

Casting Circle

We will have excerpts from several books on casting Circle. There are several ways of doing it and some are for different rituals and some are just different ways. You need to use ways that feel right to you.

We have from the long version of the Wiccan Rede: " Cast the Circle thrice about To keep the evil sprits out."

Because of this each type of circle must be cast three times. (some traditions do it more)

To cast the circle you can use an Athame, Sword, or Wand. You use this to direct the energy from you into the circle. In some you cast the circle all three times with this tool. In others after the first cast you then do the second with a censor and the third with salt water. In others they are the forth and fifth time around and are for strengthening the circle you have just built.

From: Buckland Complete Book of Witchcraft by Raymond Buckland page 57 - 59

The Circle is marked out on the floor. There is a candle each of the four quarters; yellow to the east, red to the south, blue to the west, green to the north. The altar is set up in the center of the Circle so that, when facing it, you are facing east. On the altar are one or two white candles, thurible, dishes of salt and of water, bell, deity figures (optional), bowl of anointing oil, goblet of wine (or fruit juice), libation dish, sword and priests' athames.

CENSERER lights the incense and the altar candles and then leaves the area to with the rest of the coven, in the northeastern quarter.

Priest and Priestess enter the Circle from the east (just on the northern side of the east candle) as will all, when they come in and move to stand before the altar, facing east. priest rings bell three times.

Priest and Priestess each take an altar candle and move around the altar, deosil, and across to the east, Priestess lights the east Candle from the one she carries.

They move on round to the South, where the Priest lights the South candle.

They move to the west , were the Priestess lights the West candle.

They move to the north, where the Priest lights the North Candle.

They move on around to the east, then back to the altar and replace their candles. Priestess takes up the

sword (or Athame) and, returning to the east, now walks slowly around the Circle with sword point

following the marked line. As she walks, she concentrates power into the Circle line. When completed, she

returns to the alter. The bell is rung three times. {they bless the salt and water and make holy water}

The priest takes up Thurible (censor); Priestess takes up Salted Water.

They again move round the altar to

the east. Starting there, they slowly walk clockwise around the Circle, Priestess sprinkling the salted water

along the line of the circle and Priest passing censor along its line, till they return to their starting point.

They then return to the altar and replace the tools. Priest drops a pinch of salt into the oil and stirs it with his finger. He then anoints the Priestess.

They salute, then Priestess anoints Priest,.....

{Circle is cut to allow in the rest of the coven in}

{the quarters are invoked}

{invite in the Lord and Lady}

(ED.Note: To get all the words you need to look into the book - this has been edited just to get the casting and the order)

Next we will be using A Witches' Bible by Janet and Stewart Farrar. Again we will on list the casting and the order and leave most of the words out. To get the words look on page 35 of part 1 of the book.

The High Priestess and High Priest kneel before the altar, with him to her right. The rest of the coven stand outside the North-East quadrant of the Circle.

The High Priestess puts the bowl of water on the pentacle, put point of her Athame in the water.

She lays down her Athame and holds up the bowl of water in both hands.

The High Priest puts the bowl of

salt on the pentacle, puts the tip of his Athame in the salt.

He lays down his Athame and pours the salt into the bowl of water which the High Priestess is holding up.

They then both put down their bowls on the altar, and the High Priest leaves the Circle to stand with the coven.

The High Priestess draws the Circle with the sword, leaving a gateway in the North-East (by raising her

sword higher than the heads of the coven as she passes them). She proceeds deosil from North to North.

She then lays down the sword and admits the High Priest to the Circle with a kiss, spinning with him deosil.

The High Priest admits a woman in the same way; that woman admits a man; and so on, till all the coven are in the Circle.

The High Priestess picks up the sword and closes the gateway, by drawing that part of the Circle in the same way as she did the rest of it.

The High Priestess then names three witches to strengthen the Circle (which she has already established in the Earth element) with the elements of Water, Air and Fire.

The first witch carries the bowl of consecrated water round the Circle, deosil from North to North, and replaces it on the altar.

The second witch carries the smoking incense-burner round the perimeter, deosil from North to North, and replaces it on the altar.

The third witch carries one of the altar candles round the perimeter, deosil from North to North, and replaces it on the altar.

All the coven then pick up their athames and face the East, with the High Priestess and High Priest in front

(He standing to the right) High Priestess invokes the East. As she speaks, she draws the Invoking Pentagram of Earth with here Athame in the air in front of her. After drawing the Pentagram, she kisses her Athame blade and lays it on her heart for a second or two. The High Priest and the rest of the coven copy all these gestures with their own athames; any who are without athames use their right forefinger. The High Priestess and the Coven face the South and repeat the summoning. They then face the West. They then face the North, where she also invites the Goddess and God into the circle. Everyone then replaces their Athame on the alter.

ED. Note: Very much alike, but different. Lets look at still another way. From : To Ride A Silver Broomstick by Silver RavenWolf starting on page 124

Assuming compass North has been found and you have made arrangements for some type of Door Between the Worlds, you may enter the circle. Some Witches walk over a broom that has been place in an angular position across the threshold and then pull the broom in after them. Others merely walk into the circle and use the knife to part and close the door.

If you are using the sacred space that you have previously prepared, simply take the broom and sweep as you walk around the circle in a clockwise motion. Imagine t hat your broom leaves trails of positive light and energy in the clockwise movements. Return to the altar. It is now time to charge the circle and call the Watchtowers. Another reference here is "casting the magick circle". Here is where the various rituals become diverse, depending upon the purpose and the Tradition. There are those that take all four elements and charge the circle, as was done in the cleansing and consecration ritual. Others do not do this (especially if the space is a permanent one), and merely draw the circle with their wand or Athame.

Working with the Watchtowers is a matter of choice. There are those Witches that wouldn't be caught in any dimension doing this, others use Angels at the Quarters, or elements.. You will have to determine which you prefer.

Beginning with East, call the Quarters. Then move to the South, then West, and end at the North. At each quarter, a Pentagram is drawn in the air

and the guardian is verbally invoked. You should imagine that this symbol is roaring with blue flame.

When you have called the Quarters, face the center of the circle and make mention that you are now between worlds.

As you call the Quarters (actually the guardians you have chosen to protect you while you are in he magick circle), a sense of growing will be about you. Do not be afraid. It is now time to do the invocation and alignment.

The next comes from Pagan Rituals III: Outer Court Training Coven edited by Herman Slaterpage 65..It must be noted that parts of this book were written before the publication of Bucklands Complete Book of Witchcraft or the Witches' Bible. Many things are considered secret that we now know from other books.

When all are within the Circle area, the Priestess shall take up the Wand. She shall begin in the East and walk deosil, and draw a Circle three times.

The Priestess then replaces the Wand upon the Altar and takes up the Incense Brazier. She begins again in the East and walks around the Circle censuring the entire area. The Priestess then picks up the Magick Mirror

and stands it in the North. She bids all to point their first two fingers at the Mirror and say..... She now moves to the East. All coven members face East with here and hold out their Athames. She cults the Invoking Pentagram and (calls the Quarter) Repeat for Fire at the South, Water at the West, and Earth at the North. Then make a silent salute at the East.

Next follow consecration of salt and water by the Priestess.

Next we will visit The Spiral Dance by StarHawk starting on page 69.

The room is lit only by flickering candles at each of the cardinal points. The coveners stand in a circle, their hands linked. With her Athame, her consecrated knife, unsheathed, the Priestess steps to the altar and

salutes sky and earth. She turns and walks to the Easter corner, followed by two coveners, one bearing the chalice of salt water, the other the smoldering incense. The face the East, The Priestess raises her knife and

calls out: (invoking East)

As she speaks, she traces the invoking Pentagram in the air with here knife. She see it, glowing with a pale blue flame, and through it feels a great onrush of wind, sweeping across a high plain lit by the first rays of dawn. She breathes deeply, drawing in the power, then earth's it through her knife, which she points to the ground.

As she sprinkles water three times, the first Covener cries out, "with salt and water, I purify the East!"

The priestess, knife held outward, traces the boundaries of the circle. She sees it take shape in her minds eye as they continue to each of the four directions, repeating the invocation, the purification, and the charging.

The Priestess traces the last link of the circle, ending in the East. Again she salutes sky and earth, turns and touches the tip of her Athame to the central cauldron, and says." The circle is cast. We are between Worlds,

Beyond the bounds of time, Where night and day, Birth and death, joy and sorrow, Meet as one"

The second Covener takes a taper to the South Point candle and with it lights candles in the central cauldron and the altar, saying "The Fire is lit, The ritual is begun."

As you can see there are many ways of casting a circle. There are many more than the one's listed in this file, but space and time limits it. In you Book of Shadows you should write down the different types of Castings you have been part of. Also write one that feels right to you. You will notice that some things are the same in all the Circles.