

## Notes to the Leader for Session S69 – Welcome the Return of the Light

### Preparing For This Session

This simple ritual helps celebrate the Winter Solstice and the return of the light to the earth. Here's a list of what to do ahead of time. Think about what would be best for YOU as well as your group, and keep things simple.

1. Prior to the session, distribute the Preparation (reading material—no questions or exercises).
2. The ritual is best done at night. If your group normally meets during the day, you might consider rescheduling to night-time if it's convenient.
3. The ritual should only last about an hour. That gives your group the option to let busy people go home early, or enjoy dessert, a simple gift exchange, carol singing, or anything else jolly. Talk about it and decide ahead of time.
4. Select a room that can be darkened nearly completely. You'll read a few lines after the room lights go out and you may need to use a small flashlight during this time.
5. Provide a table in the center of the seating area with the chalice or green Yule candle. Have matches or a lighter. We've asked members to bring their own candles and holders but you might have some extras on hand. One option is to provide a large bowl with sand or cat litter in which to stick all of the candles. (Cat litter is NOT traditional but we've learned to adapt...)
6. This completely optional, but if you want to decorate the table, you might choose objects from the ancient traditions:
  - a. Holly, ivy, or mistletoe (sacred to the Druids)
  - b. Evergreen boughs
  - c. Pine cones, wheat, apples or other natural items
  - d. Ornaments shaped like solar disks or stars, birds, deer, reindeer, and other wild creatures, icicles and snowflakes
  - e. Cloth in the colors of white, gold, green, red, or silver

### About the Solstice Ritual

Read the Order of Worship for this session to get familiar with how the Solstice ritual flows. Note the places where you will read (marked "**Leader reads**"). When members begin to share, which is optional, you may need to remind them be brief. This is not our regular type of sharing. After each has shared, lead the group in saying "May it be so." If there is a long silence, you might ask again if anyone wishes to share. If not, then go on to the candle lighting.

### Preliminaries

Prior to beginning the session, take a few minutes to go over the announcements of church events given at the last leader meeting or from a recent church bulletin. Also, remind members of the next meeting date. Get volunteers to light the chalice or Yule candle, read the opening words, and lead the Responsive Reading (regular type) at the close. Explain that sharing during the ritual will be optional and very brief. Make sure everyone has a candle and holder for the ritual.

### Timekeeping

preliminaries	5 minutes
opening	2 minutes
check-in	15 minutes
ritual	30 minutes
singing	10 minutes
<u>closing</u>	<u>3 minutes</u>
total	approx. 65 minutes

### Preparation for the Next Session

Make sure everyone gets a copy of the preparation sheet for the next session.