

CEREMONIES

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CEREMONIES

Immediate recognition is a powerful incentive of the BSA's advancement program. A Scout should receive his new badge of rank as soon as possible after his achievement has been certified by a board of review. A simple ceremony at the conclusion of a troop meeting or during a campout is ideal, with the Scoutmaster making the award presentation.

In addition, a troop should hold a court of honor every three months—a formal recognition with families, friends, and the public invited. All Scouts who have moved up a rank, except the Eagle Scout rank, or who have earned merit badges since the last court of honor should be recognized.

A special Eagle Scout court of honor should be held after an Eagle Scout board of review has certified that a Scout has completed all the requirements for that rank. The Scout and his family should be involved in the planning of the ceremony. It is the responsibility of the troop committee chairperson or the advancement committee chairperson to plan the ceremony and oversee the program, along with other members of the troop committee. See chapter 10 in the *Scoutmaster Handbook* for more details on planning a court of honor.

BOY SCOUT INVESTITURE CEREMONIES

INVESTITURE CEREMONY 1

The notable thing about this investiture is its simplicity. There are many more elaborate, more impressive ceremonies, but they can be unsuccessful. Many fail because a Scout forgets his lines or the staging is too complicated. Note how this ceremony is kept simple and natural, yet impressive from beginning to end.

(The troop is lined up along two sides of the room, troop officers are at the front of the room, parents are seated. The patrol leader accompanies the candidate to the shadow room. Only one candle is burning.)

Patrol leader (replying to the Scoutmaster's challenge): I bring candidate _____ (name), who has completed his Scout work and is ready to be received into the fellowship of our troop. *(The two walk together across the room and stop in front of a table holding a rough log candelabra. The patrol leader steps back a pace and the candidate stands there, his eyes gradually adjusting to the dim light, aware that there are Scouts on either side and his parents and others in the darkness behind him. But his eyes are on the Scoutmaster and troop leaders who face him across the burning candle's glow.)*

Patrol leader *(steps from his position behind the table, picks up the lighted candle, and speaks directly to the candidate):* This candle represents the spirit of Scouting. As we welcome you into the fellowship of Troop _____ (No.), we want you to stop and think about what it means to be a Boy Scout.

Sure, it's a lot of fun, but more than that it's getting along with other people. It's doing your part, helping others all the time, learning to lead, too. It's living up to the Scout Oath and Law—and believe me, that's a man's job! It's a Good Turn daily and the motto Be Prepared. That's what the spirit of Scouting means to us in Troop _____ (No.). Now, listen to the Scout Law. *(The patrol leader hands the burning candle to a Scout, who steps up to the table.)*

Boy Scout *(lights the first candle on the log and turns toward the candidate):* _____ (Name), a Scout is trustworthy. That means everybody you live and work with can always trust your word. *(The Scout hands the spirit of Scouting candle to the Scout next to him, and that boy lights the second candle, turns toward the candidate, and speaks simply but impressively about the meaning of loyalty. So it continues, through the 12 points of the Scout Law. Each Scout says only one or two sincere, forceful sentences. There should be none of the groping for words that so often spoils ceremonies. The 12th Scout returns the candle to the senior patrol leader.)*

Patrol leader: _____ (Name), you have heard the Scout Law. Will you do your best to live up to it?

Candidate *(his face glowing in the light of 12 burning candles):* I will.

Patrol leader: You will now be given the Scout Oath by our Scoutmaster, _____ (name). Please raise your right hand in the Scout sign.

Scoutmaster: Repeat each part of the Scout Oath with me, _____ (name), because it's your oath, your promise to live the life of a Scout. On my honor . . . *(The candidate joins in. As they recite the Oath, the Scoutmaster lights the three candles that represent the three parts.)*

(The candidate is asked to face the audience. The Scoutmaster steps forward, pins the badge on the candidate's shirt, and, in a few words, tells what it means to be a member of the Boy Scouts of America. The assistant Scoutmaster then puts a new troop neckerchief around the candidate's neck and says a word about what is expected of him as a member of Troop _____ (No.)—the best troop in town!

That is the cue for the patrol leader to pin a patrol medallion on the new Boy Scout's right sleeve and to tell him that the _____ (name) _____ Patrol—the best patrol in Troop _____ (No.) _____—is glad to have him as a member. Then the patrol leader takes the new Boy Scout by the arm to where the other Scouts are standing in line. They shake hands and everything is informal.)

Nothing is memorized. A little equipment, a properly set stage, and a few Scouts and leaders speaking from the heart are all that's needed to make this an evening the new Boy Scout will remember for a long, long time.

INVESTITURE CEREMONY 2

(The troop is assembled in a horseshoe formation with the Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmaster in the opening. The candidate and his patrol leader stand just inside the formation, opposite the Scoutmaster. The assistant Scoutmaster holds the staff and hat of the candidate. When ordered to come forward by the Scoutmaster, the patrol leader brings the candidate to the center.)

Scoutmaster: Do you know what your honor is?

Candidate: Yes. It means that I can be trusted to be truthful and honest *(or words to that effect)*.

Scoutmaster: Do you know the Scout Law?

Candidate: Yes.

Scoutmaster: Can I trust you, on your honor, to do your best to live up to the Scout Promise? *(The candidate makes the Scout sign, and so does the entire troop while he gives the Scout Promise.)*

I trust you, on your honor, to keep this promise. You are now one of the great world brotherhood of Scouts. *(The assistant Scoutmaster places the hat on the new Scout's head and gives him his staff. With his left hand, the Scoutmaster shakes the candidate's left hand. The new Boy Scout about-faces and salutes the troop. The troop salutes.)* March quickly to your patrol. *(The troop shoulders staves, and the new Boy Scout and his patrol leader march back to their patrol.)*

INSTALLATION CEREMONIES

Ceremonies of this nature have a variety of applications. Such ceremonies add a touch of formality or "officialness" to the occasion. They add importance to the offices and elements of troops.

It is important to tailor the ceremony to the specific event.

PATROL LEADER INSTALLATION 1

The troop forms a circle of its patrols. The Scoutmaster speaks a few words about the importance of good patrol leadership and announces the appointment of the new patrol leader of the _____ (name) _____ Patrol.

The new patrol leader is called forward. He places his left hand on the pole of the troop flag, above that of the Scoutmaster, salutes, and gives the patrol leader's promise: "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."

The Scoutmaster pins the patrol leader's badge on the boy's left sleeve and presents him with a copy of the *Patrol Leader Handbook*. The youngest member of the patrol steps forward and gives him the patrol flag.

The troop gives a cheer for the new patrol leader, who steps back to his patrol where he is congratulated by his fellow Scouts.

PATROL LEADER INSTALLATION 2

Scoutmaster: You have been selected to serve as a patrol leader because of your work in the troop. You have been trained by the officers of the troop to help you conduct patrol meetings so that your Scouts will benefit from your Scouting experience. Your work has been done well. I know this troop will serve its members better because you are one of the patrol leaders. You are not paid for this service, but the satisfaction of seeing Scouts grow into strong, upright men will be far greater than any other reward could be. You will now recite the patrol leader's promise.

Patrol leader: 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.

Scoutmaster: It is now my pleasant duty to present you with your badge of office and your patrol flag. These signify that you are a leader of Scouts in this troop. The success of the patrol is now in your hands. I know that I can depend on you to do your part.

OPENING CEREMONIES

SCOUT LAW OPENINGS

1. The Scout Law can be used as 12 separate ceremonies. One ceremony could be devoted to the first point, with a reading of the explanation, as in the following example:

Troop: A Scout is trustworthy.

Leader: A Scout tells the truth. He keeps his promises. . . .

Eleven meetings later, the subject of the ceremony would be “A Scout is reverent.”

2. The Scout Law is recited by all new Scouts.
3. The newest Scout and the oldest Scout lead the troop in reciting the Scout Law.
4. One point of the Scout Law is assigned to each of 12 boys. Each boy, in turn, takes a step forward, salutes, recites his point of the Law, and steps back in line.

SCOUT OATH OPENINGS

1. Call the troop to attention. All Scouts give the Scout sign and recite together the Scout Oath and Law.
2. After saying the Scout Oath, read the points of the Scout Law with the Scouts repeating each point, as below:

Scoutmaster: A Scout is trustworthy.

Scouts: A Scout is trustworthy.

Continue through all 12 points of the Scout Law.

UNITED STATES FLAG OPENINGS

1. The troop is in single-rank formation. The flag is carried to the front; the patrol leader of the honor guard patrol leads the troop in the 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.”
2. The troop is formed by patrols in two lines facing each other. The flag is marched up the aisle between the lines, with the Scouts saluting. The flag bearers halt at the head of the lines and march about, whereupon the troop gives the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. The troop is in a horseshoe formation with the flag in the center. Each Scout in turn steps forward one step, salutes, and steps back—or all salute together.
4. The troop is in single-rank formation. Bring the Scouts to attention and turn out all lights except a single spot or flashlight focused on the flag. A Scout from the color guard patrol recites (doesn’t sing) the first verse of “The Star-Spangled Banner.” The troop then sings the verse and the lights are turned on.

5. The troop, in line, faces a wall where a small pulley or ring with a flag line is fastened. The troop comes to attention. The flag is slowly hoisted while the bugler plays “America,” “God Bless America,” or “America the Beautiful.”
6. In your words, explain the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance. Then call the troop to attention and give the Pledge of Allegiance.
7. Call the troop to attention. Say, “Hand salute!” and give the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the Scout sign and the Scout Oath. Pause after each part and, in your own words, give the meaning of it.
8. Call the troop to attention. Salute the flag. Recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

TROOP FLAG OPENINGS

1. Salute the troop flag. Give the troop yell or sing the special troop song.
2. The Scouts salute the troop flag and repeat after the senior patrol leader the troop’s special pledge, such as: “As a member of Troop _____ (*No.*), I pledge that I shall always strive to be a good member of my patrol. I will take part in all troop activities, advance in Scoutcraft, and act as a Scout at all times.”
3. Form the patrols as spokes of a wheel, with the troop flag in the center. The patrol leaders hold onto the flagpole with the left hand. Behind them, their Scouts place their hands on the shoulder of the boy in front of them. The troop sings an appropriate Scout song, such as “Hail, Hail Scouting Spirit” or “Trail the Eagle.”

PATRIOTIC OPENINGS

There are many different kinds of patriotic ceremonies. A single patriotic ceremony, no matter how good, is bound to lose some of its meaning after endless repetition, so be sure to use a variety.

1. **Scout 1** (*lighting a red candle*): The red of my flag is the lifeblood of brave men ready to die or worthily live for this, our country.

Scout 2 (*lighting a white candle*): The white of my flag is for purity; cleanliness of purpose, thought, word, and deed.

Scout 3 (*lighting a blue candle*): The blue of my flag is for truth and justice, like the eternal blue of the star-filled heavens.

Scout 4 (*while saluting with the other three Scouts*): My flag—the flag of America, home of liberty, land of opportunity, where people of all races and creeds live in peace and friendship together.

2. The troop salutes the flag, gives the Pledge of Allegiance, then sings a verse of any of several patriotic songs.
3. A narrator reads from the writings of authors and poets who have helped us to understand what it means to love our country.

SPECIAL OPENING CEREMONY

(The equipment includes a small table covered with a dark cloth, a simple candelabra with 12 candles to represent the 12 points of the Scout Law, three larger candles to represent the three parts of the Scout Oath, and a small one representing the spirit of Scouting. Twelve Scouts are assigned to take part. They line up, six on either side of the candelabra, facing the audience, odd numbers on the right, even numbers on the left. The senior patrol leader stands directly behind the table. When all is ready, the lights are turned out.)

Senior patrol leader (*lights the small candle representing the spirit of Scouting*): I now light this candle which represents the spirit of Scouting. On my honor I will do my best. . . . (*He hands the spirit of Scouting candle to the Scout designated to give the first point of the Scout Law.*)

First Scout (*lights the first candle on the right-hand side, makes the Scout sign, and recites the first point of the Scout Law*): A Scout is trustworthy. (*The first Scout steps back and hands the candle to the second Scout, who recites the second point. This continues until all 12 points have been recited. The senior patrol leader calls the entire troop to attention and, with the spirit of Scouting candle, lights the three candles representing the three parts of the Scout Oath, and returns the spirit of Scouting candle to its place in the candelabra.*)

Troop (*reciting in unison each promise of the Scout Oath as the candles are lit*): On my honor . . .

This ceremony, though simple, is extremely effective when done well.

Variation: As each main point of the Scout Law is given, an offstage voice (a good reader) reads the explanatory part of that point in full. He or she will need a flashlight, as this ceremony is given in darkness.

CLOSING CEREMONIES

1. Close the meeting with the lights dimmed and the troop singing “Taps,” unaccompanied or led by a muffled bugle (or two bugles, one giving the call, the other the echo effect). Each boy slowly raises his outstretched hands in front of him during the first two lines (“ . . . from the sky . . .”), then lowers them as the song is being sung.
2. The troop is in formation. Lead the Scout benediction: “Now may the great Scoutmaster . . .” (all make a gesture toward the heavens) “. . . of all Scouts . . .” (*all make a sweeping motion from right to left at shoulder height*) “. . . be with us until we meet again.” (*All bring their right hands to their hearts, and bow their heads.*)
3. The troop forms a circle. Have each boy make the Scout sign and with his left hand grasp the lifted right wrist of his neighbor on the left. Then they recite the Scout Law or troop pledge.
4. Finish with the All America Yell (“A-M-E-R-I-C-A, Boy SCOUTS, BOY Scouts, B-S-A!”), followed by a Skyrocket Applause (“Ssss,” the hiss of the rising rocket; the bursting, “Boom!”; the soft exclamation as it spreads, “Ahhh”; and the terrific boy-satisfying yell, “Scout!”).
5. Retire the flag with proper camp ceremony using a bugle. If there is no bugle, whistle “To the Colors” and “Retreat.”
6. Have one round of patrol yells, then the troop yell. The Scoutmaster says, “Good night to you.” The Scouts respond, “Good night to you, sir (ma’am).”
7. The troop forms a brotherhood circle, arms around each other’s shoulders. The song leader leads the troop in the “Scout Vespers” song or a similar good-night song. When the song has ended, the Scouts leave the room in silence.
8. The troop forms a circle. Each Scout crosses his arms in front of him and grasps his neighbors’ hands. They all sing “Auld Lang Syne,” swaying softly in rhythm.
9. The troop is lined up. The Scoutmaster says, “Be prepared.” All Scouts respond in unison, “We are prepared!”
10. All make the Scout sign and recite together the Scout Oath or Promise.

11. All Scouts hum “Taps” while one boy says the Scout Oath or Promise.
12. The bugler plays “Taps” while one Scout says the Scout Oath or Promise, stating each phrase after the bugler plays a phrase from “Taps.”

13. While the Scouts sing “God Bless America” very softly, the appointed leader recites slowly and clearly the Scout Oath, as outlined below. (This could also be used as an opening ceremony.)

Leader: On my honor I will do my best . . .

Scouts (*singing*): God Bless America, land that I love . . .

Leader: To do my duty to God and my country . . .

Scouts (*singing*): Stand beside her and guide her . . .

Leader: And to obey the Scout Law . . .

Scouts (*singing*): Through the night with the light from above . . .

Leader: To help other people at all times . . .

Scouts (*singing*): From the mountains . . .

Leader: To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

Scouts (*singing*): To the prairies, to the oceans white with foam . . .

All: God bless America, my home sweet home.
God bless America, my home sweet home!

14. If a flag ceremony was used in the opening, it is appropriate to retire the flag as a closing ceremony. Scouts could whistle the bugle call, “To the Colors,” as the flag is retired.

COURTS OF HONOR

POINTS TO CONSIDER

1. Conduct courts of honor frequently—once every two to three months. Do not make a Scout wait four months to receive his award.
2. Planning is the key to successful courts of honor. Write out your plan, then have key members rehearse their parts.
3. Refer to and use the checklist on pages 100–101.

4. Be prepared—have an agenda or program for the boys and the adults who will be presenting the award. Rehearse as needed, in the actual setting. If scripts are required, make sure they are given out well in advance of the court.

SAMPLE AGENDA

The agenda provided here should be used as a guide. Variety is one key to success for courts of honor. Develop your own ideas, and don’t forget to get the boys’ opinions and consult the parents as well.

- The Scouts enter carrying the troop and patrol flags.
- The court of honor members enter.
- The color guard enters carrying the colors. The Scouts and audience members stand at attention.
- The parents and audience members join the Scouts in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.
- An appropriate opening ceremony is presented.
- The chairperson convenes the court of honor.
- The court chairperson calls on members of the court to make awards presentations.
- Special program features are presented—Scout demonstrations, a brief address, or singing.
- Retire the colors.
- Close. The court of honor may close with the troop’s regular closing ceremony.

TENDERFOOT RANK CEREMONY

The chairperson asks the senior patrol leader to call the names of the new Tenderfoot Scouts. As he calls the names, two Scouts place a large Tenderfoot badge cut-out on the wall. This should be placed so that the spotlight, when trained on the Scout receiving the award, will cast his shadow on the badge.

The Scouts who have been called line up at one side of the room or stage. The member of the court of honor who is presenting the Tenderfoot Scout badges steps forward and makes a few appropriate remarks about this rank. The Scoutmaster calls the name of the first Scout to be recognized. He steps forward onto the box or raised platform. The house lights go out and the spotlight comes on. This is a great moment for this Scout. Every eye is on him as he faces the audience.

The senior patrol leader or scribe helps the Scoutmaster who makes the presentations by having the badges handy. The Scoutmaster pins the Tenderfoot badge on the left pocket and gives the Scout handshake with the left hand. The Scout salutes, the Scoutmaster

returns the salute, and the Scout steps down and proceeds to the opposite side of the room or stage, where he stands at attention until all awards for this rank have been made. The house lights go on. The audience then gives a rousing round of applause.

Mothers of these Boy Scouts are now called to the stage, and each Scout presents his mother with the miniature Tenderfoot badge. Everyone applauds as mothers and Scouts return to their seats. This same procedure is repeated for other ranks, with the appropriate badge placed on the wall.

SECOND CLASS RANK CEREMONY

Leader: When the Indian boy prepared for manhood, he was required to go through a stern ordeal testing his worthiness and his fitness for a place among the braves of the tribe. If he passed through the ordeal successfully, he appeared before the chief at the council fire to receive the eagle feather of the brave. As the chief placed in his hands the weapons of his rank, he pledged the new brave to an oath—he bound the brave in honor never to use his weapons in any way that would bring discredit to his tribe or himself.

Just as the Indian youth went through his ordeal to prove himself, so you have fulfilled your Second Class rank requirements to prove yourself as someone who can care for himself in the outdoors. Just as the Indian youth pledged himself to his tribe, so should you pledge yourself to Scouting and maintain the Scout Oath and Law. In your growth toward becoming a Second Class Scout, do you feel that the Scout Oath and Law have become more meaningful to you personally?

Scout: I do.

Leader: This rank of Second Class represents to you the opportunities for service to others, as the weapons did to the Indian youth. We place no weapons in your hands, but the honor of all Scouting rests as surely on your shoulders. *(The leader presents the Second Class badge and congratulates the Scout and his parents.)*

Scoutmaster *(to the candidates):* Once before, you stood before this court and became Tenderfoot Scouts. Time has passed since then. You have used that time well in pursuing Scout activities and knowledge. You are now qualified to assume the title and duties of Second Class Scout. I know that you will wear this Second Class badge as a shield with honor and distinction. To prove that you know the rules by which this award may be worn honorably, you will recite the Scout Law. Scout sign!

Candidates: A Scout is trustworthy. . . . *(They recite the Scout Law.)*

Scoutmaster: Please face the audience, _____ *(name)* _____. I present you with this badge. May you bring only credit and honor to it and to your troop.

FIRST CLASS RANK CEREMONY

The First Class rank represents a significant step in Scouting. It represents the “complete Scout.” Special attention should be given to the Scout earning the award.

Leader: In the days of chivalry, after a squire had earned the right to carry the sword and shield, it was customary to retire to the privacy of the chapel on the evening before he was to be made a knight. There, surrounded by his weapons, he prayed that he might live worthy of the honor that was his, and that he might never bring disgrace on his knighthood, either in thought or in deed. Just as highly as the knights of old, we who are the Scouts of today value the distinction that is ours. As a First Class Scout, you have earned the right to demonstrate and abide by the code to which a true and mature Scout is forever bound, the Scout Oath and Law. Do you accept this greater responsibility of First Class Scout in the spirit of service of the knights of old?

Scout: I do.

Leader: In qualifying for First Class rank, you have advanced from Second Class to more skillful living in the outdoors for longer periods of time. In this experience, you have become a better camper, able to take care of yourself and others, as did the knights of old. As we present you with your First Class badge, I charge you to continue your development so that you may better serve your fellowmen in the spirit of chivalry. *(The leader presents the First Class badge and congratulates the Scout and his parents.)*

STAR RANK CEREMONY

Star Scout: Scouts _____ *(name)* _____, _____ *(name)* _____, and _____ *(name)* _____, you are no longer First Class Scouts. Whether or not you realize it, by meeting your Star Scout requirements, you have left the group of those who merely receive Scouting. Tonight you will join a smaller and more significant group—those whose duty and privilege it is to give Scouting to others. As you receive your Star Scout badge, it must be with full realization that you accept with that badge the giving of

leadership, guidance, and inspiration to younger Scouts. (*He turns to address the Scouter.*) These Scouts are prepared to take the service pledge with the Scout Oath.

Scouter: Fellow Scouts, you have left behind what may have been the receiving end of Scouting. Before you stretches a worthier, more mature, part of your Scouting experience—the giving part. The merit badge trail holds much for a Scout who is earnest and courageous. If you follow this trail far enough, the highest Scouting goal will be yours. Somewhere along the trail you will find manhood in its finest form. Are you willing to accept the responsibilities as well as the privileges that accompany the Star Scout rank?

Candidates: I am.

Scouter: Then retake the Scout Oath. As you utter the words, let your heart repeat a pledge of service to the Scouts who follow where you lead. Scouts, attention! Scout sign. Recite the Scout Oath.

Candidates: On my honor I will do my best. . . .

Scouter: Two! Your fellow Scouts congratulate you. You will now face our audience. (*The Scouter pins on the badges.*) The star I pin on you will always be a reminder of the star of service that will shine as a guide to lead you onward. (*The Scouter gives the Scout handshake to each.*) Congratulations.

LIFE RANK CEREMONY

Scoutmaster: Scout _____ (*name*), you have traveled far on the trail to Eagle. Before you, two lit candles shed their radiance on the heart-shaped Life Scout badge. I am proud of the effort you have put forth and of your accomplishments in Scouting. (*The Scoutmaster adds any personal details that apply.*) The heart shape of the badge is symbolic of life and courage. For you, now, the Scout Oath and the Scout Law will mean more than ever before. You will ever strive to make them the keynotes of your conduct. The spirit of helpfulness and alertness of mind, and the mastery of those Scout skills that make “Be Prepared” really mean something—these are the inner qualities of the Scout who wears the Life Scout badge.

This miniature badge is for your mother—in recognition of her love, comradeship, encouragement, and faith in you. Take it and pin it on her proudly! (*The Scout pins the badge on his mother’s dress, then turns and faces the audience.*) Mr. _____ (*Name*), will you pin the Life Scout badge on your son’s uniform? (*The badge is pinned.*) Attention! Scout salute! Two! Dismissed!

EAGLE SCOUT COURT OF HONOR

POINTS TO CONSIDER

Presentation of the rank may not be made until the Eagle Scout credentials have been received by the BSA local council.

Many elected officials will send a personal letter to the Eagle Scout, if the request allows them sufficient time. These include the president of the United States, members of Congress, state representatives, governors, mayors, etc. Request such letters using the proper format and address as soon after the board of review as possible. Be sure to provide the Eagle Scout’s full name and the date of his court of honor.

The troop advancement chairperson and/or Scoutmaster should call a meeting of two or three unit committee members, the Eagle Scout’s parents, and his senior patrol leader (provided he is not the Eagle Scout) to plan the complete program. By using the suggestions and outlines in this manual and delegating specific responsibilities to specific individuals, everything should go as planned. To avoid misunderstandings, be sure there is a written plan.

The troop committee should establish a standard of presentation items to be provided to the Eagle Scout at the court. This standard should apply to all Eagle Scouts on a continuing basis. Establish who should pay for certain items—the troop, mothers’ club, Eagle Scout’s parents, etc. Do not set precedents that will be an economic hardship for any family. Items to be considered might include the Eagle Scout ring, neckerchief, or belt buckle, as well as an Eagle-theme cake and refreshments.

Secure early commitments from members of the court and speakers. Send them a friendly reminder or a copy of the program about a week before the court of honor ceremony.

Invitations can be purchased at the local council service center, or a simple but distinctive form can be prepared by the unit or the parents on a photocopier. Whichever method is selected, it should be done soon after the court date is selected for early mailing.

The planner should assist the Eagle Scout’s parents in composing a list of all persons who have helped the boy earn his Eagle Scout rank, including Cubmasters, Scoutmasters, fellow Scouts (past and present), parents’ committees, sponsors, merit badge counselors, teachers, church members and leaders (past and present), community leaders, school pals, and the boy’s relatives. No other event can win parents’ support better than a good Eagle Scout court of honor.

**EAGLE SCOUT COURT OF HONOR
SAMPLE OUTLINE**

Introduction	
Call to order	Troop committee chairperson
Invocation	Minister/priest/rabbi
Welcome	Scoutmaster
Introduction of honored guests	Committee chairperson
Presentation of the colors	Troop color guard
Pledge of Allegiance	Senior patrol leader
Court of honor opening	District/unit commissioner
Scout Law presentation	Two Eagle Scouts from troop

An Eagle Scout court of honor is always newsworthy, and newspapers usually like to have stories about the Eagle Scout recognition ceremony. Relaying news items to the media is important; a slip can damage the total impact of the recognition.

The ceremony should be held in an unusual setting so the event will be memorable for the boy and those attending. Suggested places could be around a campfire, aboard a naval vessel, in a church, a school auditorium, a courtroom or judge’s chambers, or other place of dignity.

Selection of participants depends upon the place, unit preferences, and the type of ceremony. Generally the boy’s parents, chartered organization representative, or Scoutmaster makes the presentation. It is preferable to have at least three people active in the presentation: one to give the charge, one to make the official presentation of the badge and credentials from the national office, and one to pin on the badge. Other Eagle Scouts of the unit or district or the unit senior patrol leader may take active roles in the ceremony or act as ushers, Eagle Scout badge pillow bearers, flag bearers, etc.

Printed programs add a touch of class to an Eagle Scout court of honor. Again, these needn’t be expensive; a duplicated, typed copy will be acceptable. (Eagle Scout program covers are available from the local council service center.)

TRAIL OF THE EAGLE

Review the Eagle Scout candidate’s Scouting history, from induction to the Eagle Scout rank, stressing his growth in the ideals of Scouting. As this is being read, the candidate walks from the back of the room to the front where he is to receive his Eagle Scout badge.

Somewhere along the “trail,” it’s a good idea for the Eagle Scout candidate to rededicate himself by repeating the Scout Oath.

THE EAGLE SCOUT AWARD

Pledge of the Eagle	District executive or other adult who is an Eagle Scout
Presentation of the award	Scoutmaster, parents, etc.
Challenge and charge to the Eagle Scout	Impressive Scouter or other guest speaker holding Eagle Scout rank
The Eagle Scout’s response	Short speech by new Eagle Scout
Court of honor closing	Commissioner
Benediction	Minister/priest/rabbi
Retiring of the colors	Troop color guard
Reception and refreshments	

VOICE OF THE EAGLE CEREMONY

Voice of the Eagle (VOE) ceremonies are popular nationwide. Each unit seems to have its own version or adaptation.

Senior patrol leader: Please stand for the presentation of colors. Advance the colors.

Color guard leader: *(He comes forward and lets the color guard reach its position, then addresses the audience.)* Please join us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Scouts, salute. *(The troop flag is dipped. The color guard leader leads the Pledge of Allegiance.)* Two! Post the colors. Color guard, retreat. *(They return to their seats.)* The audience may be seated. *(The leader returns to his seat.)*

Senior patrol leader: I would like to welcome you to the Troop _____ *(No.)* Eagle Scout court of honor. It is my pleasure to introduce _____ *(name)*, who is chairperson of this court of honor. *(The senior patrol leader returns to his seat.)*

Chairperson: I would like to invite all Eagle Scouts, including adults, to stand at this time. *(Pause.)* Thank you; you may be seated. It is my pleasure to introduce _____ *(name)*, who will lead us in our invocation.

Narrator: *(The VOE narrator remains out of sight, using a microphone or sound system.)* Will Eagle

Scout candidate(s) _____ (*name[s]*), please come forward? This is the voice of the Eagle, the Eagle whose heights you have struggled hard to reach. We remember well when you first came to the base of the cliff, and how you looked up with ambition and determination. Look back for a moment; look down the cliff you have climbed; look at the experiences you have encountered in your ascent. These experiences should not be forgotten. You should profit by making sure adverse experiences do not occur again. Experience is a valuable teacher, if you heed its teachings.

We remember when you took your first step upon the trail that leads upward. With that first step you began to grow physically, mentally, and morally. You started living the Scout Oath and Law.

All the while you were on the trail, we watched you study and we saw you learn by doing. Upon joining, you were only a Scout. (*A Scout steps out and takes his designated place on the stage.*) At that time, you began working hard on your requirements to reach the Tenderfoot rank, the first ledge on the trail to Eagle. Before long, your brother Scouts were calling you a Tenderfoot, and they were right. You were indeed a Tenderfoot Scout. (*A Tenderfoot Scout steps out and takes his place next to the first Scout.*)

Soon you reached the second ledge, and there you were greeted by a large group of Second Class Scouts. (*A Second Class Scout steps out and joins the Scout and Tenderfoot Scout.*)

Some, like you, stopped to catch their breath before continuing along the trail. You began to study more, you worked harder, and almost before you knew it you came to another ledge—the ledge where the First Class Scouts dwell. (*A First Class Scout steps out and takes his place.*)

There you found a tempting green meadow by a crystal-clear stream bathed in the sun. There you were tempted to remain. Yes, you could have remained there to live the First Class Scout glory, but your ambition spurred you on. We remember your advancement to Star Scout. (*A Star Scout steps out and takes his place.*)

The trail from First Class to Star rank was not as difficult as it had seemed. This spurred you on, and again you climbed higher. The trail was steeper and less worn. Fewer Scouts seemed to be headed in your direction. You looked down and saw the crowds below you. You looked up and saw a few above you and, with the same determination with which you started your climb, you continued up the trail. Soon, you earned the badge of Life rank. (*A Life Scout steps out and takes his place.*)

The heart badge was then placed on your uniform. You will never forget your thoughts at that moment. This feeling has been experienced by all Scouts on

reaching the ledge of Life Scout: “Now I am close to the Eagle. I will carry on.” The trail became tougher, but more interesting. The original principles—the Scout Oath and Law—now had a fuller meaning. Your understanding of them was deeper.

Yes, we have watched your character unfold and become more manly. We have watched your leadership expand into a valuable asset. We have watched your mind develop and your wisdom increase. We have watched all these things in you, and now that you are at the threshold of your goal we welcome you, for you have done your climbing in a true Scoutlike manner.

This is the voice of the Eagle. (*The chairperson steps forward. The Scouts are seated.*)

Chairperson: The presentation of the Eagle Scout badge is an important and serious event, the climax and the goal for which a Scout works many years, an occasion for pride and joy, a time for serious contemplation. It is the culmination of efforts of the various leaders of this (these) Scout(s). The Eagle Scout Award is the highest and most coveted rank in Scouting; the last major step in the advancement program. Fewer than 4 percent of all Scouts in the United States reach the Eagle Scout rank. At this point, we trust you have achieved our purpose in the building of character, training of leadership, and the practice of serving.

The requirements for the Eagle Scout rank are as follows:

1. Be active in your troop and patrol for at least six months as a Life Scout.
2. Demonstrate Scout spirit by living the Scout Oath and Law in your everyday life.
3. Earn 21 merit badges, including the 12 that are required—First Aid, Citizenship in the Community, Citizenship in the Nation, Citizenship in the World, Communications, Personal Fitness, Emergency Preparedness or Lifesaving, Environmental Science, Personal Management, Swimming or Hiking or Cycling, Camping, and Family Life.
4. Serve actively in an approved position of responsibility for a period of six months after becoming a Life Scout.
5. Plan, develop, and lead others in carrying out a service project worthy of an Eagle Scout.
6. Take part in a Scoutmaster conference.
7. Appear before a board of review of prominent persons, and satisfy them that you have done your best to understand and live up to the Scout Oath and Law and, in all ways, qualify for the Eagle Scout Award.

Careful examination has been made by the court as to the qualifications of this (these) applicant(s) for the Eagle Scout Award.

(Name)_____, proficiency in the various crafts and skills prescribed for the Eagle Scout rank has been checked, and the records of merit badges earned by the Scout(s) have been approved and certified by the counselors appointed by the court. The Scout(s) has (have) qualified on the basis of merit badge achievement. Eagle Scout candidate _____
(name)_____ has earned _____
(No.)_____ merit badges. *(The chairperson includes others as applicable.)*

(Name)_____, the applicant(s) has (have) demonstrated his (their) capacity and willingness to exert leadership in activities that are constructive and worthwhile in this community. The record has been checked in troop leadership, school affairs, and in other fields of work and service. He (they) has (have) demonstrated loyalty and duty to God and country. We believe that he (they) is (are) qualified to receive the rank of Eagle Scout.

(Name)_____, the following is a résumé of _____
(name)_____’s personal and Scouting history *(The chairperson reads the résumé, and others’ names and résumés as applicable.)*

Narrator: This is the voice of the Eagle. I speak for the Eagle Scouts of this council. We challenge this (these) Scout(s) to accept the responsibilities as well as the honor of the Eagle Scout Award. These responsibilities are as follows: An Eagle Scout is to live with honor. His honor is sacred; it is the foundation of all character. An Eagle Scout will live so that he reflects credit upon his home, church, school, friends, and self. May the white of your badge remind you to live with honor.

An Eagle Scout is to be loyal. “To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man.” Neither pain nor profit, pride nor personal loss shall sway his loyalty. The blue on your badge is the emblem of loyalty.

An Eagle Scout is to be courageous. Courage gives all character force and strength. With trust in God and faith in his fellowman, he faces each day unafraid and seeks his share of the world’s work to do. Let the red of your badge remind you of courage.

Finally, an Eagle Scout is service oriented. Extend a helping hand to those who toil along the Scouting trail you have completed, just as others have aided you. The daily Good Turn must take on a new meaning and better the life pattern of service. Protect and defend the weak and helpless; comfort the unfortunate and oppressed. Uphold the rights of others as well as your own. Remember, real leadership is founded upon real service.

Chairperson: In recognition of these obligations, I ask you to reaffirm the Scout Oath or Promise. *(He [they] give the Scout Oath.)* Will Mr. (Ms.) _____
(name)_____ come forward as a representative of the National Council, Boy Scouts of America, and administer the Eagle Scout pledge? *(He or she reads the National Council letter.)*

Chairperson: Eagle Scout applicant(s), please escort your parents to the front. Fellow Eagle Scout(s), we now proclaim to all the world your accomplishments. The symbol of your success is the Eagle Scout badge and neckerchief, which will now be presented to your parents by _____
(name)_____. Your parents will, in turn, pin the badge over your heart and place the neckerchief around your neck. *(The badge[s] is [are] presented.)* Eagle Scout(s), in recognition of the wisdom and guidance given to you by your father(s), please present to him this Eagle tie bar, which he will be proud to wear in your honor. *(Pause.)* And now, also in recognition of the many hours of patient guidance given by her in your efforts, will you pin the Eagle mother’s pin over your mother’s heart? *(Pause.)* Eagle Scout(s), please escort your parents back to their seats, then return to the front.

Now, Eagle Scout(s) _____
(name[s])_____, please advance your name on our board to the Eagle Scout rank. *(Pause.)* As you see *(holding up the Eagle Scout plaque)*, your name(s) has (have) been placed on our permanent Eagle Scout plaque for all time.

Chairperson: I would like to read the following letters. *(He or she reads any congratulatory letters, etc.)* I now have the honor to present to you this gift *(if any)* from Troop _____
(No.)_____ in recognition of your outstanding service to this troop and of becoming an Eagle Scout. I would like to introduce _____
(name)_____, who will now give the Eagle Scout charge.

Speaker: _____
(Name)_____, I have the honor of giving you the Eagle Scout charge on the occasion of your elevation to the highest rank in Scouting.

(The speaker may use his or her own text of the Eagle Scout charge, if desired): The Boy Scouts of all nations constitute one of the most meaningful and significant movements in the world’s history, and you have been counted worthy of high rank in its membership. All who know you rejoice in your achievement. Your position, as you well know, is one of honor and responsibility. You are (a) marked men (man). As (an) Eagle Scout(s), you have assumed a solemn obligation to do your duty to God, to country, to fellow Scouts, and to humanity. This is a great undertaking. As you live up to your obligations, you bring honor to yourself

(yourselves) and your brother Scouts. When you fail, you bring down by so much the good name of all true and worthy Scouts.

Your responsibility goes beyond your fellow Scouts. It extends to your country and to God. America has many good things to give you and your children after you, but these good things depend, for the most part, on the character and leadership abilities of the nation's citizens. You are to help America in all that is needed most. Your country has a great past; you are here to help make the future even greater.

I charge you to undertake your citizenship with a solemn dedication. Be a leader, but lead only toward the best. Lift up every task you do and every office you hold, to the highest level of service to God and your fellow citizens. So live and serve, that those who know you will be inspired to the finest living. We have too many who use their strength and their knowledge to exploit others and to gain selfish ends. I charge you to be among those who dedicate their skills and abilities to the common good.

Build America on the solid foundation of clean living, honest work, unselfish citizenship, and reverence for God, and whatever others may do, you will leave behind a record of which every Scout may be proud.

Chairperson: *(He or she gives closing remarks as desired, followed by a benediction.)* You are invited to remain for the reception for Eagle Scout(s) _____ *(name[s])*, following our benediction by _____ *(name)*. *(The benediction is given.)* This Eagle Scout court of honor stands adjourned.

SCOUT OATH EAGLE CEREMONY

This ceremony is based on the Scout Oath and relates each phrase to the ranks required to attain the Eagle Scout rank. It can be used with the sample outline provided earlier, with the exception that the Scout Law ceremony has been incorporated into the "trail" rather than occurring separately.

The ceremony can be taped ahead of time, with background music added where appropriate. For most troops it is simpler to present it "live" with the speakers hidden from the audience but where they can be heard well (using a microphone if necessary). All speakers should be boy or adult Eagle Scouts. If few are available, speakers can double up on parts, though some effectiveness will be lost. As given here, the script requires two adult and three older-boy Eagle Scouts.

Use a patrol as a guard of honor for each Eagle Scout candidate (in addition to the Eagle Scout's escort) at the end of the "trail" ceremony, with the patrol leader reading the Eagle Scout's biography. (The purpose of

this is to allow more troop participation in the Eagle Scout court of honor.)

Master of ceremonies: Now we are proud to present our Eagle Scout candidates, _____ *(names)*, who will be guided by their escorts to the base of the trail to Eagle. *(The candidates and escorts, who have been seated in the front row on either side of the center aisle, walk slowly to the rear of the auditorium, turn, and face the stage, with all escorts on the right side.)*

Adult 1: We who speak to you now are Eagle Scouts. We have earned the Eagle Scout badge. Now, back to the time when you first became Scouts.

Youth 1: The first thing we learned as new members of our troop was the Oath by which Scouts do their best to live. Although we easily learned to repeat the words, we soon found that living by the meaning of it presented us with a real challenge. To be a good citizen, to do the right thing, not for fear of punishment, but because we felt the obligation to live up to the best within ourselves, to keep our minds and bodies healthy—in all these things we have tried to do our best. So has each of you—and this is why you stand here tonight.

(The Eagle Scout candidates and escorts move to the Tenderfoot sign.)

Youth 2: On my honor, I will do my best . . . *(The first escort lights the Tenderfoot candle at the top of the sign.)*

Adult 2: Let us look at the phrase, "Scout's honor." When a Scout stands before his fellow Scouts and pledges, "On my honor, I will do my best," he should not take those words lightly. That phrase should help him focus on his personal integrity, so that his earnest desire to do his best is strengthened and reinforced.

Youth 3: As Tenderfoot Scouts we said to ourselves, "These are my rules. I believe in them and accept them." We became Scouts on the Eagle trail, taking a bearing on our future and moving toward honor. Behind us, on that same trail, came each of you.

(The Eagle Scout candidates and escorts move to the Second Class sign.)

Youth 2: To do my duty to God and my country . . . *(The first escort lights the Second Class candle at the top of the sign.)*

Adult 1: And your duty to your country? There is an old Chinese saying that each generation builds a road for the next. The road has been well built for you. It is incumbent upon you to build your road even better for the next generation. We hope you will never be called upon to die for your country, but you will be expected, and America has every right to expect, that you live for it.

Youth 1: When we became Second Class Scouts, we began to develop an increasing awareness of the meaning of this part of the Scout Oath. We began to learn the importance of good citizenship, its privileges and, more importantly, its responsibilities. The time we spent hiking and camping with the troop made us more appreciative of the beautiful world God created for us. We began to see that doing our best to live as God and our country expected us to live not only made each of us a better person, but helped our fellow Scouts. As this awareness grew in each of us, it developed in each of you. *(The Eagle Scout candidates and escorts move to the First Class sign.)*

Youth 2: To obey the Scout Law . . . *(The first escort lights the First Class candle at the top of the sign.)*

Adult 1: Many times since you first became Scouts you have recited the 12 points of the Scout Law. When you were inducted as the newest members of the troop, you found these points impressive. Later, as you advanced in Scouting, you probably recited them at various ceremonies without always giving thought to the implications behind the words. Now, as you relive with us your progress in Scouting and in personal maturity, we would like you to hear them again. *(Conduct the Scout Law ceremony, using two Eagle Scouts or older boy leaders on stage. The Eagle Scout candidates and escorts remain in place.)*

Youth 3: As First Class Scouts, we tried to demonstrate the points of the Scout Law by the way we lived. We gained some understanding of these 12 goals of personal conduct, and we found that as we moved farther up the trail to Eagle, living up to these goals became increasingly demanding and rewarding. Just as we were challenged, so were you. *(The Eagle Scout candidates and escorts move to the Star sign.)*

Youth 2: To help other people at all times . . . *(The first escort lights the Star candle at the top of the sign.)*

Adult 2: This should remind you of the Scout slogan, “Do a Good Turn Daily.” If we do something regularly, it becomes a habit. That is the aim of this part of the Scout Oath. Doing individual Good Turns and community service is an important part of Scouting.

Youth 1: To become Star Scouts and earn the next rank, the heart badge of Life, we were required to do community service work. Sometimes we worked under the leadership of an older Scout whose immediate goal was the Eagle Scout rank, but we also planned and carried out projects of our own. We became increasingly aware of the value of the work we did and the personal satisfaction we gained from making that work succeed.

Youth 3: As we served our community and assisted fellow Scouts, we also discovered something else—the importance of the example we set to those who watched us, who would later be more likely to accept such responsibilities in their turn because of our attitude and actions.

As we did our best to set the example, so has each of you. *(The Eagle Scout candidates and escorts move to the Life sign.)*

Youth 2: To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

Adult 1: When a Scout makes a pledge to keep himself physically strong, he does not think of bulging muscles, but of physical fitness in its most complete sense—fitness to be able to enjoy life to the fullest, fitness so that he can fulfill his finest possible role in life with confidence in his own abilities.

Adult 2: The phrase, “to keep myself mentally awake,” sets a goal of mental health and vitality, initiative, and keenness of mind—an expanding concept that grows as a boy matures. The mentally awake person finds many pathways to growth. He thinks the people who stimulate him are curious, alert, and creative. He uses all the available resources to help him understand the world in which he lives and to which he hopes to contribute his share.

Adult 1: “To keep myself morally straight” means to keep clean in mind and body, whether you are alone or in a crowd. Many times you will be alone when the decision for right or wrong will rest solely on you, and it might test your honor and your strength. Such battles could be the most gallant of your life, for in them you will win without praise and lose without blame.

Youth 1: In many ways we found this part of the Scout Oath to be the most challenging of all. As Life Scouts in the leadership roles to which we were appointed or elected, we found that more was expected of us than ever before. It was assumed that as troop leaders we would accept responsibilities and see them through, and that we would set an example of physical, mental, and moral fitness for our fellow Scouts. We did our best to meet the challenge, and so has each of you.

Adult 1: Have you done—and been—all that you could have? Only you can answer that question, but because you stand here tonight we know that you have tried. *(Pause.)* On my honor I will do my best. . . .

Adult 2: You have nearly completed your journey, and there is one final thought we would like to share with you. *(Pause.)* The word “leadership” does not appear in the Scout Oath but is implied in every phrase.

Give thought now to your responsibility as leaders. A leader is a person who is going somewhere, but not alone. He takes others with him as he goes. Where will you lead those who follow you?

We challenge you to take pride in what you have learned so that through your leadership, as you move with purpose toward your goals, the principles of the Scout Oath become a living thing for those who follow.

Adult 1: And now, candidates, with those who have served as escorts on your journey, please turn and face your fellow Scouts. *(The Scout Eagle candidates and their escorts turn and face the audience. The Scoutmaster or assistant Scoutmaster rises and stands behind the candle log.)* Join in spirit with the thousands of young men who have attained the goal you have now achieved. Pledge yourselves once again to citizenship and service by reciting the Scout Oath. *(The Eagle Scout candidates and escorts give the Scout sign and recite the Scout Oath. The Scoutmaster or assistant Scoutmaster lights three candles at the appropriate time.)*

Adult 2: Those around you—your Scoutmaster, parents, and friends—have watched your character mature, your mind develop, and your leadership abilities expand into a valuable asset. This is a proud moment for each of you, but remember that the badge you are about to receive is not only yours, but ours. For what you do in the future reflects not only upon yourselves, but also upon your fellow Eagle Scouts. *(Pause.)* You have walked the Eagle trail with honor, and we welcome you. *(The house lights are turned up. The master of ceremonies stands by the podium to continue the court of honor.)*

SUMMARY OF EAGLE SCOUT COURT OF HONOR

- Plan well in advance; make sure the Eagle Scout court of honor is a special event.
- Involve the Eagle Scout and his parents.
- Request letters from prominent people (president of the United States, senator, state representative, governor, mayor, etc.).
- Send invitations to friends and all parents in the troop.
- Invite community, church, and school leaders.
- Print programs.
- Obtain local newspaper coverage.
- Consider presenting a special Eagle Scout neckerchief, ring, belt buckle, or plaque.

- Conduct a good court of honor:
 - Use a printed agenda.
 - Ensure that speakers know what to say.
 - Ensure that presenters know when to do it.
 - Practice (walk through).
 - Include all elements.
 - Be professional.
- Have a reception with refreshments—an Eagle-theme cake is appropriate.
- See the checklist on pages 100–101.

CAMPFIRE CEREMONIES

RECOGNITION CEREMONY

This simple ceremony welcomes new campers to their first council fire so that they will have a sense of belonging to the group as a whole. The master of the campfire says, “We will now recognize and welcome a new group of campers. Some of you others might remember the campfire when you received a similar welcome. As I call your names, new campers, please come forward and place a small stick on the fire, showing that you are now members of your council fire brotherhood. Then face the group and raise your right arm in greeting.”

As each Scout raises his arm, the rest of the troop calls out, “Welcome!” Then the Scout resumes his seat in the campfire circle.

SCOUT LAW CAMPFIRE CEREMONY

(For this ceremony you will need four small fires and four warriors or buckskin pioneers to light them.)

First warrior: I have lit the fire of truth to remind us that we must be trustworthy, loyal, and reverent.

Second warrior: I have lit the fire of friendship to remind us that we must be helpful, friendly, and kind.

Third warrior: I have lit the fire of citizenship to remind us that we must be clean, cheerful, and thrifty.

Fourth warrior: I have lit the fire of courage to remind us that we must be brave, courteous, and obedient. *(The master of the campfire asks all to stand and recite together the 12 points of the Scout Law in the proper order. He or she then declares the council fire to be open.)*

FIRE-LIGHTING INVOCATION

This variation on “Hiawatha” may be changed to fit the name and location of the camp. If your master of the campfire can memorize this, it will be quite an impressive ceremony, especially if accompanied by a trick method of lighting the fire.

On the shore of Old Lake _____ (*name*)
By the brightly shining water,
Stand the wigwams of our campers.
Dark behind it stands the forest,
Stand the chestnut, oak, and hemlock,
Stand the firs with cones upon them.
Many things they learn and do here:
How Wakonda, the Great Spirit,
Cares for all his faithful children,
Cares for all the forest people;
Learn they of the stars in heaven,
Of the birds that fly and nest here,
Learn the language of all creatures,
Call them friends whene’er we meet them.
Oh Great Spirit, then, in heaven,
Send us flame to light our campfire
That we may for this be thankful;
Oh Great Spirit, this we ask thee,
Send us fire and we shall praise thee!

(Following this invocation, possibly by a staff member in Indian attire, the fire is lit.)

CAMPFIRE CLOSING CEREMONIES

As the glowing campfire embers fade and die, the campfire should be closed on a note of quiet inspiration, with reference to the value of the Scouting ideals in our daily lives.

THE SCOUT OATH

Have all Scouts give the Scout sign and recite together the Scout Oath. Do not follow this with the Scout Law, which may be repeated so much that it can lose much of its meaning.

THE SCOUT LAW

For a closing ceremony, recite one point of the Scout Law in its entirety. The leader in charge states the heading of this point and another leader responds with the explanatory portion of the point.

THE SCOUT BENEDICTION

Have all stand, bow their heads, and recite together: “Now may the great Scoutmaster of all Scouts be with us until we meet again.” Then the Scouts leave the area quietly.

SILENT PRAYER

All campers bow their heads and the leader says, “A Scout is reverent. He is faithful in his religious duties, and respects the convictions of others in matters of custom and religion. Amen.”

TATTOO WITH ECHO

Have the camp bugler stand some distance from the council fire area and play “Tattoo.” Then have him repeat this quite softly. By using two buglers, the echo will be heightened.

SPECIAL CAMPFIRE CEREMONY

FIRST CAMPFIRE

(Ashes from the last campfire of the previous year are kept and used in a ceremony for new campers. The boys are called forward.)

Scoutmaster: Scouts, you have now been in camp one day and have attended part of our first campfire. Earlier in the evening you listened to the traditions of our troop and responsibilities of every Scout. Will you help us keep these traditions as good campers should?

Scouts: I will.

Scoutmaster: I hold in this vessel some of the ashes from last year’s campfire. The ashes stand for all that we enjoyed in our past. I now place some of the ashes on the right shoulder of each of you and pronounce you campers in good standing, entitled to the rights and obligations of our camp.

FLAG CEREMONIES

SILENT PLEDGE OPENING CEREMONY

(The leader stands at the front of the room, facing the United States flag. The reader stands at the side of the room and uses a penlight to read by. Another person shines a flashlight or spotlight on the flag. The house lights are out. All stand.)

Leader: As I say the words of the Pledge of Allegiance, repeat them silently to yourselves. Hand salute. *(All hand salute throughout the pledge.)* I pledge allegiance . . .

Reader: As our founding fathers pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor to a new nation, so do we pledge our devotion and our loyalty.

Leader: To the flag of the United States of America . . .

Reader: An honored symbol of a nation’s unity, its hopes, achievements, glory, and high resolve—red for courage, white for purity, and blue for vigilance, perseverance, and justice.

Leader: And to the republic for which it stands . . .

Reader: Where sovereign power resides in a body elected by, representative of, and responsible to this nation’s citizens.

Leader: One nation under God . . .

Reader: From the Atlantic to the Pacific; from the northern border to the southern; from the tops of the highest mountains across the wide prairies; from the greatest cities to the tiniest villages—we are united as one under the one to whom we turn for guidance, whose blessings we ask, and who watches over us—as individual citizens, and collectively as a nation—for in his spirit America was founded.

Leader: Indivisible . . .

Reader: The citizens of this great country come from different racial backgrounds, have different traditions, and many worship in different ways. Because the people of America are so varied, so diverse, and so rich in heritage, the whole of this nation is far greater than the sum of its parts—and we stand together to face the world.

Leader: With liberty and justice for all.

Reader: We have both the right of freedom and the responsibility to respect and protect the freedom of others. From Revolutionary times to the present day, American citizens have defended our flag with their blood and with their lives. Our flag is a symbol of the people. All of the people. Us. The people of the United States of America.

FLAG CEREMONY FOR A COURT OF HONOR

(The troop lines up outside the meeting room in two columns, with a flag bearer at the head of each. The two columns march in, one down each side of the room. They stop. The leader of each column is at the end of the front row of seats. The Scoutmaster and the senior patrol leader stand at the front of the room between the two flag stands.)

Senior patrol leader: Color guard, post the colors. *(The leader of the left-hand column carries the United States flag, and the leader of the right-hand column carries the troop flag; they advance to the front of the room below the stage, cross each other’s path to the opposite side,*

and post the colors so the United States flag is on the speaker’s right. They remain standing by their flags.)

Troop, present yourselves. *(Each Scout, beginning with the first one in line in the left-hand column, then the first one in the right-hand column, and continuing with alternating Scouts in each column, steps one pace out of line toward the audience, salutes the flag, and states his name. After all of the Scouts in both columns have saluted the flag and given their names, the two members of the color guard do the same, followed by the Scoutmaster and the senior patrol leader, who then addresses the audience.)* Please join us in the Pledge of Allegiance.

OUR FLAG—A SYMBOL OF US

(The troop is lined up and stands at attention. The flag bearer stands at the front with a spotlight or flashlight focused on the troop flag.)

Narrator *(off to the side):* Franklin K. Lane, in *The Makers of the Flag*, has the flag say to us, “I am whatever you make me, nothing more. I am your belief in yourself, your dream of what a troop may become. I live a changing life, a life of moods and passions, of heartaches and tired muscles. Sometimes I am strong with pride, when boys do an honest work, fitting the rails together truly. Sometimes I am loud, garish, and full of ego that blasts judgment. But always, I am all that you hope to be, and have the courage to try for.”

Our flag is a symbol of us. To some people our flag is just a piece of cloth. To others it is just a flag. But to me it represents more than I could say here tonight in such short time.

It represents what happened at camp one time—one of our boys cut his foot and had to be taken to the hospital.

It represents the time I was invested as a Tenderfoot Scout; the times I helped invest others.

It represents a lot of cold nights in tents and a lot of joyous days in the sun.

It represents every first night at camp when we get little sleep.

It represents the long trail from Tenderfoot to Eagle and the joys and satisfactions that come from attaining those ranks.

I believe our troop flags are neglected too much.

Our troop flag represents the Scoutmaster, assistant Scoutmaster, our committee members, our chartered organization representative, and many others.

I think we could say that our troop flags are the hearts of our troops. We should fly our troop flag at every opportunity and especially when we go camping.

So, guys, let’s keep our troop flags flying!

I AM YOUR FLAG

I was born on July 4, 1777.
I am more than just cloth shaped into a design.
I am refuge for the world's oppressed people.
I am the silent sentinel of freedom.
I am the emblem of the greatest sovereign nation
on earth.
I am the inspiration for which American patriots gave
their lives and fortunes.
I have led your loved ones into battle from Valley Forge
to the steaming, treacherous jungles of Vietnam.
I walk in silence with each of your honored dead, to
their final resting place beneath the silent white
crosses—row upon row.
I have flown through peace and war, strife and prosper-
ity, and amidst it all I have been respected.
My red stripes symbolize the blood spilled in defense of
this glorious nation.
My white stripes signify the burning tears shed by
Americans who lost their loved ones.
My blue field is indicative of God's heaven under
which I fly.
My stars, clustered together, unify 50 states as one,
for God and country.
"Old Glory" is my nickname, and proudly I wave
on high.
Honor me, respect me, defend me with your lives and
your fortunes.
Never let my enemies tear me down from my lofty
position, lest I never return.
Keep alight the fires of patriotism. Strive earnestly for
the spirit of democracy.
Worship eternal God and keep his commandments, and
I shall remain the bulwark of peace and freedom for
all people.

WEBELOS-TO-SCOUT CEREMONIES

BRIDGE TO SCOUTING

This impressive ceremony for Webelos Scouts can be used indoors or outdoors. Advancement recognition ceremonies for the lower ranks may precede it.

Personnel: Webelos den leader (Akela), Scoutmaster, den chief as torchbearer, Scouts from troop, graduating Webelos Scout and his parents, senior patrol leader

Equipment: A rustic bridge with a railing made of dead tree branches and floored with scrap lumber; two campfires (artificial ones for indoors); camp candle lantern; troop neckerchief

Arrangement: The bridge is set up on an auditorium stage or on the ground. If indoors, the room should be darkened. The graduating Webelos Scout is with his parents at one end of the bridge; the Boy Scouts and Scoutmaster are at the opposite end. Both groups are seated around their respective campfires. The Webelos den leader asks the Webelos Scout to stand and recite the Cub Scout Promise.

Webelos den leader (*calls across the bridge*): Hello, Scouts of _____ (*name of Scout camp*).

Scoutmaster (*answers*): Hello, Webelos Scouts of Akela, what do you desire?

Webelos den leader: We have a Webelos Scout of Akela's council ring who has prepared himself for entrance into the council ring of _____ (*name of Scout camp*).

Scoutmaster: Bring him forward to the bridge that joins our two council rings. (*The Webelos den leader leads the graduating Webelos Scout and his parents to the bridge. The Scoutmaster crosses the bridge and is introduced to the Webelos Scout and his parents.*)

Webelos den leader: _____ (*Name*), you have contributed much to your den and pack, and we shall miss you and your parents. Now you are leaving us to enter the Scout troop of your choice. There, we are sure, you will continue to grow in Scouting skills and friendships. An important part of your Webelos Scout uniform is your neckerchief. Now that you are leaving our pack and Cub Scouting, will you remove your neckerchief and give it to me? Soon, your new Scoutmaster will place around your neck the neckerchief of the troop you are to join. (*The Webelos Scout removes his neckerchief and gives it to the Webelos den leader. The Scoutmaster now beckons the graduate to follow him across the bridge.*)

Scoutmaster (*standing before the Scout campfire*): As Scoutmaster of Troop _____ (*No.*), I welcome you and your parents. There are many traditions in Troop _____ (*No.*)—so many that I would not attempt to relate them all to you now. (*The Scoutmaster may explain one or two traditions and tell of important troop activities planned for the near future.*) It is now my pleasure to present you with the neckerchief of our troop. (*He places the neckerchief around the neck of the incoming Scout.*) Wear it with pride as many have done before you. Your senior patrol leader, _____ (*name*), now wishes to express the troop's happiness in having you as a member. (*The senior patrol leader leads the troop in a cheer for the new Scout.*)

CROSSING THE BRIDGE

Personnel: Webelos den leader, Scoutmaster, a Boy Scout, graduating Webelos Scout and his parents

Equipment: A rustic bridge; troop neckerchief

Arrangement: The rustic bridge is set up on an auditorium stage or at the front of the pack meeting room. The Webelos den leader stands on one end of the bridge with the graduating Webelos Scout and his parents. On the other end is the Scoutmaster with a Scout holding a rolled troop neckerchief.

Webelos den leader (*to the parents*): During the years you and your son have been in Cub Scouting, we have had many opportunities to work together along the trail. Now _____ (*name*) has reached age 11 and is leaving the pack to enter Boy Scouting. I am sure you will find the same satisfactions there that you found in Cub Scouting. As a symbol of your son's growth and his entrance into Scouting, I ask that he stand before me where I will divest him of his Webelos Scout neckerchief. You and he will then cross over the bridge into Scouting, to be welcomed by Scoutmaster _____ (*name*) of Troop _____ (*No.*).
(*After the Webelos den leader has removed the Webelos Scout's neckerchief and saluted him, the Webelos Scout and his parents cross the bridge and stand before the Scoutmaster.*)

Scoutmaster (*greets the Webelos Scout and his parents with a handshake*): As Scoutmaster of Troop _____ (*No.*), it is indeed a pleasure for me to welcome you into the troop. We meet each week on _____ (*day*), at _____ (*time*), at _____ (*place*). We shall look forward to welcoming you at our next meeting. (*He turns to the boy.*) And now I present you with this Scout neckerchief. (*The Scoutmaster places the rolled neckerchief around the boy's neck.*) May you wear it with pride; its colors are those of Troop _____ (*No.*), which welcomes you as its newest member. (*All exit.*)

THE MILEPOST

Personnel: Cubmaster, Webelos den chief, chartered organization representative and aides, graduating Webelos Scout and his parents, Scoutmaster, and two Scout aides

Equipment: Troop neckerchief (and other recognition, if desired) for the graduate; "Wolf Valley" sign; "Bear Mountain" sign; "Webelos Lodge" sign or a council fire (artificial one for indoors); bridge; Webelos advancement board

Cubmaster (*addressing the audience*): Cub Scouting is the great Scouting movement's program for younger boys. In the final months of his Cub Scouting experience, a boy learns the requirements for the Scout badge. He decides which troop he will join, and, with his parents, arranges for his entrance into Scouting upon his 11th birthday. Tonight our pack has the privilege of bringing another Webelos Scout to this significant milestone. (*He or she turns to address the den chief.*) Den Chief _____ (*name*), please escort Webelos Scout _____ (*name*) and his parents forward. (*The Cubmaster greets them, then addresses the audience.*) Webelos Scout _____ (*name*) has chosen Troop _____ (*No.*). Mr. (Ms.) (*chartered organization representative's name*) is here. We will ask him (her) to come forward with his (her) aides. (*The Cubmaster introduces the chartered organization representative and his or her aides to the Webelos Scout, his parents, and the audience.*)

We will now relive the Cub Scout experiences of _____ (*name*), who is ready to cross the bridge into Boy Scouting. You started your Cub Scout career on the Bobcat trail. You had to learn the Cub Scout Promise; the Law of the Pack; and the Cub Scout sign, handshake, motto, and salute. You had to explain the meaning of Webelos and complete the exercises in the *Parent's Guide*. And then you looked ahead and saw that the trail went through a comparatively level Wolf Valley. (*The boy and his parents move to the Wolf Valley sign, led by the Cubmaster.*)

As you went through Wolf Valley, you worked on your physical and mental skills until you had passed 12 achievements. You passed these achievements with your parents or at your den meetings. You were growing; you mastered Wolf Valley. Raise your heads and look where the trail leads now—up and up. Your next goal was Bear Mountain. (*The boy and his parents are led by the Cubmaster to the Bear Mountain sign.*)

As you progressed up the trail toward Bear Mountain, you found the achievements a little more difficult because you were growing both physically and mentally, and more was expected of you. You passed your 12 required achievements and were encouraged to work on both Wolf and Bear electives. A year passed and you reached the top of Bear Mountain. You could see ahead of you the lodge of the Webelos. Your guides on the trail now changed. (*The boy and his parents are led to the Webelos Lodge sign or the council fire.*)

You were a member of the Webelos den. Now it was strictly between you and your leaders whether you wanted to work for the Arrow of Light Award or just be a member. You remained a Webelos Scout until you reached age 11, when you became eligible to join a Boy

Scout troop. You have worked hard in the Webelos den and are now ready to take your next step on the Scouting trail by crossing the bridge to further adventure.

(The Cubmaster calls the Webelos Scout and his parents forward to the foot of the bridge. The mother is presented with the advancement board. The Cubmaster points out the awards and achievements, then escorts the Webelos Scout and his parents across the bridge. The Scoutmaster should be prepared to make a welcoming speech to the boy and his parents, plus other recognition as desired.)

Scoutmaster: _____ (Name) _____, it is a privilege to welcome you into Troop _____ (No.) _____. As a Scout you will hike and camp. You will learn many useful things. You will have an opportunity to continue to grow into a useful citizen because you will participate in civic activities and learn the thrill of helping other people by practicing the habit of doing a Good Turn every day. And now, Scouts _____ (name) _____ and _____ (name) _____ will exchange your Webelos Scout neckerchief for our troop neckerchief, symbolic of your graduation into Scouting. *(The aides replace the Webelos Scout neckerchief with a Scout neckerchief, give the Scout handshake, step back, and salute. The Webelos den chief leads the pack in a yell for the graduate.)*

TIPS FOR GOOD CEREMONIES

A few props and techniques can spice up any ceremony. These can range from the simple to the elaborate, depending on need and budget. A few ideas are given here, but use your imagination to develop your own.

LIGHTING

Lighting is important to most ceremonies. Techniques range from performing the ceremony behind a campfire so that the fire illuminates the participants to spotlighting award recipients in a court of honor.

ROOM LIGHTS

Inspect the lighting control and be sure you know what to switch on and off, and when. Know and plan the effects.

STAGE LIGHTS

Floodlighting can be accomplished using anything from yard reflector lights to desk lamps. A regular table lamp can be used simply by removing the shade and directing the light from the bulb with cardboard.

SPOTLIGHTS

Spotlighting should be used anytime a boy is recognized before an audience, such as in a court of honor, etc.

A flashlight can serve as a spotlight. A 35-millimeter slide projector can be an effective spotlight. Try it first to be sure of the distances. Masks in front of the lens will reduce the size of the spot.

DECORATIONS

A few appropriate decorations can transform a room into a special place for ceremonies:

- Crepe paper
- Boy Scout neckerchiefs
- Posters—Boy Scout and other
- Colored lights
- Scout skill displays, merit badge displays, knot boards, etc.

AUDIOVISUALS

Many commercial and BSA movies and slide programs are available and appropriate for more formal ceremonies. Good sound equipment and carefully selected music will enhance any court of honor or other special ceremony.

SPECIAL PROPS

Specially designed and developed props become tradition and add special flair to ceremonies:

ADVANCEMENT BOARD

Develop your own. The board can be arranged by rank or by patrol. Have each boy's name on an individual card that is punched for hanging. Move the card as the boy advances.

EAGLE SCOUT PLAQUE

An impressive plaque is available from the BSA's Supply Division. It bears the troop number and an attractive eagle emblem. Engrave the new Eagle Scout's name on one of the nameplates and add it to the plaque at the Eagle Scout court of honor.

CANDLE LOG

Simply drill holes in a log and use it as a candleholder. Use your imagination to come up with a design. Candle logs are especially useful for Scout Law, Oath, and rank ceremonies.

ARTIFICIAL CAMPFIRE

This can be made with a flashlight or an electric or battery-operated light bulb fixture, logs, and sheets of red and orange plastic or cellophane. Be careful not to create a fire hazard.

BADGE HOLDER

Create a device to hold your advancement badges, pins, and cards during the ceremony. This could be a felt-covered tray or a large cutout of the Boy Scout emblem covered with cork, etc. Divide all items by each recipient's name, and be sure the presenter knows how to remove them.

FLAGS

The use of troop, church, state, and United States flags is appropriate in ceremonies. Be certain you display and carry flags correctly. A spotlight on the flag(s) is a nice highlight.

TROOP SCRAPBOOK

Display your scrapbook at special ceremonies.

CHECKLIST FOR COURTS OF HONOR (AND OTHER CEREMONIES)

Eagle Scout Court of Honor	Regular Court of Honor	Planning Phase
_____	_____	Schedule the date.
_____	_____	Reserve the facility.
_____	_____	Meet with the Eagle Scout, committee, and parents.
_____	_____	Request letters from dignitaries, etc.
_____	_____	Secure the speaker/court commitments.
_____	_____	Send invitations.
_____	_____	Print programs.
_____	_____	Prepare/distribute news releases.
_____	_____	Mail programs to participants.
_____	_____	Order refreshments.
		Physical Arrangements
_____	_____	Seating for audience
_____	_____	Seating for platform
_____	_____	Lighting
_____	_____	Heat and ventilation
_____	_____	Public address system
_____	_____	Special equipment (such as movie equipment, if used)
_____	_____	Custodian's cooperation secured
_____	_____	Refreshments
_____	_____	Parking
		Awards Presentation
_____	_____	Badges and certificates are in individually marked envelopes.
_____	_____	Clasps on mothers' pins and metal badges are open and ready to be pinned on.
_____	_____	All other awards and recognitions are arranged and marked.

CHECKLIST FOR COURTS OF HONOR (AND OTHER CEREMONIES) (cont'd.)

Eagle Scout Court of Honor	Regular Court of Honor	Planning Phase
_____	_____	Presenter's Briefing
_____	_____	One Scout at a time receives his award.
_____	_____	The Scout faces the audience.
_____	_____	The Scout is on a box or raised platform.
_____	_____	The Scout is spotlighted, if possible.
_____	_____	The presenter knows where to pin the badge.
_____	_____	The presenter knows how to give the Scout handshake using the left hand.
_____	_____	General Program
_____	_____	Who is to be introduced?
_____	_____	Make speakers aware of the time limit.
_____	_____	Prepare notes for people who are not familiar with the activities.
_____	_____	Encourage parents' participation.
_____	_____	Recognize the Scoutmaster and other leaders.
_____	_____	Have any demonstration or special program materials on hand.
_____	_____	Plan the entrance for court of honor officials.
_____	_____	Start on time and end on time.
_____	_____	Set up and staff refreshments and reception tables.
_____	_____	Follow-up Details
_____	_____	Make arrangements for returning equipment and cleanup.
_____	_____	Send a note of thanks to program participants, the custodian, and any others who helped.