

OSTARA/SPRING EQUINOX '05

*Before the ritual, please write out the "idea" that you wish to plant for the season of growth!

INTRO - (Mike)

CLEANSING - (Denise)

DIRECTIONS -

WEST: Spirits of the West, spirits of water, wash us in gentle rain, revive our longing and join us
in celebration of boundless possibility. Blessed be.

NORTH: Spirits of the North, spirits of earth, clothe us in the finery of new growth, support our
steps and join us in celebration of a world made green again. Blessed be.

EAST: Spirits of the East, spirits of air, awaken us with the Spring breeze, fill our lungs and join
us in celebration of the endless renewal of light and life. Blessed be.

SOUTH: Spirits of the South, spirits of fire, warm us with the rising sun, quicken our hearts and
join us in celebration of the unfolding of the Earth. Blessed be.

CASTING - We call upon the Ancient Ones to bless and protect this circle as merry do we meet at this Springtime rite. Lady and Lord, hear your children--for we are here to celebrate with you and for you as we greet Ostara together! So mote it be!

COVENANT - As we gather here in our sacred space, a circle is formed, and we are connected in spirit.

INVOCATION OF GOD & GODDESS -

Goddess of Earth, mother of all, with love we greet you as night and day once again greet each other in passing. Be with us, complete our circle and help us always to see your face in all that lives. (light candle)

God of the growing light, with love we greet you as night and day once again greet each other in passing. Be with us, complete our circle and help us always to see your face

in all that lives. (light candle)

The circle is cast, the ritual begun. May the powers of the Ancient One, source of all creation, may the powers of the Goddess, bright lady of the moon, and the God, horned hunter of the sun, may the powers of the guardian spirits, rulers of the elemental realms, may the power of the stars above and the Earth below, bless this time, this place, and all who gather here. Blessed be!

THE RETURN OF PERSEPHONE -

We stand, as ever, at a point on the wheel / remembering that we begin each journey / only when we are brought to our first step.

We wake each morning / because we have slept through the night.

We rejoice in the burgeoning springtime / because we have waited, in the arms of the Mother, / through the season of darkness and cold.

Reader (Denise): Winter is for bedding down. We watch the days grow shorter, and feel the chill that heralds the first snow.

All: Let there be joy in the cold and the dying. The seeds of new life are borne on the winter wind.

Hades ([Mike] to Persephone): I, the lord of all below have watched, enraptured, as you go about the fields; you twirl and shine, Persephone, you will be mine. -- My chariot awaits, my love, to take us from the world above. Now put an end to childish play, I claim you for my bride today.

Reader: We feel January in every joint. We insulate, and isolate--and strain to believe that the darkest days are behind us.

All: Let there be joy in the cold and the dying. The seeds of new life are borne on the winter wind.

Persephone ([Kim] to Hades): Hades does me great offense to play upon my innocence. Though you may call me Bride-to-be, I'll not go with you willingly. -- By force you take me to your lair, do not presume to keep me there. My mother, Goddess of the grain, will see me safely home again.

Reader: Almost any effort seems too much, and grief comes easily. How quickly we forget that rest is necessary; that only in stillness is our motion defined.

All: Let there be joy in the cold and the dying. The seeds of new life are borne on the winter wind.

Demeter (Sandy): From lofty perch on highest peak, to deepest ocean, still I seek, by night, by day, some sign or clue, but nowhere is there news of you. -- Let this, my cry of woeful loss, be carried forth and so across the world of men, that all may hear and share Demeter's pain and fear.

Reader: Inactivity turns to wrath, as we remember the warmth of sunshine, and hold the Earth responsible for our confinement.

All: Let there be joy in the cold and the dying. The seeds of new life are borne on the winter wind.

Demeter: The Earth has taken you from me, and so my wrath accordingly shall fly. Today, against the land, in anger, I will set my hand. -- Corn and cattle, all will die. The rivers run with dust, and I shall not relent, until I see Persephone returned to me.

Reader: What bargain may we make with Time? Will the seasons turn more quickly, or stay with us longer to suit our needs?

All: Let there be joy in the cold and the dying. The seeds of new life are borne on the winter wind.

Demeter: The Gods have witnessed this foul deed, and mightly Zeus shall intercede. He will return you to my care, if you have eaten nothing there.

Persephone: But mother, in my dark ordeal, the pain of hunger I did feel. And I was given, in my need, a taste of pomegranate seed.

Hades (to Demeter): For this, my lady, half the year, your daughter will attend me here. And then once more to you ascend. Now, let this pact our quarrel end.

Reader: Winter is for bedding down, gathering our strength that we may burst forth, with energy and joy, to welcome the season of new beginnings.

All: Let there be joy in the cold and the dying. The seeds of new life are borne on the winter wind.

Demeter: So will it be, within the land...

Hades (to Persephone): That when each year you take my hand...

Persephone: The living, breathing world you see shall wither and retire with me. --- But, when in springtime, I--once more--am to the world above restored...

Demeter: A mother's joy at your rebirth will waken and renew the Earth.

(Distribute the pomegranate seeds.)

Reader 2: With Persephone, we have journeyed to the land of the dead, and returned safely to the light and warmth of Spring.

Reader 3: May we grow with the brightness of the young God, and open ourselves to the energy of creation.

Reader 4: Goddess of Winter, Goddess of Life, keep us close in your embrace.

Reader 5: Accept us as your children and buoy us upon the tide of time.

Reader 6: With love, we thank and honor you for the world that blooms within us once more.

All: Blessed be!

SEED CEREMONY -

(Ring bell three times.) Springtime is when we sow the seed; it is the time for us to plant what we want to grow. This is the season of hope and joy, expectation and inspiration. Our lives are brought into balance and we are reborn, resurrected, renewed as is the Earth. We welcome thee, Ostara, beautiful Spring!

(Pass out peat pots and sticks. Take Goddess & God candles from altar. Go around circle and let each person light "idea" from the flame. Person then drops burning ashes into peat pot.)

(Ring bell once) Lady and Lord, let this soil be prepared and fertile to receive the seeds of our desire, to grow and prosper, ripen and bear fruit, as our ideas reach maturity and fruition.

(Each person mixes ashes into soil with stick. One or more person[s] drum[s] to raise energy.)

(Ring bell once) By the power instilled in us will the seeds be planted in the ready soil. Blessed Be the Wand of Spring, and Blessed Be the Earth that receives it!

(Go around the circle making an indentation in the soil of each person's pot. Pass out seeds.)

(Ring bell once) These seeds are planted in the Mother's womb to be part of the Earth,

of Life, and of us. Let these seeds and what they represent grow to manifestation, as we will it. SO MOTE IT BE!

(Ring bell three times)

FEAST - Eat, drink and be merry! We have survived another winter!

THANKS TO GOD AND GODDESS -

God of the growing light / for the Spring / for the warmth / for your power / for the lengthening day / for the energy that surrounds us / for your presence within our circle-- / we thank you, and ask your blessing, / until we gather here again. Blessed be!

Goddess of Earth, mother of all / for the Spring / for your love / for your power / for the pomegranate / for the fertility of the world we share / for your presence within our circle-- / we thank you, and ask your blessing, / until we gather here again. Blessed be!

THANKS TO DIRECTIONS AND OPENING THE CIRCLE -

WEST: Spirits of the West, we thank you for your presence here and ask for your blessing
as you depart. May there be peace between us now and forever.

NORTH: Spirits of the North, we thank you for your presence here and ask for your blessing
as you depart. May there be peace between us now and forever.

EAST: Spirits of the East, we thank you for your presence here and ask for your blessing
as you depart. May there be peace between us now and forever.

SOUTH: Spirits of the South, we thank you for your presence here and ask for your blessing
as you depart. May there be peace between us now and forever.

All: The circle is open, yet unbroken. May the love of the Goddess be ever in your heart.
Merry meet and merry part, and merry meet again! Blessed be!

POST-RITUAL/PRE-DINNER EGG HUNT FOR INTERESTED PARTIES - in church

while we set up food and drink!