

Ceremonies

A meaningful tradition

Ceremonies help mark special events throughout the year, such as bridging to another level, earning a National Leadership Journey Award or receiving a Girl Scout pin. They can also be used simply to make the beginning or end of a meeting more special.

Ceremonies are also an excellent opportunity for girls to lead. Girl Scouting operates on the principal that girls grow, learn and have fun by doing things for themselves, and ceremonies allow girls, not adults, to make decisions and express themselves. As a Girl Scout Volunteer, you can direct and encourage them as they plan traditions that will make lasting memories.

If girls have never seen a ceremony or have very limited experience in planning and choosing offer them choices to talk about and questions to ask:

“We need to choose a beginning for our ceremony. After Mrs. Tanasi and I welcome your families, should we do a flag ceremony or sing a Girl Scout song to open?”

“The main part of our ceremony is your investiture. That’s when you make the Girl Scout Promise and are invested with your membership pins. Would you like to act out the Brownie Story so you can do ‘Twist me and turn me’ at a make-believe pond? Or would you like to light candles for the different parts of the Girl Scout Promise and Law?”

“Now we need to choose a closing, or way to end our ceremony. Would you like to sing ‘Taps’ to your families, or ask them to be part of a big friendship circle or something new?”

If you have a large troop, consider having girls work in smaller groups to prepare for the ceremony. Use a Kaper Chart to divide the work fairly. For example, one group could be in charge of the opening, another the main part and a third the closing. At campfire, this could include laying and lighting the fire, keeping the fire going and putting out the fire. Or for a bridging ceremony, one group could decorate the room and welcome guests; one group could be in charge of the actual ceremony; another group could make or buy refreshments, set the table, serve and clear away. By Cadette level, girls may prefer to take turns being in charge of the whole ceremony, start to finish and/or rotate which patrol or committee will be responsible for which ceremony.

Tips for Holding Ceremonies:

1. Devote sufficient time to planning the ceremony. Good ceremonies have a clear purpose and enrich the meaning and mood of the event.
2. Use Journey adult guides and The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting to help girls plan their ceremonies.
3. Take safety precautions when using candles or fires, or when the girls construct bridges or platforms. Refer to Volunteer Essentials and the Safety Activity Checkpoints (available through the council) for specific advice.
4. Add personal elements to traditional ceremonies. Use favorite poems, songs, stories and sayings, or have the girls write something new.
5. Consider the role of colors and symbols the girls might use in their ceremony.
6. Observe flag etiquette when the girls hold flag ceremonies.

Below is a list of the most important Girl Scout ceremonies:

Bridging ceremonies mark a girl's move from one level of Girl Scouting to another.

Flag ceremonies can be included in any activities that honor the American flag.

Founder's Day (Juliette Low's Birthday), October 31, to remember Juliette Low's role in developing the Girl Scout movement in the United States.

Girl Scout Birthday ceremonies can be held on or near March 12, the date Juliette Low started Girl Scouts.

Girl Scout Bronze Award ceremony honors Girl Scout Juniors earning the Bronze Award and is usually held at the troop/group level.

Girl Scout Silver Award ceremony honors Girl Scout Cadettes earning the Silver Award and is often combined with Girl Scout Gold Award at the council level.

Girl Scout Gold Award ceremony honors Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors earning the highest award in Girl Scouting and often takes place at the council level.

Girl Scout's Own is a girl-planned program that allows girls to explore their feelings around a topic (for example, friendship or the Girl Scout Promise and Law). It is never religious in nature.

Investiture welcomes new members, girls or adults in the Girl Scout family for the first time. Girls receive their Girl Scout, Girl Scout Brownie or Girl Scout Daisy Pin at this time.

Journey ceremonies honor Girl Scouts who have earned the final award along a National Leadership Journey. This is usually held at the troop/group level with girls developing a celebration that mirrors the theme of their Journey.

Opening ceremonies start the Girl Scout meeting

Pinning ceremonies celebrate when girls receive grade level pins.

Rededication ceremonies are held for girls and adults to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

For more information on Girl Scout ceremonies, visit: girlscouts.info/ceremonies.