

Gathering for Ritual

This Gathering has suggestions for introducing sections. Some sections use a timer / clock.

Words of the Day

As people arrive, ask them to write the Words of the Day and put them in the basket.

I'd like to bring the sacredness and focus of ritual to... (this part of my life)

Opening

Chalice Lighting *"We'll begin with the chalice lighting." Ask for a volunteer.*

We light this chalice each time we meet as a ritual act which says,
This is a sacred time we are marking in our lives.
The flame reminds us that we are not alone,
that our being together sustains us, sustains life itself,
and will light our way into new territory.
Reverend Maj-Britt Johnson

The Basket *"Now we'll read the Words of the Day. I'll start and pass to the right (left)."*

Being Together

Sharing of Joys and Concerns *"Now we'll share joys and concerns. I'll begin and we'll go around the circle. Will you go next?"*

Silence, holding each other in support *"Now a few minutes of silence" (2 or 3 minutes)*

Shared Readings *"I'll start the first Shared Reading. Will you go next?"*

The sauce to meat is ceremony; Meeting were bare without it. *William Shakespeare, Macbeth*

We do spiritual ceremonies as human beings in order to create a safe resting place for our most complicated feelings of joy or trauma, so that we don't have to haul those feelings around with us forever, weighing us down. We all need such places of ritual safekeeping. *Elizabeth Gilbert*

Rituals are a good signal to your unconscious that it is time to kick in. *Anne Lamott*

Ritual is, therefore, a primary site of contact between self and society, a place where our individual selves are transformed into collective selves. *Mark Pedelty*

The magus (Persian priest) knows that anything set into motion – a work, an idea, a thought, a ritual – sends resonant waves throughout the whole system, changing everything. *Jean Houston*

Through ceremony, we learn how to give back. When we sing, we give energy through our voice; when we drum, we allow the earth's heartbeat to join with our own; when we pray, we give energy through our hearts. *Sun Bear, Wabun Wind, and Chrysalis Mulligan*

We use rituals in our Moon Circle in order to set the evening apart as a sacred space. We use it to recentre ourselves, to allow crashing thoughts to melt away... rituals can open our hearts to new possibilities. They allow us to see with a fresh clarity and bring us to a space of liminality.

Lucy Aitkenread, Moon Circle: Rediscover Intuition, Wildness and Sisterhood

Rituals are the formulas by which harmony is restored. *Terry Tempest Williams*

Ritual establishes sacred space as a crossing-over point between the spiritual and the mundane so that participants can move beyond the confines of ordinary reality. *Michelle Belanger*

The rituals performed for hunting ... [were] to cultivate proper attitude and respect, but also allowed human beings to reconnect with those mythic times in which humans, animals and plants shared a relationship with each other that was intimate and interactive.

Gregory Cajete (from Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence)

Deep Listening and Sharing

Round 1. Deep Sharing. *“Now we share reflections on Ritual and the preparation.” Begin, or if you’re not ready, ask who can go first.*

Round 2. Responses and Comments. *After all have shared or passed, check the time. Say “We have about __ minutes for a 2nd round.” Begin your response or ask who can start.*

Closing

Closing Circle *“We’ll go around the circle and say a word or sentence about what we are taking away from the session. I’ll go first, and would you be willing to go next?”*

Chalice *“We will extinguish the chalice.” Read in unison or ask for a volunteer.*

We extinguish this flame and we remember the warmth of our community, the light of our wisdom, the generosity of our sharing. We keep these in our heart until we meet again.

Song/Chime *Ask for a volunteer.*

Announcements

The Covenant

I commit myself:

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group
- to let the facilitator know if I will be absent or need to quit
- to share responsibility for good process by watching how much time I take to speak, noticing what is going on for others, and considering problems if they occur
- to do the reading and thinking about the topic ahead of time
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and tell only my own story to others
- to honor the safety of the group by listening to what others share with an open heart
- to refrain from cross-talk, judging, giving advice, or advocating a specific view
- to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn and to stay on the “I-message.”