

Samhain Solo Ritual

Embrace the Dark Feminine

Cast Sacred Space

For this ritual, you will need a candle, a drum, a length of red cord, three 'hag stones' (those that have a natural hole running through the stone), or beads instead, three crow or raven feathers and an apple.

Ritual Statement:

I draw circle to celebrate the festival of Samhain: summer's end. The mellow light of late autumn is sharpened by a growing chill. As the darkness grows, through the bare branches we catch glimpses of breath-taking stars. We let go of the warmth like trees shedding leaves. We watch the radiant reds and oranges turn brown: drying leaves as papery and dry as old parchment; the year has written its story upon them and now lets them fall, trusting the earth to keep their secrets safe and nourished beneath the mulch.

Toadstools feed on the damp forest floors: life grown out of death and decay. The frosts wither and Grandmother Winter breathes upon us, damp and thick, her mists and fog. Her wildness lashes us in strong winds and stinging rain, and in her floods her cold fingers find their way into our lives to remind us of her power to shake us to our core. We draw inward to sit at winter's hearth and watch the future played out in flame and silent thought.

Calling the Goddess:

I call upon the Goddess as Ancient Crone. Mother of Shadows, your wisdom is as deep as the black raven's wing; as sharp as the crow's call; as mysterious as the veil of mist that shimmers between this and the Otherworld. I call to you infinitely wise Grandmother, you who knows me better than I know myself. By you I am swallowed, down into the still darkness of winter, down into your Sacred Cauldron of Rebirth, where peaceful release, transformation and renewal await me.

Cont.

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iAncient Bone Mother, when life's harsh lessons weather my spirit, may your strength and endurance fill me. Rugged and timeless, may your wildness inspire journeys into the remote and lonely places of my soul; for it is here that I find you, your face bright in the darkness, a torch through the moonless night; your laughter my sacred song of dark wisdom and mother wit. Crone of all Knowing, please bless me with your presence. You are loved, honoured and welcome here.

Calling the God:

I call upon the God as Shadowed Lord of the Dead and Hunter of Souls. As nature surrenders to the tides of release and the dying light, you guide us to that dark place in the forest, that place where we let go of all we are; where the Earth Mother's body opens to enfold us; where we become yet another layer beneath the many layers, feeding the saplings that grown upon the graves of leaf-fallen lives.

Those who do not know you well, fear your shadowed face but I know you as Grandfather and have felt your deep compassion and tenderness; for each of our deaths you have died too; you know our fear; you know our pain; you have lived them also. With you and through you I journey the cycle of the seasons – be here with me now and teach me to trust your season of release. As Lord of Death you serve the Goddess and all life in bringing us the perfect peace of surrender that leads to the ultimate renewal of life. Please bless me with your presence. You are loved, honoured and welcome here.

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Remembering the Ancestors:

This is the night that we honour the Crone's dark cloak of death. It is the night when its thick blackness seems only a translucent veil; when the boundary between this world and the next is slight. I honour those who have passed over; those whom I have known and loved in this life but also those spirits, guides and ancestors who watch over me and bless my life. I offer my hand to these loving ones that they might join me in my rite if they so wish. I welcome you and give praise and thanks for your lives.

At the start of the ritual, you will have placed an Ancestor candle on the altar. Now light this candle and speak the following for the Ancestors (It is they speaking through you):

Re-member us, you who are living,
Restore us, re-new us
Speak for our silence
Continue our work
Bless the breath of life
Sing the hidden patterns
Weave the web of peace.
~ Judith Anderson

Sit for a moment and listen to the heartbeat of the earth beneath you. If you have a drum, you could use this to sound that heartbeat – feel how it connects all life. Then in silence, feel your ancestors, guides and loved ones enveloping you with their presence and love.

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The Ancestor Necklace Ritual:

For this ritual you will need a length of red cord, three 'hag stones' (those that have a natural hole running through the stone), three crow or raven feathers and an apple. Take the length of cord; hold it up and say,

This is the thread of life that connects me to all that once were, to all that are and to those yet to come.

Take the three hag stones. These represent the stony endurance and wisdom of the Crone, the wise woman who watches over our endings and midwives our beginnings, initiating the cycles of death and rebirth that link us all. Hold up the stones and say,

These stones are the strong and enduring links to all those that have gone before me and all those that follow after.

Take the three crows/ravens feathers. These represent ancestral wisdom and knowledge; the power of mystery, transformation and healing. Hold them up saying,

These feathers remind me that I am only the flap of a wing away from those I love and from those that guide and protect me.

Thread the chord through the first hag stone, looping and tying it to secure the stone. Slide the feather's quill end into the knot to secure it next to the stone. Double knot if you need to. Now say,

This stone and feather links me to the wisdom and love of my ancestors. May I feel their gentle guiding presence; may their experience and knowledge bless my life. They are the roots of my tree.

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Do the same with the second stone and feather, spaced out a little further along the thread. Then say,

This stone and feather links me to the wisdom and love of those present and those that I have lost in this life. May our bonds be strong and nurturing; may the lessons we teach each other be treasured; may our memories be sweet. They are the sturdy trunk of my tree.

Secure the third stone and feather, again spaced out a little further along the thread. When done say,

This stone and feather links me to my descendants. May my living bless their lives; may they feel their roots deep within me; may my mistakes and lessons bring wisdom to them. And may every cell

in their body hold a memory of me and my loving support. They are the buds and leaves of my tree and they will blossom and fall many times after I have gone.

Now that the three stones and feathers have been secured, tie the two ends of the thread together to make a circle. Hold this up and say,

I tie the thread of life into a circle. This is the symbol of the eternal bonds of love and experience; the spiraling cycles of life, death and rebirth that make us one with each other and all creation. As this circle is joined and the knot is tied, I am blessed by these bonds.

Take the apple and slice across its middle so that the five pointed star at its centre can be seen. Sit in silence, pondering on the mystery that out of death and loss the seeds of new life come. Each one of us that lives, or has lived, is both the fruit that falls and the seed that will start the cycle of life all over again. Eat your apple, giving thanks for the nourishment and gift of your life.

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Giving Thanks:

Grandmother of Mystery, lovingly and tenderly transform and prepare me for my coming rebirth. Tend me in my grieving and my healing; bring me rest and release, peace and wisdom, renewed strength and joy. Wise and Ancient God, I thank you for your wisdom of seed and flower, of fruit and falling leaf. Please journey with me through the turning tides of my life and teach me the value of each. Goddess and God I thank you for your presence and blessings. Bide well in my heart. Blessed Be!