

PAGAN Moonbeams

Vol. 4 Issue 4
February, 2011

Staff Notes

A little note to the readers' from our small staff.
Staff Members listed in chronological order.

Mandi Aumann

Writer & Admin. since: July 08

Love is in the air! Take time this month to be with family and enjoy yourselves. Let your children teach you to laugh again!

Raven

Editor since: Aug. 08

It's the middle of the dead of Winter here. BRRRR!
I'm cold! Time to retreat for some hot cocoa next to a warm fire, and find some me time with my journal. This is actually a great time to reflect and meditate on a more inward self. And if the cold, dark gray of Winter has got you down, put on some super upbeat music, make colorful construction paper flowers, burn some white copal incense (nothing says "hello sunshine!" better than that) and get those dancing feet going! Not only will it warm the spirit, but it's great exercise too.

Cheers!

Pandora

Writer & Editor since: December 08

As a new year was born last month, and we saw the former year reach the end of its lifespan, many of us revisited the notion of "resolutions". Many were re-born of those from the previous year, and yet others are new to us. Me? I have a personal rule to never make New Year's Resolutions, as I believe the timeline sets many up for failure, and only true success can come of the true desire to make an improvement, instead of the timeline; so, I make my resolutions at the moment I realize they're necessary, which just happened to be halfway through December, this time. Interestingly enough, they all led to the rebirth of the realization that you can not grow spiritually if you don't care for yourself, physically, too. It is my hope that you may all be able to see things a little differently, a even a little brighter, in this year to come!

Love & Light, Always!

A Few Words

Although there seems to be no end to the cold winter that has hit this year, Imbolc reminds us that warmer weather is coming.

Spend time with the offerings of nature this time of year, you are sure to find things that are very valuable. With the coming days nature will offer more and you will be lost in the wonderland that Gaia shares.

With each new step or discovery be sure to know that without the death, hibernation, or migration nature would not be able to show the greatness she is this time of year. Enjoy watching the births of all her offerings.

paganmoonbeams@yahoo.com



Index

Volume 4, Issue 4
FEBRUARY, 2011
"Birth & Death"



Topic Focus

Death & Birth

| | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| News | pg. 3 |
| Making The Connection | pg. 4 |
| Wee Pagans (grades PreK-2nd) | pg. 5 |
| Margi's Fish / Story | |
| Pagan Path Activity Ideas | |
| Beanies Lucky Pot | |
| Herb Focus | pg. 9 |
| Marigold | |
| Young Pagans (grades 3-6) | pg. 10 |
| Traveling Roads | |
| Hunter Hibernates in Winter/Story | |
| Pandora's Recipe Box | |
| Winter Energy Cookies | |
| Mineral Focus | pg. 13 |
| Peridot | |
| Pagan Teens | pg. 14 |
| Middle Magick | |
| Life & Death / Story | |
| Pagan Resources | pg. 19 |
| Parent Section | pg. 20 |
| Mystical Evening | |
| Special Pagans | |
| Path Ideas | |
| Raven's Note to Parents | |

For advertising questions, comments,
submissions, and more contact:

TristA Nichols
306 W. 6th Street
Muncie, IN 47302
(765)631-3372

Paganmoonbeams@yahoo.com

We Appreciate Your Readership

Pagan Moonbeams is proudly published monthly, by an all-volunteer staff. The publisher and authors believe that this publication has been compiled meticulously and, with knowledge; however, the publisher and authors can in no way guarantee the accuracy or completeness of the information. Therefore the publishers and authors do not accept any liability for any damage resulting from actions or decisions based on the information in question.

Users of this publication are strongly advised not to use this publication as a sole means of information, but to rely on their personal knowledge and experience, to check the information to be used. Users should also be aware that statements, insights and conclusions made in good faith in articles may need to be re-considered in the light of later research and development. We cannot guarantee the accuracy of information provided by participating companies and authorities. The publisher reserves the right to combine, delete and change sections. The publisher reserves the right to edit and reuse (parts of) the articles and to distribute the information, by any means.

All right reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced; stored in a retrieval system; or transmitted, in any form by any means, electronic or mechanical, printing, photocopying, recording or otherwise, except through the written permission of the publisher.

For more information, contact: TristA@paganmoonbeams.com

©2007/2011 Pagan Moonbeams

News

By: TristÅ

Moon Beat



Two of the Staff from Pagan Moonbeams goes live in coordination with Cauldron FM. Right now you can listen to web casts comprised and held by TristA & Raven, but it won't be long and it will become a Saturday morning show and done live. To hear the web cast and the rest of the great things Cauldron FM has to offer simply visit their site:

<http://cauldronfm.podbean.com/>. We are both excited for you to check things out!

After Death

t s w r s s p l r n o r f f s
s d d e i t v d d o r e l e n
v r d r e e m o r n o o h d r
d a s u m m e r l a n d n o o
h g l m s n a n n w y n s r a
n s r h l r l a e n a n r i y
e a w a a r a i c o h a m l r
e n l v r l a r r n l a h a r
e t e a d d l r o w r e t f a
a i s l e o f a p p l e s i i
n n d o n d l r o w r e d n u
b r s n r e o e l s l o r l o
s d l e i f n a i s s y l e n
m o y s d u i c s u i s n o d
r f r d n l a b t a d p f l r

Afterworld

Annwyn

Asgard

Avalon

Bifrost

Caer Arrianrod

Elyssian Fields

Hades

Hel

Isle of Apples

Necropolist

Summerland

Underworld

Valhalla

Go Goddess

A great website where you get to choose your own Goddess and have a lot of fun with her is Go Goddess. Take your time and try out everything it is free and a great find. <http://www.gogoddess.com/>

Making the Connection

By: Raven

Making the Connection – Life & Death

Religion, at best, can be daunting. If you are a young child or teen, the task of making a connection between yourself and where you fit in to your religion, no matter the path, can be a difficult one. Don't allow this to discourage you, as we have all, at some point in our lives, felt this same way. Allow yourself to listen to the whispers deep within you, as they will bring you to the path you were meant to walk. When you open your mind and spirit to let these whispers in, you may even find that they have been leading you down your path all along. Being Pagan, we realize that we are connected to everyone and everything around us. Finding that connection is easier than you think.

Hello, my friends! Well, we're halfway through the cold Winter season here in the Northern Hemisphere and halfway to Spring. So, for many of us that means it's COLD outside! This is the perfect time to discuss matters of Life and Death. Death too scary and final to discuss? Nah. Not really. Life and Death go hand in hand.

In a manner of speaking, both Life and Death can be celebrated and feared. As a parent, sometimes the thought of bringing new life into the world can be quite scary. There are fears, doubts, and the "what if I'm not a good parent" thoughts. The same can happen with the older siblings as well. "What if the baby doesn't like me?" "What if I'm a horrible big brother/sister?" "What if mom and dad forget about me?" This type of negative anxiety can build up inside you, but it all seems to melt away the minute that new life appears. Then the joy and happiness come. There is much excitement within the family. And the celebration of life begins!

Death should be no exception. Yes, we should still mourn the loss and know that it's okay to be sad, but there should be balance in this as the happier side, is celebrated. There is a great sadness that comes over all of us as we lose a family member or close friend. It's a hurt that sometimes feels like it will never go away. The holidays may not feel as joyful when you first lose someone. In fact, that tends to be the time that we miss our loved ones the most. The most important thing you can do is rejoice in the life that person did have with you.

Life and Death should be honored and revered for the powerful, majestic events that they are. Both are intertwined with each other. Death doesn't have to mean an end, but, rather, an ending in a corporeal form and the next big journey or step in life itself. In death we are moving from one plane to the next. In essence, you are ending your life in your body to continue your life in the spirit realm.

The beginning of life is the beginning of a journey, one that is ever continuing. New life doesn't always mean starting out as a baby. All throughout our lives we encounter a renewal of life. Sometimes new life is found through faith, other times it may be starting out fresh, or all over again, in someplace new. Yes, life can sometimes drag you down, but there is something completely magickal in every living thing. There is a spark and if you listen closely, or watch intently, you can find that certain spark. Think of the seasons and how they are ever changing. In the springtime, after everything has been so dormant and gloomy, colorful flowers start to poke their heads from the ground and blossom. New grass comes in and becomes a beautiful green; leaves come back to the trees.

So, seemingly, making that connection with life may be easy. How do we make that same connection with death? There are many ways to relate to death. There is the season of winter, when things are cold, slower, dormant, and the flowers and leaves have died. However, the life of those things doesn't end there. When leaves have fallen and flowers died their seeds have fallen as well; impregnating the earth with a new flower, tree, or shrub. Many flowers have come from bulbs, so, while all we see on the surface is just a dead space, underneath there are more sprouts hibernating & waiting for the warmer weather to wake them up.

There are particular times of the year as well when the veil is thinner, so it is easier to communicate with the spirit world. But, those aren't the only times that you can remember, mourn the loss and celebrate the new journey of your loved ones. Remember that while they may not be with you in body, their memories and thoughts will always be with you. Set up a sacred remembering space filled with pictures and/or objects that will help you think of them. Try meditating in that area. Light a candle, write a message on paper to them, place it in a fire-safe container (like a cauldron – that's what I use), and, using the candle, set your message on fire. It's best to do this part outdoors as the wind can carry your message to the departed one with whom you are communicating, and it won't set off any smoke detectors in your house.

Rejoice in your life, the days that you have and not for the time that you lost. Live for the moment, and remember that tomorrow, no matter what it brings, is another great adventure.

May the Blessings of the Lord & Lady be bestowed upon you all.

Rev. Raven, HPs

Wee Pagan

By: TristÅ

Margi's Fish

Margi ran to her mother after doing her chores in her room early in the day. She was a little upset because her goldfish had died sometime in the night. She was just didn't know what to do and was running to her mom to find out.

Margi's mother smiled and looked at Margi. "There is no need to worry about your fish; it was his time to die. He is moving out of this world to move on to what's next. He didn't suffer or anything because you are a good owner and kept his bowl cleaned and kept him fed all the time. Sometimes it is just the time for things and people to die."

Margi cleared up her troubled face and thought about what her mother had said to her. She then looked and asked "what do we do now?"

"We return your goldfish back to nature where we borrowed him from. You can decide whether you want to flush him down the toilet so he can return to Gaia's waters or if you want to burry him and allow the earth to use him."

"I want to flush him," Margi said happy with her decision. "I would just like some time to say good-bye to him."

Later that evening Margi's grandmother came over to watch Margi as her mother went to work. Margi told her grandmother about what happened to her goldfish. Margi's grandmother told her to sit down and listen to a story she wanted to share with her.

Margi grabbed a snack and found a spot of the floor in front of the fireplace where she liked to sit most of the time. Her grandmother began her story.

"Life is like a circle that never ends. Things die to bring birth back. A good example is Tilly. Tilly is the name of a beautiful butterfly that is on her way to Mexico to escape the cold northern air. Tilly was born in the North. To learn more about Tilly we need to start with Shegray. Shegray was a great caterpillar that hatched from an egg. Her colors were so bright that everyone in the garden would stop to watch her. She had many great times in her life. One day something made her make a cocoon or chrysalis, after this she climbed into it and died. It was a sad day for all of her friends to see Shegray die, but at the same time they knew it was time for her to do so. Later on out of the cocoon or chrysalis came Tilly. Tilly would not have been able to live without the death of Shegray." Grandmother stopped her story and looked at Margi.

"Grandma, is this the way it is done in real life?" Asked Margi.

"Yes, Margi, this is how death and birth are handled in life. In reality no one really knows what happens to a soul once it has died, but I believe like a lot of Pagans that death brings birth. I am sorry that your goldfish died, but I believe that it was just his turn to move to another life." Grandmother answered.

"So, now let's have a big tea party in celebration on the new birth that your goldfish made happen. It is a wonderful thing, not a bad thing, that death happens." Grandmother pointed out.

Margi listened to her grandmother because she was very wise and had never really lied to Margi. She tended to tell her the way things were without making it sound good all the time, Margi liked that about her.

Around a week later when Margi and her mother was at the mall taking a look around the pet store to find some food for her dog Margi stopped to look at fish tanks. Her eyes got big and she ran to her mother and dragged her over to the tanks.

"Mom, see that little bitty goldfish there? Well, there is something about it, I feel something about it. It is like an attachment, similar to the one I had with my goldfish that died. Could this little fish be what was born when my goldfish died?" Margi said quietly to her mother.

"Yes," replied her mother "this could be your goldfish. There is no way of really telling but if it is pulling you towards it in the same way there is nothing else to do but get it so you can begin caring for it.

Margi looked up at her mother in happiness and admiration. It wasn't everybody you could openly talk to about this kind of thing and she was glad that her mother was one of them for her. She was even more happy that she was going to get another goldfish. She knew that it may not be exactly like her old goldfish but it was special and it called to her.

She stood there and watched as the store keeper tried many times to catch that ornery fish that was dodging the net. She laughed at him a little under her breath.

Wee Pagan

By: TristÅ

Baby Book

Make a baby book comprised of many different family members, both those alive and that have passed. Include a picture of the person when they were a baby, and only baby pictures. On the other side of the page of the album, include a funny story or something cute that you have gotten from another family member about them when they were a baby (example – grandmother will tell about your mother, etc...).

If you are binding your book use colored paper and the hole punch and have pages resemble notebooking pages with stickers and anything you want to draw around the story and picture. This should be a fun book and you should do all you can to make it exciting.

If you are keeping it as a book find a really secretive and special place to put your baby book. You could keep it as individual pages and for those that are no longer around could be put on an altar around the date of what was their birthday to celebrate their birth.

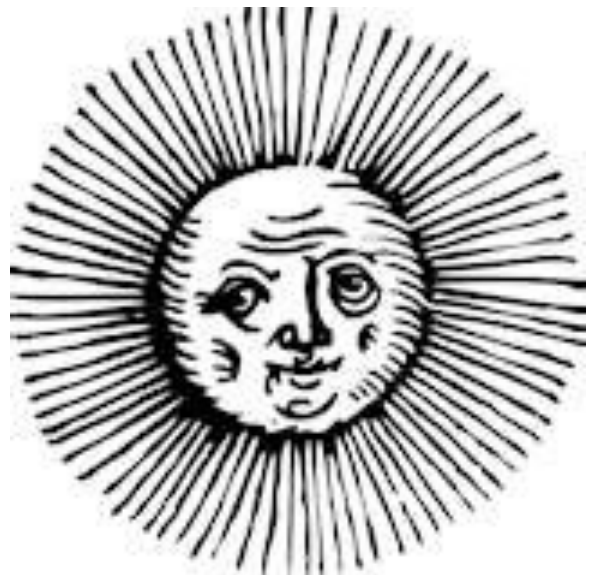
Sun & Moon Deaths

Take the time to celebrate the death of either the sun or moon and the birth of the other. It is a great time to watch the death of the sun or moon even though they can't be seen in different parts of the world. Check the time schedule or better yet pay attention to the things that lead up to the death and birth of them so you can do it naturally. It is this time of year that both the sun and moon need extra energy. Some ideas on how to this you can find below.

- Do a dance to some music that touches your heart
- Make an altar and do a candle lighting to help things on their way
- Write and carry out a death small ritual
- Write and carry out a birth small ritual
- Make an altar display to aid with energy

Plant Walk

Take the time to go on a walk and look around areas that you are familiar with. See how most of the plants that was there have died for the winter? Well that is because they couldn't survive the weather. They have left seeds behind that are hiding under the dead plants and this coming spring they will flourish again. See how many of these plants you can remember and/or find. Take a notebook or sheet of paper on clipboard to draw what you feel it will look like when the weather does get warm. What a great way to stay familiar with your area and what nature offers there.



Pandora's Recipe Box

By: Pandora

Beanie's Lucky Pot

The Water Dragon closely followed on his mother's heels, as she headed toward the source of all of the noise: the kitchen. Once there, they saw nothing; well, that is...nothing except for all of Aunt Bridget's pots strewn across the floor, and counter tops. Well, the pots and a pair of legs that were sticking out of one of the cabinets.

"What in Gaia's name are you doing, Beanie?!?" she called above the clanking.

"Aunt Bridget, we're trying to figure out which of these is the lucky one," her nephew, Bubba, answered from the other side of the kitchen island.

"What?????" Aunt Bridget looked so confused it made her son, the Water Dragon fall over in a fit of giggles.

"Mama, we need to find the lucky pot for dinner. We need to have it before everyone gets here!" Beanie answered her mother, matter-of-factly.

Suddenly, the realization of what her Fairy daughter was referring to dawned. It was a simple misunderstanding of a turn of phrase!

"*Pot luck* not *lucky pot*, honey. It *is* about dinner, this time, but it can be lunch, too. It means that everybody brings a part of the meal; in this case, everybody brings a different dish.

But, there are times that it may mean something like where the original term came from. It's a few century's old, but it refers to everybody bringing one or two ingredients to put into one really big dish. It was a one-pot-meal sort of thing. Does that make sense, Bean?"

Beanie's disappointment was evident, "You mean there's no special pot? No cauldron? Nothing? Well, that doesn't sound very magickal. *Or* very fun, either."

Her mother looked at her nephew, who'd been watching this scene unfold. She asked if he thought his mother might have something to say about all of this.

"Well, *my* mommy says all meals are magickal! And you've helped her cook; you know how much fun it can be, even when she's being serious," Bubba chimed in, trying to convince his cousin.

"Does Auntie Pandora use special pots?"

"Mom says every pot and vessel is magickal. Except, I don't know what the deal with vessels is. She is *so* weird!" Bubba stated what all children think of their parents, at one point or another.

"My little sister is absolutely *not* weird, young man. She is simply a Kitchen Witch, and she was talking about bowls, cups, pitchers, and anything else that can hold your food. Besides, we all know she makes most of her magick in the kitchen. After all, didn't she tell the both of you that her kitchen is her altar?" Aunt Bridget laughed.

Surveying the minor catastrophe in her kitchen, the little Water Dragon pulled a wooden spoon out of a nearby drawer and proceeded to drum on the bottom of the closest pot. Seeing this as motivation, his mother directed the children towards cleaning up, and promised there would be a small drumming circle, later. This encouraged Calvin to stop "drumming" and help, too. After all, drumming was natural for him; he'd been doing it since before he could stand by himself!

Amidst the din of the clanking pots and pans that they were putting away, Beanie asked Bubba if he noticed any pots that seemed more magickal than any of the others. He noted that some of the shinier ones might be,

Pandora's Recipe Box

By: Pandora

Beanie's Lucky Pot

but that it didn't seem to make that much difference to his mother. Some of her best meals came out of old black pans that she used to cook directly on a fire, when they went camping. Upon hearing this, his aunt explained that it wasn't the look of the pan that made it more or less magickal. It was the preparations made within it! At that, they took to deciding on *their* portion of that night's potluck meal. Simply put, it was a favorite summertime recipe, as it was a summertime themed dinner party! What better way to look forward to the warmer months, right? Beanie was not so easily convinced.

"But, Mama," she addressed Bubba's Aunt Bridget, "why are we having summertime food when summertime is so very far away. Nothing is growing; in fact, everything is dead!"

"Um, notsomuch." Bubba sounded so much like his mother, in that short statement that seemed like one word, that Aunt Bridget couldn't fight the smile tugging at the corners of her mouth.

"Waddya mean, 'notsomuch'??? There's ice and snow, *everywhere*, Bubba! Besides the ice and snow, *what* is growing?" Beanie confronted her cousin.

Smiling, Aunt Bridget coaxed her nephew to answer his cousin. "Go ahead, Bubba. Explain."

Shuffling his feet, and looking at his toes, he began, "Well, Mom's a Hedge Witch, too. Not just a Kitchen Witch. She says they compliment each other since she gets so many of her ingredients for cooking right outta the garden. So, she starts planting seeds around now. That way, they're small plants, when spring comes. She calls them seedlings. But, she doesn't have to do that with all of them. She says some just sleep during the winter! The snow and ice are kind of like a blanket, I guess. They don't die, they just become a doormat."

"I'm pretty sure she meant *dormant*," Aunt Bridget softly corrected. "It means they stop growing, for a little while, while they sleep the winter away."

"Oh! That makes sense! I wondered why mom wanted me to wipe my feet on the doormat, but doesn't like me to walk through the garden, too!"

"So, yeah, they're dor-mant," he pronounced the word carefully. "So, you see, Beanie, there's not very much that really dies. And Mom says 'besides, that can be used for compost, that will give the soil extra nutrients, once everything gets to growing!' See? Everything's not dead, Beanie! Why not celebrate the life that's coming back, by waking up with a Summertime Feast?!?!?" He was a little excited.

"Alright, gang! I need to go check on the baby, and when I get back, I need all of these 'vessels' put away," she winked at Bubba, just then, "so we can start on our addition to the pot luck Summertime party!"

At that, Aunt Bridget swept out of the room, and up the stairs.



Herbal Focus

By: Lionfirestone

An annual herbaceous plant, calendula blooms at the start of almost every calendar month. The basal leaves are spatulate and stalked, while the pale green stem leaves are lanceolate, alternate and sessile. The plant bears flowers in bright yellow, red and orange colors. The fruits are rough and curved achene. The plant is cultivated in the kitchen gardens around India, for the flowers that are dried for broth. Marigold is native to Egypt and the Mediterranean, but has become naturalized in the temperate regions of the world. It can be found throughout India and is widely grown in the Valley of Flowers in Ranthambore National Park. The plant is known as zergul in Hindi.

Uses & Benefits of Marigold

Marigold is useful in stomach upsets, ulcers, menstrual problems, eye infections, inflammations and wound healing.

The plant is antiseptic. Its flower, when rubbed on the affected part, relieves pain and swelling caused by a wasp or bee.

The flowers are also used to make a lotion for sprains and wounds.

The water distilled from marigold flowers is good for sore eyes, while the infusion of fresh flowers is beneficial in fever.

Marigold is used to treat alopecia, bladder and kidney problems, blood in the urine and uterine bleeding.

Bright yellow and orange flowers are used for making garlands and decorate religious places.

The leaves are used as a part of salads.

The plant is used for abdominal cramps and constipation.

Marigold is good for treating bedsores, chapped lips, leg ulcers, persistent ulcers, bruises and varicose veins.

It is used during aromatherapy, as a skin treatment.

Marigold cream treats hemorrhoids and infant bums to help fight diaper rash.

The flower is boiled to extract a yellow dye.

It serves as an excellent mouthwash after tooth extraction.

Marigold sipper

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 medium oranges, sliced 1/2 inch
- 30 to 40 sprigs Signet marigolds 4 to 5 inches long
- Carbonated water, chilled
- Ice cubes

Signet marigold sprig

In a large saucepan combine water and sugar. Add orange slices. Bring to boiling, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, for 5 minutes. Remove from heat; stir in marigold sprigs. Cover; steep for 3 minutes. Strain syrup with a fine mesh sieve; discard sprigs. Cool syrup completely. Cover and refrigerate. For each serving, pour about 1/4 cup syrup and 1/2 cup carbonated water into a glass filled with ice cubes. (For a less sweet beverage, add additional carbonated water to taste). Float additional marigold sprigs in each glass. Makes 6 servings (1 2/3 cups syrup).

Enjoy the bookmark below.

Herb Focus: Marigold



Parts Used: The petals, leaves and root

Location: Native to southern Europe and the eastern Mediterranean and now grows in many parts of the United States and Canada.

Healing Properties: Marigold can be used for headache, jaundice, red eyes, toothache, as an antiseptic, for chapped lips, bedsores and leg ulcers, and skin inflammation, and to aid in digestion and to help with skin healing.

Magickal Attributes: Use for consecration, inner vision, love, peace, and truthfulness, prophesy, the psychic, seeing magical creatures, clairvoyance, dreams, business or legal affairs and renewing personal energy.

Latin Name: *Calendula officinalis*

Important points to remember

- Don't use marigold if you're pregnant or breast-feeding.
- Don't confuse *C. officinalis* with other ornamental marigolds, such as *Tagetes patula* (French marigold), *T. erecta* (African marigold), or *T. minuta* (Inca marigold). Known for their ability to repel insects and earthworms, these plants are found in many vegetable gardens. Know that marigold carries a risk of allergic reactions.

Young Pagans

By: Mandi Aumann

Keeping Those Alive

Just because those you loved and/or knew are no longer in the body they were when you knew them does not mean that they aren't with you. Take the time to learn more about those that have passed on from people that was close to them when they were still here.

Keep them alive and in your world by taking interest in the things they did when they were alive. Make their favorite recipe, take up their hobby, listen to their favorite music, just anything that you feel connected to them when doing.

Do not become sad when keeping those gone alive, you are simply honoring them and they would be happy to see you do it so smile with them.

Sprouts

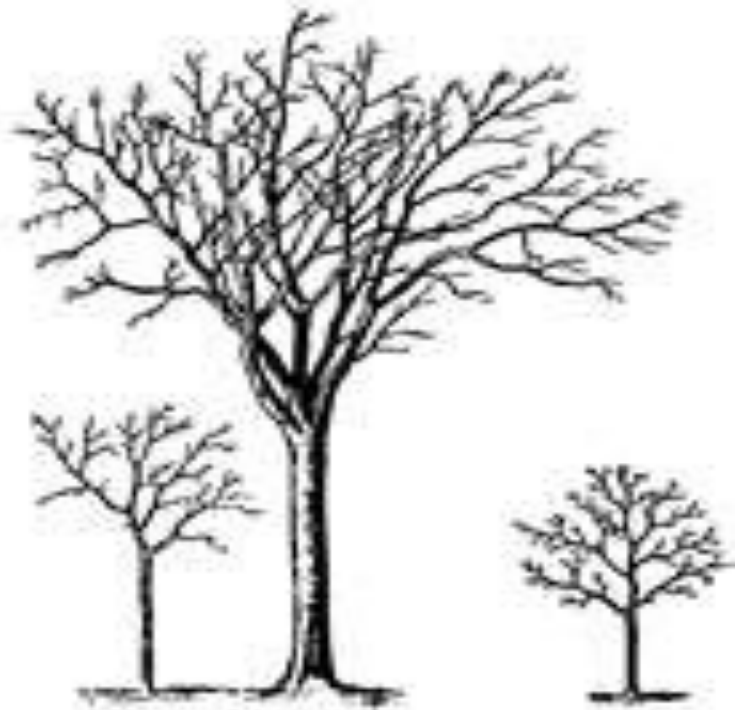
This is a great time of the year to begin sprouts or starters. Pick a seed from your meal or even a seed packet of your choice to start in a cup and in the window sill. Take the time each day to look at it, water as needed, and just spend time with your special plant.

Once the weather gets better plant it outside or you can even put indoors in a bigger pot, according to what you are growing. Be sure to ask an adult to help you when replanting it because each plant has a preferred place to grow (shade, sunlight, etc...).

This is a great experience to see how death turns to birth. Enjoy your project!

Memory tree

Make a tree out of fallen branches or wire to hang pictures of those that are gone on from our world. Put your tree in a very special place where you can remember them. Get it out on special days and talk over memories about the people on your tree.



Pandora's Recipe Box

By: Pandora

Hunter Hibernates in the Winter

“Mo-om! Hunter's sleeping on the sofa, again,” Samantha began, as she walked into the laundry room, where her mother was folding clothes. Noting the lack of concern on her mother's face, she continued, “All he ever does is sleep, anymore. He doesn't go outside and play, or *anything!*”

“Sam, dear. Your brother does more than sleep, and he doesn't go outside because it's frigid out there. You don't go out and play, all that much, either, Little Miss.” Seeing the argument erupting on her daughter's face, she continued, “He *is* sleeping more than the warmer months, but it's just because he likes to hibernate, during the Winter.”

“Yeah, I'm hibernating,” Hunter yawned, as he walked into the room.

“Mom, he's not a bear.” Then, turning to her brother, Samantha exclaimed, “Hunter, you're not a bear, or something! You can't hibernate!”

At that moment, her mother dropped a fresh-from-the-dryer towel over her head. It properly distracted Samantha, amidst her tirade. Samantha reveled in the sheer bliss that the warmth from that towel spread through her entire body.

“Sam? That feeling you've got right now? That's a small version of how most of us feel during the warmer winter months.

“Go ahead and dance,” she laughed, as her middle child began a sort of waltz with her towel. “After all, you're just helping me prove the point. Some people really just want to snuggle up and mini-hibernate, during the colder months. I mean if *I* had the choice and option to do it, I'd already have flown to the Southern Hemisphere!”

“Why?” Samantha asked.

“Because I simply *love* the summer, and down there it *is* the summer! You know how I get cold so easily, in the winter, and I have to be extra careful when I'm outside, right?”

“So you don't get cold injuries, again, right?”

“Something like that. Well, not everybody gets injuries, but everybody needs to keep warm in the winter. Some people, like your brother, also seem to move a little less. It's *our* version of hibernation. But, on the upside, I do just happen to have a recipe for some cookies that will give *all* of you some energy to go outside and build some forts and have a—NICE—snowball fight. I might even join in, for that part!” her mother explained.

“But, Mom,” Hunter spoke up, “you can't. You can't risk getting hurt or sick, again!”

“Son, while I appreciate your intentions, I'm much better at bundling up than I once was. Besides, if my cheeks start to get numb, I'll go right inside and have some hot cocoa, ok?”

She loved that her children were thinking beyond themselves, and were actually showing true concern for her; this was an even bigger deal, seeing as how they'd not actually been alive when she'd gotten her cold weather injuries. But, it also meant that they *did* listen when she told them how serious it could be!

What a great day to be a parent, she thought.

“Alright, let me make those cookies! Hunter, can you shovel the driveway, please? It'll give all of us more snow to play with,” she coaxed.

After feeling reassured that family fun in the snow *could* happen safely, she put on his warmest winter gear, and walked outside to get to work, while he let his mother believe *he* was helping *her*. In reality, Hunter believed, he was protecting his mother by keeping her inside and warm...*and* he was getting some of the best cookies ever!

Not to worry, everybody stayed safe and warm, by wearing the right kinds of winter clothes, and coming inside when they just started to get a chill. And there were even warm cookies and cocoa ready and waiting for them!

Pandora's Recipe Box

By: Pandora

Winter Energy Cookies

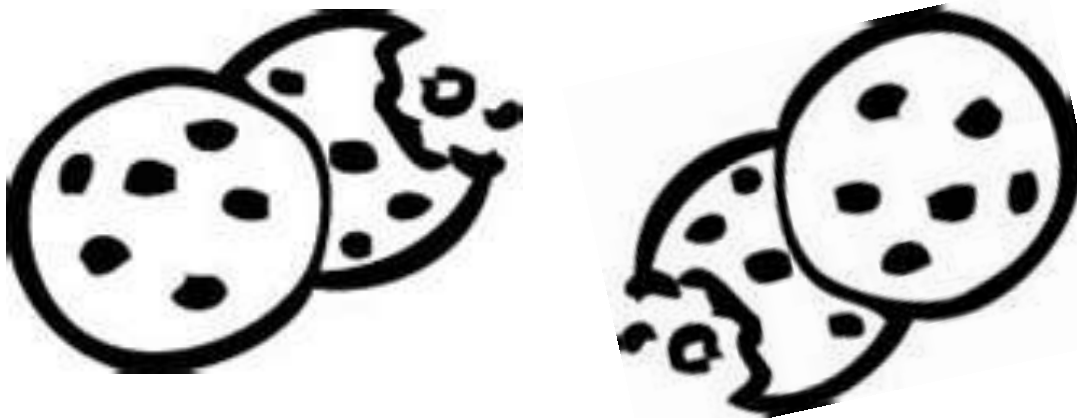
INGREDIENTS

1 cup unsalted butter
1 1/2 cups packed brown sugar
1/3 cup molasses
1/3 cup smooth peanut butter
2 eggs
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups whole wheat flour
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup toasted wheat germ
1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
2 cups rolled oats
1 cup raisins
1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
1 cup chopped walnuts

DIRECTIONS

1. Cream the butter, sugar, molasses, and peanut butter in a large bowl. Blend in the eggs and vanilla.
2. Mix the flour, wheat germ, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon in a separate bowl. Stir the dry ingredients into the creamed mixture, until evenly blended.
3. Stir in the oats, raisins, choc chips, and nuts. Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour.
4. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (180 degrees C).
5. Shape dough into large balls using 1/4 cup of dough per cookie. Place on greased cookie sheets, leaving 3 inches between them. Flatten slightly with a fork. Bake for 15 to 18 minutes. When done, the tops will still be soft to the touch. Cool on the sheets for 5 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool.

** For a less sweet option, substitute honey for the molasses.**



Mineral Focus

By: Lionfirestone

The Greeks and Romans referred to peridot as *topazion* and *topazius* respectively and this name was later given to topaz, to end the confusion with the two gems. Historical legend has it that peridot was the favorite gemstone of Cleopatra. Pliny wrote about the green stone from Zagbargad Island in 1500 B.C.. Even until recently have jewelers used the term "*chrysolite*" (Latin for golden stone) in referring to peridot gems for some reason. This term has also been used to refer to other gemstones, of a more golden color.

The earliest recorded production of peridot was in about 70 A.D. from St. Johns Island in the Red Sea, about 54 kilometers off the coast of Egypt. Most of the earliest known peridot gems came from this location and small amounts of material are still being produced from there today. Later, very large, fine-quality peridot was produced from deposits in Myanmar (formerly Burma). These deposits were well known for their 20- to 40-carat cut stones of superb color and clarity, but since the socialist government came to power, the supply of Burmese peridot has been curtailed to such a point as to no longer be a factor in the industry. One can only guess as to whether the deposits are mined out, or if government policies have resulted in the shortage of material.

Peridot is the official birthstone for the month of August as adopted by the American National Association of Jewelers in 1912. It is also the stone for the Zodiac sign of Libra. It can also be given on the 16th wedding anniversary.

It is thought to bring the wearer good luck, peace, and success. Its powers include health, protection, and sleep. The advantages of peridot are to attract love and calm anger while also soothing nerves and dispelling negative emotions.

Enjoy the bookmark below.

Mineral Focus: Peridot



Color: Shades of Green from olive to yellow green.

Chakra: Heart

Healing Properties: Health, protection, peace, soothes the nerves, success, sleep

Magickal Properties: Dispels negative emotions

Lustre: vitreous to oily

Location: Historically peridot comes from the ancient source of Zagbargad (Zebirget) Island in the Red Sea off the coast of Egypt.

Metaphysical Properties & Uses:

Animals: Peridot will help relax a stressed pet.

Children: Peridot will help children to become less anxious about their peers and help mend broken friendships.

Finance & Prosperity: Peridot is a luck and money charm.

Health & Healing: Peridot is a general healer but will help relieve asthma, allergies, bites and stings.

Home: Peridot will attract good fortune to your home and help bring a sense of peace.

Love: Peridot is a fidelity, love and marriage charm.

Protection: Peridot is anti-negativity.

Psychic: It can be used for protection against negativity in general and for auras in particular.

Middle Magick

By: Pandora

The Death Card

In Tarot, it's not what you think!

First and foremost, my dears, the Death Card has absolutely *nothing* to do with anybody dying. Let's get that one out of the way, really fast, so we can have some fun looking into some of the wonderful things this card can show you! Hang on a second, so I can pull mine out of my favorite deck. OK!

If you haven't already picked up on it, I'm pretty big on imagery; whether it's provided for me—by looking at my cards, etc.—or I need to visualize, I'm big on details. Trust me, it helps, when you start getting into some of the deeper metaphysical aspects. But, for now, I'll just use my eyeballs. If *you* happen to have a deck (or your parent/guardian will let you borrow this card for a *moment*), go ahead and pull it out so you can see what I'm talking about. If you don't have one, you can do one of two things: one, picture this in your head; or, two, pull up a picture of one on the Internet.

Alrighty! Let's get to it.

The Death card, in Tarot, is *not* about death, per se, but it *is* about the ending of something. On the flip side, you could also say it's about the birth—or even the rebirth—of something else. Something new. You know, I could stop writing, here, and you would have sufficient information to drive on, yourself. Of course, cursory information is just that: it can only get you so far. So, let's see what Auntie Pandora can do about that, shall we???

The Death card is lucky number 13, out of the 21 Major Arcana Cards, in a traditional Tarot deck. (There is also the Minor Arcana, divided similarly to a traditional deck of playing cards. We'll talk about those later, though.) Yes, I *could* start with number 1, but that would be kind of boring and entirely to “normal” for the likes of me! I will not be discussing the Tarot, in order, but I promise that you absolutely will get all of the information. You can arrange these pages, numerically, if you like. Well, eventually, you can, anyway. :) You may choose to put these pages into a 3-ring binder, so you can add your own notes; you might even choose to not print them, and only write down the information that you deem necessary. Still, you may choose to add these to your own personal Grimoire or Book of Shadows. Just, please, keep in mind that you may realize, somewhere down the road, that there was *something* that you saw, that speaks to you in the future, that just doesn't float your boat, now. I hope you'll still have access to that information, when that time comes. That's pretty much why I like the idea of printing the page, so you can write in the margins, now or 11 years from now.

OK, so back to the card! Typically, the imagery on the card is very distinct, yet a bit confusing, simply because it is so distinct. There is an image on both ends of the card. Upright, so you can properly read the numbers and words, is called *Direct*. Upside down, is referred to as being *Reversed*. This is because they have different meanings, yet one is not necessarily better than the other. Additionally, neither direction is consistently a good sign nor a bad omen, of things to come. One thing to keep in mind, and I apologize if I'm “all over the map”, tonight: divination is a snapshot of the way things will be if, *and only if*, the person receiving the reading remains on the exact same pathway he/she is currently following. Small changes can greatly affect the outcome, but maybe not. You'll need to start listening to your own intuition, for further guidance on that one.

Upright, or Direct, the Death card is a signal that something painful, or just downright crappy, is about to come to an end. It also means a new beginning, and usually a very good one, will be on the coat tails of that ending. Regardless of exactly how you look at it, there will be a big change coming. You'll need to see what the focus of your reading is, to determine what this could mean. (To help me focus, when I read, I ask a very distinct and focused question.) It may also fluctuate, based off of *where* this card falls in the reading, especially if this card is simply a timeframe clarifier. What cards are before and after it? These are things that you should consider.

Reversed, the Death card is actually a harbinger of Hope! (It seemed appropriate to use “harbinger” and “hope” in the same sentence, just because it's the Death card, for the record.) :) Whether it's the start of something completely new, and not yet even fathomed, or it's the renewal of something grand...things are definitely taking a turn for the better. Think of it like the wildfires in the western United States, that happen every year. Yes, they're terrible, terrifying and destructive. Yet, those fires create soil that is so exceptionally more fertile than it was, prior to that destructive force. You could even, technically, think of it like compost: from the decay of one thing, it helps another to thrive more than deemed possible, without serious outside help. Just keep in mind that the good, will take slow and steady growth, like that new tree growing from a seed, in the seemingly devastated forest. It won't be the fully-grown Sycamore, right away.

So, this begins what I hope will be some fun learning, in Tarot. Remember, as with all things truly magickal, keep cards, notes, and other tools secure from prying eyes and fingers...like those of the smaller people, and sometimes pets, in our homes. Give it the respect and reverence it deserves, and your magickal tools will serve you well.

Until next time...

Love & Light, Always!

Pagan Teen

By: Raven

Life & Death

An excerpt from "Growing Up a Witch"

As was typical in their house, things were quite a bustle for Sierra, her siblings and her parents. For weeks now mom had been working quite a bit in her office and in her "sacred place" within the house. Now, different food was being made in preparation for her youngest brother's Wiccaning. AJ was nearly 9 months now and there was to be a Rite of Passage, his first, where he would be presented to the God and Goddess as they asked that both the Lord and Lady watch over, protect & guide him. Sierra was always in awe of the entire ceremony just because it was such an amazing thing to her, new life being brought forth, and everyone in the mood to celebrate. There would be members of the Pagan community there as well as selective Christian folk too. Those "folk," as Sierra referred to them, were really her extended family members. Only her mother and one aunt walked a Pagan path, but there was great acceptance throughout the family, so Sierra never felt like they were the proverbial "black sheep," or outcast, of the family. So, as things were, everyone was preparing and getting things ready.

Sierra pondered what to "give" to her baby brother. Now, typically she had never seen anyone go out and BUY a gift, not what mainstream society would consider normal anyway, for this type of ceremony. Rather, what they did was bestow upon the child some sort of wish or attribute. She recalled the rather large piece of rose quartz that her Auntie Pandora had given her brother, Calvin, at his Wiccaning. "So that he would always know love," were the words that she had expressed when she brought forth that crystal.

Crystal!

That was it!!!

Sierra was ecstatic. She ran to her room and pulled out her magic box. She remembered having been out with her mom once and had found a beautiful, large quartz point. She would give this to AJ, "so that he would always find clarity of mind." She nodded to herself. Yep, that's what she was going to give to him. Pleased with herself, she carefully wrapped the quartz point with some rose petals & lavender in a bright & cheerful looking piece of blue tissue paper. Sierra tucked the gift into the drawer she had in her altar and headed back downstairs.

Had it not been that she was raised in a magickal family for the entirety of her long (at least she felt it was long) 14 years of life, she might not have noticed the energy shift when she had come into the kitchen. Things were still bustling, but hushed. She glanced over at her mother, who was speaking on the phone, and noticed that her facial expressions denoted a rather serious, intense matter. Sierra looked to her father for clarification, hoping he would provide her with an answer.

"No worries, Sierra. Mom's fine. She is doing one of the things she does best. Someone in our community has reached out to her, so she is responding," her father told her.

"I dunno, Dad. She looks... sad."

Sierra then hugged her father and he kissed her forehead. Her mom got off the phone and the slowed tempo in the room suddenly picked up back to her mother's rapid pace of doing things.

"Mom, can I help?" Sierra really wanted to ask what was going on, but knew her mother wasn't going to say, so she thought she'd find a way to keep herself occupied. And, as much as she loved her father, Sierra was not ignorant to the semi-changed demeanor of her mother. Having her mother as her mom her whole life, she learned to read people very well.

"Yes, you can. Would you please gather up your brothers and sisters and 'supervise' them in the playroom? Remind them of what we're doing tomorrow. Thank you, sweetheart."

Sierra had her instructions and she was off. Her first stop was to grab the huge arts & crafts bin that she kept in her room. Then, one by one she found "the littles," as they were referred to by her parents and even Sierra, and corralled them into the basement for some fun. While in the midst of drawing, painting and creating whatever came to her siblings' young minds, Sierra saw the opportunity to talk to them about the importance of tomorrow. Using her best "grown up" voice, Sierra began.

Pagan Teen

By: Raven

Life & Death

An excerpt from "Growing Up a Witch"

(continued)

"Now, guys, you know tomorrow is a VERY important day and we need to be sure..."

"WE KNOW!!" The other four: Leah, Marie, Tommy & Gavin all answered in unison, promptly cutting off their older sister.

"Well you don't need to be rude about it! And if you really know, then someone tell me what you think is going to happen." Sierra was trying to keep her composure and not just go all 'typical teenager' on her siblings.

Leah started, "Tomorrow is AJ's Wiccaning."

"We'll all gather together to celebrate his having been born and present him to the God and Goddess," Marie chimed in.

"Then," began Tommy, "we will ask the God & Goddess for their blessing and protection over AJ."

"Once that has happened, anyone who would like to bestow a blessing over AJ will be invited to speak and do so," finished Gavin.

"Wow! You guys really know your stuff. Mom and Dad would be proud if they could have heard you. But, you wanna know the best part about it all?" asked Sierra.

"What?! What?!" They were all eager to know.

"The food! Did you see everything that is being made upstairs? Oh my Goddess! There's gonna be some great feasting afterwards." Sierra was passionate about food. It wasn't really so much the eating, as it was really the cooking and baking of food that she loved.

The day wore on and finally came to a quiet close in the evening. Everyone went to bed ready for the next day. Sierra was almost too excited to sleep thinking of her blessing that she had for her little brother. She opened the drawer in her altar to look at it. She could feel the positive energy coming from the package. Sierra smiled to herself as she shut the drawer.

The next morning everyone was up and Sierra helped her younger siblings with what they would be wearing for the ritual. She then got herself dressed, opened her altar drawer, removed her little bundled package and tucked it into a hidden pocket on her ritual skirt. She headed down the steps to be almost bowled over in a hug by two of her mother's closest friends, Elle & Aye. Aye was an ordained High Priestess, just like Sierra's mom. Elle was her partner and photographer. They were also both artists. Sierra and all of her siblings loved when they were told that Elle & Aye were coming for a visit. Visits with them were always so fun and definitely magickal.

Everyone was heading outside, so Sierra followed suit. The ceremony began and was just incredible. The only thing that struck Sierra as odd, not in a bad way, was that her mother should have been performing the ceremony today, but there was Aye in her mother's place. Now, it wasn't that Sierra had a problem with Aye performing her brother's Wiccaning, but, rather, she didn't understand why her mother would turn everything over when she spent so much time into getting the rite written and everything in place. Ah, well, she thought. Mom always had a reason for everything she did.

When it was time for anyone within the circle to bestow a blessing upon AJ, Sierra stepped forward. She reached in her hidden pocket and pulled out the tissue paper wrapped gift. She looked at AJ as she handed the gift to her mother and said, "My gift to you, sweet little AJ, is a clear quartz point, that you may always have clarity of mind." She kissed her brother on the cheek, smiled at her parents and went back to her spot. I did it, she thought to herself.

Well after the feasting was done and all of the attendees had left, Sierra found her mom in her office writing away. She had been waiting for a quick moment alone to ask her a question.

"Mom," Sierra began. "Why did Auntie Aye perform the ceremony today? You worked so hard putting it together. I mean you wrote the whole thing and everything."

Pagan Teen

By: Raven

Life & Death

An excerpt from "Growing Up a Witch"

(continued)

"Hmmm?" Sierra's mom looked up from her papers. Sierra could see just how tired her mom looked and that there was something really pressing on her mind.

"I just don't understand. It's not like you to just turn things over to someone else like that. What's going on?" Sierra pleadingly looked at her mother, hoping that would help sustain an answer.

"Aye did AJ's blessing today because I asked," her mother responded.

"You asked?" Sierra was confused. "But I've NEVER seen you go through and write an entire ritual only to hand it over to someone else." Sierra was starting to sound as if she were whining.

"Are you complaining, Sierra? You've never complained about any ritual that Aye has led."

"No, it's not that. I just don't get it, Mom. Why go through all that trouble if you weren't going to do it anyway?"

"Trouble? I understand what you're saying, sweetheart. It seems that the Goddess needs me to help with something greater."

Something greater? Was her mother serious? What could possibly be greater than her baby brother's blessing? Sierra didn't know if she should be mad at her mom for seemingly putting her brother to the side or if she should cry.

"The phone call I received today was from a mother of someone you know. Do you remember the boy at your school who was recovering from cancer?"

"Yes, mom. His name is Jason. What about him?"

"Well, my dear, it seems that the Mother has called his spirit home to rest. So, his mother called and asked for my services."

"Mom, that makes no sense. His mother called him home, so she called you for your services?" Sierra was indeed confused.

"Not HIS mother, Sierra; THE Mother. The Mother Goddess. So his mother asked me to perform his Summerlands Rite. Jason's spirit has moved on to rest."

Sierra was devastated. Death was so scary to her. She disliked thinking about it. Yet her mother was always so strong and though she would show emotion, it never seemed to bother her that Death could hit close. Sierra remembered last year when her great-grandfather passed away. She was so upset. Her mother cried, they all did, but at the funeral she placed rosemary in his casket, kissed his cheek and smiled. Sierra remembered thinking that for a woman who should be torn apart over the fact that she had lost her own grandfather, her mother seemed almost happy.

"I didn't even know his family was Pagan, " were about the only words that Sierra could muster at that point. She remembered Jason. He was quiet, a sophomore, in her culinary class. He was always very nice, well spoken, a good student. She remembered when he started missing school and remembered the day he came back.

"His mother is Pagan, but the family practiced very privately. I was a very young woman when I first met them. When Jason was born, I had only recently become ordained. I came to see his mom in the hospital, to bring a gift to the new life she had brought forth. I also performed his Wiccaning. His mother only felt it fitting that I be the one to perform the funeral rite and help guide him to the Summerlands. And before you ask, my family is of the utmost importance to me, but with such a call right before your own brother's blessing, I wanted to make sure that it went perfectly. Strange things can happen when your mind isn't fully on the ritual you are performing. You know that. All of my magick and intent was in the ritual. I wanted to be sure it stayed that way."

Sierra's mom always had a way of putting things. She was right. A call regarding death can definitely cause a person's mind to wander. She thought it all made sense.

Pagan Teen

By: Raven

Life & Death

An excerpt from "Growing Up a Witch"

(continued)

"Mom, aren't you sad though?"

"About?"

"Well, about Jason's dying. Death is scary. I don't like it. I'm afraid to die. I'm scared of things like cancer and disease. But you always seem fine. It's like you seem sad at first and then almost happy-like. How? Aren't you scared?" Sierra was hoping the answer wasn't a complicated riddle.

"Death is a part of Life," her mother told her. "To every beginning there must be an end. From the moment you are conceived, you are already dying. Life and Death are intertwined as one. Being afraid of diseases and dying are all natural, but to everything there is a risk. Life, inherently, is a risk. For every moment that you are alive, there is a chance that you will die. Live your life. Make the most of what you have each and every day. Everyone has a time to live and a time to die. Take the moments you have and make them full of zest, of vigor. When someone dies, yes, it hurts. It hurts to lose someone you know. Knowing they are no longer here on Earth, at least in a corporeal aspect, is a very sad thing indeed. However, Sierra, we are all here for a reason. When that reason no longer exists, our spirit moves forward. Don't be afraid for what has not yet happened to you. If you live in fear of death and dying, then you will never learn to live. And when someone close to you passes, yes, mourn their death, but celebrate their life."

Wow, could her mom talk. Sierra was pretty sure she understood, but really had hoped for a less complex answer than what she was given. It all made sense to her though. Living her life for all it was worth and not being afraid of what tomorrow held. She remembered a line from a movie – "To live. Now that would be the greatest adventure of all."

She stayed up awhile longer talking with her mother about the boy who had died and about the ritual she was writing. She knew that everything was to be held the following weekend. Since the family practiced their faith on a very private level, she asked if her mother thought it would be okay if she attended the Rite. Sierra's mother told her that she felt that would be fine, but reminded her daughter that as much as it was a Rite about dying, it was also a celebration of his life.

The following Saturday came and it was time for the funeral rite. Sierra had thought about standard funerals and how everyone wore black. She then thought of her mother and the words that her mother had recently spoken to her, regarding passing of a life. She thought of her school friend who had passed and remembered his favorite color being an almost sky blue. She found the perfect skirt and dressed.

During the ceremony, Sierra listened intently to the words of her mother. Her thoughts then strayed to her friend, his picture sitting next to the urn, which held his ashes, on the altar. She heard her mother say, "To every beginning there must be an end." However her mother's words seemed to trail off from Sierra's hearing as she looked beyond and swore she saw what looked like her friend, Jason, being guided home by the Mother Goddess. Sierra smiled and whispered, "Goodbye, my friend."

Pagan Resources

There are many Pagan resources for kids, however, they seem to be hard to find. Below is a small list of the ones we found for you to check out. If you know of others or want your own listed here feel free to email us!

PaganMoonbeams@yahoo.com



W. Lyon Martin
artist • writer • storyteller • presenter



roots & shoots



**Grey School
of
Wizardry**



Meagan Stories



intelligent info for today's pagan kids...and it's free!

**PAGAN KIDS!
GUIDES**



ANCIENT LIGHT

Challenge for the mind, fun for the hands, joy for the soul

Mystical Evening

By: TristÅ

Take the time, each month, to have a mystical evening with your family, focusing on our monthly theme. Make this the time that Paganism and modern day meet within your own realm. Involve all members of the family, allowing them to help and gain knowledge, both, with this one day. To get you started on ideas, take a look at some listed below.

Birth and Life Addition

Include items that show the stages of life into your meal to keep up with the theme of the month. You could have some grapes that are good and juicy while they are alive. On the other note you could have some raisin bread to show what happens as they die. Showing the seed in the grape or raisin shows how that ingredient would start life again. This would be a great time to show birth brings life which brings death and that the cycle never ends.

Plating Up

Talk to your child and let them know that there are certain holidays where extra plates are made for gods/goddesses or those recently passed away. Make this meal special by allowing your child make a plate for the most recently passed person and have them place it outside before you begin to eat. Allow them to check the plate in the morning. Tell them that the food which is gone have left the plate was a sign that the one gone is still with them. The older kids will say animals took it, reassure them that the one who passed on must've led the animals to the plate as we know that nature is where we start and finish.

Menu

Comprise your menu of dishes that those who have passed. Include favorite colors or way or sitting arrangement that could have been used in their houses. Play games like tasting tests for dishes they aren't familiar with. Talk about the people you are honoring and allow your children to be as involved as they want to be.

Starting Sprouts

Now is the best time to start sprouts with your Young Pagan and the Wee Pagan as well. You could even use seeds from the actual meal that you are eating as a sprout. Be sure to think about this project in depth before hand because some things will work better before they are cooked.

If you are using a seed that must be planted before it is cooked allow your child to help you prepare that portion of the meal. Have them set aside a certain amount of seeds and have them aid in the preparation for them to get to the form of seedlings.

Remembering the Past

Introduce those family members that have past on by incorporating them into your meal. Explain to your children that by doing this you are keeping that person alive, and make sure they get to share in the joy of it. If they become sad, bring up funny stories or incidents that they can relate those gone to, then Show off the things they collected, make their personal recipe, flip through some pictures and tell the stories behind the one's you are familiar with whatever you feel keeps them in the family.

Special Pagans

By: Raven

Sharing your Pagan faith with your children can sometimes prove a difficult task, especially if one of those children has special needs. First and foremost, remember that you are the best parent and teacher for your child. As the mother of a special needs child I often have to re-think the way I am conveying a message. Each month we will cover a different topic, and while I will give suggestions for ways to convey meanings, in the end, it is you, the parent, who knows which ways work best for your child.

The topic of Death may be hard to convey. I mean, to kids, death can be a very scary thing. So, how do you go about explaining to your Special Pagan? How do you make them feel comfortable about death? A good way to start is by watching Disney's *The Lion King* together. This movie is wonderful, in my opinion, because it not only covers new life, but also the circle of life, our inter-connectedness to each other, and how death is a part of that life. There are opportunities all throughout the movie to discuss life and death and how they are truly interwoven with one another.

Another good way to relate life & death to your special pagan is to discuss the changing of the seasons. In the autumn the leaves die and fall from the trees. In winter everything, including the earth, seems to be in a deep slumber. Some things have died, while others are just hibernating. In spring new flowers grow, trees and plants become green again, and life just seems to spring forth from the ground. What once seemed to be dead and lifeless is now brimming with color and life. Be sure to explain to them that this changing of seasons is an ever-repeating process. Feel free to use a few calendars from sequential years.

Family photos, especially if you have ones of any relative that shows them from one time period to a later time period as they are aging. For example, pictures of your mom or dad when they were very little continuing all the way up to how they look now make a great chronology. You can even show as they got older then you were born, and as you got older, your children were born. This is a wonderful way to actually celebrate your family and their lives, as well as, remember relatives who have passed.

Be sensitive to your special pagan. Make sure that if they have questions regarding life or death, that you answer them as honestly and simply as you can. Many times as adults, we over-complicate things. Unfortunately, this does no good for our special ones. Also, sugarcoating things isn't going to help. Keep it simple. Life is a wonderful celebration. Death can be as well. Death doesn't have to mean that everything ends at that point. It is up to us as parents to point out how death can bring forth new life.

Ultimately, it is you the parent who will need to decide how much or how little information you want to give to your child. Remember that you know your child better than anyone else does. By giving them information that they can handle, in a manner suitable for their age, etc. you will help them to be well on their way to being able to really grasp concepts such as life, death and beyond.

To The Parent

By: TristÅ

Loss of Family Animal

When your children are going through the sadness when the death of the family pet has found it's way to your doorstep allow them to help with the resting of the pet. Although putting pets to rest will depend on many different factors, some ideas are below to get your juices flowing:

- Have a funeral service where your child is the one to talk of the eulogy.
- Throw a party in memory of the pet as it heads over to reincarnation, Summerland, or where ever your belief takes them.
- Comprise a picture album, single picture, or an important item to place on the altar so they can honor the pet on a regular basis. If this brings tears or sad thoughts choose something that brings a funny or good memory which makes them smile.
- Find a new use for a favorite toy or other item belonging to the animal as it recycles to something new just as their animal friend starts a new life.
- Allow your child to aid in burying the pet so him or her can contribute to a spot of land, which returns him or her back to nature; right where she came from.
- Allow or teach your child to hold a small ritual in honor of them.

Family Detective

Make a list of the closest relatives that have passed away. Make sure it doesn't contain people that other members of the family have not gotten over their death. Let your child know that this was a member of the family, but you don't know much about them. Present to your child that you would like for them to be a detective and find out about them. Allow your child to learn about that person by questioning other family members. Set up a book where they keep pictures and the information that they have learned about them. On rainy days allow your child to teach other family members about those that have gone on. Be sure to nurture this project and show appreciation as they do it. Never let them forget they are contributing to keeping their memory alive, which is a great thing!

Keeping Kids Prepared

The most important thing is to prepare them for death because no matter how hard we try it does come. Kids will accept death better if they know it is coming. This doesn't mean tell them you are going to die; I am going to die. Just letting them understand it is part of life's circle will do the trick!

Mixing of Religions

How we celebrate death in every religion is unique and sometimes it can be confusing especially to children. It is estimated that each family tree contains around 10 different religions or paths. This means that when a family member, or even a friend, dies the way they are honored and put to rest will not necessarily be the way your walk of religion would do it. Children are very confused, especially if this is the first time death has been this close to them. Below are some tips you may consider now to better prepare you for that time:

- Be sure to be open with your child/ren. Never cover things up and explain things thoroughly to them where they feel like a part of what is going on instead of something in the shadows.
- Explain that the reason you are doing it differently than you believe is to show honor and respect to those that have passed and their family.
- Do 2 services, one the way that person would have wanted it and one the way your family will. This may mean a little confusion the first time it is carried out but will clear up later with time.
- Don't feel that you are expected to include all members of the family in personal celebrations of recent deaths. If you feel that your toddler or small one is not mentally ready for services, they do not have to be. Just be careful not to shelter those who can handle it.
- Allow all members of the family to be included in any ceremonies, rituals, or parties that you have for the deceased. Being a part of it, no matter how small a part, will make them feel important as well as teach them about death.

To The Parent

By: Raven

RAVEN'S NOTE TO PARENTS

This issue we discussed issues of life and death. It can be as simple as explaining the passing of seasons, or as complicated as explaining conception and the process of life up through the passing of death. No matter how we choose to explain it, it is our job as parents to make sure that our children understand and that we are sensitive on all levels.

I choose to view death as an extension of life. It's only the end of your life in the body in which it currently resides, but it is the beginning of life elsewhere in the spirit realm. This is also how I choose to convey things to my children. I have let them know that while we should be sad for someone or something that has died, we should celebrate the time they had here and their passing on to the next stage in life.

I would like to share with you now a very brief story of how one of my daughters embraced death when she was four years old. No, my daughter has not passed on to the spirit realm. She is almost eight now.

One spring, there was a wild rabbit that had babies under the shed of our former next-door neighbor. Being spring, this is what rabbits do, and each year we would enjoy watching the baby bunnies romping through our yard. Our old neighbors had a dog, who had unfortunately, on quite a few occasions, found rabbit burrows and torn them apart. She was a dog, and that's what dogs do sometimes. Anyway, one day while she was playing dress up in a fancy dress, my daughter and I went outside to the sound of a commotion. Three of the little bunnies were dead in our yard and the neighbor was taking her dog back inside their house, upset at what she had witnessed but been unable to stop. My daughter was quite upset and I explained that this sometimes happens. I told her the bunnies would be fine and their spirits were with the Goddess. She asked me to please bury them in the exact spots we found them. While I went to get the garden spade, my then four year old daughter went into the house and found my bottle of rose water, which she brought to me. She asked me to open it, as she wanted to sprinkle some over the burial spots and bless them each on their journey to the spirit realm. Yes, my little girl wanted to perform a short Summerlands Rite for the baby bunnies. My neighbor, who had by that time returned, was astounded at my daughter's reaction. When my daughter had finished, she looked at me and said, "Mommy, I'm sad that they got killed, but I'm happy they're with the Goddess now."

So, that was how my daughter really connected with life and death right there. Even though she was upset that these cute little creatures were dead, she found great comfort in knowing that their spirits were moving on to another realm. I was very impressed that she acted the way she did. The fact that at such a young age she was able to find a celebratory moment in which she felt moved to help these animals cross over to the Summerlands was a reinforcement that I am leading my children down the right path.

Now, not everyone is going to have moments like that, and sometimes death can't be that simple. Life and Death go together like Yin & Yang. For younger children, there are relatively easy ways to explain the cycles of life/death or the circle of life. One way is through the use of Zhu Zhu Pets. I'm sure you're asking yourself, "Did this lady seriously say zhu zhu pets?" Yes, I did. If you take the batteries out of one of those fake hamsters, it "dies." You put new batteries in it and it becomes "alive" again, back to making lots of noise and movement. Obviously, this type of explanation will only work with toys, electronics requiring batteries. We can't put batteries into people to bring them back, but, on a small scale, it's the beginning of explaining the complexity of life and death. Light bulbs basically work in the same manner with the same explanation. When we die, our bodies return to Mother Gaia and make way for new bodies to be born. The change of seasons is a wonderful resource for the circle of life. As well, look to the Sabbats and the passing stage of each as the God and Goddess grow older, die, are reborn again and the youth of life starts over.

While the complexities of life and death are just that, complex, take the time to look for the simplicity and the joy in them so you can share that with your children. Be sensitive to their needs. Be open to their questions. The more openly you can talk about both subjects, the less fear your child will have.

Until next time, blessings abound!

** Article requests, questions, or comments can be emailed to raven@paganmoonbeams.com **