**IMBOLG CELEBRATION:**

httpJ/users.internorth .com/-wiccan/sabbats/imbolc.hun

The BARD (if any) should sit or stand to the WEST, unless otherwise specified in the ritual.

**Participants:**

• MAIDEN , or two MAIDENS, dressed in white

• MOTHER (this role may be taken by the HPS) dressed in red

• CRONE, dressed in black.

 BARD/GREEN MAN

• DARK LORD, (can be the HP) dressed indark clothing, and wearing a dark cloak

• four WATCHTOWERS

**Materials & Setup:**

• a Basket containing a candle for each covener present

• a Crown of Light, made from three. six. or nine candles

• a Stool for the BARD (optional: stools for the HP & HPS)

• four Comer Rocks, each with an appropriately coloured Quarter Candle

• a single White Flower tied with a White Ribbon (to symbolize Brigid).

• the Altar is at the Northeast and is covered with a White Cloth

• Evergreens are used as decoration

• a second Basket filled with Tiny Bundles of Grain or straw rests on the altar

• two (2) white votive candles are beside the basket of grain

• a Black Ribbon at least twelve (12) inches in length is placed in the grain basket

• the Brigid Flower and the Lord Wand rest together in front of the altar

• a dark colored Scarf or Shawl (for the CRONE) and

• a Bouquet of flowers (for the MAIDEN) lay on the altar

• as well as a single White Taper (for the MOTHER)

• two twists of black or grey Paper for the Crone.

The Cauldron is placed at the South, and a votive candle is placed inside. Four (4) white candles, are alternated between the Quarter Candles.

The place of ritual should be set up away from the gathered participants. It is more than a good idea to manage bathrooms and such like before the circle is closed. The Mysteries are not something any of the participants should miss out on!

HPss & HP enter the ritual space, and light the cross-Quarter candles, saying:

HPss: Enter we the sacred place, and stand within the sacred space; Turn our minds to sacred things, together dance unto the ring!

HP: Dance forth now, with the Spiral Dance, within the Lady's radiance; To celebrate the Spring's rebirth, to spark new life, to warm the Earth.

HP and HPss return to the entry point and lead the coven to the place of ritual by a spiral dance, ending in a circle around the altar. Each Watchtower, in passing, draws a Ritual Tool from the Altar then takes up position at the appropriate Corner (Pentacle-East, Wand-South, Cup-West, Sword-North).

Bard/Green Man (with stool on his back) dances at the end of the line. He/she takes a position standing outside the Circle, in the West.

A good song to sing here is "Lord Of The Dance."

LORD OF THE DANCE (See Candlemas Songs section for a link to the song in YouTube)

She danced on the water, and the wind was Her horn

The sweet Lady laughed, and everything was born

And when She lit the Sun and its light gave Him birth

The Lord of the Dance first appeared on the Earth.

Chorus: Dance, dance, wherever you may be I am the Lord of the Dance, you see!

I'll live in you, and you'll live in Me And I'll lead you all in the Dance, said He!

I danced in the morning when the World was begun

I danced in the Moon and the Stars and the Sun

I was called from the Darkness by the song of the Earth

I joined in the song, and She gave Me the Birth!

The Moon in her phases, and the tides of the Sea

The spinning of the Earth, and the Seasons that will be

Are the rhythm for the dancing, and a promise thru the years

That the Dance goes on thru our joy, and tears.

The Sun moves to the Southland, now the days lengthen fast

 And soon we'll be singing for the Winter that is past

Now we light the candles and rejoice as they burn;

And we dance the Dance of the Sun's return!

 The dance ends. High Priestess stands before the Altar.

HPss: Earth and Water, Fire and Air, I invoke the Goddess here! This night we are Between the Worlds, To celebrate the year unfurled!

HP: Earth and Water, Fire and Sky, I invoke the God on high; This night we are Between the Worlds, To celebrate the year unfurled!

The Corners shall be called thusly, that all may hear, but shall not be called until the HPS reaches that Corner and lights that Quarter Candle on her circumambulation.

EAST: Earthen ones of Eastern fame, Bless and guard our Power's fane I do summon, stir and call you, See these rites and guard this circle! (Sets the Pentacle down against the East corner rock)

Come to us and heed our call! By the Power that made us all; By the Power that blesses Thee: Come to us; and Blessed Be!

HPss: So I cast and consecrate This Circle of the small and great: By Fin and Feather, Leaf and Tree, By Rock and Earth, by Land and Sea, By the Power that blesses Thee: I cast the Circle; Blessed be!

SOUTH: Fiery ones of Southern Power, welcome now unto this tower I do summon, stir and call you, See these rites and guard this circle! (Sets the Wand down against the South corner rock)

Come to us and heed our call! By the Power that made us all; By the Power that blesses Thee: Come to us; and Blessed Be!

HPss: So I cast and consecrate, This Circle of the small and great: By Fire and Water, Earth and Air, By the Lord, and Lady Fair! By the Power that blesses Thee: I cast the Circle; Blessed be!

WEST- Western ones of water's flow, safely guard us here below; I do summon, stir and call you, see these rites and guard this circle! (Sets the Cup down against the West corner rock)

Come to us and heed our call! By the Power that made us all; By the Power that blesses Thee: Come to us; and Blessed Be!

HPss: So I cast and consecrate This Circle of the small and great: By Love and Joy and Work and Play, All things harmful cast away! By the Power that blesses Thee: I cast the Circle; Blessed be!

NORTH : Guardians of the Northern Tower, Airy ones of healing power I do summon, stir and call you, See these rites and guard this circle! (Sets the Sword down against the North corner rock.)

Come to us and heed our call! By the Power that made us all;

By the Power that blesses Thee: Come to us; and Blessed Be!

HPss: So I cast and consecrate This Circle of the small and great: By lightning’s flash, and rain's soft fall, By the Power that made us all; By the Power that blesses Thee: I cast the Circle; Blessed be!

HPss returns to the East, thus completing the Circle, then ALL (incl. HPss) excluding Bard, who is now strumming a Harp or similar instrument, join hands and sway and chant:

“Isis, Astarte, Diana, Hecate, Demeter, Kali, Inanna; Isis, Astarte, Diana, Hecate, Demeter, Kali, Inanna; Isis, Astarte, Diana, Hecate, Demeter, Kali, Inanna”

HPS: So I cast and consecrate, This Circle of the small and great.

EAST: By Fin and Feather, Leaf and Tree, By Rock and Earth, by Land and Sea,

SOUTH: By Fire and Water, Earth and Air, By the Lord, and Lady Fair!

WEST: By Love and Joy and Work and Play, All things harmful cast away!

NORTH: By lightning’s flash, and rain's soft fall, By the Power that made us all;

HPS: By the Power that blesses Thee: The Circle's cast; and Blessed Be!

All release hands. All except HPss, HP/Dark Lord and Bard, now sit down on the floor in a circle open at the East. The Dark Lord moves to stand in the West, one step outside the Circle, replacing the Bard. Bard moves deosil into the opening at the East and sits on stool or on the floor. HPss & HP (unless the HP is the Dark lord) sit on floor (or stools) before the Altar.

Here begins the First lmbolg Mystery:

The Maiden (or First Maiden) steps forth, and says:

 MAIDEN : This is the time of Brigid, the Patron of Poets and Fire, and of Healing.

She picks up the basket of candles and circumambulates {beginning in the East) distributing one candle to each Covener.

HPss: This is the time of new beginnings, when the Goddess has become Maiden.

HP: The days have turned, and grow longer, and the Sun-child is growing to His strength.

HPss: Let us honor the Goddess in all Her aspects; Maiden, Mother and Crone.

HP: With the turning of the Wheel, we now honor Her in the unfurling of Her Maidenhood.

HPss: Her Circle of Light shall shine upon us, and She shall shower us with Her blessings.

HP: We shall revel in the glory of her Light, and welcome Spring time with Her beauty.

Maiden goes and stands beside the Bard in the East.

BARD: I have been a wave upon the sea, and a spark in the firelight. I have been a fish in the ocean. I have been a Thought within a Word, And a Word within a Deed. I was cast away, and found again. I have been made of flowers And of cold steel and brass. Fire and ice are alike unto me. I have been the narrow blade of a sword That kills without cutting. And the Void is my homeland. I have been in Caer Sidi, In the Spiral Castle of Glass. And the letters on the Standing Stones are no secret from me. I have been in Annwyn And Tir na n'Og. I have danced the Spiral Dance, and drunk from the Hierlas at daybreak. I have ridden beneath two ravens and served in the kitchen. And all places are alike unto me. I have been a child. And now I come into my strength! I invoke the Land, the dear Land, the Earth our Mother!

MAIDEN: The cycles of the Moon have taken their course, and I am inmy Maidenhood. The stars are kindled, and I dance in their light.

HPss now stands, and the Dark Lord steps forward into the circle:

DARK LORD: Thy home is with me through the long months of Winter, and the Earth shall lay fallow and bare.

The HPss then lights the candles of the Crown of Light and approaches the Maiden, and places it upon her head.

All now stand up.

The Maiden, in company with the Bard/Green Man, circumambulates the circle, and the convener’s light their candles from her crown. The Bard/Green Man returns to hir place in the East, and the Maiden places the Crown of Light on the altar. The Maiden then approaches the Dark Lord, and kneels before him, and he says:

DARK LORD: As it always was, always is, and always shall be. Come to my Kingdom. Here he places his dark cloak around her, and they then retire hand-in-hand to the West. Here ends the First lmbolg Mystery

Coveners recite the Charge of the Goddess (HPss circumambulates during recitation, extinguishing the Coveners' candles.)

The Charge of the Goddess

Whenever ye have need of anything, once in the month, and better it be when the moon is full, then shall ye assemble in some secret place and adore the spirit of She, who is Queen of all witches. There shall ye assemble, ye who are fain to learn all sorcery, yet have not won its deepest secrets; to these will She teach things that are yet unknown. And ye shall be free from slavery; and as a sign that ye be really free, ye shall be naked in your rites; and ye shall dance, sing, feast, make music and love, all in Her praise. For Hers is the ecstasy of the spirit, and Hers also is joy on earth; for Her law is love unto all beings.

Keep pure your highest ideal; strive ever towards it; let naught stop you or tum you aside. For Hers is the secret door which opens upon the land of youth and Hers is the cup of wine of life, and the cauldron of Cerridwen, which is the Holy Grail immortality. She is the gracious goddess, who gives the gift of joy unto the heart of man. Upon earth, She gave the knowledge of the spirit eternal; and beyond death, She gives peace and freedom, and reunion with those who have gone before. Nor does She demand sacrifice, for behold, She is the mother of all living, and Her love is poured out upon the earth.

She who is the beauty of the green earth, and the white moon among the stars, and the mystery of the waters, and the desire of the heart of man, calls unto thy soul. Arise, and come unto Her. For She is the soul of nature, who gives life to the universe. From Her all things proceed, and unto Her all things must return; and before Her face, beloved of gods and men, let thine innermost divine self be enfolded in the rapture of the infinite.

Let Her worship be within the heart that rejoiceth; for behold, all acts of love and pleasure are Her rituals.

And therefore let there be beauty and strength, power and compassion, honor and humility, mirth and reverence within you. And thou who thinkest to seek Her, know thy seeking and yearning shall avail thee not unless thou knowest the mystery; that if that which thou seekest thou findest not within thee, then thou wilt never find it without thee. For behold, She has been with thee from the beginning; and She is that which is attained at the end of desire. ( \*Doreen Valiente)

Here begins the Second lmbolg Mystery:

"Brigid's Bed. "is prepared thusly: The Mother kneels in the centre of the Circle with her back towards the Altar. The Maiden (or Second Maiden) and the Crone pick up the flower and the wand respectively, and one while votive candle each, they light the candles from the Alter candle, and take them to the center of the Circle. They place the flower and the wand side by side in the center of the Circle, with the heads toward the Altar. They place the lit votive candles at either side of the "bed". They then kneel beside the Mother around the bed and say together three times:

“The Maiden comes to bring us light! The Winter dies, and all is bright! The frozen ground shall disappear - and all shall sprout, for Spring is near!”

The Mother now rises and stands before the altar. She summons the other two women with a hand-signal, and the three of them stand in front of the altar, assuming their Triple-Goddess roles. The Maiden kisses the Mother on both cheeks, and hands her the white taper. The Crone ignites a twist of paper from the centre Altar candle, and uses it to light the Mother's taper. The Crone drops the paper into the cauldron then stands to Mother's left. The Maiden drapes the shawl over the Crone's head and shoulders. The Maiden stands to the Mother's right and picks up the bouquet of flowers.

MOTHER: Behold the three-fold Goddess; Maiden, Mother, Crone; She is one - yet She is three. Together and Alone

CRONE: Summer comes not - without Spring. Without Summer, comes no Winter chill; Without Winter, Spring will not be born. The Three, life's Round fulfill!

MAIDEN: Now let us celebrate Imbolg! The Maiden picks up the besom and makes her way slowly deosil around the inside edges of the Circle, ritually sweeping it clear of all that which is old, useless and unnecessary. Mother and Crone walk behind her in stately procession. While sweeping, the three women say:

MAIDEN: With this besom filled with power. Sweep away the old and sour.

MOTHER: Sweep away the chill of death, as Winter draws its fading breath.

CRONE: Round, round, round about. Sweep the old and useless out!

The Maiden replaces the besom and the women resume their places infront of the altar. The Maiden picks up the basket of straw bundles and presents each member of the group with one. The Crone ignites another twist of paper, then goes to the South, kneels before the cauldron and lights the candle inside. She explains to the group that the bundles of straw which they have been given are symbolic of Winter and Death, but also that any negativity with which they are charged will be burned along with them.

A few moments of silence are allowed so that each person may charge err bundle with her own negative thoughts, habits and shortcomings. The Crone collects the bundles, walking widdershins. She then ties the bundles together with the black ribbon, lights the "community straw man" and places him in the cauldron to burn. (Note: this can be rather a smoky experience, if the ceremony is being conducted indoors, the igniting should be symbolic, or there should be a cover for the cauldron close at hand, to smother the fire if necessary.)

HPss: Thus we melt the Winter! And warm the breath of Spring! We bid adieu to what is dead, And greet each living thing. Thus we banish Winter! Thus we welcome Spring!

The Maiden collects the candles from the coveners to be blessed for use during the coming year, replacing them in their basket. The basket is placed on the altar.

HPss: I bless thee creatures of wax and light, casting out all negativity. Serve your purpose, flaming bright. Infused with magic, you shall be Instruments of light and strength, wick and wax though you may be; I give you life of needed length, to aid in creativity! In the Names of the Lord and Lady, so mote it be!

The candles are then redistributed lo the coven members.

HPss: As we close this celebration of lmbolc, let each of us find joy in the power of the returning Sun! As each new day dawns and the light of day becomes brighter and stronger, remember that your inner light should burn as brightly. Feel the changes in the earth around you, as the chill of Winter recedes and all sprouts in the greeness of fresh, new life. Remember the wonder you felt as you awakened from Maidenhood to Womanhood - from Boyhood to Manhood. Relive the joy of that awakening and heal any emotional scars you may have! Breathe deeply of the harmony of the Earth's new life and rejoice in your own!

 Dearest Brigid, Maiden of all that is fresh and new, we warmly thank you for attending our Rite of Imbolc. As this Circle is dissolved, we ask that you guide us in our new beginnings and inspire us with the fresh creativity that you bring to all life.

Here ends the Second Imbolg Mystery

The women rejoin the Circle. Bard returns deosil to the West. HP and HPss move into the East.

Business matters pertaining to the Circle may be conducted at this point.

A normal cone-of-power may now be raised, for growth and healing:

All stand.

HPss: In a ring we all shall stand. Pass the Power, hand to hand.Pass the Power, hand to hand. Bless the Lady, bless the Land; Bless the Lord, and bless the Skies. Bless the Power that never dies!

 HP: As Spring time now is given birth. Build the Power root to Earth

The above verses should be repeated as many times as needed, and then the High Priestess should say:

 HPss: By Fin and Feather, Leaf and Tree: Let the Power flow out and free!

All should release, at this point.

Opening the Circle

 The Watchtowers retrieve their tools from beside the Corner Rocks. The Circle is opened by HPss moving Widdershins from East back to East. The Corners are dismissed thusly, that all may hear, but are not dismissed until the HPss reaches that Corner on her reverse circumnambulation. HPss extinguishes each Quarter Candle in its turn.

East: Earthen ones of Eastern fame, Guardians of our Power's fane I do thank you and release you. Guardians of our rites and circle!

HPss: By the Power that made us all,I give Thee thanks from one and all By the Power that blesses Thee: Leave us now; and Blessed Be!

North: 0 Guardians of the Northern Tower, Airy ones of healing power I do thank you and release you, Guardians of our rites and circle!

HPss: By the Power that made us all, I give Thee thanks from one and all

By the Power that blesses Thee: Leave us now; and Blessed Be!

West: Western ones of water's flow, Thou who guard us here below I do thank you and release you, Guardians of our rites and circle!

HPss: By the Power that made us all, I give Thee thanks from one and all By the Power that blesses Thee: Leave us now; and Blessed Be!

South: Fiery ones of Southern Power, Thus I dismiss you from this tower.

I do thank you and release you, Guardians of our rites and circle!

HPss: By the Power that made us all, I give Thee thanks from one and all By the Power that blesses Thee: Leave us now; and Blessed Be!

High Priestess rejoins High Priest in the East, thus completing the Circle. HPss: Thus I release the East and West: Thanks to them from Host to Guest

Thus I release the South and North: With "Blessed Be," I send them forth!

HP: The Circle's open, dance we so. Out and homeward we shall go.

Earth and Water, Air and Fire, celebrated our desire.

HPss: Ewes are eaning, Spring begins, let us dance and let us sing.

By Fin and Feather, Leaf and Tree, our circle's done and Blessed Be!

Blessed Be!

The Watchtowers return the Ritual Tools to the Altar and then rejoin the Circle.

All join hands and sway and chant:

Isis, Astarte, Diana, Hecate, Demeter. Kali, lnanna Isis, Astarte, Diana. Hecate, Demeter, Kali. Inanna

HPss (breaking Circle): Thus I release the East and West. Thanks to them from Host to Guest

Thus I release the South and North. With "Blessed Be." Isend them forth!

The Circle's open. Dance we so, Out and homeward we shall go.

HP & HPs.: Earth and Water. Air and Fire.Celebrated our desire.

The Sun's returned to hanish dark. The Earth awakes to sunlight's spark.

By Fin and Feather, Leaf and Tree.Our circle's done; and Blessed Be!

Blessed Be!

All spiral dance out from the Circle (optionally may sing Lord of the Dance last two verses and chorus.)

The Rite of Candles and Wine is appropriate at this time.

 All members have libation. Sit and relax and visit amongst themselves.