

Conducting Impressive and Effective Troop Ceremonies

The Opening Ceremony

The Opening Ceremony marks the official beginning of the troop meeting and sets the tone for remainder of the meeting. Flag etiquette must be followed. It is important to have the service patrol prepared to start on time and all troop members are in formation and attentive for a dignified ceremony.

4 Major Parts of a Troop Opening

- Ceremony
- Senior Patrol Leader Opening Remarks
- Patrol Leader Reports
- Uniform Inspection

Ideas for Opening Ceremonies

- The Scout Law can be twelve separate ceremonies by devoting one point of the law with an in-depth explanation and relating it to something newsworthy
- A good song leader can lead the troop in singing a patriotic song
- Readings from the writings of any number of authors and poets who have helped us understand what it means to love one's country
- Scout Badge Ceremony—a large replica of the Scout Badge is used with Scouts called forward to point out the different parts and meanings.
- Flag History—A large poster of a prominent historical flag is displayed and described
- Colors of my Flag—Describe what each color of the flag symbolizes
- Dramatic—a variety of ceremonies can be done with candles, special lighting and audio visual effects. The BSA catalog includes recorded video tapes and cds for high profile ceremonies.

Conducting the Opening Ceremony

Senior Patrol Leader calls troop to formation. A variety of patrol formations such as files or a U-shape based on the location and objectives can be used.

Senior Patrol Leader:

Troop, Attention.

Tonight's Service Patrol, The Silver Wings, will now conduct the Opening Ceremony.

Patrol Leader and/or Patrol Member: *(note: commands will vary based on what the patrol is presenting for a ceremony).*

Join us in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Scout Salute. I pledge allegiance....

Two (Scouts drop their salute but remain at attention)

Join us in reciting the Scout Oath

On my honor...

Join us in reciting the Scout Law

A Scout is...

Two

Senior Patrol Leader: Troop at Ease (this means you don't have to stand at attention but the scouts must remain quite and in file).

The SPL thanks the service patrol and gives a brief welcome and a high level overview of the troop meeting agenda. He then proceeds with the Patrol Leader Reports. The reports should be concise (no more than a minute) and state the attendance ratio on any activity along with what was accomplished.

Patrol Leader: takes a step forward and provides the following information as appropriate:

- √ Ratio of scouts present to absent (Example: 7 out of 8 members are present)
- √ Patrol Meeting Report
- √ Patrol Activity Report
- √ Rank Advancement

Senior Patrol Leader: continues with remaining patrols until all reports are completed. The SPL or ASPL conducts the uniform inspection. This can be performed with the support of additional youth leaders. Reports are given back by the reviewers and top uniformed patrols are recognized.

Senior Patrol Leader: Troop Attention, Troop Dismissed.

He dismisses patrols under the guidance of the Patrol Leaders to commence with the next activity period.

The Closing Ceremony

The closing ceremony is quiet and permits individual thought about one's self and the point of the ceremony. After all the announcements have finished and the Scoutmaster has completed his Scoutmaster Minute, it is time to conduct the closing ceremony. The transition needs to be quick to maintain a tone of reverence. The mood and influence can be destroyed by giggling, missed cues, or a forgotten announcement that is boomed out at the last minute.

Commands for Closing Ceremonies

- The Senior Patrol Leader thanks the Scoutmaster and calls the troop to attention and the Service Patrol forward.
- At the conclusion of the ceremony, the SPL dismisses the troop.

Ideas for Closing Ceremonies

- Moment of Silence followed by the Scout Benediction ("May the Great Master of all Scouts be with us until we meet again.")
- Singing of quiet songs such as; Scout Vespers, Kum Ba Yah, Our Paddles, etc.
- Moment of Silence followed by "Be Prepared!", "We are Prepared!"
- Troop Pledge—the troop is formed and the color guard brings the colors to the front. Next the leader asks all members to repeat each part after the leader:

“As a member of Troop ____,

I pledge that I always will be an active member of my patrol,

Take part in all troop activities,

Continue to advance in rank,

And observe the Scout Law at all times.

On my honor as a Scout, I will do my best.”

- Spirit of Scouting—Form the troop in a circle and turn out the lights. Leader lights a candle saying: “Scouts, this candle represents the spirit of Scouting, the good turn, the Scout Oath and Law, and the motto. As we share the symbolic flame of the spirit of Scouting, let us stand silently for a moment and about what it means to each of us to be a member of the Boy Scouts of America. Now we will pledge ourselves with the Scout Oath.
- Flag Folding Ceremony—explains the symbolism behind each of the 13 folds of the flag (and hint, it does not have to do with the 13 colonies).
- Brotherhood Circle and Scout Benediction—Brotherhood circle is formed with the right hand crossing over the left hand.