

2022 Beltane Ritual Flow

Intention:

Reweaving our connection with sacred earth, ourselves and each other

Preparation and Set Up

Build the Beltane fire in the fire pit, cover with a tarp, cover that with a sarong for the altar, which will be covered with flowers/greenery

Make sure the Maypole is ready to go

Have an area set up for making may crowns, with all supplies needed. We use English ivy, whatever flowers are blooming, ferns, cedar sprays etc. You need some scissors and maybe twine and florist wire. Helps to have someone who knows how to make crowns as well.

In the invite, we ask people to get there early, at least 30 minutes before the ritual starts, so they can make a crown

Gather: social time and making ivy-greens-flower crowns – XXX facilitate

Crown Facilitator will recruit people to bring flowers and greens (or do it themselves)

They will set up a couple stations to make crowns (maybe a couple blankets in the meadow) and be helping people who don't know how to make the crowns.

Maybe finding helpers who will make a bunch of very simple crowns for people who don't make one of their own.

Gathering Song – XXX will begin the song

Humbly by Laurence Cole

<https://www.laurencecole.com/album/humbly/>

XXX and XXX will play flute and sing the song, lot of people know this one so will join in

All will gather in a circle around the Maypole general area

Welcome and Ritual Conspiracy: Sandra and V

(these are preparation notes for the welcoming – the actual welcoming was unscripted and something approximately like this probably came out of our mouths). My partner and I sometimes tell a longer story by tossing the “story ball” back and forth, each telling a sequential piece of the story

Section 1. Beltane Lore (Sandra)

Here is our intention for this ritual: we shake off the last vestiges of winter and allow ourselves to fully celebrate this springtime.

In these celebratory community rituals, we are inspired by traditions from around the world. We honor those traditions and are grateful for them, but we don't want to be rigid about it. We want to let those traditions evolve and change to create celebrations for these people, in this time, in this place.

Today we honor the ancient Celtic folk who gave us the name Beltane, which means the Bright Fire. Beltane was one of the 4 Fire festivals, directly opposite Samhain on the wheel

of the year. Like Samhain, this was believed to be a time when veils between the worlds was thin. At Beltane, the Celtic people celebrated their connection with the spirits of nature and this beautiful animate earth.

The invitation today is to deepen your connection with the animate forces of spring. Today we gather in community, just like those ancient Celtic peoples did. Finally, after a long dark winter, we get out of the house and travel to the ritual site to rekindle family and friendship ties, to reconnect with our beloved Mother earth and to celebrate springtime.

Section 2. Winter (V)

Think back to Samhain, the end of October. Winter is settling in earnest. We become more focused on home and hearth. The world is dying around us, decomposition and composting is beginning. We spiral inward, things get quiet. It is the time of exhale, the space between breaths. The time of increasing darkness, time for dreaming, the quiet time. Do you remember what you were dreaming of this winter? Do you recall what you were letting go of?

Do you remember what you were giving to the compost, what you let go of in hopes that it might be transformed, re-generated?

Section 3. Here we are today/Completing the Cycle (Sandra)

And the wheel turns - here we are today. It's been a long winter, a long cold and rainy spring. But summer is coming. Look around you. Life is flourishing. The sap is running, the trees are leafing out, flowers are blooming. Everything is alive, buzzing, full of the creative and generative force. Have you noticed the bees are out and active again? Have you seen the trilliums blooming! The thousands of baby big leaf maples carpeting the forest floor? The singing of the birds?

On this day, as the wheel turns toward the fullness of summer, we are invited to say our final farewell to the bones of winter. To notice what fertility that has been kindled in the great cosmic compost pile. We are completing this cycle (point to the sign nailed to the bottom of the maypole) of birth, life, death, compost and regeneration or rebirth. Taking that metaphor into our own lives, we celebrate our own renewal, our own personal regeneration, right alongside this miraculous renewal and regeneration of this animate earth, our true Mother.

Section 4: The Intention of this Ritual: Welcoming/Celebrating the Spring/Tapping into the Power of Spring (V)

Today, we celebrate the reality of The Spring. We honor the sprouting and budding and leafing and chirping and croaking, we share in the joy and hope of this miracle of renewal and regeneration. We dance, we dance the maypole in celebration of the generative life force teeming thru us, coursing through our veins in sympathetic resonance with the whole world around us.

What is the magic we are doing here?

- Celebration of what is
- Receiving the nourishment of what has been composted during the long winter
- Getting ourselves tapped into the enormous power of the springtime

- Riding the gigantic wave of The Spring
- Letting the enormous life energy/force of Spring to move through us

Grounding: XXX

She will weave into the grounding the idea that each person sinks their roots and their grounding cord down into the earth, where their roots become entwined with everyone else's, forming a circle.

Land Acknowledgement: XXX

Circle Casting: XXX

- XXX says something along the lines of - to support our ritual intention of Reweaving our connection with sacred earth, ourselves and each other, we are going to weave ourselves into a circle together - it's going to look like this. The person on your right will hand you the ball of yarn. You wrap the yarn, loosely, around your right hand and yell out your name. The whole group echoes back your name to you. Then you pass the ball of yarn to your left, using your left hand. Make sure you leave enough slack when you pass the yarn! When we are all woven together, we are going to sing a song and the circle will be cast!
- XXX models wrapping the string around her right hand, saying her name, and passing the ball of yarn to her left
- When she gets the ball of yarn back, V will teach (and we will all sing with him)
We are Weaving song by Alexa Rose Sunshine.

<https://soundcloud.com/thebirdsings/weaving-our-lives-by-alexandra-sunshine-shelley-ros>

We are weaving our lives

We are weaving our hearts and our minds

We are weaving the bright and dark threads

Of our journeys through

We are weaving our lives

We are weaving a blanket of light

We are weaving a basket to hold

All that's true

- We will sing that for a few minutes, then use hand gestures to make it quieter and quieter until it stops.
- When song ends, XXX calls out for everyone to raise their right hand in the air - says something like "just as we are interconnected by this string, so we are connected in our heart and in this circle. And so the circle is cast"
- XXX tells everyone to take the string off their wrist and drop it to the ground in front of them. We will pre-appoint someone (or do it in the moment) to gather up the yarn and wind it into a ball.

Directions: Need 4 good facilitators for this direction calling

After circle casting, Sandra says: To help weave our connections with each other and with the 4 directions, we are going to call in the directions by splitting up into groups. Let's have the facilitators for this next part move into the direction they are leading. (We each go to the quadrant we are facilitating)

Now I'm going to ask everyone in the circle to feel into which direction they are being called to today. In the East, Air – that's me. In the South, Fire – you'll join XXX. In the West, Water – find XXX. In the North, Earth – XXX. We are aiming for roughly equal numbers in each direction, so if you are not feeling called to any particular direction, pick a group that looks small and join them.

Everyone joins a group, we check out relative sizes and adjust as needed.

Here is a sample of what happens in the small groups, led by the facilitator:

Welcome to the North - We have about 15 minutes to do a check in with each other, share about why we are called to the North, and then we are going to use that information to put together a group calling of the North, performed for the whole circle.

I'll give you a quick rundown of the common associations we have with this direction. North is the direction of Earth. The earth beneath our feet, the mountains, the animals, trees, everything physical including the temple of our own bodies. Of strength, solidity, steadfastness, commitment and physical power. It's the place of our ancestors and our descendants, of being grounded, of being right here in the present.

Let's do one round to introduce ourselves and share why we were called to this direction. Let's do this in the space of one breath. I will go first. (you model)

Now for the second round, we are going to begin shaping how our group quarter call will look. The prompt is, what would you like to call into our circle from this direction? See if you can do that using a gesture or movement, a sound, a word or phrase or combination of these. When you do that, we will all echo it back to you. I will go first. (you model)

Now we will take everything that has been shared and decide as a group how we would like to weave those threads together to call in the direction for the whole circle. We will have about 2 minutes to call in our direction.

Note To Facilitators

Here are a couple things to remember about facilitating this direction call:

- Don't get bogged down in the first round – keep it moving
- During the second round, make note of what theme seems most alive for your group, using it to craft the third round
- You can come with an idea for the direction calling and just tell your people at the beginning of round three "this is what we are going to do to call in the direction"
- However you manage it, it has to be done quickly – especially if you want a minute or two to rehearse as a group

- Have fun with it – there is no wrong way to do this!

As a default, everyone can do just what they did during the 2nd round of sharing, one at a time, for 10 seconds each. Or everyone in the group could do their own movements or sounds in unison.

Other possibilities:

- *Pick out one movement pattern you saw during sharing and have everyone do that together – then invite everyone (one at a time) to add a sound or word on top of that.*
- *Ask your group for ideas on how to weave everyone's contribution into a cohesive quarter call.*
- *Maybe you have an idea for something totally different – maybe in the east everyone wants to pretend they are birds flying around the circle, making a sound or repeating a word or phrase. Maybe in the west you want to each grab a cup of water and sprinkle everyone in the circle while one person says a water blessing. Maybe in the south you all start off by crouching down and one at a time you pop up with great energy and yell out a quality of fire that speaks to you. Maybe in the north you all imitate your favorite animal and walk around the circle?*

Once all the groups are ready, this is how it will go:

- You will do your quarter call from the direction you are calling in – maybe want to face the rest of the circle so they can see you.
- Each facilitator should use these words to open and close, what happens in between is up to you and your group:

Facilitator says: (obviously using their own direction, not all doing east)

We who have been called to the East invite you to deepen your connection with the spirits of air.

Group does the quarter call

Facilitator says: We are all connected with the East today, we are all connected by Air. Air is sacred (at which point everyone in the circle will echo Air is Sacred)

CONDENSED VERSION OF THE ABOVE:

1. Separate into groups, make sure they are about equal size
2. Explain what you are doing – group shares, craft quarter call, do quarter call
3. Give brief explanation of the attributes of the direction you are calling
4. First round – name and what called you here “in the space of a breath” share. Facilitator models.
5. Second Round – share what you want to call in, adding gesture, sound, words. 30 seconds per person. Facilitator models.
6. Idea generation and practice for the quarter call (about 3-5 minutes)
7. Each group stays in their direction, whole group forms a rough circle around the May Pole.
8. Do the quarter calls for the whole circle – sequence: East, South, West, North. Facilitator uses the format above.

Maypole Dance: Sandra. (*I include these maypole instructions in case you need them! If everyone already knows how to dance the maypole, you can skip this whole part. But these are the instructions we have settled on that seem to produce the best results and least confusing maypole dance with people who have never done it before.*)

We only have 24 ribbons so we need 24 people to dance – you can double up on a ribbon, and this will work better if there are no younger kids dancing alone

If you don't get a ribbon, you can drum or play percussion, which you will find by the drummers. If anyone knows they want to drum, in a minute you can join Therese, and know that you can also rotate out of drumming and into the maypole dance. You are also welcome to grab a rattle or shaker and park yourself right in the middle of all the fun, right at the maypole.

If you don't get a ribbon, you can ask people dancing to trade out.

Everyone - stick close because when the dance is close to over, EVERYONE is invited to move into the center, getting close to the maypole for the final raising of energy. So now is a good time to take a minute and think about an intention or a prayer you'd like to add to the energy raising. (PAUSE HERE FOR A MOMENT). Typically, this dance ends with everyone in a tight clump around the maypole – touching it if you can, touching the back of people who are touching it if you can't. Go with the flow of the raising energy, which normally will end in a long wordless howl and when the energy can't be contained, we all collectively let it fly free, through the pole, reverberating out into the world for everyone who needs it. Then sit tight, breathe, ground, we will be guided in a group grounding.

IN A MINUTE - Everyone who wants one, go get a ribbon. Walk out from the pole til your ribbon is stretched out, sit tight. OK, now go get a ribbon if you want one.

WHEN EVERYONE HAS A RIBBON AND IS IN A CIRCLE SANDRA SAYS:

First, we gotta get you facing the right way. (*Get two random people in the circle to face each other, then the next two, then the next two, make that happen all the way around the circle.*)

Everyone, put your ribbon in the hand closest to the pole.

If your ribbon is in your right hand, raise your ribbon up in the air. When we start to dance, your first move will be OVER and OUTSIDE. That means you will bring your ribbon over the head and to the outside of the person facing you. Lower your hand.

If your ribbon is in your left hand, raise your ribbon up in the air. When we begin dancing, your first move will be UNDER and INSIDE - that means you will duck under the ribbon and go inside of the person you are facing. Lower your hand.

Sunwise people, raise your ribbon. Your first move will be over and outside. Moonwise people, your ribbon stays down because your first move will be under and inside. Lower your hands.

The dance is repetitive. You'll raise your arm to go over and to the outside, then lower your arm to go under and to the inside, repeating again and again – OVER and OUTSIDE, UNDER and INSIDE

REMEMBER!!! Always keep a gentle pressure on your ribbon, it should be straight, not bowed. We will start dancing relatively slowly til you get the hang of it. The tempo will get faster and faster. At some point, when you are closer to the pole and your ribbon is short, it will get harder and harder to keep doing the over and under. At that point, all hell breaks loose, normally people just run around the pole, winding their ribbon around it. Do what feels right to raise energy!

Everyone, if you have a ribbon or not, come into the knot of people at the pole. Everyone make noise, howl, shout, laugh - listen to the drums, they will lead you to a crescendo - It usually ends in a wordless howl as we release our energy into the pole, the world tree, to be amplified and released to the spirit world.

V CALLS FOR THE DRUMMERS TO START DRUMMING AND THE DANCE TO BEGIN

Post Maypole:

XXX will lead everyone in a short grounding/breathing while they are still all surrounding the Maypole.

They will then thank all the directions by leading the song Earth My Body

XXX (the circle creation facilitator) will then say that the formal ritual circle is now open, any are free to come and go as they please, but there will be many more festivities to come

Food Blessing - XXX will lead

POTLUCK

SACRED BELTANE FIRE - XXX will facilitate

XXX will do a 15-minute warning announcement to end the potluck and transition to the Beltane Fire

XXX will lead drumming to call people to the fire

Gather all around the fire pit and sing a fire song

Circle Round the Balefire

<https://open.spotify.com/track/599sDqmHHwt0UZ6eoMDn3I?si=bd078486dc564ab5>

XXX lights the Beltane fire – he volunteered to do a traditional friction fire, with some basic words to accompany, calling in the spirit of the fire.

XXX invites anyone who brought something to offer to the fire to do so now, including offering prayers and burning the herbs and offerings we have laid out.

XXX will teach the fire offering song, Fire Flicker

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ZRiM-GSKgm5AvQrONBVsFWQRYPfq4J8/view?usp=share_link

Fire flicker

Flicker flame

Flicker higher

Hear the night call your name

Dark shadows

Dancing light

Come and join us

Tell the stories of your time

All sing Fire Flicker while anyone who feels called does offerings to the Beltane Fire

Jumping of the Beltane Fire and Community Dance – V facilitates

We will have speakers and a playlist if the energy is right for a dance, either before or after the fire jumping, or both if that's what feel right.

We invite people to jump the Beltane Fire, singly or in pairs or groups, calling out a blessing or wish or intention as they do. We have drummers give them a fanfare after they jump, and everyone claps and howls for them.

Invite all present to share fire songs they may know and want to teach us

Usually, after jumping and dancing, it evolves into storytelling and sharing songs around the fire.