

The Graduation Ceremony

The Caravan Graduation Ceremony is the culminating night for your local Caravan program. This ceremony represents the badge and award achievements and the character building and spiritual formation development of the children throughout the year.

The Caravan Graduation Ceremony is now organized by the Core Values represented in the program. The eight Core Values can be represented in a variety of ways at the graduation ceremony. Consider time and resources (budget and helpers) available to help you decide if all the Core Values or a few will be incorporated. Utilizing these Core Value segments will help children, guides, and parents share and understand the achievement of the children in Caravan.

Remember, this is an outline for a Caravan Graduation Ceremony. The segments with an asterisk (*) are the “musts” for programs that award the Bunker, Winans, Lillenas, and Bresee awards.

Graduation Ceremony Checklist

Director

Arrangements

- Schedule and confirm ceremony date and location.
- Schedule equipment (if needed).
- Schedule additional rooms (kitchen, fellowship hall, gym), if needed.
- Oversee the Caravan Graduation Ceremony.

Badges/Awards/Buttons/Certificates

- Prepare a list of badges, buttons, awards, and certificates to be presented. Order items from the Nazarene Publishing House (phone 1-800-877-0700).
- Order the Bresee Award Medal from the general Caravan office by completing and submitting the Bresee Award application form and a copy of the Six-Year Individual Record form for each recipient (allow three weeks).
- Complete and submit a Congratulatory Letter form and a copy of the Six-Year Individual Record form for each Bunker, Winans, and Lillenas recipient.
- Arrange buttons, graduation certificates, badges, and awards in presentation order. Place in envelopes labeled with the child's rank and name.
- Order Years of Service pins for Caravan workers. (optional)

LeRoy Haynes Award (optional)

- Select one adult in the local church who has made a significant contribution to the local Caravan program. Submit a request to the general Caravan office for the LeRoy Haynes Award Certificate.

Local Caravan Leadership Team

Plan Graduation Ceremony

- Plan the order of service and prepare the program bulletin.
- **Meet with Caravan children (all ranks) prior to the ceremony and involve them in planning their part of the ceremony.**

Guide

Each guide can work with the children in their rank to complete the tasks. Where applicable, match the task with a badge that can be earned by a specific rank. See the following examples listed below.

Publicity

- Place ceremony announcements in the church newsletter and mail information to Caravan children and parents. (*Trailblazer – Journalism*)

Recruit Helpers

- Recruit greeters, ushers (*Scout – Hospitality*), children to run audio/visual for the ceremony (*Scout – Technology*), and people to plan and serve at the reception (*Quester – Cooking, Sentry – Cooking, Pathfinder – Cooking*). This reception is optional.

Prepare the Room and Facilities

- Arrange and decorate the platform. (*Scout – Hospitality*)
- Place processional items in the staging room. (A staging room is a room designated for all children to meet and line up for the processional.)
- Prepare and display directional and reserved seating signs.
- Check lighting and temperature.

NPH makes your graduation ceremony easier

The following products are now available to help in your graduation ceremony planning:

- Caravan bulletin (CCZZCV-495)
- Caravan/mascot balloons (CCZZCV-1041)
- Invitation postcards (CCZZCV-1036)
- Caravan posters (CCZZCV-1034PK)
- Caravan steel mug for gifts (CCZZCV-1012)

To place an order: call 1-800-877-0700 or go to www.wordaction.com.

The Graduation Ceremony

Director: Please note – It is important to keep the order of the ceremony as indicated. However in the Core Values section, ***the order of the Core Values and number of the Core Values are at the discretion of the Caravan Director.*** Also note that these Core Value contributions can be expressed in many different ways. Each Core Value has an explanation of how these Core Values can be expressed.

1. Procession *

While the audience is waiting for the procession, play contemporary children's worship music for the guests to enjoy. Consider inviting Scouts to run the audio/visual equipment for the ceremony. (*Technology*)

Have the children line up according to group and rank. (Searcher Hunter, Quester, Explorer Sentry, Scout, Adventurer Pathfinder, Trailblazer)

Order of Ceremony

1. Procession *
 2. Candle-lighting *
 3. Motto *
 4. Core Values
 - Service
 - Compassion
 - Missions
 - Work
 - Character
 - Evangelism
 - Education *
 - Holiness *
 5. Dismissal *
- (* indicates required segments)

2. Candle Lighting – The Colors of Caravan *

Choose four children to light the Caravan candles (see below for other options).

Option: Have children carry in banners or flags with the colors of Caravan. Have each child explain the significance of the color of the banner or flag. *

Option: Use PowerPoint slides with the designated color and white wording that spells out "Mental, Social, Physical, Social" (one slide and color per word). Display the slide as the candle is lit or the banner/flag is hung.

*The design, size, and construction of these flags/banners with stand or the PowerPoint slides are the responsibility of the individual Caravan program.

The four traditional colors of Caravan are highlighted in the graduation ceremony.

Candle Lighting

1. The child who carried the **green candle** says, *“The Caravan purpose is stated in Luke 2:52. Caravan members, join me in saying our purpose. ‘And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.’”*

The child lights the green candle and says, *“Jesus increased in wisdom. The green candle represents mental development. In Caravan, we learn about the world God made and develop skills we will need.”*

The child steps away from the table.

2. The child who carried the **blue candle** lights the blue candle and says, *“Jesus increased in stature. The blue candle represents physical development. In Caravan, we learn to care for the bodies God has given us.”*

The child steps away from the table.

3. The child who carried the **white candle** lights the white candle and says, *“Jesus increased in favor with God. The white candle represents spiritual development. In Caravan, we learn about God and how to live as a Christian.”*

The child steps away from the table.

4. The child who carried the **red candle** lights the red candle and says, *“Jesus increased in favor with men. In this verse men represents all people. The red candle represents social development. In Caravan, we learn the importance of friendship.”*

The child steps away from the table

3. Motto *

Have the children stand and say the Caravan motto in unison: *“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5-6).*

Searcher: A Caravan Searcher is: Honest and Truthful, Kind and Forgiving, Helpful and Loving, Loyal and Good.

Explorer: As a Caravan Explorer I will be: Cheerful, Clean, Courteous, Helpful, Industrious, Loyal, Obedient, Respectful, Reverent, Trustworthy

Adventurer: As a Caravan Adventurer, I will:

1. Develop my body and keep myself physically strong and clean;
2. Develop my mind through clean thinking and good schoolwork;
3. Love my home, my church, and my fellowmen of all races;
4. Love God, read the Bible, and live according to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

4. Core Values

The Caravan Director should explain to the audience the importance of Core Values in Caravan. Eight specific values have been chosen to represent values and character traits important for a Caravan child. These values are highlighted by honored Nazarenes whose lives exemplify these qualities and are incorporated in both the program and the graduation ceremony.

Children of any rank can participate in any of the Core Value components of the ceremony. It is up to the discretion of the Caravan Director and Leadership Team to determine how children of the various ranks are incorporated into the Core Value components.

Service – “...The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve...” (Matthew 20:28).

The Caravan Director should explain that the Service Core Value is a part of the Pathfinder rank and helps children understand the value of serving God and others.

Prior to the ceremony, give children the opportunity to assist in the planning process with their guides. The component of **servicing** can either be recognized from the stage by the Caravan Director or can be placed in the graduation ceremony bulletin.

Ways the Service Core Value can be expressed in the graduation ceremony:

- Greeters, ushers
- Audio/visual
- Set-up/tear down of room
- A PowerPoint or note in the program designating children who served in various areas in preparation for the ceremony.

Compassion

“I was hungry and you gave me something to eat...” (Matthew 25:35).

The Caravan Director should explain that the Compassion Core Value is a part of the Pathfinder rank and helps children understand the biblical concept of ministering to others through tangible means.

Children can give a short testimony about what they learned about compassion (as in compassionate ministry) through the Caravan year.

Ways the Service Core Value can be expressed in the graduation ceremony:

- PowerPoint (pictures of a specific ministry project)
- Testimony of children (or parents who participated in a project)
- Testimony of a guide on what was accomplished when the Core Value was incorporated into the teaching of a badge.

Missions

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:19).

The Caravan Director should explain that the Missions Core Value is a part of the Scout rank and helps children understand the biblical mandate of bringing the gospel of Jesus to different cultures.

Have children or a guide give a short testimony about what they have learned about missions through the Caravan program or share their favorite mission education reading book, Holiness Hero (see Explorer Sentry Holiness Heroes badge), or experience they had during the Caravan year with missions.

Ways the Missions Core Value can be expressed in the graduation ceremony:

- PowerPoint (pictures of the covers of the Children’s Mission Education books)
- Testimony of children (or parents) who participated in a project that benefited missions.
- Testimony of guide on what was accomplished or how the Core Value was incorporated into the teaching of a badge.
- Invite a missionary to come and help you present the awards.

Work

**“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men”
(Colossians 3:23).**

The Caravan Director should explain that the Work Core Value is a part of the Trailblazer rank and help children understand the importance of having a good work ethic.

Badges that different ranks have completed can be highlighted at this time. The director may also make a short announcement about the various ways children have participated in the planning and implementation of the Caravan Graduation Ceremony.

Ways the Work Core Value can be expressed in the graduation ceremony:

- Short video clip or PowerPoint showing children earning various badges.
- List in the program the various badges earned throughout the Caravan year.
- In the entrance or foyer of the sanctuary, set up a display of some of the projects completed for badges throughout the Caravan year.

Character

**“Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right”
(Proverbs 20:11).**

The Caravan Director should explain that the Character Core Value is a part of the Scout rank and helps children understand the importance of having a godly character.

Let children give a testimony of what they learned about developing a Christian character. Let a child share what he or she has learned about being a Christian and living a godly life.

Ways the Character Core Value can be expressed in the graduation ceremony:

- Testimony of a child or guide.

Evangelism

**“... You will be my witnesses in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth”
(Acts 1:8b).**

The Caravan Director should explain that the Evangelism Core Value is a part of the Sentry rank and helps children understand the importance of the biblical mandate to share their Christian faith with others.

Children or families who have accepted Christ during the Caravan year will have the opportunity to share about their experience and decision. This is also an opportunity for the leadership to share with the entire group about the church's vision to reach to the community through Caravan.

Ways the Evangelism Core Value can be expressed in the graduation ceremony:

- Short video clip or PowerPoint of a quote by a parent or child who has accepted Christ and/or joined the church.
- Highlight a van ministry or a ministry project specific to evangelism.

Education *

“Instruct a wise man and he will be wiser still; teach a righteous man and he will add to his learning” (Proverbs 9:9).

The Caravan Director should explain that the Education Core Value is a part of the Sentry rank and helps children understand the importance of education in the life of a child. This is also the time to award the Bunker, Winans, and Lillenas awards.

Each group and rank will receive the top awards starting with Searcher (Hunter, Quester), Explorer (Sentry, Scout), and Adventurer (Pathfinder, Trailblazer).

The biographies of Milton Bunker (Searcher), Esther Carson Winans (Explorer), and Haldor Lillenas (Adventurer) are read prior to the giving of the awards.

The Education Core Value can be expressed in the graduation ceremony through the giving of top awards for Bunker, Winans, and Lillenas awards.

The top awards for Caravan are represented by men and a woman who exemplify a dedication to serving Jesus Christ. The following are four short biographies for Milton Bunker, Esther Carson Winans, Haldor Lillenas, and Phineas F. Bresee.

The Milton Bunker Award

Rev. Milton Bunker was a local church pastor and father who sensed a need for the Church of the Nazarene to reach and teach children. Together, W.W. Clay and Milton Bunker created and wrote a Michigan club program called *Pioneer Boys and Girls*.

Representatives of this Michigan children's club joined with representatives of a California children's club created by LeRoy Haynes and the general Church of the Nazarene to create an official children's club program for the Church of the Nazarene.

Rev. Milton Bunker was selected as the first general Caravan director for the newly-organized Nazarene Caravan program. The top Searcher award is named for Milton Bunker to honor his dedication and love for children.

Searchers receive the Milton Bunker Award.

The Esther Carson Winans Award

Esther Carson Winans was a missionary who had an amazing gift for languages. Esther and her husband, Roger, went to live among a tribe of Indian headhunters in the rain forest of Peru. The Indians had no written language. Esther and Roger learned the language, created an alphabet and a written language, and then taught the Indians to read and write.

Esther began translating the Gospel of Luke so the Indians could read God's Word in their own language. She shared God's love with the Indians. Esther died at a young age after repeated attacks of malaria. At her request, she was buried in the mountains of Peru.

Explorers receive the Esther Carson Winans Award.

The Haldor Lillenas Award

The Haldor Lillenas Award is named for a song evangelist and musician who wrote many of the hymns sung in the early days of our denomination. He created the Lillenas Music Company that became the music publishing branch of the Nazarene Publishing House. Lillenas wrote many songs that we sing in the Church of the Nazarene.

Adventurers receive the Haldor Lillenas Award.

Holiness *

“For it is written: Be holy, because I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16).

The Caravan Director should explain that the Holiness Core Value is a part of the Sentry rank and helps children understand the importance of a holy and godly life. This is also the time to award the Phineas F. Bresee medal.

Presentation of the Phineas F. Bresee Award Medal

Two options:

- Presentation of Bresee Medal by Caravan Director. Have the director give the medal to the preteen or pin it on the preteen’s sash.
- **Presentation of Bresee Medal by Pastor - Let the Caravan Director say to the audience, “Rev. [name], as an official representative of the Church of the Nazarene, will present the Phineas F. Bresee medal. [Director hands the Bresee medal to the pastor. Have the pastor congratulate the preteen and present the medal to the preteen.]**

The Phineas F. Bresee Award

The United States had been torn apart by the Civil War. In the midst of personal hurts and struggles, a revival began to spread across America. Christians discovered the need to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Small groups and churches began to form as people who believed in living a holy life joined together for worship and Bible study. In 1884, two evangelists from the National Holiness Association held a three-week revival in the church where Phineas F. Bresee was the pastor. In that revival, he went to the altar to pray and ask God to sanctify him. His life reflected the perfect love he had experienced. He began to preach about the need for Christians to live a holy life. However, the church members did not want to hear about living a holy life. At age 56, Bresee was without a church.

Rev. Bresee knew there were people who believed in living a holy life. On October 6, 1895, he began a new church called the “Church of the Nazarene.” He selected the name Nazarene because the Gospels referred to Jesus as a Nazarene (from the town of Nazareth). He felt the new church should reflect the teachings of Jesus and teach the importance of living a holy life. The church grew. In eight years, the church grew to over 1,500 members.

In 1907, churches from the East and West met in Chicago to form a unified church. In 1908, churches from the South joined the newly formed east-west denomination. They elected three leaders they called “general superintendents.” One of those leaders was Phineas F. Bresee.

5. Dismissal *

The Caravan Director should thank the audience for attending the Caravan Graduation Ceremony and invite everyone to join the Caravan children and families in a special graduation reception (if one is held).

Remember!

The main points for the Caravan Graduation Ceremony are:

- Procession
- Candle-lighting
- Motto/Pledges
- Core Values (in some fashion)
- Top awards (Bunker, Winans, Lillenas, Bresee)

It may not be feasible to incorporate all eight Core Value segments into your Caravan Graduation Ceremony. Each Core Value is listed with a correlating Bible verse, and ideas on how to incorporate it into your program. Be creative! Have fun! This is the opportunity for your Caravan to shine!