

2024 Spring Equinox Full Script

Ritual Intention: We gather in community to embody the energy of spring and playfully explore balance. We create a natural mandala, building connection with the land, offering gratitude, reverence and strength of intention to the seeds we plant in our hearts.

Preparation:

The invitation includes a VERY IMPORTANT list of what people need to bring. To make this work, you need lots of supplies to construct the mandala. Hint: we also have found over the years that it's best to keep food items (like rice, beans, flour, etc) to one area because they make a fierce mess in your lawn. I ask people to bring buckets of flowers, pine cones, cedar sprays, ferns, anything from nature and and flowers flowers flowers.

Hint – have organizers go to local florists/grocery stores in the week before and ask them for their trash, throw away flowers. Tell them what you are doing, show them a picture and they will probably break the rules for you. Store them in the fridge til day of.

If you don't have a lot of materials, make the circle for the mandala smaller. We have tried both ways, really large circles and really small. Large is good, tons of room, people do projects in small areas, more dancing happens. Small is good, makes a prettier mandala, more communication and collaboration.

Set Up:

- The mandala is partially pre-drawn around the central fire pit, using cornmeal or compost, if you don't want decomposing cornmeal on the land. The outer boundary/circle is not drawn in yet. You can see in photo below, 4 white pathways drawn in the cardinal directions (the orange sun rays were not really part of the plan, we were just having fun with sawdust – the mandala got built right over top of the rays). The 4 white paths are “walking zones” to give people ingress and egress to the center of the mandala so you don't have to walk over other people's mandala work.



- We had someone organize a shell and rock painting station, a face painting station, and a big box of costumes (optional, but good to keep children occupied)

Ritual Begins: gather everyone in big circle around where the mandala will be

Song and Procession:

XXX will teach the song then lead a procession around the meadow. Will speak about the intention being to welcome the re-awakening of the land into spring, spur the re-awakening of the humans here, shaking off the winter doldrums, welcoming the spring and the return of longer days. It was a long dark winter! Wake up!! Parade with drums, hand percussion, dancing, singing. Get the energy going.

We used the song Oh Morning, by Lawrence Cole, with the words changed to “Oh Springtime”

<https://www.laurencecole.com/album/oh-morning/>

Welcoming – Sandra

(These are my preparation notes, I said something along these lines)

The Wheel turns yet again and here we are at the spring equinox, the time of balance and rebirth. We can really feel the season in our human bodies. Feel how the darkness of our northwest winter nights is now in balance with the long days of summer. Feel the warm spring rains are here. Feel the hope and excitement of the tree’s leafing, the songbirds singing, the frogs serenading us every night once again. And we are all out here, in the middle of it all, celebrating as a community of beloveds. Creating a space where everyone is welcome, where we all belong.

This ritual, this mandala we will co-create today, represents many things. The strength of our community. Our individual intentions and the seeds we are planting in our lives. Maybe most of all, this is a gift, an offering, for Her, this beautiful earth, our only home. As she awakens from Her winter slumber, we gather to celebrate - bringing our full selves, our full loving hearts, into this circle to create a symbol of our love and deep gratitude for this living animate world.

Let’s take a moment to remember that almost none of us has a deep ancestral connection to this land - and that most of us here today have a deep longing for that kind of connection. By feeding this land, feeding Her with our devotion, our prayers and our songs, by feeding Her with the energy of this joyful celebration - we deepen our sense of reciprocity with the land - and that deepens our connection.

And as always, we offer our thanks and honoring to the human people who have lived on these lands and tended them for countless generations. The Suquamish, the people of the clear waters, the Coastal Salish people, who were here long before our ancestors came to these shores. And they are still here today, still living here, tending the land, fishing the waters. While we will never be able to make proper amends for the great wrongs done to them, let it be our wish that some measure of our joyful songs and prayers might ripple outward and increase their joy and healing as well.

Logistics: composting toilet locations, who to ask if you need help, phones turned off or in quiet mode please, etiquette around taking photos and consent of all parties in the photo before you share it anywhere.

Introductions:

XXX will lead (we were fully prepared to scrap this if it was big crowd, like 50 people. It gets a little unwieldy for more than about 30-35)

Go around circle, introduce yourself with a name and a gesture, the whole circle will echo back

Grounding :

XXX to do movement-based grounding.

Circle Casting:

XXX leads, she will draw the outer outline circle of the mandala with cornmeal or compost. Speaking words about creating a space for the ritual, a container for joy and gratitude and reverence, speaking to the intention of the mandala. It's an invocation of spring, an expression of gratitude for this earth, our only home. End it with something to the effect of "now, our circle is cast".

Balance Game:

(pre-assign 4 volunteers, one leader for each direction. The Ritual Organizer will give each lead a script with all the lines from the game, their own lines yellow highlighted. To make this game work well, it's important each team lead has a clear, easy to read script. Get it all on one page in a 2 column format. This game works way better if it moves really fast)

Sandra says: Now that we have created our circle and drawn the outline for our mandala, we will honor the balance of equinox and call in the elements and the four directions. In a moment, I will ask you to move into the direction you feel most called to today – here are your choices!

East, the power of air, anchored by **XXX** (while Sandra is speaking, **XXX** moves into the east to show east folk where they will be standing)

South, the power of fire, anchored by **XXX** (he moves into the south)

West, the power of water, anchored by **XXX** (she moves into the west)

North, the power of earth, anchored by **XXX** (he moves into the north)

So now, everyone move to the direction you feel called to. If you're not feeling called, look for the smallest group and head that way.

Once all ritualists have moved into their chosen direction, tell the the Group Leaders to quickly explain the game: They say "I will feed you the line we need to say, then we all shout out the line in unison to the direction opposite from us in the circle"

(This balance game travels around the circle from east to south to west to north.

The questions are shouted across the circle - east shouts out to west and west shouts an answer back, then south shouts to north and north answers back, then west shouts to east and east answers back, then north shouts to south and south answers back.)

East: What do we celebrate today? (leader feeds the line, whole group shouts out the line)

West: We celebrate the spring equinox (leader feeds the line, whole group shouts it out)

South: What is the meaning of the equinox?

North: It is the time of balance

West: What is in balance on this day?

East: Darkness and daylight are equal
North: What hope is in our hearts today?
South: That the seeds we plant will take root
East: what is the power of air today?
West: the world is filled with possibility
South: what is the power of fire today?
North: the fires of creation burn bright
West: what is the power of water today?
East: the spring rains bring new life
North: what is the power of earth today?
South: the earth anchors and grounds us

Calling in the Elements:

After the Balance Game Script is completed, the Anchors call in their element, in the order of East, South, West, North:

(Anchors were instructed they could sing an invocation, speak it, act it out, their choice. I requested they invite the whole circle to somatically embody the element while they invoke. I gave them a 1 minute time limit for the invocation. This could be as simple as: I invite everyone in the circle to make sounds and move your body to honor the element _____. While the whole circle embodies the element, the anchor invites in the element/direction in their own way, song or speech.

Our typical custom is to end the invocation by yelling out “_____ is sacred – inserting whatever element you were invoking – everyone in the circle will yell it back to you.)

Transition to mandala building:

XXX will lead, calling everyone out of their directional groups, back into the circle
In a moment, we are going to begin building the mandala. This mandala we create will be a physical manifestation of our gratitude and reverence for the earth. This will be a place and time for you to connect with the land, with the springtime energy of creativity and birthing new things. As you work on the mandala, feel free to plant the seeds of your intentions for the coming summer, offer prayers of gratitude and thanks to the earth and the sun. There are only a few simple rules:

1. we will begin the mandala building by playing a recorded song – this will be your time to have a few minutes of non-verbal time to set your intentions and deepen your connection with the land. When that song ends, you'll know the quiet time is over.
2. You see that there are 4 pathways drawn into the mandala. That is where you walk! Please be respectful of the creation of other people and don't walk on their art.
3. There will be a rock/shell painting station in the Gaizebo so you can paint items to add to the mandala. XXX will be holding that down, ask her to say something if she wants

4. There will also be face painting and costume boxes for the kids mostly. XXX will be holding that down, ask her to speak if she wants
5. Point out where the materials for constructing the mandala are
6. we will be offering songs and maybe some dance music while we make the mandala so we can dance and sing. Take your time, we have as long as we need, we fully expect this to go for about an hour.
7. in general, other than the first few minutes of quiet, make it fun and lively!!

Now I'm going to start this song (pick a 3-5 minute song to play at the very beginning and add it to the playlist) - remember, we are having quiet time for the duration of this song. when it's over, do whatever you want blah blah blah

Build the mandala – After the first song, organizers should have a couple songs for singing during the mandala building. (note – we ended up singing one zipper song for about half of the mandala building, we started out with organizers offering the zipper word, then evolved into participants just calling out their own zipper words. It went on for about 30 minutes...)

She Gives Me Life by Alexa Sunshine Rose

<https://open.spotify.com/track/689HdGagLtr4jYdbiU4aUi?si=fbcf2b96afdc4f27>

I think we also did Presence by Andy Fischer Price

<https://open.spotify.com/track/4XTggHeuPd7bvlhtBrqUdT?si=8668b1df55654f94>

I think we also did Wake Wake Seeds of the Earth, but faster than this youtube video does it

Wake wake seeds of the earth

Now is the time of light and rebirth

Hear hear this magical sound

And grow grow grow up out of the ground

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NU1eLudn2Ts>

Post Mandala: this part is loose, depends on the energy Post mandala, V will run this part. He will give a 10 minute warning to wrap up mandala making
V will make the offer for anyone who wants to come into the east gate of the mandala and in a word or phrase, share with everyone INSERT PROMPT (maybe something you are deeply grateful for, one intention you have for this season of rebirth, something beautiful in your life etc) . Maybe recruit some drummers to offer a little fanfare after each share.

Circle Dance: XXX will direct everyone to form a circle around the mandala.

We will ask for group input for a fun song, then sing that song and do a simple circle dance and raise some energy.

Circle take down and wrap up

At the end of the ritual, the Anchors from earlier balance game will be dismissing the elements. Gratitude to the NORTH, to the EARTH, to the soil and the seeds, blessings to the mountains and the trees that surround us. Everyone join with me in yelling EARTH is sacred - EARTH IS SACRED

Gratitude to the WEST, to the WATER, to the falling rain, to all the flowing waters, to the blood in our very veins. Everyone join with me in yelling WATER is sacred - WATER IS SACRED

Gratitude to the south, to the FIRE, to light from our sacred sun that calls the blossoms forth, the heat that returns with spring days. Everyone join with me in yelling FIRE is sacred - FIRE IS SACRED

Gratitude to the east, to the AIR, to the birdsong, the gentle spring breezes. Everyone join with me in yelling air is sacred - AIR IS SACRED

Circle take down — XXX will lead us all in singing The Circle is Open

This is what it looked like: This was a big mandala, spacious, we had about 35 people



Scroll down for next picture

This is what it looked like one year with a smaller mandala: we had about 45 people



2024 Spring Equinox Ritual Flow (condensed)

We gather in community to embody the energy of spring and playfully explore balance. We create a natural mandala, building connection with the land, offering gratitude, reverence and strength of intention to the seeds we plant in our hearts.

Gather in big circle around where the mandala will be

Song and Procession – teach the song, then procession around the meadow, with drums, hand percussion singing Oh Morning, changed to Oh Springtime

Welcoming – XXX will include land acknowledgement, logistics and ritual rundown

Introductions, Name and a gesture, the whole circle will echo back

Grounding –

Circle Casting:

Balance Game/Directions:

Balance and Mandala Instructions:

Build the mandala – XXX holding space for shell/rock painting, snacks, face painting etc, everyone welcomed to introduce songs, general play and silliness.

Post mandala Sharing - XXX

Circle dance around the whole mandala – XXX

Circle take down and wrap up - XXX

Accompanied by drummers, all sing The Circle is Open

