

What is an altar?

Terrence looked around the dining room after his mother had arranged it. He felt that it looked as though there was more room. He liked it. He scanned the room one last time before he gave his opinion to his mother on the work that she had done. That's when he spotted it, a small table with a cloth on it in the corner. "Mom," Terrence said "what is this table for. There is nothing on it. Did you forget to take it out?"

Terrence's mother looked at him "No, Terrence, that is going to be the new family altar."

"What are you going to put on it?" asked Terrence.

"Well, I am planning to put some Pagan stuff on it, a few pictures, and some things I am going to gather off the ground from outside," said his mother with a big smile as she stroked his hair.

"I don't know what that is!" Terrence exclaimed.

"You don't know what?" asked his mother.

Terrence turned toward her and said, "I don't know what an altar is."

"Well, it is either something that is used as a center for worship," said his mother, "or in honor of those who are special."

Activity-

- Get some index cards, it doesn't matter if they are plain or lined.
- Have you child draw the different types and uses of altars, one on each card. Have them make a list of the things that make up the type of altar on the reverse side. There are many different kinds and uses of altars and you can go in any direction you want with this. Some ideas of the types and uses of altars along with the things that make it up are below in case it is the direction you feel comfortable going in:

Uses:

Shrine - made in honor of others (ancestors, Gods, Goddesses, Holidays, etc...)

Ritual Altar - adorned with items needed for a specific ritual

Working Altar - ready to do specific things only (devotions, magickal workings, etc...)

Types:

1. Room Altar - altar that completely covers a room
2. Portable Altar - an altar that is moved from place to place
3. Temporary Altar - altar that is prepared, used
4. Permanent Altar - altar that sits in one place all the time
5. Nature Altar - alter that is outside and set up all the time
6. Semi-Permanent Altar - alter that is set up using a permanent fixture then tore down when not in use

- After all cards are made simply shuffle through them and have you child either read them or you read them. Have your child then explain them in a few words. You can play this game a little each day or a lot in one day. As you play try and get faster and faster shuffling through the cards. The goal is for your child to go really fast when either they read or you say the altar type or use.
- For some kids it might be fun if you take turns doing this game. Even though you know it, this may give them some competition or just make a lot of laughs.