

*Priestess:* Blessed be  
*All:* Blessed be  
Concluding chant:  
Aradia, Sophia, Athene, Tara, Dann  
(and any other Goddesses of Wisdom).

Ground and center, open the circle, share food and socialize.

Kore  
(Spring Equinox)

*... The year is a dancing woman, who is born at the coming of spring ...*

At Spring Equinox I usually do a retelling of the entire Myth of the Kore. The spirit of the Maiden is now embodied. This is the time when she is reborn from the dark in a physical birth, as opposed to her spiritual birth at Winter Solstice. The Mother conceived nine months earlier at the Summer Solstice, and now gives birth to Spring. For she is the Earth, birthing the appearance of new life. The animals, plants and elements birth with her, and young life flourishes everywhere. Resurrection and reunion are the underlying themes of this holy day, as the maiden reunites with the mother, whom she becomes.

In the Western world our most familiar holiday at this season is Easter. The dying and resurrected deity must suffer when he bleeds, and is never permitted to reincarnate physically. He must remain forever disembodied, taking up residence in Heaven or the spirit realm. And yet the basic themes of death and resurrection can be felt at Easter. The games played with female fertility symbols such as eggs, rabbits and baskets all echo an earlier pagan mystery. In fact, doesn't the name Easter sound suspiciously like Ishtar? Regardless of the metaphors used, this is a powerful time, and people of all beliefs can feel it. The day and night are of equal length, beginning the next wave of magnetic energy that will peak at Beltane. The coming of spring is always a magical time, as the air sweetens and grows warm, buds and flowers open, and babies are born.

One of the main political purposes of this ritual is the creating and mending of bonds among women. The mother/daughter bond, held to be of value in goddess-worshipping societies, is never mentioned in modern spring celebrations. Currently, we observe a widespread severance between the generations of women. In patriarchal custom it is more suitable or convenient for women to bond to men than to leave their female bonds behind, or at low priority. The loss of camaraderie, sisterhood, love, affection, friendship, and support has been disastrous to women. Out of the bonds of women grow life, creativity, social conscience, tradition, and roots. When the ancients danced and sang at the reunion of Demeter and Persephone,

demonstrated a profound understanding of this principle. The telling of the year story can be done in many ways. Someone can read it or each can take a segment of the story round-robin style, or theater can be of it. It can be powerful to include group chanting of all the names of the goddesses who appear in the tale.

Hold this ritual outdoors in the afternoon, in a quiet spring meadow. The ground should be flat and safe for dancing. Prepare ahead of time: spring foods, salads of flowers (such as nasturtiums) and greens, colored eggs and other egg dishes, Maiden. Cakes, breads, legumes—all are appropriate. Make garlands of leaves and flowers for all to wear. Dress in delicate costumes—filmy floating faery clothes in spring colors like pale green, rose, yellow, and violet—or go in splendid nakedness with a flower in your navel. Have some sweet fruit wine on the altar.

Set up the altar to one side of the circle area, preferably facing east. Decorate with flowers and green leaves and grasses from the surrounding area. Eggs, buds, umbilical cords and other birth symbols are good for spring. Have yellow and pale green candles. Prepare some dried herbs in a cauldron to be burned during the ritual: lavender, dried rose petals, thyme, etc. Place a ball of yarn, long enough to weave around all the women.

Entrance into the circle: Create a birth canal with everyone's bodies. Each woman is birthed through everyone else into the circle. All chant:

From woman you were born into the world  
From women you are born into this circle

Cast the circle, raise the cone, chant the names of Maiden Goddesses: Kore, Diana, Persephone, Psyche, Sappho, Tenuviel, and any others you may know.

*A priestess lights the candles and burns the herbs, saying:*

We gather in this circle to welcome the Maiden  
The old Mother Goddess shape-shifts once again  
And brings to us a young and laughing daughter  
She returns once more from the darkness,  
And her sweetness makes us melt with joy  
She comes, with fragile buds and green  
She comes in beauty, dancing, singing  
With fragrant blossoms in her hair  
That which was separated has been reunited  
That which died is now reborn . . .

*All:*

That which was separated has been reunited  
That which died is now reborn  
So be it, Blessed be.



All join hands and close eyes. Let voices arise from around the circle, give thanks for the spring and the return of life, and for any other blessings in your lives. Make wishes and support one another's visualizations.

Healing ceremony: Each woman takes the center position and lies down. Others gather 'round to heal her with sound and visualization and the laying on of hands. Chant the woman's name, place healing green or other colors into her chakra. Let her speak briefly of her healing needs. At completion, several women lift her up as though she is a newborn baby. Do this with all women who desire healing.

Libation: A priestess passes the wine bowl, saying:

Drink of this sweetness,  
Let the life forces sweep through your veins  
Juice of the goddess from the body of the goddess . . .

She then passes a loaf of bread, breaking off the first piece to feed to her neighbor, saying:

Eat of Her body, the blessed sustenance of grain  
Be strong and grow as Persephone has grown up from the Earth

Let the wine and bread be passed 'round the circle. Each woman feeds or feeds to the next. The last woman returns them to the altar.

Affirming the mother/daughter bond and connections between women: A priestess takes up the ball of yarn and winds a strand around her neighbor, saying:

We are daughters of our mothers  
We are mothers of our daughters  
We are sisters, we are lovers  
We are friends and good grandmothers  
We are women like a river  
Flowing on forever and ever . . .

All continue this chant, repeating it again and again, as the yarn is woven 'round and entwined around each woman. When the last woman is woven in, she brings the end to the beginning of the strand, sealing the web. Let the chant wind down to a natural conclusion. The first woman then untwines the yarn, still tied at the altar, and rolls it up into a ball, to replace upon the altar. One priestess will take this ball home and save it until Autumn Equinox, when it will be cut to symbolize the separation of Demeter and Persephone. Each woman can keep her piece, to be used in the next spring.

The telling of the tale: To be done in a previously chosen manner by one of the participants.