

Imbolc Witnessed Self Dedication Ritual Outline and Flow

This was a small teaching ritual – meant to be done for less than 10 people, better if they know each other. The young women at this ritual were “baby witches” I had just started mentoring. The call to Imbolc went out as an invitation to join in witnessed self-dedications for the coming year. (The following Imbolc, I helped them craft their new coven’s initiation ritual!)

The following was part of the lesson plan and invitation:

Please come prepared to be witnessed in your self-dedication. You can dedicate yourself to anything. A path, a practice, a deity, a thought construct, a set of activities, giving something up, starting something, learning something, etc.

It can be as simple or as complex as you desire. It can involve many to do lists and calendar items - or it can be as simple as a deep desire in your heart, a smoldering ember you wish to fan to flame. Extra credit if your dedication has some somatic component or artwork or poem to support it ;-)

This can involve you making specific vows or promises or contracts - to other humans or to spirit. This can be vows or promises only with yourself. Or this may have nothing to do with a vow or promise - it could be just your willingness to give something your best intention and effort. (Remembering that a witch is only as good as her word - and being careful about making promises or vows, especially to deity)

Although we modern day witches sometimes choose this day of Imbolc to practice initiation or self-dedication, it’s not a hard and fast “rule” or tradition. We are a community of women who wish to witness and support each other. Sometimes, things get real when we say them out loud and in front of others. Sometimes, we need to ask for accountability support from our beloveds. Sometimes, we just want to be seen and heard.

Also, dedications need not be specific to the energy of Brigid, but I’d like to introduce you to Her! And this is a traditional day for devotion to Brigid - most of us have some kind of Celtic ancestry floating around in the soup so she is worth getting to know. If you like her story, attributes and her energy field - you can ask her for support in your dedication. You can offer her a candle flame, some love, some prayer, some milk, some incense. You can call her name to help heal what hurts in your heart with her soothing waters...invite her in to spark the flame of your innate creativity and eloquence...welcome her in to help hammer out and craft the perfect dedication that will spread real-world, tangible ripples out in the universe. She tends to be an equal opportunity deity - showing up for anyone who calls - with compassion and tenderness and generosity.

Ritual Plan

Gather and welcome – Sandra (as always, an approximation of what I actually said)

Welcome to Imbolc - this is the first of 4 Celtic fire festivals, sometimes called the cross-quarter days, on the pagan wheel of the year. We are halfway between winter solstice and spring equinox, so it is still winter, for sure. But notice there are buds on some of the trees, and it's not dark at 4:15 anymore. In Irish Gaelic, this time is called La Feile Bridhe, or Brigid's Feast. Now is the quickening, the harbinger of spring. Rife with hidden promise and full of potential. This is the day we celebrate Brigid, a deity who traces back thousands of years to pre-Celtic times in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and other places. Brigid is a triple goddess, she has many stories, archetypes and energy forms. She is a goddess of poetry, smithwork and crafting, healing, holy wells, fire, animals and herbs, hearth and home, milk and food abundance. She started as a goddess, her worship was so widespread and ubiquitous that she morphed into a Christian saint, and now in the modern era she has become a goddess with widespread worship again. As far as I know, there is no historical basis for it, but this is a day of initiation or self-dedication for many modern witches. That is why we are gathered tonight. A time to plant the seeds of dedication in our lives, come out of the fallow season of dark winter and feel the promise of new growth with the spring.

(Since this was a teaching group, I called for volunteers to do the parts, there was not much plan for them)

Land acknowledgement XXX – free form spontaneous

All sing Humbly by Laurence Cole

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

Grounding – XXX. Suggested a spontaneous crafting of a grounding that would help us send the root cord down, finding the first beginnings of germination for the seeds. Returning daylight. Warming temps.

Cast circle – XXX. Suggested very simple, speak a few words about the weaving of container done by people who know each other pretty well, perfect love and perfect trust, then use “hand to hand the circle is cast” – one person turns to the person on their left, takes their right hand and says hand to hand, the circle is cast. That person turns to their left, takes that persons hand and says hand to hand the circle is cast. Til the circle is cast.

Directions – Called for four volunteers, suggested very simple and brief inviting of directions and/or elements, with theme of early spring or Brigid.

Brigid invocation and contemplative time intro- Sandra

We will invoke Brigid and anchor our self-dedications in our bodies and our hearts. We want to move the intention from the realm of the mind into the realm of the body and the heart. We will be doing a 15 minute guided journey. I made a recording of the journey (which I am normally against doing) because I really want to do the meditation as well. I half-heartedly apologize for that! We will be live singing throughout the invocation

Teach Holy Water, Sacred Flame as invocation song

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FnjZslHu1hk>

Holy water, sacred flame

Brigid we invoke your name

Bless my hands, my head, my heart

Source of healing, song and art

The invocation and guided meditation was done as follows:

Sing 3 verses Holy Water Sacred Flame

Play Part One recording

Sing 3 verses Holy Water Sacred Flame

Play Part Two recording

Sing 3 verses Holy Water Sacred Flame

Play Part Three recording

Sing 3 verses Holy Water Sacred Flame

Brigid Journey Part 1

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jEyq7FVvY8ih8IQUCIDtiKFHsYlXfEWA/view?usp=share_link

Brigid Journey Part 2

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1156C1w8JRDMis7O8VhRzctCXNkqj8caG/view?usp=share_link

Brigid Journey Part 3

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1XOCa0CaZaELpPhyKSMI-pMmVFMr9pPE/view?usp=share_link

After the invocation journey, make the invitation to write/draw your dedication. If you have already written it, try to draw it. If you have already drawn it, try to write a poem about it...

Community witnessing of self-dedication – one at a time, we will each have no more than 7 minutes to present our dedication. If you desire it, this is also the time to ask your community for support in your dedication, let them know how they can support you or help with accountability. Feel free to take brief notes to remind yourselves of how your sisters are asking for support – later you can make plans to support them.

We will sing one verse of Fire of Creation in between each person's dedication

Teach the song

This is the closest version to how we sing it I was able to find :

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&source=web&rct=j&opi=89978449&url=https://www.instagram.com/missoula.sings/reel/DBfByl7O0E_/&ved=2ahUKEwimosLa7tWLAXUIJUQIHbpgBkcQwqsBegQICxAF&usg=AOvVaw1OhDWnMqBy_X3yQPWwiSXm

Fire of creation, Fire of illumination, Fire of transformation, Fire of a peaceful nation
And it starts very quietly, And it starts with a spark
And it starts at the center, And it starts from our hearts.

Maybe there will be time for one quick popcorn round of final shares or reflections?

Sandra will do a devoking and thanking of Brigid,
Then all will sing Way to the Well

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-iZ7rvtYUE>

We will never, never lose our way to the well of her memory
And the power of her living flame will rise, it will rise again

Sandra will lead all in thanking the directions by singing Earth my Body song

<https://open.spotify.com/track/0TPeHW12ObJLrhWwWgpRwt?si=b13269b2862c42c2>

Earth my body, water my blood, air my breath, and fire my spirit
(only those words for this version)

Whoever led the circle casting will take down the circle.