



*Be*witched*
Independent Witch Program
Module 5

Rituals 101

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Rituals 101

What is a ritual?

- _____
- Formalized Practice
- Repeated Practice or Event
- Meaningful to the witch

Wiccan Ritual Outline

- Here's a brief explanation of each of the Wiccan ritual steps.

Cleanse Sacred Space

Why: We want to remove negative energy from our space before we cast the circle and create it as sacred.

How: We cleanse sacred space usually by using a smudge stick of sage. Sage is a purifying herb and removes unwanted negative energies from our space.

Grounding and Centering

Why: We ground ourselves in order to connect with the earth. Once grounded, we can either draw energy up from the earth, or drain our excess energy into the earth, so it can be recycled. Centering is where we create a focus within ourselves for our energy.

How: The most commonly used method for grounding is a visualization where the witch imagines roots from her feet planting themselves in the ground. This establishes the connection with the earth. There are other ways to ground yourself, such as eating, and sometimes human touch, especially a hug can be particularly grounding. There are several ways to center, most are visualizations. For example, you can draw energy from all parts of your body and focus it in one area, like your solar plexus.

Casting the Circle

Why: We cast circle to create a boundary where our energy can stay in and any unwanted energy will stay out.

How: The ritual leader walks the perimeter with the athame while casting the circle. Everyone usually envisions a circle of light that forms a sphere, as the ritual leader walks back to the altar. Then many times all members chant together- this chant centers us and aids us in attuning to one another. (Attunement)

Wiccan Ritual Outline (cont.)

Why: We consecrate the circle in order to seal and bless our space.

How: We bless the elements, combine them (if you wish) and walk the perimeter of your circle. For example, you might bless a candle (fire) and unlit incense (air), then light the incense with the candle and walk the perimeter.

Calling the Quarters

Why: We call the quarters for a few reasons, and those reasons depend on how you call them and what you call. You may call the Watchtowers or Guardians for protection or you may call the elements to be present within your space to add energy to your ritual. Some people call elementals, angels, winds.

How: We call to the quarters usually by facing that quarter, and saying an evocation to the quarter. Some traditions light an appropriately colored candle before moving to the next quarter, some enact an action associated with the quarter; ie: splashing water, ringing a bell, etc. We visualize a portal opening, and within, that element- however you see it.

Invoking/Evoking the God/dess

Why: We evoke the deities to watch over our circle. At this point, we may want to evoke deities that we may reference during the “meat” of our ritual, be it a spell, esbat or other Working. FYI: Invoking is where you call a deity into a person, and evoking is where you ask a deity to be present. Many people use the word “invoking” for both uses.

How: We usually write a specific invocation to the deity, incorporating their myth and attributes. We do this so we are SURE to attract the attention of the right deity.

What: If this is an esbat, you may draw down the moon, do a working or say the Charge of the Goddess. If it's a Sabbat, you may have readings about the lore of the season/holiday. This is where your spellwork will go, if your working is a spell. Any activities or exercises done in circle would be done here. This is the reason for the ritual, itself.

Wiccan Ritual Outline (cont.)

Meditation

Why: We meditate to receive knowledge and guidance from the deities, as well as possible spirit guides, ancestors, etc. We may meditate on a specific topic, or just remain open to what they have to say to you.

How: Sometimes we meditate in silence, by either focusing on one specific thing, or focusing on nothing at all. Also, someone might lead a guided meditation, where the circle all goes through a visualization together. Another way to meditate is to chant, dance, or do labyrinth walking- a moving meditation.

Divination

Why: We do divination to see if our offerings were accepted, if our center was on the right track or as an omen for the future.

How: Using a divination tool (tarot cards, runes, etc), ask the question and then divine the answer.

Why: We pass around cakes and ale, to ground us after the main part of ritual. Sometimes we make a offering of cakes and ale to the deities, so that they will take our offering into accord when we ask them for help.

How: We pass the cakes/ale around clockwise. To make an offering, the HPS gives the first cake, and the first sip of wine to the Gods usually using a special dish (which is later returned to the earth). Then the HPS will take a sip of the wine, first, then pass the cakes and ale around, either by passing it around, or by walking around the circle clockwise (easier to do if alcohol and juice are both being offered)

Thanking the Deities

Why: We invited the deities to our circle, and now we will thank them for coming, and let them know that we are finished with our working.

How: We usually speak a short thankful passage to them, thanking them for coming, and inviting them to leave.

Wiccan Ritual Outline (cont.)

Dismissing the Quarters

Why: Just as we called on the quarters to aid us, now we thank them for their presence, and invite them to leave.

How: We face the direction of the element/watchtower, etc that we are dismissing, say our thank yous and invite them to leave. If candles were lit for each direction, one would snuff them at the appropriate time. We envision our elemental portals closing as each quarter is dismissed.

Open the Circle

Why: We have to open the circle to return to our normal reality. We take away our protective barrier, and let all the energies within the covenstead mingle.

How: Usually, we reverse whichever technique we had cast the circle with. If we walked clockwise around the circle three times, we'd walk counter-clockwise thrice. If we envisioned a bubble surrounding the circle, you'd send that bubble into space, into the ground, or wherever else you want. There are lots of ways to cast and then open (or un-cast) the circle. It ends the ritual.

Grounding

Why: Sometimes we have excess personal energy after a ritual. If you feel light-headed or dizzy, chances are that you need to ground. Grounding will return the energy back into the earth.

How: Either do the exercise where you plant your roots into the earth and "see" the energy drain into the earth. Another way to do it is to just place your palms on the floor and push your excess energy out that way. Eating meat-and-potatoes type food also works well, as well as hugs (always ask first).

Other information

- Not everyone uses the same ritual outline, this is just one possibility
- Some people separate different parts of the ritual using the ringing of a bell
- Keep in mind that you might not use all steps for each ritual

Family Full Moon Ritual

Read through the ritual, and look at the ritual steps above. Analyze the ritual below and note each ritual step. Keep in mind that not all steps will be present at all rituals.

Begin by ringing the bell to establish Sacred Space. The bell ringer says:

I ring the bell
To cast the spell
Let sacred time begin
1 - 2 - 3
So mote it be
Let sacred time begin.
Then Mom casts the Circle by saying:

Great Mother,
Weave around us
A circle of radiant light
Where we can honor
Our Lord and Lady.
Protect us, guide us and love us.

Tell the kids to imagine a silvery-blue light surrounding us to create a circle. Explain that this "Circle of Light" means we want to make this a sacred place to honor the Goddess and God. Tell them a Sacred Place doesn't have to be a church. It can be in your dining room, a special spot in the forest, or even at school, as long as you show the respect and honor the Goddess and God deserve by creating your Sacred Space first. When you're ready you can go on to explain how this is a place out of time and a time out of place. You might want to skip this with younger kids because it might be too confusing (and a little scary) for them.

Next we "Call the Quarters". Explain that this is asking the Ancient Ones to add their powers to ours to make our Circle strong.

CHILD A lights the yellow candle and says:
I call to you Ancient Ones of the East
Guardian Sprirts of Air
To witness this ritual and guard this Circle

CHILD B lights the red candle and says:

I call to you Ancient Ones of the South
Guardian Sprits of Fire
To witness this ritual and guard this Circle.

CHILD C lights the blue candle and says:
I call to you Ancient Ones of the West
Guardian Spirits of Water
To Witness this ritual and guard this Circle.

CHILD D lights the green candle and says:
I call to you Ancient Ones of the North
Guardian Spirits of Earth
To witness this ritual and guard this Circle.

Next Mom says:
The Circle has been cast
The Ancient Ones have been called
Now it is time to welcome
The Goddess and the God.

Great Mother,
Whose symbol is the bright night moon,
Heavenly father,
Whose symbol is the fiery sun,
We ask you to join our family
For this Full Moon Celebration.

Light the Moon candle.

We light this candle in honor of Our Lady
On this night when the Full Moon
Rides high in the sky,
As a symbol of our love and respect
For the Goddess.

Mom spreads her arms in announcement:

Once more we come together
Beneath the Full Moon
To share our joy of life.
To thank the Lord and Lady
For all they have given us
And for all that we have.
Read the Moon journal.
Then serve dinner.

After dinner, clear the table except for the candles and glasses of milk. Bring in the cookies and ask someone to say the blessing. The child chosen hold the plate and says:

We thank the Spirits of the Land
Who gave us this food.
We thank the men and the women
Who helped grow and prepare it.
And we thank the Lord and the Lady
And bless this food in their names.

Pass the cookies around the table. When everyone is done eating Mom can say the final blessing:

Mother of all, Queen of the Night
Father of All, Lord of the Sky
Watch over those gathered here
And keep us safe in your loving arms
Until the Moon is Full again.
Mom extinguishes the Moon candle and says:
Blessed Be.

Now it is time to close the ritual. Explain that the ritual is over and we need to thank The Ancient Ones for their help and guidance, thank the Goddess and God for joining us and release the Circle, thus undoing our Sacred Space.

CHILD A says:
Thank you and farewell
Ancient Ones of the East
Guardian Spirits of Air
Go in Peace. (Extinguish the yellow candle.)

CHILD B says:
Thank you and farewell
Ancient Ones of the South
Guardian Spirits of Fire
Go in Peace. (Extinguish the red candle.)

CHILD C says:

Thank you and farewell

Ancient Ones of the West

Guardian Spirits of Water

Go in Peace. (Extinguish the blue candle.)

CHILD D says:

Thank you and farewell

Ancient Ones of the North

Guardian Spirits of Earth

Go in Peace. (Extinguish the green candle.)

Then Mom says farewell to the Goddess and the God:

We thank you God and Goddess

For sharing this special time

With our family.

May we keep you in our hearts,

And follow your path of love Every day.

Blessed be!

Now the bell ringer rings us out and says

I ring the bell,

Release the spell

And Sacred Time will end

1 - 2 - 3

So mote it be,

Until we meet again.

Explain that this is the signal that Sacred Time is over, and our Sacred Space is released. That is, it goes back to being just a normal dining room.

Now Mom says:

The Circle is open

And yet it remains a Circle.

Around and through us

Always flows its magickal powers.

This ritual is over.

From: <http://www.paganparenting.net/phpnuke/modules.php?name=News&file=article&sid=27>

When and why do we do rituals?

- Esbats (full and new moon rituals)
- Sabbats (Wiccan holidays)
- Dedication (when a new member dedicates herself to her coven)
- Initiation (when a member is initiated within a tradition or coven)
- Elevation (when a member gains a degree)
- Wiccanings/ Namings (a ceremony for a baby, asking that the child be blessed)
- Handfastings (Wiccan weddings, traditionally for a year and a day)
- Handpartings (Wiccan partings/divorce)
- Complex Spells
- Meditation, Divination
- Lots of other reasons...

Esbats: from French "S'esbattre," meaning "to joyfully frolic"

Esbat Rituals

- Takes place on a full or new moon (three days before or after is acceptable)
- Priestess may draw down the moon into herself and "become" the Goddess
- Working Celebration- Magick may be performed, Healing may be performed
- Other Coven activities may be performed
- Each month has different correspondences that are correlated to the month (below)
- "Energy flow" may impact the direction of an esbat ritual
- Each month will have a name, some have several names, it all depends on the source that you are looking at

Lunar Calendar Correspondences

_____ **Moon (January)**

Nature Spirits: gnomes, brownies

Herbs: marjoram, holy thistle, nuts and cones

Colors: brilliant white, blue-violet, black

Flowers: snowdrop, crocus

Scents: musk, mimosa

Stones: garnet, onyx, jet, chrysoprase

Trees: birch

Animals: fox, coyote

Birds: pheasant, blue jay

Deities: Freya, Inanna, Sarasvati, Hera, Ch'ang-O, Sinn

Power Flow: sluggish, below the surface; beginning and conceiving. Protection, reversing spells.

Conserving energy by working on personal problems that involve no one else. Getting your various bodies to work smoothly together for the same goals.

Moon (February)

Nature Spirits: house fairies, both of the home itself and of houseplants

Herbs: balm of Gilead, hyssop, myrrh, sage, spikenard

Colors: light

blue, violet

Flowers: primrose

Scents: wisteria, heliotrope

Stones: amethyst, jasper, rock crystal

Trees: rowan, laurel, cedar

Animals: otter, unicorn

Birds: eagle, chickadee

Deities: Brigit, Juno, Kuan Yin, Diana, Demeter, Persephone,

Aphrodite

Power Flow: energy working toward the surface; purification, growth, healing. Loving the self.

Accepting responsibility for past errors, forgiving yourself, and making future plans.

Moon (March)

Nature Spirits: Mer-people, Air and Water beings who are connected with spring rains and storms

Herbs: broom, High John root, yellow dock, wood betony, Irish Moss

Colors: pale green, red-violet

Flowers: jonquil, daffodil, violet

Scents: honeysuckle, apple blossom

Stones: aquamarine, bloodstone

Trees: alder, dogwood

Animals: cougar, hedgehog, boar

Birds: sea crow, eagle

Deities: Black Isis, the Morrigan, Hecate, Cybele, Astarte, Athene, Minerva, Artemis, Luna

Power Flow: energy breaks into the open; growing, prospering, exploring. New beginnings; balance of Light and Dark. Breaking illusions. Seeing the truth in you life however much it may hurt.

Moon (April)

Nature Spirits: plant faeries

Herbs: basil, chives, dragon's blood, geranium, thistle

Colors: crimson red, gold

Flowers: daisy, sweetpea

Scents: pine, bay, bergamot, patchouli

Stones: ruby, garnet, sard

Trees: pine, bay, hazel

Animals: bear, wolf

Birds: hawk, magpie

Deities: Kali, Hathor, Anahita, Ceres, Ishtar, Venus, Bast

Power Flow: energy into creating and producing; return balance to the nerves. Change, self-confidence, self-reliance, take advantage of opportunities. Work on temper and emotional flare

Moon (May)

Nature Spirits: faeries, elves

Herbs: dittany of Crete, elder, mint, rose, mugwort, thyme, yarrow

Colors: green, brown, pink

Flowers: lily of the valley, foxglove, rose, broom

Scents: rose, sandalwood

Stones: emerald, malachite, amber, carnelian

Trees: hawthorn

Animals: cats, lynx, leopard

Birds: swallow, dove, swan

Deities: Bast, Venus, Aphrodite, Maia, Diana, Artemis, Pan, Horned God

Power Flow: full creating energy; propagation. Intuition, contact with faeries and other supernatural beings. Strengthen connection with supernatural protectors and beings around you. Power flowing from the Greenwood Gods and trees.

Moon (June)

Nature Spirits: sylphs, zephyrs

Herbs: skullcap, meadowsweet, vervain, tansy, dog grass, parsley, mosses

Colors: orange, golden-green

Flowers: lavender, orchid, yarrow

Scents: lily of the valley, lavender

Stones: topaz, agate, alexandrite, fluorite

Trees: oak

Animals: monkey, butterfly, frog, toad

Birds: wren, peacock

Deities: Aine of Knockaine, Isis, Neith, Green Man, Cerridwen, Bendis, Ishtar

Power Flow: full but restful energy; protect, strengthen, and prevent. A time of Light; Earth tides are turning. Decision-making, taking responsibility for present happenings. Work on personal inconsistencies. Strengthen and reward yourself for your positive traits.

Moon (July)

Nature Spirits: hobgoblins (small, grotesque but friendly brownie-type creatures), faeries of harvested crops

Herbs: honeysuckle, agrimony, lemon balm, hyssop

Colors: silver, blue-gray

Flowers: orris, frankincense

Scents: lotus, water lily, jasmine

Stones: pearl, moonstone, white agate

Trees: oak, acacia, ash

Animals: crab, turtle, dolphin, whale

Birds: starling, ibis, swallow

Deities: Kheper, Athene, Juno, Hel, Holda, Cerridwen, Nephthys,

_____ **Moon (July) Cont.**

Power Flow: relaxed energy; preparing; succeeding. Dream-work, divination, and meditations on goals and plans, especially spiritual ones

_____ **Moon (August)**

Nature Spirits: dryads

Herbs: chamomile, St. John's Wort, bay, angelica, fennel, rue, orange

Colors: yellow, gold

Flowers: sunflower, marigold

Scents: frankincense, heliotrope

Stones: cat's eyes, carnelian, jasper, fire agate
Trees: hazel, alder, cedar

Animals: lion, phoenix, sphinx, dragon

Birds: crane, falcon, eagle

Deities: Ganesha, Thoth, Hator, Diana, Hecate, Nemesis

Power Flow: energy into harvesting; gathering, appreciating. Vitality, health. Friendships.

_____ **Moon (September)**

Nature Spirits: trooping fairies

Herbs: copal, hennel, rye, wheat, valerian, skullcap

Colors: brown, yellow-green, yellow

Flowers: narcissus, lily

Scents: storax, mastic, gardenia, bergamot

Stones: peridot, olivine, chrysolite, citrine

Trees: hazel, larch, bay

Animals: snake, jackal

Birds: ibis, sparrow

Deities: Demeter, Ceres, Isis, Nephthys, Freyja, Ch'ang-O, Thoth

Power Flow: rest after labor; balance of Light and Dark. Organize. Clean and straighten up physical, mental, emotional and spiritual clutter.

_____ **Moon (October)**

Nature Spirits: frost faeries, plant faeries

Herbs: pennyroyal, thyme, catnip, uva ursi, angelica, burdock

Colors: dark blue-green

Flowers: calendula, marigold, cosmos

Scents: strawberry, apple blossom, cherry

Stones: opal, tourmaline, beryl, turquoise

Trees: yew, cypress, acacia

Animals: stag, jackal, elephant, ram, scorpion

Birds: heron, crow, robin

Deities: Ishtar, Astarte, Demeter, Kore, Lakshmi, Horned God, Belili, Hathor

Power Flow: to let go; inner cleansing. Karma and reincarnation. Justice and balance. Inner harmony.

Moon (November)

Nature Spirits: subterranean faeries

Herbs: grains of paradise, verbena, betony, borage, cinquefoil, blessed thistle

Colors: gray, sea-green

Flowers: blooming cacti, chrysanthemum

Scents: cedar, cherry blossoms, hyacinth, narcissus, peppermint, lemon

Stones: topaz, hyacinth, lapis lazuli

Trees: alder, cypress

Animals: unicorn, scorpion, crocodile, jackal

Birds: owl, goose, sparrow

Deities: Kali, Black Isis, Nicnevin, Hecate, Bast, Osiris, Sarasvati, Lakshmi, Skadi, Mawu

Power Flow: take root, prepare. Transformation. Strengthen communication with the God or goddess seems closest to you.

Moon (December)

Nature Spirits: snow faeries, storm faeries, winter tree faeries

Herbs: holly, English ivy, fir, mistletoe

Colors: blood red, white and black

Flowers: holly, poinsettia, Christmas cactus

Scents: violet, patchouli, rose geranium, frankincense, myrrh, lilac

Stones: serpentine, jacinth, peridot

Trees: pine, fir, holly

Animals: mouse, deer, horse, bear

Birds: rook, robin, snowy owl

Deities: Hathor, Hecate, Neith, Athene, Minerva, Ixchel, Osiris, Norns, Fates

Power Flow: to endure, die, be reborn; Earth tides turning. Darkness. Personal alchemy. Spiritual paths. Reach out to friends and family, the lonely and needy.

Moon (Usually once per year)

Nature Spirits: banshees and other beings who carry messages between worlds

Herbs: ginger, hops, wormwood, hyssop, patchouli, mugwort, nutmeg, star anise

Colors: black, white, purple

Flowers: white lily, dahlia, chrysanthemum

Scents: rosemary, dragon's blood, lilac, pine, wisteria

Stones: obsidian, onyx, Apache tear

Trees: pine, cypress, yew, elder

Animals: bat, wolf, sow, dog, snake

Birds: owls, raven falcon

Deities: Cybele, Circe, Hel, Nephythys, Cerridwen, Horned God, Caillech, Feryja, Holda

Power Flow: release, remember; communion with the dead. Prophecy. releasing old negative memories and emotions.

Sabbats: from Greek "Sabatu," meaning "to rest"

The Calendar of the Sabbats

December 20-22: Yule/ Winter Solstice

February 1-2: Imbolc

March 20-22: Ostara/ Spring Equinox

May 1: Beltane

June 20-22: Midsummer/ Summer Solstice

Sabbats: from Greek "Sabatu," meaning "to rest" (cont')

August 1: Lammas

September 20-22: Mabon/ Autumnal Equinox

October 31: Samhain

Lesser/ Minor Sabbats (seasonal/ mythological)

December 20-22: Yule/ Winter Solstice

March 20-22: Ostara/ Spring Equinox

June 20-22: Midsummer/ Summer Solstice

September 20-22: Mabon/ Autumnal Equinox

Greater/ Major Sabbats aka Fire Festivals (celtic/ mythological)

February 1-2: Imbolc

May 1: Beltane

August 1: Lammas

October 31: Samhain

What Happens at a Sabbat?

The root of the word Sabbat means "to rest," so usually no _____ will take place during a sabbat ritual

Some options for a sabbat ritual include:

- Ritual Drama
- Nature activity
- Party (it IS a celebration, after all)
- Explanation of lore surrounding holiday
- Sacrifice
- Offering
- Any activity correlating to holiday
- Feast

Sabbat	Date	Nature	Mythology
Winter Solstice / Yule	December 20-22	Longest night vs. waxing sun	Rebirth of the Sun God
Imbolc	February 1-2	Celebrates the awakening earth	Goddess is bride of the God
Spring Equinox / Ostara	March 20-22	Days and nights of equal length	Sexual awakening of Lord and Lady
Beltane	May 1	Flowers in full bloom	Honors marriage of Lord and Lady
Summer Solstice / Midsummer	June 20-22	Longest day vs. waning sun	Lord at peak power, Lady pregnant
Lammas / Lughnasadh	August 1-2	First (grain) harvest	Sacrifices made for a good harvest
Autumn Equinox / Mabon	September 20-22	Second (fruit) harvest	Honors aging deities
Samhain	October 31	Third (meat) harvest, thinning veil	Death of the Lord, Lady is crone