

Stardust Ritual for 6 volunteer leaders

(Version with UNIVERSE language)

LEADER #1: LIGHT [Recruit a partner to light the candle while you read this reverentially. Both come forward and begin by ringing CHIME and waiting for it to fade out before you start speaking.]

1. In the beginning there was mystery and darkness. Out of this mystery and darkness, the universe was born in a Great Radiance of brilliant light and boundless energy!

LEADER # 2: HYDROGEN/WATER

[You will come forward to lead this part right after the candle is lit and the candle leaders have returned to their seats. Silently pour water into a bowl, standing so that everyone can see the trickle of water, and pouring from a height that will enhance the sound of the falling water. Then say something like:]

2. "Hydrogen is the elder of all. Each atom of hydrogen that swirls in water and within us is 13 billion years old. [pause] I invite each of us to come forward to anoint forehead or hand with this elder atom. As we do so, let us silently hold in gratitude the elders in our own lives who taught us, guided us, and brought out the best in us. And let us open to the ways in which we too can mentor others." ." [anoint your own forehead or hand, **RING CHIME**, and return to seat.] NOTE: If there are 10 or fewer people in the circle, change the wording to invite people to speak aloud a mentor's name and to say something about their gift. If there are too many people, you can modify the words so that you anoint only yourself, eliminate the second sentence, and begin the third with, "Let us silently hold . . ."

LEADER # 3: AIR/BREATH

[You will guide this part right after the water anointment ritual. You will come forward, pause, breathe, and then invite us all to take a **deep breath**. After the outbreath say something like:]

3. “In that breath, we each inhaled recycled stardust, the gifts of Red Giant stars, ancestors who lived and died before our Sun was born. [pause] Through the creativity of those ancient stars, atoms were joined into all the NITROGEN that now colors the sky blue. Other atoms were shaped into all the OXYGEN that now burns in our cells and powers our awareness. And still other atoms were fused into all the CARBON that we, in turn, offer as a gift to the plant realm, in the carbon dioxide that we exhale. [pause] Let us breathe together once more as we remember these grandparent stars, as we give thanks for the ongoing creativity of the Cosmos.”

[pause, ring **CHIME**, and return to your seat.]

LEADER # 4: CALCIUM/BONES

[You will guide this process right after the person who guided the BREATH part of the ritual returns to their seat. Come forward, pause, breathe, and then read or say something like:]

4. “In the bellies of hot blue-white stars were created all the silicon atoms that now bind the rocks of Earth. These blue-white stars also brought forth all the calcium atoms that now bind the bones of our bodies. [slight pause] I invite us all to close our eyes and sit up tall [slight pause], resting on our bones [pause], feet fully on the floor. [pause till shuffling ends]. Let us take this moment to remember, in gratitude, the grandparent stars who bequeathed us these sturdy gifts: the calcium in our bones, the silicon in stones deep within Earth.” [pause for 10 seconds.] [Ring CHIME to end, and return to your seat.]

LEADER #5: PRECIOUS METALS

[You will guide this part of the ritual right after the person who guided the BONES / CALCIUM part of the ritual returns to their seat. Come forward, pause, breathe, and begin reading or speaking something like:]

5. "Let us now reflect on, marvel at, any metals we may be wearing: any copper, silver, gold, platinum. Even the iron in a belt buckle, or metal filling in a tooth! [Pause] Let us remember that these very atoms of metal were created in the awesome explosion of a supernova that signaled the death of an ancient star. [Pause] Surely there is beauty and new life that emerges from every death. [RING CHIME, return to seat.]

LEADER #6: CONCLUSION

[You will guide this part of the ritual right after the person who guided the PRECIOUS METALS part of the ritual returns to their seat. Perhaps recruit a partner to alternate with you in reading the poems. Come forward, pause, breathe, and begin reading:]

● **We humans have always been drawn to the stars. We have always yearned for relationship. And so, in 1943, the French author Antoine de St. Exupery had his Little Prince speak these words:**

"In one of the stars I shall be living. In one of them I shall be laughing. And so it will be as if all the stars were laughing, when you look at the sky at night."

[pause]

● **In 1989, Native American poet Joy Harjo wrote of another kind of relationship with the stars:**

**"I can hear the sizzle of a newborn star,
and know that anything of meaning,
of fierce magic, is emerging here.**

**I am witness to flexible eternity, the evolving past.
And I know I shall live forever,
as dust or breath in the face of stars,
in the shifting pattern of winds."**

- Twenty years ago and on through today, our eyes grow teary when we watch the Lion King speak these words to his adventurous little son: [pause]

“Simba, let me tell you something that my father told me. Look at the stars. The great kings of the past look down on us from those stars. So whenever you feel alone, just remember that those kings will always be there to guide you — and so will I.”

- Science has barred us from a literal understanding of the Lion King’s words. And yet, we CAN cultivate an embodied sense of the stars as our ancestors too. A quarter century ago, the astronomer Carl Sagan concluded his television series *Cosmos* in this way: **“We are the local embodiment of a Cosmos grown to self-awareness. We have begun to contemplate our origins. We are star-stuff pondering the stars!”**

[pause, then ring **CHIME** and return to seat]

NOTE: The ritual can either end here or another person can invite participants to anoint themselves with “stardust” (glitter), or to pass around a small plate or shell of stardust while an appropriate short song is sung over and over. Possibilities to sing as chants:

Chant #1

**“We are made of stardust,
every single atom,
of carbon and of oxygen,
calcium and iron.”**

Chant # 2

**We all come from the cosmos,
Stardust streaming through our veins,
With the hands of primate forebears,
Lungs of old rep-til-i-ans.**

[You can close after all have anointed with glitter, by inviting all to stand and hold hands in a circle, while singing the chant for the last few times.]

Or, you can pass out copies of a 2-verse doxology:

**Praise birth and death amid the stars,
Whence came all atoms that we are.
Praise cosmic temporality,
Each moment precious as can be.**

**Praise birth and death upon this Earth,
Rejuvenation and rebirth.
Praise beauty rise and then depart,
Fullness of spirit, breaking heart.**

Amen.