

EL-KU-TA LODGE  
ORDER OF THE ARROW

EAGLE COURT OF HONOR CEREMONY

This ceremony is adapted from a description of a Zuni or Navajo Ceremony seen by Dave Jager. The idea of this ceremony is to make the presentation of an imitation Eagle Feather to the new Eagle Scout(s) as meaningful as possible. It should fit in with any kind of a program that is planned to present the Eagle Badge. Therefore, coordination with Master of Ceremonies is essential. If there is time, the Dance Team could perform before the ceremony.

Scene:

A stage in a church building or an outdoor setting.  
Stage lights on, but subdued enough not to be harsh.  
If staged outdoors, have a campfire and torches.

Principle Parts:

One drummer  
Four Indians who sit in a semi-circle as shown in the Lay-out.  
Four Indians who sit in a semi-circle behind the first four, as shown in the lay-out.  
One Chief who speaks and who presents the eagle feathers to the Eagle Scouts.  
Two escorts for the Eagle Scouts.

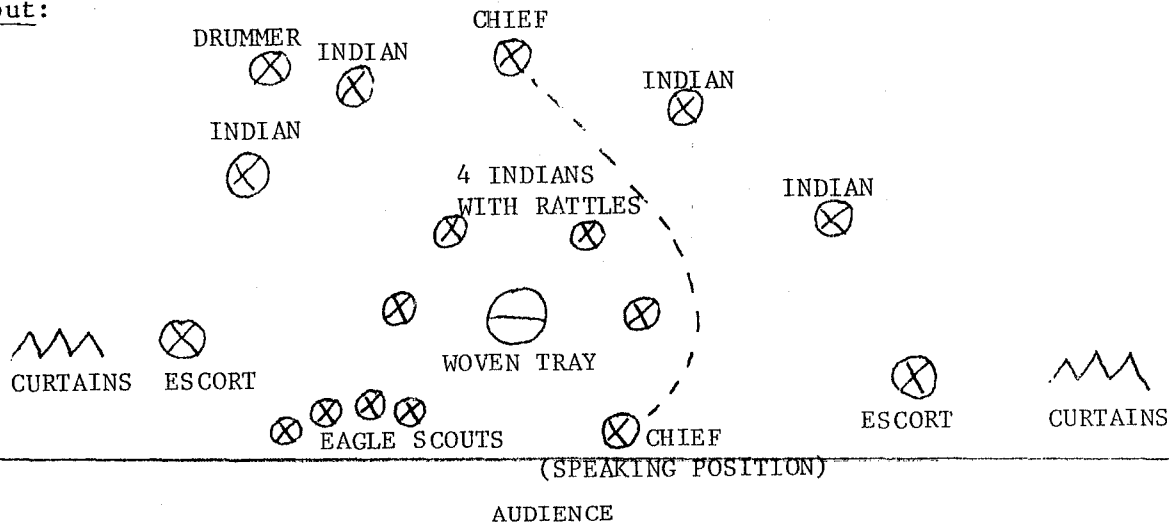
Props:

Enough imitation eagle feathers, prepared with fluff tips, horsehair, base plumes, red felt and yellow thread wrapping, for each of the Eagle Scouts to have one.  
One plain imitation eagle feather ("Dancing Feather") to which is attached monofilament fishing line of a fine type so it cannot be seen.  
One woven, flat tray on which all the feathers are placed, including the "Dancing Feather".  
Four rattles made as authentic as possible.  
One drum and drum stick.

Costumes:

Each person, except the Chief, is dressed in shirt, leggings, breech cloth, mocassins, and O.A. sash, with a 2-3 feathered headdress.  
The Chief is dressed in shirt, leggings, breechcloth, mocassins, O.A. sash and warbonnet. The warbonnet could be either a double trailer or no trailer.

Lay-out:



## Procedure:

Actors position themselves as shown in the Lay-out. The curtain is closed, if possible.

The Chief stands in the back of the circle and comes forward to speak. He then returns to his position back of the circle when not speaking (notice the dotted line on the Lay-out).

The drummer stands in his position so he can see all movements. He beats a steady beat, varying the speed during the ceremony.

The four indians with the rattles are the ones that make this ceremony go. They sit facing each other as shown in the Lay-out. The monofilament line is tied around the fingers of the hand which holds the rattle of two of the four indians. This makes it difficult for the audience to know which of the four is making the feather dance. Some practice is a must to make the feather do what is wanted. A routine has to be decided on and practiced. The rattles are used to keep time with the drum. The feather keeps time with the movements of the hands, rattles and drum.

The four other indians sway with the feather and keep time to the music.

## Ceremony:

All take their assigned places in darkness or behind a curtain. When all is ready, the curtain opens and lights go on. The Chief steps forward, solemnly and speaks.

Chief: "This is the "Eagle Feather Dance". We ask all present to be silent and refrain from picture taking so the Great Spirit, Wankan Tonka, may give His blessing. If we are in tune with Him, the eagle feather will tell us."

(The Chief goes back to his original place. There is silence for 30 seconds. Then the drummer starts his beat. Softly, but with rising sound, the drummer beats. He beats for 30 seconds before the faintest movement is seen in the feather. The drummer may stop and start again if there is noise or camera flashes. The feather drops immediately when the drummer stops.)

Four Indians with Rattles: They are seated in the center of the circle. They begin shaking the rattles 10 seconds after the drumming starts. After shaking the rattles for 30 seconds, the feather moves slightly. The drum beats and the rattle shaking goes somewhat faster as the feather begins to dance. It dances for a minute. Then the rattles and drum slow down until the feather stops. Allow 10 seconds before the Chief comes forward to speak.

Chief: "Will the escorts bring the Eagle Scout(s) forward..."

(When they are in position, the Chief continues, speaking directly to them.)

Chief: "That you have completed the Eagle Rank reflects great credit upon you. I congratulate you. May you be proud of your achievements, but humble enough to remember that you did not make it alone. Much is now expected of an Eagle Scout. May you be strong in doing good to others. May you soar upward as the eagle, always looking to God for your strength. May the circle of your life be complete. May you now give to others what you have received. May this token be a reminder of your obligation to give service."

(The Chief now gives to the Eagle Scouts an imitation eagle feather, taken from the woven basket. He also gives each Eagle Scout the Scout Handclasp. Afterwards, the Chief speaks, raising his hands over his head in blessing.)

Chief: "May Wankan Tonka, The Great Spirit, Be With You Now and Always."

The Chief goes back to his original place and the curtains close. The Eagle Scouts are then escorted back to their places.