

# AOL-to-Scout Ceremonies



Members of the troop frequently participate in a AOL-to-Scout ceremony, even when it is formally conducted by the Cub Scout Pack. During these occasions the troop's participation greatly contributes to the overall crossover experience. When AOLs are being recognized, frequently they cross a symbolic bridge from the pack to a troop. The troop's presence should be as impressive as possible. In this light, for most crossover ceremonies, there should be a good assemblage of Scouts in attendance, wearing their most complete troop meeting field uniforms. Naturally, if a troop neckerchief is to be presented, the troop members should be wearing theirs, and as always, Scout spirit should shine brightly throughout the proceedings.

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## The Bridge

Crossing a bridge from a Cub Scout Pack to a Scouts BSA Troop is a symbolic act. If there's no actual bridge, most packs build or borrow a simple, portable, wooden one that's rustic with railings made of dead tree branches or rope, and floored with scrap lumber.

## What's Presented During the Crossover

Since with each level in the pack there's been a corresponding neckerchief, if the troop has a troop neckerchief, presenting one to each AOLs Scout crossing over is an appropriate symbolic gesture. The AOLs neckerchief is removed, and the pre-folded troop neckerchief is placed around the AOLs' neck, either with the same slide or with one provided by the troop. Doing so, ceremoniously, with the friendly participation of assigned troop leaders creates a memorable moment. In conjunction with this, exchanging the blue shoulder loops with olive green shoulder loops provides added impact. A Scouts BSA Handbook as well as the troop's unit numeral (if different than that of the pack's) can also be presented at this time.

## Outdoor Ceremonies

Perhaps the most impressive of all AOLs crossover settings is one where the troop is gathered around a lit campfire in an area distinct from, but in view of, where the pack has gathered. Optimally, there is an actual bridge separating the pack and troop locations. After the Cubmaster addresses the Pack family and turns things over to the leader of the AOLs Den for their explanations and remarks, the Senior Patrol Leader from the troop, along with at least two other junior leaders, escort the appropriate AOLs Scouts (often with their parents) over the bridge, to the troop's campfire, which has been lit in their honor. Once over the bridge, the Scoutmaster and troop leaders greet the AOLs who join the troop's members seated around the fire. At that time, a new member investiture ceremony can commence.

## Simple Crossing The Bridge Ceremony

*In attendance are the AOLs den leader, Scoutmaster, Scouts representing the troop, graduating AOLs Scout(s) and parents. The bridge is placed up front, house lights are dimmed, and a bright LED flashlight directs its beam on each end. The AOLs den leader, with the graduating AOLs Scout(s) and parents, stand on one end of the bridge. On the other end is the Scoutmaster and troop representatives holding a rolled troop neckerchief(s).*

– **AOLs Den Leader:** During the years you have been in Cub Scouting, we have had numerous opportunities to work together along the trail. Now [name(s) AOLs Scout(s)] is leaving the pack to enter a Scouts BSA Troop where I am sure you are going to make many new discoveries and experience a wide variety of new adventures.

– To symbolize your growth and entrance into a troop, your AOLs Scout neckerchief will now be removed. (*Neckerchief(s) removed and handed to parents.*) Now, please carefully cross over the bridge into Boy Scouting, and be welcomed by the Scoutmaster of Troop

(number).

– **Scoutmaster:** (Greets AOLs Scout with the Scouts BSA handshake.) As Scoutmaster of Troop (number), it is indeed a pleasure for me to welcome you into the troop. We meet each week at (time) at (place). We shall look forward to seeing you at our next meeting. And now I present to you this Troop neckerchief (Rolled neckerchief is placed around the AOLs neck.) May you wear it with pride. It's colors are those of Troop (number), which welcomes you as its newest member(s).

### Simple Pack Gathering Crossover Ceremony

- Invited are the Scoutmaster, an Assistant Scoutmaster, and the Senior Patrol Leader. The crossover bridge that the graduating AOLs Scouts can walk across from the left side to the right side is situated up front. The Cubmaster and Assistant Cubmaster stand on the left side of the bridge. The troop representatives are called up and stand on the right side of the bridge.
- The first AOLs Scout with their parents is asked to come forward. The parents stand to the left of the Cubmaster and the AOLs Scout stands with their back to the bridge.
- The Cubmaster turns to the AOLs Scout and silently removes their hat, and hands it to the Assistant Cubmaster to hold upside down. In turn, the following items are removed and placed in the hat: neckerchief slide, neckerchief, blue shoulder loops.
- The Assistant Cubmaster then hands the hat to the AOLs Scout's parents. The Cubmaster shakes their hands and sends the parents in front of the bridge to the other side to stand with the troop representatives.
- The Cubmaster and Assistant Cubmaster both shake hands with the AOLs Scout, first with the Cub Scout handshake, and then with the Scouts BSA handshake. The AOLs Scout then turns to face the bridge and crosses over.
- On the other side, the Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmaster, and Senior Patrol Leader put on olive green shoulder loops, and a troop neckerchief (if the troop uses one). Other items can be presented at this time as well.
- After each graduating AOLs Scout crosses over, all the remaining Cub Scouts and attendees are instructed to stand and salute the new member of Scouts BSA as they file out to form a receiving line at the back of the room, from where they can greet everyone before refreshments are served.

### Rudyard Kipling Crossover Ceremony

*Akela's lines can easily be divided between the Cubmaster, Assistant Cubmaster, AOLs Den Leader, and Assistant AOLs Den Leader.*

- **Akela:** The moon is full, just as it was long ago on that night in the jungle when Mowgli first joined the wolf pack. It has been many years since Mowgli returned from living with the wolves. After he returned, he taught us many of the lessons he learned while in the jungle. The most important was that the strength of the wolf is the pack, and the strength of the pack is the wolf.
- That is why we are here tonight in this council ring. 🗣️But just as Mowgli had to leave the pack, tonight we also have some man cubs among us who have grown strong and tall. The time has now come when they too must leave the pack to find their place in the world of men.
- They have learned many lessons as they have walked the trails of the bobcat, tiger, wolf, and bear. 🗣️Tonight, these cubs are ready to begin their next adventure on their way to manhood. We will not hold them back, though we will miss them when they are gone. Instead, we will wish them well and send them into the wild where they will continue on their path.
- So let us begin. Parents, bring forward these man cubs. 🗣️(Akela calls out the names of the Cubs who will be crossing over. Parents and Cubs come forward and face the rest of the pack.) Akela of men, do you hear me?
- **Senior Patrol Leader:** I hear you, Akela of the man cubs. What is it that you want?
- **Akela:** We have among us several AOLs Scouts who have grown tall in body and strong in character. They have learned well the ways of the pack, but now they yearn to run with older Scouts in the wild places. They have been with the pack for many moons, and have been a source of pride for us all. But now it is time that they must leave us and search out greater adventure.
- **Senior Patrol Leader:** I understand you and I will accept them into my tribe and guide them in those wild places. 🗣️(Akela now leads the AOLs, one at a time, to the bridge between Cub Scouts and members of Scouts BSA. After the AOLs neckerchief and blue shoulder loops are removed, they cross the bridge to troop members waiting with Scout handbooks, troop neckerchiefs, and green shoulder loops.)
- **Akela:** These AOLs Scouts are no longer with our pack, yet we still call on the Great Akela of all Scouts to always guide their way. We ask that the Great Akela watch over them as they learn to soar with Eagles in the wild places. And, in the fullness of time, we pray that these Scouts will return, tall and proud and strong, and present their own cubs to be accepted into the pack. But until then, let us send them on their way with a mighty wolf howl.

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