

## OPENING CEREMONIES

### SCOUT LAW OPENINGS

1. The Scout Law can be used as 12 separate ceremonies. One ceremony could be devoted to the first point, with a reading of the explanation, as in the following example:

**Troop:** A Scout is trustworthy.

**Leader:** A Scout tells the truth. He keeps his promises. . . .

Eleven meetings later, the subject of the ceremony would be “A Scout is reverent.”

2. The Scout Law is recited by all new Scouts.

3. The newest Scout and the oldest Scout lead the troop in reciting the Scout Law.

4. One point of the Scout Law is assigned to each of 12 boys. Each boy, in turn, takes a step forward, salutes, recites his point of the Law, and steps back in line.

### SCOUT OATH OPENINGS

1. Call the troop to attention. All Scouts give the Scout sign and recite together the Scout Oath and Law.

2. After saying the Scout Oath, read the points of the Scout Law with the Scouts repeating each point, as below:

**Scoutmaster:** A Scout is trustworthy.

**Scouts:** A Scout is trustworthy.

Continue through all 12 points of the Scout Law.

### UNITED STATES FLAG OPENINGS

1. The troop is in single-rank formation. The flag is carried to the front; the patrol leader of the honor guard patrol leads the troop in the Pledge of Allegiance: “I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.”

2. The troop is formed by patrols in two lines facing each other. The flag is marched up the aisle between the lines, with the Scouts saluting. The flag bearers halt at the head of the lines and march about, whereupon the troop gives the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. The troop is in a horseshoe formation with the flag in the center. Each Scout in turn steps forward one step, salutes, and steps back—or all salute together.

4. The troop is in single-rank formation. Bring the Scouts to attention and turn out all lights except a single spot or flashlight focused on the flag. A Scout from the color guard patrol recites (doesn’t sing) the first verse of “The Star-Spangled Banner.” The troop then sings the verse and the lights are turned on.

5. The troop, in line, faces a wall where a small pulley or ring with a flag line is fastened. The troop comes to attention. The flag is slowly hoisted while the bugler plays “America,” “God Bless America,” or “America the Beautiful.”

6. In your words, explain the meaning of the Pledge of Allegiance. Then call the troop to attention and give the Pledge of Allegiance.

7. Call the troop to attention. Say, “Hand salute!” and give the Pledge of Allegiance followed by the Scout sign and the Scout Oath. Pause after each part and, in your own words, give the meaning of it.

8. Call the troop to attention. Salute the flag. Recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

### TROOP FLAG OPENINGS

1. Salute the troop flag. Give the troop yell or sing the special troop song.

2. The Scouts salute the troop flag and repeat after the senior patrol leader the troop’s special pledge, such as: “As a member of Troop (No. ), I pledge that I shall always strive to be a good member of my patrol. I will take part in all troop activities, advance in Scoutcraft, and act as a Scout at all times.”

3. Form the patrols as spokes of a wheel, with the troop flag in the center. The patrol leaders hold onto the flagpole with the left hand. Behind them, their Scouts place their hands on the shoulder of the boy in front of them. The troop sings an appropriate Scout song, such as “Hail, Hail Scouting Spirit” or “Trail the Eagle.”

### PATRIOTIC OPENINGS

There are many different kinds of patriotic ceremonies. A single patriotic ceremony, no matter how good, is bound to lose some of its meaning after endless repetition, so be sure to use a variety.

**1. Scout 1 (lighting a red candle):** The red of my flag is the lifeblood of brave men ready to die or worthily live for this, our country.

**Scout 2 (lighting a white candle):** The white of my flag is for purity; cleanliness of purpose, thought, word, and deed.

**Scout 3 (lighting a blue candle):** The blue of my flag is for truth and justice, like the eternal blue of the star-filled heavens.

**Scout 4 (while saluting with the other three Scouts):** My flag—the flag of America, home of liberty, land of opportunity, where people of all races and creeds live in peace and friendship together.

2. The troop salutes the flag, gives the Pledge of Allegiance, then sings a verse of any of several patriotic songs.

3. A narrator reads from the writings of authors and poets who have helped us to understand what it means to love our country.

## CLOSING CEREMONIES

1. Close the meeting with the lights dimmed and the troop singing "Taps," unaccompanied or led by a muffled bugle (or two bugles, one giving the call, the other the echo effect). Each boy slowly raises his outstretched hands in front of him during the first two lines ("... from the sky ..."), then lowers them as the song is being sung.
2. The troop is in formation. Lead the Scout benediction: "Now may the great Scoutmaster . . ." (all make a gesture toward the heavens) "... of all Scouts . . ." (*all make a sweeping motion from right to left at shoulder height*) "... be with us until we meet again." (*All bring their right hands to their hearts, and bow their heads.*)
3. The troop forms a circle. Have each boy make the Scout sign and with his left hand grasp the lifted right wrist of his neighbor on the left. Then they recite the Scout Law or troop pledge.
4. Finish with the All America Yell ("A-M-E-R-I-C-A, Boy SCOUTS, BOY Scouts, B-S-A!"), followed by a Skyrocket Applause ("Ssss," the hiss of the rising rocket; the bursting, "Boom!"; the soft exclamation as it spreads, "Ahhh"; and the terrific boy-satisfying yell, "Scout!").
5. Retire the flag with proper camp ceremony using a bugle. If there is no bugle, whistle "To the Colors" and "Retreat."
6. Have one round of patrol yells, then the troop yell. The Scoutmaster says, "Good night to you." The Scouts respond, "Good night to you, sir (ma'am)."
7. The troop forms a brotherhood circle, arms around each other's shoulders. The song leader leads the troop in the "Scout Vespers" song or a similar good-night song. When the song has ended, the Scouts leave the room in silence.
8. The troop forms a circle. Each Scout crosses his arms in front of him and grasps his neighbors' hands. They all sing "Auld Lang Syne," swaying softly in rhythm.
9. The troop is lined up. The Scoutmaster says, "Be prepared." All Scouts respond in unison, "We are prepared!"
10. All make the Scout sign and recite together the Scout Oath or Promise.
11. All Scouts hum "Taps" while one boy says the Scout Oath or Promise.
12. The bugler plays "Taps" while one Scout says the Scout Oath or Promise, stating each phrase after the bugler plays a phrase from "Taps."
13. While the Scouts sing "God Bless America" very softly, the appointed leader recites slowly and clearly the Scout Oath, as outlined below. (This could also be used as an opening ceremony.)

**Leader:** On my honor I will do my best . . .  
**Scouts** (*singing*): God Bless America, land that I love . . .  
**Leader:** To do my duty to God and my country . . .  
**Scouts** (*singing*): Stand beside her and guide her . . .  
**Leader:** And to obey the Scout Law . . .  
**Scouts** (*singing*): Through the night with the light from above . . .  
**Leader:** To help other people at all times . . .  
**Scouts** (*singing*): From the mountains . . .  
**Leader:** To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.  
**Scouts** (*singing*): To the prairies, to the oceans white with foam . . .  
**All:** God bless America, my home sweet home. God bless America, my home sweet home!
14. If a flag ceremony was used in the opening, it is appropriate to retire the flag as a closing ceremony. Scouts could whistle the bugle call, "To the Colors," as the flag is retired.