

## GIRL SCOUT TRADITIONS

### Ceremonies



Juliette Gordon Low, who founded Girl Scouts in 1912, is shown here presenting a girl with an award.

*“Every badge you earn is tied up to your motto, ‘Be Prepared.’ Badges are not awards for something you have done once like an exam that you passed. They are not medals to wear on your uniform just to show what a smart girl you are. You wear the badge to let people know that you are prepared and willing to be called on because you are a Girl Scout. And Girl Scouting is not just knowing, but doing. Not just doing, but being.”*

Juliette Gordon Low

Ceremonies are a traditional and very important part of Girl Scouting. Ceremonies connect us to each other, honor milestones and events, celebrate accomplishments, explore meaning, celebrate good times, and create a sense of unity. As Girl Scouts is girl-led, girls must always be involved when planning a ceremony.





*Here are a few traditional Girl Scout ceremonies.*

## **Opening and Closing Ceremonies**

Every meeting should have an official opening and closing that tells girls that the meeting is about to begin or end.

### **Suggestions for Opening Ceremony**

Use an opening ceremony every meeting to signal to the girls that the meeting has begun. It's up to you which elements you would like to use.

- Say the Girl Scout Promise
- Perform a flag ceremony
- Girls can share their day.
- Share a song

### **Suggestions for Closing Ceremony**

Closing ceremonies give girls a special moment to end the meeting and say goodbye.

- Friendship Squeeze  
Stand in a friendship circle and place your right arm over your left arm. Hold hands with the girls next to you. One girl begins by using her right hand to squeeze her neighbor's hand. That girl then squeezes with her right hand. One by one, each girl passes on the squeeze until it travels all around the circle.
- You can sing "Make New Friends" while you are squeezing
- Once friendship squeeze is completed, the leaders say "Good night Girl Scouts" and the girls are dismissed.

## **Investiture Ceremony**

An Investiture Ceremony welcomes girls or adults into the movement when they join Girl Scouts for the first time. You are invested just once in your lifetime. Girls can either say the Promise individually or in a group, depending on their ages. During this ceremony participants receive their Girl Scout membership pin.

## **Rededication Ceremony**

A Rededication Ceremony is used to reaffirm belief in the Girl Scouts Promise and Law. Since the Promise and Law are the very foundation of Girl Scouting, it is appropriate to hold this ceremony at least once a year.

*The Investiture and Rededication ceremonies may be combined if there are new and continuing girls and/or adults in a troop.*



## *Traditional Girl Scout Ceremonies*

### **Girl Scout Promise and Law Candle Ceremonies**

This ceremony is traditionally used for the Investiture or Rededication Ceremonies, but can be used as the open or close of any ceremony. Ten candles represent parts of the Promise and Law. If girls are young, or the location where you are meeting doesn't allow open flames, battery operated candles or flashlights can be used.

### **Flag Ceremonies**

A flag ceremony is any ceremony including or honoring the flag. Inherent in the Girl Scout Promise is our belief in service to our country. It honors the American Flag and can open or close a larger ceremony or an event.

### **Court of Awards Ceremony**

Earned Awards are an important part of Girl Scouting. Presentation of these recognitions is done at a Court of Awards Ceremony. If many awards are earned during the year, especially for younger girls, it is a good idea to have these ceremonies several times throughout the year. This gives the girls the opportunity to wear their awards on their current uniform and reinforces what they did to earn it. At future meetings, point to a badge that they earned and ask them as a group, who remembers what we did to earn this?

### **World Thinking Day**

Celebrated since 1926, World Thinking Day is a day of international friendship. It is an opportunity to explore other cultures, talk about peace, and speak out on issues that affect young women who make up the over 10 million Girl Guides and Girl Scouts in 150 countries around the world. February 22 is the date for World Thinking Day because it's the birthday of both founders of the Girl Scouting movement, Lord Robert Baden-Powell, and his sister, Lady Olave Baden-Powell. The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) pin is worn by girls and volunteers around the world, but is not an earned award. Traditionally, World Thinking Day is an appropriate time to learn the symbolism of the pin before the girls receive it, but this is not a requirement.

### **Bridging**

A Bridging Ceremony is held any time a girl moves from one age level to the next. A Brownie Bridging Ceremony is commonly called a "Fly/Up Ceremony" because the girl is entitled to receive her Brownie Girl Scout Wings. Any girl who was previously a Brownie Girl Scout receives her wings. The Bridging patches available at each level are earned awards for the girls who complete the requirements. A girl bridges whether or not she has completed the requirements to earn the Bridging Award. Bridging can be done by individual troops or in a larger area event.



## *Traditional Girl Scout Ceremonies*

### **Girl Scouts' Own**

A Girl Scouts' Own Ceremony is a quiet, inspirational, reflective ceremony that the girls plan and implement themselves. Themes may be taken from nature, things we value such as friendship or the Girl Scout Promise and Law. A Girl Scout's Own Ceremony may be undertaken any time the girls would like to express their feelings. Many times, Girl Scouts' Owns are done as a closing to camp but they can be easily done at a troop meeting as well.

### **World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS)**

#### **Pin Ceremony**

This ceremony may be a part of a Thinking Day, Rededication or other ceremony, or may stand alone. Girls receive their WAGGGS pin and learn its symbolism.

#### **Founder's Day Ceremony**

This ceremony is held to honor Juliette Low as the Founder of Girl Scouting in America. Founder's Day is October 31st, Juliette Gordon Low's birthday. A Founder's Day Ceremony can involve a candle ceremony or may have a birthday theme.

#### **Leader Appreciation Ceremony**

This ceremony is held in honor of Leader Appreciation Day, which is April 22.