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Children of the Earth

No.14

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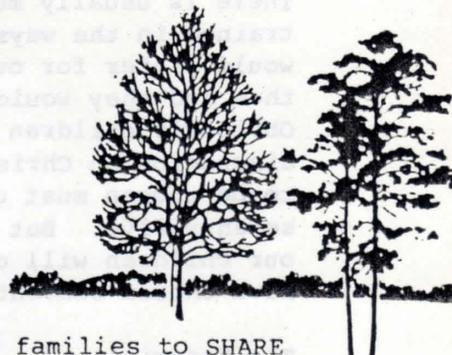
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G'all took me off the Unicorn list 'cause I was so long between issues that time, but I'd sure like to see the littlest Unicorn - I keep listing as a resource + haven't even seen it. Please? y

Children of the Earth



PO Box 116
Berkeley Springs WV
(304) 258-2785

CHILDREN OF THE EARTH exists to provide a FORUM for Pagan families to SHARE the joys and hassles of raising (or being) Pagan children. We hope you will ALL send articles, and write letters, to share questions, ideas, problems, experiences, stories, and whatever. In short, PARTICIPATE. THIS NEWSLETTER IS WHATEVER YOU MAKE IT.

Here are some suggestions of what to send:

1. LETTERS expressing your opinions and ideas on issues relating to Pagan Parenting.
2. ARTICLES and regular columns of interest to Pagan Families, book reviews, etc.
3. ACTIVITIES, games, stories, music, etc. that are Pagan/Family oriented.
4. KIDS - material written by and/or for them.
5. CONTACTS for networking.
6. ANNOUNCEMENTS of events, publications, etc OF INTEREST TO FAMILIES in the Pagan community.
7. ARTWORK - black on white, please, so it will photocopy.
8. RITUALS - written with young ones in mind.
9. EVERYTHING ELSE THAT YOU THOUGHT OF AND I DIDN'T. Whatever seems relevant to families and parenting and kids.

COTE does not have a regular printing schedule. When you send me enough stuff to do an issue, I'll do it. Send articles and stuff: if we're too long between issues, it might just be your story I'm waiting for.

Subscriptions are \$5 for 4 issues that you aren't printed in; if something of yours is printed, your subscription is extended.

On names: Unless you say otherwise, I'll print full mailing information if you say you want contacts/pen-pals, and for everything else I'll sign it with your given or pagan name. Really, I'd prefer everything to be marked clearly with the way you prefer to be known.

Advertising policy: I don't charge money for ads; swap me something. I'm limited to the size issue one postage stamp will carry. Articles have preference over ads. If I have room, I'll probably print it. If not, I won't. When I have to choose, I choose family-related over general. Printing ads does not constitute endorsement of a person/product/service/etc. I'm down here in West By-Goddess Virginia and am not omniscient. Hail Eris!

Blessed Be!

Hestia



THE CRYSTAL SPRING
by Ed Fitch

Concerning Children's Covens:

There is usually much discussion among Witches as to how their children should be trained in the ways of the Craft. Though most of us have come in as adults, we would prefer for our youngsters to start much earlier...it would be worthwhile for them and they would enjoy it.

Obviously children should be given exposure to conventional religion, with discussion on Christianity's good and bad points. The choice of what religion is to be chosen must ultimately be that of the individual, whether the age be five or seventy-five. But I've observed that when given the option the vast majority of our children will choose Witchcraft, a few agnosticism, and none (in my experience) have chosen conventional religion.

The Material:

What material should be used...should it be particularly elementary and especially written down to them, as are many of their schoolbooks? The answer: by all means, no! Youngsters are much more intellectually sharp than many adults realize. They can handle grown-up material easily and moreover, they would resent being given "kindergarten rituals". Even the youngest!

Whatever is chosen should be clear and common-sense. A most capable High Priestess whom I know has taken the basic rites of the Pagan Way and modified them slightly, bringing in a full opening and closing of the circle for every ritual, a simple initiation ceremony, and each item generally made more fully in agreement with her own tradition. For others, I am certain that Pagan Way or Outer Court material could be selected and adapted with little difficulty.

How Old and What Covens?:

What age should the young ones be when brought in, and how long should they be kept in the beginning coven? The answer is simple... a child can be brought in as soon as she or he is old enough to keep quiet about the ceremonies and spells, and not talk about them to friends and schoolmates. They may be kept in a young people's group until the minimum for initiation into your own tradition. Usually this would be eighteen, though the presence of parents in the circle with them is enjoyed. Exactly which adults and how many should be decided based on the preferences of the individual group.

It's best that they be led through the first couple rituals, then do it all themselves afterwards. Also, they should take turns at being priestesses and priests, to give everyone the experience. If at all possible, the numbers of boys and girls should be equal... or as close as possible, anyhow.

Primarily Worship Rites:

Most of the work should involve worship-oriented rituals. Magical operations should be strictly minimized at first, except for healing. Some protective spells and rites should be taught at a later time.

A major point is intended by this. First and foremost: worship and reverence for the Goddess, the God, and the Mighty Ones is of the greatest importance. To learn this with the innermost reaches of the soul is a very great attainment indeed. It gives stability, a sense of ethics and responsibility, ironclad control over one's mind and magic, and a protection from within that can withstand any buffetings of the mundane world or of things psychic. It provides a sense of awe and the view of distant horizons that gives impetus for ever deeper and more extensive study and practice throughout life.

As a matter of fact, most adults could use the same sort of thing!

Children and Magic:

Magic, for youngsters, is easy. They adapt to it without any problems: society hasn't had the chance to give them the hangups that bedevil us adults. Nor has it filled their minds with firm misconceptions about what's real and what isn't. They still have close contact with the subconscious and extraconscious mind... which is the key to it all, really.

With magic, though, go slowly... A bit more slowly than with adults. Learning magic gives one power... The sort of power involved in handling a fast car, a horse, a plane, or a rifle. Adults are accustomed to this kind of power, but a child or teenager has to get over the exhilaration of just making things happen, learn care and moderation, learn to be careful of others, and to protect oneself. In short, maturity.

The working of Craft rites quite regularly, and the performing of increasingly stronger magical and worship spells, invariably hastens the growing-up process.

Here everything depends on the effectiveness and judgement of the Priestess or Priest who serves as guide and mentor.

Methods of meditation and of psychic training depend entirely on the orientation of your own tradition. Some will use little or nothing in the way of training exercises... others will use much. Some will draw from the excellent books by Gray or Bardon, others from their own court materials. Some may teach fundamentals of yoga, divination methods, herbs, astrology, or other Craft-oriented arts. It all depends on your wishes and your needs.

Reading and Literature:

Background reading is important, both factual and fictional. Dion Fortune's works on occultism, Tolkien's Ring trilogy, Robert Graves' Poetry and his introduction to the Greek myths... these should be included. Various publications including the Crystal Well have offered very good annotated listing of Craft-type books for youngsters. I won't try duplicating any of these lists here... merely recommend them to you. Suffice it to say that there are far more good books on Witchcraft for children and young people than most adults ever realize.

The initial BOOK OF SHADOWS, with all basic rites, should be set up by the adults of the sponsoring coven. But as time goes on, the members of the young folk's coven should be encouraged to add their own poems, their own spells, and finally some rituals they have researched or composed.

Discuss It With Them!

Be ready to answer their questions, and answer them to the best of your ability. And honestly. Don't hide behind the "because I say so" ploy... it won't work. Kids and teenagers are observant and quite sharp intellectually. (More so than many adults!) You can expect that some of their questions will be the most profound and difficult that you've ever tried to figure out. Just do your best, that's all.

As they get more experienced, give them more autonomy in the running their own coven: it will pay off. As time goes by, they will be needing less advice... and ultimately, practically none. At this time they will be ready for full initiation in the Craft and you should grant it as soon as your tradition will allow.

It will all take time, and it will not always be easy. But few other tasks could ever be as rewarding!

***** CHILDREN'S SPRING RITUAL *****

AS PERFORMED AT THE SPRING EQUINOX MYSTERIES FESTIVAL, 1986,
AQUARIAN TABERNACLE

Written by Eric, and performed under supervision of Eric,
Leland, Imogene & Damien.

Materials: Colored eggs (one for each child), stones (gathered at site), sticks (gathered at site), bells and other noisemakers, incense and burner, anointing oil, salt, water (at site), candles (with jars to protect from the wind), chalice, flat alter stone (at site), bundle of broomstraws.

Important points to remember:

1. Child centered with minimum of guidance & help.
2. Easy, rhythmic, and short in length.
3. Include a lot of action (ie dancing, noisemaking, etc.)

The ritual should be done after dinner and before their bedtime, and not last longer than 15-20 minutes.

Have the children gather stones and one stick each (about 12" in length). Outline a circle on the ground and have the children place the stones around it. Make the circle big enough to enclose all the children with plenty of room to spare. Line the children up outside the circle, holding hands. Appoint one child to anoint, one to sprinkle, and one to cleanse (with incense). These children should be the oldest or most mature. Have the other children file into the circle one-by-one past these three children and form a circle. Appoint 4 other children to call the 4 quarters (volunteers or older children). Have one child invoke the Goddess and one invoke the God. Do a chant and circle dance with noisemakers. Have the children take an egg and a stick and place it in the center of the altar and ask the God and Goddess for special favors and requests. Have them ground and then dismiss the 4 quarters and the God & Goddess. Then break the circle and dismiss the children to their families.

FROM LITTLE ACORNS

Last June, Starsight conducted a 4-part 2-day workshop for children, called "from little acorns", as part of Silver Acorn Circle's INTO MIGHTY OAKS workshop. Here's how it went:

...The children each got a coloring book (From Little Acorns, \$5, to Silver Acorn Circle, PO Box 75546, Oklahoma City, OK, 73147, checks to Jill Harshaw or Sarah White), a quartz crystal, a flute, and a booklet filled with stories, songs, chants, references, games and rituals all designed just for children.

The four rituals we did at the workshop were written (and I use the word loosely!) by my then-three year old daughter. They were modified by the children present (10, counting my 2). Once the children were gathered together, we sat in a circle. I blew several bubbles and showed them how to stick the bubbles with a pin without popping the bubble. They also learned they could pop the bubble whenever they wanted to. Once they understood this about bubbles, we imagined a small bubble in front of each of us. Each bubble grew until it touched our neighbor's bubbles, and all the bubbles became one bubble. Then the bubble grew big enough to fit us all inside. Bubbles could, of course, stretch so we would always be inside the bubble wherever we were. As we sat there safe inside our bubble, we talked a little about Paganism, what the children thought it was and how they felt about it. For most of the children, this was their absolutely first ever contact with anything even remotely resembling Paganism. I had to backtrack real quick and revise my original plans! Their initial reactions were very negative - 'black magic', 'eating babies', 'drinking blood', 'icky', 'Jesus-haters', 'grown-up stuff'. After some more talk, they agreed to try the weekend, and then make a decision. To help put them in a better mood, I told them some stories. The children then learned a circle dance from Scotland, then played THE MOON GAME until snack time. After snacks, I brought out the quartz crystals, and we played Quartz People. After lunch, they were still excited, so we calmed down with a little color breathing. Their favorite colors are purple, green, and orange. The second ritual, we raised white light energy to send to our sick friends to use as they wanted to use it. Then we chanted and said goodbye for the night.

On Sunday morning, the children arrived eager for more (as an aside, two of these children have talked their mother into coming to visit us so they could learn more.) so we started with a love ritual, and all the children got to send loving thoughts to their friends. I was very touched when some of them chose to send their love to me. Then we played Castles with our quartz crystals and had a snack. After the snack, we played the REALM OF THE GODS until lunch time. After lunch, I told them some more stories, and then we all made up some stories together. We took a short Nature Walk - short because some of these children were real City Kids. They wanted to go back in as soon as they realized we weren't going to play on the playground equipment! But they did enjoy 'eating weeds!' - sour grass, fiddleheads, lamb's quarters, violets, watercress, onions, plantains, and mint, all growing by the roadside. It was the sour grass they really liked. When we got back, we sang some songs and they each got an Indian flute (feathers, bells and all). We talked some more and they decided being Pagan wasn't so bad. Maybe not all Pagans ate little babies' hearts! It might even be fun. Then we did a farewell ritual. And that was the end of the From Little Acorns Children's Workshop.

The children liked the workshop so well, I've been toying (just toying, mind you!) with the idea of doing a Summer Pagan Children's Camp. Once I figure out all that needs to be done, I just might do it. There are so many things to consider! Places and time and curriculum and number of children and so much more! Maybe someone else would like to actually do it. I'm real good at planning things, but not so good at quickly implementing them. -Starsight

SPEAKING OF BOOKLISTS - WE HAVE THIS FROM STARSIGHT:

May I recommend a whole lists of children's books? All of them are available through the Public Library System (Inter-library loan). (editor's note: At least in Oklahoma.) Where possible, I have included ISBN numbers.

The Son of the Day and the Daughter of the Night by George MacDonald, ISBN 0914676458.

Valentines for a Dragon by S>R> Murphy, ISBN 0689710496

The Strange Child E.T.A. Hoffman, ISBN 0907234607.

Sarah's Unicorn B & C Coville, ISBN 0064430847

THE BRAMBLY HEDGE SERIES (Spring, Autumn, Winter, Summer, and Secret Staircase) by Jill Barklem.

Grandfather Twilight and Animalia by Barbara Berger

The Baby's Bedtime Book by Kay Choroao

Mr. & Mrs. Bird Build a Nest and Mr. & Mrs. Bird and Their Family by Daniel Boillat

FLOWER FAIRY BOOKS (Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, Wayside, Trees, Garden) by Cicely Mary Barker.

Clump-a-Dump and Snickle-Snack by Joanna Russ

Anna Witch by Madeleine Edmondson, ISBN 0385173938

Teddy Edward's Magic Journey and Snowy Toes and the Magic Music Box by Patrick & Mollie Matthews.

Starbaby by Frank Asch

The Faun & the Woodcutter's Daughter and The Lady of the Linden Tree by Barbara Picard

Heather, Oak & Olive by Rosemary Sutcliff.

Pagans - Greetings!

I, Morgaine (and help from my fellow group) have put a Craft booklet together for the children. I wish to formally announce the booklet as "A Little Pagans' Rising" to its new beginning into the Pagan community.

The booklet consists of nine sections (possibly more!). This booklet will also deal with the creativity of the child's mind and at the same time give a learning technique into the Ancient ways of Paganism. This program is in all respects on the positive path!

This booklet is FREE for the asking. If you would like to be a subscriber or inquire more information, please send a SASE to the following:

Morgaine Wood
13 Wilkinson Ave.
Iowa Falls, IA 50126

There will be a limited subscription distributed at its first phase stage. All names will be kept in order received and in strict confidentiality! Any contributions will be greatly accepted and appreciated.

Blessed Be and may the Lady's Light Shine on small pathways.

Morgaine Wood.

Dear Hestia -

I have a problem that maybe your readers could help me with. I want very much to progress in the Craft; I also want to be a good mother. How does the mother of small children find sufficient peace and quiet to do meditation, psychic exercises, magic, etc. etc. etc.?, while also working, parenting, and attempting to relate to her spouse? Not to mention time? Can anyone give me suggestions?

- Meghan

WANTED: ANY & ALL INFORMATION PERTAINING TO HECATE. Hestia wants it and so does Pete of Aquarian Tabernacle - he's writing a book. Please send whatever you wish to share to COTE. Thanks for the help. -Hestia

CIRCLE is having serious zoning problems. If anyone hasn't already heard about it, check with them. Box 219, Mount Horeb, WI 53572.

NOTE: Cote MOVED AGAIN. NEW ADDRESS IS PO BOX 116, BERKELEY SPRINGS WV 25411.

RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES

PAGAN PARENTS' LEAGUE, PO Box 423-P, Bay Shore NY 11706 USA, donate cash or postage stamps, no checks please, to Belinda.

THE LITTLEST UNICORN, Box 8814, Minneapolis, MN, 55408, \$7/yr to Rowan Tree.

PAGAN PARENTING NETWORK NEWSLETTER, Nicola Beechsqirrel, Blaenberem, Mynnyddcerrig, Nr. Llanelli, Dyfed, Cymru, Wales. 2 pounds/year.

RESOURCES FOR ADULTS:

FRANZ BARDON FOUNDATION Nonprofit Educational Cooperative dedicated to propagating Hermetic knowledge, PO Box 4869, Denver CO, 80204.

NINEWORLDS PUBLICATIONS carries books on myth, folklore, history and culture of Northern Europe, Contact Steve McNallen, Nineworlds Publications, PO Box 1792, Breckenridge TX 76024. (817)559-2117.

ROWANWOOD DESIGN, PO Box 23686, Lexington KY 40523, notecards, graphic arts, robes, runes, bags, etc.

PAGANA, newsletter of Pagan/Occult/Witchcraft Special Interest Group of Mensa. \$12/6 thick issues (\$15 overseas) from PAGANS SIG, POB 9494, San Jose, CA 95157 USA.

JANA GALADRIEL, CENTRE FOR THE THRONE OF ISIS ASET, PO BOX 2143, CANYON COUNTRY, CA 91351, Putting together Pagan Trade & Barter Directory - write for further info, participation.

COVENANT OF THE GODDESS produced Press Packet to help with positive publicity - \$3 donation to COG, & Don Frew, POB 4243, Berkeley CA 94794

EARTH-RITE Computer Bulletin Board System, by/for Pagan community, 300/1200 baud 24 hours/day, 415-651-9496.

*philosophers stone - pagan bookstore
557 rd '6, Kenil, nj 07847*

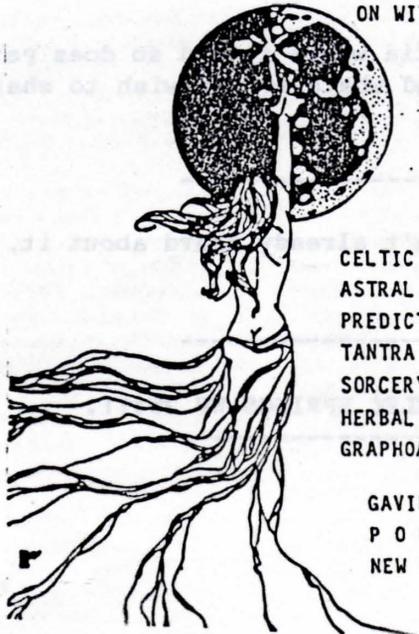
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POETRY .

by Kate:

I feel the longing of Life for itself,
the sadness of an end, of preparations
for the party that never happened,
my blood gathered for the ancient
ceremony of conception, now unused,
readying for the outward journey;
my yearning for a man to hold me
lessens, waning with the movements
of the traveling moon - Oh Moon,
Where are the caresses of my sisters?
I lie quite still, a quiet knowing
forming in my mind, there are oils
and incense, perhaps flowers to strew
Upon the floor of the vast female
cavern; the huge cave formed by
the touching of all women in Power,
in Blood, in Knowledge, in Love!

Oh Woman, I sing my song to You,
as woman who will bear the child,
as mother to the not yet born,
as giver of herself to create life,
as center of the dynamo of action,
receiver of the seed, like a black
fertile field, rampant with potential,
stirring with energy, movement within,
I sing my song to You, You, oh Woman,
Whose hands reach out in all directions,
Whose breasts feed, and transmute love,
Whose mind never obscures the true
nature of her being, tho it be
trampled in the dust of her cultures...

Blessed Be, oh Goddess, Blessed be.

Source unknown,
tune of Amazing Grace:

Enjoy, enjoy the day, this day,
When morn awakens you;
The brightness of the burning sun,
The dampness of the dew.

Enjoy, enjoy the night, tonight,
The solace of the dark;
The shining moon, the twinkling stars,
The lovesong of the lark.

Enjoy, enjoy the life, all life
That is in all-around;
And know the thrill today, each day
Of beauty you have found.

Poem for the Seed Moon by Jossy (6)

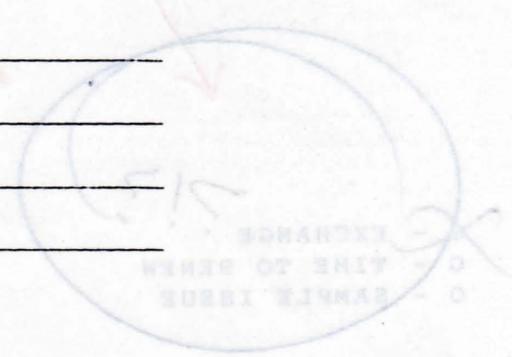
With Spring coming and Winter going
We have all the fun we can have
Of all the Flowers
And thank you so much for the flowers
And all the other things.
I love you, God and Goddess.

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TO: Rowan Tree
Box 8814
Minneapolis MN 55408

Poison Ivy cure: Wash
affected area with kerosene.
Relieves itching, rash disappears.

★

I heard a rumor - from a
seven-year-old - that She-Ra
has the One True Right and
Only Way.

★

Your poem could have
been here.

★