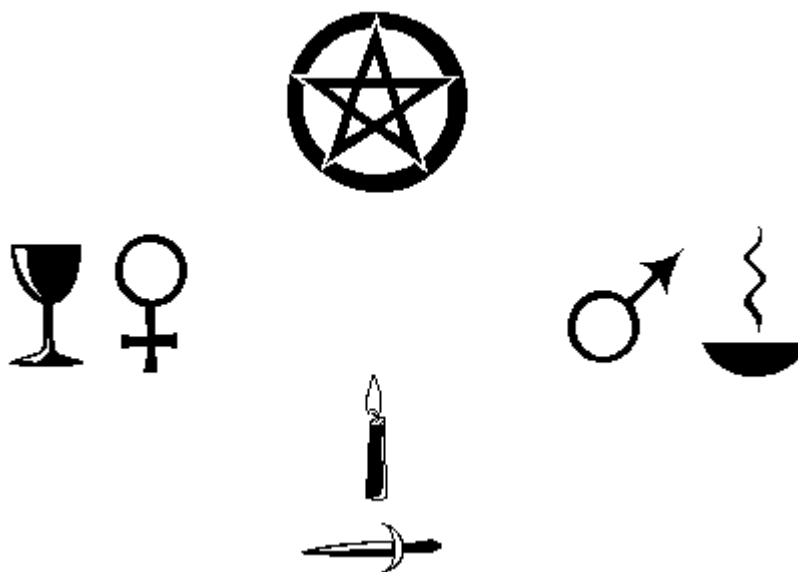


Altar Arrangement



Traditionally, the altar is placed either in the center or the circle or in the North. In either event, it faces North. However, if this does not fit with the ritual space, or if a particular working suggests that it would be more appropriate to face the altar in another direction, this is acceptable. In addition, on certain occasions, positioning the altar in another direction may feel more appropriate (ie. For the Winter Solstice one might face the altar to the East to greet the rising Sun).

The altar should be of comfortable height, large enough to hold everything placed upon it, and steady. It need not be something reserved solely for ritual use. A mundane occasional table with a suitable cover makes a fine altar. The size required will depend on the amount of space available, the materials to be used in ritual, and the size of the group.

On the altar there should be a symbolic representation of each element, and a representation of the Lord and Lady, a cup of sharing, and additional candles as appropriate.

Symbol of the Lady: This may be an actual statue or other physical likeness of one of the Goddesses. Other substitutes include a holey stone, flowers, or a chalice. On a simple altar, the chalice may represent both the Goddess and the element of water.

Symbol of the Lord: Again, an actual likeness of the God may be used. Other symbols include a piece of antler, teeth (carnivore) or any other item felt to represent the male principle. The athame may do double duty as the God symbol.

East is the element of Air. The totem animal is Aquila, the Eagle. His realm is the high mountain

peaks. The associated color is yellow or white. East stands for new beginnings, intellect, wisdom. It is the time of sunrise. It is represented by incense and/or a wand.

South is the element of Fire, represented by Leonis, the Lion. Leonis lives in the burning deserts or savannahs. The associated color is red. The associated time is noon. It stands for passion. It is represented by the athame, a red candle, and/or the sword.

West is the element of Water, represented by Orm Silvren, the Sea-dragon, whose place of residence is the depths of the ocean. The color is blue, the time is evening. West stands for emotion, that which is hidden. It is represented by the chalice.

North is the Element of Earth, represented by Taurus, the Bull, whose place of origin is a cavern or rolling, forested hills. The color is green or black, the time of day is midnight. This is the realm of spirit and magic. It is represented by the pentacle, or a container of salt or earth.

Other elements may be added as desired, such as those described below. Or the altar may be kept very simple. The only things which are generally considered necessary are a representation of the Lord and Lady, and representative items of the four quarters.

Optional altar items include the following:

North-east: Bell, iron bar or nails (nails point outward)

South: Sword in sheath – hilt towards the east.

Southwest: Oil for anointing, may be more than one (separate for sexes). Should coordinate with incense. For instance, if your oil is based on sandalwood, you might choose a sandalwood incense to complement it.

West: Broom or besom, leaned against the side of the altar. The broom is sometimes used to symbolically clean the circle space prior to beginning of ritual.

Watchtowers/quadrant candles: These can all be white, or can correspond to the colors of the Elements.

Northwest: Bread or cakes, preferably warm from the oven.

Center: Crystals to be used in healing. White on right, dark on left.

Egg and Arrow symbols: along with spirals, these are the oldest symbolic representations of the Goddess and God.