



Ceremonies in Scouting

Ceremonies are used in order to inspire the young person with the high ideals of Scouting and make him/her realize the serious aspects of Scouting. Scout ceremonies should be dignified, simple and short.

Ceremonies serve Scouting in a variety of ways. A simple or elaborate ceremony can:

- communicate something significant is taking place!
- emphasize an event or accomplishment!
- entertain!
- provide inspiration!

Ceremonies that are well-planned and well-presented are colorful, dramatic, and will add meaning and enhance the experience while leave a lasting impression. These rituals briefly focus the attention of the Scouts to the basic ideals of the Patrol, the Troop, and the Scouting Movement.

We all feel uplifted when we experience an impressive ceremony. Through the years, creative ceremonies have perpetuated Scouting's unique fascination, attraction, and timeless mystique.

In Scouting, ceremonies are held to:

1. Open and close formal meetings and activities
2. Induct/invest new members
3. Appoint youth and adult leaders
4. Present recognition and awards
5. Step up from one section to the next



A Scouting ceremony is a presentation done in such a way that it adds meaning and impact to whatever is taking place.

During a troop/pack meeting, ceremonies are employed to get things underway, celebrate accomplishments, recognize individuals for advancing or assuming new leadership roles, acknowledging new or existing troop/pack members, and closing out the meeting.

1. Investiture Ceremony

This is one of the most important ceremonies in Scouting. It marks the formal acceptance of the young person into Scouting. It gives him/her the thrill of belonging to a group and makes him/her feel ready to face new responsibilities.

The investiture is the beginning of a special time in a young person's life. Every Scout is unique, but they find common ground in their shared Scout values and make a promise to stick by them. Making a promise when a young person or persons join the troop/pack is a way of celebrating these values.

The process usually takes place right after all the prerequisites have been completed and it is determined a new young person or persons are serious about joining the troop/pack. Usually, the investiture ceremony happens in a memorable place that means a lot to the group.

As soon as a young person completes the pre-requisites, he/she must be invested immediately to start on the progressive advancement path.



A special ceremony can be scheduled, during the troop/pack meeting or as part of a special gathering or it could happen around the campfire, or it could happen on a boat sailing on the sea. Regardless, it is a big celebration for all involved.

The setting of an investiture ceremony should reflect the importance of the commitment yet be familiar so that it feels safe. The ideal setting is at a nighttime campfire/friendship circle or an out-of-doors event or even suitable indoor locations that are special. The place where regular Scout meetings take place is the last choice. Wherever the ceremony is held, efforts can be made through the use of things such as candles or lights to make the setting special.

If it is held during the troop/pack meeting, a special ceremony can be scheduled, during the meeting or as part of a special gathering. At the end of these ceremonies, it is customary to present the new Scout with any of the following items or combination thereof: A group scarf, unit and group badge, their patrol badge, etc.

The ceremony should be dignified, but not solemn. The Scout Leader's expression should be welcoming and friendly yet filled with a sense of importance and excitement.

Ideally, the new members should be invested one at a time so that all the attention is focused on the candidate's individual commitment. It is their individual commitment, hence, each Scout says their promise on their own as best they can, NOT repeating it after a leader.

If, for some unavoidable reason, several Scouts have to make their promises in a single ceremony, then, ideally, there should be no more than two or three taking the Promise together.



There is no rule as to what it must be, but troops might want to consider taking measures to ensure their opening ceremonies do not fall prey to becoming repetitions of the same words and actions week after week. There are ways to vary what is presented and breathe new life into this important segment of the meeting. Besides adding meaning, doing this will spark interest.

If the Patrol Leaders' Council so decides, for each troop meeting a different patrol can come up with, practice, and present an impressive opening ceremony to represent the troop and do themselves proud.

2.2. Closing ceremony

Scheduling a meaningful ceremony as a closing for the troop meeting serves to comfortably round out what has preceded. It also contributes to a consistent meeting structure. As reflected in the Troop Meeting Planning Form, the meeting should formally end with some form of closing.

There is no rule as to what it must be, and troops have a lot of leeway as to what they present and how they present it.

The PLC can assign a patrol to present a specially prepared closing, or the troop might adopt one they really like, and use it every week, following a unique Scout Leader's Minute.

3. Recognition and Awarding Ceremony

When a Scout completes the required advancement requirement, immediate recognition is very important. Therefore, a Scout should receive their new badge of rank as soon as possible after their achievement has been certified. It could be a Court of Honor or a simple ceremony at the conclusion of a troop meeting or during a campout is ideal, with the senior patrol leader or even the Scout Leader making the award presentation.



Court of Honor – In addition to recognition ceremonies during troop meetings, a troop can hold a court of honor. This is the ceremony where a Scout who has rendered exemplary service, has performed honorably, or has achieved the advancement requirements is given due recognition.

Everyone who has earned any badge of rank or merit badge is called forward and recognized. If a Scout has not yet been presented their badge, they can receive it during this ceremony. If they have already been given their badge during a previous troop meeting, they are also called up and recognized during this same ceremony.

This is a formal recognition with families, friends, and the public in attendance.

4. Appointment Ceremony

An appointment ceremony acknowledges the importance of the troop's elected leaders. When a Scout is given a position of responsibility in the Patrol Leaders Council, it must be recognized and celebrated. This responsibility is a significant step in practicing leadership, and a formal appointment ceremony helps communicate to the Scout and their troop how special this opportunity is. **As with any ceremony, each troop can personalize their presentations in any way they choose.**

5. Going up Ceremony

The last of the ceremonies relating to personal development is the step up to the next section, which happens when the cubs have completed their time in the pack.

This might be because they have reached the end of the path of personal objectives or because their growth pattern in all the areas is such that it would be better for them to continue their scout activity in the older group. This will be determined by the child and the leaders together.



The most commonly used symbol for this is crossing an obstacle or completing a course, representing passage from one situation to another, with the pack at the end where the cub starts off and the unit from the next section at the other end.

These ceremonies as that of the Troop and the Patrol meetings are very short and simple, while campfire ceremonies may be a little longer and more elaborate.

Many Scout/Cub Leaders have encountered the problem looking for “How to” scripts. They are unable to conduct ceremonies due to the absence of any prepared manuscript. There are no fixed and permanent procedures, so there is no need for such a document. Be creative. Help the young people to create ceremonies that are relevant, purposeful, and impactful for them.

Short easy to memorize lines mixed with action put movement in a ceremony and make it more impressive. If the participants, for instance, continually refer to a script, the ceremony goes slower and seems less natural than if he/she speaks smoothly from memory. Avoid high sounding words. It may have a grand sound, but it will not have a clear meaning to the boys/girls in your troop/pack.

Keep your ceremonies as short as possible. A long one may take more time in rehearsals than the members care to spend on it. Make it fast moving with a punch at the end where it will count most.

Since, ceremonies must inspire and get quick emotional reactions, the symbolism of all spoken parts, actions, and props must be clear and, therefore, simple.



Candidate: “Yes. It means that I can be trusted to be truthful and honest”. OR “yes, I know and understand the Scout Promise”. (Or any other words to that effect).

The Promise is a commitment “to live by the Scout Law”. Hence,

Scout Leader: “Do you know the Scout Law”?

Candidate: Yes.

Scout Leader: “Can I trust you to do your best to live up to the Scout Promise”?

From this point, the candidate makes the Scout Sign and makes the Scout Promise.

(When the candidate makes the Scout sign while making the Promise, the entire troop makes the Scout Sign.)

As, making the Promise is the Scout’s individual commitment, **it is best that each Scout says their promise on their own and not repeat it after a leader.**

After the candidate makes his/her promise, the Scout Leader says a few welcoming words.

Scout Leader: I trust you, on your honor, to keep this promise. You are now one of the great world brotherhood of Scouts.

Note: The above scripts/questions can be read/asked in Dhivehi or English. The Scout and the Leader decides what language they wish to speak at the ceremony. The most important thing is that both the Leader and the members of the troop to understand what they are saying.

The new Scout salutes the Scout Leaders and turns to face the troop and salutes the troop. The troop salutes. The new Scout and his/her patrol leader go back to their patrol.

An Appointment Ceremony

The troop stands in horseshoe formation. The Scout Leader stands at the opening of the horseshoe holding a troop flag on a pole. *(This does in no way mean that a horseshoe formation is a must. It can be a half circle or any other formation to that matter.)*

The Scout Leader speaks a few words about the importance of good patrol leadership and speaks a few words of encouragement.



Scout Leader: “You have been selected to serve as a Patrol Leader because of your work in the troop. I know as a Patrol Leader you will lead and conduct patrol meetings so that your Scouts will benefit from your Scouting experience (or any other words to that effect).

The Scout leader then announces the appointment of the new patrol leader of the (name) Patrol.

The new patrol leader comes forward. He places his left hand on the pole of the troop flag, above that of the Scout Leader, salutes, and makes the patrol leader’s pledge: “I promise to do my best to be worthy of my office as patrol leader, for the sake of my fellow Scouts, my patrol, my troop, and the world brotherhood of Scouting.”

(It would be best to have the Patrol Leader badge fixed on the uniform, before the ceremony).

The troop gives a cheer for the new Patrol Leader, who steps back to his patrol where he/she is congratulated by his/her fellow Scouts.

A meeting Opening Ceremony

In the meeting Opening Ceremony, the troop normally stands in the horseshoe formation with the Senior Patrol Leader or Patrol Leader in charge of the ceremony at the opening of the horseshoe.

Some ways to open meetings

- **Recitation of selected verses from the Quran and the meaning.**
- **Opening with the Scout Promise and Law**
 - The Scouts make the Scout Sign when reciting the Promise and Law.
- **Opening with a Scout Law.**
 - Each ceremony can be devoted to a Scout Law
- **Hoisting/opening the flag**
 - The Scouts salute the flag
- **Patriotic opening**
 - Sing the National Anthem or a patriotic song.