

Over the Moon Religious Award

For Young People Age 7-11 of Wiccan Faith or Other Earth Religions

ADULT INTRODUCTION

What is the Over the Moon Religious Award?

This award is designed for elementary school-aged children who are active in Wicca or another pagan or Earth-based religion. It has been designed to be appropriate as a religious award for Scouts, but can also be earned by any other child who is interested in the program.

A child using this program will need an adult mentor. A priest or priestess of the appropriate faith, chosen by the parent or guardian, is ideal. If your family works apart from any recognized clergy, then parents and guardians themselves can serve as mentors. A mentor helps the child plan and complete activities, is available to answer any questions the child might have, and when the work is finished, send the form at the back of the book to Covenant of the Goddess along with the fee. The award is then sent back to the mentor to be presented to the child. Children may work toward the award either alone or in a group.

If the child and mentor are not Wiccan, you may find that parts of the program need to be adjusted to better fit your needs. You will find suggestions throughout the book to help you tailor the program to your path. Such adjustments do not need to be reported to COG.

Children of age 11 or above should work toward the Hart and Crescent Award, also available through COG.

CHILD INTRODUCTION

The Over the Moon Religious Award is for kids in elementary school (or age 7 to 11) who are active in Wicca or another pagan or Earth-based religion. It can be used as a Scouting award, but you don't have to be a Scout to get it.

In this book you will find a list of projects for you to do. They will help you have fun and learn more about your religion. When you have done them all, you can get the award. You will need an adult to help you finish your projects and to fill out the form in the back of the book. Your priest or priestess can help you, or you can work with your parents. When you're done, your adult helper will send us the form at The Covenant of the Goddess, and we will send them the award to give to you.

PART 1. THE WORLD

Wicca and many other Earth-based religions believe that the Earth is sacred. *Sacred* means something very special, something we need to respect. We need to respect the Earth: She is our Mother and our home. Everything and all the wonderful things that are part of Her.

1. Rocks! Start a rock collection. Learn about the three kinds of rocks, and see if you can find out which kinds you have.

The solid part of the Earth is made of rocks. Some people think that rocks, especially crystals, have a lot of energy. (We'll talk about energy later!) Most rocks have been around much, much longer than we have!

Sedimentary rocks form slowly. Layers of dirt or sand get buried by more layers, and then even more layers. Over time, the layers are pressed together so tightly that they become rock-hard. Sedimentary rocks often show bands or stripes where the different layers were. Sandstone is a sedimentary rock.

Igneous rocks form quickly. Deep under the ground, the Earth becomes very hot, and even rock melts. This melted rock can sometimes come up to the surface through volcanoes. When it cools and gets hard again, it is an igneous rock. Lava is an igneous rock that cools very fast, so it has holes in it where there were air bubbles.

Metamorphic rock is a rock that has changed. Sometimes a rock that has been under a lot of pressure or heat will change into a new kind of rock. Did you know that every diamond used to be a piece of coal?

Some rocks are plain looking, and some are very beautiful. See how many kinds of rocks you can find in your neighborhood. Look for ways that people use rocks. See if an adult will take you to a rock show or a shop, where you can see many different kinds of rocks.

2. Plants! Plant a tree, or start a garden.

Plants are beautiful and helpful. A lot of our food comes from plants. Did you know that they help us breathe? Plants breathe in carbon dioxide, which is what we breathe out, and they breathe out oxygen, which is what we breathe in!

If you have a yard, you can plant a tree or garden right there. You can grow flowers, or herbs, or vegetables. Your adult helper can tell you what kinds of plants will be happiest growing where you live. If you don't have a yard, there are lots of plants that will grow in a pot. You can ask at a park if they will let you help them plant a tree.

Make sure your plants get the right amount of water and sunlight. Your adult will help you learn how much your plants need.

You might want to go with your family to a forest, park, or garden to see all the different kinds of plants that live there. What animals are eating them? Do any animals live in them? How else are plants helping?

3. Animals! Make a poster showing your favorite animal.

Animals are a lot like us. They move around, they eat and breathe like we do.

Learning about animals can be a lot of fun. You can learn from books and television. You can play with pets, or go to the zoo to watch them up close. If you live near a wild place, you might even be able to see animals there. But ALWAYS be careful with strange animals! Most animals get frightened very easily, and they might hurt you by mistake if they think you are dangerous. Don't go too close, and stay near an adult.

After you've picked your favorite animal, learn more about it. Go to see it at a zoo if you can. Then make a poster showing what you've learned. You can draw pictures or cut them out of nature magazines. Write something about the animal.

4. People! Do something that helps another person.

People are part of the Earth too! We are all different, and we are all special.

Find a way to do something kind for someone else. If you do well in school, maybe you can help someone in your class study for a test. You can

collect food or toys to give to people who need them. You can help a neighbor with their yardwork. Your adult can help you think of more ideas.

5. Put It All Together! Do something that helps the Earth.

All of us - plants, animals, and people - have to live together. We need to learn to work together so that we have clean air to breathe and clean water to drink, and room for everything to live.

Does that sound like too much work for a kid? Don't worry! There are plenty of things that one person can do that will help, and this is your chance to learn about some of them. There are books that will give you some ideas, like *Fifty Simple Things Kids Can Do to Save the Earth* by the Earthworks Group.

You can pick up trash around your neighborhood. You can start recycling your trash at home, or collect things to recycle from your neighbors. You can learn how to use less water or electricity in your house. Your adult can help you find more ideas. Start with just one!

PART II. LEARNING THE WAYS

6a. Learn some of the old stories (mythology).

6b. Make something creative about your favorite story or myth.

Mythology means stories about the old pagan Gods. Wicca and many other pagan religions still use these stories to help us understand who the Gods and Goddesses are. You might belong to a family or group that tries to practice religion just like some of your ancestors did long ago. If you do, there will be one group of myths that is the most important for you to learn. For example, if you are Asatru, then you will learn the most from reading Norse mythology. Other groups and families are more eclectic, which means that they honor Gods and stories from many different places. If this sounds more like you, then you can just choose your favorite.

Find a book of mythology at your library and read the stories. If you belong to a strong community - if you are Native American, for example - you may be able to find a storyteller who knows the stories by heart and can tell them to you.

When you have read or heard some of the stories, pick one and make something that will show other people why you like it. You can put on a play or a puppet show, or make a diorama, or write a story in your own words with drawings, or write a song or a poem, or make a statue of one of the characters. Get creative!

7a. Make a family tree showing at least four generations, and learn about the people on it.

7b. Learn a craft, song, game or food that one of your ancestors would have known.

Some people's religion comes from their ancestors, people who were part of their family long ago. Some pagan religions believe that we can still talk to our ancestors in the spirit world, and that they still help us. In any case, our ancestors are part of where we came from and who we are, so it's good to learn about them.

Look for shows at natural history museums to learn about old cultures. Go to other events that have activities you can learn from - a Native American pow-wow or a Renaissance fair, for example. Dover Books makes lots of books about old cultures and their clothes, games, crafts, and more, and they don't cost much.

8. Go to a religious celebration.

Unlike some religions, most Wiccans and pagans don't meet every week. In Wicca, we have two kinds of religious celebrations, Sabbats and Esbats. (If you are not Wiccan, ask your adult helper to tell you what the important celebrations are in your religion.) Sabbats are seasonal festivals - there are two each in the spring, summer, fall, and winter. Esbats are moon festivals; they are usually held on Full Moon nights, but sometimes also on New Moon nights.

Start doing something at home to celebrate these days. This could be as simple as having a special dinner on Sabbats with seasonal decorations - maybe flowers in spring, or cut-out snowflakes in winter - or going outside with your family to look at the Full Moon before bed. Of course you can do more if you want to! Talk to your adult helper and your parents to get ideas.

If you can, go to a bigger celebration with other people from your religion. Open circles and festivals are happening all over the country!

9. Learn about the Five Elements. Make a project showing your favorite.

Air is around us all the time - it's what we breathe. Clouds go through it. Sometimes it is still, and sometimes it is windy. In most traditions, Air stands for our thoughts, which are always moving even though we can't see them.

Fire is hot! It can be helpful if we control it, keeping us warm and cooking our food. But if we're not careful, it can hurt us. So Fire is like our passions - strength, courage, anger - good if we're careful, bad if we're not.

Water keeps us alive; all living things need water. It can change from liquid to solid (ice) or gas (clouds or steam) and back again. Our emotions, our feelings, change a lot too, so many of us connect them with Water.

Earth is the rocks (remember the rocks?) and the ground we stand on. It is hard and solid, like our bodies. Earth holds things together.

Spirit is not quite like the other four elements. Spirit is the soul, the intelligence, that makes everything else come together into a team. Spirit is like all of the elements at once.

Learn more about these elements. Look at them in nature. Read about them. Talk to your adult helper about their spiritual meaning. Then, choose your favorite and make a creative project for it. It can be a poster, a poem, a science project, or anything you like, as long as it shows something about your element.

10a. Show that you can center or meditate for a couple of minutes.

10b. Send energy through your hands.

10c. Put a "bubble" around yourself.

Magical energy is something that is in everyone. You can learn to feel it for yourself. Rub your hands together, then bounce them back and forth for a little bit, until it feels like there's a little pad of rubber or something between your hands. That's energy. We can use this energy to make our life better, as long as we make sure that we don't hurt anyone else.

Centering or meditating is one way that we can calm ourselves down when we are upset, and make sure that we aren't sending out any energy by accident. Sit quietly with your eyes closed and take a few deep breaths. Try to not think about anything else except your breath. If this is too hard, you can choose one thing to think about - a word like "Love," or a beautiful picture. Soon you should feel yourself calming down. You will feel like you are more in control of yourself.

Sending energy might sound hard, but it's really very easy. Take a few deep breaths and relax. Imagine that inside you, right behind your belly button, there is a pool of energy in your favorite color. It looks like colored light. Imagine that light moving up through your body and pouring out of your hands. Try sending energy to your adult helper, and see if they can feel it.

Now imagine that there's a bubble of this same colored light all around your body. Every part of your body is inside it. Imagine that this bubble keeps everything bad away from you. (Remember to keep doing other things to stay safe, too!)

PART III. DEALING WITH OTHERS

11. Explain the difference between secret and private. Why is our religion private?

One of the hard parts of being a kid in a pagan religion is keeping things private. Since people in some other religions talk about what they do all the time, it can be hard to understand why we usually don't.

A lot of people don't understand why everyone isn't in the same religion. They think that their religion is the only one that is right. This is different from most pagan religions, where we think that different ways are right for different people.

Some people get very scared when they hear about other religions, even though what we do is okay and very normal to us. At your age, you shouldn't have to deal with that. So it's usually best to keep quite about religion, except with people you know will understand.

There's no reason to be ashamed. Our ways are very beautiful, and you shouldn't feel that you are keeping a bad secret. This is private

like some of your body parts are private - healthy and good, but not for everybody to see.

12. Learn about one other religion. (Optional)

It's good to learn what other people believe so we can understand them better. If it's okay with your parents, you might try going to a church, temple, synagogue, or other place of worship, to see what they do. Look at some of their stories. Think about what is the same and what is different.

Some people think that doing this is a very good idea, but others don't. Your parents might not want you to start seeing other ways too early and getting confused. So you can do this part if your parents say it's okay, but you don't have to do it to get the award.

REQUIREMENT CHECKLIST

ADULT INIT.

PART I. THE WORLD

- _____ 1. Rocks! Start a rock collection. Learn about the three kinds of rocks, and see if you can find out which kinds you have.
- _____ 2. Plants! Plant a tree, or start a garden.
- _____ 3. Animals! Make a poster showing your favorite animal.
- _____ 4. People! Do something that helps another person.
- _____ 5. Put It All Together! Do something that helps the Earth.

PART II. LEARNING THE WAYS

- _____ 6a. Learn some of the old stories (mythology)
- _____ b. Make something creative about your favorite story or myth.
- _____ 7a. Make a family tree showing at least four generations, and learn about the people on it.
- _____ b. Learn a craft, song, game, or food that one of your ancestors would have known.
- _____ 8. Go to a religious celebration.
- _____ 9. Learn about the Five Elements. Make a project showing your favorite.
- _____ 10a. Show that you can center or meditate for a couple of minutes.
- _____ b. Send energy through your hands.
- _____ c. Put a “bubble” around yourself.

PART III. DEALING WITH OTHERS

- _____ 11. Explain the difference between secret and private.
Why is our religion private?
- _____ 12. Learn about one other religion. (Optional).