

# **Ceremonies in Girl Scouting**

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# Ceremonies in Girl Scouting

## Descriptions

Every Girl Scout meeting should have an opening and closing. An opening signals to the girls that the meeting has begun and it is time to get down to business. The closing allows the girls a special moment to end the meeting and say good-bye. Both ceremonies are usually very short and simple. They will mean more if they are made up by the troop/group and varied from meeting to meeting. Any of the following ideas would be appropriate for either an opening or closing. Two or three could be combined if a longer ceremony is desired.

- \_ Flag ceremony.
- \_ Reciting of Promise and Law.
- \_ Have each girl give an example of how they observed the Girl Scout slogan "Do a Good Turn Daily" since the last meeting.
- \_ Sing a song.
- \_ Recite a poem.
- \_ Friendship circle with linked hands.
- \_ Discuss a symbol of Girl Scouting and its meaning.
- \_ Talk about how the program helps us live up to our Girl Scout motto "Be Prepared."

## Opening and Closing Ceremonies

Ceremonies mark special Girl Scout events throughout the year. They can celebrate major transitions, such as bridging to another level or getting your Girl Scout pin; commemorate your accomplishment when you earn awards; or simply make the beginning or end of your group's meeting special. You can also plan a ceremony around a theme (such as friendship or nature) that you wish to explore in thought, words, or song. Whatever its purpose, every Girl Scout ceremony enables girls to share in a special part of Girl Scout history and create their own special memories. Here's a list of important ceremonies in Girl Scouting:

- \_ Investiture welcomes new members, girls or adults, into the Girl Scout family for the first time.
- \_ Opening ceremonies start the troop meeting.
- \_ Closing ceremonies finalize the meeting.
- \_ Pinning Ceremonies celebrate when girls receive age-level Girl Scout pins.
- \_ Rededication Ceremonies are an opportunity for girls and adults to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- \_ Bridging ceremonies mark a girl's move from one grade-level of Girl Scouting to another. These typically take place toward the end of the school year and they are easily combined with a Court of Awards ceremony. Advancing from Brownie Girl Scouts to Junior Girl Scouts is called "Flying Up"; for all other age levels (Daisy, Junior, Cadette, Senior, Ambassador, Adult) it is called "Bridging."
- \_ Girl Scouts' Own is a girl-planned program that allows girls to explore their feelings around a topic using the spoken word, favorite songs, poetry, or other methods of expression.
- \_ Court of Awards is a time to recognize girls who have accomplished something during the Girl Scout year.
- \_ Flag ceremonies can be part of any activity that honors the American flag.

-Clean Up (Good for young girls): The children skip about the room arranging everything neatly, singing to the tune of "London Bridge." Weave the magic in and out, in and out, in and out, Weave the magic in and out, we are Girl Scouts. We have tidied everything, everything, everything, We have tidied everything. Finally, the girls line up before the leader who asks, "Is everything finished?" when the girls assure her that the room is clean she says: "Then be gone!" (Leader can wave a special "good-bye wand" as girls silently tiptoe out.)

-Magic Tunnel: When hats and coats are on, the Girl Scouts stand in two lines facing each other, raising their arms and holding hands to make an arch. The two farthest from the door go under the arch, then the next two, etc. The tunnel diminishes until the last two go.

- Good-Bye Song: Tune: "Good Night Ladies" Note: Can be sung while doing the Magic Tunnel (above). Good-Bye (name of level...repeat 3 times) It's sad to see you go.

## Special Closing Ceremonies

- **Good-Night Song:** Tune: "Taps"; Music also in Brownie Song Book Night has come, Owls are out, Beetles hum round about, Tip-toe so, Out they creep, Girl Scouts go home to sleep.
- **Girl Scout Good-Bye Song:** Tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" Now our Girl Scout meeting ends, Say good-bye to all our friends To our homes we Girl Scouts go, Singing songs to let you know, We are happy as can be, Working, playing, merrily.
- **Girl Scout Out:** Stand in circle with a girl in the center. Spell G-I-R-L-S-C-O-U-T. Girl in center touches the top of a head as each letter is said. The three girls that get the letters O, U, T leave the circle and line up by the door or are given permission to leave with their parent/guardian. The remaining girls close up the space and the spelling begins again. Keep repeating until all are eliminated.
- **Spread Arm Good-bye Circle:** Extend arms sideways at shoulder level, drop halfway to sides, step one pace in and hold hands not with the people on either side of you but with the person next to them. Every other person will be holding hands and the arms will make an interesting zigzag pattern. Sing a good-bye song.
- **Friendship Circle with Friendship Wish:** Girls stand in circle with arms crossed right over left and grasping the hands of the person on either side. A designated person starts the passing of the friendship wish by thinking a silent wish and then symbolically passing the wish to the person on her right by squeezing her hand. That girl then thinks her own silent wish and continues the "squeeze". This is repeated until the "squeeze" has gone around the entire circle. When the originator receives the "squeeze" she says, "Goodnight (or Goodbye) Girl Scouts". The girls drop their hands and leave in silence. Hint: So that the location of the "squeeze" can be identified, have each girl extend her right foot as she passes on her wish. Variation: One person starts the squeeze in both directions & the person who receives both squeezes at once says goodnight.

## Hints for Successful Ceremonies

- Devote sufficient time to planning the ceremony. Good ceremonies have a clear purpose and enrich the meaning and mood of the ceremony.
- Add personal elements to traditional ceremonies. Use favorite poems, songs, stories and sayings, or have the girls write about what something means to them, their feelings on a topic or why they love being a Girl Scout. Consider the role of colors and symbols that you might use in your ceremony.
- Observe flag etiquette when doing flag ceremonies.
- Take safety precautions when using candles or fires, or when constructing bridges or platforms. Refer to Safety-Wise for specific advice.