

FLAG CEREMONIES - ETIQUETTE

Overview

A flag ceremony honors the American flag as the symbol of our country and all the hopes, dreams, and people it represents. If your group includes girls from other countries, invite them to honor their flags too, and together conduct an international flag ceremony. Flag ceremonies may be used for:

- Opening or closing meetings
- Opening or closing special events (service unit events, over campout, etc.)
- Honoring a special occasion or special person
- Retiring a worn flag

Flag ceremonies may take place in meeting rooms, outdoor settings, large auditoriums, onstage, or even on horseback. The American flag is carried by a color guard for protection during a flag ceremony. All flag ceremonies share one thing—respect for the flag.



Pearl of Wisdom

- Girl Scout founder Juliette Gordon Low, herself a famous patriot and advocate for displaying and honoring our nation's flag, developed a stars-and-stripes design for Girl Scout uniforms, though it was never implemented.
- No one knows for sure who designed the first stars and stripes, or even who made it. Many historians credit New Jersey Congressman Francis Hopkinson with the design—and the story of George Washington asking a Philadelphia upholsterer by the name of Betsy Ross to create a flag may be more legend than fact.



Activity 1: Flag Trivia

Instructions:

Read questions out loud and have participants call out answers. To make it more fun, toss out candy to those who get the answers correct.

How many stripes are on the American flag?	13
When grouped with other flags, where should the American Flag be placed?	At the center and highest point of the group
When the American Flag is posted in a stand, it is always posted before other flags? True or False	False. It is posted last and taken out first during the closing ceremony to make sure it is always at the highest point.
When the American Flag is displayed in a public auditorium, what side of the speaker is it placed on?	To the speaker's right as they face the audience. Any other flag should be placed on the left of the speaker.
The flag should be lowered and brought in at dusk if not illuminated. True or False?	True
At what pace should the flag be raised and lowered?	Quickly raised and slowly lowered
When a flag is old and tattered and needing replacement, what should be done with it?	The flag should be retired by burning or burying in a dignified manner.
Bonus: How many American Flags have been placed on the moon?	6

Activity 2: Folding Flag

Instructions:

Using the diagram below practice folding the flag with group.

Flag Folding Procedure:

1. Fold the lower half of the stripe section lengthwise over the field of stars, holding the bottom and top edges securely.
2. Fold the flag again lengthwise, now with the blue field on the outside.
3. Starting with the stripes end fold in a triangular fold.
4. Continue until flag is completely folded.
5. Tuck in end.
6. When the flag is completely folded, only a triangular blue field of stars should be visible.

Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



Step 4



Step 5



Step 6



Step 7



Activity 3: Flag Ceremony

Instructions:

Invite girls from an older troop to come in and demonstrate a flag ceremony using the following script.

Caller: *Girl Scouts, Attention.*

- Girl Scouts stand quietly and remove all headwear; this is a signal the ceremony is about to start.

Caller: *Color guard, Attention.*

- If the color guard is standing “at ease,” it comes to “attention.”

Caller: *Color guard, Advance.*

- Color guard carries the flag(s) towards flagpole or stand.

Caller: *Color guard, post the colors.*

- Color guard places the flag in its stand, or unfolds and hoists the flags up the poles in the appropriate order (The American flag always comes first, and the state flag if you have it is usually next, with any flags after that going in order of importance.)

Caller: *Color guard, salute the colors.*

- Color guard salutes the flag and then returns to “attention.”

Caller: *Girl Scouts, honor your colors.*

- Girl Scouts salute the flag.

Caller: *We will now say the Pledge of Allegiance.*

- If you have a color guard, they should stand at attention and not participate, keeping their full attention on the flag.
- Pledge of Allegiance:
 - I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

Caller: *We will now say the Girl Scout Promise.*

- Similarly, the color guard, if you have one, should stay focused on the flag.

Caller: *Color guard dismissed.*

- Color guard retreats to the back of the room but stays standing at attention.

Caller: *Girl Scouts dismissed.*

Now have participants practice the closing ceremony below. Select a caller, flag bearer and a color guard for each flag.

Closing Ceremony:

Caller: *Girl Scouts, Attention.*

- Girl Scouts stand quietly and remove all headwear; this is a signal the ceremony is about to start.

Caller: *Color guard, Attention.*

- If the color guard is standing “at ease,” it comes to “attention.”

Caller: *Color guard, Advance.*

- Color guard approaches the posted flags.

Caller: *Please join me in signing Taps*

- Color guard remains at attention and does not take place in any singing or speaking.
- Taps:
 - A. Day is done, gone the sun,
 - B. From the lake, from the hills, from the sky;
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh

Caller: *Color guard honor your colors.*

- Color guard salutes the flag and returns to attention.

Caller: *Color guard, retire the colors.*

- Flag is slowly lowered and folded; American flag first, and then in reverse order that they went up.

Caller: *Color guard, dismissed.*

- Color guard carries the flag to an appropriate place at the back of the room.

Caller: *Girl Scouts dismissed.*



S'more Info

- blog.girlscouts.org> Search: Raise it. Salute it. Love it. Let's celebrate Flag Day!
- girlscouts.org> About> Traditions> Ceremonies
- gswo.org> Volunteers> Forms and Documents> Search: Flag Ceremony Outline

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