

## Flag Retirement Ceremony

When the U.S. Flag becomes tattered or worn, it should be disposed of by burning.

Here are the basics for a Flag retirement ceremony. Appropriate songs and/or readings may be added.

1. Lower the flag from the pole (or remove it from the staff) and carry it to the fire site.

2. Place the stars (as the audience sees them) in the upper left hand corner.

This is an appropriate reading to start the ceremony:

“Remember as you look at the Flag, it is the symbol of our nation, it is red because of human sacrifice; blue because of the true blue loyalty of its defenders; and white symbolizes liberty - our land of the free. The stars are symbols of the united efforts and hope in the hearts of the many people striving to keep America great.”

3. Cut the field of blue from the stripes - have someone hold onto this piece.

4. Next, cut each stripe from the “whole” and lay each piece, one at a time, across the flames. These are some ideas for appropriate readings for each stripe:

First Stripe - "The thirteen stripes stand for the thirteen original colonies which are: Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Georgia, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, South Carolina, New Hampshire, Virginia, New York, North Carolina, and Rhode Island."

Second Stripe - "The white stands for purity"

Third Stripe - "The red stands for courage"

Fourth Stripe - "Give me liberty or give me death"

Fifth Stripe - "One if by land, two if by sea"

Sixth Stripe - "We the people of the United States, in order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, ensure domestic tranquillity, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessing of liberty to ourselves and our posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution on the United States of America."

Seventh Stripe - "We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal. They are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights. Among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Eighth Stripe - "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

Ninth Stripe - "Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of speech or press."

Tenth Stripe - "Four score and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth upon this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal."

Eleventh Stripe - "The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state .

Twelfth Stripe - "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."

Thirteenth Stripe - "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

5. After all the stripes have been burned, the field of blue is laid on the fire - all are silent until the entire piece burns to ash.

6. Out of respect, nothing should ever be added to the ceremonial fire after the Flag has been retired.

7. The ceremony ends with everyone departing in silence.

8. After the ashes have cooled, they should be buried.

Please remember, this is a very solemn ceremony and should be done with the utmost respect and reverence for the flag to be retired.