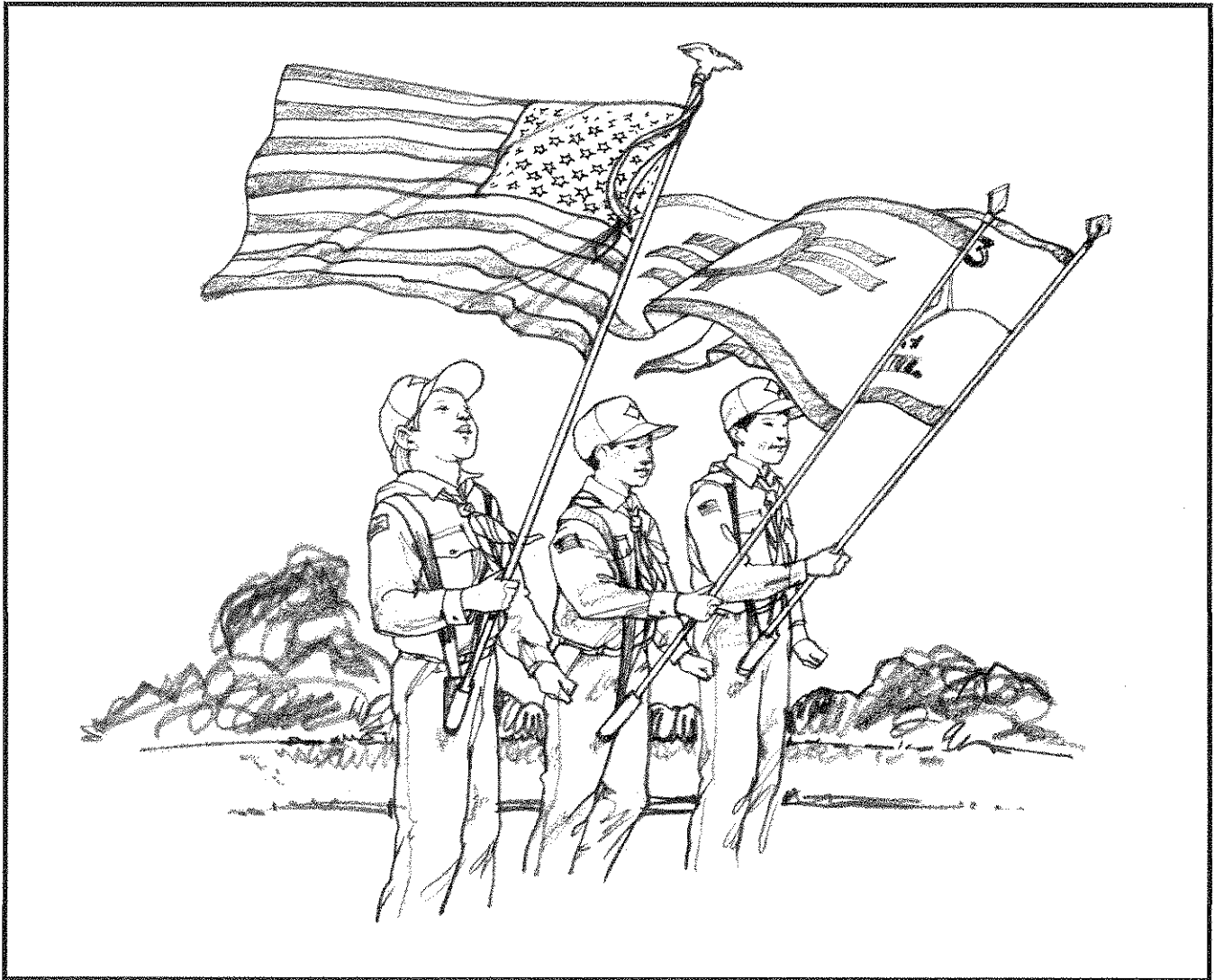


CHAPTER 1

Introduction to Ceremonies



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Why Do We Use Ceremonies?

Ceremonies play an important part in our lives. We have ceremonies to celebrate birthdays, holidays, graduations, weddings, religious events, and many other special occasions. Ceremonies are also an important part of Cub Scouting.

Why do we have ceremonies in Cub Scouting?

- Everyone likes to receive recognition. A den or pack ceremony helps to recognize a boy in a positive way.
- Ceremonies provide meaningful and memorable highlights in a boy's Cub Scouting experience.
- Ceremonies help teach the ideals and goals of Scouting. As boys participate in ceremonies, they "learn by doing."
- Ceremonies focus attention not only on boys but also on families, leaders, and volunteers. All involved earn recognition for their accomplishments.

Ceremonies should be a regular part of den and pack meetings. Ceremonies define the beginning and the end of meetings, and they provide a format for presenting awards. Beyond that, ceremonies can help set the stage for and develop the monthly theme. Using ceremonies stimulates and encourages increased participation in monthly pack meetings.

Do you remember the best ceremony you ever saw? The worst? What was the difference between the two experiences? When you can answer these questions, you'll be ready to put what you know into practice and make a difference in the experience a boy will have when he receives his Tiger Cub badge or crosses a bridge into Boy Scouts. Cub Scouts will remember their awards and how they were recognized for earning them, and families will value these occasions as memorable highlights on the Scouting trail.

What Kinds of Ceremonies Are Used at Den Meetings?

- An **opening ceremony** signals the beginning of the den meeting.
- Present instant recognition in fun and easy ceremonies that acknowledge **progress toward ranks**.
- **Denner installation** recognizes boy leaders and the importance of this position in the Cub Scout and Webelos den.
- **Special recognition** ceremonies mark special achievements reached both in and out of Scouting.
- A **closing ceremony** brings a quiet, inspirational end to the den meeting.

What Kinds of Ceremonies Are Used at Pack Meetings?

- **Opening ceremonies** set the stage for the pack meeting and can be theme-related.
- **Flag ceremonies** teach boys how to handle and present the U.S. flag in a respectful way.
- **Induction ceremonies** welcome new boys and their families into the pack.
- **Advancement ceremonies** celebrate the completion of requirements for Bobcat, Wolf, Bear, and Webelos ranks, and for the Arrow of Light Award.
- **Transition ceremonies** mark the transitions for Cub Scouts from Tiger Cub to Wolf, Wolf to Bear, and Bear to Webelos Scout. **Graduation ceremonies** celebrate the program change from Webelos Scout to Boy Scout. They encourage boys to make the step up to their next challenge on the Scouting trail.
- **Closing ceremonies** bring the meeting to a close and send everyone home with inspirational ideas to think about.
- It is also important to remember **ceremonies for den chiefs and adults**. These ceremonies include den chief inductions, Den Chief Awards, den chief recognition, leader inductions, leader and family thank you's, recognition of leader training, and Cub Scout leader recognition plan awards. These ceremonies let your leaders know that you appreciate the commitment they are making and their efforts toward bringing a quality program to the boys.

There are many other opportunities for ceremonies. Take the time to focus on the presentation of Gold Arrow Points, Silver Arrow Points, Webelos activity badges, Academics and Sports belt loops and pins, the World Conservation Award, National Summertime Pack Award, BSA Family Award, National Den Award, and recognition of tenure and service projects. There are also presentations of Quality Unit Awards, pack charters, and special 25-year or 50-year anniversary awards.

Tips for Effective Ceremonies

When planning your ceremonies, remember these important points:

- **Determine your audience.** Keep your ceremonies appropriate for boys of Cub Scout age. Simple ceremonies are more effective than long, elaborate ones. Boys this age have a short attention span.
- **Alternate responsibility** among the dens for the opening, flag, and closing ceremonies at the pack meeting. When boys are involved, it is easier to hold their attention during the pack meeting.

- **Use a variety** of ceremonies to hold the boys' and adults' interest. Theme-related ceremonies spark the boys' imagination. Keep track of which ceremonies you use and avoid repeating them month after month.
- **Adapt ceremonies** to meet your needs. Packs come in many different sizes, and boys come with different skill levels. Younger boys may need to have someone read their lines while they perform an action or hold a sign. No ceremony is written in stone. Volunteers have written or adapted those presented here to meet the needs of their packs. Feel free to change them to work for you! This makes them your ceremonies. Then try using the All Purpose, All Occasion Ceremony Creator in Chapter 10 to get started writing your own ceremonies.

Tips for Using This Book

Use this book as a launching point for your ceremonies. Photocopy it, scan it, rewrite it! Highlight each person's part and tape it on the back of the prop that person may hold or use. Make sure that the print is large enough to be easily read, even in low-light conditions.

Ceremonies Encourage Advancement

Recognition is important to boys. When they are recognized for their accomplishments, they are motivated to achieve more. The advancement plan provides fun for the boys, gives them a sense of personal achievement as they earn badges, and strengthens family understanding as adult family members work with boys on advancement projects.

Limitations?

All of us are better at some things than others. Some boys and adults in your pack may have additional challenges with physical and/or mental disabilities. When you plan ceremonies, check with adults, leaders, and boys to make sure they are comfortable with their parts. They will help you ensure that the ceremonies you use are both appropriate and fun for all to do. All can play a part when you plan ahead.

What Is Advancement?

Advancement is one of the methods used to achieve the aims of Scouting in all phases of the Scouting program (Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing). The aims of Scouting are character development, citizenship training, and personal fitness.

Advancement is the process by which a Cub Scout meets certain requirements and receives recognition. He progresses from badge to badge, learning new skills as he goes. Advancement is simply a method or a means to an end, **not an end in itself**. Everything that is done to advance and earn these ranks; from joining until leaving the Scouting program, should be designed to help the boy have an exciting and meaningful experience in Scouting.

More information about advancement and recognition can be found in the *Cub Scout Leader Book*.

Cub Scout Advancement Goals

The administration of the Cub Scout advancement program is primarily the responsibility of the pack committee, with the support of the district advancement committee and the commissioner staff. They work together to see that the following standards are met.

- The pack should maintain detailed advancement records to ensure that boys are advancing and that awards are presented promptly to each boy.
- Families of Cub Scouts should understand their role and responsibilities in their boy's advancement. For the boy to receive maximum benefit and growth from his achievement, the adult's standard for completion of any requirement should be based on the Cub Scout motto, "Do Your Best."
- The use of den chiefs (Boy Scouts or Venturers who help with Cub Scout and Webelos Scout den meetings) can help stimulate advancement through example, as well as encourage boys to continue in the Scouting program.
- Presentation of badges or other recognition items should be a part of **each** monthly pack meeting.
- Badges and other recognitions should be presented as soon as possible after a boy completes the requirements. He should be recognized during a ceremony at the monthly pack meeting.
- Packs and troops should be encouraged to work together to ensure a smooth transition from the Webelos den to the Boy Scout troop.
- Suggestions for advancement ceremonies may be found in *Cub Scout Program Helps*, the *Webelos Leader Guide*, the *Cub Scout Leader Book*, at monthly Cub Scout roundtables, and in this book.

