

Samhain Ritual

Positions

Lead:
Fire-Bearer:
Tree-Bearer:
Well-Bearer:

Ancestors:
Nature Spirits:
Gods/Goddesses:
Out-Dwellers:

The Omen/Asking the Blessing:
Hallowing the Blessing:
Affirmation of the Blessing:

Requirements

Fire pit	Well	Tree
Oil	Silver	Seed Ball
Tobacco	Wine / Mead / Juice	Seeds
Out Dweller Offering	Blessings cup	Bell
Ogham and book	Candles	Water on altar
Sage smudge for altar	Incense	Matches or Lighter
Individual Items for empowerment	Key Offering to Deity of occasion	

Decorative Elements

Festive decorations (Gourds, flowers, traditional items) Colours, orange, black
Foods: Pork, Pine nuts, Apples, Pomegranates, Wine, Whisky, cider, chocolate

Offerings

Seeds, cider/mead/wine, oil, fruit/sweets

Processional

ALL: We approach the sacred grove
With hearts and minds and flesh and bone
Join us now in ways of old
We have come home
We have come home

(repeat until all are in position)

(LEAD DRUID rings the bell three times)

Purification

Druids approach Altar and waif smudge/spritz water
*Guests smudged and Spritzed by **FIRE** and **WELL BEARER***

LEAD DRUID –

EARTH MOTHER: Oh beloved Mother of all;
From whose starry womb the green earth springs
You are the Bearer of all Life.
We pray you bless and uphold this Rite.

(All kneel and kiss the earth)

LEAD DRUID –

EARTH MOTHER: So say we all.

ALL: So say we all.

LEAD DRUID -

SKY FATHER: Nurturing Father of all;
From whose breath all life is sustained.
You are both Guide and Guardian.
We pray you bless and uphold this Rite.

(All kiss hands and raise them skyward)

LEAD DRUID -

SKY FATHER: So say we all.

ALL: So say we all.

Nature and Purpose of the Ritual

Samhain is the first and, in some ways, most important of the great Celtic feasts. It is remembered throughout the Celtic territories as the end and the beginning of the year's cycle, and a time when the gates between the worlds stand open. In the agricultural year, Samhain is the season during which herds of cattle were culled. A few were kept for breeding stock while many were butchered to sustain the clans through the winter. Thus the season between Samhain and midwinter was a time of feasting and plenty.

The change from the light to dark half of the year meant that the powers of the spirit world were especially active. Common folk considered the night of Samhain a time to keep to their halls and seek the protection of the gods and goddesses as they enjoyed the bounty of the passing year. Some tales tell of raiders from the other world who every year burn the hall of Erin's king.

Purpose:

At sunset on October 31, clans or local villages begin the formal ceremonies of Samhain by lighting a giant bonfire. The people would gather around the fire to burn crops and animals as sacrifices to the Celtic deities. It was a method of giving the Gods and Goddesses their share of the previous years herd or crops. In addition these sacred fires were a big part of the cleansing of the old year and a method to prepare for the coming new year.

Precedent:

Samhain dates back to the ancient Celts who lived 2,000 years ago. Contrary to what some believe, is not a celebration of a Celtic god of the dead. Instead, it is a Celtic word meaning "summer's end." The Celts believed that summer came to an end on October 31st and the New Year began on November 1st with the start of winter. But the Celts also followed a lunar calendar and their celebrations began at sunset the night before.

Creating the Cosmos

WELL BEARER: I come upon the veil in love and respect.
This well, our link to the primal waters of life, portal to the under-realm:
With silver, I beg thee open.

(WELL BEARER drops coin into the water and brings arms up to point at the Altar)

WELL BEARER: So say we all.

ALL: So say we all.

(FIRE BEARER raises arms to point up in the air)

FIRE BEARER: I come upon the veil in love and respect.
This fire, our link to the Gods and Goddesses, portal to the over-realm:
With oil, I beg thee open.

(FIRE BEARER pours oil onto the fire and brings arms up to point at the Altar)

FIRE BEARER: So say we all.

ALL: So say we all.

(The TREE BEARER points arms open wide to either side)

TREE BEARER: I come upon the veil in love and respect.
This tree, our bridge between below and beyond, the road of our
passage: With herbs, I beg thee open.

*(TREE BEARER hangs herbs on tree, then raises arms open wide and brings them together to
point at the Altar).*

TREE BEARER: So say we all.

ALL: So say we all.

(ALL raise arms to point at the Altar, clap together, and open arms wide to form the ritual space).

Opening the Gates

LEAD DRUID: Mighty Cernunnos, our portals open wide.
We beseech thee Gate-Keeper to grant us safe passage
to the other realm.
Open the way in peace.
Guide us to the hidden places.
Protect us on our journey and in our Rite.

So say we all.

ALL: So say we all.

Offering to the Out-Dwellers

(OUT-DWELLERS takes the offering plate to the South, passing by the fire)

OUT-DWELLERS: Ancient Dark Ones,
You who dwell in the outer dark;
You who stood against the Gods;
Take this offering and trouble not our work.
Likewise, we acknowledge in ourselves
Weakness and perversity;
Hatred and spite;
Cowardice and ignorance.
We contemplate these ills
And for this time we set them aside.

So say we all.

ALL: So say we all.

Inviting the Kindreds

(ANCESTORS takes the offering of oil and places it in the fire)

ANCESTORS: We hear your voices speaking words of wisdom into our unconscious minds. Your whispers awaken our dreams, our hearts, our desires.
You who are our ancestors, you who once walked upon this earth,
And were a part of our shared life eternal.
We praise you with all that is sacred in our lives.

(NATURE SPIRITS takes the offering of seeds and scatters it upon the ground)

NATURE SPIRITS: Spirits of the land and place, creatures of fur, and flesh, and feather.
We call to you in respect and in peace. Ever welcome and ever revered,
We ask for your guidance.
Walk with us now as we cross through the gateway.

(GODS/GODDESSES takes offering of alcohol and pours it slowly on the ground)

GODS/GODDESS: Patrons and patronesses hearken to us, your children.
We call to you in the other realm in love and respect.
Join with us in our work.
May we know your presence within our grove.

So say we all.

ALL: So say we all.

(LEAD DRUID makes offering of fruit, cider/mead/wine)

Key Offerings: (subject to Deity of the Occasion)

LEAD DRUID: We invite _____ to our ritual
and hope that She / He / They lend their blessing and energies to our
ritual.

(LEAD DRUID place offering in fire)

LEAD DRUID: We invite members and guests to place any offerings they have brought
in the fire

Prayer of Sacrifice

LEAD DRUID: Gods and Goddesses,
Ancestors, Spirits of Nature
All who come unto this Grove.
We offer thanks and respect for your presence and aid in our workings.
Accept this offering with the love and respect of we, your faithful children.
Guide us, teach us, help us to see and hear you.
Help us to connect once more as our ancestors once did.

(LEAD DRUID takes final offering and throws it on the fire)

Omens

THE OMEN: Gods and Goddesses, ancestors and kindreds.
With great love and respect we have offered you these gifts and sacrifices
In accordance with our shared belief and tradition.
We ask now how they have been received.
Please grant us a sign of your acceptance.

(THE OMEN draws and Ogham, reads its meaning, and lays it against the blessing cup)

THE OMEN: We are gladdened by your pleasure.

Asking of the Blessing

ASKING: Gods and Goddesses, ancestors and kindreds.
In humility and reverence we ask what blessings
You grant to your children in return.
Let your will be shown to us.

(ASKING draws and Ogham, reads its meaning, and lays it against the blessing cup)

ASKING: We accept your wonders and blessings.

Hallowing the Blessing

(HALLOWING comes forth and holds the blessing cup aloft)

HALLOWING: Our cup is filled with the blessings you grant us.
Let it touch the mind, heart, and spirit in each of us.
May we, the cherished children, grow through its bounty.

(The cup is then passed from Druid to Druid, each taking a sip)

Affirmation of the Blessing

(AFFIRMATION returns the cup to the Altar)

AFFIRMATION: Gods and Goddesses, ancestors and kindreds,
We affirm your gifts to us with love and respect.
We are ever-thankful for these gifts we have received;
May they carry us forward in our Rite and in our lives.

So say we all.

ALL: So say we all.

Workings

(LEAD DRUID will lead the group in Meditation.)

Thanking Beings

LEAD DRUID: (THE GODS OF THE RITUAL)

GODS/GODDSS: Gods and Goddesses, your strength is our strength.
We thank you for your presence in our Rite and on our journey.
You are ever-welcome in our lives.

So say we all.

ALL: So say we all.

NATURE SPIRITS: Spirits of place, friends of fur and feather,
You who dwell in the untamed lands.
We thank you for your presence in our Rite and on our journey.
You are ever-welcome in our lives.

So say we all.

ALL: So say we all.

ANCESTORS: Ancestors, you who inspire and move us forward.
We thank you for your presence in our Rite and on our journey.
You are ever-welcome in our lives.

So say we all.

ALL: So say we all.

Closing the Gates

(BEARERS in position once again. ALL standing with arms wide.)

LEAD DRUID: Mighty Cernunnos, all that we have done is by your aide.
We offer you our thanks.
Now we ask you to let the doors swing closed once more.
I ask for your help in closing the gates.
May the tree once more be tree, the well be water, and the fire merely flame.

Let the Gates be closed.

(ALL bring their hands to a clap, and let their arms fall to their sides).

Close of Ritual

EARTH MOTHER: Earth Mother, you granted us this life
And we walk in your fertile bounty.
May we always remember to honour your gifts each day.

So say we all.

ALL: So say we all.

SKY FATHER: Sky Father, you sustain our lives
And we grow from your inspiration.
May we always remember and honour your gifts each day.

So say we all.

ALL: So say we all.

(The LEAD DRUID rings the bell three times. The ritual is ended).

LEAD DRUID: Our Ritual is ended. We thank you all.