

# Witch DAILY

## Samhain Planning Ritual Workshop:

### **Blessing and Consecration of the Participants:**

This part of the ritual is to help the coven members transition from the mundane world to the sacred world of the circle. In our tradition we have different ways that we have done this over time. We have used incense or sage; salted water, a bell or singing bowl, to cleanse the spirit of the coven members. We also typically consecrate people by blessing them with the words; "You are God/dess, you are always welcome in the Circle." We then typically put a little oil (in the shape of an invoking pentagram) on their forehead, heart, or hands, whichever the participant prefers.

You can use ours, or write your own words to bless and consecrate the participants:

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The goal is to help transition into sacred space, remembering that they themselves ARE sacred, inviolate, and worthy. We aren't making them worthy, we are reminding them that they already ARE. They can leave the worldly pressures, especially the ones that are invalidating, outside of the circle.

### **Circle Casting: (It's Samhain, so this will be widdershins)**

Depending on the size of the group, the casting and the blessing and consecrating may happen at the same time. You create a gateway that will be the last part of the circle for the participants to enter. Once everyone has entered, the priest or priestess makes an additional pass to "close" the circle, being sure that the total number of casting passes is an odd number.

The words should be simple and easy to remember.

The one I often ask my students to start with is: "By my will, I (name), do cast this circle in perfect love and perfect trust."

You can add words that say things about containment and protection. You should also visualize the boundary you are creating.

Write your casting here:

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Traditionally, the athame is used to cast. If you have a coven sword, then the coven sword is often used for "big" rituals like Samhain or initiations and elevations.

# Witch DAILY

## **Calling the Quarters:**

Because it's Samhain, you'll be calling these in reverse: (West, South, East, North)

You can write your own quarter calls, or you can borrow one. For Samhain I use the one created by Starhawk's Reclaiming which tells the story of a witch as she prepares for her own death during the burning times. It is sad, but very powerful.

Spirit of the Water, soothe away my anger, for I am soon to leave here, in great fear and pain. Surround me with thy beauty if it please thee that I might lose my fear of the flames.

Spirit of the Fire, hear me when I cry. For I am soon to die, and leave a daughter to mourn. Let me burn brightly if it please thee that she may see my light and be warmed.

Spirit of the Air, lift my ashes quietly, so high above that gathering, and let them fall again. And this shall be a sign if it please thee, that I shall be returning on the North wind.

Spirit of the Earth, I give my body to thee, oh let my bones, scattered, be among the growing things. And let the forest grow, if it please thee, over this place of death and suffering.

You can write your own quarter call, just be respectful of the elements/elementals, and be sure to ask for their protection and respectful participation at Samhain.

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## **Altar blessings**

Here is where you bless the elements on the altar: water, salt, flame, incense.

This can be very simple, just like the circle casting.

"I (name) do by my will bless this \_\_\_\_\_ to aid us in our rite, and to lend us its power as we do our work. So mote it be."

Or you can write your own:

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**Invocation:**

If you believe in a Divine Power, this is the place to include that invocation here. If you don't no worries, you can simply acknowledge the power of the universe, the human spirit, and the life of the Earth.

I like to invoke the Goddess in Her form as Crone and Maiden, the mother is ever present in Her as well. We acknowledge Her, but put more prominence on the Crone and the Maiden. We also invoke the Horned God, whose power is now at its lowest. We ask that the Crone be prepared to guide all souls to the Other Side, so that they may find rest.

I typically call Hecate, and Persephone (or Kore), inviting their presence. I call on Cernunnos, the Horned One, the spirit of the Green who will endure the dark time.

***Example:***

“Great Goddess of All Things, in your form as Hecate, the giver of transition, death, and guide to all who are lost, we invite your presence, lend us your grace as we know what to release, welcome those who have fallen to your gateway. Kore, Maiden, Goddess of all that will be, we invite you to witness that which is being transformed, that you might bring us your promise of renewal. Hail and be welcome.”

“Great God of the Greenwood, Cernunnos, Horned One, you who gives life to the wild things, and renews the land each year. We invite your presence, welcoming the spirit and spark of the life that will be renewed, that you might lend to us the power to endure the dark of the year. Hail and be welcome.”

Or you can choose your own deities, and write your own invocation:

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At this point light the candles on your altar, one for the Goddess and one for the God, or light them for the polarity of masculine and feminine.

If you are working with a group, you might want to have a little bit of an explanation of what is happening in this next part as you move from facing the altar, to facing the coven.

**Acknowledging the Journey**

Acknowledge the Participants, and what everyone has endured this year.

# Witch DAILY

## **Inviting the Ancestors**

Next we invite our ancestors to join us, to help us, to bring us their love, their comfort, and prepare the way for any messages that they might want to share with us later in the ritual.

You can write your own invitation, especially if there is someone in particular you wish to hear from.

It should be something along these lines:

“Ancestors, from whose pattern of life we have been created in our own unique strength and power, we invite you to our circle. The veil is thin, we ask that you join us, participation and share this time and space with us.”

You then ask the coven, or your family to call these folks by name. It can be your ancestors, friends, relatives, pets, anyone who has crossed over. Take a few minutes to allow people to call their names.

The priestess or priest then concludes this invocation with something akin to the following:

“Beloved Ones, we acknowledge your presence, and we know that it is your love and power that remains. What is remembered lives. We ask that at the conclusion of Samhain that you feel free to transition to the realms that may renew you. We are grateful for the life you have given us, and we ask that you continue to bless us with your power and memory. What is remembered lives.”

Use the one above, or write your own.

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Either way, it is traditional to say at the end: “What is remembered lives.”

Coven responds: “What is remembered lives.”

This is usually chanted as people bring memories of their loved ones, so that the presence is easily felt. A mirror can be on the altar to catch glimpses of your loved ones wanting to look in on you.

When the chanting is over move on to the next part.

## **Calling the names of martyred witches (and those martyred as witches)**

We have always done this in our coven, but it is totally optional. For each name a bell is rung.

You can find names of these folks in the local history of where you live- the Salem martyrs, martyrs from the burning times, or martyrs from Africa and South America. Choose appropriate to your location.

## **Burning the Remnants:**

Now we gather to release the things that no longer serve us. We ask that the Crone take these things from us, and renew them in the earth.

# Witch DAILY

“Hecate, you who transitions us from life to death, you who renews the world, you who remembers all. We ask that you lend us the power of renewal in taking from us those feelings, relationships, worries, concerns, practices, behaviors, or other issues that no longer serve us. We sacrifice our former selves that we might become the version of ourselves that serves us, and honors our lives the best.”

You can write your own if you prefer:

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If you circle members haven't already, this is the place to write down the things that no longer serve.

“We light the sacred flame.”

You need only acknowledge the sacred flame, though you can add something more fancy if you like.

Invite anyone participating with you to burn their remnants, or burn your own. Encourage people to speak these out loud as the paper burns, though it isn't necessary- it is more powerful.

## **Meeting the Crone:**

If you are working with more than one person, this can be a designated person's role, or can be a function traded between two people.

We ask that the Crone join us in our circle.

Invoke her presence: “Wise one, gate of transformation, we invite you to walk among us.”

For each participant, the priestess as crone goes to the individual and holds their hands, asking the coven member to “give her their sorrows, their pain, and that which no longer serves” the coven member then can share out loud, or silently connect with the priestess. When the person has concluded, the crone embraces them, the priestess focuses on taking the burdens from the person and pushing those sorrows into the Earth.

If there is no one to priestess the crone, then focus on the experience of the Crone being present in the room with you. Imagine she is just outside of you, looking at you with kind, old, intelligent eyes.

Feel free to speak aloud those things you wish to give her. As you do, close your eyes and see her taking them as words, images, tokens, and crushing them into ash in her hands. The Earth opens up around her feet, and she pours the ash into the ground, these things are dust- they are gone, they aren't yours anymore, they belong to Her, and she will renew them in the Earth.

## **Meeting the Maiden:**

Close your eyes, or turn away and turn back to face the same space (with eyes closed) invite the Maiden to join you.

# Witch DAILY

If you are working with more than one person, this can be a designated person's role, or can be a function traded between two people.

We ask that the Maiden join us in our circle.

Invoke her presence: "Young one, gate of potential, we invite you to walk among us."

For each participant, the priestess as crone goes to the individual and holds their hands, asking the coven member to "give her their hopes and dreams, the things that will come to new life in the new year" the coven member then can share out loud, or silently connect with the priestess. When the person has concluded, the maiden embraces them, the priestess focuses on bestowing these gifts to the person from the Earth into their bodies with her embrace, she may say something aloud like, "Take the bounty from me, renewed, your desires shall become yours."

If there is no one to priestess the Maiden, then focus on the experience of the Maiden being present in the room with you. Imagine she is just outside of you, looking at you with bright, excited, joyous eyes.

Feel free to speak aloud those things you wish to receive from her. As you do, close your eyes and see her taking them as words, images, tokens, and them becoming seeds in her hands. The Earth is still opened up around her feet, and she pours the seeds into the ground, they erupt alive from the Earth as new life, they belong to You, and she has given them to you from the Earth.

## **Divination:**

Be careful about the divination portion here. You want to be careful not to negate the magic you just performed with the Maiden and the Crone. So if you want to know something about the things you just released or asked for, then do so by asking a "How question" such as, "What can I do to make my Samhain gifts manifest in the best/fastest way possible?" This is also where you can ask your ancestors, loved ones, or those who have crossed over questions about what they see or what they want you to know. I highly recommend having a notebook or paper and pen close by so that you can record your experience. The energy of Samhain can feel scattered because of the thin veil, don't trust that memory will behave as it usually does.

Use your preferred divination tool. In our coven we had tarot cards, runes, and cards with "Yes" and "No" written on them for people to reach for. They could chose whichever they preferred.

Sit for a little bit in meditation, enjoying the power of this moment.

*This is the part of the ritual that should transition everyone from serious to joyous. Happy music can be played, and if in a group, the spiral dance will be enjoyed before the cakes and wine.*

## Pomegranate and Apple

Slice the pomegranate cross wise to reveal the seeds. Slice the apple cross wise to reveal the five-pointed star.

Looking at the Pomegranate-"Behold the fruit of life, which is death." Show the pomegranate, or spend a little time looking at the seeds.

# Witch DAILY

Priestess or Priest: “You are as full of life as the pomegranate. Your life has all the possibility of joy, as this fruit is filled with the promise of life.”

Priestess holds the Apple- “Behold the fruit of death, which is rebirth.” Show the apple, or spend a little time looking at the core.

Priestess or Priest: “You are renewed, always like the Apple. Life has all the possibility of renewal, as this fruit shows us the promise of renewal whenever we have need.”

## **Cakes and Wine:**

Bless the wine, and the cakes.

Do this in conjunction with the Great Rite: athame in the wine saying, “As male is to female, and female to male, so does the power of life flow within me and all here. I invoke the powers of life to make manifest all that has been brought to the Goddess and God tonight”. Sprinkle some of the wine on the cakes.

Then formally bless the cakes and wine. Our blessing goes like this: Lady and Lord, bless this wine, symbol of the joy of life, and the powers of life that are ever present around us. Lady and Lord, bless these cakes, symbol of the sacrifice of the grain, that sustains us that we can enjoy life with those whom we love, who love us in return. So mote it be.

You can also write your own blessing here:

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Offer a libation:

Cakes and wine should be shared, with the following blessing from one participant to another, or to yourself.

May you (I) never hunger (take a bite of cake/bread).

May you (I) never thirst (take a sip of wine).

These are then passed around to everyone. If in a group the priestess gets the last bite or sip of wine and bite of cakes.

## **Spiral Dance/Meditation/Joyousness, Silliness**

Can sing, perform the spiral dance, tell ghost stories, talk about the hopes for the future. This can also be a place to tell happy stories of ancestors or those who have passed on.

## **Come back together to release the ancestors**

“We now ask our ancestors to prepare themselves to return to their home in the next realm, that they might know how much we love and cherish them, and how grateful we are for the power of LIFE that they have given us.”

# Witch DAILY

You can say something aloud exactly like that, or you can write your own benediction here:

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Say their names, and wish them safe travels as the veil closes again tonight. Wish them well, share your love. Thank them for their presence.

## **Ring the Bell**

You can ring a bell, a singing bowl, a chime... anything that has a pleasant tone. Deeper is better for Samhain.

“The veil is open for a few more hours. We are grateful for the participation of those who have made the way for us. We ask that you return or transition to your realm. We invite you to be in communication as necessary, asking that you respect the boundaries of the world of form. We send you with our love, joy, and gratitude, so mote it be.”

You can write your own farewell:

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***Ring the bell nine times.***

## **Open the Circle, release the Quarters**

I almost always do this in a much simpler way than the invocation. I want there to be some magical residue from all of the rituals and magic I perform to be present in my home. I have yet to have anything other than positive consequences as a result.

Remember that you are going widdershins for Samhain.

Lady and Lord, Hecate, Kore, Great God of the Greenwood, we thank you for your participation and presence. We are delighted to have had you share our time together this blessed night, Go if you must, stay if you will, Hail and Farewell.

Draw up the circle with ONE pass if you want to leave some magical structure in your house/on your property. If you want to fully pull up the circle's power, then circumambulate as many times as you cast.

Imagine the circle's light being pulled through your body, and dispersing into life-giving power all around you.

# Witch DAILY



To release the quarters, you can do it simply by saying something like:

By the Air that is Her Breath

By the Earth that is Her Body

By the living Waters of Her Womb

By the Fire of Her bright spirit, the Circle is open, but never broken

You can also write your own release of the quarters:

May the eternal love of Life, and the Lady and Lord awaken in your heart, and guide you to happiness.  
Merry Meet, Merry Part, and Merry Meet AGAIN!