

A Druid Celebrant

Today in our modern lives, there is often a palpable sense of spiritual loss, the religious traditions have been subsumed into blatant commercialism. Rites of passage for our young people that, at one time, would have acknowledged their transition into adulthood and welcomed them as vital parts of the community, are rarely performed.

Elder members of our communities are far from being honoured for their change of life and for their role within the community. The spiritual aspects of marriage have often been replaced instead with a desire to have the biggest and most expensive display. And at the end of life, the funeral services are performed by someone who has had very little to do with the deceased, and therefore finds it difficult to give a heartfelt ceremony for the family.

It is often this lack of spiritual content that has sent many of us on our own path of spiritual exploration. And there is a growing sense within the wider community these days, of a need to find a way of living that re-kindles the magic within everyday existence and to bring back the spiritual integrity to life changing events. The people who are searching may not follow any particular religious path, but may be searching for someone who can facilitate that process for them, and that is where many Druids find themselves being asked to provide a service as a Celebrant.

After all of the years of personal work that the Gwersi take us through, many feel they are ready to take their experience and learning out into the larger world to facilitate ceremonies that mark significant points in other people's life journeys.

As a Celebrant you will connect with people at pivotal points in their life, and guide them through any transition they wish to undertake.

Facilitating a "Rite of Passage" ceremony such as a Handfasting, Baby naming or a Passing-over ceremony is on the one hand a joyous, life affirming honour and on the other a great responsibility. You will be working at a very deep level with a family and their community and so good people skills are essential for the job.

Let us assume for a moment you have been contacted by someone who wishes to have a rite of passage and they have been given your name as someone who could help them. How does one deal with this kind of request?

When you are first contacted by a family to be their celebrant often they do not know you, quite often they do not really know much about the spiritual path you are on, so it is important to put them at their ease. It is all part of the process to answer questions about your path, how the ceremonies work. It may be necessary to point the family in the direction of websites or other information that can help them to build an understanding of where you are coming from spiritually, after all they are inviting you into their family and community, trusting that you will provide a service that reflects them on their deepest levels.

How the ceremony manifests is really up to the celebrant in so much as they guide the energies of the circle, and this job will be made so much easier if the celebrant has done their own research thoroughly. Hopefully on our journeys through our training we will have had the opportunity to be part of many rites of passage ceremonies, giving us deep insights as to the effects they can have on all of the participants.

Perhaps we have not had that opportunity, but we may have been drawn to exploring rites of passage as part of our understanding of ritual in general. Either way these travels will ensure that a confident and inclusive approach to any ceremony can be conveyed to someone approaching you to be their Celebrant.

Having said that the celebrant guides the energies within the ritual, an important thing to remember is the ceremony's structure will be largely dictated by the clients. The whole initial process is to find out what the clients want from their ceremony. What is important to them, what kind of words they are comfortable with, would they like some of their relatives to take various parts in the ceremony?

This initial contact will give both you and any potential client an opportunity to understand where each is coming from, and at this stage it may be enough to take down the details of what kind of ceremony, when they would like to have the event, if they have a venue and how many are likely to attend.

Then to give the client an idea of the kind of ways that you work ceremony, you can send/ email them an appropriate basic ceremony, along with a good list of creative motifs and ideas of ways in which their ceremony could be personalised. You can then arrange to chat in a few days to see how they like the information and discuss the ceremony in more detail if they want to proceed.

It also seems important at this stage to mention payment as it is one of the first questions that you will be asked, for a new celebrant this can be a tricky or uncomfortable subject. If this your first time of being asked you may not have given this any thought at all. What do people charge for this sort of thing? Here again some research of what other people charge for their services is useful. As we all know the internet is an infinitely useful research tool, as you can generally find many celebrants there who have already come to that kind of decision.

It really is a personal matter, some may not wish to charge at all, but for most, especially if you do not know the people for whom you are facilitating, it is reasonable to have a monetary or some other agreeable energy exchange.

The family in question will not generally expect you to give your time without any exchange, especially if you have to travel any distance. Do not forget that you may well be on the phone and email a good number of times before the ceremony takes place, refining the writing of the ceremony and with questions from both yourself and the family.

Even if the family in question are on the same spiritual path as yourself, there may well be others within the ceremony who are not. One of the joys of ceremonies is the opportunity for families to share intimate moments with each other, and to that end it is wonderful to try to involve as many family members and friends, old and young to take part. This could be anything from blessing the circle with an element, to giving a blessing at one of the quarters. You may be surprised at how enthusiastic people can be and how much more moving they find the whole experience when they have actually taken part.

It may be useful practice (if you have not done so already) to spend time composing a basic package of ceremonies. Along with basic ceremonies, it would be good to have a list of ideas of things that can make a more creative and intimate feel. We may be familiar with many ideas and the generally accepted motifs of say a Baby naming ceremony, but it is surprising how many people are unsure of those kinds of details.

For instance suggesting to a client the motifs of a Handfasting that can be added or personalised to make a logistical, visual and emotional difference. Thinking about where the Bride and Groom will be before the ceremony begins, will they be together or apart? Will the Groom be in the circle waiting or would they both like to be brought to the circle accompanied by Hand maidens and Groom's men?

Within the ceremony what would they think about having a garland of Ivy or flowers or a beautiful cord to bind the couples hands together when speaking their vows, maybe a

candle to be lit by them at the centre of the circle that they can relight at each anniversary. Decorations for each of the four quarters, a large decorative drinking vessel with mead or champagne and cake to share with the congregation as a symbolic first meal with their community. Possibly a besom broom for the couple to jump as they leave the circle. All these things and many more can be suggested to the couple as things to make the event beautiful, inclusive and above all joyful, and it may spark more creative thought from the clients. All of this is designed to encourage the client to see this process as theirs and feel that they will be getting something utterly personal and unique.

Also useful to compile maybe a simple questionnaire, for the contact process (for your own reference, not be sent to the client) and preferably one that can work with a variety of events. This can give you and the clients, a sense of order and professionalism to any discussions (but hopefully not too pedantic) and can help you to remember pertinent points that all need to consider in the initial process. It can also be useful to have as reference notes when (if you have been asked to) creating their ceremony. It is easy in the initial stages of chatting to a client to be diverted onto various interesting tangents and so forget some of the pertinent information.

Some very obvious starter questions such as, when and where the clients hope to have their ceremony. Some people have a date and place in mind before asking, but some will not and may need help if they are in your local area. So a list of places that could be suitable may also be a good thing to have to hand. Again an obvious thing to say is be sure that you have permission from the land owners or guardians, most places are absolutely fine as long as they know what is going to be happening.

Do they wish you to write the ceremony, or would they prefer to write it themselves and have you facilitate it?

A thing to consider when writing for other people is language, use of language is a very important issue, particularly if the family group will contain people who are following a number of spiritual paths, or more likely no path at all.

So defining a common language with the clients is a big part of the process. How do they generally refer to deity? Some people are very happy to use words like Lord and Lady, Gods and Goddess, or even specific God names. However if there are a number of different paths, they may wish to use a more general term such as Great Spirit to keep things more inclusive.

There are many instances where in a handfasting, the clients may be from two different spiritual paths and wish to honour both with a church wedding and a pagan wedding. So it is important to understand what all parties need.

Then there is the question of exactly how much ritual would they like the ceremony to contain. Now that may seem like an odd question, but you would be surprised at how few "bells and smells" some people want. An OBOD druid will, by now, have an opening and closing of a circle ritual that they are both familiar and comfortable with, almost second nature, however this is certainly not the case for most people in general. Things such as the Druid's prayer, Awens or the Oath of Peace will need their meanings explained, and it is possible that the clients may not wish them included in their ceremony.

It is good to consider that sometimes this can be a little too much for people who are not used to magical ceremony, so a question as to how they feel about that is pertinent.

This is where having a list of basic ceremonies which have explanations of each part and commonly used motifs that you can send them, would be very helpful.

A good many ceremonies have been reworked to include things like the circle being cast by the company holding hands and the celebrant saying within the introduction something like, “We stand here together at this sacred time and place, in a circle of family and love to witness the handfasting/baby naming/passing over of.....”

Or possibly casting the circle with flower petals (perhaps getting one of the children attending to do this), this fulfills the idea of bringing the company together and fixing the ceremony in time and space without the need to walk around the circle with a wand.

It may seem odd to reduce or change the ritual aspects of a Druid ceremony if the people have asked a Druid to perform it in the first place. But often it is the clients desire to bring the wider family into something that is deeply meaningful to them and they want to do this as gently as possible.

For some the idea of casting a circle with a wand is too firmly wrapped in the overlay of historical misconception, so we can, with judicious use of words and actions, move people away from those misconceptions and allow them to see the beauty, creativity and inclusiveness within our ceremonies.

So let us bring some of the elements together into a cohesive idea. You have worked on a comprehensive set of basic ceremonies that cover a variety of rites of passage. You have compiled a good list of magical understandings and creative ideas that can beautify and intensify the rituals. So now you have a better idea of what kinds of questions you could include for your first contact with any prospective client, and it may look something like this:

Date:..... Name of Client: Contact details:

Type of Event: i.e Baby blessing/naming, Handfasting/Renewal of Vows, Child’s rite of passage, Croning, Funeral or something other.

When the Event is to be held:

Where the Event is to be held :
(details would be helpful to get any logistical problems sorted before the ceremony)

Have they or any of their family and friends had any experience of Druid or other sacred ceremony?

Do they wish you to write the ceremony, or would they prefer to do that themselves and have you facilitate it?

If you are to write the ceremony then:

If this is to be a ceremony centred around children, what ages are they?

If this is to be a rite of passage for a young/teen girl or boy, are they happy to allow you to chat to the young person, to get an understanding of how they feel about the whole idea and what they might be expecting?

Does the client have a particular spiritual path that they follow, and if so how they would like that incorporated within this ceremony?

Do they have any particular preferences when it comes to the spiritual language the ceremony will include i.e God names, or Great Spirit and so on?

Is there anything symbolically, emotionally or anything other that they would particularly like to include or convey within the ceremony.

How do they feel about the ritual content of casting of circles, Druid's prayer/Oaths of peace and Awen chants etc?

Would they like their family and friends to take parts in the ceremony?

Do they want to know the details of the ceremony so they can prepare answers to any questions, or would they be happy to have the ceremony unfold as they move through it and be spontaneous?

Would the client like you to provide the ritual items for the ceremony, water bowls, incense, burners etc, or would they prefer to use their own?

Would they like you to print out ceremonies (if you have that facility) for the main participants or will that be something that the client will do if they would like something more formal?

This should give you enough information to begin the process of writing any ceremony.

So you have had your initial chat with the principle participants and both parties are happy to work together, emails and phone numbers have been exchanged and you have a basic idea of what the ceremony is to be about. You also know whether you are to write the ceremony or if they wish to write it themselves with all of the information you have given them. The next stages are to write the first draft of the ceremony, send it off for feedback, to confirm information for the venue and details of who will be supplying what as regards ritual equipment. That is pretty much it until a couple of days before the ceremony, apart from intermittent contact for more information and confirmations.

There are some things to remember if you have never written a ceremony for non-druids before. A gently informative introduction to the ceremony for people who are standing in a circle for the first time, will ease any worries they may have about what to expect. Within the structure of your words it is good to make the magical aspects of what you are saying clear for instance, when calling in the spirits of the four directions saying something like "I call to the spirits of the east, of air, the spring...the spirit of clarity of vision or clear thought....." These are simple, clear words that subtly bring people an understanding of the themes and ideals that thread through the magical structure of the ceremony, this will enable them to connect to it on a personal level.

The day of the ceremony can be a little nerve racking for the Celebrant particularly if this is your first time. There will be a multitude of family and friends, it is fairly safe to assume that you will not be familiar with many there. The venue may be new to you so take a few minutes to familiarise yourself with the energies of the space and get the ritual items in place. It may seem like another obvious thing to say, but the key to confidence is to be very sure of your ceremony. If you have worked out a basic formula for all your ceremonies so you will be familiar and comfortable with their flow and logistics, this will give you a confident air within the circle.

The Celebrants job is to set the circle and the energy logistically as well as magically, making sure that everyone who has a part to play, is in the correct place, has everything they need and are happy with what they are doing. Most people are happy as long as they know that you will be giving them an obvious cue as to when they need to speak, bless the circle with fire or water, or what ever task they have agreed to.

If there are family or friends taking parts in the ceremony who are new to magical ceremony, you will need to take them all aside for a few moments to make sure that they understand the words and the cue you will give them as to when they speak, all of this will help to reassure both you and them and calm any nervousness.

It is a nice idea with the friends and family to encourage them to read the words that you have given them, and, if they are comfortable to do so, to speak in their own words, even adding something more personal, after all this is about making the ceremony intimate and personal to all the people involved.

Gathering a chatting, laughing and generally noisy congregation into an ordered circle, requires a confident, friendly, but positive air, and a gentle reminder to turn off mobile phones does not go a miss at this point. Another thing to be talked with everyone before the ceremony gets going, is the taking of photographs and videos during the event. It maybe that the clients are very happy to have this happen, so that should have already been discussed and taken into account. However it is a reasonable request to those taking photos or video to be respectful of the energy. They should not to distract the participants from what they are doing or saying by putting the camera right into their faces or getting in the way of their progress as they move around the circle.

The key with facilitating a public event is, expect the unexpected! Things will be forgotten, go awry and not work in the ways you planned. There will be the inevitable distractions when the ceremony is in full swing, teenage giggling, a child crying or dog running across the circle and trying to eat the bread from the centre, people talking on their mobile phones, even if you have asked them to be turned off! These things need to be taken in your stride and most times gentle humour and understanding is the best way to dispel the disturbance and keep the energies focussed.

Mirth and Reverence in equal measure is the key to a wonderful, magical and moving experience for all involved.

A Handfasting Ceremony

Druid: Welcome, we have gathered here in this beautiful place under the eye of the Sun and supported by the nurturing Earth beneath us. We gather here to bear witness to a handfasting, the joining of the spirits of two people in love and honour. Here before this circle of family and friends *Couple's name* will declare their vows to one another. They joining will create a new branch on both their family trees, the roots of each stretch away into the depths of the Earth and the mists of time.

Let us join hands to form a circle of friendship and love.

and let us take three long breaths together

Take a long slow breath with the Earth beneath us

A long slow breath with the Sky above us

and a long slow breath with the Seas that surround our sacred islands.

We call to the sprits of this circle, the spirits of this space. We call to the ancestors and guides of these two families, we ask you to join us here in this sacred place to bear witness,

to give your guidance, protection, inspiration and your blessings on this celebration of love and honour.

Lets us begin by giving peace to the quarters, for without peace can no work be.

Druid: May there be peace in the North
May there be peace in the South
May there be peace in the West
May there be peace in the East
All: May there be peace in the whole world.

Druid casts the circle

Druid: Let the circle be blessed and consecrated with Fire and Water
(it maybe that this could be done by one or two members of the congregation)

Druid: Let the spirits of the four directions be invited into this space that their power and beauty may grace this circle.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Hawk of Dawn that flies in the clear pure air we invite the spirits of the East, of Air, Spring, new beginnings, clear vision and thought, to bless us with their presence. We ask that they to bear witness and bless this day with their guidance, and inspiration.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Great Stag in the heat of the chase and the inner fire of the Sun we invite the spirits of the South, of Fire, Summer, of personal will and manifestation, to bless us with their presence. We ask that they to bear witness and bless this day with their guidance, and inspiration.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Salmon of Wisdom that dwells in the sacred pool we invite the spirits of the West, of Water, Autumn, healing and dreaming, to bless us with their presence. We ask that they to bear witness and bless this day with their guidance, and inspiration.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Great Bear in the starry heavens and the deep and fruitful Earth we invite the spirits of the North, of Earth, Winter, the time of cleansing and renewal, to bless us with their presence. We ask that they to bear witness and bless this day with their guidance, and inspiration.

Druid: Let us now speak the words of the Druid's prayer as a centring meditation and follow with three Awen chants.

Grant oh God and Goddess your protection
And in protection, strength,
And in strength, understanding,
And in understanding, knowledge,
And in knowledge, the knowledge of justice,
And in the knowledge of justice, the love of it,
And in the love of it, the love of all existences,
And in the love of all existences, the love of God, Goddess and all Goodness.
Awen x 3

Druid: Let the couple who wish to be handfasted on this day walk the paths of the Sun and the Moon.

The Groom will walk clockwise from their place in the west of the circle, and the Bride anti-clockwise around the circle to make a circle within a circle, they will then be standing before the Druid in the East.

Druid to the Bride: Who has walked the path of the Moon to stand in this place of beauty and wonder to declare her vows?

Bride answers.

Druid to the Groom: Who has walked the path of the Sun to stand in this place of beauty and wonder to declare his vows.

Groom answers.

Druid: you have completed a celestial circle by walking the paths of the Sun and Moon, will you now walk the circle of time and Earthly place through the elements and seasons together?

B & G answer

B & G walk hand in hand accompanied by the Druid to the South of the circle.

Druid or Family member or friend: Welcome, you have travelled to the Southern realm, time of the midday Sun. I ask you both to consider, should you be faced with fierce fires of change, how will your love survive?

B & G answer

Druid or Family member or friend: Then accept the blessings of the element of Fire, may your loves passion never diminish and may your home hearth always be a light and warmth in the cold times. May you be blessed all the days of your lives.
(They then take some incense and walk around the couple allowing the smoke to touch them.)

The couple thank the South and move to the West.

Druid or Family member or friend: Welcome, you have travelled to the Western realm, time of the setting Sun. I ask you both to consider, as feelings ebb and flow on the great tides of life, how will your love survive?

B & G answer

Druid or Family member or friend: Then accept the blessing of the Element of water, may you always find support and inspiration in each other to follow your dreams and wishes and may you never thirst in the the dry times. May you be blessed all the days of your lives.
(takes water and blesses them)

B&G thank west and move to the north.

Druid or Family member or friend: Welcome, you have travelled to the Northern realm the place of winter, the time of sleep and the dark. I ask you both to consider, in times of stillness and restriction, I ask you how will your love survive?

B & G answer

Druid or Family member or friend: Then accept the blessing of the element of Earth, may your union be blessed with strength and fruitfulness and may you never hunger in the sparse times. May you be blessed all the days of your lives.
(Ask them to touch the Earth to feel her strength)

B&G thank the North and move to the East

Druid or Family member or friend: Welcome, you have travelled to the realm of the East the place of Spring, the dawning of the day. I ask you to consider, in the passage of time and the crystal clear light of each day, I ask you how will your love survive?

B&G answer

Druid or Family member or friend: Then accept the blessing of the element of Air, may each new dawn bring you the clarity and vision to always see the path your ahead and may you always find within each other, something new and wonderful to cherish. May you be blessed all the days of your lives.
(blesses with either a feather or their own breath)

B&G thank the East.

Druid: You have walked the circle of time and returned with many blessings. All things in nature follow cycles, the eternal waxing and waning of the Moon, the constant rise and setting of the Sun, the ever changing seasons, these are all part of the great mystery that you will share together.
Now it is time to declare your vows to one another and to exchange your rings as a symbol of the eternal nature of all things.

The B&G have their left hands bound together whilst they speak their vows

*Groom to bride
Bride to Groom*

Druid: You have made your solemn vows of love and honour to one another before this company, your ancestors and the spirits that guide you, let them be sealed with a kiss.

Druid: May The Gods (Great Spirit) guide you both on your new journey together and may the blessing of this day shine brightly to guide you on your path. Will you now share with your friends and family a symbolic first meal?

bride and groom to share some bread and drink with the company. (At this time it may also be nice to hear from anyone who may have a reading or something they wish to bless the couple with come to the centre and speak.)

Druid: It is the time of recall as the light of the day dies down let it be rekindled in your hearts. May your memories hold what the eye and ear have gained this day.

Druid : Let us now speak the Oath of Peace as a bond between all who have gathered here this day and follow it with three Awen chants.

All: We swear by peace and love to stand heart to heart and hand in hand,
Mark oh spirit and hear us now confirming this our sacred vow.

Awen x 3

Druid: We will now thank the spirits of the four directions for the presence in this celebration of Handfasting beginning in the North.

Druid or Family member or friend: In the name of the great bear in the starry heavens and the deep and fruitful earth, we thank the spirits of the North for their presents, their guidance and their inspiration in this celebration.

Druid or Family member or friend: In the name of the Salmon of wisdom that dwells in the sacred pool, we thank the spirits of the West for their presents, their guidance and their inspiration in this celebration.

Druid or Family member or friend: In the name of the great Stag in the heat of the chase and the inner fire of the Sun, we thank the spirits of the South for their presents, their guidance and their inspiration in this celebration.

Druid or Family member or friend: In the name of the Hawk of dawn that soars in the clear pure air, we thank the spirits of the East for their presents, their guidance and their inspiration in this celebration.

The druid now uncasts the circle.

Druid: In this celebration we have witnessed the joining of two people and their tribes, may the blessing of this day flow ever with them and their families, flowing from the past, celebrated in the present and carried into the future. Let the joy of this day be ever strong in your hearts as you journey through the Great Mystery. Spirits of this circle, spirits of this couple, their families and friends, we thank you for your inspiration, guidance and blessings on this day of celebration. We ask that you continue to watch over this couple on their new journey. This circle of love and honour is open and yet never broken, so may it be.

A Baby Naming

Druid: Welcome to this beautiful place at this celebration of new life. We gather in a space that is in the eye of the Sun and surrounded by the power and majesty of the Earth, who is the Goddess that holds, feeds and nurtures us, our world. We stand together in a circle of Family, Friendship, Love and Community to bear witness to the sacred rite of Naming and Welcoming for this child. Let us take three long breaths together
Take a long slow breath with the Earth beneath us
A long slow breath with the Sky above us
and a long slow breath with the Seas that surround our sacred islands. Spirits of this time, Spirits of this place, Ancestors, Guides and Guardians, we ask for your blessings, your guidance, your protection and your inspiration on this rite of naming.

Let us give peace to the quarters, for without peace no work can be.
Let there be Peace in the North
Let there be Peace in the South
Let there be Peace in the West

Let there be Peace in the East
All say: Let there be Peace throughout the whole world

Druid casts the circle

Druid: Let the circle be blessed and consecrated with Fire and Water
(it maybe that this could be done by one or two members of the congregation)

Druid: Let the spirits of the four directions be invited into the circle.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Hawk of Dawn that flies in the clear, pure Air we invite the spirits of the East to be present in this circle, spirits of the air we breath, spirit of Spring, spirits of birth, spirits of the dawn, of clear thought and vision, spirits of hope.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Stag in the heat of the chase and the inner fire of the Sun we invite the spirits of the South to be present in this circle, spirits of fire, spirit of the Summer, of passion, spirits of manifestation, spirits of vitality and strength.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Salmon of Wisdom that dwells in the sacred pool of Segais we invite the spirits of the West to be present in this circle, spirits of Water, spirit of the Autumn, spirits of inspiration, of dreaming, spirits of healing.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Great Bear in the Starry Heavens and the Deep and Fruitful Earth we invite the spirits of the North to be present in this circle, spirits of the Earth, spirit of the Winter, spirits of the deep renewing sleep, spirits of deep roots and the nurturing soil.

Druid: Let us now speak the words of the Druid's prayer as a centring meditation and follow with three Awen chants.

Grant oh God and Goddess your protection
And in protection, strength,
And in strength, understanding,
And in understanding, knowledge,
And in knowledge, the knowledge of justice,
And in the knowledge of justice, the love of it,
And in the love of it, the love of all existences,
And in the love of all existences, the love of God, Goddess and all Goodness.
Awen x 3

Druid: As this circle is set in space and time so it becomes a sacred place, a place in which each person gathered here today can honour the journey that this young family are taking together, and in turn you are honoured as an important part in the lives of this child and his/her parents.

Parents names through your union and with your child two family trees, with their deep roots and strong branches, have become one and through you send a new shoot into the world.

Your child carries within them all of the gifts of understanding and knowledge, the joys and sorrows of all those who have gone before, ancestors stretching back in time beyond measure. Through you they have joined the great cycle of life and will continue into the

future to make a new branch on the sacred world tree. We take a moment to honour those ancestors who gifted us life.

Parents names take each others hand and look at one another. You have chosen to share this life together, take a moment now to let one another know how you truly feel to be at this point in your lives together.

This is a time when you both should say something to each other that reflects how you feel and honour each other with words from your own hearts.

Parents speak to each other

Druid: *Parents names* you have declared how you feel to each other before your child and this loving community, do you now wish now to make a vow to your child?

Parents speak to the child

Druid: *Parents names* you have made a vow to your child, their journey in this realm has already begun, you have you chosen Guide parents for your child?

Guide Parents names Will you take this role as guide parents? Do you offer your love, support and guidance to this child, guiding them to find love, trust, freedom with nurture and exploration with understanding?

They answer each in turn and if they wish to read poems and/or maybe put gifts in a box for the child to keep.

Druid: The *Parents* and the *Guide Parents* have given their vows and have pledged to care for this beautiful child, it is time now for this child to be given the name by which the worlds seen and unseen will know them.

Druid turns to the child

Blessed are the powers of creation, as this child begins their journey they are offered a name. There is great power in a name. It is an invocation and gift that is given with great care and emotion.

Witnessed by their family, their community, their ancestors, guides and guardians and the Gods and spirits of this land, this child is given his/her their name.

The name your parents have chosen to bestow on you is *Child's name*. Your name has been chosen with great care and love, you are given the name that your family, friends and the Gods will know you by.

Let us speak their name together: *Child's name is spoken by all*

Druid: *Parents names* will you now take a journey with *Child's name* to the sprits of the four quarters that they might know your *Child's name* and love her as you do?

They answer

Druid: Then let us begin the journey

Druid: We call the Spirits of the Eastern realm, we bring before you *Child's name* who is bright and new to this world. We ask that you welcome him/her and bless their journey.

Druid and parents move to the East

Druid or Family member or friend: Welcome to the Eastern realm, this is the place of Air, of Spring, the time of the child, it is the dawn of a new day and a new breath of life. In this realm the winds of changes do blow and stir the world to bring you a new insight, a new vision. It is the place of exploration and questing for knowledge.

Parents of Child's name will you honour and nurture the quest for knowledge and experience that will drive your child?

Parents answer

Druid or Family member or friend: whilst blessing the child with Air:

Then receive this blessing from the Eastern realm, may you be blessed with an enquiring minds that seek to know the world, may you find a new joy with every Sunrise and may you find the beauty held within all you see.

Druid and parents move to the South

Druid: We call the Spirits of the Southern realm, we bring before Child's name who is bright and new to this world. We ask that you welcome him/her and bless their journey.

Druid or Family member or friend: Welcome to the Southern realm, this is the place of Fire, the Sun, of Summer, the time that represents the adult stage of life, the fire of the hearth and the heat of passion, it is the rage of the forest fire and the furnace of the Sun. It is also the place of your inner fire and the majesty of manifestation on this earth.

Parents of Child's name will you honour and nurture the fire and passion that will burn within your child?

Parents answer

Druid or Family member or friend: South says whilst blessing the child with fire:

Then receive this blessing from the Southern realm, may you always find a light to guide you through the darkest times. May you always find a hearth fire to warm you in the cold times, and may a passion for all life has to offer burn bright within you,

Druid and parents move to the West

Druid: We call the Spirits of the Western realm, we bring before you *Child's name* who is bright and new to this world. We ask that you welcome him/her and bless their journey.

Druid or Family member or friend: Welcome to the Western realm, this is the place of Water, of Autumn, the time that represents old age, gift of dreaming, the wisdom of a life lived, the healing from the sacred waters of the earth and the raging tempest of a wild ocean.

Parents of Child's name will you honour and nurture the dreams and wisdom that will flow through your child?

Parents answer

Druid or Family member or friend: says whilst blessing the child with water:

Then receive this blessing from the Western realm, may the wisdom of the ancients flow through you, may you always follow your dreams and intuitions with that wisdom, and may the gentle waters of the earth keep you always free from thirst and healthy of body and mind.

Druid and parents move to the North

Druid: We call the Spirits of the Northern realm, we bring before you Child's name who is bright and new to this world. We ask that you welcome him/her and bless their journey.

Druid or Family member or friend: Welcome to the Northern realm, this is the place of Earth, of Winter and Death, it is the time of cleansing, of sleep and rest. It is also the place of nurture and safety and the provider of food and shelter. This is the place of foundation and roots, of connection to all that has gone before and all that is to come.
Parents of Child's name will you honour and nurture your child's journey through this life?

Parents answer

Druid or Family member or friend: *says whilst blessing the child with earth:*
Then receive this blessing from the Northern realm, may the Earth hold your roots firm, may you always find food and shelter, and may the Great Mother bless your journey in her realm.

Druid: As the Spirits of the four directions have welcomed you and blessed your journey, *Child's name* so we now welcome you to the apparent world. May you always find love and support within this your community.
Let *Parents* and *Child's name* take this time to embrace each one of their friends and family and receive their blessings in this circle.

The family then moves around the circle with the child

Druid: Let us take a moment to stand in a circle once more hand in hand and feel the love, support and connection of all within.
This has been a sacred rite of passage for a family, the ancestors have been honoured on this day, the Gods and Goddesses of Land, Sea and Sky have been honoured and so too has the spirit of their community.
This day of celebration will live long in the hearts of all.

Let the spirits of the four directions be thanked for their power and presence in this circle.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the power of the great bear in the starry heavens and the deep and fruitful earth, we thank the sprits of the north for the blessings on this ceremony.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the power of the Salmon of wisdom that dwells in the sacred pool, we thank the sprits of the west for the blessings on this ceremony.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the power of the great stag in the heat of the chase and the inner fire of the Sun, we thank the sprits of the south for the blessings on this ceremony.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the power of the Hawk of dawn that flies in the clear pure air, we thank the sprits of the East for the blessings on this ceremony.

Druid: Spirits of this Circle, Spirits of this place, ancestors, guides and guardians, we thank you for your blessings, guidance, protection and inspiration on this rite of passage, this circle is open but never broken. So Mote it be.

A Coming of Age Ceremony

(This can be adapted to suit either a boy or a girl with some creativity)

Druid: We stand together in a circle of Family, Friendship, Love and Community to bear witness to a sacred rite of passage, a child's coming of age, of their transition to the adult phase of their life. We come to honour their journey and to welcome them into this new way of being in the world.

Let us take three long breaths together

Take a long slow breath with the Earth beneath us

A long slow breath with the Sky above us

and a long slow breath with the Seas that surround our sacred islands.

Spirits of this time, Spirits of this place, Ancestors, Guides and Guardians, we ask for your blessings, your guidance, your protection and your inspiration on this rite of naming.

Let us give peace to the quarters, for without peace no work can be.

Let there be Peace in the North

Let there be Peace in the South

Let there be Peace in the West

Let there be Peace in the East

All say: Let there be Peace throughout the whole world

Druid casts the circle

Druid: Let the circle be blessed and consecrated with Fire and Water
(it maybe that this could be done by one or two members of the congregation)

Druid: Let the spirits of the four directions be invited into the circle.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Hawk of Dawn that flies in the clear, pure Air we invite the spirits of the East to be present in this circle, of Spring, spirits of the breath of life, spirits of new understanding and future vision.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Stag in the heat of the chase and the inner fire of the Sun we invite the spirits of the South to be present in this circle, spirits of Fire, spirit of the Summer, of passions rising, spirits of new found vitality and strength.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Salmon of Wisdom that dwells in the sacred pool of Segais we invite the spirits of the West to be present in this circle, spirits of Water, spirit of the Autumn, spirits of inspiration and dreaming, spirits of emotion.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Great Bear in the Starry Heavens and the Deep and Fruitful Earth we invite the spirits of the North to be present in this circle, spirits of the Earth, spirit of the Winter, spirits of the death and rebirth, spirits of deep roots and new branches.

Druid: Let us now speak the words of the Druid's prayer as a centring meditation and follow with three Awen chants.

Grant oh God and Goddess your protection
And in protection, strength,
And in strength, understanding,
And in understanding, knowledge,
And in knowledge, the knowledge of justice,
And in the knowledge of justice, the love of it,
And in the love of it, the love of all existences,
And in the love of all existences, the love of God, Goddess and all Goodness.
Awen x 3

Druid: There comes a time in each young persons life when they feel the need to be acknowledged as more than a child within their family. There are physical changes that bring their own challenges. It is a time of powerful emotions and confusing feelings, there is both the desire to remain free of responsibility, but also to be seen as an emerging adult and to be respected as an independent individual. After much thought and discussion with their family *Child's name* has taken the decision to step beyond the confines of childhood, to stand before their family and tribe as a young adult ready to take their place and position of responsibility within the community.

Druid turns to the child

Druid: *Child's name* are you ready to stand before your tribe?

Child answers

Druid: Then I ask you to join me here in this circle.

Child steps forward to join the Druid

Druid: Are you ready to leave behind you the expectations of a child and to embrace a new way of being?

Child answers

Druid: Do you understand that from this day forward you will no longer be treated as a child, your family and community will honour you with plain speaking and expect from you an adult response? As your family will honour your decision and see you in a new light, your tasks and responsibilities to the family may change. It is not always easy to find the patience within and the strength without, to honour and support your family, whilst at the same time striving to explore your own sense of identity, this may sometimes challenge and conflict you. Do you feel ready to accept this challenge?

Child answers

Druid: Then it is time to begin this rite of passage in earnest.

They walk to the Southern quarter

Druid: To the Southern realm, the place of the Adult, of parenthood, the place of the fiery passion of creativity and the inner will, we bring *child's name*. He/She stands before you to make a declaration.

(Ideally the Druid will have sat with each individual to write the following parts)

Child: I come before you in love and honour, to ask for a blessing on my decision to move beyond my life as a child. I thank you for giving me life and for all your nurturing and love. I thank you for all of the things you have taught me, the ways you have kept me safe, healed me when I was sick and watched over me as I slept. You have given me the strength and encouragement to be strong in the world. You have blessed me with both of your blood and bone and created someone who is part of both of you. Will you offer me your blessing?

Parents or Guardians: *(they may each wish to say something individually)*

Child's Name as you stand here in this circle I can see that you are no longer a child. From love you were created, and as you grew inside me, we loved you. When you came into the world soft and small we held you tight and knew such joy. As you grew we protected you as much as we could whilst still having to watch you to experience the bumps and knocks we could not prevent. And you grew into the confident, strong and wonderful person you are now. We are happy and proud that the love and support of this family has given you the confidence and security to find your true self. You know that we have been and always will be with you, to love you, support you, and challenge you through what ever life may bring. In our hearts you will always be the small child that we would like to protect, but we know that you are growing beyond that to become more than we could ever have wished. And so we offer you our unreserved and heartfelt blessing on this your decision.

Accept this symbol of our love, if you are ever far from us or unable to speak to us, and you need to feel our love, take this in your hands and know we are there for you.

Child gives their thanks and then walks to the West

Druid: To the Western realm, the place of Autumn, of wisdom, the place of dreams, of inspiration and deep emotion, we bring *child's name*. He/She stands before you to make a declaration.

Child: I come before you in love and honour, to ask for a blessing on my decision to move beyond my life as a child. As my *GrandParents or GuideParents* you have helped to shape me, along with my parents you have watched me grow and change and loved me. I love you for the encouragement and support, the stories and the fun we have shared. I am part of you and I honour your part in my life. Will you offer me your blessing?

GrandParents or GuideParents: *Child's Name* we have watched you grow from a small and vulnerable infant, into a strong and capable young Man/Woman. Within you is the combination of two strong family trees and you have all of the wisdom and knowledge of both to draw on as you make your own path in this world. We honour you decision to step into the responsibilities of the adult world and if you ever need our wisdom or support all you have to do is call us and we will be there for you.

Accept this symbol of our love, if you are ever far from us or unable to speak to us, and you need to feel our love, take this in your hands and know we are there for you.

Child gives their thanks and then walks to the North

Druid: To the Northern realm, the place of Winter, the place of the ancestors, of the deep roots of family and the knowledge held with in blood and bone, we bring *child's name*. He/She stands before you to make a declaration.

Child: I come before you in love and honour, to ask for a blessing on my decision to move beyond my life as a child. I call to my ancestors, I call across the veil and through the mists of time. Held in me is the sum of everyone that has gone before and all that they knew,

within that is held the potential for all that which is yet to come. I honour your lives, your loves and your stories and I vow to pass on to future generations all that I have gained of your wisdom. Will you offer me your blessing?

(It would be nice to have a collection of photographs or other items that could be placed in the North to represent the ancestors)

Ancestors: From generation to generation the gifts have been given and the wisdom has grown. You stand before us at a threshold of your life, poised on the brink of a new understanding of how the world will be. We are your roots deep in the soil, we are the foundation of your being and the well from which you can drink. We are part of the great mystery and we live in no small way through each generation. In love and honour you approach us and in love and honour we respond.

Accept this symbol of our honour and if you ever feel lost in the great mystery, take this in your hands and know we are there for you.

Child gives their thanks and then walks to the East

Druid: To the Eastern realm, The place of spring, of rebirth, the place of new vision, clarity and new beginnings, we bring *child's name*. He/She stands before you all to make a declaration.

The Druid offers the young person a sword to hold.

Druid: Take this sword in your hand, the sword represents great power and wisdom. It has been used over the millennia as a symbol of truth and honour and many have sworn to uphold an oath with their hands resting on the hilt of one. Do you wish to take this sword in your hands and speak before your tribe?

Young Adult: By the sword that I hold in my hand, I declare my wish to move beyond the boundaries of childhood. I stand before you and in my heart I am ready to see the world with new eyes and to learn what it means to hold the responsibilities that come in this new cycle. As my family and my tribe, I ask for your words of wisdom, for your support and guidance as I step through this gateway.

Druid: Let us honour this young *Man/Woman's* declaration, they have found the maturity to recognise the powerful changes within, and then the courage to present themselves to their tribe asking us to respond to those changes. So from this day forward let them take their place as an adult in this community.

Let all here each in turn welcome and offer a blessing to young *Man/Woman's name*.

Young person goes around the circle to be hugged and blessed by everyone

Druid: It is the time of recall, let us hold in our hearts and minds the memories of this day. Let the spirits of the four directions be thanked for their power and presence in this circle.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the power of the great bear in the starry heavens and the deep and fruitful earth, we thank the sprits of the north for the blessings on this ceremony.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the power of the Salmon of wisdom that dwells in the sacred pool, we thank the sprits of the west for the blessings on this ceremony.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the power of the great stag in the heat of the chase and the inner fire of the Sun, we thank the sprits of the south for the blessings on this ceremony.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the power of the Hawk of dawn that flies in the clear pure air, we thank the sprits of the East for the blessings on this ceremony.

Druid: Spirits of this circle, Spirits of this place, guides and guardians of *Young person's name*, we thank you for your inspiration, guidance, protection and blessings on this rite of passage. We ask that you continue to watch over and inspire *Young person's name* in their journey through life. This circle of honour and love is now open but it is never broken. So may it be.

A Croning Ceremony

(Which may be adapted, with some creativity, to celebrate a Male as well as a Female croning. It is also written to be worked in an intimate surrounding where all can take their time and be comfortable)

Druid: We gather here in this place as a sisterhood, as a company of women that span all the ages and transformations of womanhood. We are come together to honour *Crone's name* rite of Croning. We come to support her, to welcome her to a new and wonderful state of being.

Let us take three long breaths together

Take a long slow breath with the Earth beneath us

A long slow breath with the Sky above us

and a long slow breath with the Seas that surround our sacred islands

Spirits of this circle, spirits of this place, ancestors, guides and guardians of our sister, we ask for your blessings, your guidance, your protection and your inspiration on this rite of Croning.

Let us begin by giving peace to the Quarters for without peace no work can be.

Let there be Peace in the North

Let there be Peace in the South

Let there be Peace in the West

Let there be Peace in the East

All say: Let there be Peace throughout the whole world

Druid then casts the circle

Druid: Let the circle be blessed and consecrated with Fire and Water
(it maybe that this could be done by one or two members of the congregation)

Druid: Let the spirits of the four directions be invited into the circle.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Hawk of Dawn that flies in the clear, pure Air we invite the spirits of the East to be present in this circle, spirits of Air, the breath of life, spirit of youth, spirits of clear thought and gathered wisdom.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Stag in the heat of the chase and the inner fire of the Sun, we invite the spirits of the South to be present in this circle, spirits of Fire, spirit of the Summer, of a deep and abiding passion, and spirits of transformation.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Salmon of Wisdom that dwells in the sacred pool of Segais we invite the spirits of the West to be present in this circle, spirits of Water, spirit of the Autumn, of memories held, of dreams followed and spirits of healing.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Great Bear in the Starry Heavens and the deep and fruitful Goddess that is the Earth, we invite the spirits of the North to be present in this circle, spirit of the Winter, of nurture, spirits of the dark Goddess and the renewing sleep.

Druid: Let us now speak the words of the Druid's prayer as a centring meditation and follow it with three Ioho chants to bring the energies of transformation into this space. Grant oh God and Goddess your protection

And in protection, strength,

And in strength, understanding,

And in understanding, knowledge,

And in knowledge, the knowledge of justice,

And in the knowledge of justice, the love of it,

And in the love of it, the love of all existences,

And in the love of all existences, the love of God, Goddess and all Goodness.

Ioho x 3

In the South and West of the circle there can be placed decorated seats of honour and the Crone is invited to sit in the South to begin with.

Druid: We call to the energies of the Moon, who reflects to us with her cycles that rise and fall, waxing and waning, the ever changing rhythms of life, of death and renewal. We call to the Goddesses of Initiation and transformation, we ask that they bring to our circle their guidance, inspiration and their blessings, as we honour this transition to the next phase of our sister's life journey.

We call *Crone's name* to come and sit in a place of honour within this circle. This chair and it's placing, represents the phase of life you are preparing to move beyond.

Druid or Family member or friend Speak as the representation of:

The Maiden: Great Mother we honour you, we honour your journey. In you I see my future path and the woman it is possible to become. In me can you see the reflection of your youth, the tender child that laughed, ran and played, unknowing and uncaring of the passage of time? See a face of innocence and wonder, that took in all the stories of your family and the knowledge that the world could give, and you created pictures, stories and song with it all. And as your body and mind grew and changed, new feelings, drives and understandings shaped how you saw the world. With the coming of your first bleed, you became a potent young woman, discovering yourself and how you affected the world around you, testing your abilities, your identity and sexuality, growing ever into your adult self.

Druid or Family member or friend Speak as the representation of:

The Great Mother: It is in the South on the the wheel of life that you sit, the place of Summer, the place of the adult, of deep and fiery passions. It is the time of The Great Mother full and ripe with all the fruits of the Earth.

It is a place of great bounty and creativity, of giving birth and nurture to the babe in arms and to a myriad of ideas that have grown strong and true with your love. It is the time of selfless love and sacrifice for the greater good, where you have grown in power and strength with your life experiences. You have added to your families history new tales of triumph and sadness greater understandings and they are the richer for you in their lives.

In your journey you have touched many lives and created many memories that your tribe hold dear in their hearts and wish to share with you in this place.

I now invite each of your sisters to step forward into this circle to honour you with some of those thoughts, memories and blessings.

allow time for who ever wishes to step forward and speak

Druid or Family member or friend Speak as the representation of:

The Crone: I stand here as your guide. You have come here with this sisterhood to acknowledge the changes in your body, mind and emotions. With our support and nurture you will begin in earnest a new and vital phase on your journey. This is often seen as a time of loss and sadness, a time when the body can no longer produce new life and the face that we see in the mirror does not match the image of a the youth we once were.

We Crones are here to tell you that these feelings are fleeting and to show you that far from being a time of sorrow, this is a time of renewal and freedom.

Let each Crone here gathered speak of their joyful journey.... *allow time for who ever wishes to step forward and speak.*

The Crone: You have heard your sisters speak. I offer you the chance now to speak, to tell us of your thoughts and feelings, your hopes and fears.

The new Crone takes this opportunity to speak.

new crone answers

The Crone then invites new Crone to rise from the Southern chair.

The Crone: As you rise from this place of Summer you leave nothing behind you, everything that you were, are and ever will be, is in the fabric of your skin and bone. You did not leave behind the child as you grew into an adult, she has always played joyfully in your laughter. You will not leave behind the ability to nurture those around you as you move beyond the physical ability to give birth. Instead you will nurture the new generations and pass on the stories and experiences you have gained.

In truth within the Crone, the child becomes stronger as she is allowed to run free with all the knowledge and strength she has gained. The Mother within you will always have the power and passion to create what ever they wish in this world.

The Crone is a woman in her full power, she is confident, wise and able to give generously of her hard won gifts from the battles of life. She has earned the right to take time and space for herself knowing that she can pass the baton of responsibility to others.

Are you now ready to take the step into your new way of being?

new crone answers

They move together to the Western chair where she takes her new place.

Druid : It is the time of recall. Let us now speak the Oath of Peace as a bond between all who have gathered here this day and follow it with three Awen chants.

All: We swear by peace and love to stand heart to heart and hand in hand,
Mark oh spirit and hear us now confirming this our sacred vow.

Awen x 3

Druid: We will now thank the spirits of the four directions for the presence in this celebration of *Deceased's name* life beginning in the North.

Druid or Family member or friend: In the name of the great bear in the starry heavens and the deep and fruitful earth, we thank the spirits of the North for their presents, their guidance and their inspiration in this ceremony of Croning.

Druid or Family member or friend: In the name of the Salmon of wisdom that dwells in the sacred pool, we thank the spirits of the West for their presents, their guidance and their inspiration in this ceremony of Croning.

Druid or Family member or friend: In the name of the great Stag in the heat of the chase and the inner fire of the Sun, we thank the spirits of the South for their presents, their guidance and their inspiration in this ceremony of Croning.

Druid or Family member or friend: In the name of the Hawk of dawn that soars in the clear pure air, we thank the spirits of the East for their presents, their guidance and their inspiration in this ceremony of Croning.

The druid now uncasts the circle.

Druid: In this celebration we have witnessed, honoured and celebrated the transitions of a this *Crone's name*. Let the joy of this day be ever strong in your hearts as we journey through this Great Mystery.

Spirits of this circle, spirits of *this place*, we thank you for your, inspiration, guidance and blessings on this day of power and beauty and ask that you continue to watch over *Crone's name* on their new journey.

This circle of love, honour and celebration is open and yet never broken, so may it be.

A Funeral Ceremony

(written with notes to allow for using in either a conventional funeral service such as a cremation or burial as well as a scattering of a persons ashes in a personal place)

Druid: Welcome to all of you who have gathered here, you who loved and were beloved of *Deceased's name*. We have come together at this time and in this place to celebrate their life and to mourn the passing of this bright soul.

If this is a ceremony held within the confined of a Crematorium or Conventional Cemetery then the opening of a full circle may not be an option.

If this is a private scattering of ashes or funeral on a dedicated Pagan burial site the full circle opening can be used as follows:

Druid: Let us begin by giving peace to the Quarters for without peace no work can be.

Let there be Peace in the North

Let there be Peace in the South

Let there be Peace in the West

Let there be Peace in the East

All say: Let there be Peace throughout the whole world

Druid then casts the circle

Druid: Let the circle be blessed and consecrated with Fire and Water

(it maybe that this could be done by one or two members of the congregation)

Druid: Let the spirits of the four directions be invited into the circle.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Hawk of Dawn that flies in the clear, pure Air we invite the spirits of the East to be present in this circle, spirits of Air, the breath of life, spirit of Spring, spirits of clear thought and new vision, spirits of hope.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Stag in the heat of the chase and the inner fire of the Sun we invite the spirits of the South to be present in this circle, spirits of fire, spirit of the Summer, of passion, spirits of manifestation and spirits of transformation.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Salmon of Wisdom that dwells in the sacred pool of Segais we invite the spirits of the West to be present in this circle, spirits of Water, spirit of the Autumn, of the dreaming and spirits of healing.

Druid or Family member or friend: By the Great Bear in the Starry Heavens and the nurturing Earth, we invite the spirits of the North to be present in this circle, spirits of the Earth, spirit of the Winter, spirits of the deep and renewing sleep.

Druid: Let us now speak the words of the Druid's prayer as a centring meditation and follow it with three Awen chants.

Grant oh God and Goddess your protection
And in protection, strength,
And in strength, understanding,
And in understanding, knowledge,
And in knowledge, the knowledge of justice,
And in the knowledge of justice, the love of it,
And in the love of it, the love of all existences,
And in the love of all existences, the love of God, Goddess and all Goodness.
Awen x 3

Druid: As this circle is set in space and time so this becomes a sacred place, a place in which each person gathered here today can honour the journey of *Deceased's name*. Let us connect with him/her, just take just a few moments, close your eyes and think of *Deceased's name*. Picture their face, remember their smile, hear their laughter and feel their presence within this place.

Here there maybe something that the family would like read or a song to be sung that meant something to the Deceased and that they would have given to their loved ones as a message to remember them by.

Druid: This is a time to celebrate *Deceased's name* life, loves and the effect that they have had on the people who their shared their time on this plain of existence. I now invite each of you gathered here, if you wish, to step forward and speak to *Deceased's name* and may be share with us a story, an anecdote or something of *Deceased's name* life that you will always cherish. Or maybe offer him/her a blessing, poem or reading as a gift to accompany him/her on their journey beyond the veil.

At this point people may step forward to speak

Druid: Today is a day tinged bitter sweet, it is time to bid farewell to the physical form of *Deceased's name*. But what we have shared with them, the many memories that we hold in

our hearts and minds will stay. And when we are sad, when miss their strength or humour we can bring them to mind and take comfort in those memories and feelings. We can reach beyond the veil of tears and sadness to find again the joy they shared. We now return *Deceased's name* back to the Great Mother's embrace, in knowledge that they will find an new path and purpose within the greater mystery.

If this is a ceremony held within the confined of a Crematorium or Conventional Cemetery then the coffin may be lowered to the fire or into the earth at this point.

If this is a private scattering of ashes or a dedicated pagan burial site then the family will want to either lower the coffin or scatter the ashes at this point.

Druid: As the spiral path leads to the centre, closer to the source,
May Spirit embrace you *Deceased's name*, as its own.
Returned are you to the Fire, to the power of transformation
Returned are you to the Earth, to the comfort of the Mother
Returned are you to the Water, to the realms of Healing
Returned are you to the Air, to the breath of life
And we wish you well.
As the moon waxes and wanes,
As the seasons turn from Spring to Winter,
All endings bring new beginnings.

Deep peace of the running waves to you
Deep peace of the flowing air to you
Deep peace of the quiet earth to you
Deep peace of the shining stars to you
Deep peace of the shades of night to you
Moon and stars, always giving light to you.
Blessed be.

Rest from you travels in this existence and when you are well rested and ready for your new adventure to begin, may you hear our words on fresh breezes, an ancient blessing on your new journey.

All say together:

May a new road rise to meet your feet,
May a gentle wind be always at your back,
May the Sun shine warm upon your face,
May the rain fall softly upon new fields,
Until we meet again
May spirit guide you safely to a new land.
So may it be.

And quiet moment of contemplation is then taken, or possibly even a cheer of good wishes may be welcomed.

Druid : It is the time of recall. Let us now speak the Oath of Peace as a bond between all who have gathered here this day and follow it with three Awen chants.

All: We swear by peace and love to stand heart to heart and hand in hand,
Mark oh spirit and hear us now confirming this our sacred vow.
Awen x 3

Druid: Let us now thank the spirits of the four directions for their presence in this celebration of *Deceased's name* life beginning in the North.

Druid or Family member or friend: In the name of the great bear in the starry heavens and the deep and fruitful earth, we thank the spirits of the North for their presents, their guidance and their inspiration in this celebration of *Deceased's name* life.

Druid or Family member or friend: In the name of the Salmon of wisdom that dwells in the sacred pool, we thank the spirits of the West for their presents, their guidance and their inspiration in this celebration of *Deceased's name* life.

Druid or Family member or friend: In the name of the great Stag in the heat of the chase and the inner fire of the Sun, we thank the spirits of the South for their presents, their guidance and their inspiration in this celebration of *Deceased's name* life.

Druid or Family member or friend: In the name of the Hawk of dawn that soars in the clear pure air, we thank the spirits of the East for their presents, their guidance and their inspiration in this celebration of *Deceased's name* life.

The druid now uncasts the circle.

Druid: In this celebration we have honoured the life and shared the sorrow of *Deceased's name* passing. Let the sorrow and joy of this day be ever strong in your hearts as we journey through the Great Mystery.

Spirits of this circle, spirit of *Deceased's name*, their family and friends, we thank you for your, inspiration, guidance and blessings on this day of great emotion and ask that you continue to watch over *Deceased's name* on their new journey.

This circle of love and honour, celebration and sadness is open and yet never broken, so may it be.