

Flag Retirement Ceremony

This is a solemn ceremony and should be done with utmost respect for the retiring of the flag of our country

.Items needed: Flag to be retired, sharp scissors, flashlight, fire to burn the flag.

People needed:

- The Color guard - - four girls, one for each corner of the flag.
- One or two girls will cut the flag;
- One or two girls will lay flag pieces on the fire.

Script

GIRL SCOUT IN CHARGE: "Color guard, advance." (may carry flag folded or open on a pole). "Please stand for the Pledge of Allegiance."

An appropriate reading or poem (see sample below)

Song – optional

GIRL SCOUT IN CHARGE: "When the flag of our country has become worn or damaged, the proper way to dispose of it is through burning or burial. We are here tonight to pay our last respects to this particular flag with love and reverence. Each stripe stands for one of the thirteen colonies, and each state is represented by a star on a field of blue." When reader finishes, the cutter starts cutting the first stripe. When it is entirely cut, she lays it over the arm of another color guard member to lay on the fire. As each stripe is laid on the fire, the Girl Scout- in-Charge calls out the name of the thirteen original colonies in the order in which the states were admitted to the Union. The first stripe stands for Delaware, then Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Virginia, New York, North Carolina, and Rhode Island. The field of blue with white stars, which stands for all the states, is burned last. It should be laid on the fire with two girls holding the corners, not tossed onto the fire. Closing: A song such as "God Bless America"

The girls are dismissed in silence while taps is played or hummed by the group

I am Old Glory!—A Reading for Retiring Worn-out Flags

I am Old Glory; for more than 9 score years I have been the banner of hope and freedom for generation after generation of Americans. Born amid the first flames of America's fight for freedom, I am the symbol of a country that has grown from a little group of 13 colonies to a united nation of 50 sovereign states. Planted firmly on the high pinnacle of American Faith, my gently fluttering folds have proved an inspiration to untold millions. Men have followed me into battle with unwavering courage. They have looked upon me as a symbol of national unity. They have prayed that they and their fellow citizens might continue to enjoy the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, which have been granted to every American as the heritage of free men.

So long as men love liberty more than life itself, so long as they treasure the priceless privileges bought with the blood of our forefathers; so long as the principles of truth, justice and charity for all remain deeply rooted in human hearts, I shall continue to be the enduring banner of the United States of America. Remember as you look at your Flag, which is the symbol of our nation, that it is red because of human sacrifice. It is blue because of the true blue loyalty of its defenders. It is white to

symbolize liberty - our land of the free. The stars are symbols of the united efforts and hope in the hearts of many people striving for a greater nobler America. (At the beginning of the ceremony the speaker should say who the flag grommets will be given to. They are a form of good luck and can be carried or worn by the person who receives one.) [Lower the colors or unfold the flag.] Our flag has been used so much, that it is no longer a fitting emblem to display, so we are respectfully burning it.

FIRST STRIPE: The 13 stripes stand for the original 13 colonies which are; Massachusetts, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Delaware, Maryland, North Carolina, Georgia, and New Jersey.

SECOND STRIPE: The white stands for purity

THIRD STRIPE: The red stands for courage

FOURTH STRIPE: "Give me liberty or give me death"

FIFTH STRIPE: "One if by land, two if the sea"

SIXTH STRIPE: We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution of the United States of America.

SEVENTH STRIPE: We hold these truths to be self evident that all men are created equal. They are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights. Among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

EIGHTH STRIPE: Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof

NINTH STRIPE: Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech or press.

TENTH STRIPE: "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth to this continent a new nation."

ELEVENTH STRIPE: The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

TWELFTH STRIPE: "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

THIRTEENTH STRIPE: "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind." Each state is being represented by a star on a field of blue, which signifies a new constellation being formed. "As we place it in the fire, let it burn brightly and remind us how truly our flag represents our country."

* Nothing should ever be added to the ceremonial fire after the Flag has been burned (out of respect)

* The next morning the girls that actually burned the flag and their leader will gather the ashes to be buried.

* This could be included as the last step in the ceremony if they wanted all of those in attendance to participate.

* If the ashes are entirely out, they can be carried to the burial site in a box, if the ashes are still hot, a bucket could be used, then place by shovels-full into the hole.

* For the burial site: A hole is dug, the dirt placed carefully beside it and the ashes are placed into the hole by handfuls. Fill the hole back up with dirt, a marker can be placed.