

OPENING AND CLOSING CEREMONIES

Girl Scout meetings should have an opening and closing. They provide a frame in which to work. An opening signals to the girls that the meeting has begun and it is time to get down to business. The closing allows the girls a special moment to end the meeting and say good-bye.

Both ceremonies are usually very short and simple. They will mean more if they are made up by the troop/group and varied from meeting to meeting.

Any of the following ideas would be appropriate for either an opening or closing. Two or three could be combined if a longer ceremony is desired.

1. Flag ceremony.
2. Reciting of Promise and Law.
3. Have each girl give an example of how they observed the Girl Scout slogan "Do a Good Turn Daily" since the last meeting.
4. Sing a song.
5. Recite a poem.
6. Friendship circle with linked hands.
7. Discuss a symbol of Girl Scouting and its meaning:
 - Membership Pin The Uniform
 - World Trefoil Pin Trefoil Shape
 - World Thinking Day Symbol Girl Scout Sign
8. Talk about how the program helps us live up to our Girl Scout motto "Be Prepared."

Special Closings

1. Clean-Up (Good for young girls)

The children skip about the room arranging everything neatly, singing to the tune of "London Bridge."

Weave the magic in and out, in and out, in and out,

Weave the magic in and out, we are Girl Scouts.

We have tidied everything, everything, everything,

We have tidied everything, we are Girl Scouts.

Finally, the girls line up before the leader who asks, "Is everything finished?"

The children answer: "Everything."

The leader asks: "Is nothing left?"

The children answer: "Nothing!"

The leader says: "Then be gone!"

(Leader can wave a special "good-bye wand" as girls silently tiptoe out.)

2. Magic Tunnel - When hats and coats are on, the Girl Scouts stand in two lines facing each other, raising their arms and holding hands to make an arch. The two farthest from the door go under the arch, then the next two, etc. The tunnel diminishes until the last two go.

3. Good-Bye Song - Tune: "Good Night Ladies"

Good-Bye (name of level...repeat 3 times)

It's sad to see you go.

Note: Can be sung while doing the Magic Tunnel (above).

4. Good-Night Song - Tune: "Taps"

Night has come,

Owls are out,

Beetles hum round about,

Tip-toe so,

Out they creep,

Girl Scouts go home to sleep.

5. Girl Scout Out

Stand in circle with a girl in the center. Spell G-I-R-L-S-C-O-U-T. Girl in center touches the top of a head as each letter is said. The three girls that get the letters O, U, T leave the circle and line up by the door or are given permission to leave with their designated adult. The remaining girls close up the space and the spelling begins again. Keep repeating until all are eliminated.

6. Taps

Hand motions:

Day is done - arms are held extended with palms down, shoulder level

Gone the sun - lower arms slightly

From the lakes - turn palms up, raise arms slightly

From the hills - raise arms higher

From the sky - raise arms level with top of head

All is well - lower arms to shoulder height, place right hand on left elbow

Safely rest - cross left hand to right elbow

God is nigh - bow head into crossed arms

Variations of "Taps"

Daylight:

Thanks and praise, for our days

'Neath the sun, 'neath the trees, 'neath the sky,

As we go, this we know,

God is nigh.

Evening:

So good night, peaceful night

Till the light of the dawn shineth bright.

God is near, do not fear,

Friend, good night.

Juliette: On this day, we have come
 From the North, from the South
 East and West, all your dreams
 Will live on, Juliette.

7. Spread Arm Good-bye Circle - Extend arms sideways at shoulder level, drop halfway to sides, step one pace in and hold hands not with the people on either side of you but with the person next to them. Every other person will be holding hands and the arms will make an interesting zig zag pattern. Sing a good-bye song.

8. Girl Scout Good-Bye Song

Tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"

Now our Girl Scout meeting ends,
Say good-bye to all our friends
To our homes we Girl Scouts go
Singing songs to let you know,
We are happy as can be,
Working, playing, merrily.

9. Native American Benediction

May the Great Spirit - Extend right arm straight overhead
In the future - Slant arm ahead
As in the past - Slant arm behind
Be in our hearts - Right hand on heart
As in our prayer - Bring hands together at chest
 Repeat, using only gestures, no words

10. Friendship Circle with Friendship Wish

Girls stand in circle with arms crossed right over left and grasping the hands of the person on either side. A designated person starts the passing of the friendship wish by thinking a silent wish and then

symbolically passing the wish to the person on her right by squeezing her hand. That girl then thinks her own silent wish and continues the "squeeze". This is repeated until the "squeeze" has gone around the entire circle. When the originator receives the "squeeze" she says, "God Bless the Girl Scouts and Girl Guides everywhere. Goodbye". The girls drop their hands and leave in silence.

Note: This could be preceded by singing "Taps".

Hint: So that the location of the "squeeze" can be identified, have each girl extend her right foot as she passes on her wish.