

What is a Girl Scout Ceremony?

A Daisy Girl Scout says the Promise and receives her Girl Scout pin at an investiture ceremony.

A Brownie Girl Scout is presented her first Try-It at a Court of Awards ceremony.

Girls “fly-up” to Junior Girls Scout and receive their gold wings.

Cadette Girl Scouts share a campfire with songs and thoughts of friendship.

A Senior Girl Scout shares a proud moment with family and friends when she receives the Gold Award.

Girl Scouting is filled with special memories and special times. Ceremonies heighten the significance of special times, enabling girls to share these moments with others in a memorable way. Several kinds of ceremonies have become part of the Girl Scout tradition. These include:

- **Investiture Ceremony** – New members of Girl Scouting make the Promise and receive membership pins.
- **Rededication Ceremony** – Members renew their Girl Scout Promise and review what the Girl Scout Law means to them.
- **Bridging Ceremony** – Girls celebrate passage from one program level to another.
- **Court of Awards Ceremony** - Girls receive recognition for their special accomplishments.

These ceremonies are high points of a girl’s adventure in Girl Scouting and they involve planning and preparation by troop members.

There are many other kinds of ceremonies that take less planning or may even happen spontaneously. These include:

Flag Ceremonies: Girls learn patriotism and respect in these activities that are often part of other ceremonies.

Scouts Own Ceremonies: Within the troop setting, the girls create a ceremony that reinforces personal values.

Campfire Ceremonies: Girls bond and create memories with their groups.

Whatever the purpose or origin, ceremonies serve to reinforce the values of Girl Scouting. They provide opportunities for girls to share their feelings and reflect on what they have accomplished individually and together.

Planning Ceremonies

Although there are many different types of ceremonies, there are some elements that are common to every ceremony. Every ceremony has:

A Purpose

Most ceremonies in Girl Scouting mark special events or recognize accomplishments.

A Theme

These are the thoughts or ideas that tie the ceremony together. The theme of a ceremony is often expressed in songs, readings or other activities.

Content

These are the activities that take place during the ceremony.

Opening activities set the mood and provide a focus for participants. These may include candle lightings, campfires and processions.

Middle activities carry out the purpose and theme of the ceremony. Girls can receive recognition, read poems, sing together, perform a skit, or express personal feelings.

Closing activities pull everything in the ceremony together. A friendship circle, moment of silence or a special song are activities that involve all participants and guests in a final moment of sharing.

In Girl Scouting, girls grow, learn, and have fun by making decisions, doing and discovering for themselves. That is why it is important that the girls do as much of the planning for ceremonies as possible. Ceremonies are opportunities for the girls, not the adults, to express themselves. Girls should have a part in making their own memories.

Planning should include the girls' ideas and input. As the girls get older, their responsibility for planning should expand. Keep in mind that different levels and/or groups will have different abilities. Be flexible, let the girls make mistakes and learn from them. It will be your function to guide the group and provide an environment that promotes creativity.

Some ceremonies require certain items (such as flags or Brownie pins), and many ceremonies can be greatly enhanced with additional equipment.

The Council Office has a variety of items that can be checked-out to troop leaders free-of-charge. Specific items that would be helpful for troop ceremonies include:

- American flag
- Kansas flag
- Missouri flag
- Girl Scout flag
- World Association flag
- Set of Mini International Flags
- Red Sashes (for flag ceremonies)
- Bridges
- Candelabra

Visit our [Equipment Rental web page](http://gsksmo.org/troopleader) (go to gsksmo.org/troopleader and select "Equipment Rental" on the left) for a complete list and information on how to reserve items. Please note that there is a \$5 rental fee for items.

Here are some ways the girls at each age level can be involved in ceremony planning.

Daisy	Brownie	Junior	Cadette	Senior
Choose a favorite song to sing	Choose songs & poems related to the theme	Decide on a theme	Decide theme	Plan and put on an area ceremony
Decide who they want to invite	Decide who they want to invite and make invitations	Decide when they will hold the ceremony	Find songs & readings	Select site and make arrangements
	Set up before ceremony	Find songs & poems	Work with Junior sister troop to plan bridging	Contact participants
	Serve refreshments	Make and serve refreshments	Make own props	Choose what to put in ceremony
		Cleanup		Conduct ceremony

It is important to practice enough that girls are comfortable in their roles. But be sure not to rehearse so that the girls get bored.

The best ceremonies are those that are written or adapted to use words that are personally meaningful to the troop. Remember that a ceremony is a special time. Involve the girls in the planning so they feel the ceremony is theirs.

A Note about Public Speaking:

Girl Scout ceremonies provide a great opportunity for girls to get public speaking experience. Urge the girls to volunteer for speaking roles, but be sensitive to girls who are not comfortable getting up in front of groups. Be sure there are plenty of non-speaking roles for girls who are not yet ready to be speakers. Reassure girls that it is natural to be nervous, but that proper preparation and practice can help build confidence and skill. Talk to the girls about making eye contact with the audience, standing with good posture, avoiding fidgeting, and speaking loud enough for every audience member to hear.

Ceremony Planner

Type of Ceremony: (Investiture, etc.)

Purpose: (What will it celebrate?)

Theme:

When:

Where:

Guests:

Are invitations needed?

Content

	Activities	Props	Who's Responsible
Before Ceremony:			
Opening:			
Middle:			
Closing:			

Setup: Where will people stand or sit? Is special setup required? (If so, provide a sketch.)

Refreshments: Are they required? If so, what will be served, and who is in charge?

Budget: List all purchases that must be considered and their costs (Remember props, decorations, refreshments, and room rental.) Can anything be borrowed instead of bought?

Rehearsal: When will the ceremony be practiced?

Checklist:

- Does the ceremony fit the ability of the girls?
- Does each girl have a job (during planning and during the ceremony)?
- Have the girls discussed all safety issues (especially with candles)?
- Can all speakers be heard?
- Do the activities touch emotion: feelings of respect, pride, and happiness?
- Does everyone get to participate, even guests?
- Is it interesting, yet easy to understand?
- Most importantly, is it fun?

Investiture and Rededication

What is an investiture?

An investiture ceremony is held when one or more people join Girl Scouting for the first time. The girl or adult who is being invested accepts the ideals of the Girl Scout Promise, receives the appropriate membership pin and is welcomed into Girl Scouting.

What is rededication?

A rededication ceremony is for those who already have been invested. This is a special time for girls to renew their Girl Scout Promise and review the Girl Scout Law.

What is included in an investiture or a rededication?

Investitures traditionally include the opportunity for new members to say the Girl Scout Promise and receive their membership pins. Daisy Girl Scouts receive the Daisy pin; Brownie Girl Scouts receive the Brownie pin; and Junior, Cadette, Senior, and adult Girl Scouts receive the Girl Scout pin.

Rededication ceremonies include many of the same components as an investiture. Often, investitures and rededication occur at the same time as a troop welcomes new and returning members at the beginning of the year.

Things to think about:

- Put membership pins on ribbons and pin onto each girl with straight pins. This will make the pinning part of the ceremony move faster.
- Avoid long talks directed at parents. Remember that this is the girls' ceremony.
- Girls may choose to wear their Girl Scout uniforms for the first time at investiture.
- Light candles from the inside to outside so girls don't have to reach over an open flame.
- Use taper, lighter or fireplace match or another candle to light candles.
- Write or type text on index cards so girls can read their parts with ease.
- Make sure making the Promise is a comfortable experience for girls who may not be ready to recite it by themselves in front of a group.
- Experiment with different room set-ups.
- With younger girls, consider substituting candles with flashlights.

Investiture/Rededication Ceremonies

Examples and Suggestions

Universal Ceremonies (for all age levels):

Basic: This ceremony can be easily altered to give the troop an opportunity to personalize their ceremony.

- Begin with a flag ceremony or song.
- Individually or as a group, girls make the Girl Scout sign and recite the Girl Scout Promise and the Girl Scout Law.
- Explain the meaning of the hand sign to the audience. Each finger represents one of the three parts of the GS Promise.
- Pin each girl with the appropriate Girl Scout pin and make the Girl Scout handshake (shake hands with your left hand while making the Girl Scout sign with your right hand.)
- Welcome new members to the troop and present the troop to the audience.
- End with a flag ceremony followed with “When ‘ere You Make a Promise”

Rays of Light:

- Before the ceremony, set out 13 candles (3 tall and 10 shorter) or 13 flashlights (consider experimenting with colored cellophane to produce different colored lights).
- Begin with an opening activity. Flowers can also be used to represent each part of the Law and Promise. At the end of the ceremony, the troop will have made a Girl Scouting bouquet.
- Assemble the girls and hand out the flashlights/candles. Dim the lights. The first speaker lights her candle/flashlight and says “On my honor, I will try to serve God and my country.” Continue lighting candles/flashlights until all 3 parts of the GS Promise and all 10 parts of the GS Law have been represented.
- Pin each girl with the appropriate Girl Scout pin and make the Girl Scout handshake (shake hands with your left hand while making the Girl Scout sign with your right hand.)
- End with an age-appropriate closing activity

Age Level Sample Ceremonies:

On the next few pages are examples of ceremonies by age level. Although these ceremonies are presented as scripts, groups are encouraged to alter them to embody the feelings of their members.

Daisy Ceremony Example:

Daisy Petal

- Create a large paper daisy with a petal for each girl. Write the troop number on the center piece and set it on the floor. Have each girl write her name on her petal and keep it with her.
- Begin with a flag ceremony, either a very simple one performed by the Daisies or one given by older Girl Scouts.
- Have the girls stand as a group and give the Girl Scout Sign, recite the Girl Scout Promise, and say the Girl Scout Law. Use note cards or posters if necessary.
- The leader approaches the paper daisy and calls the girls one by one. The leader welcomes each girl to the troop as she adds her name to the flower. The leader pins each girl and gives her the Girl Scout Handshake.
- Close with a song.
- After the ceremony, attach the petals to the center piece and keep as a troop memento.

Brownie Ceremony Example:

NOTE: Many Brownie leaders like to pin the Brownie pin upside down. Then they announce to parents that once the girl has completed a good deed, the pin can be turned right-side up.

The Magic Pond: This ceremony is based on the “Brownie Story” which can be found in the Brownie Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting.

- Use props and decorations to create a forest setting. In the middle of the room, use foil, construction paper, or a mirror to create the Magic Pond.
- Begin with an opening activity.
- As a troop, the girls recite the GS Promise and Law
- The leader or girls narrate the Brownie Story. The rest of the troop acts it out as a skit.
- After the story, the leader stands beside the Magic Pond and calls each girl forward. She spins her a few times and says, “Twist me and turn me and show me the elf. I looked in the water and saw...” Then the girl responds, “Myself!”
- The leader pins each girl, gives her the Girl Scout handshake, and welcomes her to the troop.
- End with a closing activity

Junior Ceremony Example:

Troop Declarations

- Start with an opening activity.
- The leader announces that the troop will rededicate itself to Girl Scouting
- Using the values listed in the Girl Scout Promise and Law, have each girl create a personal pledge that will help her renew her commitment to Girl Scouts. For instance, “I will do my best to be courageous and strong by standing up to peer pressure and doing the right thing during our meetings.”
- If there are enough girls to represent all three parts of the Promise and all ten parts of the Law, the personal pledges can be added together to create a troop pledge.
- Present the Girl Scout pin to new members, leader pins to new leaders, and World Association pin to all girls.
- End with a closing activity, such as “When’ ere You Make A Promise”

Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Ceremony Example:

The Light of Girl Scouting

- Light 13 candles on a table. Start with a more formal opening activity.
- Dim the lights and have speakers read:

We know our Promise & our Law. We have recited it many times over the years. We may have questioned its importance in our life or forgotten its value.

But, what would the world be like if we stopped serving God and our country? (blow out one candle)

What would the world be like if we stopped helping people in need? (Blows out one candle)

What would the world be like if we stopped living by the Girl Scout Law? (blows out one candle)

What would the world be like if we all chose to be dishonest & self-serving? (Blows out one candle)

- Continue through the law until all candles are out & room is dark. Pause.

If we choose this path, our world becomes very dark.

(Pause)

But I, _____, make a commitment today to serve God and my country. (Re-light first candle)

- Allow girls to re-light each candle while they say their part of the Promise and Law.
- Present girls with certificates or pins.
- Conclude with a closing activity.

Bridging Ceremonies

Why do Girl Scouts have Bridging Ceremony?

A bridging ceremony marks a Girl Scout's passage from one program age level to another. Daisy Girl Scouts bridge to Brownies, Brownies to Juniors, Juniors to Cadettes, Cadettes to Seniors, Seniors to Ambassadors and Ambassadors to adult Girl Scouting. The bridging ceremony may be the culminating event of a series of bridging activities that serve to introduce girls to what lies ahead in Girl Scouting. The bridging ceremony for Brownie Girl Scouts moving into Junior Girl Scouting is usually called a "fly-up" ceremony.

What is in a Bridging Ceremony?

Bridging ceremonies often include girls of both program age levels with the older girls welcoming the younger ones into the new program age level. Girls usually receive pins or other mementos that symbolize their passage from one program age level to another. Bridging Daisy Girl Scouts may receive the Brownie Girl Scout membership pin. Brownies bridging to Juniors may receive their Brownie wings and the Girl Scout membership pin.

Things to Think About:

- Invite girls from the next program age level to help younger girls in the planning process for the ceremony.
- Prepare girls for bridging with activities that help them know more about what is ahead. Girls should have the opportunity to learn about books, uniforms and recognitions for the next program level and see a troop in action. Requirements for earning the bridging awards can be found in the Girl's Guides to Girl Scouting.

Ways to Make a Bridge:

- To make an easy bridge, turn a card table upside down. String crepe paper from the ground up to the legs and across to create the effect of a bridge.
- Have girls walk underneath a helium balloon arch
- Find a rustic outdoor bridge
- Cut out cardboard stepping stones
- The Council Office has a number of bridges available for rental.
- See the council pinterest page for more examples.

Bridging Ceremony Samples & Suggestions

Universal Ceremonies

From the Past to the Future

- Set up display of items from the troop activities throughout the year, including the girls' scrapbooks, photos and examples of projects.
- Start with a friendship circle, the last circle the troop will share in their current GS level.
- Allow each girl to share her favorite event or best achievement in their current level. Then present examples of the events they have to look forward to (consider inviting girls from the next age level to give a short presentation on this theme.)
- As a troop, walk over a bridge.
- As each girl crosses into the new GS level, present her with her membership star, and pin her with the membership pin for the next level. If you have guests from the older level, have them stand at the other end of the bridge to receive the new members.
- To end, sing a song together.

Girl Scout Mentors

- Begin with a flag ceremony, with the girls from the older level helping the younger ones.
- Pair each younger girl with an older one. Have the first pair begin with the first pledge in the GS Law. The younger girl says the line, and the older girl expands it to help the younger one understand. For example:
 - Younger GS: *I will do my best to be honest and fair.*
 - Older GS: *Being honest is being truthful about what you say and do; being fair means treating everyone equally.*
- Larger troops may also need to explain the Girl Scout Promise, Motto, Slogan, and Handshake, so that each girl has an opportunity to speak.
- The older girls pin on the wings for the younger girls and give the Girl Scout handshake.
- Make the friendship circle.

Daisy to Brownie Ceremony Example

Recipe for Brownies

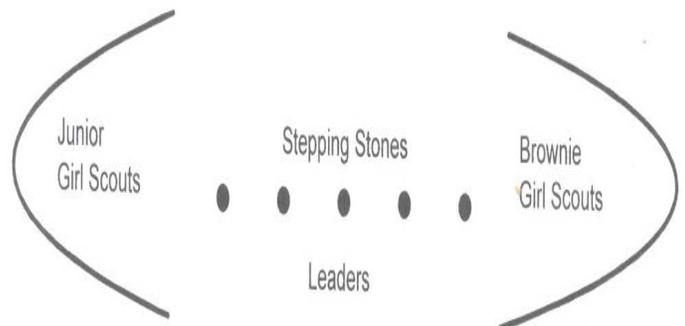
- Begin with an opening activity.
- Recite the Promise and Law as a group, and explain the process of bridging to the audience.
- In order to show the opportunities the girls will have at the next Girl Scout level, present a “Recipe for Brownies.” Bring out a large pot and spoon and have each girl announce one ingredient. Girls can add crepe paper, glitter, or construction paper to the pot to symbolize each ingredient. For instance:
 - Start with two sticks of Leadership (drop in 2 small boxes covered in paper)
 - Cream with a half cup Responsibility (drop in a cup of cut crepe paper)
 - Sprinkle with Self-Confidence (sprinkle with confetti)
- Continue the process until all girls have presented an ingredient. Stir the pot three times, and announce that they have successfully made a batch of 24 (however many girls are in the group) Brownies.
- Present each girl with her Brownie pin.
- Close with an ending activity.

Brownie to Junior Ceremony Example

Stepping Stones

- Begin with a joint flag ceremony, with both the Brownies and Juniors working together.
- Brownie Girl Scouts form a ring at one end of the room. The Junior troop forms a horseshoe at the other end of the room. The Brownie Leader is in the center of the circle. Brownies sing the *Brownie Smile Song* and add – “Now it’s time to say goodbye. Open the ring and out we fly.”
- Leader pins each girl with her wings: “I now give you Brownie wings that you may fly to Junior things.”
- The Junior leader says:

*Now who is this with her dress so brown,
Her smile turned up and her cap turned down?
We’ve heard of her ways all over town.
Of course, why of course, she is a Brownie.
Oh, we’re the Girl Scouts, a trusty band,
And we welcome this elf from Brownieland;
We’re ready to help her lend a hand;
So welcome, oh welcome the Brownie.*



- Brownie Girl Scouts individually walk across the stepping stones. The leader asks each girl to say the Promise and then pins the Girl Scout pin on the girl’s uniform, etc. The girls then enter the horseshoe.
- End with a closing activity.

Junior to Cadette Ceremony Example

Junior Girl Scout Bridging Ceremony

Junior form a horseshoe at one end of the bridge, while Cadettes form a horseshoe on the other. Each Junior is presented with a candle while she is still on the "Junior" side of the bridge. One by one, each bridging Junior walks to the center of the bridge, escorted by her leader. When they reach the center of the bridge, they are met by an experienced Cadette. The ceremony then proceeds in the following manner:

Leader: *May I present Junior Girl Scout _____, who is eager to accept the challenge of Cadette Girl Scouting.*

Cadette Girl Scout: *I, _____, challenge you, _____, to serve your younger sister Girl Scouts, your community, and your country; as we have served you. If you accept this challenge, I will light your candle in respect, that you will live your challenge to the fullest. Do you accept this challenge?*

Bridging Junior: *I will accept this challenge.*

Upon accepting the challenge, the Cadette lights the bridging Junior's candle

Leader: *(name of new Cadette GS), would you please recite the Girl Scout Promise*

New Cadette: *(recite the Girl Scout Promise)*

- Cadette leader and girls congratulate the new Cadette Girl Scout and welcome her to Cadette Girl Scouting
- The same procedure is repeated until all girls are bridged
- Do a closing song or other closing activity

Cadette to Senior or Senior to Ambassador Ceremony Example

The Keys to the World

- After an opening activity, Cadettes form a horseshoe on one side of a bridge, and Seniors on the other side.
- After Cadettes cross the bridge and are met and given the Girl Scout handshake by the Senior Girl Scouts, they should then form a horseshoe with the Seniors.
- The Senior Girl Scouts welcome the Cadettes and tell them about the benefits of being a Senior. For instance:

“When you are a Senior Girl Scout, your life is filled with action. In addition to group activities, Seniors have many individual opportunities coming their way. You can take part in special events and activities planned by Seniors for Seniors. You can be a delegate or a member of the council board and help plan council activities. You may be selected for one of the many STUDIO 2B destinations open to Girl Scouts each year. And you can now begin work on the Gold Award, the highest award in Girl Scouts. We invite you to get involved.”

- The Seniors present the Cadettes with a gold key (cardboard, paper or metal). One Senior explains how the key symbolizes the opportunities that come with continuing Girl Scouting:

As you begin your Senior journey to the Gold Award - we give you a gold key to help you unlock the doors to the wide world of Girl Scouting. Keys have quite a history. They were first used back in biblical times. They were large and made of wood. They were carried as a sign of prestige. We hope you will

carry your key as proudly as the first keys were carried - and that this key will open many doors and worlds in your Senior years of Girl Scouting. Welcome to Senior Girl Scouts!

- The Cadettes put on the keys (on ribbons or necklaces) and become Seniors. All the girls join together for the closing activity.

Ambassador to Adult Ceremony Example

Adult Gifts

- Have the graduating Senior Girl Scouts join in a friendship circle with their other troop members at one side of the room. Have a group of Girl Scout adults come forward and make a circle across from the girls.
- Ask everyone to say the Girl Scout Promise together and sing “Make New Friends”. You may wish to read an appropriate poem at this time.
- An adult Girl Scout reads:
As (name of each girl) says good-bye to Senior Girl Scouting, we welcome her into adult Girl Scouting. New opportunities are waiting (list samples of adult activities) and we hope that you will continue to enjoy Girl Scouting as an adult member.
- Have each girl leave the circle of her troop members as you call her name. When she walks over to the circle of adults, have one adult present her with an appropriate gift. Have another adult give her the Girl Scout handshake and welcome her as an adult.
- End with an appropriate closing activity.

Gift Ideas:

Flowers (daisies, yellow rose)
Personalized I.D. pin (from catalog)
10-year membership pin
Part of adult uniform

Court of Awards Ceremonies

What is Court of Awards?

At a Court of Awards, Girl Scouts receive recognition for their accomplishments in the form of patches, badges, pins and certificates. Court of Awards ceremonies are held several times during the Girl Scout year and even more frequently for young girls. A Court of Awards may be used as a closing ceremony for a project the whole troop has worked hard on, with each girl receiving the patch or badge that symbolizes her effort. The ceremony can also be used to present or celebrate the insignia that each girl has earned over a specific period of time.

What is in a Court of Awards?

Presentation of awards is the main activity of a Court of Awards ceremony. There are many creative ways to present girls with insignia. Demonstrations or displays of what was done to earn the awards can add interest to the ceremony. Girls may wish to include candle lighting in the ceremony. Many of the Promise and Law candle lightings used for investitures are also appropriate for Court of Awards ceremonies. A Court of Awards can be a formal kind of ceremony with invited guests; parents, troop support committee, consultants and sponsors. It can also be a simple ceremony with the troop leader presenting the girls with insignia at the end of a regular troop meeting. Whatever form the Court of Awards takes, it should be an opportunity for girls to feel proud of their accomplishments.

Things To Think About:

- Prepare recognition items ahead of time; packaging each girl's awards together.
- Emphasize the effort each girl made to earn whatever awards she is receiving, rather than the number earned.
- Hold award ceremonies frequently, especially with younger girls. Daisies, Brownies and young Junior Girl Scouts should receive recognitions as soon as they have earned them in order to help them understand that the award is a symbol of their work.
- Recognize each girl individually by name. If possible, comment on what was done to earn the insignia.
- To save time, pin awards to ribbons and then pin ribbons on the girls.

Samples & Suggestions for Court of Awards Ceremonies

Daisy Bouquet Ceremony

- Begin with an opening activity.
- Present each girl with a paper daisy for each petal they have earned. These are made by creating a colorful flower with construction paper or cardboard, attaching a green pipe cleaner to the base, and attaching the petal to the middle of the flower. Each girl creates a bouquet with her paper daisies and uses them to decorate the table.
- Allow each girl to describe how she earned one of the badges
- Congratulate the group on their achievements, and end with a closing activity

Girl Scout Journey Award Ceremony

- Decorate the ceremony site with samples of the activities girls did to complete the Journey. Also, have each girl create a poster of their favorite activity.
- Begin with an opening activity, such as a flag ceremony.
- Explain what Journeys are and talked about which Journey awards the troop has earned.
- Ask each girl to name one thing they tried to do as part of a Journey activity. Girls may hold up samples of their work, etc. Present each girl with her awards.
- Congratulate the group, and end with a closing activity.

Girl Scout Badge Court of Awards

- Before the ceremony, write each letter of the word *badges* on a piece of posterboard. Have the girls come up with an explanation for each letter; write these on the back of the posterboard. Encourage girls to create their own explanations; here are some examples to stimulate the creative process:

B stands for Badges to be given today. What is a badge? An outward sign of an inner accomplishment. The scrap of colored material is not nearly so important as the job that was done to earn it.

A Awards given at the Court of Awards. Here we are not rewarded for the badge itself, but for what the badge represents. It means new knowledge, new skills learned and new opportunities to be of service to others.

D stands for Deeds. Good deed to be done now and in the future for family, friends and the community. Good deeds done with the knowledge and skills acquired through the badges.

G is the Girl in Girl Scouts and the growth we achieve through living the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

E is for Eagerness and Energy. Both are necessary to earn badges. Badges do not come easily, and they should not, or their value would be small. Badges present challenges and satisfaction in accomplishment.

S stands for many things: service to others, self-development and self-respect, all of which are important values that help us develop as Girl Scouts.

- Begin the ceremony with an appropriate opening activity.
- Allow the girls to present their explanations of the importance of badges, showing the audience the front of the posterboard, and reading from the back of it.
- Distribute the badges earned by the group, and allow each girl to share a small story about how she earned it. Or, ask each girl to show how she displayed one of the badges values that the troop explained with the posterboards.
- End with a closing activity.

NOTE: This ceremony can be performed using the letters from many different words, including *Girl Scouts*, *Awards*, *Bronze Award*, etc...

Additional Ideas

- Attach awards to anchored balloons, ribbons, or trefoil cut-outs. This way, they can be used to decorate the room as well as add a special touch to each girls accomplishments.
- Awards can also be attached to sashes, so that each girl can be crowned with a unique title, such as “Miss Courage.”
- Girls should be encouraged to create a more ornate display (such as a scrapbook or a PowerPoint slideshow) to document their achievements.
- Make sure that the girls take pictures and notes as they work through their projects. Use these to create table decorations and posters to decorate the room

Scout's Own Ceremonies

What is Scout's Own?

A Scout's Own is a special kind of ceremony that expresses the spirit of Girl Scouting. It's called a Scout's Own because girls and leaders plan it themselves. It's an opportunity for girls to express their thoughts and feelings. Though a Scout's Own is a ceremony, it is not a performance for an audience. Nor should it be confused with a religious ceremony.

A Scout's Own can be held any time or place. You may use it to open or close a meeting or special occasion. Girls usually like to pick a special spot to hold a Scout's Own – one that is meaningful or especially scenic. It's a Girl Scout tradition to walk to the Scout's Own spot quietly and leave it in silence when the ceremony is over.

Campfires create an excellent setting for an intimate and meaningful ceremony. As the group is gathered close for the light and warmth of the fire, there is a great opportunity for bonding and group introspection.

What is in a Scout's Own?

A Scout's Own is usually planned around a theme. The theme can be anything the girls want, but usually it is about important or inspirational ideas, such as the meaning of the Promise, friendship or the beauty of nature. Holidays, songs and poems can be inspiration for a Scout's Own theme.

The main ingredient of Scout's Own is the opportunity for girls to express themselves. They may do this through songs, poems, inspirational reading or through their own words. A moment of silence gives participants time to reflect on what has been said. A special way of arriving at and leaving the Scout's Own site adds emphasis to the ceremony.

Things to Think About

- Involve girls in planning as much as possible. Help them select a theme and then provide resources; poetry books, songbooks for them to select content. Cadette and Senior Girl Scouts can plan the ceremony from beginning to end.
- A patrol might do the planning for a Scout's Own for a large group.
- Pick a spot for the Scout's Own that is away from distractions and provides some inspiration. Focus on a work of art, a scenic view, a quiet place, clouds or a campfire.
- Give girls the opportunity to share their personal thoughts during the Scout's Own. You can encourage this by passing around a special item that each person holds while she speaks; a decorated stick or an interesting stone. Make it okay not to share, though.
- Include some quiet time for reflection during the Scout's Own.
- Practice songs for the ceremony ahead of time. Having to teach the words during the Scout's Own can distract from the atmosphere of the ceremony.
- Designate a "silent arch" that girls enter and become quiet as they approach the ceremony. This might be a tree branch, special rock, doorway or path. As girls leave, they remain quiet until they pass back through the arch.

Samples & Suggestions for Themes for Scout's Own Ceremonies

Growth in Girl Scouting: The Acorn

- Form friendship ring
- All say Girl Scout Promise
- Light a candle as each part of the Law is said
- Acorns are handed out to each person in the ring
- A speaker delivers a speech on the theme. The reading should be carefully selected or written in order to represent the feelings of the group. Here is an example reading:

“This acorn may stand as a symbol of many things; therefore, take this acorn as the symbol of potential. We are all only one small person, as this acorn is only one small nut, but we may never underestimate the potential we hold for growth and greatness. Take this acorn as a symbol of a seed. May it remind each of us that we too are seeds. That we come from the earth and need to stay “down to earth”, but that we must also keep our eyes and ideas cast up, for that is where we are destined to grow. Take this seed and remember its potential. Each girl you touch in Girl Scouting is a seed, and it is our job to see that each seed is planted firmly, warmed, protected, coaxed and given nourishment to grow. Take this seed finally as a symbol of humor, a nut, for we will certainly need to keep a sense of humor to help us through our work ahead.”

- Each person gives her wish for the group.
- Close with “On My Honor”.

Friendship: The Legend of the Sticks

- Read or act out the legend:

Once a group of friends was having an argument. They made so much commotion that Sally, the older sister of one of the girls, came over to see what was the matter. She listened quietly as each one accused the other. “She’s not being fair”, said one. “It is my turn”, said another. “No, it’s my turn”, said another.

As Sally listened, she began to stoop down and pick up some sticks that were lying on the ground. Finally the friends, watching her grew quiet. Sally then put all the sticks together in a bundle and tied them together with a string. She handed the bundle to each girl. “Can you break this bundle of sticks?” she asked. Each girl in turn tried to break the bundle, but not one of them could.

Then Sally untied the bundle and separated the sticks. To each friend she gave one stick. “Now,” she said, “see if you can each break a single stick.” Of course, the single sticks snapped in two with only the slightest effort.

“All of us are like these sticks”, Sally said. “Each one of us, standing alone, is weak. Each one of us can be broken as easily as a single stick. Yet all of us, working together, can be as strong as this whole bunch of sticks – so strong that nothing can break us.”

- Each girl comes forward and picks up one stick (could be spray painted silver or gold). After she picks up her stick, she shares her thoughts about friendship.
- Girls then return to the horseshoe with their sticks. The leader then goes around and picks up each girl’s stick placing them again into a bundle and tying them securely. “Now we are again one strong troop working together.”

Appreciation of the Natural World: Secret Hideaways

- During a campout, have girls find a special place where they can sit by themselves and observe the peace and beauty of the outdoors.
- Allow the girls several opportunities over the weekend to visit their secret places alone.
- At the end of the campout, have each girl bring back a memento of her secret place and share some of her thoughts and feelings about her place with the group.

Hope: Wish Boats

Make wish boats ahead of time. Use small pieces of wooden shingles and attach the toothpick to the boat with clay. If sails are not used, just set a small birthday candle into the clay and place small flowers at the base.

- Girls stand quietly at the ceremony site (lake, pond, stream) facing the water.
- Opening Song – “Make New Friends”
- Each Girl Scout makes a wish out loud, lights the candle and sets her wish boat afloat.
- Everyone sings “Taps”.

NOTE: this may also be done as a bridging ceremony, with the older Girl Scout making a wish boat with the younger Girl Scout and together setting them afloat.

Flag Ceremonies

A flag ceremony can be used as part of a troop meeting, ceremony or Girl Scout event. Flag ceremonies can open and close a troop meeting, service unit event or day at camp. A flag ceremony can be included in an investiture, Court of Awards, or bridging ceremony. Start with small, simple flag ceremonies done within the troop setting so that girls gain skill and confidence in handling the flag. Then the troop may be ready to do a flag ceremony at a large event in or outside of Girl Scouting.

Flag Etiquette

The most important component to any flag ceremony is an attitude of respect towards the flag. It is not just a piece of cloth; it is the symbol that has been chosen to represent the values, history, and glory of the United States of America.

The American Legion has helpful information on flag etiquette. The American Legion Auxiliary will often visit your troop, talk about flag etiquette and present a flag to the troop.

Flag Terminology and Tips

Caller: Scout-in-Charge, Color Sergeant, Sergeant-at-Arms and Color Captain are all terms for the same person, the one in charge of the ceremony and who gives commands to the Color Guard and instructions to the audience.

Color Bearer: The girl that carries a flag (folded or on a staff). She wears a red sash over her right shoulder and tied with a square knot at the left hip.

Color Guard: A guard of honor for the flag. It is made up of a Color Bearer for each flag used and Color Guards. Two or more Color Guards stand on either side of the Bearer to see that the flag does not touch the ground or become entangled in the ropes and to help in any way necessary. When there are many girls in the Color Guard, they should form two parallel lines. There are generally four guards, but there can be more as long as there is an even number.

Colors: A term synonymous for "flag".

Flagstaff or Staff: The pole upon which the flag is placed, either permanently on a portable pole which is placed in a flag stand, or temporarily when the flag is run up a stationary pole.

Posting the Colors: Placing the flags in their stands in view of the audience, or raising the flag up the pole.

Retrieving the Colors: Taking the flags from the scene.

Retreat: The ceremony of lowering the flag.

Salute: Stand at attention, remove hats, place right hand over heart. Salute the American flag whenever...

...The Pledge of Allegiance is recited

...The flag passes in front of you

...The flag is being raised up a pole: from the moment it begins upward motion until it reaches the top

...The flag is being lowered on a pole: from the moment it begins downward motion until it is taken off the pole

...The "Star Spangled Banner" is played, whether or not a flag is present

NOTE: Do not salute flags of other countries. Stand at attention in a respectful manner.

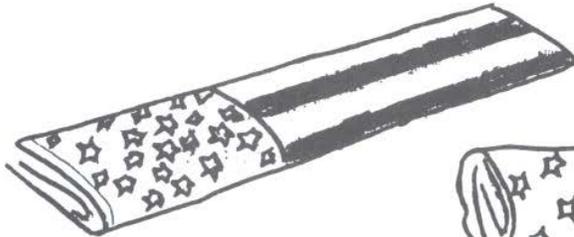
How to Handle the Flag:

Holding a Folded Flag: The Color Bearer carries the American flag, folded in a triangle, resting on her forearms with the point of the triangle forward. If the World Flag or the flag of some other country is used it is folded into a square and carried by its Color Bearer.

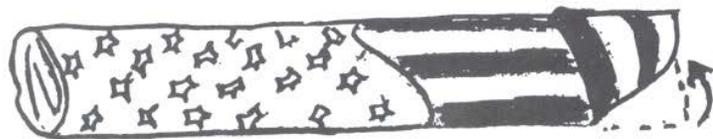
Holding a Flag Attached to a Staff: The Color Bearer holds the pole with her left hand at her left hip and with her right hand palm down over the pole in front of her.

Folding The Flag: It is folded lengthwise in half, and then lengthwise in half again, with blue field always on the outside. The guards at the stripe end of the flag begin folding it in a triangle toward the blue field. They continue to fold until they reach the next pair of guards. The last guard will tuck the binding within the folds and see that the flag is given to the Color Bearer. (See illustration for folding instructions)

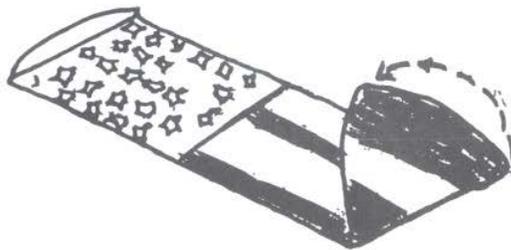
STEP 1



STEP 2

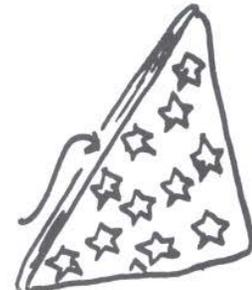


STEP 3



STEP 4

Binding
turned
under
here



Unfolding the Flag:

The Color Bearer passes the flag to the two rows of the Color Guard. While keeping the blue field towards the flagstaff, the flag is passed between the rows of guards while the triangle folds are unfolded. At this point (the flag has two lengthwise folds), one row of the Guard holds the flag while the other row opens one fold. The process is repeated, leaving the unfolded flag. It is then passed to the Bearer to be hoisted up the flagstaff.

How To Display The American Flag:

The Federal Flag Code prescribes the proper display of the American flag in the presence of flags of other nations or organizational flags (i.e. Girl Scouts & World Association flags).

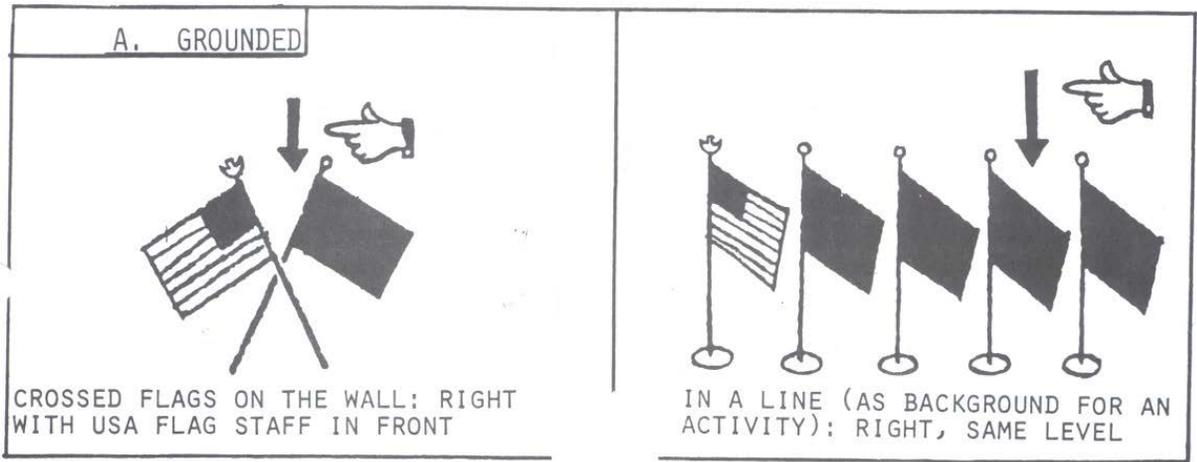
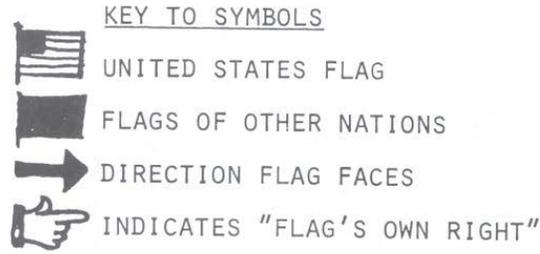
Key Points to Remember:

- Display the flag only from sunrise to sunset. If displayed at night, it must be lighted.
- The flag should not be displayed in bad weather, unless an all-weather flag is used.
- When displayed in the United States, give the flag the position of honor. The key words are: **right, front, higher.**

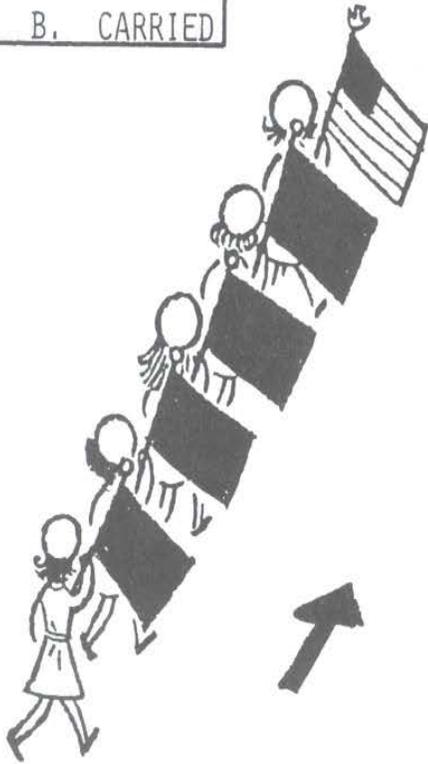
- Right: this is always the flag's right. Think of the flag always facing the audience, except when it is being marched in or out.
- Front: The flag should be closer to the audience than any other flag.
- Higher: No other flag should be displayed higher than the American flag.
- When you hang the flag on a wall or in a window, the blue field is at the top and to the flag's own right
- Do not use the flag as a drapery or cover. Place nothing on top of it. Do not allow the flag to touch the ground or floor.
- The flag should be displayed at half-staff until noon on Memorial Day, then raised to the top of the staff.

These illustrations demonstrate the rules for such occasions:

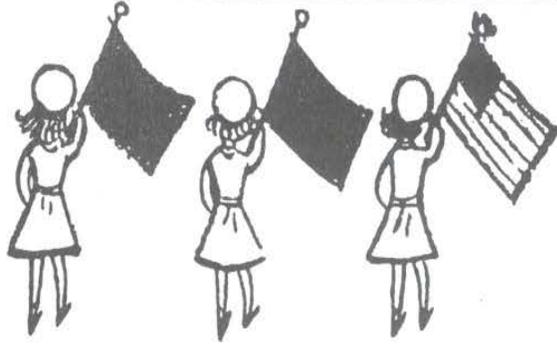
WHEN DISPLAYING THE AMERICAN FLAG WITH FLAGS OF OTHER NATIONS



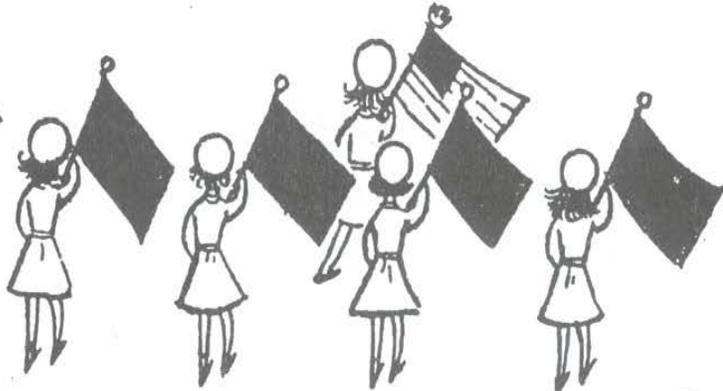
B. CARRIED



DOWN A NARROW AISLE: FIRST

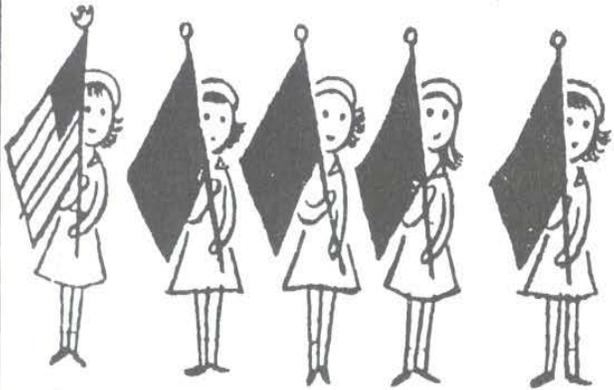


WITH ANOTHER FLAG OR FLAGS: RIGHT

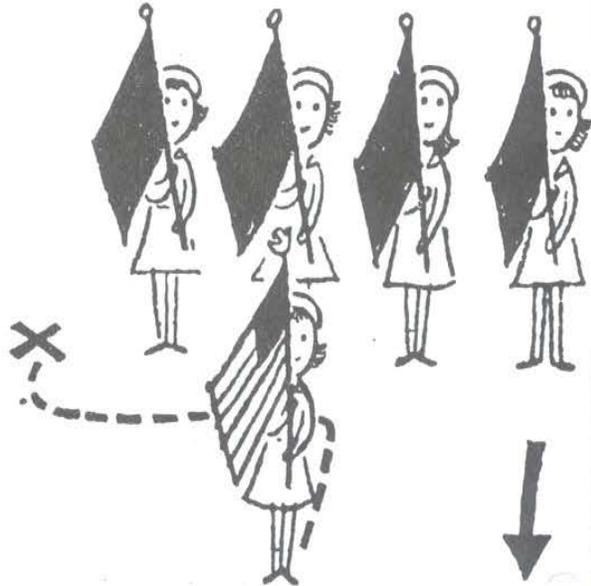


WITH A LINE OF OTHER FLAGS: FRONT OF CENTER

C. HELD FOR CEREMONY



IN A LINE: RIGHT-SAME LEVEL



IF PLEDGE IS INVOLVED: BRING FRONT CENTER

WHEN DISPLAYING THE AMERICAN FLAG WITH GIRL SCOUT FLAGS:

KEY TO SYMBOLS



UNITED STATES FLAG



WORLD ASSOCIATION FLAG



TROOP FLAG

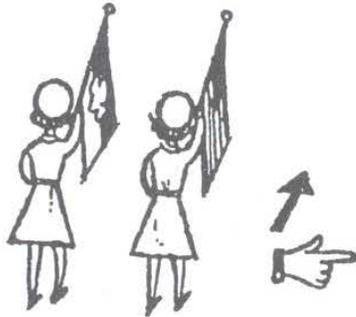


DIRECTION FLAG FACES



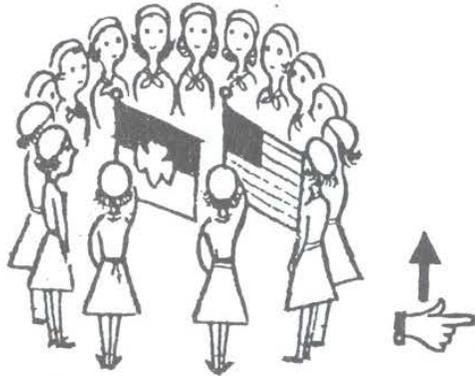
INDICATES "FLAG'S OWN RIGHT"

A. CARRIED

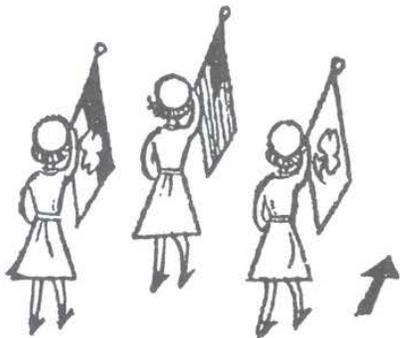


TWO FLAGS: RIGHT

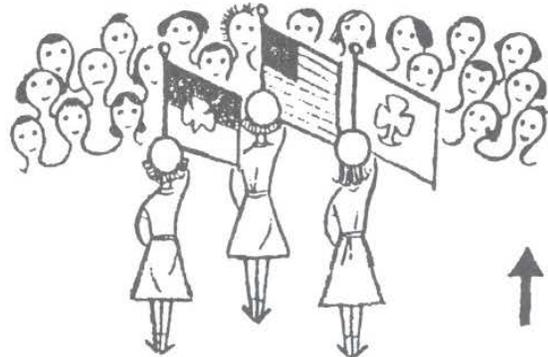
B. HELD FOR CEREMONY



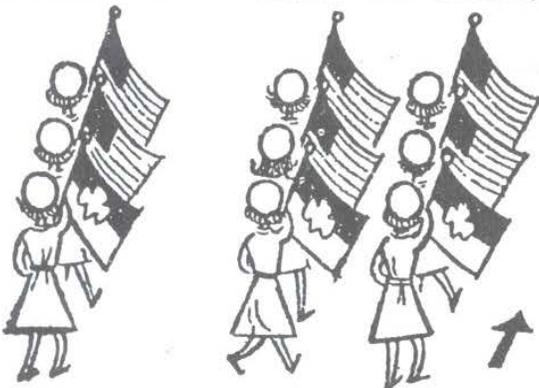
TWO FLAGS: RIGHT



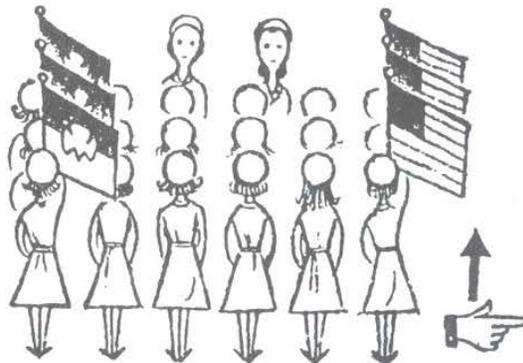
THREE FLAGS: CENTER, FRONT



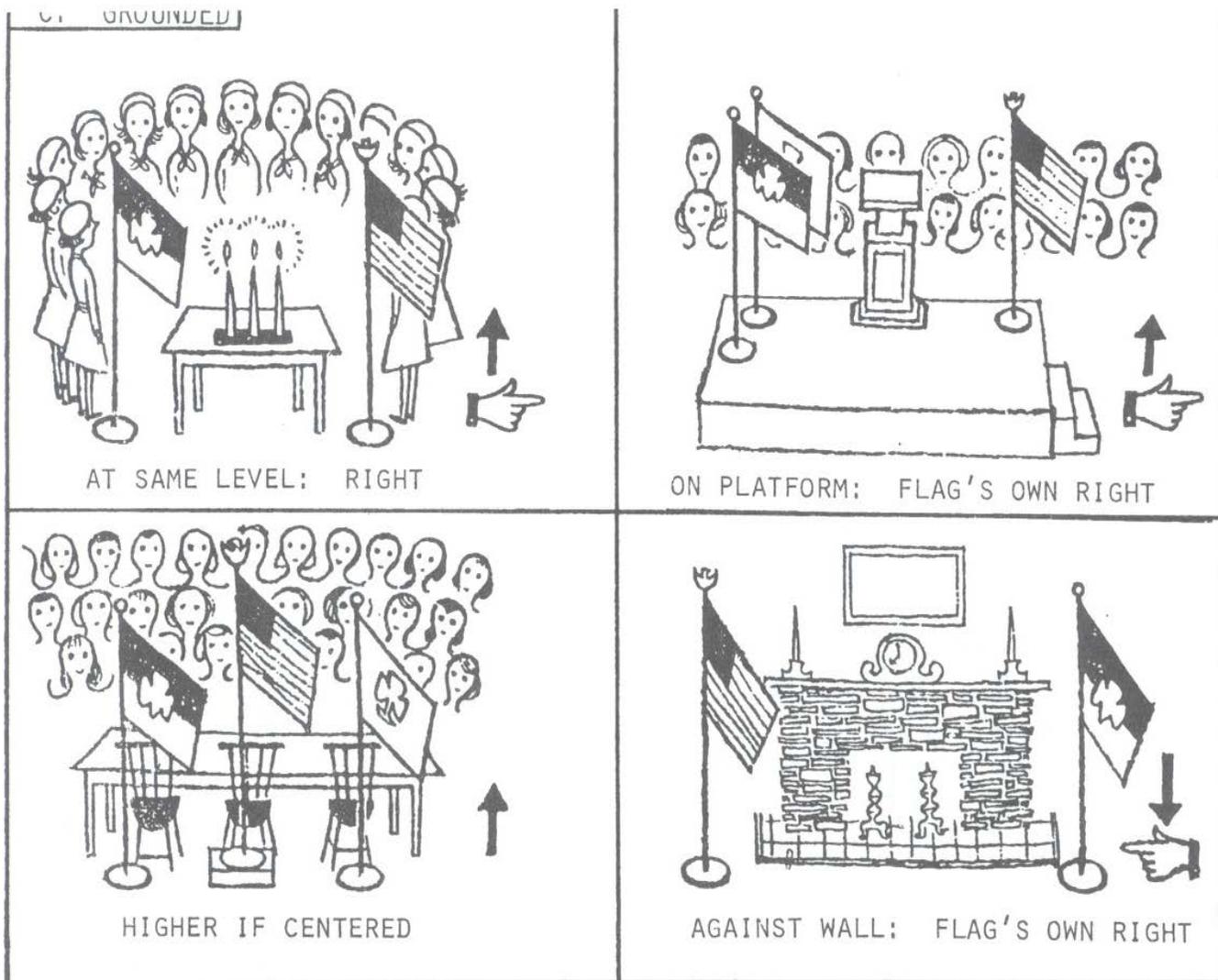
THREE FLAGS: CENTER, FRONT



MANY FLAGS: IN FRONT



MANY FLAGS: RIGHT



Flag Ceremony Samples and Suggestions

Posting the Colors: The Basics

- The flag is always raised briskly, yet respectfully
- A caller is needed to instruct the audience and coordinate the actions of the color guard. This job can be divided among many girls in order to give each girl a responsibility.
- Be sure to follow the guidelines for proper handling and proper display of the flag(s).
- All observing Girl Scouts must stand, remove hats, stop talking, and salute the flag as it enters.
- When the Color Guard possesses the colors, their only responsibility is to protect the flag. While guarding the colors, girls do not salute the flag, sing, or recite anything.
- The Color Guard assists the Color Bearer to raise or display the colors. As the flag is raised, the Caller instructs the audience to salute the flag.
- After the flag is raised, the Caller will lead the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. From here, the group may decide on further pledges, readings, or songs.

- The Caller dismisses the Color Guard, and then dismisses the audience.

Posting the Colors: Sample Ceremony

- The Caller says to the audience "Please Stand"
- The Caller says "Color Guard, advance." The Color Bearers lead the Color Guard to the flagstaff. If only the American flag is used, the Color Guard typically follows the Bearer in two parallel lines.
- The Caller says, "Color Guard, post the colors."
 - If using a folded flag, the Color Bearer hands the flag to the first two members of the guard. The flag is unfolded by the Guard (making sure that the end with the blue field remains by the flagstaff) as the Bearer completes any preparations with the flagstaff (untying the rope, pulling down the clips, etc.) The Color Guard passes up the flag after the Bearer attaches it and begins to hoist it.
 - If using flags attached to staffs, the bearers hold up the flags at this point. After posting the colors, the Guard salutes.
- The Caller instructs the color guard to honor their flag.
- The Caller asks the audience to join them in Pledge of Allegiance. (The Color Guard should not recite this, or any recitation or song during the ceremony.)
- The Caller says, "Color Guard, retreat." The Color Guard leaves goes back the same way they came in.
- The Caller dismisses the audience.

Retiring the Colors: The Basics

- The flag is always lowered slowly and respectfully.
- A caller is needed to instruct the audience and coordinate the actions of the color guard. This job can be divided among many girls in order to give each girl a responsibility.
- Be sure to follow the guidelines for proper handling and proper display of the flag(s).
- All observing Girl Scouts must stand, remove hats, stop talking, and salute the flag as it is lowered.
- When the Color Guard possesses the colors, their only responsibility is to protect the flag. While guarding the colors, girls do not salute the flag, sing, or recite anything.
- The Color Guard assists the Color Bearer to retire the colors. As the flag is lowered, the Caller instructs the audience to salute the flag.
- After the flag is lowered, the Caller will lead the audience in a recitation or song.
- The Caller dismisses the Color Guard, and then dismisses the audience.

Retiring the Colors: Sample Ceremony

- The Caller says to the audience "Please Stand"
- The Caller says, "Color Guard, attention." The Color Guard comes near the audience.

- The Caller says, "Color Guard, advance." The Color Bearers lead the Color Guard to the flagstaff. If only the American flag is used, the Color Guard typically follows the Bearer in two parallel lines.
- The Color Guard salutes the flag.
- The Caller says, "Color Guard, retire the colors". If using flags on staffs, the Bearers pick up their flags. If using a flagstaff, the Bearer lowers the flag while the first two Color Guards catch the flag and pass it down to the rest of the Guard. The Guard folds the flag and passes it back to the Color Bearer. (In the case of multiple flags, the American flag is always retired last.)
- The Caller leads the audience in a song or recitation, such as "Taps" or "Make New Friends." (The Color Guard should not recite or sing this).
- The Caller says, "Color Guard, retreat." The Color Guard leaves and returns the flags to where they are stored. If using multiple flags, the American flag is the last one placed.
- The Caller dismisses the audience. The audience files out silently.

Additional Ideas:

- For a more formal retreat from the flagstaff: The two rows of the Color Guard turn to face each other, then take a step backward. The Color Bearer turns around (her back to the flagstaff) and walks between the 2 rows. The first Color Guard pair (the girl closest to the flagstaff from each row) follows her out, followed by the second pair, and so forth.
- While the "Pledge of Allegiance" is almost always recited at Colors, research more recitations or patriotic songs that can be added to the ceremony to personalize it.
- Combine different age levels of girls so that the older girls can get experience in a leadership position and the younger girls can see what they have to look forward to as they progress towards higher Girl Scouting levels.