



Gilwell Field Assemblies Overview

This overview applies to all days of a Wood Badge course. Actual content covered at assemblies may vary by day and will be detailed in the lesson plans for each day's assembly.

Gilwell Field Variations

- Before a Wood Badge course begins, staff members should designate the area that will serve as Gilwell Field.
- A course with its first days based in the outdoors—at a Scout camp, for example—may well have an actual field to serve as the Gilwell Field assembly area. It should have flagpoles capable of displaying an American flag, Pack 1/Troop 1 flag, and one other flag (or more).
- When the opening days are based indoors—at a conference center, for example—staff can use the main assembly room for Gilwell Field gatherings. In some settings, the square of participants and staff can be arranged around the perimeter of the space; in other rooms the patrol members may simply stand at their tables as they take part in the proceedings. Flags can be displayed on flagpoles or hung vertically against a wall.
- When Wood Badge participants embark on the outdoor experience portion of the course, the spirit of Gilwell Field moves with them. Staff should designate a Gilwell Field assembly area in the vicinity of the various patrol campsites and again establish a method of displaying the appropriate flags. This may be done with rustic flagpoles, with lines tossed over tree branches, or by tightly stretching ropes horizontally between two trees and hanging the flags from them (a video presentation is available online).
- Local conditions will dictate the actual arrangement of people on the field. The graphics in the lesson plans serve as sample formations. See note below about troop guide placement.

Opening Flag Ceremony

- The assistant Scoutmaster for program should assign staff members to conduct the Day One opening flag ceremony, including presentation of the historic flag, descriptive reading, and patriotic song to model a proper flag ceremony to participants at the first Gilwell Field assembly. On subsequent days, program patrols will be expected to use these elements as well.

Invocations

- Invocations and benedictions have been introduced at Gilwell Field assemblies, troop meetings, and campfires in response to recommendations from the National Council's Religious Relationships Committee. These recommendations are not a statement of policy, and course directors may adjust the frequency with which



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prayers are offered to achieve a balance with respect to their participants' preferences.

Safety Moments

- A Safety Moment is required for every Gilwell Field assembly. The quartermaster should deliver this brief, daily announcement for safety awareness. The day's topic can be chosen to align with the location and local conditions or any other of the safety topics relevant to the group.
- BSA has created a collection of Safety Moments—discussions for Scouts and Scouters that pertain to a wide variety of potential hazards—that may be chosen for delivery. These can be found at <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/safety-moments/>.

Troop Guide Placement

- The den chief/troop guide placement in each day's assembly is very important and symbolizes the changing role that occurs as the patrol becomes more independent and self-sufficient.
 - **Day One:** The den chief leads the den to their place on Gilwell Field.
 - **Day Two:** The troop guide follows the patrol on to Gilwell Field and lines up at the end of the patrol.
 - **Day Three:** The troop guides join their patrols and then are invited to join the staff line.
 - **Days Four and Five:** The troop guides line up at the designated spot with the rest of the staff.
- The Day Four Gilwell Field Assembly lesson plan provides an optional layout that integrates the day's youth staff members into the assembly formation, if desired.

General Guidelines

- The program on Gilwell Field needs to move along: extended and funny but time-wasting "presentations" by staff or patrols should be discouraged.
- The program patrol should be told by their troop guide to walk the most direct route to the flag poles and not try to stay in step or count cadence.
- When the program and service patrols' symbols of service are presented, the old and new program patrol leaders can come out at the same time, and the old leader presents the symbol to the new leader. This is followed by the old and new service patrol leaders similarly exchanging the symbols and embellishments.

"The Gilwell Song"

- "The Gilwell Song" will be taught to participants at the Blue and Gold Banquet and will be sung at the Gilwell Field assemblies beginning on Day Two. It should always be sung at a lively, energetic pace but not overly fast, and there should be no clapping or running around while singing. If seated during the Gilwell Song,



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- participants should stand during their patrol's verse and during the chorus. If already standing when "The Gilwell Song" is sung (such as at a Gilwell Field assembly), participants may take one step forward when their patrol sings its verse.
- Staff members who are serving as troop guides should sing the verse of the patrol they are serving until they join the rest of the staff at assembly on Day Three. This helps participants learn their verses of "The Gilwell Song" more quickly. Staff members who are not serving as troop guides should sing the verse of their original patrol wherever they are standing and thus avoid the confusion associated with running around to join a patrol. Everyone should sing the chorus.
 - **Note:** There is no staff verse for "The Gilwell Song." The singing of a staff verse is exclusionary, not at all inclusive, and should not be done. The recognition for serving on (or having served on) a Wood Badge staff is receiving and wearing a third Wood Badge bead.