

Plan an Eagle Court of Honor

Congratulations on earning your Eagle Scout rank! You are continuing a proud tradition in Scouting America and in Troop 202. After you have received confirmation from national Scouting America that you *are* an Eagle Scout, you may begin planning your Eagle court of honor. This document is intended to provide guidance as you plan the event.

There are only a few rules as to what *must* be included in a proper Eagle court of honor. You will want to talk with your family and decide what is important to include in your court of honor to make it special and memorable. Here are a few planning suggestions:

- Determine a date for your court of honor. Check that the Scoutmaster and your master of ceremonies are available. Avoid scheduling a conflict with a troop outing or other commitment. As soon as you have selected a date, send invitations.
- Reserve a location for your program. The default location for Troop 202 courts of honor is usually St. Elizabeth Seton Church, but some courts of honor have been held elsewhere. Other location options might include the candidate's place of worship, home, special outdoor venue, or Eagle service project location. There may be a fee for reserving some locations. To request a room at the church, you can contact Mrs. Susan McRoberts in the church office.
- Most Eagle candidates target a program length of 30 to 45 minutes. Often, the final program will stretch a bit in length as you and other speakers ad lib.
- Include other Scouts in your program. You may also want to include special people who have helped you on your path to Eagle. One reason for holding a court of honor is to acknowledge your achievement. Another is to encourage progress by younger Scouts on the path to Eagle. Also consider what role the troop SPL might play.
- Maintain a proper tone for the ceremony. It's completely appropriate to include humor, but a relatively serious program will make a better impression and emphasize the important milestone you have achieved.
- You may want to choose a theme for the program. Typical themes center on the Scout Oath and Law, the ranks on the path to Eagle, your own unique Scouting experiences, the symbolism of the Order of the Arrow, or the history of Scouting. Sometimes, props are used to enhance the program. Examples include candles, rank badge posters, photographs, and slide shows.
- Approach someone to be the master of ceremonies. An experienced adult Scouter can help you ensure that the program moves along in the proper pace and sequence.
- You will need to prepare a written script and make copies available to your Scoutmaster and master of ceremonies prior to the court of honor. You will want copies for others with speaking parts on the day of the ceremony. You should ask all who have parts in the program to arrive at least 30 minutes early to rehearse briefly.
- Prepare a program for attendees to follow. You may also want to have a guest book for attendees to sign.
- You may have seen some elements featured in previous courts of honor that you would like to include in yours. Examples might be an official call to order by a representative

of the council or district, parading of the flags by the troop Color Guard, letters from our state's Senators or Governor. These things are not automatic. You will need to make arrangements for them in advance.

Elements typically included in an Eagle court of honor script are:

- Welcome
- Introduction of honored guests
- Invocation
- Presentation of the colors
- Pledge of Allegiance
- Recitation of the Scout Oath and Law
- Declare the court of honor open for the purpose of awarding the rank of Eagle
- Escort the Eagle candidate forward (usually by an escort of Eagle Scouts)
- Theme content and candidate's path to Eagle
- Declaration that the candidate has met the requirements of the rank
- Eagle promise, Eagle charge (led by an Eagle Scout, often joined by all Eagle Scouts present)
- Presentation of badge, neckerchief/slide, pin, parent/mentor pins
- Special presentations (letters, parent comments, etc.)
- Candidate comments (thank-you to leaders and mentors, advice to younger Scouts)
- Declare the court of honor closed
- Benediction
- Retire the flags
- Announce a reception if planned

Resources:

Cake – It is common to have an Eagle-themed cake at a reception following the ceremony. A cake typically must be ordered at least one week in advance, and can be obtained at Kroger, Sam's Club and other local bakery centers. If you plan to order a cake with the BSA logo (emblem, badge, fleur de lis), contact Gina Sherrill at the council office (317-813-7065 or gina.sherrill@scouting.org) for a trademark release you can present to the bakery. You'll need to tell Gina the name and address of the bakery, how many cakes are being ordered, what images are desired on the cakes, who will pick up the cake, and the date of pick-up.

Color Guard – To schedule the Troop 202 Color Guard, you will need to approach the Color Guard Commander or the adult mentor to the Color Guard Commander.

Date – The Troop 202 calendar can be found on the troop website. You will want to confirm availability of the Scoutmaster, your master of ceremonies, and the site. Once you decide on a date, send invitations and ask the Troop Committee Chair to add your event to the troop calendar.

District Representative – It is appropriate, but not required, to have a district or council representative available to open and close your court of honor. You can contact the Troop Committee Chair for assistance.

Eagle Badge, Pins – An Eagle badge/pin set may be purchased at the Scout Shop in Indianapolis.

Eagle Rank Certificate – You will receive an Eagle rank certificate from Scouting America. You may purchase a frame at the Scout Shop in Indianapolis if desired.

Invitations – You can purchase invitations at the Scout Shop in Indianapolis, or you can prepare them on your computer using clipart available online. You may send the invitation by email to the troopwide distribution list.

Letters – It is optional but customary for Eagle candidates or their parents to contact notable individuals and request letters of acknowledgement and congratulations. You can find links on the Eagle page of the troop website.

Master of Ceremonies – Choose a master of ceremonies who is familiar with your path to Eagle and experienced in planning and presenting courts of honor.

Neckerchief and Slide – The Eagle neckerchief and slide may be purchased at the Scout Shop in Indianapolis. Troop 202 typically uses either the red, white, and blue Eagle neckerchief.

NESA Membership – You will receive information about membership in the National Eagle Scout Association at the time that your rank is confirmed by Scouting America. You must send the membership form and payment directly to NESA if you wish to join the organization. A discount is offered to new Eagle Scouts.

Programs – You can purchase blank programs at the Scout Shop in Indianapolis, or you can prepare programs on your computer using clipart available online.

Props – The troop has several props, including flags and candle holders that can be used for your court of honor. You may also be able to get ideas from Eagle Scouts and their parents in the troop. Even if candle holders are available, remember to purchase candles. Consider using an electronic lighter rather than a butane lighter, as the frequent click of a butane lighter may detract from the atmosphere of your ceremony. (Note: Candles may not be allowed in some areas of the St. Elizabeth Seton church building.)

Reimbursement – If you request, Troop 202 will reimburse you for several of the items you must purchase for your court of honor. Your out-of-pocket expenses for only the Eagle pin/patch set, invitations and programs, neckerchief and slide will be reimbursed, up to a limit of \$100. The cost of food, including cake, is not reimbursed. You must submit receipts to the Troop 202 Treasurer to request reimbursement.

Troop 202 Eagle Plaque – As soon as your Eagle rank is confirmed by national Scouting America, notify the troop Advancement Chair so that the Troop 202 Eagle plaque can be updated with your name/date and available for your court of honor.

Venue – To reserve space at St. Elizabeth Seton, contact Susan McRoberts (Troop 202 room scheduling liaison at the church).

Eagle Scrapbook – Troop 202 has a scrapbook of all Eagles since the troop was formed in 2002. In preparation for your court of honor, please prepare a scrapbook page and submit it to the Troop Committee Chair. The page must be 12" x 12", one-sided, and must include your first and last name, date of your Eagle rank, and the title of your Eagle project. You may include other information or photos showing highlights of your Scouting journey if you choose.