



hooray! you're planning a court of awards. now what?

Ceremonies are an important and exciting part of Girl Scouting.

Ceremonies reinforce values, pass on traditions, recognize accomplishments, strengthen friendships, and give life to the beliefs established by the Girl Scout Promise and Law. They are a means for girls to express their feelings, friendship, patriotism and service.

A Court of Awards is a great way to bring girls and their families together to acknowledge the accomplishments of the past year and recommit to a new year of Girl Scouting and all that it has to offer.

In this packet you will find everything you need to plan a fun and memorable Court of Awards. From sample scripts, to a time line checklist - we have you covered in your planning.

before you send invitations

Planning your Court of Awards is really exciting! But, before you send out those invitation check to see if the event is following Girl Scout guidelines.

- Check in with Volunteer Care to ensure that your event meets all event guidelines and safety checkpoints.

- You will need to prepare for this event in advance. Please read this guide thoroughly and note the advance preparations you will need to make and materials you will need to obtain.

do you need extra insurance?

Additional Girl Scout insurance and special permission from the council office is required for any group planning an event or activity for more than 150 people.

Accident-Only Coverage Plan 2 is \$.11 per person

This covers all member's as participants for events lasting longer than those covered by Plan 1; and all nonmember's as participants regardless of the length of the activity/event.

[Additional Insurance Request Form](#)

learn more about ceremonies.

Ceremonies help Girl Scouts mark special events throughout the year, such as bridging to another level, earning a National Leadership Journey award, or getting a Girl Scout pin.

Ceremonies can commemorate accomplishments or simply make the beginning or end of a group's meeting special. Girls can plan a ceremony around a theme, such as friendship or nature, and express themselves in thought, words, or song.

Whatever its purpose, every Girl Scout ceremony enables girls to share Girl Scout history and traditions and create their own special memories.

elements of a good ceremony

ceremony program content

Structure. A ceremony will typically have three parts: the opening, the main part and the closing.

Girl-led planning! To create a ceremony that is extra special to the girls and unique to the group, involving them in the planning process is imperative. As a way to personalize ceremonies, encourage girls to include songs, poems, readings, quotes and skits.

Imagination. Make each ceremony different.

Simplicity. The ceremony should be simple enough for all participants and everyone in attendance to understand.

Intent. Good ceremonies have a clear purpose.

Tradition. While a great ceremony should reflect the ideas of the girls, it's important to make sure that there are still traditional parts included.

Inclusiveness. Ceremonies should be inclusive, involving all girls in both the planning process and the ceremony itself. A good ceremony will make everyone a participant.

troop involvement ideas

It is important to involve troops in as much of the ceremony as possible.

- Involve girls in the planning and implementation of the court of awards ceremony.
- Create a PowerPoint photo presentation and ask each troop to submit photos from their year.
- Ask troops to make a display board representing their year.
 - After the ceremony, girls can hold informal fair presentations of special events from the year.
- Recognize girls that have earned the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver and Gold
 - Girls that earned the awards last year can help in recognizing this year's recipients.
- Troops can each present a song, poem, skit, etc., if time permits
- Each troop makes a centerpiece for refreshment tables symbolizing a memorable Girl Scout activity.

The ceremony program will help girls and guests know what to expect from the event. Include the following items in the ceremony program:

- Program order (agenda)
- Troop(s) doing flag ceremony
- Troop numbers with program grade level
 - Optional: List girl and adult names for each troop.
- If listing girls' names put an asterisk to designate girls who are bridging
- Girl Scout Bronze, Silver and Gold Award recipients
- Words for the Girl Scout Promise and Law, Taps, and any group songs being sung . (Note: words can also be projected on screen)

ceremony adaptations

It is important that the Court of Awards Ceremony meets the needs of the girls and families in your area. Consider the following adaptations:

- Change the order of ceremony to work with your area
- Times can be adjusted to fit your program
- For larger service units/areas
 - Have more than one ceremony for your service unit. Divide by school, area, or grade level
 - Only invite bridging girls, award recipients and adults on stage
 - Have each troop give a brief summary of what they have accomplished
- For smaller service units/areas
 - Each troop can be responsible for planning one part of the ceremony. (ex. Decorate bridge, emcee the event, create and print programs, flag ceremony)
 - Include a family potluck before or after the ceremony

additional roles for girl scout troops

In addition to the ways you ask all troops to participate, there are additional roles that troops can take on. Consider having different roles available for girls of different ages, such as:

- Help with decorations
- Conduct Flag Ceremonies
- Pass out programs to guests as they arrive
- Assist with serving refreshments
- Serve as emcees for parts of the event

flag ceremony

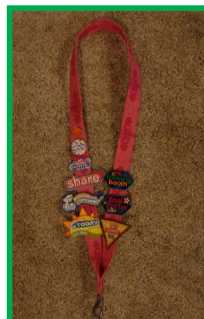
Flag Ceremonies are an important Girl Scout Tradition that reminds us that we are part of something larger. Information about performing a flag ceremony are included in the [Court of Awards Sample Script](#).

- When flags are involved, make sure that proper flag etiquette is observed.

decorations

Be creative with the decorations for the Court of Awards Ceremony. Consider:

- Decorating the bridge girls walk over as part of the bridging ceremony
- Create centerpieces for refreshment tables
- You can get some inspiring ideas from our Pinterest Page! www.pinterest.com/girlscoutshs



council resources

We've developed several resources to help you in your planning. From gathering troop information and to informing girls and parents on the activities of the day - we have your covered.

See available resources to the right. Each file is in Microsoft Word to easily customize to your needs.

Court of Awards Sample Program

Welcomes

Flag Ceremony

Recognition of Troops

Girl Scout Doves

Girl Scout Brownies

Girl Scout Juniors

Girl Scout Cadettes

Girl Scout Seniors

Girl Scout Ambassadors

Adult Recognition

Council Representative Remarks

Closing Remarks

Closing Flag Ceremony

Re-dedication (Optional)

Early Registration Information

Let girls' and adult volunteers' names if space is available

Girl Scout Doves Troop #	Girl Scout Cadette Troop #
Girl Scout Brownies Troop #	Girl Scout Junior Troop #
Girl Scout Juniors Troop #	Girl Scout Ambassador Troop #
Girl Scout Cadettes Troop #	

+ Bridging Girl Scout Troop Leader or Co-Leader

Court of Awards Sample Program

A Microsoft Word file you can use as a template to make your own Court of Awards program.

[Download](#)

Court of Awards Sample Script

Welcome! And thank you for coming to show your support and encouragement of _____ Girl Scouts. (Service Unit Name/Troop #)

(Emcee(s) should include a short introduction of themselves here)

Tonight/Today we gather for our annual Court of Awards. The purpose of the Court of Awards is to celebrate the achievements of the girls and recognize the support of our adult volunteers.

OPENING FLAG CEREMONY

In keeping with Girl Scout tradition, we will begin with a flag ceremony. Please stand as girls from Troop # _____ present the flag.

Please stand for the presentation of the flag. If you have an "audience," such as an Investiture/Re-dedication 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 passes the flags in the stands; the American flag is 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 "At Attention."

Join us in the Pledge of Allegiance

Court of Awards Sample Script

A Microsoft Word file you can use as a template to write your own Court of Awards script.

[Download](#)

COURT OF AWARDS Information and Guidelines

DATE: _____

TIME: _____ pm - Troop line up: _____ pm program begins

PLACE: _____

All registered Girl Scouts and their families are invited to participate in the Court of Awards. This is a special service unit event that honors Girl Scouts of the _____ area and their accomplishments this year.

Please fill out the Court of Awards Troop Information Sheet. This information will be used for the Reports and Bridging Ceremonies as well as provide information for the Court of Awards Ceremony Program. These forms will come to you as an e-mail attachment. Open it, type in the information, save it, and email it as an attachment to _____ with Court of Awards and your troop number in the Subject line. Note: You can also print the forms, fill out and give them to the Court of Awards Chairperson or the Service Unit Manager at the Leader meeting by _____.

Please pay attention to the following guidelines. These guidelines will help you understand what happens at the ceremony and how each troop can participate.

- Uniforms** - Girls are encouraged to wear as much of the uniform as they have. If they only wear their Girl Scout membership pin, they will be given a full uniform. This is a special Girl Scout ceremony and we need to show off our uniforms/badges. Leaders are encouraged to wear a uniform or appropriate attire. Note: Information about girl and adult uniforms can be found at: www.girlscouts.org
- Seating** - The outside rows (or front rows) will be reserved for girls and troop leaders. Families and guests will sit in the center section. It is necessary for troops to sign up so we know how many seats are needed in the reserved section.
- Songs** - All troops will be singing together. You will be notified of the songs we will be singing prior to the ceremony. Please practice these songs with your troop.
- Slide Show** - The ceremony will include a PowerPoint photo presentation highlighting troop activities. This presentation will be shared with the girls and their families. It is encouraged to have photos of the girls themselves and others during this part of the ceremony. Each troop can submit approximately 5 digital photos to be included in the PowerPoint presentation. Please type Court of Awards slide show and your troop number in the subject line. Please e-mail the photos to by _____.

You can save photos or have them put on a disk if you do not have access to a digital camera.

- Refreshments** - Refreshments will be served following the program. Please let girls know they should

Court of Awards Information and Guidelines

A Microsoft Word file you can use as a template to give information to troop leaders, girls and parents about the Court of Awards

[Download](#)

Court of Awards Council Representative Request Form

girlscouts.org
Heart of the South

*Complete this form and submit to info@girlscouts.org. Every effort will be made to have a Council Representative attend your Court of Awards (CWA) Ceremony. Please submit this form as well as a check prior to your event or as soon as you have your event scheduled.

Service Unit _____

Service Unit Manager or Council of Awards Event Coordinator _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Date of Service Unit Court of Awards: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____ (Please give complete street address, city and state for the event location)

Is this your first Service Unit Court of Awards? _____

Are there any council-level awards that you are expecting to have presented during your event?

Number of Troops in Service Unit _____

Number of Girls in Service Unit _____

Number of Volunteers in Service Unit _____

Will you have a printer, screen and speakers set up at your event? _____

Are you having refreshments after the ceremony? _____

Have you held your CWA in school offices, government offices, church leaders, etc.? _____

Please let these you have invited or plan to invite: _____

Every effort will be made to send a council representative to your Court of Awards Grand Celebration! The sooner we receive your data, the sooner we'll be to schedule someone.

Thank you!

www.girlscouts.org

Atlanta, TN 30302 • Houston, TX 77002 • Jacksonville, FL 32216 • Little Rock, AR 72205 • Memphis, TN 38103 • Miami, FL 33133 • New York, NY 10018 • Orlando, FL 32817 • Phoenix, AZ 85016 • Raleigh, NC 27601 • San Antonio, TX 78204 • San Diego, CA 92101 • Tampa, FL 33602 • Washington, DC 20005

Court of Awards Council Representative Request

Request a council representative to attend your Court of Awards and present council level awards to girls and volunteers.

[Download](#)

Court of Awards Troop Information Sheet

Troop Number: _____

Program Grade Level (Circle below)					
Girl Scout Daisy	Girl Scout Brownies	Girl Scout Juniors	Girl Scout Cadettes	Girl Scout Seniors	Girl Scout Ambassador
K-1 st grade	2 nd -3 rd grade	4 th -5 th grade	6 th -8 th grade	9 th -10 th grade	11 th -12 th grade

Court of Awards Attendance

Girl Scouts	Girl Scouts
Contact Person	Phone Number
E-mail Address	

Are the girls in your troop bridging? Yes No

If yes, which troop is your bridging sponsor? _____

Are girls in your troop receiving one of Girl Scout's Highest Awards? Bronze Silver Gold (Circle award below)

Court of Awards Program Information

Please write a brief paragraph about your troop's activities this year.

Names of the girls in troop: _____

Court of Awards Troop Information Sheet

A Microsoft Word file you can send to your troops to collect information of their awards, girls and volunteers.

[Download](#)

Girl Scout Awards and Insignia

Girl Scout insignia and awards are traditionally presented to girls as they fly-up or bridge—moving up to the next program grade level.

There are specific insignia that are given to girls automatically when they move onto the next level and a bridging award that must be earned by completing different requirements.

Use the chart below to assist in determining what awards to give to girls at the ceremony.

Program Grade Level	Insignia Automatically given	Earned Awards
Girl Scout Daisy	Membership Star with blue disc Ending Certificate Girl Scout Brownie Membership Pin (optional)	Bridge to Girl Scout Brownie
Girl Scout Brownie	Membership Star with green disc Girl Scout Brownie Wings Girl Scout Membership Pin (optional)	Bridge to Girl Scout Junior
Girl Scout Junior	Membership Star with yellow disc	Bridge to Girl Scout Cadette
Girl Scout Cadette	Membership Star with white disc	Bridge to Girl Scout Senior
Girl Scout Senior	Membership Star with red disc	Bridge to Girl Scout Ambassador
Girl Scout Ambassador	Membership Star with navy disc	Bridge to Adult Girl Scout





Adult Recognition Award Ideas

Every person likes to feel appreciated for her or his volunteer service. Whether in the form of a simple thank-you for a small job well done or a formal commendation for years of faithful service in a key position of an organization, such acknowledgment is a signal to the recipient that she or he is noticed and appreciated—that she or he is recognized.

Some ways to recognize volunteers during the ceremony could include:

- A framed photograph of the Girl Scouts who participated in a particular project or event (can be a blown-up snapshot)
- Flowers
- Specific awards such as “Rookie of the Year”, Most Valuable Team Member, Green Angel, Green Knight, etc. as developed by your service unit team, committee, or group
- Fun awards such as breath mints (‘you take my breath away’), note cards (‘for a noteworthy achievement’), or batteries (‘you’ve added energy to our group’)
- Certificate
- Small trinket



Girl Scouts Heart of the South and GSUSA Adult Awards
In addition to general adult recognition, consider nominating exceptional adult volunteers for one of the adult awards listed below.

More details about these awards can be found on the council website at:
www.girlscoutshs.org/en/for-volunteers/volunteer-recognitions.html

GSUSA Awards

Appreciation Pin: Recognizes outstanding service to at least one geographic area, service unit, or program delivery audience

Honor Pin: Recognizes outstanding service to at least two geographic areas, service units, or program delivery audiences

Thanks Badge I: One of the highest adult awards in Girl Scouting, for service above and beyond that benefits the entire council

Thanks Badge II: Nominee has received Thanks Badge I and has taken a leadership role in developing a model that has been replicated at the national level

Years of Service Pin: Recognizes an adult member for years of active volunteer service at five-year intervals.

Membership Numerals: Recognizes tenure in Girl Scouting. Girl member and adult member years recognized in five-year intervals. These can be purchased through the council shop.

Volunteer of Excellence: Recognizes those volunteers who have contributed outstanding service while partnering directly with girls or who have contributed outstanding service in support of the council’s mission delivery to girl and adult members.

President’s Award: Recognizes the efforts of a service-delivery team or committee whose exemplary service in support of delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience surpassed team goals and resulted in significant, measurable impact toward reaching the council’s overall goals.

court of awards checklist

Adjustments can be made to this schedule to accommodate larger or smaller service units as well as individual troops.

3-6 Months before ceremony

- Decide who will be invited and if multiple events are needed.
- Set Your Budget – some Service Units cover the expenses of their Court of Awards Ceremony, others divide expenses by troop
- Contact nearby troops/Service Units that might partner for joint Court of Awards if group size is small
- Choose date(s) and confirm with troops
- Reserve venue
 - If an outside location is selected, have a rain date or back-up location
 - Ensure that the location of your event is accessible to persons with disabilities. Ask families in advance if any special accommodations need to be made. If you have questions regarding specific adaptations, please contact the council at 800-624-4185 or info@girlscoutshs.org.
- Secure screen and projector for PowerPoint, if needed (may be available from venue)
- Reserve flags, sashes, candle logs from the council
- Locate, create or reserve a bridge from the council
- Design program (if a troop has not signed up to assist with this)
- Go through the flow of the program (where will everyone sit, stand, direction they walk on and off stage, etc.)
- Mail, or deliver, invitations to make sure that recipients get them well enough in advance to make plans to attend

Venue Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

2 weeks before ceremony

- Touch base with troops to confirm attendance
 - Confirm all tasks are being completed
- Rehearse your ceremony so that everyone is comfortable with their part
- Collect RSVPs so you can have an accurate head count
- Develop seating chart and signs for troops so they can sit together
- Make sure there is enough seating and that everything is set up before attendees start to arrive.
- Update ceremony program with troop information and proofread

1-3 Months before ceremony

- Send reminders to troops to invite girls and families
 - Invite girls to make invitations at troop meetings for their families
- Assign tasks to troops and volunteers
 - Conduct flag ceremony _____
 - Decorate bridge _____
 - Put together PowerPoint _____
 - Design and print program _____
 - Coordinate refreshments _____
 - Pass out programs _____

Confirm with venue

Remind troop leaders to purchase awards and other ceremonial items

week of ceremony

- Pick up refreshments
- Run through script
- Test A/V equipment
- Print programs

after ceremony

- Return flags, equipment, etc.
- Evaluate event and make notes for future ceremonies

sample program time line

Time Allotment	Activity	Description	Materials Needed
2 min	Welcome and Introduction	Welcome girls and guests to the ceremonies	Computer Projector PowerPoint slideshow of photos (can be shown at the beginning or end of ceremony) Bridge Podium / Microphone Ceremony programs Script
5 min	Flag Ceremony	Conduct opening flag ceremony	Flags Flag stands Sashes Flag ceremony commands
5 - 10 min	Girl Scout Daisies	Award membership stars/earned awards, bridging 1 st graders to Girl Scout Brownies	Script Each troop provides awards for girls in their troop and other ceremonial items
5 - 10 min	Girl Scout Brownies	Award membership stars/earned awards, bridging 3rd graders to Girl Scout Juniors	Script Each troop provides awards for girls in their troop and other ceremonial items
5 - 10 min	Girl Scout Juniors	Award membership stars/earned awards, bridging 5 th graders to Girl Scout Cadettes and introduce the Bronze Award recipients	Script Each troop provides awards for girls in their troop and other ceremonial items
5 - 10 min	Girl Scout Cadettes	Award membership star/earned awards, bridging 8 th graders to Girl Scout Seniors and introduce the Silver Award recipients	Script Each troop provides awards for girls in their troop and other ceremonial items

Time Allotment	Activity	Description	Materials Needed
5 - 10 min	Girl Scout Seniors	Award membership star/earned awards, bridging 10 th graders to Girl Scout Ambassadors and introduce the Gold Award recipients	Script Each troop provides awards for girls in their troop and other ceremonial items
10 - 20 min	Girl Scout Ambassadors	Award membership star/earned awards, bridging to Adult Girl Scouts and lifetime Membership, if being awarded by the Service Unit or Troop, Graduating Seniors	Script Each troop provides awards for girls in their troop and other ceremonial items
10 - 15 min	Adult Recognition	Years of Service Awards, Service Unit Team Awards, Troop Leader and Adult Recognition	Script Service unit provides awards and recognition items *If any volunteers are receiving a council-level award, these will be provided and presented by a council representative
10 - 20 min	Council Presentation	A council representative will present council-level awards for Product Sales, Gold Award, Council Scholarships, Adult Awards, Service Unit Awards and make a summer camp presentation	All awards at this level will be provided by the council.
2 min	Closing Remarks	Thank you	Script PowerPoint slideshow of photos (if not done at beginning of ceremony)
5 min	Closing Flag Ceremony	Conduct a closing flag ceremony	Flags Flag stands Sashes
Based on activities selected	Rededication (optional)	<u>Rededication ideas</u> Recite the Girl Scout Promise and Law Sing "Make New Friends" Candle lighting (flashlights/glow sticks can be used) Read a poem (See troop presentation ideas for details)	Troops provide their own materials for their part of the ceremony. Ex. Candles, words for poem or song, awards or recognitions.
Based on activities selected	Early Bird Registration (optional)	This encourages parents to recommit to Girl Scouts and gives them the opportunity to re-register.	Forms Patches
	Refreshments (optional)		Refreshment items Hostesses