

A Circle is Cast

Rituals for Solitary Spirituality

by DeAnna Alba

illustration by Lisa Michaels

The Wheel of the Year is also the Wheel of Fortune. For this ritual you'll make a Wheel of the Year to be used as an altar piece, or to hang on the wall above it. As each Sabbat presents itself, turn your wheel so that the appropriate image is at the top of the wheel. As you make the wheel (which in this case will actually be a wreath), ask for the blessings of Fortuna, Goddess of the Wheel of Fortune as you work.

CREATING A WHEEL OF THE YEAR

This project necessitates a trip to your local crafts shop to pick up the items you'll need. First, a wreath made of a durable natural material like grapevine or straw. The size is up to you, but keep in mind its ultimate resting place — a wall or altar table.

You'll also need items to weave into, tie on, or stick in the wreath that represents each of the Sabbats. Here are some suggestions; feel free to come up with your own items that best signify each holiday to you.

Hallows/Sambain: a little plastic or ceramic pumpkin, or a piece of gauze-like material to represent how thin the veil between the worlds is at this time of year.

Winter Solstice/Yule: decorative evergreens and/or holly berries. These items remind us that life is everlasting and ongoing even in the seeming dead of Winter.

Imbolc/Brigid: some raw lamb's wool in remembrance of this lamb-

ing time of the year, or a St. Brigit's Cross. Brigit is the Christianization of the Irish Goddess Brigid, Goddess of artisans and craftspeople, and the Goddess who holds sway over this time of year.

Spring Equinox: a small grouping of silk flowers, or perhaps a rabbit you've made out of felt. Whatever symbolizes Spring to you will work just fine.

Beltane/May Day: several brightly colored ribbons braided together in remembrance of the woven ribbons on a Maypole. I chose the Maypole ribbons because I was taught the

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Maypole dance as a child and it is a fond memory. If the idea of a Maypole seems too phallic to you perhaps attaching a few cowry shells to the wreath instead of the ribbons will work better. Beltane is at its root a fertility festival and a celebration of sexuality — the beginning of the heat cycle.

Summer Solstice/Litha: an image of the sun is the obvious choice as this Sabbat celebrates the longest day of the year and the sun at its height of power.

Lughnasad/Lammas: an image of a horse, a small silver horseshoe, or if you've access to it, a few strands of hair from the mane or tail of a horse tied into a lover's knot. A Lammas

fair traditionally included horse races and was the primary time of the year to celebrate marriages in the traditional societies of Celtic Ireland.

Fall Equinox/Mabon: any small artificial fruit or vegetables would be appropriate for this autumnal harvest festival. Grapes would be particularly appropriate if your wreath is made of grapevines. Apples for Avalon if you have a Celtic bent to your theology would also be very appropriate.

You'll also need to have on hand whatever you will need to attach these items to your wreath. Thread or string, scissors and glue come to mind. If you'll actually be making any of the items for the wreath, bring those supplies along too.

This altar piece should be created in sacred space, so gather all necessary items together, then create your sacred space in your usual manner. Begin by blessing the wheel itself by the elements using the elemental representations you have on your altar.

Start with the *Element of Earth*. Sprinkle your wheel with salt, dirt, corn meal or rub it all over with a rock or crystal or whatever your Earth symbol is. As you do so visualize the wreath as it began — as a seed in the rich and fertile Earth. Ask your favorite Earth Goddess to cherish and protect that seed and bless it on its way through growth and maturation to harvest and its creation as wreath. Name it your Wheel of Life.

Now using your representation of *Elemental Water*, sprinkle the wreath all over on both sides while visualizing the nourishing rains of spring causing that seed of the wreath to sprout and continue its growth phase. Call upon your favorite Goddesses of Water and Spring to cherish and protect it and speed it on its way toward maturation.

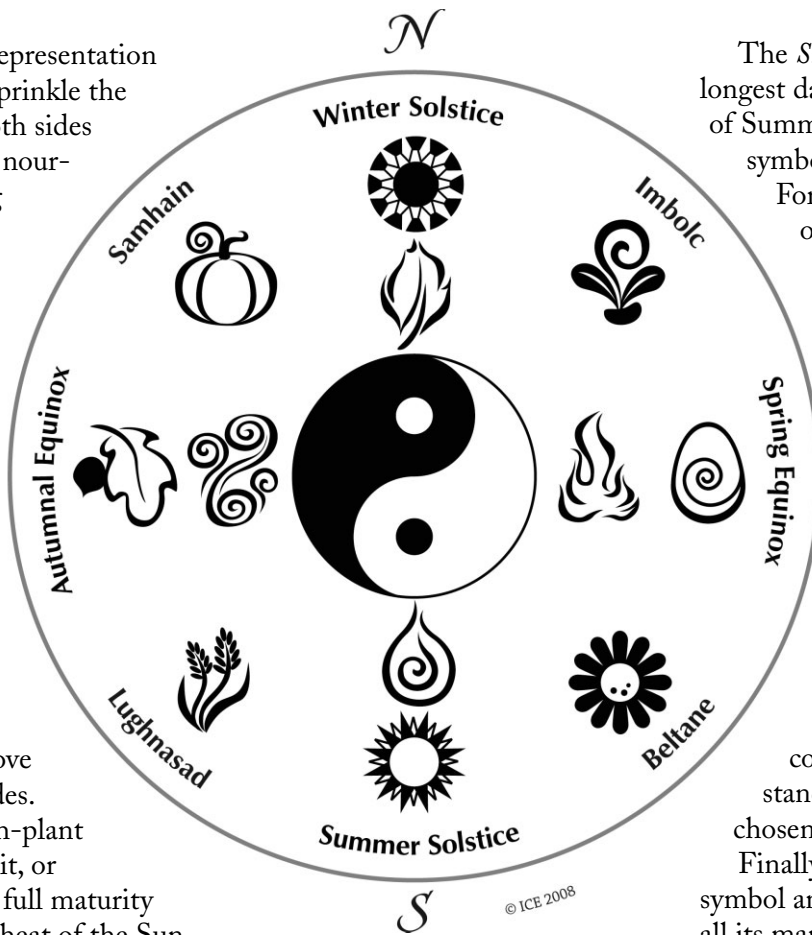
Using the *Fire Element*, pass your wheel through or above the flame on both sides. Visualize your wreath-plant flowering, setting fruit, or otherwise coming to full maturity under the life giving heat of the Sun. Call on your favorite Goddess of the Sun to protect and perfect the plant through its maturity and harvest.

Now honor its harvesting by passing it through the incense smoke of *Elemental Air*, knowing that your prayers of thanksgiving arise to the Divine on the smoke of your incense.

Settle now to the work of attaching your chosen items to your wreath, asking Fortuna for Her blessing at each turn of the Wheel. Begin wherever you like, but since I am of a Celtic persuasion I'll begin with *Hallows/Samhain*.

Visualize this time of the year and all it means to you as you attach your object. Ask Fortuna and your ancestors to bring you safely through this dark time of the year.

Turn the Wheel to your *Winter Solstice* spot and attach your item, visualizing the light beginning to grow again. Ask Fortuna for



renewed spiritual growth in you, and that any difficult growth lessons She may send your way be quickly learned and thus quickly ended.

At the *Imbolc* spot on your Wheel, affix your symbol and ask Fortuna to be sure your skill in your chosen profession increases and that you have ample opportunity to do the work that you love.

As you attach your item at the *Spring Equinox* position, visualize the greening of the Earth and ask Fortuna to make sure the green keeps coming to you too, in the form of money/financial stability.

Beltane is the time of love; as you place your symbol in position, ask Fortuna for a happy sex life, and visualize that coming to pass.

The *Summer Solstice* brings the longest day of the year and the heat of Summer. Place your Solstice symbol on your wreath and ask Fortuna that there be at least one person in your life to whom you can bare your soul without fear of recrimination.

Change the wreath's position now to *Lughnasad*. If you are not married or partnered, but wish to be so, ask

Fortuna to bring lasting love into your life as you place your item on the wheel. If you are already joined, ask Her for continued love and understanding between you and your chosen partner.

Finally, attach your *Fall Equinox* symbol and visualize abundance in all its many forms coming into your life. Pray to Fortuna that it be so.

Now give it the Breath of Life — your life — by gently blowing on the wreath and every item. This activates the wreath, thereby reinforcing all you have asked of Fortuna and releasing the Wheel to do its work while you go about your daily life. Install it in its place of honor at your altar. ☺

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