Ceremonies

Conducting Public Ceremonies

Session Length: 50 Minutes

Learning objectives:
- To review the types of public ceremonies.
- To review the factors that need to be considered when conducting a public ceremony.
- To discuss how to conduct call out ceremonies according to national guidelines, as listed in the Guide to Inductions.
- To review a framework for successful call outs and the ten inductions principles applied to the ceremony.

Required Materials:
- Easels and Flipcharts (Large one) and markers
- Power Point presentation file, computer and projector (if available)
- The Guide to Inductions
- 3’ of masking Tape

TRAINER PREPARATION

The room should be set up with the podium at the front and a flip chart on each side of the room to facilitate their use. Room configuration should be based on facilities available and the number of attendees. Ideally, for a larger class with available facilities, the attendees should be seated at tables in rows, so that everyone can face the front of the room and see the presentation.

This session should be presented by a youth Arrowman who has experience as a ceremonialist in public ceremonies such as a WEBELOS crossing over or the Calling-out Ceremony. The presenter should familiarize themselves with the various ceremonies presented and be able to discuss them, but be able to remain open to the fact that the ceremonies presented are not the only examples being used. An adult may assist with the presentation in discussing how these programs necessitate the support of the advisers, scoutmaster, and other adults. The trainers must be outgoing and energetic, but present the material in a serious manner so the participants will not feel that these programs are less important.

Trainer Tip: Prior to the arrival of the participants, print on the flipchart or the session name and your name and contact information. Review and prepare materials needed for session.

SESSION NARRATIVE

Introduction: 3 Minutes

The trainer begins by introducing himself giving the audience his name, lodge, position, and other information as desired. The trainer should also give a brief background as to why they are teaching this class and why the subject is important to them. The trainer should then go into the objectives of the course.
Ceremonies - Conducting Public Ceremonies

- To review the types of public ceremonies.
- To review the factors that need to be considered when conducting a public ceremony.
- To discuss how to conduct call out ceremonies according to national guidelines, as listed in the Guide to Inductions.
- To review a framework for successful call outs and the Ten Inductions Principles application to the ceremony.

Definition of Ceremonies: 3-5 Minutes

The trainer should pose the question to the group: What is a ceremony? Answers should be solicited from the group before presenting the Webster definition: Webster definition:

- A formal act or series of acts prescribed by ritual, protocol, or convention.

The trainer should then solicit types of ceremonies, not related to the Order of the Arrow, and write them on the flipchart. Some examples of ceremonies include:

- Wedding
- Baptism
- Confirmation
- Graduation
- Presidential Inauguration
- Court of Honor

In the Order of the Arrow, when we think of ceremonies, what immediately comes to mind are the Pre-Ordeal, the Ordeal, the Brotherhood Ceremony and the Vigil Ceremony. On the surface, the purpose of these ceremonies is to communicate the meaning of the Order to candidates. However, we know that they are much more.

They serve to inspire, to educate, and to guide us on our journey. They have been carefully scripted for this purpose, down to the importance of every word, and every movement. Through symbolic progression, we are carried forward through each step of self-discovery on our journey as members of the Order.

There are, however, other ceremonies conducted by members of the Order of the Arrow. Unlike the aforementioned ceremonies, these ceremonies are conducted in public view to a variety of different audiences, at a variety of different events. These ceremonies do not have the benefit of being scripted by National, but rather have been written locally by the individual Lodges. Because of this, there is a lot of variation in some of these ceremonies, which reflects the individual characteristics of the Lodges who practice them. Variations are not a bad thing, because they allow each Lodge to develop and practice their own traditions.

The trainer should then solicit types of public ceremonies which can be conducted by the Order of the Arrow, and write them on the flipchart. Some examples of ceremonies include:

- Order of the Arrow Call Out
- WEBELOS Arrow of Light
- WEBELOS Crossover
- Campfire opening/lighting
- Summer Camp Opening
- Eagle Scout Court of Honor
- Broken Arrow Ceremony

There are many sources for these ceremonies, and examples of each will be provided. It should be noted, however, that these ceremonies are neither written by, nor endorsed by the National Committee of the Order of the Arrow.
Order of the Arrow, but are provided only as examples. Local Lodges perform these ceremonies as a service to their Council’s or districts troops, packs and the Council or district itself.

If your Lodge is going to perform any public ceremony, it is recommended that the Lodge to review it carefully beforehand and make any necessary changes to the script. In doing this, the ceremony not only becomes unique to the Lodge, but it will also ensure that the ceremony is presented in the best possible manner.

The ceremonies that have been collected for presentation as part of this class have been sourced from various web sites on the internet and from other Lodge contacts. They are not the only examples available, nor are they the required ceremonies that have to be used. A lodge may choose to use one of these examples, find and use a different example from another Lodge, or write and develop their own.

**Ceremony Script Reference Library**

Once a Lodge has determined which ceremonies they want to use, they should create a permanent reference for them, so that when the need arises, the ceremonies are readily at hand.

One possibility for a ceremonies reference would be to include the chosen ceremonies of the Lodge as an addendum to your lodge plan book. This way, they can be reviewed yearly, updated and revised as part of the Lodge’s traditions. In addition, the Council will be able to review them yearly as well, which will help serve as a reminder to the Council of all the ceremonies the Lodge is able to perform.

The script is just one part of the presentation, and probably the easiest to complete, especially if the Lodge has a reference library as previously discussed.

When performing public ceremonies there are several other factors that need to be considered in order to present a quality ceremony: planning; location; audience, symbolic progression and presentation.

**Factors for Quality Ceremonies:**

**Planning:**

With any event, planning is of primary importance. Once the need for a public ceremony has been determined, careful planning is essential in ensuring its success. It is important to plan to ensure the following have been identified and confirmed: (Trainer should poll audience for suggestions and record on flip chart. The finished list should include all the following items)

- Ceremony desired
- Date
- Time
- Venue
- Script
- Ceremonialists to perform the ceremony
- Required ceremonial garb
- Required props
- Names of honorees

With the goal being a completed and impressive ceremony, the plan needs to include all the elements needed to complete that task.

**Location:**

The location of the ceremony plays a great part in the potential impact of the ceremony. The location can dictate how the ceremony is presented, flow of characters, and provide opportunities or restrictions...
in the presentation. The amount of available space, arrangement of seating, elevated stages, campfires or prop locations need to be evaluated prior to conducting a ceremony so necessary adjustments can be made.

Outdoor locations can help to add to the dramatic effect of the presentation of certain ceremonies and can allow for additional effects. WEBELOS crossovers and Arrow of Light Ceremonies, conducted in the forest, are a great example of this. The ambiance provided by a wooded backdrop with stars overhead with a real campfire casting its glow over the characters.

Audience:

It is extremely important to understand the audience for the public ceremony, because knowing the audience helps you understand how the ceremony needs to be presented. The audience for an Arrow of Light or WEBELOS crossover does not have the same expectations as those at an Eagle Court of Honor.

For the WEBELOS ceremonies, these events are probably the audience’s first exposure to the OA. For many of them, it is the first time they have witnessed the OA in action, and young men, dressed in Native American attire, are sure to impress the audience. As long as the WEBELOS who are crossing are called up and involved in the ceremony, and the ceremony is done tactfully, the audience will be satisfied and pleased. Although nobody wants to make mistakes when performing ceremonies, for this audience, there is more leniency to deviate from the script, and more tolerance for minor errors.

In contrast, when performing an eagle ceremony, or a call out, the audience is very familiar with the Order of the Arrow. The ceremony has to be spot on, because the audience understands the event, understands the Order of the Arrow, and has most likely seen the ceremony performed before. Their expectations are high, and they expect the ceremony to be conducted very well.

Symbolic Progression:

Symbolic progression is one of the 10 induction principles, but it applies to the other public ceremonies as well. Of the 10 induction principles no symbol or symbolic procedure should be mentioned or used unless and until it is called for in the authorized ceremonies. The meaning of the nationally prescribed induction unfolds in a logical, systematic manner, and this progression should not be violated in other public ceremonies.

For example, it is inappropriate to use the names of Allowat Sakima, Meteu, Nutiket and Kichkinet in public ceremonies. In Cub Scout or WEBELOS ceremonies, the chief should be Akela, as that is appropriate for the program. In other ceremonies, characters can be referred to as the chief, the medicine man or the guide.

Obviously, it is acceptable to use an arrow in an arrow of light ceremony, because the symbolism applies to the Cub Scout Program. To use that same arrow in a summer camp opening, however, could be construed as a violation of symbolic progression, and should be avoided.

Presentation:

Presentation has the most elements of the topics to be discussed, because without good presentation, no ceremony will be successful.

Practice:

Practice is an essential part of an effective presentation, and one of the biggest factors in a ceremony going smoothly. If the ceremony has several characters, it is important that they practice together. Members should observe each other to learn their techniques and learn how to cooperate with them. Practices should be serious, but be sure to make them fun.
Team Unity:

Team unity is a hard concept to grasp, but it is result of teams practicing together. When teams spend time together practicing, but also outside of ceremonies, bonds develop that help to strengthen and improve ceremonial performance. Eventually team members will be able to predict each others actions, and perform together, not as individual characters, but in unison as a coherent team.

Communication:

When conducting public Ceremonies, many times “actions speak louder than words.” The ceremonial presentation is a combination of both oral and non-verbal communication methods.

Oral communication should be spoken clearly with annunciation. Lines should be spoken in complete sentences in proper English, not line by line. When portraying American Indian characters, lines scripted in “broken English” should be revised to reflect proper grammatical construction. “Broken English” reflects negative stereotypes and therefore has negative connotations to American Indians.

**Trainer Tip:** Dealing with any ethnic stereotypes can be a sensitive topic and should be addressed with respect and care.

Non-verbal communication includes gestures made not only with the hands, but with the entire body. As a general rule, the majority of communication is non-verbal, but often in ceremonies, the only messages sent using non-verbal methods are forced and awkward. This is because the person performing does not know the script, and because they are focusing on remembering their lines, the non-verbal communication cannot flow naturally. When ceremonials know their lines thoroughly, their posture, gestures and expressions become part of their performance, enhancing their presentation.

Although in normal conversation, non-verbal communication can be subtle, in ceremonies it is typically exaggerated because the gestures are created to enhance the oral tale. Just as the words are part of the script, so are the motions that accompany them. Gestures should be meaningful, and appropriate.

**Trainer Tip:** Examples of good and bad gestures and non-verbal communication methods from your personal experience can be added to enhance the understanding of this topic.

Props:

Many public ceremonies require props as an integral part of the ceremony, and these should be accounted for as part of planning (e.g. bridge for crossovers). However, there are other props that can be used that can add effect and atmosphere to ceremonies. One of the best props to incorporate is a drum. As a background for the entrance and the conclusion of a ceremony, a drumbeat provides great atmosphere. Along the same lines, flute music can provide the same type of background.

Another element/prop that be incorporated into outdoor ceremonies is a fire. In the evening, ceremonies performed to a backdrop of a glowing fire adds a great atmosphere that accentuates any presentation.

The effect of the fire can be further enhanced with remote fire starting (but always have a backup!). All fire related effects must comply with the guide to safe scouting.
Attire:

Ceremonial costumes are critical for ceremonies that are Native American in nature. Ideally, ceremonial costumes should reflect the local American Indian culture. With a bit of research, costumes which are authentic to local traditions can be created, adding to the presentation.

If American Indian costuming is going to be used, it is very important that it is done properly. They should be as authentic “looking” as possible. There is an emphasis on “looking” because it is possible to construct an authentic looking costume without the expense of authentic construction that can be associated with real beadwork/quillwork, buckskin, etc. (Trainer should solicit suggestion from the audience on methods of creating authentic looking ceremonial costuming)

If American Indian costume is not a part of the ceremony, the appropriate attire is the Boy Scouts of America dress uniform with OA sash

In all ceremonies presented by the Order of the Arrow, as these are Order the Arrow events, Arrowmen present and participating should be wearing their OA sashes

Trainer Tip: “Costume” is the appropriate word to describe the attire. Avoid “regalia” or “ceremonial clothes” as these carry connotations

Purpose of the Call Out and National Guidelines: 3 Minutes

The purpose of a call out is to officially recognize each elected Scout as a candidate for membership in the Order of the Arrow. The call out is a form of public recognition used to communicate the honor of being selected for membership into our Order to members, non-members, and the public.

Its dignity must impress all with the high ideals and standards of the Order. It should serve to intensify a Scout’s desire to become a member.

The National Committee of the Order of the Arrow does not provide lodges with a specific call out ceremony. The committee has instead produced a list of items that all call out ceremonies must include. Each lodge should develop its own call out ceremony that incorporates these items as well as information about its lodge history and traditions.

Keys to a Successful Call Out: 3-5 Minutes

The trainer should begin by asking the participants to brainstorm a list of items that they feel should be included in a call out ceremony. Following approximately three minutes of brainstorming, the trainer should review the list below. Discussion may or may not be warranted for each topic, yet the trainer must ensure the group understands that the list of mandatory items MUST be included in every call out ceremony in order to adhere to national guidelines.

Items that every call out must include:

- Purpose of the Order of the Arrow.
- History of the Order of the Arrow in Scouting.
- History of the lodge.
- Reason for selection.
- Recognition of candidates: calling-out every candidate’s name, unit number and community.
- Challenge to the candidates to continue their pursuit of membership in the Order of the Arrow.
- After the ceremony, distribute Spirit of the Arrow booklet 1 and information about all upcoming Ordeals to the candidates.
A letter of recognition and welcome from the Lodge Chief.
- The giving of the Scout handclasp.
- Welcome from the Lodge/Chapter Chief.

A Successful Framework for the Call Out Ceremony 8-10 Minutes

There are several audiences to consider when writing and performing a call out ceremony, from the Troop or Team, to the Candidate, to the Lodge. Each of these entities has expectations from the call-out, and it is the duty of the Lodge to meet these needs. In addition to including all key elements in a call out ceremony and keeping the target audiences in mind, the following should be considered:

Make Everyone Aware of the Importance:
- The call out serves to publicly recognize the elected candidate, in addition it challenges nonmembers and entertains members.
- A successful production always follows a bell curve pattern, bringing the audience up to a climactic point, and then gradually brings them down.
- The lodge should concentrate their efforts on putting together an exciting ceremony, but leaving behind an important message for the audience to silently ponder at the close.
- The buildup in excitement should lead all persons witnessing the call out to realize the importance of Order of the Arrow membership.

Announce the Candidate:
- The name, unit number, and community of each candidate must be announced clearly.
- Each candidate must be given the same opportunity for recognition.
- It is important to get the correct spelling and pronunciation of each candidate’s name.

Conduct with Dignity:
- The ceremony should be conducted with an overriding sense of dignity.
- Rough stuff, making candidates kneel, hazing, teasing, marking the candidate in any way or any other kind of physical or psychological abuse has no place in any Order of the Arrow and is strictly forbidden.
- Any physical contact in any Order of the Arrow ceremony must be “symbolic” in nature.
- Physical tapping of the candidates can be considered hazing and therefore is not allowed.

Call Out Locations:
- Choose as impressive a location as possible for the call out, but have a backup in case of rain.
- Call-out ceremonies can be held in public at an evening retreat ceremony, at a special gathering of all Scouts and Scouters in camp, at mealtime in a dining hall or at a campfire.
- The bluff of a cliff in camp, the parade grounds, a local OA circle can all have a powerful effect if the ceremony is conducted in an impressive manner.
- Supplement the script by using the location to its advantage.
- If the callout takes place near a lake, the characters may want to involve canoes. (When using canoes or operating around water follow the Guide to Safe Scouting and use PFDs as required.)
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Make it Impressive, Keep it Short and to the Point:

- Ceremonies should be dignified and impressive. They should have an Indian theme. Campfires, drums, and dancing can be used to supplement, but not overwhelm, the honor.
- The successful call out should last no longer than 15 minutes, and should leave a strong impression on the candidate and the non-member.
- Keep things moving, avoid repetition, and keep to the point: the recognition of the candidate.

Items not to Include:

- Be sure to not violate the principle of “Symbolic Progression” as described in principle number 9 of the “Ten Induction Principles”.
- When in doubt about any item consult the Ten Induction Principles as a guide to what should and should not be included.

Safety:

- Safety is very important in all OA activities.
- Call-outs must be conducted in a safe manner, in accordance with the policies and procedures of the Boy Scouts of America and the local council.
- First aid and fire protection resources must be adequate and well deployed.
- Water and boat safety must be taken into consideration if canoes or floating stages are used for the ceremony.
- Personal floatation devices must be used in accordance with BSA policy.
- Youth protection policies are considered if the candidates are not visible while hiking on a trail.
- In addition to taking normal precautions, some council or district’s camping and health and safety committees require the prior approval of call out scripts and staging.

Who Should Attend?

- Other Scouts, parents, family, friends and any interested members of the community may witness the call out.
- These guests should not be routinely invited to any other Order of the Arrow Ceremonies.

The Ten Induction Principles and the Call Out: 5-7 Minutes

The Ten Induction Principles apply throughout the entire induction sequence, from unit elections to Brotherhood. Each specific principle may not be as relevant for some parts of the induction as some others. The Induction Principles that have special relevance for call outs are:

Principle 2 - Eligibility:

The right to membership is given only by the scouts within a candidate’s unit during an authorized Order of the Arrow election. (Only the candidate himself can overrule their decision. The candidate should be given a choice at all points of the induction sequence to determine whether he/she is ready for the next step he/she is about to take.)

Principle 3 - Candidate’s Compliance:

The candidate has the continuous choice of meeting the tests of the Ordeal to the best of his ability or withdrawing. (Candidates must respond to any challenges issued during the call out to adhere to this principle. A challenge may consist of a series of questions posed to the candidate along a trail, or questions posed to the group of candidates at the call out site.)
Principle 4 - Discretion:

In cases where the strict application of the tests and requirements of the induction is not possible, the Lodge may choose an alternative that will meet the spirit of the induction, and the quality of the candidate’s experience. (Challenges to the candidate should not be at a level intense enough to warrant a possible rejection of a challenge, or decision to withdraw from the ceremony. Candidates who are handicapped should be given challenges that they are capable of meeting. For example, if a candidate is unable to walk the specified trail to or from the call out site, the lodge must provide an alternative means of transportation.)

Principle 6 - Importance of the Individual:

All actions and procedures must recognize the worth, dignity, and separate identity of the individual and his present or potential ability to govern himself. (Careful scripting of the ceremony will ensure that the candidate is properly recognized for the honor bestowed upon him by his unit. The public viewing the ceremony should also be aware of the importance of membership in the Order.)

Principle 9 - Symbolic Progression:

No symbol or symbolic procedure should be mentioned or used unless and until it is called for in the authorized ceremonies. (The meaning of the nationally prescribed induction unfolds in a logical, systematic manner. The focus of the call out ceremony and the progression of the call out must not reflect any ceremonies beyond the call out. In short, no symbolism or text from the pre-Ordeal, Ordeal or Brotherhood ceremony should appear in the call out ceremony. What characters should take part in the call out? The ceremonial principles should not reveal their names until they issue the series of challenges in the pre-Ordeal. It is, therefore, inappropriate to use the names of Allowat Sakima, Meteu, Nutiket and Kichkinet in call outs. If the characters are referred to by name, it would be more appropriate to call them guide, chief, etc.)

Examples of violating symbolic progression are:

- Using lines from the Pre-Ordeal or Ordeal text.
- The firing of an arrow, which is a focal part of the Pre-Ordeal.
- The use of the bow, bowstring, and arrow in a ceremony
- Giving the obligation.
- Giving the admonition.
- Reciting any part of the Legend.
- Putting candidates on silence before Meteu’s challenge in the pre-Ordeal ceremony.
- The placing of the hand on shoulder
- Binding the candidates with rope.
- Using the names of any of the four principals.
- The use of the W. W. W.

Principle 10 - Active Membership:

Lodge policy must recognize that one who understands the Obligation of the Order and is striving to fulfill it is an active member; his dedication in itself accomplishes the major service of the lodge. (The callout is used to strengthen this principle. Not only does it reinforce the message conveyed by the selection of the candidate for membership in the Order, but it helps to remind members of the importance of the example to set in the unit. The candidate has been elected due to his example. His role as a member will be to strengthen that example.)
Summary and Questions: 3 Minutes

The trainer may wish to address any questions at this time, and briefly review the objectives for the session.

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Because of the time limitations of an LLD, there are no interactive activities planned. If there is an additional time two activities that can be rolled into free or optional time are as follows:

Activity: 15-20 Minutes

Trainer should challenge the participants to take a few minutes and script a ceremony for OA opening a campfire for a Cub Scout event, or other event. After allowing a few minutes to compose script, invite some participants to share their ideas, and provide positive feedback and suggestions.

Activity: 10-15 Minutes

Review photos, video or a script of a Call Out and critique for compliance to the national guidelines. Suggest alternatives and changes.

APPENDIX: SUGGESTED VISUAL AIDS

The following is a recommended list of flip chart pages that can be used for visual presentation.
Ceremonies - Conducting Public Ceremonies

OA Ceremonies

Public Ceremonies

• Sources
• Review
• Library.

Factors to Consider

• Script
• Planning
• Location
• Audience
• Symbolic progression
• Presentation

The Call Out

Purpose

Keys to Success

• Purpose of the OA
• History of the OA in Scouting
• History of the lodge
• Reason for selection
• Recognition of candidates
• Challenge to the candidates
• Spirit of the Arrow Booklet
• Upcoming Ordeal Information
• A letter of recognition and welcome from the Lodge Chief
• Scout handclasp
• Welcome from the Chief

Successful Framework

Call Out Ceremony

• Consider the audiences
• Troop or Team
• Candidate
• Chapter and Lodge

Successful Framework

Call Out Ceremony

• Make Everyone Aware of the Importance
• Announce the Candidate
• Conduct with Dignity
• Call Out Locations
• Make it Impressive, Keep it Short and to the Point
• DO NOT INCLUDE...
• Safety
• Who Should Attend

Questions?

The Ten Induction Principles and the Call Out

• Principle 2: Eligibility:
• Principle 3: Candidate’s Compliance
• Principle 4: Discretion
• Principle 6: Importance of the Individual
• Principle 9: Symbolic Progression:
• Principle 10: Active Membership

Lodge Leadership Development

Order of The Arrow
The Guide to Inductions

The Order of the Arrow Handbook
   An official OA Publication

The Guide for Officers and Advisers
   An official OA Publication