

**THIS ISSUE**

*Homeschooling Quick Take*

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New Spin: Recent news + lessons  
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God Focus: Dagda  
Goddess Focus: Brigid  
Holiday focus: Imbolc  
Religious Ed: Heathens  
Pagan Calendar  
Parent Section

Want to see something else? Let us know! [paganmoonbeams@yahoo.com](mailto:paganmoonbeams@yahoo.com)

**All About The Family**

The definition of family varies from person to person, however it is something that we are all a member of. Being a member of a family is something of importance in all cultures.

In the past the family was the backbone of each and every person. It showed in everything that was done, made, or said. Today family is defined much the same, however, an adaptation of family has taken place. Today the position and jobs within the family have been given to others, making the family larger and to include many people, organizations, and social groups. Society demands more to survive, usually far from home, so our immediate family just doesn't have time to fill all the shoes it has in the past.

**Imbolc**

Imbolc is a holiday with many names, Groundhog's Day, Candlemas, and Bridget's Day (just to name a few). It originated back in Ireland long, long ago and has acquired many traditions that many still practice today.

This Cross Quarter Day is celebrated by most on the second of February and is commonly known as Groundhog's day. On this day we patiently await the groundhog to come from his hole and predict the remainder of winter will be like.

This holiday is the day marking the midpoint between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox, celebrating the return of life and light. To acknowledge the return of the light, many traditions will illuminate their homes, by lighting every light source within it, every candle, lamp, and light. This will last for a few minutes while respecting and honoring the return of the Sun.

Imbolc is also widely celebrated as the birthday of the Celtic deity, Brigid. Brigid is a spirit of fertility, healing and art. In several religions it is a tradition to leave offerings for the deity on the Eve of Imbolc. Bread, milk, berries, corn, and various other foods are left out on her behalf.

There are many different ways and reasons to celebrate this joyous occasion, so celebrate it in the ways that work best for you and remember that it is a celebration; celebrate!

*Written by: Thorn Marie- Thanks!!*

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# News Spin



## Quick Clips

By: P. Nichols



### The Man Computer

Not fond of doing math? You might be if you were a walking talking human computer like the 27 year old French researcher who took a two hundred digit number and figured out the 13th root of that number in his head. A 13th root means that it is a number that when multiplied by itself 13 times equals another number. In this case the answer he came up with was a 16 digit number. Did I mention he did this in only 72 seconds?

### College Students Vs. the Monkeys

Speaking of math skills, did you know that monkeys are as good at some math skills as college students? Amazing but true, fourteen students at Duke University and two Rhesus monkeys were asked to add up two sets of dots that were flashed on a screen and then pick the correct answer. Both groups were able to answer the math problems in less than one second.

### Natural Tree Lights

Looking for clean natural sources for electricity just got a bit more interesting in Japan. An inventor has found a way to light up the lights on a holiday tree using guess what? An electric eel! He placed two metal panels in an aquarium that pick up the electricity and wires run from the plates to the lights on the tree.

### Smart Squirrels

We are all familiar with squirrels darting up trees to get away from danger, but how would a squirrel evade a rattlesnake in the desert where there are no trees? Graduate students in California observing squirrels in the desert found that squirrels would chew on snake skin shed by a rattlesnake and then lick their fur to transfer the scent. They also roll around in the soil that rattlesnakes have been laying in. This works to fool the rattlesnakes because they cannot see very well and thus rely on their sense of smell to find something to eat.

## Moonbeams Staff Member

A valued member of the staff was absent from this issue due to a death in her family. Next month she will return and so will the quality of this newsletter.

To her and her situation I dedicate this poem and send her lots of energy to aid her:

### Our Steps

Our steps are the same  
Our paths are of different colors  
Our clothes resemble ourselves  
Our souls to one another came

I grew watching your foot prints  
Because they moved ahead of me  
As you aged I took on the lead  
We kept the pace less than a sprint

There came a point the prints dwindled down  
I realized that your steps became one with mine  
Now together we move our steps  
Walking a path dressed in a rainbow gown

### Coloring Imbolc Contest

The deadline for the "Coloring Imbolc Contest" is on Jan 12, 2008. There is still time to get your entry in and possibly win a year tuition to Grey School of Wizardry.

Send in your Imbolc themed color-by-number to paganmoonbeams@yahoo.com to enter.

See last months issue for detailed information!

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## One State's Wide Steps

In the last year the Pagan community have been very busy and can be accredited with many feats both large and small. It wasn't too long ago that a person would keep their religion a secret due to ridicule, this still is a practice for many but seems to be fading as a whole.

Sometimes you wonder if you can make a difference or aid in the changing world view of Paganism. It is a fact that one person, one group, or even one state can make a giant leap towards the acceptance of the Pagan religion in today's world.

A true example of this would be a state level group called the Wiccan Interfaith Counsel, based out of Indiana. This group along with smaller affiliate groups have provided several 'care packages', pentagrams, and other supportive religious tools to the U.S. troops now fighting overseas. The same group recently got a ruling by the Indiana Department of Corrections for Pagan convicts to be allowed to carry or wear the pentagram/pentacle within the prison walls.

Never feel that you can't make a difference in anything that you do. No matter how small or large of a battle you chose to aid with. It doesn't matter how great your accomplishments, it matters more what your intent and actions were.

When looking at the world back in time I am sure you remember a period where a person or group of people were not accepted. The people that stand out to you as the solution to that problem could be considered hero's or an action as heroic. The fight we are all facing to make Paganism accepted will be the history lesson of some little kid not too long from now. Stand up and participate or aid in the fight no matter what path you decide to take to do it. You or the one's you worked with may end up being the one that becomes a part of that history. Just imagine how well you will feel once the fight is over and you can honestly say you contributed.

*Adding the swan and it's meaning would be a great addition to your journal !*

### Simple Symbols Monkey

Overall the monkey symbolizes mind over matter and the ability to use intellect well. It can also symbolize being sly, cunning, and unreliable. Basically the monkey represents all the good and all the bad in humans since it is linked so much to them.

In some West Africa tribes the monkey is an ancestral figure that represents mischief and inquisitiveness. Hinduism from India has a monkey-god that is highly regarded.

### Draw a Monkey

Both written and visual instructions for younger kids:

<http://www.wikihow.com/Draw-a-Monkey>

A simple cartoon monkey for all ages to enjoy:

<http://www.howtodrawit.com/monkeys.html>

Written instructions for older kids:

[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2073628\\_draw-monkey.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2073628_draw-monkey.html)

Visual directions for older kids:

<http://entertainment.howstuffworks.com/how-to-draw-animals6.htm>

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# All About the Family

(Continued from pg. 1)

It actually doesn't matter what you consider your family, the important thing is that you have them. Without them, life would not be as rewarding or fulfilling. Finding out where you come from is important, so learning about your family line is a nice thing to know and/or understand. It is also important to understand the position and importance of each member of your family.

## Two Friends' Family Views:

Make a venn-diagram comparing the opinions of these two friends about the members of their family. When done maybe do a few more using your friend, siblings, or other family members' definition of family to your own.

### Friend 1

Mother and step-father & father and step-mother, sister and brother, close male friend, close female friend, aunt and a couple of my cousins.

### Friend 2

Mom & dad, sister, grandparents on both sides, aunts and uncles on both sides, cousins and a close childhood friend and his family.

## The Family Tree

Do your own research into your immediate or adoptive family. Hold interviews with family elders, search through old family documents or even go to a genealogy library to find out more about those people that are closest to you and make your own version of a family tree. Here are some different ideas for presentation of your personal family tree to get your motor started as you think of your own unique way.:

Make a spider web on poster board with you in the middle and as you go out the rest of the family unfolds. They can be added with colored construction paper you can even paste on google eyes. Using a black poster board and use white-out to show the lines connecting people which will form a very interesting spider web.

Get a blank hard back book and comprise different families on each page then show a diagram of how those families are connected on the back page.

Make paper flowers and hole punch them in the middle. Write the name of each person that is a part of your family tree on them. When done string them in order on a piece of yarn. One at a time spread them out by tying knots in the yarn to hold them in place. Push the flowers together or spread them out in such a way they form a bouquet and put them in a vase that can be placed for decoration in special places.

## Family Ties

Family ties are precious things  
woven through the years,  
of laughter, love, and tears.  
Family ties are cherished things  
forged in childhood days,  
by love of parents deep and true  
by tradition, by family ways.  
Family ties are treasured things  
and far though we may roam,  
the tender bond with those we love  
still pull our hearts towards home.

author unknown

## Family Journal

Start a family journal. Each holiday have a family elder tell you about something special in their life. Write it using your own words or theirs in your family journal. On special occasions or family get-togethers pull out your journal and read some of the stories to yourself or to other family members. This small activity could become a very important step to you and future generations when learning about your family and it's roots.

Family Coloring Page:

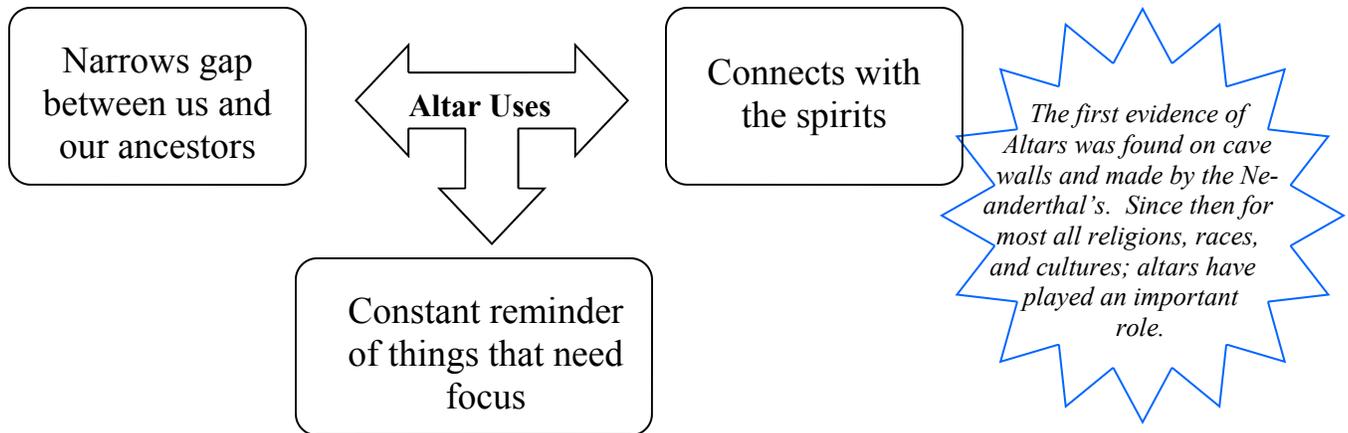
<http://www.geocities.com/cerddorionkids/Imbolc2.htm>

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# Monthly Unit: Altars

## Defining the Altar

The meaning of the Altar is as different to cultures, religions, and individuals as the meaning of happiness. The best general definition would be a specific area that one sets aside for his or her own personal use for the exchange of energy with and/or to communicate with the spiritual world.



## Types & Idea's of Altars

Most people think of religion as the reason for an altar. This is very true, especially in the Pagan religions, however there are many individual reasons to have an altar. It is good practice for everyone, especially kids, to make many different altars while learning about and enhancing their religious beliefs.

Below are some types and idea's for altars you can make:

**Altar of Change;** to prepare or show acceptance of a change in your life like a new baby in the family, new home or new friends

**Altar of Progression;** in remembrance or preparation of a progression you experiencing, like your growth (physical, emotionally, or religiously), or working toward a goal

**Altar of Completion;** to show an accomplishment or that you reached a goal. This can be in anything you are working for in life like your grade level, reaching fairly large goals or mastering a new skill that seemed impossible.

**Altar of Healing;** to aid in healing of your heart, body or mind. Times when this would be appropriate would be to aid in the healing of a friend, yourself or to help keep someone healthy.

**Altar of Memorance;** to remember or show respect to someone that has passed out of the body they occupied (person or animal) or to remember something or someone that you consider special that you don't see anymore.

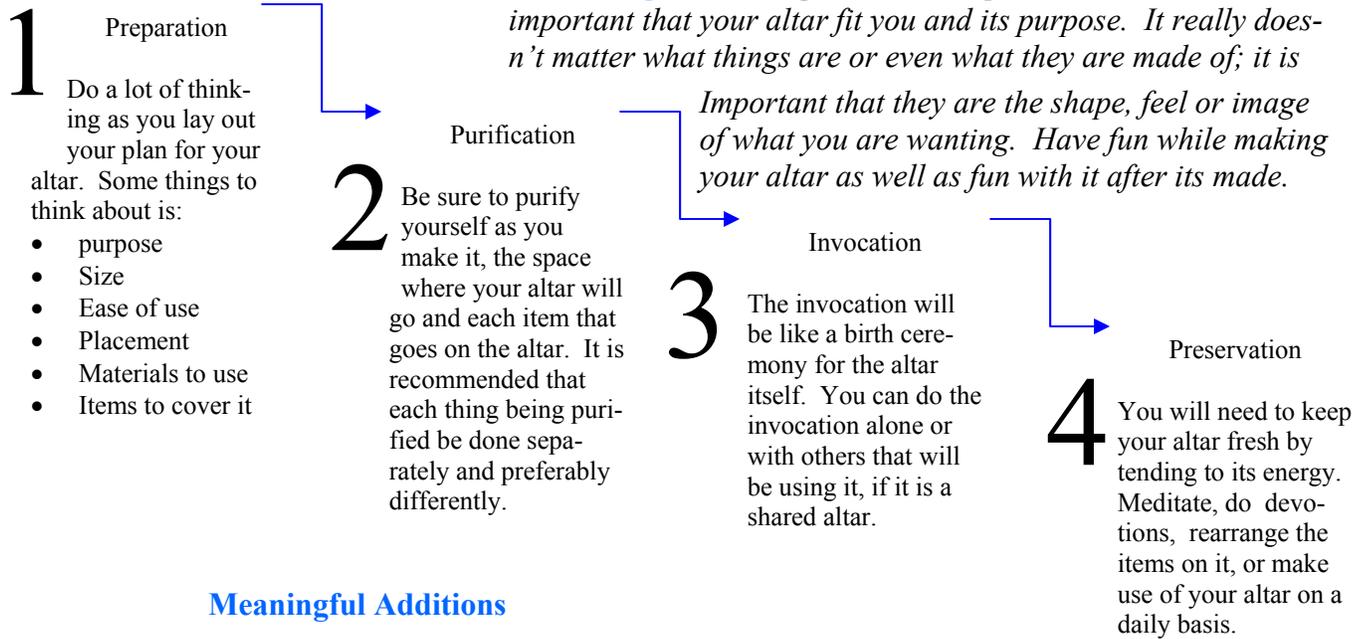
**Altar of Protection;** to aid in protection of yourself, someone special or even an animal you hold dear or feel for. This type of altar can also be used to help give energy to and protect things in the world such as rainforests, global warming or endangered animals.

There are many other reasons to set up and practice making altars just be sure to try at least a few. Remember the more you set up altars, the more you become clear on what to put on them and how to use them.

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# Monthly Unit: Altars

## Four Steps to Creating an Altar



## Meaningful Additions

There are many things you can add to your altar, however, the best altars hold meaningful things. These things can be sentimental, representational, or simply aid in the environment desired.

Some things that you want to think about when making meaningful additions to your own altar:

1. Nature items
2. Deity representations
3. Animal symbols
4. Colors
5. Sacred objects
6. Number of items
7. Personal family items (photo's, memento's, etc...)
8. Offerings

Be sure that when adding such items that you do your own research as to the representations and/or meanings of each item. Be sure that all parts of your altar cater to the topic and/or meaning of your altar.

**Choose many** different kinds of altars to work with and or practice making:

- Natural, garden, or other outside altars
- Complete room altars
- Small portable altars to be set up anywhere
- Semi-portable altars that can be set up and taken down as needed

Use these ideas or any other that you come up with. The best thing about an altar is there is no wrong or right way to build it. Use your own ideas and get wild with your altars or their set-up when the mood hits you.

## Play Altar 10

This game needs to be played with two players that take turns. In advance write different situations and/or reasons to build an altar that you can think of on strips of paper and put them in a cauldron or other item for drawing out of. The game can be played any way desired and/or age level. Each strip of paper that is drawn will have a list of at least 10 answers, however more is better. Answers for each strip of paper will be more like a list of things that can be put on an altar being made for the reason on the strip of paper. See how many you can guess. Keep some type of scoring to see who wins, or not.

## Numerology

**Numerology** is used to help find magickal names, and the values of birthdates. It is hard coming up with your magickal name and some of the names you might have tried do not work well for you. You can either use your full name or birthdate to help choose your magickal name with the same numerical value. To determine the numerical value of your birthdate, add the numbers of the month, the day, and the year together.

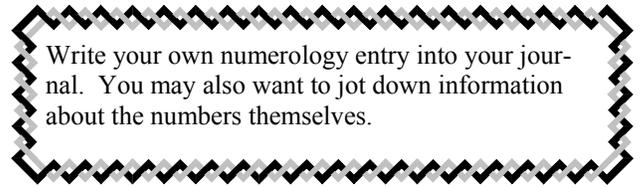
**Example:** 12/19/1977  $12+19+1977=2008$   
 Then you would add these numbers together:  $2+0+0+8=10$   
 Then  $1+0=1$   
 Your final number would be 1.

To get the numerical value of your name or a magickal name, add together all the values of each letter, this gives you the final number.

**Example:** Shannon Donaldson =  
 First name:  $1+8+1+5+5+6+5=31$   
 Last Name:  $4+6+5+1+3+4+1+6+5=35$   
 Add together:  $31+35=66$   
 Then again:  $6+6=12$   
 Then again:  $1+2=3$

### Number Chart

<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>J</b>	<b>K</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>Q</b>	<b>R</b>
<b>S</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>W</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>Z</b>	



Write your own numerology entry into your journal. You may also want to jot down information about the numbers themselves.

- 1- A person with great individuality, more often trend setters for good or bad. Works best alone.
- 2- A cooperative, sympathetic person.
- 3- Optimistic and inspired are expressions of this type of person. A creative and artistic person.
- 4- Slow and steady builder of a career, business relationships, or whatever they attempt. Works best when serving others.
- 5- This person thrives on change and new things.
- 6- Family, home, truth, and justice describe this type of person.
- 7- This person often gets off to rocky starts in life.
- 8- This person has the ability to acquire money and position in life.
- 9- This person must be careful with their responsibilities. Their keywords must be passion, love and service.

### Herb Focus: Basil



**Color:** Broad green leaves  
**Location:** Warm climates but can easily be grown in most gardens  
**Common Use:** To relieve symptoms of cold or flu  
**Gender:** Masculine  
**Planet:** Mars  
**Element:** Fire

**Magickal Attributes:** Love divinations, wealth, protection, sympathy

*\*\* As with all natural medicinal items and purposes be sure to talk to a parent before using.*

### Mineral Focus: Aventurine



**Color:** Light green, peach, or white  
**Healing Properties:** Calms stress; both physical and mental  
**Element:** Air

**Care:** To cleanse, put into running water from a spring or even from the tap.

*\*\* Crystal Healing is an acquired art and shouldn't be practiced without parental permission and/or guidance.*

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## God of the Month : DAGDA

Dagda is an ancient Celtic God, generally going by the name of The Dagda, because of his high status among the Gods themselves. He was the son of the Goddess Danu and became the leader of the mythological God/Goddess dynasties of light and goodness, known as the Tuatha De Danann. He was the father of Brigid and the patron of the Druids. He was known to have a special bond with the Morrigan, the sea Goddess, which aided in the security of his people. He carried a club with one end that killed his enemies and the other that would bring the dead back to life.

*Dagda is the God of wisdom and knowledge, fire, agriculture, and magic.*

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### Dagda and His Children

When the Tuatha De Danann was defeated by the Milesians, Dagda gave to all of his children a sidhe (mound of earth which is hollow) to live in with the exception of one; Aonghus Og, the God of love, who had been born to Dagda and Boann the river Goddess. Aonghus had tricked the Dagda out of a palace that both wanted. Because of this trickery and unwillingness to give up the palace of the god of love, which it became for evermore, the Dagda did not give Aonghus Og a sidhe of his own to reside in.

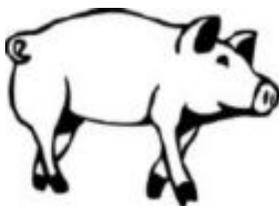
The Sidhe's that were given to Dagda's children are considered a vital part of Celtic mythology being revered as passage ways to the Celtic Otherworld where people can mingle among the God and Goddess', never grow old, and have all they ever dreamed of.

After his job of leading the Tuatha De Danann was complete he resigned his job and joined everyone else as they disappeared into the hills scattered among the ancient Celtic world.. His children were then transformed into fairies.

The Dagda Owned magical things and is quite often thought of by these items:



He had a cauldron that never emptied. It would always have food for him and never left anyone hungry. There is a statue dedicated to just this cauldron in Trelee Park in Kerry, Ireland.



He always had a pig roasting and one growing to be used in his cauldron.

He had a harp which was made from a living oak tree that would summon the seasons with music



When Dagda's name is translated it means "Good God", this doesn't actually mean he was a good or that he wasn't bad. He is simply good at everything

### Dressing up The Dagda

He dressed in a simple tunic that was rather short. He dragged a large club behind him on a set of wheels.

*\*\* Directions for making a homemade doll that can be used when studying or worshipping any of the God/Goddess can be found in December 2007's issue. Idea's on dress and props will be put in all issues as new God/Goddess' are introduced.*

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## Goddess of the Month : BRIGID

Brigid is a Goddess that brings forth a lot of confusion when studying. She is unlike any other Goddess and deserves much respect and praise. There are many different cultures and times where the Goddess Brigid shone above all. It is believed that these cultures may have started back during Neolithic times, the Stonehenge holds the secrets of that time and may stand as an offering to Brigid herself. The ancient Celts held her so high that a holiday, Imbolc, was completely dedicated to her. She was so powerful to people that worship her that many different religions have adopted her, forms of her, or even created a special person out of her image. There is even a complete religion dedicate to her and the study of her.

She has been known as a three fold Goddess that existed in most of the ancient Celtic regions. She is known as the Goddess of childbirth, poetry, inspiration, warrior of the seasons, fire attendant and many different other things which vary according to religions and cultures. Some of those are addressed here, however there is no way to account for all aspects of a Goddess at this level of importance to so many.

### Brigid Fast Facts

Brigid invented whistling and keening.

Brigid's crosses came about when the ancient Pagan's were converting to Christianity.

A Brigid doll is made around Imbolc and placed in it's own bed with lights around it to welcome Brigit to the house and support her fight with the Crone during Imbolc.

Do your own research and see if you can find more information about Brigid.

### A Walk With Brigid

The Neolithic form of Brigid was Bride. The maiden, Bride was captured and held hostage by Cailleach in the high mountains of Ben Nevis. Caillech's own son fell in love with her and as the winter ended he eloped with her. The hag, Caillech, chased them everywhere and because of the chase caused storms as her rage led her in the search. Bride was freed as Caillech turned to stone.

As the Celts adopted the story Brigid became a mother to Bride throughout the spring and summer. Caillech still rules both fall and winter but is defeated each year by Brigid and Bride as they bring in the warmer seasons.

The Christians, too, adopted their own form of Brigid, called St. Brigid of Killdare. In their version she was the daughter of a Druid and saved by St. Patrick himself. She is known for being gracious and was said to give her family's property to the poor .

A tax collector, Alexander Carmichael, wrote many sacred stories, songs, and poems that were used to teach ancient Pagan history and customs. He collected all of his notes together to form books in the early 1900's. Among these is a Gaelic love song dedicated to Brigit;

#### Blessing of Brigit

I am under the shielding  
Of good Brigit each day;  
I am under the shielding  
Of good Brigit each night.

I am under the keeping  
Of the nurse of Mary,  
Each early or late,  
Every dark, every light.

Brigit is my comrade-woman,  
Brigit is my maker of song,  
Brigit is my helping woman,  
My choicest of women, my guide.

From: *Thou Harp Of My Music*  
By: Alexander Carmichael

### Ancient Celtic Brigid's Family Tree

Brigid had 3 sons by Tuireann.

Brigid married the tyrant son of the king of the Formarians BRES

BRIGID/  
Goddess of  
healing

BRIGID/  
Goddess of  
poetry, majical  
arts, & music

BRIGID/  
Goddess of  
metalcraft

DAGDA had 3 daughters, each for a section of Celtic Europe, or was it one Goddess that took different jobs according to the area? - that has always been debated.

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## Churning the Elements

As Pagans we acknowledge the Elements as the very building blocks of our existence. They are the substances of which everything is created. It is important to understand and harmonize with the working elements in order to live in balance with the higher power.



### Air Correspondences

**Direction:** East  
**Time:** dawn season  
**Spring Colors:** white, yellow  
crimson, light blue  
**Tools:** wand, incense, creative  
visualization  
**Sense:** Smell  
**Gemstone:** topaz  
**Plants:** Frankincense, myrrh,  
pansy, primrose, vervain, violet,  
yarrow  
**Trees:** aspen  
**Animals:** birds  
**Spirits:** sylphs, faeries who in-  
habit trees, flowers, winds,  
breezes, and mountains.  
**Ruled By:** King Paralda  
**Goddess:** Arodia, Arionrhod,  
Codea, Nuit, Urania  
**Gods:** Enill, Khephera, Mer-  
cury, Shu, Troth



**Air is** one of the most important things which our bodies need to survive. Without air to breathe we could not exist. Air is the cool breeze that surrounds us on a hot day. It lifts the birds and faeries into flight. Though air can be quite calm like the cool breeze, it can also be extremely noisy and violent like in a storm. Try to visualize air in your minds eye, feel it, smell it,



### Exercises to connect with the element air:

The music a wind chime makes as a gentle breeze blows

Leaves floating on the ground

A strong winter wind making the snow drift

The smell of a fresh baked pie as you walk in the house



A breeze ruffling your hair

*A kite pulling on the string as the wind tries to carry it away*

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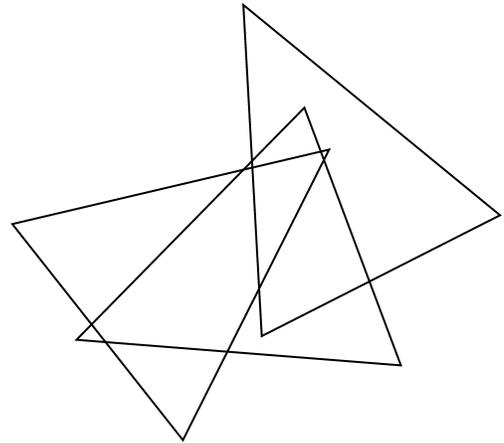
## Churning the Elements....Continued

### Experiments With Air . . . .

#### Feel the Energy of Air

Go to the park and swing real high. Notice how the wind changes as you pick up speed. How does it feel on your skin and in your hair? Does the hair on the back of your neck stand up or on your arms? Do you feel a tingling sensation? What do you think it is?

\* \* It is energy and you are tapping into it by playing with the air currents.



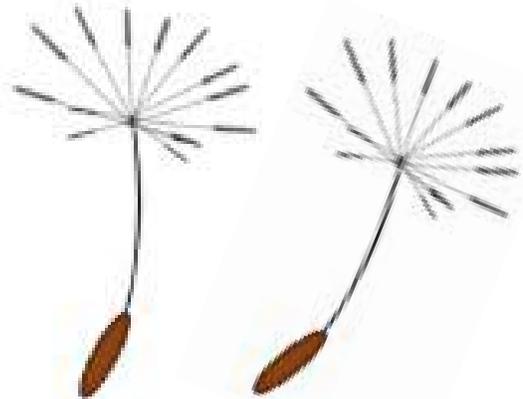
#### What Do You See?

Go outside on a nice day. Pick a spot where you can see the clouds in full view. Lay down on the grass and watch the fluffy white clouds as they drift across the sky. Watch as they gently change shape. What different shapes do you see in the clouds? Notice how slow or quickly the air changes the shapes of the clouds.

#### Make a Wish

Find a fluffy dandelion and carefully pick it. Close your eyes and make a wish, now open your eyes and blow on the dandelion. The tale goes that if you can blow all of the little seeds off the dandelion in one breath, your wish will come true.

\* This is a great way to see just how air can carry not only the seeds but your wish as well.



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# Faith Focus: Heathens

The title 'Heathen' is used for both pre Christian people of North Europe and a modern day group of religious people. The Heathens of today are a group of very serious and liberal people. Heathens do not have a rank system or large group that they must belong to, however, they do form hearths or kindreds (small groups) to socialize and celebrate within.

Heathens do not really bother with the thought of afterlife or reincarnation (feelings on these are mixed within the Heathen realm) they are more into the world of today and now. They practice self-control and honesty to a fault. Heathens are very careful to mean what they say and agree totally with the things that they sign.

Each individual picks his or her own group of Gods, Goddess', local and tribal Gods, and people who they have been close to that have passed on in life and honor them. These individuals, Gods and Goddess' are considered separate from the living and living world of today.

Festivals are held at important times in the year although they don't necessarily follow the Wheel of the Year. Magic and divination (in the form of runes) are not considered a major part of the religion and are not used during the Heathen festivals. The celebrations that Heathens have differ from most Pagan religious celebrations because they do not make a circle or call the corners.

It is a regular practice to offer food and drink not only at a festival, but as a part of everyday life. Heathens do have a strong belief in Elves, Brownies, Dwarfs, Etins (giants), Housewits, and Landwits. Heathens make a special point of befriending these hidden folk and the one's they live with in order to keep peace and happiness with them.

## Defining Heathen Words

Draw a line matching the definition of the Heathen celebration with it's definition.

Blot	Festival named after a Goddess and celebrated in the spring.
Symbel	Festival starting on Yule and celebrated for 12 days
Winter Nights	A rite that centers around food and drink and can be in or out of doors
Yule	Celebrated in October or November
Eostre Festival	Celebrated as a rite of passage where drinking is the main focus. A drinking horn is passed among everyone.

## Heathen Ethics

- Wyrð connects everything in the universe as a web so things you do today will totally effect what happens in the future in some form or fashion
- Frith makes the bond between family and friends tight. It is important to be that all stays that way and is sometimes done with gifts or hospitality.
- Your word does make you so it is important to always honor it. It is equally important that you only say what you can honor.



## Days of the Week

Most of the week days were named after the God/Goddess' that heathen's worship:

Tuesday after Tiw (Tyr)  
Wednesday after Woden (Odin)  
Thursday after Thunor (Thor)  
Friday after Frige (Frigg)

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## Imbolc History

Today Imbolc is celebrated by many Pagan religions and is one of the spokes on the Wheel of the Year. If researched you will find many different ways to celebrate this holiday. The holiday is associated with the Goddess Brigit no matter what religion or culture people are from. Take a look at how the ancient Imbolc was celebrated and see how much of it is still alive in your own family or personal festivities.

### Cadeyrn's Imbolc

Cadeyrn returned from the field with great news of the first sign of milk witnessed in the ewe. This was a sign that the earth was planning for a new cycle. With this great news Cadeyrn and his family began preparing for the upcoming Imbolc festival to be held tonight. They arranged candles and put out fresh Coltsfoot all over the house to light the way for Brigit during her visit tonight as she prepared to battle the Crone and help the new season roll in.

Midday they all marched up to the hill to wait for the snake to come out of hibernation to determine how much more winter there would be. As they watched the snake come out of its hole and then return to it so they knew that there would be another month left of winter. Afterward and many times during the day everyone in the family would cleanse their head, feet and body for the new cycle of work. The house was to be very neat and tidy because tonight the Goddess, Brigit, would roam the earth in hopes of hospitality. A special bed would be made with newly washed and sewn blankets with candles to be kept lit throughout the night so when Brigit awoke she would wave her wand over the fires bringing good luck to the household. As they finished the days festivities Brats (lengths of cloth or ribbon) would be hung in the windows to absorb the power of the Goddess while the Imbolc festivities were taking place.

Right after sunset Cadeyrn and his family had a nice candle lit dinner at home. Their favorite part of the meal was a bread that had fruit in it (similar to today's fruitcake) which everyone was sure to eat some of. Directly after eating Cadeyrn's oldest sister dressed as Brigit to go outside and gather some rushes then return home and place the rushes in a special place on the table then carefully walked around the house to bless it. Then she would leave and return as herself. The family would then eat some oat bread over the rushes being sure to drop crumbs on them in a ritual manner then make a Cros-Bride out of it, Cadeyrn would make a three point one (to represent the triple Goddess, Brigit) and his oldest sister would make a four point one (to represent the cycle of the Celtic year). After the home celebrations the men of the village dressed in white gowns with straw headdresses and paraded through the town bearing gifts to the land spirits as they awoke for the next season. Cadeyrn was very happy because this was his first year to walk with the men demonstrating that he was becoming a man. His family was so proud of him and told him so when he returned home.

All festivities seem to have dwindled when Cadeyrn settled down across the room from Brigit's bed. He is the oldest son so he would be in charge of keeping Brigit's light lit tonight. He would drift in and out of sleep as he watched her powerful light. Cadeyrn sat back and thought of the days activities and smiled, he was so proud he was able to have such a great holiday. He also thought he was the luckiest person in all of ancient Celtic Scotland.

\* \* \* Imbolc was celebrated in many different ways according to the ancient Celtic area. Even though this story reflects the festivities around Celtic Scotland similar activities happened throughout ancient Celtic society.

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## How to Make a Brigid's Cross

A Brigid's Cross can be made out of stiff grasses, wheat stalks, reeds, or rushes. Gather a few dozen reeds of the same length. You will want to soak them in water to soften them so that they will bend easily. Use them to make your Brigid's Cross by following the directions below.

### Instructions

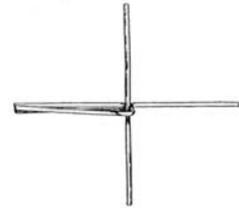
1. Hold one reed vertically, and fold another in half around the middle of the first.



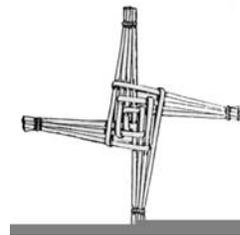
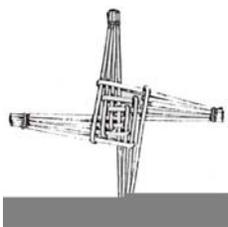
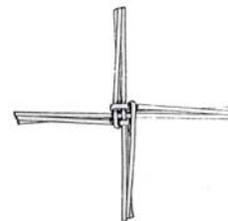
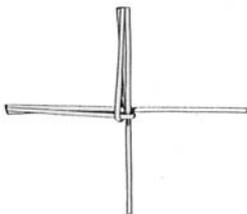
2. Fold the next reed over the last one. It should be parallel to the first.



3. Fold the next reed over the reeds one and three. It will be parallel to the second reed.



4. Continue to work in a circular fashion until you have used up all your reeds, or created enough of a woven center to the cross. Hold the reeds together carefully, and tie each end together with string so that the cross won't fall apart.



**Brigid's Cross symbolizes the cycle of the Celtic year, that light will shed and spring and summer will always return. Hang your Brigid's Crosses in the door ways of your home to bring protection and prosperity throughout the year.**

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## Imbolc Recipe Box

### Maiden Wakes Muffins

From Imbolc by Akasha

#### Ingredients

2 cups flour	2 tsp, baking soda
2 carrots, grated	3 eggs
1/2 cup raisins	2 tsp. cinnamon
1 green apple, peeled, cored, grated	2/3 cup vegetable oil
1 cup sugar	1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 cup almonds, sliced	2 tsp. vanilla

Soak raisins in hot water, in a covered bowl for 30 minutes. Drain thoroughly. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large non-metal bowl, mix flour, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt. Stir in carrots, raisins, apples, and almonds. In a separate bowl, beat eggs, oil, and vanilla until well blended. Stir egg mixture into flour mixture until just wet. Grease muffin pan with a little butter or use cupcake/muffin cups. Divide the batter into the cups and bake for 20-22 minutes, or until golden brown. Cool five minutes before removing from the pan. Makes 8 servings

### Brides Brunch

Imbolc by Akasha

#### Ingredients

2 (9 inch) pie shells	1/2 tsp. salt
3 tbs. green onion/chives, finely chopped	8 eggs
1/2 pound Canadian style bacon/ thin sliced ham	1/4 asp. Pepper
	1/tbs. milk

Line a quiche dish with 1 pie shell. Arrange 1/2 of bacon or ham in the bottom of shell. Break 7 eggs into the dish. Pierce the yolks with a fork, but do not mix the egg yolks with the egg whites. Add the green onions/chives, salt, and pepper. Arrange the remaining bacon or ham on top. Cover with the remaining pie shell. Mix the remaining egg with the milk and lightly brush the top crust with the mixture. Bake at 400 degrees for 30-40 minutes. Serve hot or cold. Makes 6 servings

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## Imbolc Activities and Crafts

### Brigid Candleholder

The serpent is a symbol of the Goddess that is widely known. Follow the instructions below to make a candle holder which will hold three taper candles that will represent the maiden , mother, and crone.

You will need to make a batch of salt dough or you can use another type of dough of your choose. Roll a piece of dough into a 2 inch thick tube shaping one end into a snake tail and the other into a snake head. Place on a baking sheet and shape into a S pattern. This is so your candleholder will be stable and support your candle tapers. Take your tapers and press them into the dough to create a hole for the taper to go after the dough is baked. Bake according to the type of dough you use. When it is ready and has cooled off paint snaky patterns, finishing with the eyes at the head. You are now ready to place your tapers into the holes. Four inch tapers work the best,

### A Garden of Possibilities

Imbolc is a wonderful time to think about our potential and make necessary changes. It is a time to gestate new growth, abilities and projects. Go out doors and dig up some good rich dirt or use potting soil to fill a sheet-cake baking pan. Then sit in a circle with the dirt filled pan in the center. Think about what particular ideals, projects, goals, creative ventures, or changes you would like to make in the up coming months. Write a few words, or draw a picture on a small slip of paper. Do as many as you like.

### A Ring of Light

In Scandinavian countries it is a holiday tradition for girls to wear a garland in their hair that hold a circle of lit candles to bless the return of light.

Draw an inner circle on a 9 inch paper plate, about an inch from the edge. Next draw very light lines dividing the circle into quarter. Draw four rectangular candle shapes, keeping the dividing lines as guides for the candles' centers.

Cut out the candle shapes making sure to keep them attached to the ring at the rim. This connection serves as the base of the candle. Bend candles from the base to stand upright. Decorate candles with markers, paint, and or glitter. Use orange or red tissue paper to make the flames for the candles and attach with glue, or staple to the tops of the candles.

Adapted from Circle Round  
By Star hawk Diane Baker and Anne Hill

### Popcorn Transformation

Imbolc is a great time to reflect upon transformation. How the darkness transforms into light, how our creative ideals transform into forms of art before our eyes, how our bodies so neatly heal themselves as the sun slowly begins to warm our souls.

One of the simplest symbols of transformation is popcorn. Make popcorn the old fashion way in a skillet with hot oil. Pay close attention to the corn transforming into a great Imbolc snack. As the corn pops dance around to the rhythm of the popping!

### Popcorn Chant

You put the oil in the pot  
And get it real hot.  
You put the popcorn in  
And get a big grin (*smile*)  
Sizzle, sizzle, sizzle (*move hands back and forth*)  
Sizzle, sizzle, sizzle Pop!

## Celtic Corner

### Storytelling & Fionn's Wife

From ancient times up until now there has been storytelling. In the past it was a job of the Bard and today it is of the Storyteller, but no matter the job or title the steadfast entertainment and hobby is a must. The great stories that are told teach history, morals and family commitment. Although you can enjoy storytelling from almost anywhere in the world, there is nothing like hearing a story from the people who live in Ireland.

Take some time and listen to a 2 part story "How Fionn's Wife Saved His Life" on YouTube by my favorite Irish storyteller Claire Muireann Murphy. The story comes in two parts and links to both are below:

How Fionn's Wife Saved His Life pt. 1 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a1qjaWN92I8>

How Fionn's Wife Saved His Life pt. 2 - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I5WqVxghTho>

#### Enhancements

Use this blurb on Claire Muireann Murphy, that she wrote, and use it to make an advertisement pretending she is coming to your area. You may want to read more about her on her MySpace website or listen to more of her stories on You Tube to help with research so your ad will say as much as possible.

Write or make-up your own story version of something that happened in your family (you may need to ask a grandparent). Be a storyteller to friends or other family members with your story.

### The Ancient Celtic Family

Today's family is nothing like the family of the past. In ancient times the Celts family and community was very large and comprised of many different people, races, and cultures.

Membership in the family and community was something that could be born into or earned. It was not important how you became a Celt, all members were held at the same level of respect and honor.

Each new family member joined more than a single family they joined the community which operated like one big family itself. Kids were born of one family who raised them then they would be adopted by another for training and education. Each geographical area where the ancient Celtic family resided would also become a part of the family. This was done by chieftains and other important leaders who would make the area a member in several different ways.

The devotion to the family and community was above all else. This was noticed by everyone, like their enemies, neighbors and the many others that surrounded them. Many of these people became part of the ancient Celtic family.

There are many places in the Gaelic speaking areas where this type of family unit is still present. A little has changed since the ancient times however, the unity has not. If you would like to read a little about one person who is still a member of this type of society in modern times Visit: <http://www.geocities.com/sconemac/celtdfam.html>



**Claire Muireann Murphy**, storyteller, wordsmith, writer and performer has told stories all over the world to audiences from 1 to 100 years old. Her stories include the mythical Irish legends and folktales as well as a plethora of other world stories, fables, myths, legends and anecdotes. She works through storytelling to build bridges between marginalized communities and endeavors to promote multiculturalism through her work. She lives and works in the West Coast of Ireland. For more information go to [www.myspace.com/claremuireannmurphy](http://www.myspace.com/claremuireannmurphy)

### Your Celtic House

Draw a large circle on a blank sheet of paper. Write or draw the people that would be a member of your house if you lived in a modern Celtic society that resembled the one of ancient times.

*Remember anyone can be a member if they have earned it!*

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# What do Pagan's put their trash in?



## *A Wiccar Basket*

### Keeping in Touch With Nature

The weather has changed and usually it means sitting at home more and less time hanging with friends. Why not spend more time outside with nature? Spending time in nature isn't just for the comfortable weather times and can be a rather new concept. If you don't actually know what to do outside why not take time out and make your own goals and list of things to accomplish while outside. A small list to get you started can be found below:

- Start a audio journal of nature sounds that can be used later in meditation or as a sleep aid.
- Go for walks and learn all about how alive the nature is even when it seems to be in a hibernating state.
- Begin the fun of Letterboxing. Learn about it and start by making your own letterbox: <http://letterboxing.org/GettingStarted/> and/or find letterboxes that other's have hid: <http://letterboxing.org/america.htm>
- Make a list or flashcards of winter animals in your area. Take a hike to see how many you can find or take several trips until you are able to see all of them that you want to.
- Begin a regular ritual that needs to be done outside, changing your location often, and stay true to it.
- Adopt a tree, plant, or animal type to care for all winter. If choosing an animal be sure no to put food in the same place each time.
- Find a place that makes you comfortable or were you feel energy from somewhere in nature. Make a habit of visiting it often and keeping a diary of your experiences and things you see each time.

All activities could be continued throughout the year, it could be a way for you to see all of natures faces as well as give you a good rapport with nature itself and/or it's God and Goddess'.

### Rain, Rain Come Again

The spring rains are soon to be on their way, washing away the last traces of winter. Rain sticks have been part of tradition through ritual and relaxation in South and Central America and is an ancient custom. It is not hard to make this magickal instrument used to nurture the up coming spring rains.

You will need a cardboard mailing tube with two end pieces and a pound of nails per stick. The nails need to be the same length in diameter as the tube. Hammer the pound of nails into the tube as far as they will go. You can make patterns with the nails as even or uneven as you choose. Glue or tape one of the end pieces on the tube. Then pour 1 to 2 cups of rice or dried beans into the open end. Different types of beans will make the sound differ. You can use all the same type or you can mix them. Have fun choosing your special sound. Now glue or tape the other end piece on to the tube. You can wrap your rain stick in brown paper by gluing it in place, or you can wrap it with masking tape, or cover it with contact paper. The covering helps hold the nails in place. Once you have done this you are ready to decorate your rain stick. Let the magic of sound guide you as you decorate your rain stick.

To use your new rain stick gently tilt it all the way upside down and listen as the beautiful sound of rain filling the air. You can use your new rain stick before meditations, or in ritual, or maybe in your family jam sessions. Have fun with your new magickal instrument!



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## January 2008 Pagan Calendar

1  
Kalends of January (Roman)  
New Year's Day (America)  
New Years (German, Roman & Japanese)  
Fortuna  
Jupiter  
Juno  
Egyptian Day  
Gamelia  
Feast of Hera (Greek)  
Frost Faeries (Wiccan)  
Day of the Tuatha de Danaan (Celtic)  
2  
Moon enters Scorpio  
Advent of Isis (Ancient Egyptian)  
Nativity of Our Lady Inanna (Sumerian)  
Egyptian Day  
3  
Earth closest orbital position to the sun  
St. Genevieve  
Customary Kalends of January  
Deer Dances (Native American)  
Day of Mourning (Ancient Egyptian)  
Lenaia of Dionysus (Greek)  
4  
Moon enters Sagittarius  
Quadrantid Meteor Shower  
Egyptian Day  
Martyrs of Independence (Zaire)  
5  
Nones of January  
La Befana (Italian)  
Eve of Epiphany of Kore (Greek)  
6  
Twelfth Night  
Epiphany of Kore-Persephone  
7  
Moon enters Capricorn  
Sekmet (Ancient Egyptian New Year)  
8  
(Candle) New Moon  
Mercury enters Aquarius  
Justitia  
9  
Moon enters Aquarius  
10  
Geraint  
11  
Moon enters Pisces  
Carmentalia  
Juturna  
Plough Monday  
12  
Eoh (yew tree) ends (Runic half-months)  
Compitalia  
The Lares  
St. Distaff's Day  
13

16  
Moon enters Taurus  
17  
Felicitas  
Egyptian Day  
18  
Moon enters Gemini  
19  
20  
Moon enters Cancer  
Sun enters Aquarius  
Beth (Birch) ends (Celtic tree calendar)  
Aquarius rises  
St. Agnes' Eve  
21  
Luis (Rowan) begins (Celtic tree calendar)  
St. Agnes  
22  
Moon enters Leo  
(Candle) Full Moon (Wolf Moon) (Cold Moon)  
Hestia ends (Goddess Calendar)  
St. Vincent  
23  
Bridhe begins (Goddess Calendar)  
24  
Moon enters Virgo  
Venus enters Capricorn  
Cornish Tinnerns' & Seafarers' Day  
St. Paul's Eve  
25  
Burns' Night  
St. Paul's Day  
26  
Moon enters Libra  
Pluto enters Capricorn  
27  
Peorth (womb, dice cup) ends (Runic half-months)  
28  
Mercury Retrograde Starts  
Elhaz (Elk) begins (Runic half-months)  
29  
Moon enters Scorpio  
Last Quarter Moon  
Egyptian Day  
30  
Mars Retrograde ends  
Festival of Peace  
Birthday of Z Budapest  
31  
Moon enters Sagittarius  
February Eve  
Norns  
Distr & Valkyries

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## To The Parent

### A Prayer for Imbolc

Author: *Flame RavenHawk*

This is Imbolc when the ice begins to melt, the earth begins to soften, and the seed begins to stir in the darkness. Let the small seed of peace also stir with in the hearts of those who have been locked in the ice of fear, anger, and hatred.

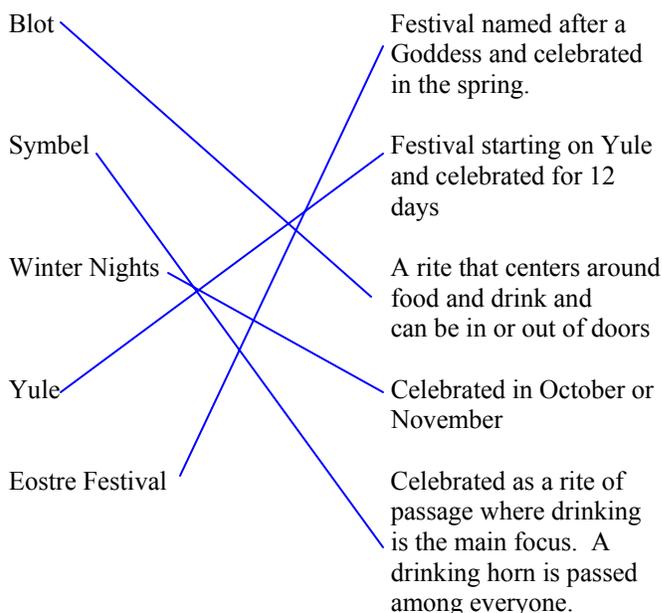
As the heat of the sun strengthens and warms the earth, so may the heat of love and compassion strengthen the will and the spirits of all of us who strive for peace.

I will strive to soften my impatience, so that my compassion can break free and thrive. Peace is a harvest worthy of my patience. I cannot hasten the growth of the crop by tugging on the new shoots. But I can prepare the soil where the seeds of peace may grow.

I can allow love to burn so brightly within me that I glow with the force of it, and allow it to shine so that the fear and anger held within the hearts of the others begins to soften and melt.

Peace is not and outward ideal but an inner truth that lies deep with in each heart. May it break forth and flourish. So mote it be.

#### Defining Heathen Words Answer Key



#### Home School Tip

Even though there are a lot of things you can count as PE in your home school it just doesn't seem to be enough. Usually the resort is to join something; ball team, karate, gymnastics, etc... Although this is fun it seems to be an extra-curricular activity to your child. To turn this activity more into home school PE simply combine it with a PE oriented program. You can join The President's Challenge at [http://www.presidentschallenge.org/the\\_challenge/index.aspx](http://www.presidentschallenge.org/the_challenge/index.aspx) or come up with your own document and reward system.

#### Affirmations for Self-confidence

**I am a strong, capable, and wise individual, bring forth the best that is with in me.**

**I unfold and awaken my divine qualities.**

**Here and now, I live my life the way I desire it to be.**

**I let go of the past, and look forward with anticipation and joy.**

**With joy and confidence, I move on in my life journey.**

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## Flaming Family Traditions

The Winter Solstice is a great time to flame family traditions for the younger generation. All families have their own version of how this is done, however it seems that as technology takes over this procedure itself is being lost. This is a true disappointment because so much history is being lost as well as the feeling of family unity. Make this the year that you start flaming your own family tradition, even if you have to be the first generation to start it.

I would like to share with you a small story about one of my family traditions.

Many generations back, when our family had no traditions to bond one another, a woman sat up in her bed pondering over a saying she had read in a book; 'Remembering when and where the seed came from is not as important as what it grew into'. This saying was only one line and actually didn't have much to do with the book but it had her boggled and led to many sleepless nights. It was cold on this particular night so she got up to pull the cloth over the clay windows and it hit her, the most brilliant idea. The next morning she began a family tradition that has been in the family now over 20 generations. It was something so simple yet so complex it changed a whole family from the first generation after her youngest daughter's.

This tradition caused my daughter to be excited on her eleventh birthday not because of presents or her big party later that day, but because she was going on a trip to visit all her local relatives and speak to the ones she barely knew. She was going on a hunt and she would get to spend quality time with each member of her family through a one-on-one session to boot. It was mid-afternoon when she found out that her aunt in Oklahoma would mail her the special gift from the oldest living relative in the family. The gift was a biography of a family member and she would add it to her set, she had only one other one because she didn't get to begin the tradition until she was ten, but before she was done she would have 35.

Everyone in my family begins notes or journal entries throughout the years of great events and common everyday events that were special to them. These books are written until your 60th year when they are compiled and written into your biography and presented to you from your closest blood relative as your Solstice gift. Excerpts of your biography are read aloud to all close family members who have come to celebrate with you during your special rite of crossing over to the sacred ground with the many ancestors before you.

When you are done reading it you will add it to the original set of all members of the bloodline from many generations back which is in the care of the oldest living relative. Copies of these biographies are made throughout the years and they are given as gifts from the oldest living relative to the children starting on their tenth birthday. The children know this and get to have fun visiting and calling family members, so they get to know who they are, trying to find the family member that was chosen by the oldest living relative to deliver the biography to them. They are excited to see who they get and what it was like. The book becomes a great book for both parent and child to share.

The whole process brings the family closer and lets the children know where they are coming from. This great tradition started with a 50 year old woman laying in bed one night thinking of a saying in a book she had read. My family has never been the same since.

You too, can begin or re-flame a family tradition this Winter Solstice by coming up with a plan to bond your family with traditions and knowledge. It starts with one person and one thought!

## Take 10

It's rather sad that in this hectic life one must schedule time just to relax. Aromatherapy is an excellent way to soothe the mind, body and soul without much work or time spent. The warm smell of certain aromas can calm and soothe as one carries out daily tasks or can add to one's religious practices.

Here is a list of herbs and essential oils that might meet your needs *(donated by: Thorn Marie - Thanks!)*:

<b>Basil</b> (not to be used in essential oil form)	Harmony, peace, happiness	<b>Black Pepper</b>	Courage, romance, protection
<b>Chamomile</b>	Meditation, peace, dreams	<b>Cedar</b>	Balance, spirituality, dreams
<b>Cinnamon</b> (not on skin or in bath)	Psychic awareness, purification	<b>Ginger</b>	Love, courage, prosperity
<b>Jasmine</b>	Love, psychic awareness, peace, dreams	<b>Juniper</b>	Protection, meditation, communication, healing, purification
<b>Lavender</b>	Health, peace, relaxation, sleep, purification, love	<b>Myrrh</b>	Healing, spirituality, meditation
<b>Peppermint</b>	Mental energy, purification, psychic power	<b>Rosemary</b>	Energy, healing, love

### Power Oil

Get some extra physical or magical energy. Try some in the morning when you are getting ready to meet the day.

- 1/8 Cup Base Oil
- 3 Drops Patchouly
- 3 Drops Black Pepper
- 1 Drop Peppermint
- 1 Drop Ginger
- 1 Drop Orange

Get some energy or start your day off right with a boosting drink.

### Mango and Banana Milk Shake

- 1 Chopped banana
- Flesh of 1 ripe Mango
- 2/3 Cup of milk.

Put all ingredients into blender and blend until smooth.

*Makes 1 1/4 cups*

This combination is full of B vitamins, beta carotene, calcium, potassium, and magnesium.

Worldly Wisdom: **It is better to be depended on than to be thanked.**

*When you are thanked, the book is closed and you are forgotten. If you are needed the book is always open as well as your memory and respect.*