



Officer Installation and Friendship Circle Ceremonies

Ceremonies and other shared experiences help chapter members bond because they mark that this is a special occasion to be taken seriously and remembered.

There are two ceremonies in the MOMS Club – the Officer Installation Ceremony and the Friendship Circle.

Often, both ceremonies are held at the same special event to commemorate the end of one year and the beginning of a new one. The ceremonies should be the highlight of a special event to mark the change in the board – it can be at a pot-luck, a special end-of-year meeting/party, or even at a restaurant – but both should be done once a year, even if it's just at the last meeting before summer.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS CEREMONY:

This simple officer installation ceremony is much more important than the few words it shares, because it creates a positive transition between the old board and the new.

But it also means something to the other members, because it marks a positive transition into a new year for everyone.

The installation ceremony also points out the seriousness of the officers' commitment to the chapter, because they are swearing to do their best. By saying that before their peers and other members, the ceremony is an act of affirmation, because the officers are publicly stating their pledge to the chapter. It commemorates the trust the members have placed in them, because they are returning that trust with their promise to do their best.

Installation of Officers Script:

- 1) The Outgoing President starts the ceremony with a short statement or speech about her term of office and the meaning of the MOMS Club to her. The speech should be used to thank special people who helped her during her term and to encourage members about the year to come.
- 2) The Outgoing President installs the Incoming President by calling her up to the front and saying to her: "Repeat after me: I, (new President's name), promise to uphold the goals and principles of the MOMS Club and to perform the duties and responsibilities of the office of President to the best of my ability."

The Incoming President repeats the promise.

The Outgoing President turns to the other members, saying, "To the members of the MOMS Club of (your group's area name), I present your new President!"

- 3) After the Incoming President is installed, she installs the rest of the Executive Board as a group. The new President calls them up to the front and says, "Repeat after me: I, then state your name and office, promise to uphold the goals and principles of the MOMS Club and to perform the duties and responsibilities of my office to the best of my ability."

The new officers repeat the promise, either one at a time or together as a group.

The President then turns to the other members, saying: "To the members of the MOMS Club of (your group's area name), I present your new Executive Board!"

- 4) Optional: If you wish, you may expand this ceremony to swear in any appointed officers (for example, members who are on the Membership or Service Committees, the newsletter editor, publicity chairman, etc.) by repeating step 3 for them.

If you do swear in the appointed officers, the President calls them up to the front and says to them as a group: "Repeat after me: I, then state your name and office, promise to uphold the goals and principles of the MOMS Club and perform the duties and responsibilities of my office to the best of my ability."

The appointed officers repeat the promise, either one at a time or together as a group.

Then the President turns to the other members, saying, "To the members of the MOMS Club of (your group's area name), I present your new appointed officers!"

- 5) After the installation of all the officers is completed, the new President can make a short speech about what the MOMS Club means to her and her plans for the upcoming year. As with the speech of the former President, the new President should make her talk positive and encouraging, as it will set the tone for the coming year.

THE FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

This is a wonderful, heart-warming ceremony that really inspires the mothers in your group, making them feel good about the MOMS Club and their decision to stay home. We challenge any group to complete a Friendship Circle with dry eyes! Have tissues ready!

Because it's so special, the Friendship Circle is included in every International MOMS Club event – Luncheons, most workshops and any time moms from different chapters come together, we try to have a Friendship Circle.

But Friendship Circles aren't just for inter-chapter gatherings. The Friendship Circle started when there was just one chapter, and it continues in all chapters to this day.

All members participate in the Friendship Circle. We suggest it be a part of every year-end event, because it really sets the mood and inspires the members.

The following instructions are for a group with fewer than 30 members participating. If you have more than 30 members participating, you will want to have one large circle for the candle lighting and then two or more smaller circles set up for the sharing.

There are parts in this ceremony for five speakers. If you wish, each officer can take one part or you can use volunteers from the group. It is an honor to have a speaking part in this ceremony, so be sure to pick people who have contributed a lot of time and effort to your club.

For this ceremony, all the members stand in a circle facing a head table. Candle holders for three unlit candles are incorporated in the decorations of the table. Have a fourth candle already lit at the beginning of the ceremony or have a long-handled candle lighter ready. The fourth candle or candle-lighter will be used to light the others. If possible, dim any room lights before the ceremony starts.

Note: *because lit candles are used in this ceremony, you need to be aware of fire safety. Make sure any candles and candle holders are secure and kept away from any flammable decorations or clothing. Some local fire codes prohibit using "open flames" (including lit candles) in centerpieces or passing them around a circle during a ceremony. If your local codes do not allow you to use lit candles in any part of this ceremony, you can substitute electric candles, flashlights or other non-burning lights for the speakers' part of the ceremony. We suggest that for safety, mothers pass around a long-stemmed sweetheart rose or carnation as they share their thoughts and quotes, instead of a lit candle.*

For the ceremony, the speakers may be standing behind the head table or spaced throughout the circle for a stereo effect. You may use fewer speakers if you wish, but try to use at least three. Multiple voices add to the richness of the ceremony and help set apart the different ideas for the listeners.

On the following pages is the script for the Friendship Circle ceremony.

MOMS Club Friendship Circle Script:

Speaker #1: "The Friendship Circle shall now begin."

Speaker #2: "The MOMS Club was founded to give support to mothers who believe in the importance of raising their children themselves and at home."

Speaker #3: "While much of society today tries to deny the value of motherhood, we believe motherhood is one of the most meaningful and valuable roles a woman can experience in her life."

Speaker #14: "The nurturing a mother offers strengthens not only herself and her family, but our whole community as well."

Speaker #5: "The MOMS Club recognizes the importance of a mother's role in its goals and principles."

Speaker #1 (Lights the first candle and says): "For the mother herself... By its very existence, the MOMS Club seeks to enrich the lives of mothers-at-home and to support them in their often difficult decision to sacrifice the financial rewards of the working world in order to gain the more important rewards of helping their children learn and mature."

Speaker #2 (Lights the second candle and says): "For the family... There is no one right way to raise children, to be a wife and mother. Each mother must find her own personal path to fulfilling those roles. The MOMS Club hopes to give them the support they need as they each find the best ways to nurture their families."

Speaker #3 (Lights the third candle and says): "For the community... We seek to return mothers their share of participation in its events. Mothers offer a valuable perspective and knowledge, and the MOMS Club seeks to give them the chance to share that experience by participating in the community at large, both through our service projects and other community involvement."

Speaker #4: "Now we would like the members to share their favorite thought or quote on mothering."

At this point, if you have more than one circle for sharing, Speaker #4 should say, "One person in each circle should take the flower at your table, and then share with your group your thought on Motherhood or the MOMS Club, before passing the flower to the next person."

If everyone is in one group, then Speaker #5 holds the flower as she reads her thought, short poem or quote - whatever is special to her.

She then hands the flower to the next person in the circle who shares her thought or poem, and so on around the circle. If a person doesn't want to share her feelings or quote, she can just pass the rose on to the next person.

After the rose has gone all the way around the circle (or circles), everyone sits down. When everyone is seated, Speaker #5 says, "That concludes our Friendship Circle," and she and two others blow out the candles on the ceremony table.

IF YOU CREATE YOUR OWN CEREMONIES

The International MOMS Club strongly suggests that you use the ceremonies here for your Installation and Friendship Circle. However, if you wish to write a ceremony for another occasion, you may. If you do create your own, you must abide by the following rules:

- 1) The ceremony must be non-religious. Remember, you will have members of many different faiths. Consider their feelings. If you do include a non-denominational prayer or refer to God, do so in a way that will not designate a particular faith;
- 2) Keep everything on a positive tone. Use ceremonies only to encourage your members and inspire them;
- 3) There shall be no hazing or negative treatment of any member or visitor at any MOMS Club function. No member or visitor may be made to feel self-conscious or intimidated, and shall not be forced to participate in any activity or ceremony against her will;
- 4) The script of any proposed ceremony must be sent to your Coordinator. Be sure to note in the script any special effects you plan to use, such as candles or other props. After your ceremony is approved by International, and used by your chapter, fill out a short evaluation of the ceremony. Include in your evaluation of the ceremony its purpose and whether or not the ceremony was a success with your group. Send both the ceremony script, description and evaluation to International. If your new ceremony has universal appeal, International may share your idea with other chapters.

If you have any questions about ceremonies, talk to the MOMS Club volunteer who helps your chapter, or contact us at support@momsclub.org

