



Virtual Court of Awards Planning Guide

Ideas for engaging families in this important Troop Ceremony

Ceremonies are a cherished tradition to help Girl Scouts mark special events throughout the year, such as bridging to another level, earning awards, or celebrating Girl Scouts' Founder Juliette Gordon Low.

Often, ceremonies are planned by troops as in-person experiences where family members may be invited as observers. This resource will help Leaders and their Girl Scouts to plan a virtual Court of Awards Ceremony where the family members are **participants**, instead of an audience.

What is a Court of Awards?

A Court of Awards (CoA) is a special ceremony recognizing girls' accomplishments. Girls are presented with their badges, year pins, and other awards earned. Volunteers and parents may also be recognized during the ceremony. The Court of Awards can be held anytime during the year, at any location, and as often as the troop desires. Whether your troop has one, two, three or more Court of Awards each year, it's important to plan special times to present girls with their awards earned. And, this is a great opportunity to involve the entire family!

Your troop Court of Awards can be a **15-minute ceremony held at the end of a troop meeting or a special stand-alone event**. Short and snappy ceremonies are just as memorable, so do what works best for your troop and its families.

Why include families in a Court of Awards?

A Court of Awards is a great way to bring girls and their families together to acknowledge the accomplishments achieved. Ceremonies are an important and exciting part of Girl Scouting. Ceremonies reinforce values, pass on [traditions](#), recognize achievements, strengthen friendships, and give life to the beliefs established by the Girl Scout Promise and Law. They are a means for girls to express their feelings, friendship, patriotism and service. Including families in the ceremony will provide families with a greater understanding of their girl's accomplishment and help you to engage them in their Girl Scout's experience, which means you'll have more help and support!

Virtual Court of Awards Planning Guide

What's in this planning guide?

In this packet you will find everything needed to plan a fun and memorable Court of Awards that includes family engagement and translates into a virtual environment. From checklist to sample script, we have you covered in your planning! This includes:

Family Involvement Ideas.....	2
Elements of a Good Ceremony.....	3
Before You Send the Invitations.....	3
Virtual Tools.....	3
Short & Snappy Ceremony Planner.....	4
Court of Awards Checklist.....	5
Court of Awards Presentation Ideas.....	6
Ceremony Ideas for Family Engagement.....	7
Reflecting on the Court of Awards Ceremony.....	9
Uniform Placement.....	9
Sample Script for Girls, Troops, and Families.....	10

Additional Resources: *Coming soon!*

- CoA Invitation Template
- Certificate template
- Photo prop resources
- PowerPoint template
- Zoom backgrounds
 - CoA Celebration
 - Gold Award Girl Scout
 - Silver Award Girl Scout
 - Bronze Award Girl Scout
- Social media filters
 - Court of Awards Celebration
 - Gold Award Girl Scout
 - Silver Award Girl Scout
 - Bronze Award Girl Scout
- CoA Program Sample
- Flat Juliette

Family Involvement Ideas

Family members can be invited to help with all parts of the ceremony, from planning the event to running the ceremony itself. Adults can also help by shopping for badges, being your Virtual Venue technology helper, making decorations, preparing the awards for presentation, or even providing snack. (Yes, you can have snack time at your virtual ceremony!) You will find all sorts of ideas in this guide.

Elements of a Good Ceremony

Girl-led planning! To create a ceremony that is extra special to the girls and unique to the group, involving girls in the planning process is imperative. As a way to personalize ceremonies, encourage girls to include songs, poems, readings, quotes, and skits.

Inclusiveness. Ceremonies should be inclusive, involving families in both the planning process and the ceremony itself. A good ceremony will make everyone a participant, including the family members! In addition, you will need to account for different abilities and access to technology. (See Appendix for Virtual Tools, Tips & Tricks.)

Imagination. Make each Court of Awards ceremony different. Once you have a basic outline that appeals to your girls, it's okay to use your template and make the next one unique by switching up the theme, decorations, or opening.

Intent. Good ceremonies have a clear purpose. The purpose of a Court of Awards ceremony is to present the girls with awards earned and celebrate accomplishments with the families. (See Award Presentation Ideas.)

Simplicity. The ceremony should be simple enough for all participants and everyone in attendance to understand. You might want to start with our Short & Snappy Court of Awards template and then add in options based upon girl and family input.

Structure. A ceremony will typically have three parts: the opening, the main ceremony, and the closing. (See Appendix for Virtual Court of Awards SAMPLE Script and Short & Snappy template.)

Tradition. While a great ceremony should reflect the ideas of the girls, it's important to make sure that there are still traditional parts included such as reciting the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and welcoming guests as they arrive. (See Appendix for Award Presentation ideas, Program Sample and Program Script.)

Before You Send the Invitations

Planning your Court of Awards is really exciting! But, before you send out those invitations, check to see if the event is following Girl Scout safety guidelines by reviewing [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#). You will not need [additional insurance](#) for a virtual ceremony. If you are hosting an in-person event in the future, [additional insurance](#) to cover family members as participants (not an audience) may be required. (See Appendix for Court of Awards Checklist and Timeline.)

Virtual Tools

There are several free and low-cost tools that Girl Scouts are using for virtual meetings and events. While we cannot endorse or support specific online meeting tools, we encourage you to look at these and alternative options and discuss the pros and cons with parents and girls to determine the best solution for your troop. Find more information about Video and Audio-Conferencing Tools, Chat Tools and Additional Low-Cost Tools on our *Girl Scouts at Home* page [here](#).

Keep up with the latest information on Virtual Meeting Resources [here](#).

Short & Snappy Ceremony Planner

A Court of Awards can be a 15-minute ceremony held at the end of a troop meeting, an hour-long stand-alone event planned a month in advance, or anything in between; all can be meaningful for your girls. This checklist will help you use this packet to plan a Short & Snappy Ceremony in 10 easy steps.

Pre-Ceremony

1. Invite family members via email to join the girls online for the last 15 minutes of their virtual Troop Meeting. *“Dear Troop 123. You’re invited to join us for our virtual Court of Awards Ceremony to be held at the end of our troop meeting on Date at Time.”*
2. Ask an adult to purchase badges/awards girls have earned & prepare them for presentation/distribution (put on a ribbon or make a slide showing the badge).
3. Ask an adult to customize and share their screen during the ceremony. If possible, include photos of the girls working on badge activities.
4. Let participants know in advance to prepare for sharing (See step #6 below).

Ceremony

5. Use the [sample script](#) as written for the word BADGE.
6. Choose one sharing option as badges are presented: Leaders describe the badges, girls talk about the activity enjoyed while earning the badge, or family members share something they’ve observed about their Girl Scout (new skills, knowledge or attitude). *It’s best to let everyone know in advance so they are ready to respond.*
7. Invite the family to sing along (on mute) while playing a recording of a favorite troop song or have one of the girls teach the song. A repeat song or one with hand-motions can engage all family members.

After Ceremony

8. Send out information showing uniform placement of badges/awards earned.
9. Send a thank you to adults who assisted with your ceremony.
10. Ask for volunteers to help the girls plan their next Court of Awards!

Court of Awards Checklist

Adjustments can be made to this schedule to accommodate larger or smaller ceremonies.

1-3 Months before ceremony

- ☐ Decide who will be invited (Troop members only, another troop, Family and friends, Service Unit members) and if multiple events are needed.
- ☐ Set Your Budget.
- ☐ Choose date(s) and decide your virtual platform
- ☐ Create and send invitations
- ☐ Plan the ceremony with your troop members. Ask girls to select ideas from Ceremony Ideas for Family Engagement section of this document that they would like to include. Keep in mind how families can be involved in an active role of this event.
- ☐ Assign roles to girls and families, such as:
 - ☐ Conduct opening ceremony
 - ☐ Coordinate family activities.
 - ☐ Create PowerPoint.
 - ☐ Customize program sample.
 - ☐ Coordinate refreshments
 - ☐ Deliver/ship supplies.
 - ☐ Purchase awards and other items.
- ☐ Review ceremony presentation so you are prepared.

2 weeks before ceremony

- ☐ Deliver or ship any necessary supplies for the ceremony
- ☐ Confirm attendance of girls and families
- ☐ Confirm all tasks are being completed
- ☐ Rehearse your ceremony as needed
- ☐ Final review of program pamphlet

Week of ceremony

- ☐ Confirm all participants received their supplies
- ☐ Final review of presentation materials such as PowerPoint, etc.

After ceremony

- ☐ Evaluate event and make notes for future ceremonies
- ☐ Refer to Ceremony Ideas for Family Engagement of this document for family reflection ideas

Court of Awards Presentation Ideas

Remember, the girls are first in Girl Scouting – so letting the girls lead the award presentations will always make it a better, more girl-focused ceremony. There are several free and low-cost recognition tools that Girl Scouts are using to celebrate girls and adults during virtual or in person Court of Awards ceremonies. Please see our Pinterest page for many more ideas! pinterest.com/girlscoutsoc

- Branded PowerPoint, especially for CoA, celebrating Girl Scout Awards
- Branded zoom background Giving girls who earn an award a special background (ie: all girls who earned the Silver Award get a silver award background JPEG file dropped in the chat box to use immediately
- Template for certificates that can be mailed in advance to each girl earning an award, then have girls open their packet in turn at the ceremony
- Another resource for customizing and presenting your award: [GSOC's badge card](#)

Ceremony Ideas for Family Engagement

A Court of Awards is a great way to bring girls and their families together to acknowledge the accomplishments achieved. The following ideas are ways to incorporate family participation in your ceremony. Keep in mind that some suggestions may require advanced preparation. Depending on your budget, you may choose to do everything electronically or mail or drop supplies off for the Girl Scouts in your troop.

- ❑ **Budget** - Be sure to include all expenses in your budget. A virtual Court of Awards ceremony can be as simple as having everything handled electronically or providing supplies, certificates, and goodies if you have funds for this.
- ❑ **Invitations** - Invite families to attend and sign up to help at the virtual event. Plan to send invitations 2 weeks to 1 month prior to the event so families can schedule accordingly. If this can be included in a yearly calendar, even better!

Create a digital invitation, print one, or have the girls create invitations for their family.
- ❑ **Ceremony** - Plan the outline of the ceremony and assign roles for involvement in the ceremony, including if there will be people designated to handle purchasing of supplies and snacks, porch deliveries, or shipping of supplies.
- ❑ **Virtual photo opportunities** - Having visuals will help to engage families in the virtual Court of Award ceremony. Assign a girl and/or adult to take the lead on collecting photos to create a slide show or to use in an electronic presentation.

Photo Ideas:

- Show photos in a slide presentation before the CoA ceremony begins.
 - Photos should be reflective of the awards being presenting at the ceremony.
 - Ideas include: Photos of the experience related to the award being given, i.e badge activity or girls with families during the activity/project.
 - Families can create [bitmojis](#) for those that will be in attendance.
 - Backgrounds with a set theme or one that can be created for the troop or by the family to be viewed during the event.
 - Create an official “arrival” for each family member and then they can walk the red carpet...this can be done inside or out. Using beach towels inside from the hallway to the viewing area or on the front walkway to the front door.
-
- ❑ **Celebration supplies** - Get creative with fun supplies (budget permitting) to help families get excited about the Court of Awards Ceremony.

Plan to do a porch drop off/pick up or send celebration packages in the mail. You could even create a **Porch “Pride” Box** as a fun way to deliver materials.

Celebration Supply Ideas:

- Photo props - Paper cut outs of award graphics, Girl Scout trefoil, beanie, or signs for participants to congratulate each other while muted on a video call that say, “Congrats!”, “Way to Go” etc. Get creative with fun printable props.
- Awards the girls are earning.
- Print a certificate for each Girl Scout. During the ceremony, electronic certificates can show on the screen, while family members present a hard copy certificate to their Girl Scout. Create a certificate for each girl.
- Give each girl a banner to hold up or hang behind them to decorate their space for the ceremony.
- Noise makers - Include noisemakers for everyone in the family to spread joyful noise after each Girl Scout is presented an award.
- Decorations of your choice!

❑ **Acceptance Speech** - Each Girl Scout can “walk” up to the stage and share a short speech (about 5 lines); this is a great opportunity for her to share her accomplishments.

❑ **Family Activities** - Keeping the family engaged is key for this event. Listed below are some fun activities that everyone can do at home:

- Family scavenger hunt: A list of 7-10 things to find and bring back
- Memory game: Show a group of items, hide them, remove one item, and families guess what is missing.
- [Kahoot](#) or other electronic trivia game about the troop, girls, events, and/or general Girl Scout history
- Create a Flat Juliette to join your family photos for the celebration.

❑ **During the CoA**, the following can take place to share the information and history of Girl Scouts with the families in attendance. (not in any particular order):

- Recite Girl Scout Law
- Friendship Circle - Have girls teach their families. Share the history of this closing ceremony.
- Invite girls and family members to share something special about Girl Scouts
- Everyone can dress up for the event
- Share recipes in advance so girls can create “fancy” finger foods to eat with their family before, during or after the virtual Court of Awards

Reflecting on the Court of Awards Ceremony

Share a meal - Talk about the experience over a meal, like dinner. Caregivers may want to encourage siblings to join in on the conversation by asking questions about the awards earned, or if they did not understand something. This is a great opportunity for your Girl Scout to share about how she earned a badge or award and explain what it means to her to earn a Girl Scout award.

Here are some conversation starters and questions to ask your Girl Scout:

- Now that you've earned this badge, what new skills do you have or what do you now know that you didn't before?
- What did you have to do to earn the badge or award?
- What was your favorite part about earning this badge?
- What surprised you when working on the badge/ award activities?
- What would you tell a younger Girl Scout about earning this badge or award?
- What badge or award would you like to earn next? Or what topic would like to earn a badge in next?

Uniform Placement

Be sure to find out where the new badges and awards go on your Girl Scout's uniform. Find uniform placement by following [this link](#) to view videos showing where to place insignia and badges or click on the PDFs below for each Girl Scout level.

Remember: Earned awards, badges, and petals go on the front of the uniform. Fun patches from events, field trips, or patch programs go on the back of the uniform.



[Girl Scout Daisy](#)

[Girl Scout Brownie](#)

[Girl Scout Junior](#)

[Girl Scout Cadette](#)

[Girl Scout Senior](#)

[Girl Scout Ambassador](#)

Sample Script for Girls, Troops, and Families

Prep:

1. Assign each girl a part, whether speaking or choosing an image to share on screen.
2. Ask girls with speaking parts to make a card with an assigned letter from the word “BADGES” with a speaking part on the back; they can practice their speaking part beforehand.
3. Mail awards to the parent or guardian of each girl to be presented during the Court of Awards.
4. Ask girls to make a thank you card for their family.

Supplies:

- A card for each letter in the word “badges” with the speaking part on the back.
- An image to share on screen for each letter, i.e., Juliette Gordon Low quote, a word cloud image or other image.
- An image with the Girl Scout Promise
- An image with the Girl Scout Law

Procedure: Each girl holds up her letter and reads her part. Together the letters spell the word.

Optional: Take a screenshot of girls with families holding the letters, images, and/or awards.

OPENING: WELCOME

Girl 1: Welcome to our Court of Awards! We will start with each Girl Scout introducing herself and her family.

Girls take turns introducing themselves and their families.

Girl 2: Thank you all for joining us today! We are glad you are here to help us celebrate. Please mute yourself unless you are the person speaking.

Girl 3: We will start by reciting the Girl Scout Promise and Law. The Promise is important to us! It inspires us to do our best. It explains the ways Girl Scouts agree to act every day toward one another and to people in the world around us.

Girl 4: We invite all our families to say the Girl Scout Promise with us. For this part, you can unmute yourself as we say it together with (Girl 5) leading us.

Girl 5: Ready, begin.

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.

**Members may substitute for the word God in accordance with their own spiritual beliefs.*

Girl 6: The Girl Scout Law acts as a guide for everyday living. When we gather with our troop, or with other Girl Scouts, we join in reciting both the Promise and Law to remind us that we belong to a big, powerful, sisterhood. Please join us in reciting the Girl Scout Law, with (Girl 7) leading us.

Girl 7: Ready, begin.

I will do my best to be

honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong, and
responsible for what I say and do,

and to

respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place, and
be a sister to every Girl Scout.

“BADGE” CEREMONY*

Girl 8: B stands for the BADGES earned that will be presented today. Our Girl Scout Founder Juliette Gordon Low said, “A badge is a symbol that you have done the thing it stands for often enough, thoroughly enough, and well enough to BE PREPARED to give service in it. You wear the badge to let people know you are prepared and willing to be called on because you are a GIRL SCOUT.”

Show image.

Girl 9: A is for the positive ATTITUDE we gain from knowing that the time and energy needed to complete these badges have given us new knowledge.

Show image.

Girl 10: D is for the individual DEVELOPMENT we have experienced by completing these badges. We are proud of our accomplishments and we are happy to celebrate them with you today.

Show image.

Girl 11: G is for GROWTH we have shown by earning these badges. Each step has helped us to build our skills. Plus, we've made some memories and had a lot fun along the way!!

Show image.

Girl 12: E is for ENERGY needed to earn these badges. Badges challenge us to build skills and explore new knowledge and skills in STEM, Entrepreneurship, and the Outdoors - and they give us satisfaction in accomplishment.

Show image.

Girl 13: S stands for SELF-RESPECT. By developing our talents and strengthening our weaknesses, we grow pride in ourselves.

Show image.

**This format can be used to explain letters in the name or category of a BADGE, name of a specific AWARD, or a ceremony THEME chosen by the girls, etc. Simplify the wording for younger girls.*

MAIN CEREMONY: PRESENTATION OF BADGES AND AWARDS

Leader: And so, we have badges (and awards) to be given at this Court of Awards. As your leader, I know the work you have done to earn them. I know you are eager to wear them. So it is with great pride in your accomplishments that we present them to you today.

Call each girl by name to make the presentation, describing the badge(s) or award(s) she has earned, inviting her to share one activity she enjoyed and one thing she learned when completing the badge/award, and inviting her family to present her badges, year pins, and any other awards earned.

In turn, each family is also invited to say a few words about their pride for their Girl Scout and how Girl Scouts has helped them to be a leader.

CLOSING: THANK YOU

Leader: In closing, the girls have planned (songs, poems, readings, quotes, skits) to share.

Girls share in teams, groups, or individually. They may teach a song to families to sing together.

We congratulate all girls, and thank you, families, for the support and encouragement you give your Girl Scout (and our troop).

Call out individual contributions of parents/family members. Girls present them with a thank you card, and hugs and/or high-fives.