SCOUT'S OWN CEREMONIES

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SCOUT'S OWN CEREMONIES

What Is A Scout's Own?

A Scout's Own is a special type of ceremony that expresses the spirit of Girl Scouting. It is called a Scout's Own because girls and their leader plan it themselves. It's an opportunity for girls to express their thoughts and feelings. Planned and carried out by the girls with the help of their leaders, the Scout's Own is a ceremony, but it is not a "performance". If parents and public are part of the group, the program goes on just the same. The "audience" is expected to participate. It is **NOT** a religious ceremony and does not take the place of going to church, synagogue or temple. It may be held on any day of the week, in troop meetings or at camp.

Baden-Powell, the founder of Scouting, describes the Scouts Own as "A voluntary uplifting of their hearts . . . in thanksgiving for the joys of life, and a desire to seek inspiration and strength for greater love and service for others."

The idea of Girl Scouts' Own came from the founder of Girl Scouting, Juliette Low, who understood young people so well. It is a special ceremony for Girl Scouts. It is a tradition, an important time in Girl Scouting. A Girl Scouts' Own is not a religious ceremony or service, but an inspirational occasion where Girl Scouts of every faith and creed can participate.

A Girl Scouts' Own is based upon the beliefs and ideals of Girl Scouting. It allows girls to express their thoughts and feelings in a truly meaningful way.

A Scout's Own can be held at any time, indoors or outdoors. You may use it to open or close a meeting or special occasion. Girls usually like to pick a special spot to hold a Scout's Own - one that they really like or that is especially scenic. It is a Girl Scout custom to **walk quietly** to the place where the ceremony is held and **leave quietly** after it is over. A good way to do this is to designate a "silent arch" that girls enter and become quiet as they approach the ceremony. This might be a tree branch, special rock, doorway, path, etc. As girls leave, they remain quiet until they pass back through the arch.

Types of Girl Scouts' Own

An Inspirational Girl Scouts' Own

A Girl Scouts' Own at camp may be merely a quiet walk around the camp to enjoy the sunshine, the trees, the lovely day. Groups may pause at favorite spots - the camp lodge, the lake, the brook or beach, a campfire circle, a woodland cathedral, hillside, or camp green. Poems, songs, or thoughtful talks on a Girl Scout theme may be presented at each stop.

An International Girl Scouts' Own

A program of songs from other countries may be given before a display of world flags, a map of the world, or a series of "living pictures" - girls costumed according to the country represented and posing as typical family groups, craftspeople, or dancers. One person speaks on Girl Scouting and international friendship.

A Sunrise Girl Scouts' Own

In the spring and summer, particularly at camp, Girl Scouts like to gather at dawn to start the day off with an experience of seeing the sun rise. If arrangements are carefully made and the ceremony is simple, this can be a memorable event. The groups walk silently along a familiar path to a high spot previously chosen for its view to the east. If the ground is set with dew, the group remains standing. The ceremony may consist of a poem or short talk, a song, and then silence while the sun appears. If the time is exact, the group may simply walk to the spot, sing "God Has Created a New Day" just as the sun rises, and then file silently back.

What's in a Scout's Own?

A Scout's Own is usually planned around a theme. The theme can be anything the girls want, but usually it is about important or inspirational ideas, such as the meaning of the Promise, friendship, the beauty of nature. Your troop might have a Scout's Own on a national holiday or one of Girl Scouting's special days. A smaller group usually plans a Scout's Own with the help of it's leader. If you have a large troop, a patrol or small group of girls can be responsible for planning a Scout's Own

These are some ways to express your theme:

Songs for everyone to sing
Shadow play scene
Music played by one or two girls
Poems or Quotations
Words a troop member writes for the Scout's Own
Choral reading
Stories and legends
Girl Scout Promise
Pledge of Allegiance
Thoughts about what the theme means to her (spoken by each Girl Scout)

What Makes A Good Scouts Own?

First, it should have a central idea to give it unity. Sometimes Girl Scouts choose some aspect of the Promise or one or all of the Laws as a theme. A special occasion, such as the Fourth of July, Thinking Day, or Mother's Day may provide the basic idea. In camp, the sun, the moon, or the countless aspects of nature lie around in dazzling profusion, waiting to be "starred" in their own Scout's Own. In the city, too, the wonders of nature are there to be observed, to be searched out and recognized by those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. A well-loved poem or legend may motivate the entire Scouts Own.

Good leadership can do much in guiding the girls toward suitable material. Giving several suggestions from which a choice can be made, helping to compare different selections for programs, and helping to distinguish between what is of value and what is unworthy of inclusion in this type of program are examples of how leaders can be involved in helping the girls plan a Scouts Own. At any event, there is always lively discussion as stories, legends, lives of the famous in history, and fable are included or rejected according to the requirements of the theme, the length of the program and the time available for preparation.

Next the theme must take form. This does not imply elaborate preparation. It simply means careful planning by the girls themselves, with the aid of their leaders. They may decide to use one way, or a variety of ways to present the theme; dramatization, solo or choral singing, solo or choral reading, musical interludes, and background music. Participation by all is desirable, but not mandatory, although the major responsibility may be taken by a nucleus of girls, with everyone joining in the singing or responsive readings. Girls can be encouraged to share their personal thoughts by passing around a special item that each person holds while she speaks; a decorated stick, a special stone.

An attitude of quietness will make it a more meaningful experience for all involved. But, it is the spirit of an "uplifting of hearts" that really makes this ceremony a Scouts Own. And when, the program over, Girl Scouts quietly disperse, it would be with a feeling of inspiration, of having glimpsed "the vision splendid" the poet Wadsworth knew the young could see.

How to Plan:

1. Choose a theme, such as one of the Laws, the Promise, our country, people, citizenship, nature (forests, rivers, mountains), special occasions (Thanksgiving, First Day of Spring), local history
2. Make a list of the different ways you can tell or show the theme
3. Choose one idea to open the Scout's Own
4. Organize order of program
5. Decide who is to lead parts
6. Decide who is to lead the girls to and from the Scout's Own
7. Decide how to end the Scout's Own

Where to have it:

At a meeting (opening, closing, spontaneously when all girls reflect on a shared experience)

1. At Camp (sunrise, campfire, sunset)
2. Quiet place on a trail

Anytime or anyplace, inside or outside, where Girl Scouts are gathered is the right place.

Suggested time that a Scout's Own should last:

Daisy and Brownie Girl Scouts	10 minutes
Junior Girl Scouts	10-15 minutes
Cadette Girl Scouts	15-20 minutes

SOME SAMPLE SCOUT'S OWN

Theme: Friendship

1. Song: "Hello" (Pocket Songbook, pg. 10)

2. Poem: New Friends and Old Friends by Joseph Parry

Make new friends, but keep the old
Those are silver, these are gold
New-made friendships, like new wine
Age will mellow and refine
Friendships that have stood the test
Of time and change - are surely best
Brow may wrinkle, hair grow gray
Friendship never knows decay
For 'mid old friends, tried and true
Once more we reach and youth renew
But old friends, alas, may die
New friends must their place supply
Cherish friendships in your breast
New is good, but old is best
Make new friends, but keep the old
Those are silver, these are gold

3. Song "Make New Friends" (Pocket Songbook, pg. 10)

4. Poem : Ecclesiasticus 6:14

A faithful friend is a sturdy shelter
He that has found one
Has found a treasure

5. Song "Friendship"

Friendship is a shiny thing, a steady beam of light
A lantern on a lonely street, a song far in the night
A smile, a touch of a loving hand, a quiet moment on a hill
And, oh, what a happy little child bringing home a daffodil
Friendship is a binding tie of one soul to another
A gentle soft relationship as children to a father and a mother

Raindrops thumping on an autumn leaf, an outpost on a hill
And, oh, what a happy little child bringing home a daffodil
Friendship is a happy thought, a warmness in your heart
Friends are those who understand, friends will never part
Of two people very much in love in a world that is never still

And, oh, what a happy little child bringing home a daffodil
Friendship feels so warm inside, it heals a broken soul
The road is rough but in the end a love we all shall know
So grab the gladness 'round your heart and let friendship shine through

Remember love and the daffodil and how they both grew
And, oh, what a happy little child bringing home a daffodil

6. Poem: Albert Camus

Don't walk in front of me
I may not follow
Don't walk behind me
I may not lead
Walk beside me
and just be my friend

8. Taking Hold of Hands (a story)

A country girl was on her way to school with her little neighbors. The school bell was ringing and they must climb the hill. It was winter and the path was icy; to slip backward was easier than to climb forward. Then this little maid turned to lead and encourage the group, calling cheerily, "Let's take hold of hands, it's easier taking hold of hands."

Our life is an adventure in comradeship which calls for the taking hold of hands. All growth in understanding involves sharing in the understanding which other people have won. We are highly privileged if we can join hands with them and share what they have learned through costly experience.

But we should remember always that we must give as well as receive. For, much as we need the experience of others, it is equally true that others need the experience which we have won and which we alone can give.

9. The Legend of the Sticks

(Need to have prepared beforehand a bunch of sticks (may be spray-painted silver or gold, enough for one for each girl, plus enough sayings about friendship for one for each girl)

Once, a group of friends were having an argument. They made so much commotion that Sally, the older sister of one of the girls, cam over to see what was the matter. She listened quietly as each one accused the other. "She's not being fair", said one. "It's my turn", said another. "No, it's my turn", said another.

As Sally listened, she began to stoop down and pick up some sticks that were lying on the ground. Finally, the friends, grew quiet and were watching her. Sally then gathered all the sticks together in a bundle and tied them together with a string. She handed the bundle to each girl. "Can you break this bundle of sticks?", she asked. Each girl, in turn, tried to break the bundle, but not one of them could.

Then Sally untied the bundle and separated the sticks. To each friend, she gave one stick. "Now", she said, "see if you can each break a single stick." Of course, the single sticks snapped in two with only the slightest effort.

"All of us are like these sticks", Sally said. "Each one of us, standing alone, is weak. Each one of us can be broken as easily as a single stick. Yet, all of us, working together, can be as strong as this whole bunch of sticks - so strong that nothing can break us."

(Each girl then comes forward and picks up one stick. After doing so, she reads a little saying about friendship and friends - some examples follow)

Let us keep the memories and friendship of today until we come together on another day

More precious than silver and gold are friends - both new and old

Friendship is one mind in two bodies

A friend is someone you can trust

The only way to have a friend is to be one

(Girls then return to their places with their sticks. The leader then goes around and picks up each girl's stick placing them into a bundle and tying them securely. "Now we are again one strong troop working together")

Theme: "Girl Scouts"

Girl 1: **G** is for Girl - that's why we are here

I is for Interest - without that we wouldn't care

R is for Ready - to start to take our place in the world

L is for Living - the Girl Scout way

Girl 2: **S** is for Seeking - to learn, to explore

C is for Country - we'll try to do our share and more

O is for Obligation - to live up to the Promise we've made **U** is for Unity - together, one for all

T is for Trust - without that, we'd all fall

All: I am a Girl Scout

Girl 3: *I have a Promise. It has three parts. Girl Scouts and Girl Guides all over the world* are sisters and friends in this Promise.

All: Repeat the Girl Scout Promise

Girl 4: I have a Law. This is the code by which I try to live. This law should be used daily in every Girl Scout's life -- in all she does in work and play.

All: Repeat the Girl Scout Law

Sing "Whene'er You Make A Promise" (Sing Together, pg. 25)

All: I am a Girl Scout

Girl 5: I have a motto - "Be Prepared". This means that I can be depended upon , whenever I am needed. This is my duty -- to be ready when called upon.

All: I am a Girl Scout

Girl 6: I have a slogan "Do a good turn daily". I will try to help other people.

All: I am a Girl Scout

Girl 7: I have a sign. This I give whenever I repeat my Promise. It is important to stand erect to show my pride in belonging. This reminds me to think straight and to realize my duty as a citizen. I give the Girl Scout sign to other Girl Scouts and Girl Guides *because it is the sign of friendship. The three fingers stand for the three* parts of the Promise.

All: I am a Girl Scout

Girl 8: I have a uniform and am proud to wear it. It must be neat at all times. When in uniform, I try harder than usual to obey the Girl Scout Law.

All: Sing "On My Honor"

Theme: "Promise and Law"

Entire group recites the promise
Each girl tells what the Promise means to her
Divide girls into pairs or equal groups, one for each part of the Law. Each group tells what their phrase of the Law means to them.
Song: "Girl Scouts Together"
Short story or poem
Song: "Whene'er You Make A Promise"
(Have cards with letters on front and "reading" on back for girls to hold)
What the Promise and Law mean to a Girl Scout:

P stands for Partnership with God and our fellow man

R means Responsibility , which when accepted, makes us a better person

O is Opportunities, many opportunities that come to us through Girl Scouting

M is for Moments that we'll treasure always

I stands for Individuality, the mark of a strong person

S symbolizes Service, the keynote of Girl Scouting

E might be Experiences, little things and big ones, too. Maybe that (fill in here with two special troop experiences that happened during the year).

L stands for Laughter, an effective medicine for all aches and pains, emotional and physical

A symbolizes Adventure: the kind of thing that can change an ordinary day into a momentous one

W means Work, good and simple, without it we could not live - merely exist

All: And remember always, A smile is the trademark of a Girl Scout

Song:"Green Trees" and "Taps"

Theme: "Founder's Day"

All: Juliette Low once said:

1st Solo: Did you ever think how wonderful it is that with every new spring, sap rises in trees?

No one knows whence it comes, but it flows from root to branch and makes a dead, bare tree blossom with green leaves.....

And so it is with Girl Scouting: it rises within you and inspires you to put forth your best. In every path of life, you have a chance to show what a Girl Scout can do.

All: Juliette Gordon Low knew that time flies swiftly. Today is soon tomorrow, and all of our tomorrow's lie in the hands of youth. Her gift to youth was Girl Scouting, and her dream, a tree of fellowship grown from a tiny seed.

Light Voices: She knew the seed would ripen

Dark Voices: The tree grew...

2nd Solo: Nourished by faith...

3rd Solo: Watered by service...

4th Solo: Tended by love.

5th Solo: "I've got something for the girls of Savannah, and for all America, and all the world."

Light Voices: She said, in the phone call that made history.

All: Yes, we started it that night. She brought the seed from England, and we helped her plant that seed in the rich soil of Georgia, we twelve.

6th Solo: On my honor, I will try,

2 Voices: Each said
4 Voices: Soon, there were scores of us

6 Voices: Hundreds

8 Voices: Then thousands

All: Now, we are three million strong, each living the Promise.

7th Solo: Let us all repeat it together

All:
On my honor, I will try:
To serve God and my country
To help people at all times
And to live by the Girl Scout Law

Light Voices: Duty, Service, Loyalty ... these were ten challenges

Dark Voices: These the roots our founder planted many years ago

8th Solo: The tree grew strong and flourished

Dark Voices: It's branches - delight in the out-of-doors, joy in the arts

Light Voices: It's leaves - fun, friendship, new things to do

All: Juliette Low knew what girls wanted. She said:

9th Solo: "If it isn't right, the girls won't take it, and it won't last."

All: Three million voices answer:

"It **is** right. It **will** last. Thanks to your inspiration, Juliette Gordon Low."

"The Book of Trees" Scout's Own

Reader: Those of us who are here tonight are fortunate enough to have come in contact with the organization which believes in making a "friend in need, a friend indeed." Let us all imagine that we are in a great forest. The clearing through which all Girl Scouts must enter is our ethical code. All who enter must make the Girl Scout Promise. But once inside, we find many paths - all leading to a way of life on which we can build a wholesome future. In Girl Scouting, we are able to help all our girls take this trail.

Girl 1: Reading from the Book of Trees:

Girl 2: I am the Oak Tree - As sturdy and long-lived as I, so is a Girl Scout's honor.

Girl 3: I am the Holly Tree - Constantly green and holding tight to my leaves as a Girl Scout is ever loyal.

Girl 4: I am a Birch Tree - With my bark and my wood, I am useful and help others as every Girl Scout does.

Girl 5: I am a Linden Tree - My heart shaped leaves are like the hearts of Girl Scouts who are friends to all and sisters to each other.

Girl 6: I am the Aspen Tree - My leaves softly whisper "Courtesy is Thoughtfulness" as every Girl Scout knows.

Girl 7: I am the Elm Tree - Sheltering the little folk of the woods in my gracious branches and roots, I am a friend to all animals, just as every Girl Scout.

Girl 8: I am the Poplar Tree - Tall and straight as a soldier who obeys orders, so does every Girl Scout.

Girl 9: I am the Maple Tree - Brightening the spring, my leaves gay in the fall, I am as cheerful as a Girl Scout.

Girl 10: I am a Hickory Tree - Tough of wood, I keep my nuts stored in strong, tight cases, just as a Girl Scout is thrifty.

Girl 11: I am the Dogwood Tree - In the spring, I stand clean and beautiful in the face, as does a Girl Scout, clean in thought, word and deed, so stands in beauty.

All: (The Conservation Pledge) I give my pledge as an American to save and faithfully defend from waste the natural resources of my country - it's soil and minerals, it's forests, waters and wildlife.

All: Sing "This Land is Your Land"