

# Imbolc Ritual

## Preparation

Assemble materials

Set the altar (working color candle: purple)

offices: Center, Acolyte, North, East, South, West, God, Goddess, Ritual Leader

## Gather

(May sing "Come Pagans All")

## Introduction

*CENTER: Tonight we will celebrate Imbolc. The word Imbolc has been translated as meaning "ewe's milk" or "in the bag." These terms come from the fact that this is a time when many farm animals are pregnant and, in preparation for giving birth, are full of milk. This is a time of celebration for it means that new animals are on the way and a fresh supply of milk will provide needed nourishment to get through the rest of Winter. In the seasonal cycle celebrated through the God and Goddess, this is the time when the Goddess nurtures her young son born at Yule who will soon develop into the strong God of the upcoming Spring. This is a time for spring cleaning. All the Yule greenery is collected and burned as the house is prepared for Spring. This is also a time for divining future weather patterns. It was believed that, on this date, one could tell what the remaining Winter would be like by assessing the conditions of this day alone. Consider the following poem:*

*If this night be fair and bright, Winter winds shall blow with might  
If this day brings clouds and rain, Winter shall go and not come again.*

*This time is also known as Candlemas and is the time for preparing and blessing all candles to be used through the coming year. It can also be a time for blessing the seeds that you wish to plant for the Spring.*

*If you wish to take part in this ceremony, please gather around the altar in a circle and come close enough to take hands. Please introduce yourself by offering a blessing to all, stating your title (if you have one,) your public or ritual name, and your place of origin. After each introduction, we will welcome and honor you. For example, I would say:  
"Bright Blessings to you all. I am [ritual title and name] of [location]."*

*And you would respond: "Greetings [title and name]. We welcome and honor you."*

(Begin introductions, deosil. When done:)

*Welcome one and all to this celebration of Imbolc. Please now take a large step backwards as I prepare our ritual circle.*

### **State Intention**

CENTER: *I will now state our intention and then light the working candle.*

*We gather together here to celebrate the sabbat of Imbolc. We come together to bless our candles and to plant new seeds - both literally and figuratively - for the coming year. This is our intent. (light working candle)*

### **Banish and Purify**

CENTER: *I will now banish and purify this space.*

*If any ill intent here be, by these sounds I banish thee*

Banish old energy, ring bell at altar quarters, widdershins)

EAST: *By Air, we sanctify.* (take working candle)

SOUTH: *By Fire, we purify.* (touch athame in fire, draw pentagram)

WEST: *By Water, we sanctify* (pour water in chalice)

NORTH: *By Earth, we purify* (put dipping stone in water and draw circle, deosil)

GOD AND GODDESS: *Through the blessings of the Goddess and the God, we claim this space sacred.* (Place tip of athame into chalice)

### **Cast the Circle**

ACOLYTE: *I will now go around the circle and ask if each of you wish to be part of this rite. If you do not wish to be part of the circle, feel free to watch from just outside. You are welcome either way. When asked, how do you come to this circle, the traditional response is, in perfect love and in perfect trust, but you may respond however your heart desires. After the blessing, please step forward into the circle.*

(Go around the circle of people clockwise and ask:)

*Do you wish to be part of this circle?*

*How do you come to this circle?*

*Welcome to this circle of love and trust. Blessed Be*

When done, say:

CENTER: *In this circle now we spin, let the magick rite begin.  
May we feel safe and sure for the work we shall procure. So Mote It Be.  
I invite you to take this wand and offer your energies and blessings to the circle.*  
(pass wand around circle)

### **Ground and Center**

CENTER: *We will now ground and center. If you wish to participate, please close your eyes. Take a moment to ground yourself with Mother Earth and Father Sky. Center yourself. Clear your mind and focus your thoughts and energies on this circle. Put away all mundane concerns and allow this time to be a gift to yourself. If you wish, you may take this time to connect with your personal deities. We will use a soft humming sound to center. Begin now and continue until you hear the ringing of the bell.*

### **Set the Four Quadrants**

CENTER: *We will now create a sacred space within a magickal circle by calling on the four directions and the three deities. Then, we will fill this space with our energy. (May chant "Welcome Spirits")*

EAST: *Guardians of the East, element of Air, realm of the mind, direction of the rising sun and new beginnings, let us look forward to the coming warmth and beauty of Spring. Hail and welcome. Blessed Be!*

SOUTH: *Guardians of the South, element of Fire, realm of the heart, direction of the noonday sun and fortitude, let us be thankful for the return of warmth to this chilled and quiet earth. Hail and welcome. Blessed Be!*

WEST: *Guardians of the West, element of Water, realm of the soul, direction of the setting sun and endings, let us take refuge and comfort in gatherings like these where we can come together in support and love as we make it through the long dark winter. Hail and welcome. Blessed Be!*

NORTH: *Guardians of the North, element of Earth, realm of the physical, direction of the dark of night and renewal, we celebrate this time when we can finish our deeper reflections which the dark beckons us to consider. Let us learn and grow from these reflections. Hail and welcome. Blessed Be!*

### **Call the Deities**

CENTER: *We will now honor the deities through the following litanies. If you wish to join in, please respond by saying "come to us" after each line:*

GOD:

*O great Goddess, {come to us.}*

*Mother of us all, {come to us.}*

*Blessed Mother of the Earth, {come to us.}*

*She, whose face shines in the silver moon, {come to us.}*

*She, who wraps us in her arms of love, {come to us.}*

*Like a flower that opens its petals to the air, {come to us.}*

*Like the water that flows through deep forests, {come to us.}*

*Join us now, O sweet Lady, {come to us.}*

*O Goddess of the Moon, great feminine one,  
bless this sacred circle and all work within it done. [light candle]*

GODDESS:

*O Great God, {come to us.}*

*Father of us all, {come to us.}*

*Blessed Father of the sky, {come to us.}*

*He, whose face shines in the golden sun, {come to us.}*

*He, who fills us with sacred light, {come to us.}*

*Like the warm breeze that fills us, {come to us.}*

*Like the fire that warms and protects us, {come to us.}*

*Join us now, O great Lord, {come to us.}*

*O God of the Sun, great masculine one,  
bless this sacred circle and all work within it done. [light candle]*

CENTER: *For the next litany, please respond with the words "Let us be present."*

ACOLYTE:

*O sacred Child, {let us be present.}*

*Mystery of all, {let us be present.}*

*Great miracle of creation, {let us be present.}*

*You, whose face shines in the starlit heavens, {let us be present.}*

*You, who gives us the strength of life, {let us be present.}*

*Like the silence that stills us, {let us be present.}*

*Like the center of the wheel, {let us be present.}*

*With you, O great force of the universe, {let us be present.}  
O Child of the Stars, great mysterious one,  
bless this sacred circle and all work within it done. [light candle.]*

### **Raise Energy**

*CENTER: We will now fill this circle with our energies of love and sharing. To raise energy, I will ask that you take hands and begin chanting together. Allow this sound to stir the energy deep within you. Bring that loving energy to the circle. Let your inner self be free and open for you are safe here. We will end at the sound of the bell. Let us begin. (May use “Within This Ring Of Power” or “Earth, Air, Fire, Water”)*

### **Close the Circle**

*CENTER: And now we all this circle enclose. Within its bonds let no troubles dispose. With love and trust shall we hold fast. For now, at last, the circle is cast.” [ring bell] (May sing “We Are A Circle”)*

### **Ritual**

*RITUAL LEADER: To celebrate Imbolc, I will invite each of you to do three things. The first is to take on a Spring cleaning - not of your physical house (something you can do later) but of your inner house. I will pass around some incense in a seashell. This will symbolize each of the four elements, the smoke of the incense represents air, the burning incense stick represents fire, the sea shell represents water, and the incense cone made of natural herbs represents earth. As the incense is passed around, feel free to allow it to cleanse you inside. Think of something that might need to be cleaned out and removed. If you wish, you can take a moment to speak your thoughts. Let the burning incense burn out this old concept.*

*Secondly, I will pass around some seeds. Take a few of these seeds. Then, Take a moment to personally bless these seeds and in putting positive energy into them so that they may grow strong in the Spring. Take them home with you after the ritual and plant them in a location where you can watch them grow. The strength of its growth will indicate the strength of your upcoming Spring and Summer. When everyone has received their seeds, we will sing a small chant to help direct our energy.*

*Thirdly, we will take a moment to ask a blessing for these candles to be used in our upcoming rituals.*

Light incense and pass around.

Pass around seeds.

Speak a blessing for the candles.

### **Sharing**

CENTER: *Before we close this ritual, we will take a few moments to let you share your thoughts and feelings about this ritual or about anything you wish to express.*

[allow participants to openly speak and share their experiences or other concerns.]

### **Completion**

CENTER: *Now we will end this ritual.*

*Now this circle we undo, for the magick rite is through  
Let this sacred work befall for the good of one and all*

### **Release Deities (Acolyte snuffs candles)**

ACOLYTE:

*O Child of the Stars, great mysterious one, with you our work here has now been done.  
If you have come to bless this rite, we thank you now for your bright light.*

GODDESS:

*O God of the Sun, great masculine one, with you our work here has now been done.  
If you have come to bless this rite, we thank you now for your bright light.*

GOD:

*O Goddess of the Moon, great feminine one, with you our work here has now been done.  
If you have come to bless this rite, we thank you now for your bright light.*

### **Release Quadrants**

WEST: *Guardians of the West depart, to your watery realm impart.*

*Bless all here gathered in true mind and heart. Hail and Farewell. Blessed Be!*

SOUTH: *Guardians of the South depart, to your fiery realm impart.*

*Bless all here gathered in true mind and heart. Hail and Farewell. Blessed Be!*

EAST: *Guardians of the East depart, to your airy realm impart.*

*Bless all here gathered in true mind and heart. Hail and Farewell. Blessed Be!*

NORTH: *Guardians of the North depart, to your earthly realm impart.*

*Bless all here gathered in true mind and heart. Hail and Farewell. Blessed Be!*

## **Ground**

*CENTER: Before we bring this ritual to a close, I invite each of you to take a moment to ground your energy. You may do this by silently concentrating on returning your energy to the earth. One of the best ways to do this, however, is to give warm hugs to all who have participated here after the circle is open. (Ground.)*

## **Open the Circle**

*CENTER: Let these blessings we bestow like a seed, take root and grow. For the circle now is open but let these bonds remain unbroken. So Mote It Be. [ring bell]*

## **Bow [place hands together]**

*CENTER: From Mind [touch forehead] and Heart [touch center of chest] and Body [cross hands across chest] and Soul [drop hands open in front of you], let is now in love and peace grow. And from the Spirit from which we all came, [bow] Merry Meet, Merry Part and Merry Meet again! Blessed Be!*

## **Ending**

*CENTER: The ritual is over. (extinguish working candle)*

## **Cakes and Ale**

### **NEEDS:**

- purple working candle
- altar
- altar cloth
- altar tools
- deity candles
- quadrant candles
- “cakes and ale”
- incense
- sea shell
- flower seeds
- plastic ziploc bags
- candles for the year to be blessed