

summer solstice

RITUAL/CEREMONY

by Erin Bruce

WHAT IS THE INTENTION FOR THIS CEREMONY?

To celebrate the heat & fire of the Summer Sun. • To honor your own inner fire & celebrate your peak moments from the last 6 months. • To invite the sun's fire into your life to help you build & grow all the big things you want to accomplish in this season of Doing.

SUPPLIES: fire making supplies or a candle (if using a candle, have a pot or something you can safely burn paper in); paper & pens; your item for the altar (see below).

TO PREPARE:

- Since we're celebrating the Summer Sun, if you're able, I recommend performing this ceremony outside. (It also includes a burning ritual, which is always safer to do outside.)
- Gather supplies to build a fire safely. (I suggest building a fire that you can gather around & roast marshmallows afterward.) If you're not able to build a fire, a candle also works.
- Prior to your ceremony, spend some time reflecting on what you've accomplished in the first half of this year. What are some of your peak moments? What projects have you completed, what goals did you meet, what have you created that you feel really proud about? Reflect on these things & bring something to your ceremony that represents one of your accomplishments.

SETTING UP YOUR SUMMER SOLSTICE ALTAR:

- Set up your altar wherever you'll be performing your ceremony. If you don't already have an altar (or one outdoors) create a simple altar by finding objects that represent the 4 elements: air; fire, water; earth.
 - Don't overthink this part! You may already have meaningful things that represent some of these elements: seashells from the beach (water), a special crystal that you love (earth), etc.
 - I also love taking a special walk to collect things that represent each element. You can do this a few days prior to your Solstice ceremony or include it as a part of your sacred day. (Note: Kids LOVE these seasonal treasure hunts!)
- Because we are celebrating the summer sun, include something that represents the Sun. (A yellow flower, a candle, a yellow or orange gem, etc. Again, kids love hunting for something to represent the sun.)
- Bring something to add to the altar representing a peak moment in your life, something you accomplished in the last 6 months that you're really proud of. (Don't put this on the altar yet, you'll add it as part of the ceremony.)



1. BUILD YOUR FIRE

I suggest getting your fire burning before you gather everyone for your ceremony. This step always takes longer & is more fidgety than you anticipate, so make sure you have a good burning fire before you begin.

If you have kids, invite them to help build the fire. While you're building the fire's foundation, talk to them about the meaning of the Summer Solstice. (see below)

2. GROUNDING

When you're ready to begin, gather everyone around the fire. Start with some breathing exercises & grounding to settle into the space.

Take several deep breaths to relax & center yourself. I do a simple 5 second breathing exercise: breathe in for a count of 5, pause, then exhale for a count of 5. Do this several times to relax & arrive in this sacred space.

When you're ready, use a grounding exercise to anchor yourself & connect with the energy of the Earth. Use any grounding technique you like. I do this by spending several minutes envisioning roots growing out of the base of my spine. I picture the roots growing deep into the ground. Sometimes I will anchor my roots to a powerful crystal deep within the Earth. (Kids love to spend some time pretending to be a tree in this way.)

3. CALL IN THE DIVINE

Invite in whatever sacred powers you connect with (guides, energies, God, Goddess, the Divine, the Directions, etc.) Invite them to join you, and to guide & empower you in this work.

(I am a huge advocate for developing your own language to talk to the Divine, so I try not to provide exact words for your ceremonies.)

Your invitation can be very simple. Such as: "I invite the Divine & the powerful energy of _____ (fill in the blank) to join me (or us) on this sacred seasonal day. Please be with me & support me in my work. Please lend your energy to this ritual & this sacred space."

4. THE MEANING OF THE SOLSTICE

Take a moment to discuss the meaning of this sacred seasonal day & how it relates to this ceremony. (Or to remind yourself, if you're performing this ceremony solo.)

- The Summer Solstice is the longest day of the year. Today, the sun burns longer than any other day.
- Today we celebrate the fire of the sun as it reaches the peak of its life cycle, (which began on the Winter Solstice.)
- We each have a fire that burns within us—your own piece of the sun burning brightly inside of you.
- At the Summer Solstice we celebrate our own sacred fires. We invite in the fire of this longest day sun to add to our own fires so that we can burn brighter & stronger for the upcoming weeks of summer.
- Summer is the season of Doing. It is the most energetic & productive season of the year. We can use the fire of the Summer Solstice sun to fuel our work & our growth over the coming season.



5. CELEBRATE YOURSELF

Place the object you brought that represents an accomplishment you're proud on the altar. If you're doing this ceremony as a group, take turns placing your objects.

As you do this, take a moment to say out loud what it is you're really proud of. What have you worked really hard on that you were able to see to fruition? How have you challenged yourself? In what ways have you grown over the past 6 months? Share these thoughts & allow everyone gathered to celebrate you. If solo, allow the pride you feel to truly soak into your spirit.

When everyone gathered has shared, say a prayer of thanks for your accomplishments. Express gratitude to *yourself*, for all your hard work, for your great ideas, for your general badassery. (How often do you express gratitude for yourself?!!)

6. INVITE FIRE INTO YOUR LIFE

(Hopefully spending some time acknowledging your accomplishments & celebrating the hard work you've put in so far this year has you feeling proud & confident in yourself. This is the spark of your internal summer fire beginning to burn! Now we're going to invite in the fire from the sun. We'll add it to your own & fuel your inner fire for all the work you want to do this summer.)

Think about where you want to invite the sun's fire into your life. What do you want to do & create this summer? What do you want to grow in your life? What parts of you could use some extra fire to accomplish these things?

Spend a few minutes thinking about this. Then write those things you want to grow in your life on a piece of paper. Write down what you want to do & accomplish with your raging inner fire.

When you are ready we are going to burn our papers. We are literally lighting those plans, dreams, ideas, etc. on *fire* so they can begin burning brightly in our lives. As you place your paper into the fire, say out loud what it is you would like add fire to in your life. What do you hope to do, accomplish & grow this summer?

As your paper burns envision that fire taking hold in your life. Envision your own inner fire, picture it growing bigger & bigger. Know that your inner fire is burning stronger & fiercer with the addition of this summer fire. Feel your soul on fire, see it raging inside your body & spirit.

7. OFFER A PRAYER TO THE SUN & ITS FIRE

(Again, I think it is vital for us to develop our own language & voice for speaking with the Divine. Don't stress about making the words perfect, or flowery. Just speak from your heart.)

3 wonderful components to a prayer are praise, asking, and thanks. Let the Sun know how grateful you are that it shines on the Earth & gives us life. Ask the sun to lend its powerful Summer Solstice fire to your life, to help your plans & dreams grow. And then, say thank you for hearing your prayer.

8. RELEASE THE ENERGIES YOU INVITED IN

Thank your guides/spirits for being here, hearing your prayers, supporting you & adding to your fire.

5 soul lessons SUMMER TEACHES YOU

1. HONOR YOUR *inner fire.*

The element of Summer is fire.

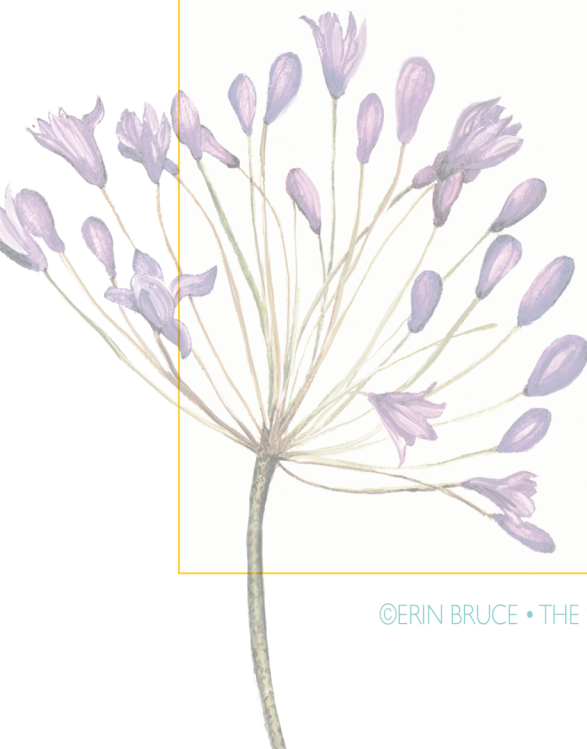
The powerful fire of the Sun will grow & nourish all the plants in the gardens over the summer weeks ahead. Autumn's harvests wouldn't come without the Sun. In summer we are reminded the Sun is sacred. Its fire is sacred.

Just like Earth's powerful sun, we each have our own inner fire. Your own sun, burning inside you, that nourishes your hopes & dreams. Your Inner Fire is the fierce, powerful, badass part of you. The You that does the hard work of bringing your dreams to life. In the same way that crops would cease to grow without the Earth's sun, your life would shrivel without your Inner Fire.

The summer's sun reminds us to celebrate our own Inner Fires.

Acknowledge the fierce, powerful, badass You that resides within. Take some time to recognize Her, acknowledge the important things your Fire does for you. Express gratitude for that part of your Self in the same way we celebrate the summer sun that grows our gardens and warms our days.

What has your Inner Fire helped you accomplish this year? How does that part of your Self manifest in your life? What blessings do you owe your Inner Fire gratitude for?



2. WHEN SOMETHING REACHES *completion* IN YOUR LIFE, YOU HAVE TO *let it go* SO YOU CAN *change & grow.*

The Summer Solstice has a bittersweet quality about it. We are celebrating the arrival of summer. (YAY!) But we have also reached the longest day of the year & now the days start slowly getting shorter again.

The Sun has grown as far as it can grow in this cycle. It's reached its peak. And it now begins its slow descent inward again, as the darkness gradually begins to return. Every year the Sun reminds us of this beautiful cycle of expansion & growth, and then ... returning inward.

Like the Sun there are ways you've expanded as far as you can this growth cycle. (Look around, acknowledge & celebrate the peak moments you've experienced recently.) Now's the time to begin the process of letting go of things that have reached completion in your life. Ways of operating that once served you, but now you've outgrown.

While growth & change is exciting, it can also be bittersweet letting go of things that once served you well. It's sad letting go of relationships, jobs, patterns (etc.), that have reached their peak. But this is a part of the cycle of growth that the sun teaches us so well. We awaken, we grow, we let go & turn inward, so we can begin the cycle all over again.

What has reached its peak in your life? Is there something that has reached completion that you are sad to let go? What change & growth are you excited for?



3. RECOGNIZE AND CELEBRATE YOUR OWN *divine masculine.*

Summer is the season of Yang energy. Yang is masculine energy. It's the energy that drive us to do, build, create. It's expansive & passionate. It's bold & commanding. It's assertive and self-reliant. It radiates, like the summer sun shining so fiercely & confidently this season

We all have elements of both the the feminine & the masculine that reside within us—the Yin & the Yang. One isn't best. Both are important. Both are necessary. Too often our culture equates masculine energy with anger & aggression. Its not a quality we're encouraged to explore & embrace.

But masculine energy is also protective & nurturing. It wants to see your hopes & dreams come alive in your life. Masculine energy is so powerful when you're not ruled by it, but instead you're able to harness & direct that energy to build the life you are desiring.

It's important to acknowledge the Divine Masculine that resides within you. It's important to celebrate the ways this part of yourself empowers you. And when we embrace this part of ourselves in a mindful way we can harness this beautiful masculine energy & not be overpowered by it.

How has the masculine empowered you this year? What has required you to be bold, powerful & loud? What will you build this summer with that masculine energy?



4. Find balance BETWEEN *intense* SUMMER ACTIVITY, AND IMPORTANT *idle hours* OF SUMMER RELAXATION.

All that masculine Yang energy makes summer a time of intense activity.

Historically, it was a time of working long hours tending the gardens and fields. Fewer of us have summer farm work to tend to these days. But still, our summers are jam-packed with plans, projects, activity, and adventure. Most of those are fun, exciting things we looking forward to. But ... we're *so busy!* We have a LOT of things going on. (Check yourself ... are your summer weekends almost all booked already?)

Summer is a time of so much going and doing. But in the summer our spirits also *yearn* for long, lazy hours of sitting on the porch, sipping an ice-cold drink, just reading a really good book.

We work hard in the summer. And we *play* hard in the summer. It's important that we balance that intense activity with idle hours of rest. And relaxation. And just *soaking in* all that warm, radiant, delicious, rich summer sun.

*How do you plan to be idle this summer? Make yourself a Summer Relaxation Bucketlist.
(Include books you plan to read, beaches you want to sit solo at & places you'll simply lay in the grass.)*



5. PUT IN THE *hard work*. THEN, *be patient & trust*.

The summer fruit will ripen on the vines when it's time. You can't rush it. You can't control it. You have to just ... Let go. Be patient. And, trust.

Trust in the seeds that you've planted. Trust that your Inner Fire has sparked their growth. Trust in the hard work you've already put into tending your garden—the hard work you've put into manifesting new dreams for yourself this year.

The fruit of all those seeds you planted will ripen when they're ready. You can't rush it. You can't control it.

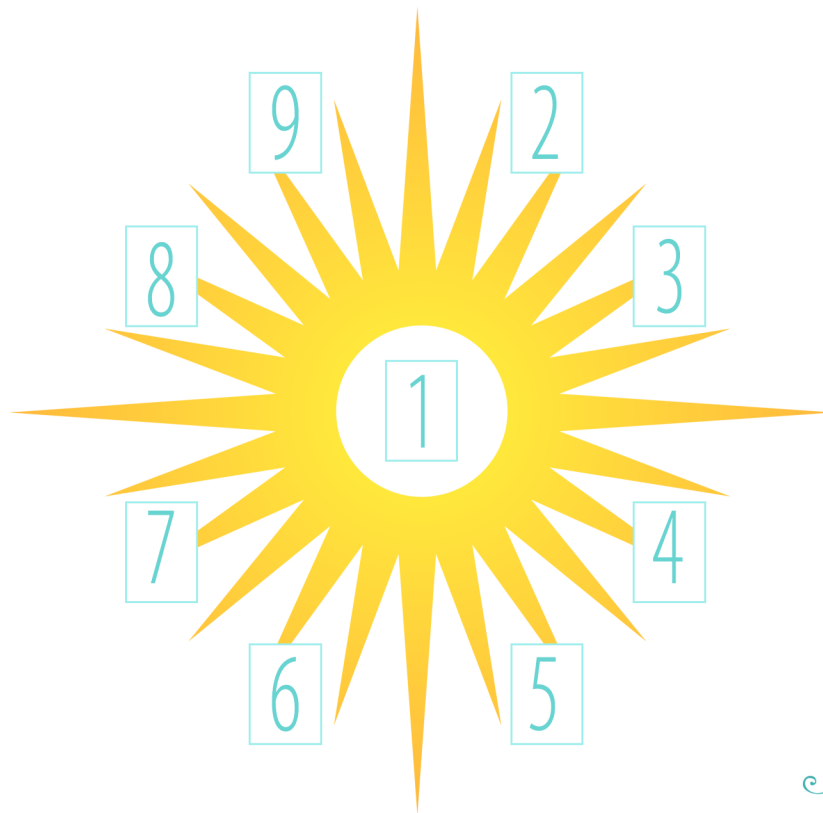
Just like the summer fruit on the vine, your dreams & intentions will ripen in their exact right, divine, moment. The Universe has already aligned to deliver you everything you've worked so hard for this year. You have to just be patient. And trust.

*What ideas or intentions have you planted that you trust will grow to juicy ripeness this summer? Express gratitude for the fruit they will bear as though you've already received it.
(Because ... you have!)*



summer solstice

TAROT SPREAD



*the
seasonal
soul*

- 1) What is the theme for the summer? Who are your spirit guides this summer?
- 2) Summer is the season of rapid growth & progress. What is growing rapidly in your life right now? Where will this growth be focused this summer?
- 3) Where do you need the summer fire in your life?
- 4) How can you help the intentions you planted in spring continue to grow & bear fruit?
- 5) Creative expression reaches its height at Lammas, on August 1st. Where should you be focusing your creative energy for the next 6 weeks?
- 6) How can you make the fullest use of your potential this season?
- 7) The Summer Solstice is the culmination of the sun's life cycle, which began on the Winter Solstice. What is reaching culmination within you, from first 1/2 of the year?
- 8) What do you need to release & let go off from the first 1/2 of the year?
- 9) If you do the work, what will you harvest at the end of the season?



sacred seasons

YOUR PERSONAL JOURNEY THROUGH THE WHEEL OF THE YEAR.



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