



Celebrate Your Newest Girl Scouts with an Investiture Ceremony

Content credit: Girl Scouts of the USA

A new troop year means new adventures, but there's even more reason to get excited about October: your troop may be welcoming new youth and adult members into the world of Girl Scouting! As a troop leader, you know firsthand the value of introducing new members to the girl-led, confidence-boosting experiences that will change their world, so mark this special moment with an initiation that celebrates the powerful sisterhood they're now part of.

An **investiture ceremony** welcomes all new members to Girl Scouts while a **rededication ceremony** is a great way for returning members to kick off the troop year and renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Both ceremonies, at their core, are traditions that allow us to reflect on the ideals of the Girl Scout Movement and the empowering journey your Girl Scouts—and the millions of Girl Scouts who came before them—will undertake. Depending on your troop's members, you might decide to hold a combination investiture/rededication ceremony.

An investiture ceremony itself doesn't need to be formal or elaborate; in fact, it has only three requirements. New members must:

- Recite the Girl Scout Promise, either individually or as a group.
- Receive the appropriate membership pin—the Girl Scout Daisy pin, Girl Scout Brownie pin, or Traditional Membership pin, depending on the girls in your troop.
- Be verbally welcomed into your troop and to Girl Scouting. You may choose to give the welcome to new members yourself, or returning Girl Scouts might want to collectively give the welcome.

The rest is up to you and your troop! The ceremonies are totally customizable to your troop's needs and interests, but here are some things to consider.

Where Will You Hold the Ceremony?

For some troops, it may be easiest to hold your ceremony at the same place you hold your troop meetings, but the sky is the limit! If your Girl Scouts love the outdoors, consider holding the ceremony in your local park. If your Girl Scouts all attend the same school, consider using a space there.



When Will You Have the Ceremony?

If all your troop members are new to Girl Scouting, you may decide to hold your investiture ceremony a few meetings into your troop year, after your Girl Scouts have learned the Girl Scout Promise. Some troop leaders also schedule the ceremony the week of Juliette Gordon Low's birthday (October 31) and take the opportunity to discuss the trailblazing legacy of Girl Scouts.

If you want to show the new adults in your troop what Girl Scouting is all about, consider including them in the investiture ceremony. Plan your ceremony on an evening or a weekend—or whenever most families in your troop are available—and ask your troop how they'd like to honor the adults in the group. Perhaps Girl Scouts would like to deliver a special thank you? Or maybe they'd like to pin the adult members? Whatever your troop decides, all participants should feel like they're part of the Girl Scout sisterhood.

What Else Will You Do at the Ceremony?

As with all Girl Scout activities, keep your troop's ceremony girl-led, and encourage troop members to make it their own. Depending on their ages and interests, ask them if there's a Girl Scout song they'd like to sing, a skit they'd like to perform, a special treat they'd like to share with the group, or a candle lighting or flag ceremony they'd like to incorporate.

If you're working with new members who are still learning about Girl Scout traditions, you might want to encourage the Girl Scouts to talk about how they can incorporate the Girl Scout Promise and Law into their daily lives. If you already have an established troop, ask the returning Girl Scouts to design a special ritual for the new members or open the ceremony with a speech.

Or if you're like troop leader Maranda Oliver from Girl Scouts Wisconsin Badgerland, you can also use the ceremony to reinforce a key Girl Scout value: giving back. "Our area suffered some major flooding, which left most of our communities devastated," says Maranda. "But in true Girl Scout fashion, my troop wanted to help. So instead of having our [rededication] ceremony, we used our first meeting to make baked items to give to a volunteer park clean-up effort luncheon. We made many different [baked] goods, but I wanted to incorporate a fun ceremony and tradition, as it was our first meeting. We held a traditional GORP ceremony. The girls absolutely loved it! They felt empowered and it reminded them of all the reasons they love being Girl Scouts. They each kept a baggie for themselves, but we made an abundance so that we could bag them up and give them to the volunteers at the clean-up and share the Girl Scout tradition with others."

No matter how your troop decides to customize your ceremony, your unique spin on this long-standing tradition will make investiture a memorable event for all!