

What are rites of passage?

Johnny finished a party for his best friend Levi. There was a lot to do at the party and it was really fun. When it was over, he Johnny asked if Levi could come with him and spend the night. Johnny's mother said he couldn't and shushed Johnny when he tried to protest.

When in the car and alone with his mother, Johnny asked: "Why did you not allow me to ask Levi if he could come home with us?" This seemed odd to Johnny because the two were best friends and was always together.

"Because," said his mother, "You know that Levi is a Jew, his religion is Jewish right?"

"Yes, I know he is Jewish, and I am Pagan." Said Johnny in a goofy voice.

"Well," his mother went on, "Today wasn't just another party for Levi that you went to. It was something called his Bar Mitzvah. It is considered a rite of passage for him. Because of this special day, he needs to spend it with his family and those in his religion."

"What is a rite of Passage?" Asked Johnny.

"A rite of passage is a mile marker in someone's life. The rites of passages are usually celebrated and change someone's life forever." Stated Johnny's mother "Pagans have rites of passage too."

Activity-

- Have your child get a piece of construction paper and a piece of string or yarn.
- Cut the paper into squares, circles, or whatever shape that is your child's favorite. You will need to have 8 shapes. Make a circle at the top of each shape (use a paper hole punch, knife, or scissors).
- On each shape have your child write on one side the stages of life, one for each shape (Paganing, Coming of Age, Initiation, Handfasting, Priest/Priestess, Elderhood, and Parting). On each shape's back have them write what stage of life it is: Paganing: naming, birth - Coming of Age: becoming an adult - Initiation: entering a path - Handfasting: marrying - Priest/Priestess hood; able to perform ceremonies in path - Elderhood: Becoming an elder - Parting: death). As a side note there are other rites of passage that are path specific, so there may be more you can add.
- Go over each stage with them. You can even play a game where they put them in the order of them happening and explaining to you what each stage means. This can be a few days or just a few times it is up to you.
- Once your child understands the stages of life and in what order they go have them tie them to the yarn or string. Be sure to leave at least an inch on each end of the string or yarn.
- Tie the two ends of the string together. Lay the yarn or string in a circle on a flat surface. Explain that the cycle of life is in the form of a circle. Go over each stage with your child

and when you get to parting let them know that the parting happens so the beginning of the circle, birth, can happen.

- The 'circle' can be put in a special place, homed on an altar, or just simply put up. Be sure to revisit it once in awhile for review and retention.

****Don't worry too much about them knowing everything about each rite of passage as each one will be gone over in depth later in this series.***