

## **Girl Scouts Traditions, Ceremonies, and Games**

Throughout the long history of Girl Scouts certain traditions remain meaningful and are still practiced today.

### **Important Dates:**

- February 22: **World Thinking Day** (the birthday of both Lord Baden-Powell and Lady Olave Baden-Powell, the originators of Boy Scouts and the Scouting Movement worldwide).
- March 12: **The birthday of Girl Scouting in the USA.** The first troop meeting was held in Savannah, Georgia, on this date in 1912.
- Third week in April: **Volunteer Appreciation Week** centers on the long-standing National Girl Scout Leaders' Day (April 22), but expands the definition of volunteers beyond troop leaders, to include all the volunteers who work in so many ways on behalf of girls in Girl Scouting.
- October 31: **Founder's Day** (Juliette Gordon Low's birthday).

### **Girl Scout Slogan and Motto**

The Girl Scout slogan is **"Do a good turn daily."** The Girl Scout motto is **"Be prepared."**

### **Girl Scout Sign**

The idea of the sign came from the days of chivalry, when armed knights greeted friendly knights by raising the right hand, palm open, as a sign of friendship. To give the sign yourself, raise the three middle fingers of the right hand palm forward and shoulder high. The three extended fingers represent the three parts of the Girl Scout Promise.

### **Girl Scout Handshake**

The handshake is a more formal way of greeting other Girl Scouts and is also an appropriate way to receive an award. To do the handshake, shake left hands and give the Girl Scout Sign with your right hand.

### **Quiet Sign**

The quiet sign can be extremely useful to you as a volunteer, so teach this to girls during your first meeting! The sign is made by raising your right hand high with an open palm. As girls in the group see the sign, they stop talking and also raise their hands. Once everyone is silent, the meeting can begin.

### **Time-Honored Ceremonies**

Ceremonies play an important part in Girl Scouts and are used not only to celebrate accomplishments, experience time-honored traditions, and reinforce the values of the Promise and Law, but also to encourage girls to take a short pause in their busy lives and connect with their sister Girl Scouts in fun and meaningful ways.

- Opening ceremonies begin troop meetings or other group meetings.
- Closing ceremonies finalize the meeting, with expectations for the next. A closing ceremony may be as simple as a hand squeeze while standing in a “friendship circle”.
- Flag ceremonies can be part of any Girl Scout activity, to honor the American flag.
- Girl Scouts’ Own is a girl-led program that allows girls to explore their feelings and beliefs around a topic, such as the importance of friendship or the personal meaning they get from Girl Scout Promise and Law, using favorite songs, poetry, or other methods of expression. It is never a religious ceremony.
- Investiture welcomes new members, girls or adults, into the Girl Scout family for the first time. Girls receive the appropriate level Girl Scout pin at this time.
- Rededication ceremonies are opportunities for girls and adults to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- Court of Awards is a ceremony to recognize girls who have accomplished something special during the Girl Scout year.
- Bridging ceremonies mark a girl’s move from one level of Girl Scouting to another, such as from Junior to Cadette.

*For more about ceremonies, visit [www.girlscouts.org/program/gs\\_central/ceremonies](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/ceremonies)*

### **Tips for Games**

Games can be used many different ways in Girl Scouting—breaking the ice, developing teamwork, learning or reinforcing skills, building stamina, or just blowing off steam after sitting for too long. Here are some tips for game leaders:

- Be sure the games you select are right for the age, experience, and physical condition of the girls.
- Start with familiar games that are quickly learned, and then move on to more complex games.
- Avoid games that offend other people's beliefs or customs. Also avoid games that waste food or other resources.

- Provide opportunities for girls to participate in a variety of games, such as get-acquainted games, nature games, action games, international games, relay games, singing games, and wide games (games where groups complete activities as they rotate between stations).
- Use Girl Scout resource books for additional ideas on creating, teaching and organizing games.