conjunction with a campfire program, and it should be very special.

The ceremony involves two color guards, one for the flag currently in use and a special color guard for the flag to be retired from service. Of course, this may be adapted if conditions necessitate.

Just before sunset the flag which has been flying all day is retired in the normal ceremonial procedure.

*The color guard responsible for the flag receiving the final tribute moves to front and center. The leader/caller should present the color guard with the flag which has been selected for its final tribute and subsequent destruction. The leader/caller should instruct the color guard to “hoist the colors.”*

Leader/Caller: (when the flag has been secured at the top of the pole)

“This flag has served its nation well and long. It has worn to a condition in which it should no longer be used to represent the nation.”

“This flag represents all of the flags being retired from service today. The honor we show here this evening for this one flag, we are showing for all of the flags, even those not physically here.”

The caller should:

- Call the group to attention.
- Order a salute.
- Lead the entire group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
- Order the flag retired by the color guard.
- Slowly and ceremoniously lower and then respectfully fold the flag in the customary triangle. Deliver the flag to the leader of the group and then dismiss the group.



## Flag Burning Ceremony

I am Your Flag (author unknown)

*Girl Scouts stand in flanking line on one side of the fire. Caller/Master of Ceremonies (MC) stands at rear of fire facing audience, asks audience to stand. Color Guard (3 Girl Scouts minimum) will approach fire from rear of audience, walk past line of Girl Scouts, then stop. A Color Guard slowly unfurls flag on far side of campfire so it shows through the flames while MC reads the script*

MC: "I am your Flag. I appear in many places. I have taken many forms and been called many names. I was authorized by Congress in 1818 in the form you see now and have remained unchanged except to add a new star each July 4th after a new state joined the union until I reached my present number of 50."

"I am more than just red, white and blue cloth shaped into a design. I am a silent sentinel of freedom. People of every country in the world know me on sight. Many countries love me as you do. Other countries look at me with contempt because they don't allow the freedom of Democracy that I represent – but country looks on me with respect. I am strong and the people of America have made me strong. My strength comes from your willingness to give help to those who are in need. You strive for world peace yet stand ready to fight oppression. You send resources and offer technology to less fortunate countries so they may strive to become self-sufficient. You feed starving children. You offer a home to anyone who will pledge allegiance to me."

"Your sons gather beneath me to offer their lives on the battlefields, to preserve the Liberty I represent. That's why I love the American people. That's why I have flown so proudly."

"Girl Scouts and their families are some of my favorite people. I listen to your patriotic songs. I'm there at your flag ceremonies and I appreciate the tender care you give me. I feel the love when you say your pledge. I notice that your hand covers your heart when I am on parade. How smartly you salute me as I pass by and I ripple with pleasure when I see it."

"Now I am tired and it's time for me to rest in the Sacred Flames of your campfire. My colors are faded and my cloth is tattered but my spirit remains unbroken."

"To set my spirit loose, first cut the blue field away from my stripes."

*MC pauses. Color Guard leader uses scissors to remove blue field.*

MC: "Tear each of my 13 stripes and lay it on the fire, one at a time. As you do this, think about the 13 original colonies and the pioneers who carved a nation out of a wilderness. They risked everything to fight for the Independence which we enjoy today."

*Color Guard leader uses scissors to start each stripe, then tears it; another Guard hands each stripe to the next Girl Scout waiting in line. Girl Scout takes stripe in both hands, then walks toward fire, places stripe in base of flames, salutes, then walks to form flanking line on opposite side each facing fire.*

MC: *(continue slowly reading through next section, timing each state to a fresh stripe)* “My first state was Virginia, then Massachusetts, then New York, Maryland, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Delaware, North Carolina, South Carolina, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and finally Georgia.”

“As you cut and rip me apart and watch me burn, do not be sad or feel sorry for me. I have had the great Honor of being your flag of the United States of America and the Republic for which I stand, one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.”

“When my stripes are gone, kiss the blue field and lay it across the fire. Then stand silently as you watch each star twinkle and fade into ashes.”

*Color Guard leader takes blue field, brings it to her lips, then lays it on the top of the fire. Pause silently until blue field has been consumed.*

MC: “Now I am just a memory, but if there is a tear in your eye or a lump in your throat; if you felt a shiver in your spine as you watched me burn, then I will be back the next time you need me and my colors will be fresh and bright and my edges won’t be ragged anymore. When I climb to the top of the flagpole, I’ll wave at you and remember the love and respect that you have showed me here tonight.”

“So when you see me, stand straight, place your right hand over your heart...and I’ll salute you, waving back...and I’ll know that... YOU REMEMBERED!”



## Court of Awards

Girl Scouts receive their earned awards or recognitions for their accomplishments in the form of patches, badges, pins and certificates. This ceremony is called a Court of Awards ceremony and can be held as often as needed.

There are many creative ways to present girls' recognitions. Demonstrations or displays add interest to the ceremony especially if non-Girl Scouts are invited. A candle lighting ceremony is very appropriate and effective. A Court of Awards can be a formal ceremony with invited guests, such as parents, or it can be a simple ceremony when the girls are presented with recognitions at the end of a regular troop meeting. A Court of Awards ceremony should be an opportunity for girls to feel proud of their accomplishments.

### Ceremony Tips

- Prepare recognition items ahead of time
- Package each girl's awards in a bag, on a vest or sash, on a piece of felt, or on a ribbon (this will save time pinning the girls)
- Emphasize the effort each girl made to earn her awards not the number of awards earned
- Hold award ceremonies frequently, especially for younger girls, like at the end of a troop meeting during the closing ceremony
- Recognize each girl individually by name



### What to Include in a Higher Award Ceremony

- Information about the award being earned
- A time for the girl, and possibly parents, leaders, or mentors, to speak about what she did to earn the award
- Presentation of the award
  - \*The girl may have someone in mind for who she would like to pin or present to her – ask her
- Presentation of any accompanying recognitions like letters of congratulations

**A Gold Award Ceremony is held each year by the council**

## Girl Scouts' Own

A Scouts' Own ceremony is a special ceremony that expresses the spirit of Girl Scouting. It's an opportunity for girls to express their thoughts and feelings. It is not a performance; if parents and public are part of the group everyone is expected to participate. It is not a religious ceremony. It may be held anytime, any day, indoors or outdoors, at troop meetings or while camping. It may be used to open or close a meeting or as a special occasion.

Girls may choose a special location to hold their ceremony. It is a Girl Scout custom to walk quietly to the place where the ceremony is held and leave quietly after it is over. Designate a silent arch such as a tree branch, special rock, doorway, path, etc. that girls enter and stay quiet as they approach the ceremony location. As girls leave, they remain quiet until they pass back through the arch.

A Scouts' Own ceremony usually has a theme. The theme should be decided by the girls. Usually it is about important or inspirational ideas, such as the meaning of the Promise or friendship. This ceremony may occur on a national holiday or a Girl Scout special day like Juliette Low's birthday, World Thinking Day or Girl Scout Birthday.



Ways to express the theme:

Songs  
Music  
Poems or Quotations  
Words written by a troop member(s)

Choral readings  
Stories and legends  
Girl Scout Promise  
Dramatization

Any means by which members can express their feelings regarding the theme

## Planning a Scouts' Own ceremony

Girls, with the assistance of their leaders, plan the ceremony. Participation by all is desirable, but not mandatory. Girls are encouraged to share their personal thoughts by passing around a special item that each person holds while she speaks like a decorated stick or a special stone.

Talking Stick



### How to Plan:

- ◆ Choose a theme: Girl Scout Law, Girl Scout Promise, our country, people, citizenship, nature, special occasions or holidays, local history – anything that inspires the girls
- ◆ Determine how the theme will be used
- ◆ Decide how to begin the ceremony
- ◆ Organize the order of the program
- ◆ Decide who will lead the girls to and from the ceremony
- ◆ Decide what parts need to be filled
- ◆ Decide how to end the ceremony

### Where to host the ceremony:

- ◆ At a meeting: opening, closing, spontaneously when all girls reflect on a shared experience
- ◆ At Camp during sunrise, at a campfire, or sunset
- ◆ Quiet place on a trail
- ◆ Some other place that holds meaning for the girls

### How long should it last?

Time frame guideline -

Daisy / Brownie: 10 minutes  
Junior: 10-15 minutes  
Cadette: 15-20 minutes  
Senior / Ambassador: 20-30 minutes

## Poems

### The Brownie Story

For those who've come, I'm here to share  
The Brownie Story with girls who care  
For once, a long time ago  
When fairies and elves in England did grow  
Two little girls as normal as you  
Lived with their father and grandmother, too!  
Their father, a tailor, worked hard all day  
And Granny, very busy, had no time to play  
The girls loved to play and dance and sing  
They could make a game out of any old thing  
Then one day the father, a wise old man  
Told of the magic of Brownie Land  
He told them of the Brownies who work and  
dust  
And clean for their families without making a  
fuss  
Granny told them to look for a magical place  
Where the wise old owl might show them the  
face  
Of a Brownie who was willing to clean and  
sew

And dance and sing, 'cause Brownies love  
that, you know!  
Our two found the owl with the answers to  
share  
With all the little girls waiting way out there  
Said he "Go to the Magical Brownie Ring,  
Join all the Brownies in everything."  
Deep in the woods when the moon is out  
Go to the pond - turn yourself about  
You'll find magic that starts with a rhyme  
And this magic circles the world in time  
**"Twist me and turn me  
And show me the elf  
I looked in the water  
And saw myself"**  
Now all of us know of the magic Brownie  
woods  
Where each little girl helps as she should  
Where trees and flowers and the rain and the  
sun  
Are friends of children who join Girl Scout fun

### I am a Daisy

I'm a Daisy, Daisy Girl Scout  
And I'll tell you something true  
I'm a loyal little Girl Scout  
And my color is True Blue

### A Leader's Promise

I will do my best:  
To be honest about my girls' abilities and fair to their talents  
To be friendly and helpful because my girls deserve the best  
To be considerate and caring even when things don't work out  
To be courageous and strong because my girls need me  
To be responsible for what I say and do because others are depending on me  
To respect myself and others, after all, I am a Girl Scout  
To respect authority, and the girls  
To use resources wisely by not wasting the potential in each girl I work with  
To make the world a better place by sharing my best, and not sharing when necessary  
To be a sister to every Girl Scout and care for each Girl Scout as family

## Songs

### Brownie Smile Song

I've got something in my pocket  
That belongs across my face  
I keep it very close at hand  
In a most convenient place  
I'm sure you wouldn't guess it  
If you guessed a long-long while  
So I'll take it out  
And put it on  
It's a great big Brownie smile

### Girl Scouts Together

Girl scouts together, that is our song  
Winding the old trails, rocky and long  
Learning our motto, living our creed  
Girl Scouts together in every good deed.  
Girl Scouts together, happy are we  
Friendly to neighbors, far o're the sea  
Faithful to country, loyal to home  
Known as true Girl Scouts where ever we roam.

### Hello

Hello, Hello, Hello, Hello  
We are glad to greet you  
We are glad to meet you  
Hello, Hello, Hello, Hello

### Make New Friends

Make new friends  
But keep the old  
One is silver  
And the other's gold  
A circle is round  
And has no end  
That's how long I'm going to be your friend  
Fare thee well  
Good luck to thee  
When I'm gone please remember me

### When E're You Make a Promise

When e're you make a promise  
Consider well its importance  
And when made  
Engrave it upon your heart



### Taps

Day is done  
Gone the sun  
From the Lake  
From the hill  
From the sky  
All is well  
Safely rest  
God is nigh

Fading light  
Dims the sight  
And a star  
Gems the sky  
Gleaming bright  
From afar  
Drawing nigh  
Falls the night

Thanks and praise  
For our days  
Neath the sun  
Neath the stars  
Neath the sky  
As we go  
This we know  
God is nigh

## On My Honor

Chorus: On my honor I will try  
There's a duty to be done and I say aye  
There's a reason here for a reason above  
My honor is to try and my duty is to love

People don't need to know my name  
If I've don't any harm then I am to blame  
If I've helped another, I've helped me  
If I've opened up my eyes to see  
(Chorus)

I've tucked away a song or two  
When you're feeling low there's one for you  
If you need a friend then I will come  
'Cause there's plenty more where I come from  
(Chorus)

Come with me where the fire burns bright  
We can even see better in a candle's light  
And we find more meaning in a campfire glow  
Than we'll ever find in a year or so  
(Chorus)

We've made a promise to always keep  
And pray "softly falls" before we sleep  
We'll be Girl Scouts together and when we've gone  
We'll still be trying and singing this song  
(Chorus)

## Resources

The council offices have resources available for use in ceremonies, including:

The American, Girl Scout, Indiana, WAGGGS, Daisy and Brownie flags	
Flag stands	International flags
Bridges	White gloves
Candelabras	Silver Award podium banner
Candlesticks	Red sashes
Flag Bearer belt	And more

Check out the [GSNIM website](#) for a complete list, availability, and reservation options