

Flag Ceremonies

The text for this page came from the booklet entitled, "Cub Scout Ceremonies for Dens and Packs".

Most den and pack meetings should include the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag. It is appropriate to have a presentation of the colors and the Pledge of Allegiance at the beginning of every pack meeting, with the retirement of the colors at the conclusion. On occasion, especially in den meetings, you can vary the opening ceremony and not use the flag. In pack meetings, you might start out with the presentation of the colors in the beginning of your pack meeting and reserve the Pledge of Allegiance for later during the opening ceremony or even during the closing ceremony. Patriotic ceremonies should be meaningful and inspirational for boys.

Flag Ceremony Planning

When you take the time to plan ahead, the Cub Scouts and Webelos Scouts will be prepared for a successful experience.

- When younger Cub Scouts are responsible for a flag ceremony, make sure the flags are not too heavy for the boys to carry.
- Check the ceiling height beforehand to determine whether the flags will clear it. If they won't, post the colors before the meeting.
- Rehearse the ceremony. Make sure everyone knows his part and walking route.

Create Your Own Opening Ceremony With the U.S. Flag

Use the following suggestions to make your ceremony effective:

- Have the color guard post the colors and retreat. Delay the Pledge of Allegiance until after your opening ceremony.
- Post the flag, and then create a slight breeze with an electric fan.
- Shine a flashlight or spotlight on the flag.
- Follow the flag with a flashlight or spotlight while the color guard walks in.
- Use background music (piano, records, cassette tapes, CDs).
- Prerecord music and play it, making it louder or softer as your ceremony progresses.
- Use songs that are appropriate for the occasion.
 - "The Star-Spangled Banner"
 - "America, the Beautiful"
 - "You're a Grand Old Flag"
 - "God Bless America"
 - Seasonal songs
 - Marching songs
 - Spiritual songs

Flag Ceremony Comments

Keep in mind the following guidelines:

- When in uniform, stand at attention and salute with your right hand.
- When not in uniform, stand at attention and place your right hand over your heart. You should remove your nonuniform hat.
- When in uniform, with your head covered or uncovered, either indoors or outdoors, stand at attention and salute with your right hand when the national anthem is played, the colors are raised or lowered, the Pledge of Allegiance is recited, or the flag passes by in a parade.
- The reason the color guards do not participate in saluting, singing, or saying the Pledge of Allegiance with the group is because their job is to guard the flag at all times. They should salute after the flag is posted.
- The U.S. flag is posted on the left, as you look toward the front.

- Any person can write to his or her U.S. senator or U.S. representative, and for a reasonable fee receive a flag that was flown over the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.
- For more information regarding the flag, refer to the booklet Your Flag.
- You can find additional information on the U.S. flag from current encyclopedias and from veterans groups.
- Make sure that you include all boys in your flag ceremonies at different times of the year. Boys with physical disabilities can proudly act as narrator or even flag bearers when adults see these events as possibilities instead of barriers

Often, the Pledge of Allegiance is introduced with a phrase that helps set the stage and turns our thoughts toward the meaning behind the words. Use the following ideas, but often the most effective statement is one that comes from your heart.

Sometimes we hear people say the phrase, “One nation, (pause), under God.” When this phrase was added by House Joint Resolution 243 and approved by President Dwight D. Eisenhower on June 14, 1954, it was added without a comma or pause after the word “nation.” The correct phrasing is, “One nation under God.”

Thirteen stripes and 50 stars—this phrase can only refer to our American flag. Let us remember the history behind the Stars and Stripes as we say the Pledge of Allegiance.

“Long may it wave” —let us remember the history of our flag as we pledge our allegiance to our flag.

As we salute our flag, let us remember the words from the American’s Creed:

It is my duty to my country
 To love it;
 To support its Constitution
 To obey its laws
 To respect its flag; and
 To defend it against all enemies.

The red in our flag stands for courage and bravery. Today, as we salute our flag, let us remember the men and women in the armed forces who are serving our country and us.

For more than 200 years, our flag has been the emblem of liberty for generation after generation of Americans. Let us look at it with pride as we pledge our allegiance to it.

Our flag is bright with cheer, brilliant with courage, and firm with faith. Let us think about these things as we pledge our allegiance.

We, the people—that is what our flag stands for. Together, let us say the Pledge of Allegiance.

For the opportunities our country offers to the youth of America, let us say the Pledge of Allegiance to our flag, the emblem of our nation.

The flag is a symbol of our country. Let us join together in saluting our flag and saying the Pledge of Allegiance.

Where our flag flies, there is freedom. Join me now in expressing our allegiance to the flag.

On June 14, 1777, Congress approved the first official United States’ flag. Throughout our country, we now observe June 14 as Flag Day. Let us remember that special day as we pledge our allegiance.

Many creative and inventive people have contributed to the growth of our country. Long ago, our ancestors never dreamed we would have automobiles, airplanes, television, computers, space shuttles, or many other things that we take for granted. It took many different people who used their individual talents to make our country grow. Let us think of these people as we pledge allegiance to our flag.

“O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain, for purple mountain majesties, above the fruited plain!” Our country is beautiful, from the historic treasures of New England on the East Coast, to the deep blue lakes of the Central United States, to (add something personal about your area), to the towering mountains of the West. We are proud of our beautiful America and pledge ourselves to keeping it beautiful. There is beauty in each of our 50 states, and our United States flag represents those states. Stand and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

America is made up of people from many different nations—including the nations of the American Indian—who have brought with them their ideals, customs, and talents. America is often called a melting pot because it is a blend of so many different people and cultures. As we pledge allegiance to our flag, let us think of all the different people who have created our country as it is today.

Behold the emblem of our country—our flag. May it always represent the highest ideals of the American people. May its stars and stripes always support democracy in America. Stand and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

We have the responsibility to care for our beautiful world. We enjoy doing things together as families. In Scouting, we have many opportunities to work and play together. Today, as we salute the flag that represents millions of American families, let us be thankful for our own families and the beautiful world in which we live. Stand and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Growing up is an adventure. Every day brings new and exciting things into our lives. Scouting opens many new doors for boys as they develop in character, personal fitness, and citizenship. As we salute the United States flag, let's think about all the adventures that are ahead of us, and silently promise to do our best. Let us stand and pledge allegiance to our flag.

Standard Indoor Flag Ceremony Using Flag Stands

Preparation: Put flag stands in place at the front of the room. Looking to the front, the U.S. flag stand is on the left. Flag guards are in the back of the room holding the flag. They have already checked to make sure that the flags fit in the flag holders and that the flags clear the ceiling.

Personnel: Narrator and color guard

Materials: U.S. flag and a pack flag

Standard Outdoor Flag Ceremony Using a Flag Pole

Preparation: Check the flag against the rope to make sure the attachments line up before the flag ceremony. It helps to lower the loops to the base of the flagpole so it is ready for the ceremony. Rewind the cord to hold in place.

Personnel: Narrator and color guard

Materials: U.S. flag and a pack flag

Presentation of Colors - Indoors

Narrator	Actions

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Will the audience please rise? (Pause.)	The color guard waits in the back of the room for the audience to rise and become quiet.
Color guard, advance.	The U.S. flag guard and bearer and pack flag guard and bearer walk down the aisle and to the flags. They stand behind the flags, facing the audience.
Color guard, salute.	The guards and bearers salute.
Color guard, retire the colors.	The U.S. flag is removed first (just slightly ahead of the pack flag).
Hand salute.	Everyone, with the exception of the guards and bearers, salutes. The U.S. flag stays on its “marching right” as the guards and bearers proceed down the aisle to the rear of the room.
Two.	Everyone drops the salute.