

# Earth-Centered Traditions

## Lesson 9: Rites of Passage

1.2.2022

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**Objectives:** Exploring rites of passage among earth-centered traditions.

**Materials:** Laptop/PowerPoint.

**Time allotments:** Suggested for 50 minute class, followed by 20 minute closing service (end class around 9:50/11:50 to begin chapel 9:55/11:55).

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### 1. **Nametags and Graffiti Wall** (5 minutes before class begins):

- Make nametags using blank paper, markers, and holders. Youth can create their own unique but LEGIBLE nametag. Make it a regular practice to wear nametags.
- “Graffiti Wall” questions: Write the following on whiteboard. Invite youth as they arrive to grab a marker and weigh in with their responses:
  - ▶ What practices or rituals do you do to mark the New Year?
  - ▶ Is there some life moment you look forward to: getting to vote, going off to college, driving a car, owning a home, getting married, becoming a parent, others?
- Teachers complete attendance sheets.

### 2. **Silly Fun: Tree Pose** (5 minutes max)

We say that Unity is a place where people lead lives of integrity, service, and joy. We say that at church we find and keep our balance. So in the spirit of yoga... who can stand on one leg the longest, in a tree pose, *with their eyes closed?!?!*



### 3. **Chalice Lighting:** Light the chalice, saying these words together: “We light this chalice as a symbol of our faith; the light of truth and the warmth of love.”

**Teacher reads:** (from theologian and author, Tim Keller)

*“A fish, because it absorbs oxygen from water rather than air, is only free if it is restricted and limited to water. If we put it out on the grass, its freedom to move and even live is not enhanced, but destroyed... Freedom, then, is not the absence of limitations and constraints but it is finding the right ones, those that fit our nature and liberate us.”*

**4. PowerPoint presentation: Rites of Passages (35 minutes)**

Follow the lesson plan in the PowerPoint presentation, with teachers facilitating discussion along the way.

**\*Note: To help track time, a suggested time allotment for each slide is listed on the upper right corner.**

**5. Questions for Discussion (10 minutes)**

- Many youth look forward to “coming of age” as a rite of passage into greater freedom to choose their own path in life. Yet freedom remains one of the trickiest challenges people face. Read Tim Keller’s quote again:

*“A fish, because it absorbs oxygen from water rather than air, is only free if it is restricted and limited to water. If we put it out on the grass, its freedom to move and even live is not enhanced, but destroyed... Freedom, then, is not the absence of limitations and constraints but it is finding the right ones, those that fit our nature and liberate us.”*

- What do you think about his understanding of freedom not as the absence of constraints but finding the right ones that ultimately liberate us?

*(Hint: Consider the musician who learns scales, form, meter, music theory, etc. that frees her to then improvise.)*

- Think about coming of age rituals in earth-centered traditions that test a young person’s ability to survive in the wilderness. We have seen examples of children handling cobra snakes and hunting bear; their very lives are put on the line. In contrast, we can think of empty rituals done to please someone else, or just to pass a test, and simply go through the motions.

What are some rites of passage that truly matter to you? Why?

**6. Announcement:** Next week is our closing celebration. Thanks for being with us this semester.

**7. Say goodbye until next time:** Extinguish the chalice, saying together: *“May the light of truth and the warmth of love go with us in our hearts.”*

**8. Help clean up classroom before leaving:** Please keep regular practice of readying classroom for the next class.

- leave lesson plan and all materials organized
- wipe the whiteboard clean

- tables and chairs neatly returned
- nametags collected in Ziploc bag
- leave any comments for RE staff on attendance sheets