



SAMBAIN GROUP CEREMONY

Materials:

- Fire or Candle
- Yew Sprig
- Sword
- Torch
- Incense & Burner
- Pieces of Paper to hand out
- Red Candle
- Bowl of water
- Hammer, Bread & Salt, Honey, Wine or Mead

Roles

- Druid 1
- Druid 2
- Herald
- Directions: North-East-South-West
- Ancient: Eldest and/ or most experienced
- Seeker: Youngest and/ or least experienced

A meditation on what is passing, what needs to be shed and what, in ourselves and our lives, we need to let go of at this time, is ideal preparation for this ceremony. Prior to the ceremony all participants should have prepared a piece of paper on which they have written down those things that they wish to release.

PREPARE: *At the center of the circle have a fire, fire-bowl or candle. You will need a branch of yew, sufficient to provide sprigs for all participants; a sword and hammer. For the sword, you could use instead a knife. In addition, you need enough bread, salt, honey and wine. The Ancient should carry a bowl of water - used for consecrating the ritual objects. A red candle or sacred flame is needed for the Mórrígan devotional.*

PROLOGUE

(Before the ceremony proper begins, one of the youngest or least experienced in Druidry present – the Seeker – and one of the oldest or most experienced in Druidry present – the Ancient – step forward, and sit/stand opposite each other)

SEEKER:

I come to your hearth, wise Ancient, for comfort - for on this night I can feel that the Otherworld draws closer.

ANCIENT:

The hearth fire burns brightly on this night, O Seeker, and you are welcome to share in its warmth. Now is the time of Samhain. The old year is dying away and the dark months approach. The Otherworld does indeed feel closer at this hour, for during Samhain, time ceases to exist.

SEEKER:

If time is abolished during the celebration of Samhain, what becomes of that invisible wall which time alone raises between the span of the living and the realm of the dead?

ANCIENT:

Like time its builder, it is abolished whilst three times the Sun, the Eye of the World, throws his brilliant glance from East to West, whilst three times darkness comes again over our lands. Then and then alone, time will be reborn, the invisible wall will be raised anew, and then alone will begin the New Time.

SEEKER:

Is it then possible, during the celebration of Samhain, to pass without risk or fear from one world to another: the living to the realm of the dead, the dead to the span of the living?

ANCIENT:

It was during the celebration of Samhain that Cuchulainn penetrated the realm of the dead, and it is during these three nights and days, each time a year dies and the dark hours begin, that the veil between the worlds is thinned, and the dead may walk with us once more, and the living may cross to the Otherworld.

SEEKER: Your words, wise Ancient, and the thought of encountering those who have already died, fill me with fear.

ANCIENT: Do not try then, O Seeker, to meet Donn, God of the Dead and pass through his home - Tech Duinn, for this test will be greater than your powers. Dwell then in yourself and your own house. But know that each one of us is on a journey – a journey of the Soul that passes many times through life and through death. We are each at a different stage on this journey, and there is no need to fear those who have forged the paths before us – even if they stand now in the Otherworld.

SEEKER: My fear is not yet lessened, Wise Ancient, since the departed are given the freedom to mingle with us.

ANCIENT: Know, O Seeker, that the Spirits are amiable and favourable to those who respect, venerate and love them.

SEEKER: But how can I prove to them that I love, venerate and respect them?

ANCIENT: By making them ritual gifts.

SEEKER: What are these gifts and what are the rites whereby the offerings should be made to them?

ANCIENT: Hear and see, O Seeker, and be wise - guard carefully in the most secret places of your heart this ceremony of the Ancestors in which we authorize you to be the learner.

Ancient and Seeker return to their places (East and North East respectively). The ceremony can then begin in situ, or participants can then proceed to another place, where a circle is formed by each person entering from the West and circling sunwise to salute the East before taking their place in the circle.

Candles and incense are lit. The ceremony then begins with

The Opening

Sound the Horn

DRUID 2:

Céad Míle Fáilte (kay-d mil-lah fal-ch-uh)!

Síocháin a bheith i do chroí (Shee-o-kahn a bayth ee doe croy)!

Optional: Perform the B.R.S.C

Sound the bell 3 times

HERALD:

By the power of star and stone,

By the power of the land within and without,

By all that is Fair and Free,

We welcome you to this rite of Samhain

In the grove of Raven Heart Hearth

DRUID 1:

We have come from East and West, North and South to be here together today.

(All join hands)

DRUID 2:

Let us take three breaths

Together with the Earth beneath us....

Together with the Sea around us...

Together with the Sky above us....

NORTH:

With the blessings of Earth, Sea and Sky may our ceremony begin!

(All release hands)

DRUID 1:

(Saluting East and facing outwards)

Oh Spirits of this place, Oh Spirit of this circle, we ask for your blessings, your guidance, your inspiration on this our ceremony.

Oh, Great and mighty skilled Gods of the Tuatha Dé Danann, we greet you and honor you!

You who are wise beyond our mortal lives

You who are strong beyond our physical vessels

You who shine within our everlasting spirits

We humbly ask for your protection within this circle

We humbly ask for your inspiration within our deeds

We humbly ask for your blessings within this, our ritual we now perform!

DRUID 2:

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

(Moving to salute each direction in turn, crossing the center of the circle, then returning to place in the West)

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 throughout the whole world.

DRUID 1: Let us join in this prayer that unites all Druids.

ALL:

Grant, Oh Great Gods thy 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 the Gods and all goodness.

ALL: Vibrate 3 IMBAS

Druid 1 speaks as Druid 2 traces a circle around the perimeter of the ritual area with their dagger, Going sunwise starting in the East

DRUID 1: Let all disturbing thoughts and distractions be laid aside and all malevolent forces, seen and unseen, be cast out and banished from this space.

DRUID 2 speaks as this time DRUID 1 traces another circle around the perimeter of the ritual area with their dagger.

DRUID 2: As this circle is cast, the enchantment of the apparent world subsides. We stand together in the eye of the sun here and now, between past and future. The earth below us, the heavens above us, and the circle around us. We consecrate this circle in the name of Ogma the Protector, An Dagda the Father, and Anu the Mother. This is sacred time. This is sacred space.

DRUID 1: Now let us consecrate this circle with Water, Fire, and Air.

WEST (WATER BEARER):

May our circle be purified and blessed with the Element of Water.
Move sunwise around the circle while sprinkling the blessed water

SOUTH (FIRE BEARER):

May our circle be purified and blessed with the Element of Fire.
Move sunwise around the circle with candle/torch

EAST (AIR BEARER):

May our circle be purified and blessed with the Element of Air.
Move sunwise around the circle with the incense

DRUID 1: We gather as equals, in our physical form here upon the earth. Each presence is a blessing, and with every breath we take, we breathe light and life into this circle.

DRUID 2: Let the four directions be honored, and let the gateways of the Quarters be opened, that power and radiance might enter our circle for the good of all beings. Come forth and bring your wisdom, strength and glory. We ask you to bear witness to and bless this ritual.

NORTH

Move to and face the North. With arms up and palms facing forward, visualize a doorway opening, a glowing dark green energy forming and a dolmen of ancient stone surrounded by dark green foliage. The goddess of the land, An Mórrígan dwells here. She is holding the ritual treasure (Stone of Sovereignty) Aloft. Say (to Her):

**Hail to the element of earth and the ancient fortress of stone in the North!
Seat of sovereignty and right rulership, Morfessa- Keeper of the flame, master of art, guardian of the the mysteries! May the ancient Lia Fail (leea fall) be a sacred center in our hearts!**

*Vibrate the name **FALIAS***

SOUTH

Move to and face the South. With arms up and palms facing forward, visualize a doorway opening and a glowing red energy forming, and a bright fort blazing with bright yellow mystical fire and swirling winds. Within the fortress is Lugh with spear in hand, holding the ritual treasure (Spear) aloft. say (to him):

Hail to the element of fire and the bright burning fort in the South! Seat of will and determination, Esras- Keeper of the flame, master of art, guardian of mysteries, May the Spear of Lugh bring precision and swift action!

*Vibrate the name **GORIAS***

WEST

Move to and face the West. With arms up and palms facing forward, visualize a doorway opening and a glowing blue energy forming, and a mystical island sea fort in the distance surrounded by mist and waves. Within the fortress is An Dagda, holding aloft the ritual Treasure, the Cauldron of plenty. Say (to Him):

Hail to the element of water and the mystical fortress in the West! Dwelling of abundance and fulfillment, Semias- Keeper of the flame, master of art, guardian of the mysteries. May the cauldron of the Dagda overflow with abundance and wisdom!

Vibrate the name MURIAS

EAST

Move to and face the East. With arms up and palms facing forward, visualize a doorway opening, a glowing yellow energy forming and a bright white fortress shining like the sun over the horizon. Within that fortress is Nuada holding his ritual treasure, the Sword of Light. Say (to him):

Hail to the element of air and the bright fort in the East! Defender of the just, swift in decision, Uscias- Keeper of the flame, master of art, guardian of mysteries! May the Sword of Nuada rule with truth!

Vibrate the name FINDIAS

(All turn to face center)

ALL:

As the sea surrounds us,
As the sky is above us,
and as the Earth is among us,
May the Gods be within us.
May the harmony of our circle be complete.

~THE RITE~

The Yew is presented by the North to the Ancient who consecrates it (with water) and places it near the fire/fire-bowl in the center of the circle, saying:

ANCIENT: The ritual of Samhain being set in the sign of the Yew, the Tree of the Dead, whose eternal green symbolizes the eternity of the spiritual life, we lay here a branch of Yew.

WEST: If the Yew is the Tree of the Dead, it is equally that of the Ovates. In this rite of Samhain it is then the Ovates particular offering to the wise departed.

*In the next section of the ritual, **The Knight (South)** presents the Sword to the Ancient who consecrates it. The Knight then lays it in the North-East. **The Hammer**, after consecration, is placed in the South-East, and **the Bread and Salt to the North**, the **Wine to the West** and **Honey to the South**: so that there is thence formed a star with five points at the center of which is the yew and fire/fire-bowl. The ritual objects can be placed close to the center, forming a small central pentagram shape, or towards the circumference of the circle.*

SOUTH: The sword is the symbolic weapon of the warriors. We offer this therefore to the heroes who are departed.

South (The Knight) presents the Sword to the Ancient who consecrates it. South then lays the sword in the North-East.

WEST: The Hammer is the symbolic tool of the builders and producers. We offer it therefore to the departed labourers.

West presents hammer to Ancient who consecrates it. West then places it in the South- East.

NORTH: Whatever was their work on earth, the departed ate honey, bread and salt, and drank wine; we shall therefore offer to them bread, salt, honey and wine that they may refresh themselves in spirit even as in the time of their earthly feasts.

If indoors, candles and lights are extinguished, the windows opened, and garlic can be placed on the window-sill. All face the open window. If outdoors, garlic can be placed at the Western gateway, any lights are extinguished, and all face West. A bell or other instrument may be sounded if it feels right at this time.

HERALD: Let us now direct our attention to the West as we open the gates to the Otherworld.

DRUID 1: *Standing with arms outstretched holding the ritual dagger*

May the gateway to the Otherworld be open. May the gods hear our prayers and accept our departed loved ones. We give you this offering of apples as an offering of acceptance.

DRUID 2: Now is the time to speak the names out loud into the West. Speak the names of those who have died this past year so that they may pass in peace.

After the participants have spoken the names

DRUID 1: Let us now have a moment of silence for our fallen loved ones.

Long Pause to allow individual communion with the Departed

ANCIENT:

O Ancestors, known and unknown, ancestors of our bodies, ancestors of our spirits, all those who have given form to our lives, who have made us what and who we are, body and soul. Mothers of ours! Fathers of ours! Teachers! Guides! Healers! Nourishers! Those who show us the way to go...and the way not to go! All you whose Fire is in us, whose Water is in us, whose Air is in us...whose Earth is in us.... all you whose Spirit is in us! On this night of Samhain we feel you near. At this time of no time we call to you. Come dear Spirits! We welcome all of you who come in love and friendship, who share our quest for the Truth, and even as you move amongst us we shall remember those of the departed who are most dear to us.

DRUID 2:

O dear Spirits, you who were our predecessors, our friends, our guides, come to the help of those who are striving strenuously upon the path; guide them upon their quest for the light, support them in their times of difficulty. Ask for them the support of the Higher Powers and gain for them, if it be possible, the all-powerful blessing of the Unknowable Ones. We greet you as brothers and sisters during your brief transit across our world.

All turn to face inwards.

WEST: The Sun of all our lives sets in the West; but the Stars of The Seven Sisters have risen. Beloved spirits, we welcome you to share the wine of love.

Cast a little wine into fire

NORTH: The veil of midnight discloses the stars. O ancestors, in wisdom share the salt of Earth.

Cast a little salt into fire

SOUTH: In the light of day lies understanding; shadows are small. True spirits, share your clear vision as we share the sweetness of honey on the tongue of truth.

Cast a little honey into fire

ANCIENT: The Sun is reborn in the setting stars of dawn; may the souls of our loved ones share again the bread and breath of life. ***(Casts a little bread into fire)***

May the fire release the spiritual essence of these offerings, that you, beloved Ancestors, may partake of this feast in the company of those on this plane.

Candles are lit if needed. Symbolic feast of bread and salt, honey and wine is offered to all.

NORTH takes salt, EAST takes bread, SOUTH takes honey and WEST takes wine around to each member of the circle.

Ensure that a little of each offering remains. After all have eaten, the remains are consumed in the fire. As the Ancient pours these onto the fire/fire-bowl, They can say:

MAY THE DESIGN OF GOOD BE BROUGHT INTO BEING!

NORTH: As Samhain is the time of the dead, it is the time of transformation. At this time, The Mórrígan calls to us. She sweeps through the cave of our souls. She clears away all that is finished or no longer of worth. Nothing unworthy escapes her challenge. At this time of Samhain she moves among us, offering us the gift of purification, of clearing away all thoughts and feelings and habits that no longer serve us.

Now, - if you wish- you may, in the company of your Ancestors, join in this devotion to the Mórrígan- the Shapeshifter, Queen of Battle, Magic, and Transformation.

EAST: *Distribute Devotional Text to all who wish to participate*

DRUID 2: *(From center, Facing North)* I Call to thee, Mórrígan! Hear me, O Great Queen! O, Great Mother, I call to thee! Badb, the Battle Crow, Macha the Swift Horse, Nemain, the Thunderous War Cry! Morrighu- I call to thee! O Great Queen, we honor and praise your presence in this hour and throughout a lifetime!

(Give an offering of incense and/or drink)

ALL: *(Chanting)* Peace to the heavens – Heavens to earth- Earth under Heavens- Strength in everyone *(and/or the Old Irish: Sid co nem- Nem co domain- Domain fo nim- Nert hi cach)*

Light a central red candle and/or sacred fire in Her honor

NORTH:

From the center to the edge – may The Queen hold this place.

From the center to the edge – may her crows surround us.

From the center to the edge – may her wings spread over us.

DRUID 1:

Let us now meditate. See before you the sky at twilight, not light nor dark but the stars are showing. Before you is a field of the remnants of an old battle. Bodies lay about with various swords and spears embedded in them. The smell of fire and smoke fills the air. The Mórrígan stands at a distance across the field and across a small shallow river. Behind her is a primitive stone temple covered in spirals. You walk closer to her. She is wearing a long black and red gown. Her face is at a stage of gaining age but still holds youth and beauty. In her left hand she holds a spear with a shaft made of hazel wood. In her right hand, she holds an apple.

Together, we now speak words of devotion.

ALL:

O Great Goddess, Great Mother Mórrígan- Anu- I have come to you as my Anam, my soul. May I learn the spiritual path here where you are. May I be given courage here where you are. May I learn the true meaning of sacrifice here where you are.

May you grant me transformation. May my magic flow true and my will be strong. With it, I can rise up and grow along the path of the Tuatha De Danann, the path of the Divine Ones as I leave behind my physical body. I am a creature of magic and my Anam can dwell in the Otherworld. I am in harmony with the world I dwell in.

I come to you as my Anam, I am a truth speaking spirit in my Anam. Here where you reside, in the Otherworld, may the gods of the Otherworld be guardians for my Anam. May you let me see you in my Anam, even when my physical body has lost consciousness. Let the blood of the Mórrígan be within me. Let the soul of the Mórrígan shine and illuminate throughout me.

DRUID 2: Take a moment to reflect on the Mórrígan and her blessings. Think about how this will help you in your daily life.

DRUID 1: At this time, give her your sacred and sacrificial offering.

NORTH: Let us each raise this mead (or wine) and drink to her. *(Pass the vessel of mead/wine around the circle for all to drink from)*

Once complete-

DRUID 1: Together, may we share one final blessing.

ALL: Let the blood of the Mórrígan be within me. Let the soul of the Mórrígan shine and illuminate throughout me.

ANCIENT: O Ancestors, O Spirits, we have met this Samhain Eve and remembered one another. With respect and love, may you now depart in peace. *(Turn to face West if outdoors, or open window if indoors, in gesture of farewell. All do likewise)*

ANCIENT: *(turning back into circle after a pause. All do likewise)*

Let us rejoice – a new Time begins, may it bring us whatever things are needful, support our bodies, nourish our souls and give radiance to our spirits. May it show to each one their true Path, by the light of the Oak, the Yew and the Silver Birch!

Sprigs of Yew are distributed to all.

Optional: Story of The Mórrígan and The Dagda

THE CLOSING

-Sound the bell once

DRUID 2: It is the hour of recall. As the fire/light dies down let it be relit in our hearts. May our memories hold what the eye and ear have gained.

(All join hands)

ALL: We swear, by peace and love to stand, Heart to heart and hand in hand. Mark, O spirit, and hear us now, Confirming this, our sacred vow. ***(3 times, pausing between each)***

-All Chant CASCADING IMBAS.

DRUID 1: May the spirits of the Four Directions be thanked for their blessings.

(Each direction turns to face outward as they speak)

EAST:

We give thanks to the element of Air and the bright fort in the East. Defender of the just, swift in decision, we thank Uscias- Keeper of the flame, master of art, guardian of mysteries. May the Sword of Nuada continue to rule with truth!

WEST:

We give thanks to the element of Water and the mystical fortress in the West. Dwelling of abundance and fulfillment, we thank Semias- Keeper of the flame, master of art, guardian of the mysteries. May the cauldron of the Dagda continue to overflow with abundance and wisdom!

SOUTH:

We thank the element of Fire and the bright burning fort in the South! Seat of will and determination, we thank Esras- Keeper of the flame, master of art, guardian of mysteries, May the Spear of Lugh continue to bring precision and swift action!

NORTH:

We give thanks to the element of Earth and the ancient fortress of stone in the North. Seat of sovereignty and right rulership, we thank Morfessa- Keeper of the flame, master of art, guardian of the mysteries. May the ancient Lia Fail (leea fall), the Stone of Sovereignty, continue to be a sacred center in our hearts!

DRUID 2:

Let us again take three breaths...
Together with the Earth beneath us.
Together with the Sea around us.
Together with the Sky above us.

ALL:

As the sea surrounds us,
As the sky is above us,
and as the Earth is among us,
May the Gods be within us.
May the harmony of the land be complete.

Circle is uncast counter-sunwise with their dagger or sword by DRUID 1

HERALD:

By the power of star and stone,
By the power of the land within and without,
By all that is Fair and Free,
We thank you for attending this ceremony In the Grove of Raven Heart Hearth

DRUID 1:

May the blessings of the Gods be always with us. I declare this ceremony of Samhain closed in the apparent world. May its inspiration continue within our beings.

~ENO~