

CHOOSING A CRAFT NAME

You may take a Craft name when you start practicing Wicca, or dedicate yourself; if you are initiated into a coven or Tradition, you may be given a name. You may wish to change your Craft name, or take an additional name, in a separate ritual.

Re/naming yourself is very important. Who doesn't want to know what their name means, and see what relationship that meaning has to their life? Many cultures, religious and secular, use a change of name to mark and celebrate a turning point in someone's life.

In some Catholic orders, nuns take new names to reflect their new orientation toward life and deity. All over the world, tribal people take new names – or *add* names to their names – to commemorate important events. In ceremonial Traditions, it's an ancient belief that naming a thing gives you power over it. That means that when you name yourself, you're taking new responsibility for your life.

How do you come up with a name? There are whole books about that! You may wish to name yourself after a patron Goddess or God, using His/Her name or changing it a little in sound or spelling – Dyana, for instance, changed from Diana, or Bello, from Belenus. Maybe you'll choose an ethnic name, or one from Welsh or German or Anglo-Saxon legend.

Maybe there's someone in your family whose name you'd like to use: if your favorite auntie's name was Margaret, for example, you could use the name Pearl (which is what Margaret means); if you're her nephew, you could spell her name backwards and become Teragram.

You may wish to name yourself after some quality you have worked (or are working) to develop. Patience, Laughter, and Quiet, for instance, are names both men and women can

use.

Nature names are popular, too. Raven, Sage, Pine, Panther, Glade, Sky, Moonbower, Clover, Redbeard, and other such names are quite common, and if you choose one, you'll likely find, eventually, someone who shares it.

Perhaps your name will come from your experience, or your natal sign, or from some very strong interest. Some people even choose the names of fictional characters (and in the wake of the Harry Potter and Lord of the Rings movies, this is likely to become more common).

Many Wiccans create their magical names by combining syllables from three or four other names. Let's say you're interested in the gods Cernunnos and Lugh, you're also an artist, and besides that, you want to honor your grandmother, whose name was Elizabeth.

You can take parts of the proper names and work with artistic words too, putting them together in different combinations till you find one that feels right to you. You might settle on Arzacerlu: "ar" from "artist," "za" from Elizabeth, "cer" from Cernunnos and "lu" from Lugh. Or you might like to be Lubethnos o' the Brush. (Cernunnos, by the way, is pronounced care-new-nohs, not sir-new-nose.)

A NAMING RITE

Like all the rites Mother Earth Ministries suggests, this one is meant to be done as part of a fully-cast Circle, performed after the Gods are invoked.

You will need a piece of paper, a writing implement, and your Book of Shadows if you have one. (If you don't, the piece of paper you use in this ritual will become a page in your Book.)

You will also need to know what your name is to be, and why/how you've chosen it. Be sure to practice reading the rhyme you choose

ahead of time, so you're sure of the rhythm by the time you are in your Circle.

To name myself (new name)
is my will
From (one source of new name)
I take the first syllable;
from (another source of new name)
I take a second.
A third from (another source)
helps me bond
with this name and make it mine:
(your new name)
I am, in Circle place and time!

If your name doesn't have three syllables, change the line about the third syllable to "These two sources help me bond." If you name has more than three syllables, add these extra lines:

More parts of my name
from others are drawn,
and into my new identity sewn.

Don't worry that the rhymes aren't exact. They are close enough to intrigue your inner self, and it's your inner self that needs to accept the new name.

If your name has just one source, say,

To name myself (new name)
is my will
From (source of new name)
I take its syllables and meaning,
to make it mine:
(your new name) I am,
in Circle place and time!

You should do most of this work before you cast your Circle; it could take several hours, and extend over the course of days or weeks.

In the center of your paper, write your new name three times, one under the other. Use a different style of writing each time you write the name.

Around the new name, in concentric circles (or ovals), write in detail how you chose or devised it, and what it means to you. This may be quite lengthy, and while it does not need to be easy to read, it needs to be neat enough that you *can* read it again when you want to.

Take your time and do this work carefully. You may want to lightly pencil the shapes of the circles before you begin to write. Leave some space under the name and the circles around it.

Take this prepared paper (and something to write with) into your ritual Circle. When you have cast the Circle, called the Quarters and invoked the Gods, declare that you are prepared to rename yourself.

Beneath the circles of writing around the three copies of your new name, use your best handwriting to inscribe "So I am before the Gods" and on the next line, write "from [*the date of your ritual*] forward."

On the line beneath that, in the same handwriting you use for your legal signature, write "So mote it be" three times in a row.

Now, lick the thumb of your dominant or "power" hand (the one you use to write with) and press it lightly onto a dusty surface and then quickly onto the paper, over the words "So mote it be."

It's alright if your thumb print overlaps onto the other words you've just written, but it should not obscure the words surrounding your name. As you do this, say, "I am (new name). So mote it be!"

Take some time to imagine situations in which you'll be known by your new name. If it's a name you want most people to call you, think about introducing yourself by that name, and about laughing with old friends as they correct themselves during the time it will take them to get used to using your new name.

If it's a name you'll only use in Circle,

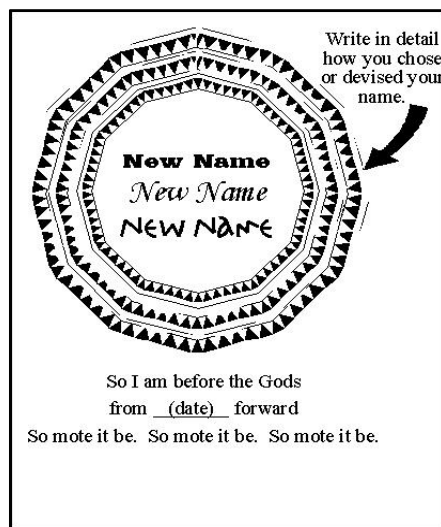
then visualize introducing yourself to the Gods and Quarters. Imagine hearing a priest or priestess asking you by your new name to take part in Circle activities.

Before you go on to the Cakes and Ale portion of your rite, be sure to thank the spirits of anyone whose name has become part of your name.

Let's go back to our original example of creating a name from your desire to honor your grandmother Elizabeth, your interest in art, and the gods Cernunnos and Lugh.

In that case, before you finished your Circle you'd raise your cup in a short toast to art, raise your hand in the horned salute (pointer and pinkie extended, other fingers and thumb folded under) to Lugh and Cernunnos, or cross your arms across your chest in the "God position" as you thank Them for inspiration.

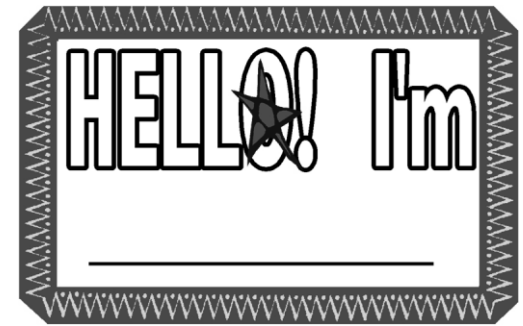
Finally, you'd touch your dominant hand to your heart, your forehead, and the air in front of your forehead, while thanking your grandmother for her inspiration. When you've done something like that to acknowledge the powers behind your new name, then you can finish and open your Circle in the usual way.



Mother Earth Ministries

talks a little bit about

Choosing a Craft Name



Like followers of many faiths, Wiccans sometimes adopt a religious name, by which they are addressed in Circles and at other religious events. It's not a requirement, but it's a common practice, and there's nothing sinister or deceitful about it.

A "Craft name" reflects a Wiccan's religious identity – and because we grow in our faith, Wiccans sometimes change or add to their Craft names. Taking a Craft name is about taking responsibility for our spiritual progress, and for our attitudes, behaviors, goals, and relationships.

Sometimes our teachers or initiators bestow names upon us, but very often, we choose our own names. This brochure looks at how Craft names can be chosen, and offers a ritual for taking a Craft name.



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