



# Living Earth Leadership Handbook

This guide is based on the work of Diana's Grove Leadership Training Program, by Rena Bailey, Canyon, Jan Dickinson Arden Goewert, and Pamela Wilz. Adapted by Living Earth Church. We consider this Leadership Handbook a living document that will be regularly revised as our church's needs evolve.

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. Background

The purpose of this guide is to support the members of Living Earth who are called to step forward in community and take an active role in their spiritual growth. It is for all members, as we are a leader-full group. We are a community of service-minded spiritual seekers. First and foremost, we are leaders of ourselves when we take responsibility for our experiences. Advancing in leadership does not include obtaining power-over; rather, it means stepping forward in service to others and to the Divine.

### 2. Overview

The criteria of leadership are divided into ten broad topic areas, which are presented in two categories: Community Arts and Ritual Arts. They are as follows:

#### Community Arts

1. Philosophy
2. Leadership
3. Peer Support and Teamwork
4. Preparation for Events
5. Service

#### 6. Unstructured Time

7. Online

#### Ritual Arts

1. Small Groups
2. Presentation Skills
3. Ritual Planning and Execution

### 3. Levels of Leadership Within Living Earth:

For each topic, we have identified skills, knowledge, and dispositions we expect to see when at various levels of leadership and experience. Living Earth is blessed to have a membership coming from many different backgrounds, including some very experienced and highly trained leaders from other groups and traditions in the larger Pagan community.. *When we refer to Beginning, Advancing, or Experienced in Leadership, we are not referring to that outside training and experience but rather are referring to the level of experience, training, and leadership only within our organization.* Although we value the experience and status attained through outside training and initiatory status, and we welcome the input from these amazing contributors, Living Earth does not automatically impose a higher level of expectations and responsibility on anyone with such outside training unless they have also attained that level of experience within Living Earth and choose to accept that level of responsibility..

- **Beginning In Leadership = Active participants and members.** You are no longer a guest; you feel that you are a stakeholder and know your involvement is necessary, valued, and important. You may have had training as a Pagan priest or priestess in a tradition outside of Living Earth, or you may not have had such training.
- **Advancing in Leadership = Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts.** You have stepped forward in service to volunteer at, host, lead, or facilitate a one-time or ongoing function.
- **Experienced in Leadership = Clergy Council.** You are considered part of the core leadership, and are either ordained through Living Earth or are in our Clergy Training program. You are involved in Living Earth intimately on a daily basis.

The expectations for higher levels of leadership include the ones for those that come before it.

# COMMUNITY ARTS

## 1. Philosophy

Without knowing why we do what we do, it is difficult to do the work, hold intention, and see the outcome. Being grounded in the basic philosophy allows the leader to embody the overall intention of Living Earth. We strive to act in integrity with this philosophy in the communities we strive to create. The organization's philosophy must inform all of the leader's actions.

- Beginning In Leadership (Active Members): Be aware of Living Earth's philosophy, even if you cannot articulate it. Strive for your actions to be consistent with the philosophy while at Living Earth rituals and events.
- Advancing in Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): Be able to articulate the philosophy. Actions are consistently in alignment while at Living Earth events.
- Experienced in Leadership (Clergy Council): Be able to articulate and explain nuances and meanings. Philosophy has become part of your being while at Living Earth events.

### A) The Philosophy's Essence:

Individuals become more fully who they choose to be through devotion to self-awareness and interacting with each other in a healthy, compassionate, authentic manner, thereby becoming more effective at their individual callings and, thus, creating a healthier world. This essence is expressed in the following quote: "Live in the world today as you want it to be in the future." - Alice Walker

### B) Essential Values:

- i.) Choice, mutual respect, and a commitment to discovering the mystery of healthy interactions.
- ii.) Do what is right for you and treat others with respect (re-spect: a willingness to look again at the people you meet).

### C) How philosophy at Living Earth is brought to life:

- i.) Small group work including rituals and workshops.
- ii.) community service work
- iii.) festivals and larger community events

D) Cornerstones of Community: Our framework upon which our community is built. These include Choice, Thinking Well of Self, Thinking Well of the Group, Stewardship of Self, Sacred Wound, Relentless Support of the Sacred Made Manifest.

E) Four Levels of Reality: Physical, Emotional, Mythic, Essential.

### F) Communication style:

- I-referenced. "*I feel \_\_\_ because I need \_\_\_\_\_.*"
- Direct.

G) Hierarchy of Commitment and Involvement: the greater the investment, the more power in shaping the work.

### H) Importance of inclusion and embracing diversity.

- a.) Self-responsibility: take care of yourself; do what is right for you.
- b.) Recognition of the importance of community as common-unity.

I) Priestessing: Leaders in our spiritual community hold space through priestessing, a non-gender-specific term for someone who is:

- Officiating sacred rites.
- Leading others to their own discovery.
- Acting as healer.
- Relentless support of the sacred made manifest.

## **2. Leadership**

Leadership is included as a separate topic to provide a foundation that permeates every other topic and criteria listed. Those who choose to participate in leadership training in this community need to know what being a leader looks like at Living Earth. Living Earth presents a unique approach to leadership and leader development. The expected skills are grounded in the following.

- For All Levels: The following criteria are expected at all levels of leadership development, with consistency in demonstrating each being the differentiating factor across levels. For example, we would expect that a new leader is sporadic in demonstrating these items; the most experienced leaders are expected to demonstrate them all of the time. For most criteria, we have noted several behavioral examples.

### A) A learner's mind:

Be open to trying new and unfamiliar things with the intention to gain, improve and grow from the experience and from receiving input from those experiencing the work. Regularly seek the answers to the questions: "What do I know?" "What gifts do I want to improve?" and "What do I need and want to learn to do?" The answers to these questions might lie in the realm of organization, the logistics of ritual planning, or communication.

Behaviors include: asking ahead of time for help with needed skill improvement, setting up feedback sessions with mentors or team members, having a goal, and accepting feedback as a tool.

- i.) Demonstrates ability to learn from mistakes as well as successes.
- ii.) Uses effective communication skills to speak and listen when receiving feedback.
- iii.) Can say what was learned in the doing.
- iv.) Learns from observing others.
- v.) Sets measurable goals.

### B) Refusal of privilege:

Know what being in service means. Know that leadership is not about being above the group in any way.

- i.) Act within limits expected of the group, ground rules and group agreements; honor community cornerstones (Choice, Thinking Well of Self, Thinking Well of the Group, Stewardship of Self, Sacred Wound) and the priestessing elements (Facilitate Sacred Rites, Lead Others to Their Own Discovery, Act as Healer, Relentless Support).
- ii.) Regularly ask yourself: "How does this serve?" and "Who does this serve?"
- iii.) For example, regarding personal behavior, if asking others to do their dishes, do yours.

### C) Demonstration of leadership by behavioral example:

Go first where you want the group to go.

- i.) Be willing to be involved and model by doing.
- ii.) Know group facilitation skills and demonstrate them,, whether leading or supporting.
- iii.) Demonstrate willingness to risk; be vulnerable.

### D) Relationship with the community:

The community must see you and know you in order to trust you as a leader.

- i.) Engage in conversations that are relevant to the other person; be present in the moment to activities around you.

- ii.) Ask others how the work is impacting them.
- iii.) Observe interactions and ask questions if you have a concern.
- iv.) Be the problem solver, not the problem.

E) Good communication skills:

- i.) Active, attentive listening when others speak.
- ii.) Speak so others can hear you (in the choice of words used and the timing; this does not refer to voice projection).
- iii.) Speak directly to the person(s) involved.
- iv.) Use "I-referenced" statements.
- v.) Be familiar with body language and its impact.
- vi.) Know your voice tone, pitch, and cadence.
- vii.) Create structures so others can safely discuss needs, fears, concerns.
- viii.) Empower the individual to solve problems, offering help as appropriate.

F) Know and impeccably support the intentions of Living Earth:

- i.) Be familiar with the Cornerstones of Community, Living Earth's FAQ, our Mission and Priorities, Guiding Principles, By-laws and Constitution, newsletter, upcoming events, theme of the event, expectations for participants, and tasks needed for physical operation during the event.
- ii.) Be able to discuss and explain intentions to participants and others.
- iii.) Talk about the work, not about yourself.

G) Be accountable for your actions; understand the impact of your behavior:

- i.) Demonstrate willingness and ability to say things such as: "I don't know" "Let me try again" "My mistake" and "I am sorry I did that; what can I do to resolve/change/heal?"
- ii.) Act with awareness of the spiral of  

$$\text{Responsibility} = \text{Authority} = \text{Power} = \text{Impact} = \text{Responsibility} = \dots$$
- iii.) When accepting a task, keep the focus and hold intention. Do what you say you will do.

H) Accomplish work/service tasks while supporting the individual and the group:

- i.) When working on a task with a group, maintain as your highest priority the experience of the participants. Maintain as your second priority your commitments to healthy process with your fellow leaders. Keep the task itself in the lowest priority and hold awareness of the overarching intention that encircles all three priorities.
- ii.) Know how to do the task; ask for help if you don't know. Tell the other person what is to be done, show them or guide them as they do it. Ask if they have questions. Clarify in a respectful way. If not done properly, offer suggestions later from your experience of doing the task, to support them in doing it.
- iii.) Be aware that some people who take on leadership roles may be there as a participant, and vice versa. Clarify if you are not sure, so that those who need to take a step back from leaders have the opportunity to participate when they are not in a space where they feel comfortable leading.

I) Self-Care:

- i.) Support your own values, limits and needs, while being responsible for the work you say you will do.
- ii.) Meet your own needs outside of your work as a priestess.
- iii.) If you cannot fulfill a commitment, find someone else who will do it.

### **3. Peer Support and Teamwork**

Embodiment of the values of peer support and teamwork during leadership work at Living Earth is necessary for several reasons. Teamwork provides a richer experience for participants because it uses the

variety of skills present in members of the leadership team. Teamwork also allows leaders to give more individualized attention to participants. Peer support is essential for leaders who do their work alongside participants; it is also an effective antidote to burnout. Effective use of peer support and teamwork enable modeling of two tools consistent with our belief in small group work and community, as agents of change.

- Beginning In Leadership (Active Members): Demonstrate awareness of the Hierarchy of Responsibility and at least periodically demonstrate behaviors associated with its concepts.
- Advancing In Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): Demonstrate awareness of the Hierarchy of Responsibility and consistently demonstrate behaviors associated with its concepts.
- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Demonstrate awareness of the Hierarchy of Responsibility and consistently demonstrate behaviors associated with its concepts. Also, recognize, explain and coach these behaviors in others.

A) Live the Hierarchy of Responsibility by:

- i.) Self responsibility and effective communication. Take action in your own behalf; set limits; value and support others when they do the same. Speak directly and so others can hear you (without shaming, blaming, inviting defense or feeding dissension); self reference.
- ii) Keeping your agenda forward. Ask for what you want and need; remain responsible for your own well-being.
- iii) Generosity of spirit (as opposed to mythmaking). Act with kindness and compassion, discerning what needs to be addressed and what does not. Rather than making up stories (even "positive" ones) about others, ask. Communicate compassionately.
- iv.) Direct communication (rather than directive). Speak directly to the person you need to have a conversation with while holding firmly to the other concepts in this hierarchy of responsibility. (Directive is telling someone what to do, which is, at certain times, appropriate.)
- v.) Thinking holistically. Think about the impact of your behavior on the whole community and on the organization. Ask yourself, "What would happen if 10 others followed my example?"

B) Uphold the intention for being together:

- Beginning In Leadership (Active Members): Support the facilitator in whatever group you are in.
- Advancing (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts) and Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Support the facilitator in whatever group you are in; be able to facilitate activities that uphold intention.

C) Agreements:

- i.) Be overt about agreements. Participate actively in stating and clarifying agreements.
- ii.) Uphold agreements made by the team. Make your actions consistent with those agreements.

D) Assure safety for all group members:

- Beginning In Leadership (Active Members): Make your contributions support intention and make them with compassion and kindness.
- Advancing In Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): Make your contributions support intention and make them with compassion and kindness. Also, begin developing sensitivity to group energy and address when things are "off."
- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Make your contributions support intention and make them with compassion and kindness. Increase your sensitivity to group energy and consistently address when things are "off."

E) Honesty:

- i.) Say what needs to be said.
- ii.) Make your values apparent.
- iii.) Remove the masks of "we," indirect language, and ambiguity.

F) Be 150% present, involved, and focused.

- Beginning In Leadership (Active Members): Demonstrate readiness to make the shift from "personal" to "group" focus.
- Advancing In Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): Demonstrate professionalism and group focus while doing intense personal work.
- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Consistently demonstrate professionalism and group focus; notice and attend to details in the physical plant and in presentations, including ritual.

G) Develop an interdependent relationship with others on your team.

Know whom you can ask for help, and with what. Be clear about what you can offer and do so impeccably when asked. Understand and embody the motto "In Service To Each Other We All Are Free."

H) Know how your piece fits with the whole and be accountable for your piece.

Take responsibility for all facets of your piece - props, set up, follow through. Be sure that your piece meets the overall intention of service to the group, not service to ego or wounds.

I) Be prepared to have your part cut or added to at the last minute; let go of investment in a certain task or role.

- Advancing (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts) and Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): support the process not only by being prepared to have your role cut but also by stepping in to do something at the last minute with little to no preparation time.

J) If an issue needs to be addressed, do it at an appropriate time and place. Don't bring up issues before presentations or ritual; don't address an un-addressed issue with one person, in a group setting.

K) Support others with your active participation; respond to requests.

- Beginning In Leadership (Active Members): Know your limits.
- Advancing (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts) and Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Know your limits, and be able to notice - even anticipate what is needed to make the current process successful; act on it.

L) Be as attentive to the work and intention of other team members as you are to your own work/presentation/job.

M) Empower and support a new person in taking a role:

- i.) Give enough context and direction to enable them to succeed.
- ii.) Assist when necessary.
- iii.) Teach what needs to be done; don't do it for them.

N) Share in a positive, helpful evaluation of the work/ritual that was offered.

Provide sensory based feedback when requested. **Ask before giving unsolicited feedback.** Be honest.

#### **4. Preparation for Events**

Being prepared allows one to step fully into the work with a common background and frame of reference.

A) Read the complete description of the work before arriving at a Living Earth event.

- Advancing (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts) and Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): : Do outside research to add to your knowledge and toolkit of ideas.

B) Be rested and alert enough to be present and supportive.

- Advancing In Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): Know what baggage you bring from home.
  - Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Know when to step out of the group, if necessary.
- C) Know the expectations for your participation in ritual, if a plan is available.
- Advancing In Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): Know the expectations and be able to fulfill them with less direction.
  - Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Know your strengths and weaknesses; recognize learning opportunities.
- D) Bring any props or ritual wear as requested. If you get it out or take it to ritual, put it away.
- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Assist others in getting their props and putting away.
- E) Know your limits; ask for help when needed.
- Beginning In Leadership (Active Members): Learn your limits; begin to ask for help.
  - Advancing In Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): Know your limits, ask consistently for help when you need it.
  - Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Know your limits, ask consistently for help when you need it.

## **5. Service**

Service allows one to become invested in a community goal that can be tangibly realized. Performing service also allows for greater bonding and deepening of community connection.

- A) Perform assigned tasks as requested.
- Advancing In Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): Know why you do the task and what the results should be.
  - Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Be able to take responsibility for a Realm of Authority.
- B) Cover others' tasks, when requested.
- Advancing In Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): See the big picture: be aware of needed service and do it even if it's not assigned
  - Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Be able to explain how to do a task and/or know who has that Realm of Authority.
- C) Be able to perform a number of tasks, not just the tasks you are assigned. Know who to ask for assistance.
- Advancing In Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): Provide assistance to others if they need it.
  - Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Function as a member of the staff.
- D) Facilitate clean-up: know how to put away items and where they go.
- E) Demonstrate your understanding of the hierarchy of service work: participant first, your team members second, the task as lowest priority.
- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Impeccably demonstrate this principle.
- F) Allow others to do tasks assigned to you without demonstrating territoriality.
- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Be aware of the possibility of hurt feelings and make amends.

G) Perform tasks quietly and without voicing dissatisfaction.

Perform tasks invisibly: perform tasks without drawing attention to yourself or the task.

## **6. Unstructured Time**

People come to Living Earth for experiences that reflect our particular values and philosophy. Aside from structured events such as worship services, discussion groups, or workshops, much of this is unstructured time such as fellowship meals, community gatherings, festivals, to name a few. As a leader in this community, it is your job to provide the environment in which these experiences can occur.

The following are expected equally of all levels:

A) Maintain awareness that priestessing and holding space continues throughout unstructured time; it doesn't stop when the ritual ends. This approach means that what you say in small groups or to individuals needs to be consistent with what you would say in front of a group as a facilitator, reflecting our community values. Continuously be aware of and use the four priestess arts (officiate sacred rites, lead others to their own discovery, act as healer, relentless support).

B) Facilitate (make easy) what is happening, whenever two or more are gathered. This might be a service task or it might be interpersonal connecting. Offer assistance and support the process, as appropriate.

C) Notice and take advantage of opportunities to orient newcomers to Living Earth, the Center, and the work. Introduce yourself, offer information on the basics, do what you can to help newcomers fit into the group and feel welcome.

D) Facilitate informal discussions, especially at meals and before rituals. Choose inclusive topics, preferably related to the work of the event.

## **7. Online**

Many Living Earth members participate in our community via our Meetup website or Facebook pages. For some, their only experience of our work is through our email lists and message boards. That community deserves the same impeccable service and support as those who attend our rituals, events, and festival.

A) Be a consistent presence online.

- Advancing In Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): Post at least once per week in the various communication venues.
- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): The above, plus, respond to others' posts as appropriate to facilitate continuing dialog.

B) Make your written communication as carefully impeccable in quality as your verbal communication.

- Advancing In Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): Provide context for your reader to make your post inclusive of those who do not attend weekends and weeks or do not know your subject (e.g., Tarot) well. Proofread your post several times for grammar, punctuation, spelling and readability before you hit "send."
- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): The above, plus
  - "Officiate the sacred rite" of written communication: be brief and relevant to the discussion
  - Lead others to their own discoveries: end your message with a "juicy" question
  - Heal impending or actual conflicts, and
  - Relentlessly support the sacred as manifested by online dialog.



## RITUAL ARTS

### **1. Small Groups**

Small groups are one of many Living Earth settings in which individuals can participate in our community. Our smaller rituals and events allow people to get to know each other, engage in worship activities, and discover as well as often verbalize their personal processes and strategies for change. Your job is to provide a space that is safe and structured enough to enable those personal growth processes and ensure healthy interpersonal process.

A) Uphold the agreements in all small groups.

- Advancing In Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): Support the facilitator; bring discussion back to focus when needed.
- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Present the agreements and create safety in the group.

B) Speak to the topic of discussion, fully and deeply; demonstrate vulnerability, without drawing the group's focus to your issues.

- Advancing In Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): Be able to model the depth of sharing that you want the group to reach.
- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Be aware of the depth of sharing the group is reaching and foster the process.

C) Allow time for all group members to participate.

- Advancing In Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): Be able to cut your check-in short to give others enough time to speak.
- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Be able to gracefully end an over-long check-in by another group member.

D) Be self-referenced.

- Advancing In Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): Be able to re-take when you speak in universals or "you".
- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Be able to encourage others to be self-referenced without shaming them.

E) Do not speak for Living Earth or other leaders unless speaking about your Realm of Authority.

F) Bring the group back to focus when needed.

- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Actively intervene when needed.

G) Use small group skills in structured and unstructured settings.

- Advancing (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts) and Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Be able to facilitate 'large talk' - dialog that is about the work, the event, individuals' personal growth processes.

H) Support the designated facilitator.

- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Function as the designated facilitator.

I) Be able to identify the roles taken in groups and basic group dynamics.

- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Be able to facilitate groups where members take challenging roles.

## **2. Presentation Skills**

Presentation skills are necessary to either (1) teach material strictly for comprehension or (2) present information that allows the listener, through self-discovery, to understand, synthesize, and incorporate information and material into his or her own practice. It is always advisable to set and keep the intention of the presentation at the forefront of your mind. The presenter should also always strive to engage the audience as participants, not observers..

- Beginning in Leadership
  - A) Awareness of: what is my intention? How do I begin this presentation? How do I intend to end? Who else will I need to ask for support in this activity? How will I get feedback? How will I know when I have met my intention (or what, exactly, do I wish the audience to take away from this presentation)?
  - B) Ability to stay on target or focus for the presentation. Ability to keep the "lesson plan" in mind while you are presenting - not to serve form or fill a time slot but to meet the intention.
  - C) Awareness of the group energy, body language, and sensing the needs of the group. Ask for assistance when needed and be open to feedback about how you handle group energy.
- Advancing in Leadership
  - A) Awareness of and grounding in the present - the ability to SEE feedback (Is the audience understanding? How do I know? Am I going too quickly or too slowly? Do we need to take a break? Do I need to adjust/modify the material as we go along?)
  - B) Awareness of time needed for presentation - What can be cut out if time runs short? What is crucial and absolutely must be presented?
  - C) Awareness of and appropriate response to communication barriers outside of your control (background noise, talking ,dogs, other interruptions).
  - D) Voice awareness - appropriate to physical reality - pitch, volume, modulation, speed, and tone.
- Experienced in Leadership
  - A) Awareness of personal presence and its role in communication. Attention paid to appearance, posture and body attitude, placement in the room and movement of the presenter, non-verbal and para-verbal communication.
  - B) The ability to field questions from the participants and other leaders.
  - C) The ability to form a larger group into small groups for breakout discussion or some other activity that teaches. Uses methods of teaching other than direct instruction/lecture/speaking.

## **3. Ritual Planning and Execution**

Ritual planning and execution are included as an essential part of the leadership criteria because ritual is one of the primary tools we use to facilitate personal growth. A leader must be able to participate impeccably in creating these multi-sensorial prayers that lay new patterns in the soul.

A) Essence of Intention: Know the foundation principles of ritual: what we do, how we do it, why we do it. Know the Living Earth definition of ritual and our philosophy of ritual.

- Beginning In Leadership (Active Members): Be able to explain the following to a mentor, staff, leader, participant:
  - a.) Philosophy: Rituals lay patterns in our soul, forming instinctual responses. We are more empowered by what we do than what we observe.
  - b.) Definition of Ritual: Sanskrit word meaning Art and Order; a multi-sensorial prayer.
  - c.) Energy = life force in our bodies which increases by breathing, singing, dancing.
  - d.) Dreaming and interacting: our goal is to use the energy raised in ritual in the way that is best for the individual.
  
- Advancing In Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): All of the above, plus
  - a.) An awareness of what skills you need to bring to your piece in a ritual.
  - b.) How do you serve the character, role, or archetype?
  - c.) Costuming
  - d.) How will you use your body and voice?
  - e.) How will you make this piece about the participants and not about you?
  - f.) An awareness of the support you will or may need - physical, emotional - from the community and your co-facilitators.
  - g.) Physical reality objective: What do you want the group to have when you're finished with your piece?
  - h.) How is your task accomplished?
  - i.) What are the props you need?
  - j.) Where do you find them?
  - k.) How will you get them down to the ritual area and back to where they are stored?
  
- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): All of the above and be able to identify, for any piece of the ritual for which you are responsible:
  - a.) What's important about this piece? Why is this part in the ritual?
  - b.) What's the spiritual reason for this part in the ritual?

B) Know the bones of the style - the form - we use at Living Earth Rituals, including: gathering, grounding, casting, elemental invocations, deity or archetype invocation, ritual main process/energy work, devocations, opening a circle, and regrounding.

C) Follow the Living Earth Ritual Guidelines

To allow for the inclusiveness all, we have created some guidelines that we wish for all ritual organizers to follow.

- i.) Before circle gathers (or shortly thereafter), ritual leaders (or ritual participants) are responsible for individually welcoming each person when they arrive. Find some way to make sure every person is greeted. In larger rituals, this can be done all at once not individually.
  
- ii.) Make sure ritual leaders introduce themselves before anything is done in circle, preferably before ever starting. It's hard to join in ritual not even knowing the leader's name. Make sure each attendee has a chance to at least share their name with the whole group, or if a very large circle, with those around them.
  
- iii.) Try to provide clear directions if you need anyone to do anything or say anything either before the ritual or before you do something (unless you have a clear reason not to), can be brief and done

with gesture or a few words, but just keep in mind that there may be guests or new members in circle or ones that do not practice your specific path.

iv.) Most important: Include some sort of "sharing" or "participatory" component to the ceremony, energy raising, or ritual structure. For example, during the main magical working/main process, provide a time for reflection on how each person interprets/directs/works with the energies involved, or to think about how the working applies to his/her individual life. Then, at some point allow each person to somehow share or contribute with their thoughts or energies. This can be done verbally with round-robin, "popcorning" (random speaking out), everyone choosing a single word to say on the count of 3 together, ask people to share when ready in no particular order, or non-verbally in some creative expression, focus of attention, contributing magickal energies, moving or gesturing. Song or chant is an engaging option. Participation can be done whole-group or in breakout smaller groups if lots of people are present.

v.) Thanking everyone for coming at the end, complimenting others as desired, reiterating the welcoming nature of the event. Some gesture of gratitude to make people know their contribution of time, energy, magick was appreciated.

#### WHY?

This does four things:

- Makes each person feel included and important to the ritual.
- Enhances and increases the energies and intensifies the magic, since each person is adding to it, for a more effective spell or process
- Makes the ritual personally relevant and meaningful to each person
- The sharing aspect builds relationships, community, and caring for those in circle. It connects us and helps us feel part of something special, and we can express support for each other. We're not all in our own little worlds, but there for each other as well.

#### D). Embrace and Demonstrate Ritual Etiquette

Ours is not a religion of "rules", but in order for us to be free of inhibitions, to feel we are in "safe space," to get the most out of what we are doing and to protect those whose identity as Witches were it revealed, would compromise them in their mundane lives, it is imperative that everyone know and agree to abide by the following general points of etiquette:

i.) First and foremost, a magickal circle is not for observers; it is participatory and experiential. A circle is a religious rite and all participants should conduct themselves in a manner respectful to the Goddess and God. If one is not prepared to focus and contribute his/her attention and efforts to the ceremony, one does not belong in the circle. If one does not wish to participate, s/he should excuse her/himself before the pre-rite meditation and grounding begins.

ii.) The taking of photographs during ritual is inappropriate and impermissible. As noted in item 1 above, the ritual, and memories of it, are to be carried in one's heart; they are not a proper subject for objective observation and documentation. The exception to this is when all participants have been asked before the ritual has begun, and all agree; or when the ritual is "staged" specifically for the taking of photographs, filming or videotaping. Photographing rituals requires special tact and sensitivity.

iii.) Our rituals are not inviolably solemn, but they are serious in central purpose. Inappropriate talking, joking, laughing, etc. are not only rude and disrespectful of the Goddess, the Mighty Ones, the priest/esses of the ritual and other celebrants, but also they interfere with concentration and

continuity of the ceremony. She commands us to have mirth and reverence; humor and laughter are gifts of the Goddess. Our attitude, conduct and energy should reflect both the joyousness and the solemnity of this our celebratory religion. We strive for balance, to be both serious and serene, approachable and warm while acknowledging our human-ness and imperfections when silly things happen.

iv.) Since traditional lore teaches that consecrated object easily absorbs energy (becomes "charged"), tools, such as wand, chalice, athame, jewelry, drum and other ritual regalia, should not be touched by someone other than the owner without the owner's express permission.

v.) Once the circle is cast, all celebrants should consider themselves in it for the duration. It is preferable for one to take care of personal needs before the ritual is begun, but if one finds it necessary to use the toilet, feels faint or whatever, one can either ask for assistance or "cut a door" in the circle and leave, carefully closing and sealing it afterwards. The circle is intended to contain the energy and focus, and when it is casually entered and exited, that energy can become dissipated or lost and focus shattered.

vi.) Anyone who is drunk, stoned or otherwise inebriated does not belong in circle. In addition, the use of drugs or alcohol (this includes the smoking of cigarettes) in circle is unacceptable behavior; it can show disrespect and it puts the user(s) on another wavelength than the non user(s). A small amount of wine or another alcoholic beverage may be offered near the close of a ritual; it is appropriate for any guest so acknowledge the offering and pass without drinking for any reason. A non-alcoholic substitute may or may not be available, and in either case there is no criticism or judgment for anyone who chooses to partake or pass.

vii.) People who invite others to rituals are responsible for preparing the guest(s) as to what is expected of them, how to behave, etc. Guests cannot be expected to know what's going on all on their own, especially if it's their first Pagan ritual or Living Earth function, but much can be done by the person who invites them to make them feel more comfortable and included by giving them some information ahead of time about how things work and how people are expected to behave.

viii.) What private information is shared in circle is sacred and not to be talked about with those who were not part of the circle. This mainly applies to small, private rituals, but if one is invited to a ritual presented by another group, this rule is inviolate.

#### E) Participate in the Collaborative Ritual Planning Process.

All Living Earth members are invited to plan certain ceremonies such as Full Moon Sabbats, regardless of experience or training, using a facilitated Collaborative Ritual Planning process.. Those who participate in CRP may be invited by the Clergy Council to plan even more rituals. Because we plan ritual with a diversity of individuals in diverse circumstances, we have developed and embraced this structured process to plan these rituals, that allows for consensus decision making and effective ritual production.

- Beginning In Leadership (Active Members): become familiar with and participate regularly in the Collaborative Ritual Planning Process used by Living Earth
- Advancing In Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): Participate in and support energy work in the ritual. Have a hand in facilitating the Collaborative Planning Process. Assist as needed.
- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council):
  - a.) Actively participate in planning all segments of a ritual.
  - b.) Facilitate energy work and be able to offer a benediction to follow it.
  - c.) Possess facilitation skills for group planning.

- d.) Serve as HP for a ritual.
- e.) Respond to unusual circumstances with a shift in language or a change in the plan, as appropriate.

F) Take direction from the Priestess in the center.

G) Maintain awareness of physical safety of group members.

H) Hold focus; hold the sacred.

- Advancing and Experienced Leaders: Support and help sustain the ritual's intention during the entire ritual; watch the HP and other ritual team members for spur of the moment changes during the ritual, and ask, if needed, to clarify. Observe participants for general awareness of process problems, etc. Officiate this sacred rite, lead others to their own discovery, act as healer, offer relentless support.

I) Systematically work to gain and improve skills for offering Living Earth's style of ecstatic ritual and trancework, including: induction, permission for participants to go into trance, use of poetic trance language, use of four-tuple and double-bind, work with drum and drummer, lead a return from the trance work.

- Beginning In Leadership (Active Members): Be able to be a voice on the edge that echoes the trance leader.
- Advancing In Leadership (Volunteers, Teachers, and Hosts): Be able to be a supporting voice in trance.
- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Be able to be a lead voice in a trance.

J) Systematically work to gain and improve skills for ritual design and co-creation, with the goal of being able to design a ritual or facilitate the collaborative design of a ritual for a small or large group, to fulfill an intention.

- Experienced In Leadership (Clergy Council): Know how to design and facilitate transitions. For each of your parts in the ritual, know:
  - a.) How do you begin and end?
  - b.) What are your cues to start?
  - c.) What are the cues that you give to the next part?
  - d.) What pieces come immediately before and after?
  - e.) What is the ideal energy level of the participants for your piece?
  - f.) How do you communicate that energy level to the people who have parts right before and after?
  - g.) What will you do if the group is not where you anticipate them being?
  - h.) How will the group know you're finished?

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End of Handbook. Thank you for stepping forward in service. Blessed Be!