

Samhain



What is Samhain

Samhain is one of the major festivals of the Wheel of the Year, for many Pagans the most important festival of all. It is the third and final harvest festival of nuts and berries and a fire festival. All the harvest is in, all is complete, it is the end of the cycle of birth and growth, it is the point of death. The seeds of the harvest have fallen deep into the dark earth, they are unseen, dormant, and thus apparently lifeless.

The God, as Sun King is sacrificed back to the land with the seed until the Winter Solstice, and the Goddess, now as Crone, mourns Him until His rebirth at Yule. He travels the Underworld learning its wisdom. This is the time of the descent into darkness, of pre-conception, out of which new life, new ideas, will eventually emerge..

Traditionally the veils between the worlds are at their thinnest now. Boundaries dissolve and all is laid bare. It is time to honour and offer hospitality to, our ancestors.

At Samhain the dark half of the year commences. It is a truly magical time. Death is always followed by rebirth and while this is the end of the old year, it is the beginning of the new year. For the Celts the day did not begin at dawn, it began at sunset, it began with darkness. Light is always born out of darkness, they are inseparable, interdependent, and necessary. Darkness is fertile with 'all potential'.

Samhain is October 31st in the northern hemisphere.

Source:

www.goddessandgreenman.co.uk





KEY WORDS

- death
- surrender
- stillness
- darkness
- the shadow
- going within
- endings and beginnings
- crossing the veil
- the spirit world
- remembrance
- grieving
- ancestors
- introspection

Some ideas for celebration

Making an offering to the spirits of the land

Honouring your ancestors is a very special thing to do at this time and can be done in many simple ways.

Think about all those departed souls from your life, both family and friends, children may wish to remember pets even - place photographs of them on your altar. Offer them your hospitality, welcome their presence into your home.

At your Samhain feast, consider laying an extra place for them to join you at the table - cook and eat their favourite dishes, talk about them - re-member them, bring them closer.

You and your children can make an offering for departed pets by leaving some dog food outside on Halloween night, many night creatures appreciate this offering. Be careful what you put outside - bread and milk can be fatal to hedgehogs!

Source:
www.goddessandgreenman.co.uk

Candle Ceremony For The Ancestors

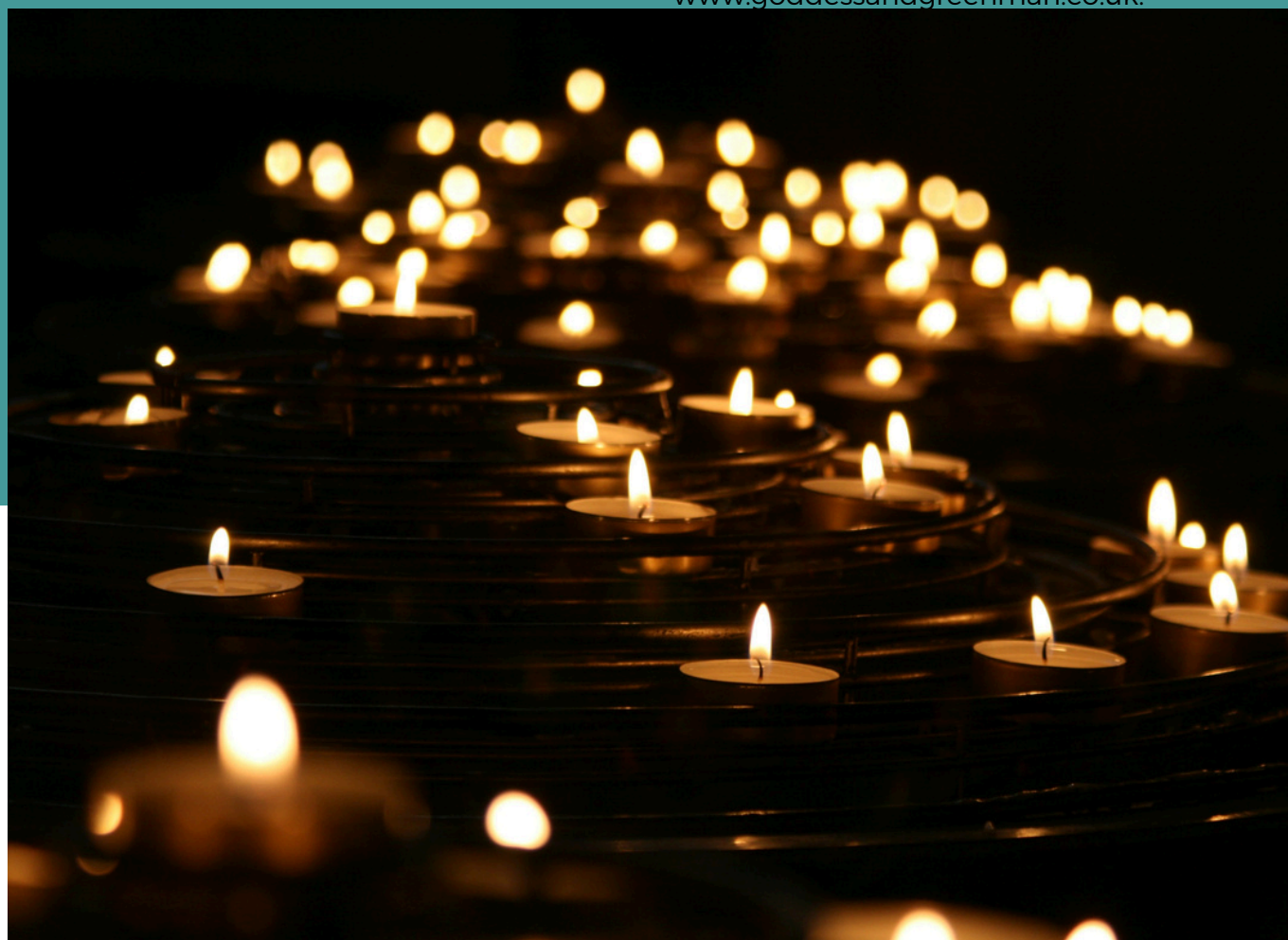
This is a wonderfully simple ritual which can be shared with both friends and family, or worked alone.

You can include children in it - it begins in darkness and ends full of light. It's a great balance to trick or treating!

You will need a supply of small candles, either black or white, or a supply of night lights. You need a heat proof container or tray of sand or earth to put them in. Place one in the centre of the container from which all the others will be lit. Switch off all the lights and sit gently in the darkness. Allow the darkness to enfold you. Ask for the presence of your ancestors to come to you.

When you are ready, light the central candle saying "We welcome our departed loved ones into this home and honour your presence amongst us". Allow each person in the circle to spontaneously remember someone who has passed to the Summerlands and remember something about them and light a candle for each person from the central candle: 'I remember Great Aunt Stella and her generosity of heart....'. Allow this to continue for as long as it takes to complete the re-remembering. You will end with a tray full of radiant candles. When all is complete, give thanks, and allow the candles to burn to completion.

Source:
www.goddessandgreenman.co.uk



Celebrating alone

List all the main events and good memories of the last year. Ask the ancestors to bless you and guide you forward. You may wish to say something like:

'Blessed ancestors, those who have walked this road before us, we remember you and honour you always. May we receive your blessings and wisdom, and may we in turn be guided to care for those who come after us far into the future!'

You might also want to do a meditation at this time as well.

The one included in this module would be good to do.

This is also a good time to think about your legacy, what are you leaving behind? What impact are you making in this world? How will you leave earth a little better than you found it?

Source: The Magical Year by Danu Forest.

