

Grand Howl and Flag Ceremony

Note: this format has not changed a great deal over the years, but the new wording instead of DYB and DOB came into effect in 2000. It is imperative that we try to ensure uniformity with this as much as possible, to ensure that when Cubs encounter other Packs on state or district camps they are not left wondering what everyone else is doing. It is also a great way to show that we are indeed “all in the great worldwide brotherhood of Scouting” if we are all saying the same words!

An adult leader is to lead the ceremony, with the Sixer or nominated Cub calling out “Do Your Best” and doing the flagbreak. It is a welcome to the Akela as their leader, and a reference to the fact that they intend to keep their promise. Before starting the Grand Howl, give them a gentle reminder to tidy themselves up (eg shirts tucked in, socks pulled up etc).

The Grand Howl is just that – it should be yelled out! When going into the circle, try to have eye contact with every Cub at least once throughout the ceremony. This gives them the feeling that you are really listening to them as they call out their welcome, and it also helps to keep an eye on the ratbags and let them know by a frown that they should be behaving in the ceremony.

Akela (or nominated leader) calls the Cubs into the Pack Circle by calling sharply and loudly “Pack, Pack, Pack”. The Cubs yell back in answer as they run in to form the circle “Paaaaack” (long and drawn out).

Once the Cubs are in the Pack Circle, Akela (or the nominated leader for the ceremony) will say “Pack Alert”. All Cubs and Leaders must stand to attention. The Akela then walks into the centre of the circle with her arms extended out horizontally. When she drops her arms down by her sides, this is the signal for the Cubs to drop down to a squatting position (like a wolf on its hind legs), with their fingers in the salute on the ground like paws.

They then yell out “Akela, We’ll Do Our Best!” After yelling this, they all rise to their feet, and their front paws become ears instead, with their fingers in the salute formation on either side of their heads. The Sixer calls out to remind the rest of the Pack “Do Your Best”. The Cubs then drop their left arm, and remain with one hand up at the salute position, and yell back the answer “We’ll Do Our Best”. During this, the Akela salutes and turns slightly so that she can have eye contact with every single Cub one after the other as they yell this out. This is a form of acknowledgement that she hears and appreciates their welcome. The Cubs then drop their salute and Akela returns to her position at the edge of the circle.

She may ask the Cubs to turn to face the flag (depending on where it is in your hall). The nominated Sixer or Second will then move forward to ‘break’ the flag. Once it is open, the Pack salutes the flag, and the Sixer moves back to join the circle. It is preferable for the Cub to walk around the outside of the circle to reach the flag, and not through the middle of the circle.

At the end of the night, the Grand Howl is still done first, but the flag is then saluted before being lowered. Upon lowering the flag, make sure that the Cubs know not to let the flag touch the ground as this is symbolic of dragging your country in the dirt.

PS. I have referred to Akela as “she” throughout this example, partly through force of habit and also because it is confusing to read if both genders are constantly referred to in the text.