

Ritual Planning Guide

Start with a strong intention

The intention considers who this ritual is for - what do we need, at this time, in this culture, in these circumstances, in this physical world?

Sometimes we stick with traditions – and sometimes, we get creative and craft intentions for what is needful today. It helps to actually ask the people who are coming to the ceremony what they need – what work they want to do.

It's best if the intention is simple, clear, and one or two sentences.

Every piece of the ritual is then planned to support that intention.

Bottom up planning- if your ceremony is based around one action you know you want to do, it's possible to plan around that element, not around a clear intention. The action becomes the intention. Example – dancing the maypole at Beltane.

Possible steps to planning ritual

1. Craft the intention
2. Design the grounding, circle casting (container creation), and honoring of the elements to create a space where the intention can be realized.
3. Determine which (if any) deity/spirit/guide will help support the intention or is traditional for the holiday or event being celebrated. Find a way to call in that energy that will remind everyone of the work you are doing.
4. Brainstorm the main ritual actions (the body or the “tofu” of the ritual) that represent or manifest your intention. This can be a guided journey, a working of some craft project, a piece of spell work, a curated group sharing circle, a circle dance, etc.
5. Begin to flesh out the ceremony. Assign roles and tasks, pick songs or music that will fit with the ritual, decide if you will be doing energy raising for a specific purpose.
6. Sketch out a rough outline of the whole ritual
7. Do a ritual run through in writing or in your mind. Get a sense of the time it will take to do each part. Adjust accordingly. Less is often more. If you have a time limit, make sure your ritual plan can be done in that amount of time. Make sure the people who have roles know the amount of time they have to do their part.
8. Pay special attention to the transitions. Smooth transitions from one ritual element to another are what really make the ritual flow. How will you move people from the guided meditation into the blending of a ritual elixir? Who is facilitating the transition? How will one part of the ritual end and another one begin? What instructions or explanations will be needed so the flow is clear? Hint - songs or music are very valuable in ritual transitions.
9. Write out the plan and share it with everyone who needs to understand the whole. For people who have a small role, just make sure they know who and what is happening just before they do their role. That is their cue they are up next.
10. Have a practice run thru if needed, even if it's just a quick group call with the

major players. This is really helpful for very complex ceremonies. It will flow better if you have even a simple rehearsal.

11. In a big or complex ritual, consider having an informal ritual director. Preferably someone who is not the primary spiritual space holder (ie priestess or priest). They will have the outline of the whole ritual and can keep things on track.

12. Do your best to plan, delegate, and keep things within the time allotted for the ritual. Then when it's ritual time - let go of control, run on spirit time, read the energy in the room and be prepared to improvise and change the plan if need be.

**These are the “standard” pieces of a “west coast neo pagan eco feminist ritual”
(although there is no standard and you can do whatever feels right to you)**

Welcoming and Ritual Conspiracy (brief rundown of what is going to happen)

Land acknowledgment

Grounding

Cast circle (create the container for the ceremony)

Honor the directions and or elements

Call in Deity or spirit or guides

Ritual Tofu (the main body of the ritual)

Energy Raising (if that is happening)

Thank and farewell to the Deity

Thank and farewell to the directions

Take down circle and farewell