

Children's Yule Ritual

This ritual is designed for children between the ages of 4 and 7 (give or take a year). It is written so that actual open flame is not necessary, although a fire can be used if the children are properly supervised or if an adult places the offerings in the fire. If no fire is used, the contents of the Offering Bowl can be burned, buried or drowned by the person running the ritual after the children are gone.

For this ritual you will need:

Child safe offerings for the Earth Mother (and Sky Father if desired), the Well, the Fire, the Tree, the Gate Keeper, the Ancestors, the Nature Spirits, the Shining Ones and Sulis. Some examples of child safe offerings would be flowers, fruit, paper objects, and age appropriate arts or crafts. If very small children are present (under the age of three) remember that anything that can fit through a cardboard paper towel tube is considered a choking hazard and if could be edible, it might be eaten so don't use anything potentially poisonous like Daffodils, Lily of the Valley, etc.

A bowl to put offerings in (if no fire is available or inadvisable due to the age of the child/children involved)

Paper and markers for the offerings to Sulis

Drums, rattles, bells and any other instrument that the child/children might want to use during the songs

Cupcakes and juice or milk for the Blessing

Wooden discs to write the Blessings on so that the children can take them home to remember what they got

Goody bags (It's a party after-all!)

Pre-ritual Briefing:

Today we are going to have a party for the sun goddess Sulis. She is very small today, but just like you, she is going to grow bigger and bigger every day.

When we have a party what do people sometimes bring us? (Presents!!) Just like we get presents at our parties, we are going to give Sulis presents and sing her songs at this one. Then, we're going to ask her to make it warmer so that summer will come.

Each of you needs a present for Sulis. I am going to give each of you a piece of paper and some markers so you can make her one. You can either draw a picture or write a few sentences about why you like the sun.

Give the children 20 minutes to make pictures for Sulis.

If you know the words to the songs we are singing today, sing along with me. If you don't know the words, can you all clap along with the song or play your instrument?

We are going to walk over to where we are having the party and we are going to sing a song as we are walking and sitting down. If you know Deck the Halls, sing along with me, if not, clap or play along with the song.

Procession:

Deck the Halls

Deck the halls with boughs of holly, Fa la la la la, la la la la.
Tis the season to be jolly, Fa la la la la, la la la la.
Don we now our gay apparel, Fa la la la la la la.
Troll the ancient Yuletide carol, Fa la la la la, la la la la.

Purification:

Before we start our party for the sun goddess, we want to make sure that we can pay attention. I want you to think off all the things that might keep you from paying attention.

Give the child/children a minute or so to think

Imagine that all those distractions are little flies buzzing around your head. We are going to sing a song about getting rid of flies and every time we say "Shoo, fly." imagine that one of those annoying flies is kicked out of the room.

Shoo Fly
Shoo, fly, don't bother me
Shoo, fly, don't bother me
Shoo, fly, don't bother me
For I belong to somebody

Repeat as needed until everyone has gotten rid of all of their "flies."

Now that everyone's flies have been kicked out of the room, we are all able to pay attention. Is everyone ready to pay attention and have a party for Sulis?

Honoring the Earth Mother:

Parties are very exciting for boys and girls but it is important to remember the mommies and the daddies who have worked so hard taking care of us. Before we start the party for Sulis, we are going to sing a song for Sulis' mommy, the Earth Mother, who is such a great mommy.

She's Got the Whole World in Her Hands

She's got the whole world in her hands,
She's got the rivers and the mountains in her hands,
She's got the oceans and the seas in her hands,
She's got the whole world in her hands.

She's got everybody here in her hands,
She's got everybody there in her hands,
She's got you and she's got me in her hands,
She's got the whole world in her hands.

We are going to give Sulis' mommy, who is also our mommy, the Earth Mother, a present. Who wants to come up and put the Earth Mother's present into the Offering Bowl for us?

(Optional Sky Father Offering)

Now we are going to sing a song to Sulis' daddy.

Sky Father (Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes)

Sky Father, clear and bright, clear and bright
Sky Father, dark at night, dark at night
You are free of clouds, grey or white
Sky Father, clear and bright, clear and bright

(Repeat if desired)

We are going to give Sulis' daddy, who is also our daddy, the Sky Father, a present. Who wants to come up and put the Sky Father's present into the Offering Bowl for us?

Statement of Purpose:

Today is the middle of winter. It is very cold and we want it to get warm again so that summer can come. Sulis is the sun goddess, but she is very little and she isn't strong enough to make it warm all by herself. So, we are going to throw her a party and give her presents that will help her grow big and strong so that summer can come.

(Re)Creating the Cosmos:

Sulis is a goddess and lives far, far away. We want her to be able to see her party and her presents and hear the songs we sing for her. How can we talk to her if she is far, far away?

Hopefully a child will come up with the answer “a telephone.” If they respond with computer based technology (e-mail, instant messaging, skype, etc.) you can either redirect them to the phone metaphor, or you can change the metaphor to a computer based one.

We have a way of talking to gods and goddess who live far, far away but we need water, fire and a special tree. If we sing to them and give them gifts, they act like a telephone and help us talk to not only to gods and goddesses who live far, far away, but also people we loved who have died and plants and animals too!

To create this special telephone, first we are going to sing to the Well and give it a gift.

There's Water in the Well (The Farmer in the Dell)

There's water in the Well
There's water in the Well
Hi-ho, the derry-o
There's water in the Well

The water's cold and dark
The water's cold and dark
Hi-ho, the derry-o
The water's cold and dark

Who would like to put our gift for the Well in the Offering Bowl?

Next, we are going to sing to the fire and give it a gift so it will help us make our special telephone.

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Fire (Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star)

Twinkle, twinkle little Fire
As we sing you rise up higher
Little flame, warm and bright
A tiny piece of holy light
Twinkle, twinkle little Fire
As we sing you rise up higher

Who would like to put our gift for the Fire in the Offering Bowl?

Finally, we are going to sing to the tree and give it a gift so that we can make our special telephone.

Big, Green Tree (Three Blind Mice)

Big, green tree
Big, green tree
You are so tall
You are so tall
You reach the sky with your branches high
Your roots dig into the ground nearby
You are the link between earth and sky
Big, green tree

Who would like to come up and put our gift to the tree into the Offering Bowl?

Opening the Gates:

We want to make sure that we reach Sulis and all of the guests we are going to invite to our party using our special phone. To do that, we need the help of someone named Cernunnos. He's a god who is going to make sure that we don't dial any wrong numbers. As we sing his song and give him his gifts, he's going to connect our phone to all of the people we want to talk to.

Pop! Goes the Gate (Pop! Goes the Weasel)

O god between the worlds come play
We need your help, please guide us
Keep us safe along the way
Pop! goes the Well gate.

O god between the worlds come play
We need your help, please guide us
Keep us safe along the way
Pop! goes the Fire gate.

O god between the worlds come play
We need your help, please guide us
Keep us safe along the way
Pop! goes the Tree gate.

(At each Pop! give an offering to Cernunnos and open the appropriate gate.)

Inviting the Kindred:

Now that we can talk to everyone far, far away, we are going to invite more guests to our party. First we are going to ask all the people we know and love who have died to come to our party.

Ancestors

Grandmas, Grandpas Come and Play (London Bridge)

Grandmas, Grandpas
Come and play
Come and play
Come and play

Bring your parents
Don't delay
It's a party.

(Repeat if desired)

Who would like to come up and put our gift to our ancestors into the Offering Bowl?

The next guests that we are going to invite to our party are all of the animals and plants and rocks and stones and everything that lives outside.

Nature Spirits

Do Your Ears Hang Low?

Do your ears hang low?
Do you look like a crow?
Do you live in the snow?
Do you need sun to grow?
Can you fly? Can you run?
Do you swim? Weigh a ton?
Do your ears hang low?

Yes our ears hang low.
Yes we look like a crow.
Yes we live in the snow.
Yes we need sun to grow.
We can fly. We can run.
We can swim, weigh a ton.
Yes our ears hang low.

Who would like to come up and put our gift to the Nature Spirits into the Offering Bowl?

The last group of guests we are going to invite to our party are all of Sulis' friends and her family, the other gods and goddesses.

Shining Ones

Gods and Goddesses (Frère Jacques)

Gods and Goddesses

Gods and Goddesses

Please come play

Please come play

Welcome to our party

Welcome to our party

We love you

We love you

Who would like to come up and put our gift to the gods and goddesses into the Offering Bowl?

Key Offerings:

Now that we have all of the guests here, we have to invite the Sulis, so that we can give her the presents we brought for her.

Song for Sulis (Mr. Sun)

Oh Pretty Sun, Sun,
Sulis Golden Sun,
Please shine down on me

Oh Pretty Sun, Sun,
Sulis Golden Sun,
Hiding behind a tree...

These little children
Are asking you
To please come out
So we can play with you

Oh Pretty Sun, Sun,
Sulis Golden Sun,
Please shine down on...
Please shine down on...
Please shine down on me!

Now each of you needs to come up one at a time and give the present you made for Sulis to her by putting it in the Offering Bowl.

Prayer of Sacrifice:

Ancestors, Nature Spirits, Gods and Goddess, we hope that you liked our gifts and our party. Beautiful sunny Sulis, we hope that you liked all of the pictures we drew for you and sentences we wrote for you. We hope that you will accept our gifts and grow big and strong so that summer will come.

Omen:

We have thrown such a nice party for Sulis and all of our guests that they are going to give us gifts that we can take home with us. I am going to roll these dice and they are going to tell me what the gifts are.

(This omen is done using rune dice, but any divination system will work, just change the narrative. Between drawing the omen and going home, one of the parents will have to use the marker and write the omen gifts onto little wooden discs and put them in the children's goody bags to remind them of the gifts they received during the ritual.)

Roll the omen and talk to the children about what it means and how they could use the gift.

Blessings:

(Bring out the cupcakes and juice/milk and hold them up to the Fire, Well and Tree)

Sulis, gods and goddess, plants and animals, and our loved ones who have died, thank you so much for giving us *_(fill in the omen)_*. We know that when we eat these cupcakes that we will be able to use the blessings you have just given us.

Thank you for _____. *(Have all the children take a bite of their cupcakes.)*

Thank you for _____. *(Have all the children take a bite of their cupcakes.)*

Thank you for _____. *(Have all the children take a bite of their cupcakes.)*

(Allow the children time to finish their cupcakes and juice/milk.)

Closing the Gates:

Our party for Sulis is almost over and we have to thank all of our guests for coming. Can you all help me thank everyone?

First we are going to say thank you to Sulis for coming. Ready? On the count of three. . . one . . . two . . . THREE!

THANK YOU SULIS

Now we are going so thank the gods and goddesses for coming. Ready? One . . . two . . .
THREE!

THANK YOU GODS AND GODDESSES

Next we are going to thank the Nature Spirits for coming. Ready? One . . . two . . .
THREE!

THANK NATURE SPIRITS

Last, we are going to thank all of our ancestors for coming. Ready? One . . . two . . .
THREE!

THANK ANCESTORS

Now it's time to hang up the special phone we made that allowed to talk to all of our
guests. To do that, we are going to clap after I say the word "close." Is everyone ready?

Fire gate CLOSE! (*clap*)

Well gate CLOSE! (*clap*)

Tree gate CLOSE! (*clap*)

We've just hung up our telephone and now we have to say thank you to Cernunnos, who
helped us dial it. Ready? One . . . two . . . THREE!

THANK YOU CERNUNNOS

Now we have just two more thank you's. Can everyone say thank you to the Earth
Mother and Sky Father? (*Sky Father part optional*)

THANK YOU EARTH MOTHER AND SKY FATHER

Closing the Rite:

GREAT JOB! This part of our party for Sulis is over and everyone did a fantastic job.