

Bridging Ceremony Resource



What is “bridging” and who is it for?

For girls who are already Girl Scouts, a “bridging” (or bridging ceremony) is a ceremony honoring and celebrating their graduation to the next Girl Scout level. Think **Daisy** to **Brownie**, **Brownie** to **Junior**, **Junior** to **Cadette**, **Cadette** to **Senior**, **Senior** to **Ambassador**, and even **Ambassador** to **Adult**! This progression marks important milestones in each girl’s journey through Girl Scouting and should be celebrated by the troop, family, and close friends.

When does a bridging happen?

GSUSA and your council automatically recognize a girl’s level in Girl Scouting based on their year in school. As soon as one school year ends and another begins, she is considered having moved to the next grade level—but when you choose to host your official ceremony is really up to the troop. You might decide to follow the school year calendar and host your bridging ceremony in late May or early June to complement the last day of school. You might also choose to bridge during the summer, once all girls have had some free time to finish up the last of the badges or journeys they started. Another option is to wait and bridge at the start of the new Girl Scout year, in the Fall.

Why do we bridge? And why is it important?

Think of it like this: A bridge is something that crosses a gap and gives us access to new and exciting things that wait to be discovered on the other side. A Girl Scout bridging ceremony does the same thing: it gives girls the opportunity to physically make the leap from one level to the next!

Bridging is an important transition in a Girl Scout’s life. It’s a defining moment when a girl becomes aware of her achievements and is ready for new adventures and responsibilities. Celebrating this change should be fun, personalized, and memorable for everyone involved. And most of all, it should be designed by the girls in true partnership with adults.

How to Plan a Girl-Led Bridging Ceremony

At its core, a bridging ceremony usually has **three parts**:

1. **Opening:** Guests are welcomed, and the tone is set.
2. **Main section:** The ceremony is explained, and the girls celebrate moving from one level to the next.
3. **Closing:** Girls can participate in friendship circles and thank their guests.

Each of the ceremony’s parts offers plenty of room for the girls’ creativity and individuality, but it should always focus on paying tribute to Girl Scouts as they move forward.

Tips, Hints, Ideas, and Resources for Your Next Bridging Ceremony

- Devote sufficient time for planning the ceremony. Good ceremonies have a clear purpose and enrich the meaning and mood of the event.
- Take safety precautions when using candles or fire, or when the girls construct bridges or platforms. Refer to Volunteer Essentials and the Safety Activity Checkpoints (available through your council) for specific advice.
- Add personal elements to traditional ceremonies. Use favorite poems, songs, stories, and sayings, or have the girls write something new.
- Make it symbolic but keep it fun. It can be sentimental but should also be fun for the girls. Including a flag ceremony, a poem recitation, girls saying what they've learned through the year are all great but if the girls are not into all that, follow their lead and maybe encourage just one symbolic element.
- Include a physical bridge. There are a lot of ways to represent a bridge: an actual bridge in a park, a homemade bridge in a back yard, stepping stones, an archway, or you can simply walk from one end of the room to another!
- Don't go too crazy! Encourage the girls to keep it simple and meaningful rather than overdone and stressful.
- Only go to Pinterest as a last resort. Pinterest has a lot of great ideas but can also be overwhelming. You can get sucked in and spend hours gathering ideas to propose to your girls only to find out that they are happy with just a short little ceremony and some ice cream!
- Above all, be thankful. The ceremony should include a few minutes where girls and leaders give thanks to their parents and family members who have helped them through the years. Do you have a special caregiver in the troop who is always there to help when you need it? As the troop leader, you can take a moment to give them a special Girl Scout pin or certificate.



Multi-Level Girl Scout Bridging Program Outline

This can be used as a base for a Service Unit bridging ceremony or if this is for your troop just choose the parts for the levels you have.

- Welcome
- Pledge of allegiance
- Girl Scout Promise
- “As each girl cross the bridge today, you will receive a candle. This symbolizes the light you carry to the world as Girl Scouts.”
- Each leader will introduce their troop and say 2-3 things they accomplished, then name girls one by one as they cross bridge.
 - **Daisies bridge** – receive unlit candle; welcomed by Brownies
 - **Brownies bridge** – receive unlit candle; welcomed by Juniors Brownies bridge – receive unlit candle; welcomed by Juniors
 - **Juniors bridge** – receive unlit candle; welcomed by Cadettes or older girls in general
 - **Cadettes** through **Ambassadors** bridge – receive unlit candle; welcomed by next age level or adults
- Ask girls to join us at the front of the stage. Candles are lit.
- Girls sing Make New Friends.
- Close with a Friendship Circle.

NOTE: You can make this unique by adding in special songs, poems or activities that the girls may want to share. You can also recognize special adults at this time.

