



Keening Ceremony

Template - Online Circle

This Template is a suggested Running Order and Time Management plan for the Keening Ceremony Theme (pronounced 'Key-ning'). Please use this document in conjunction with the Foundation Circle Template where you have a guideline script for sections such as the Cleanse, Fire/Water Ceremony explanations etc. Specific information for this Theme is offered below and the sample script is in italics, please 'translate' into your own words. This Theme may be used at any time in the year but around April/Spring Equinox/Easter and November/Samhain/Hallowe'en is also popular with the emphasis on death and rebirth.

Things to consider a few days before the Circle

Be conscious of holding your Moon Mná Circle and the content of the Theme. Take time to meditate/spend quiet time with your sense of grief. This will allow you to tap into your personal holding of the ancient practise of 'waking the dead' to their rebirth in Spirit through Keening. This is vitally important to do as you begin to collect specific items/materials that you will require for your Circle (as well as your Lunar Kit):

Theme Related Items

- A light black scarf for the Keening and also, for the Cleanse.
- Your Cauldron or a large fancy Bowl for the Keening vessel.
- Brigid's Well water or Seawater or local Riverwater to pour inside this vessel.
- Symbols of death for your 'Shelf/Table' Altar such as memorial cards.
- Appropriate sombre funereal music then happy uplifting music (see below for ideas).

- Your computer with Zoom downloaded (and working knowledge of how to use it.)
- The Chant on your computer (downloaded) or phone (recorded).

NOTE: You will need to remind the women to have their own black veil (scarf or shawl or old-fashioned mantilla), Keening vessel (glass bowl, black 3-legged cauldron etc) and sacred water to add such as Well/River/Sea water. They can also have tealights and matches for atmosphere if they wish.

MUSIC IDEAS: with thanks to Moon Mná Circle Facilitator Della Ratcliffe.

Keening Of The Three Marys - William Coulter -Celtic Circle HD
<https://open.spotify.com/track/OKXVBes3050O9yqxmY5Oru?si=868f1ca7dbdf43a5>
 there is also a YouTube version, with lovely pics at <https://youtu.be/itGz9VBfj94>

Keening Song - Kitty Gallagher (Arr. Gallagher)
<https://open.spotify.com/track/7Hug84IydhZTBvbJPxh4ug>

Pain - Amy Wedge
 youtube <https://youtu.be/bVYTsvTUAmQ> spotify
<https://open.spotify.com/track/503Ns6ku1BbS1EsVNZOdgY?si=6e434f89b2474f33>

FOR THE INITIAL AND CLOSING SECTIONS IF YOU NEED A RECAP, PLEASE REFER TO YOUR FOUNDATION THEME TEMPLATE NOTES AGAIN.

6.00pm VENUE PREPARATION

Open Sacred Space privately, calling in your Guides and whatever protection method you use (Guardian Angels wings, Arch Angel Michael, Organic Armour etc) to help you prepare calmly and thoroughly. Place your notes on your table near your computer (and your Mála Naofa or Mesa if you carry a sacred bundle). Arrange your Shelf/Table Altar (so it is visible on screen) attractively with your Keening Vessel and black scarf. Settle yourself before opening your Zoom connection so the women can gather 10/15 mins before you start (turn off your video/mute yourself until you are ready to begin).

7.00pm Fáilte/Welcome

Include a brief introduction to the evening's running order. Check that everyone can hear you and ask them to practise their 'mute/unmute' button before you start. Hold your notes close to your camera so you are maintaining eye contact throughout.

7.05pm Opening Sacred Space

Invite in the ancestral 'Mná Caoineadh' (Irish Gaelic for Crying Women and pronounced Meh-naw Keen-ah) when calling in the North Direction (Ancestors).

Face forward so the women can hear you and remember to nod towards each Direction just before you call it in.

7.15pm Hand Casting a Safe and Confidential Circle

Remind the women that they are energetically holding the hands of the women nearest them geographically and can feel this palpably once they quieten their mind.

7.20pm Solo Keening Scarf Cleanse

Having described a Cleanse and what it is for, explain that after the demonstration, everyone will offer themselves a Self-Cleanse at the same time. As you demonstrate, gently waft your Keening scarf over your face, hair, and body to 'collect' whatever you wish to let go, humming or crooning as you do so. Show the women how you flick this towards the light or place on the earth to release all before using it in the Keening Ceremony later. Now invite the women to begin with their own black scarf. Refer to the Foundation Cleansing video and documents if you need to. Hum/croon softly during the Cleanse or put on soft music (remember to change your audio sound settings if so, as Zoom picks up the human voice but has to be 'set' for instruments or sound recordings. Ask 'Mrs Google' how to do this!).

7.30pm Theme Introduction

Here are examples of comments relevant this Theme, add or subtract to your liking.

"Keening is the old Irish tradition of a specific crying ritual to release the collective grief of the family and community of the person who had died. We adapt this poignant beautiful old tradition to shed pent up emotions for ourselves, old phases of our life, our loved ones and indeed others such as war victims, survivors of abuse and indeed Mother Earth.

The Moon is a quintessential symbol of the Divine Feminine, with her gloriously complicated cycle, she mirrors the stillness of our innate being. So, we meet monthly to discuss aspects of life important to women. Each Moon Mná Theme itself has a direct link to Grandmother Moon. This Keening Theme brings an awareness of the Moon shedding and releasing each month as she wanes from fullness back to her Dark New Phase gifting us permission to let go whatever no longer serves us."

This is where you tell the Keening Women's Story (see separate document). Invite the women to close their eyes to connect with the Mná Caoineadh as you read a printout.

7.35pm Talking Full Woman OR Symbol/Stick.

"What does grieving mean to you. How have you grieved/not grieved before?"

You answer first to start and set an example. The women will copy so make sure you keep to the amount of time you have set for this (around 3 minutes). Remember to explain your 'thank-you-please-come-to-an-end-as-you-have-exceeded-the-time-limit' sign if the women, in their excitement, share too long (hand on your heart/Namaste sign/T sign for Time).

Depending on the number of women present, you may decide to put them in pairs or triskeles in Zoom Breakout Rooms OR give everyone a chance to speak in the main Zoom Room. Invite the women to 'mute' and 'unmute' themselves when it is their turn to speak as you hold up your Talking Full Woman. You can do this in order of who arrived on screen first or when they raise their hand – your choice.

7.55pm Keening Ceremony Explanation

"As I explained in the invitation, this modern version of the Keening Ceremony centres around a clear (crystal or 'fancy') Bowl/Cauldron in place of a coffin. So, either you have your own Keening vessel, or you may use mine energetically instead. As a modern evolution from the traditional 3 Keeners, everyone who wishes to may take part. All of us will sit in an energetic Circle with either our own Keening vessel, or near your screen if using mine, with a black veil (scarf or shawl or old-fashioned mantilla) covering our head and eyes. This is to evoke the ancestral women who took part in these ceremonies and funerals in the past and create privacy to allow inhibitions to be shed easily.

To begin, it is recommended to start with chosen subjects to keen then let the energies of the emotions take you where you need to go. For example, if you have fully grieved for all loved ones that have passed away then you may choose to

grieve for others – colleagues/friends/a phase in your life but also Mother Earth with all the climate change, the women in Afghanistan, hungry/abused children, whatever comes to your heart. Once everyone puts on their scarves it is time to begin. The sound of women crying, sobbing, wailing can be upsetting, so it is important for us all to go within and listen to our hearts.

This way we are letting natural curiosity go while taking the opportunity to release tears for ourselves or for those we have chosen to keen for. A good tip is to ‘fake it ‘til you make it’. Start to make crying noises until the body takes over. Let the ego mind take a much-needed break and focus on tears or/and sad scenes in your mind’s eye. What often happens is that your emotions take over so you’re crying and emoting sounds physically while your head is wondering what is happening. Then thoughts will flit through, this is fine. Simply note this as you would in meditation then let it go.

As we are on Zoom you will hear me and yourself only. Do not open your eyes, look around at what others are doing to maintain their privacy, simply stay with the sound you and I are making and your own emotions. Some find this easier than others so please do not compare yourself to anyone else. There is no right or wrong way to do this. To keen you need to surrender and let go your inhibitions. Even if can’t go there today know that you may release in your dreams or later on in your own privacy.”

8.00pm Solo Journaling

Now offer the women 5 minutes to ponder what it is they wish to keen for. This could be simply one thing or several and will probably change as the Ceremony continues. Give examples such as grieving for a loved one or a phase of life that has passed or the melting ice in the Arctic etc.

8.05pm Demonstration

Place the Well/Sea/River water into your Keening vessel. Put on your black scarf lifting it over the rim of your vessel and cry into it for about a minute (make sure that they can see your vessel on their screen by propping it up on a little table/some books). Now begin to cry softly at first then proceed to sob a little bit louder so they

understand that the sounds you, and they, release will change over the course of the Keening Ceremony. Do this only for a minute or two to demonstrate.

“Once I start Keening, place your scarf over the rim of your vessel and begin. If you do not have your own Keening vessel and so are using mine then place your scarf over your laptop camera. During the Keening Ceremony each of you will be releasing your actual or energetic tears into your vessel.”

“The Ceremony will take approximately 25 – 40 minutes (rarely more) and usually ends with gentle sighing or humming and even sometimes laughter. Now is the time to add your choice of water to your Keening Vessel . Have your black scarf nearby.”

8.10pm KEENING CEREMONY

*Dim the lights and light candles (safely) for atmosphere. Invite them to do the same.

*Prepare quietly by tuning into your Moon Mná Guides and any spiritual helpers who may be Angels, Saints, Goddesses, Power Animals, Ancestors especially if at the time of Samhain. Usually, one will step forward to be a particular aid in this work. Ask for help in holding the space and the sacred flow of the Ceremony especially to know when to stop crying and therefore naturally wind down the Keening.

* Ask for permission to begin by inviting the women to nod their consent and put their scarves on.

*As the Chief Keener, you begin straight away (fake it if you need to as you are setting the example so need to begin quickly).

*You may be able to see, out of the corner of your eye, the women join in on their Zoom squares as the energy grows. Track/tune into each one.

*Maintain a steady flow of Keening which will vary organically from sobbing to crying to loud wailing and gentle snuffling. There will be a natural end to the Ceremony, lasting approximately 25 - 40 minutes. Once you stop keening then quite soon afterwards the women will stop crying too. I find that the Keening can morph into a gentle lullaby-like hum or silence and sometimes laughter (even slightly hysterical). Tune into whatever feels best as you emote, trust your instincts.

*Check in with your Mná Caoineadh ancestors and regular guides to see if the Ceremony is complete. Thank them afterwards for holding everyone energetically.

*Now talk everyone through a simple grounding exercise stretching their fingers and toes and heels.

9.00pm JOURNALING AND/OR GROUP SHARE

It is good to gift everyone time to journal, sit and gently process. If you have a small Circle, then a group share is good but do remind the women that it might be too early to share which is fine. You'll need to manage the time here depending on your numbers perhaps only 3 or 4 women will be able to share.

RELEASING YOUR KEENING TEARS REMINDER

Explain that after the Circle, everyone will release the tears from their Keening vessel to the Earth with gratitude. This may be in their garden or local source of water.

9.10pm FIRE/WATER CEREMONY

This is an opportunity to close the Circle by letting go or welcoming in whatever may have arisen during the Keening Ceremony. For example:

“My intention is to let go any fear around releasing my emotions while welcoming in being comfortable with death.”

It is your choice whether to facilitate a Water OR Fire Ceremony. It may depend on your home as if it has fire alarms/water sprinklers then you will have a Water Ceremony.

If a Fire Ceremony, then either you hold the candle, and the women blow with their breath towards the flame whatever they wish to release and then welcome in. They can do this individually or all at the same time. You could also invite them to have their own candle and do this themselves. If a Water Ceremony, then you have the fancy water bowl and hold up each individual petal/mini rice cake Moon biscuit/cookie OR you hold up one and they all blow at the same time. Alternatively, the women could have their own water bowl and petal/rice cake. It is lovely if everyone has the same item.

Chant Alternative

Invite everyone to lilt/hum which works very well as it is soothing after the Keening release. You can have the audio 'Chant' supplied recorded on your phone to play it at the Fire/Water Ceremony so everyone can hear and join in confidently or sing another Chant if you are more comfortable with that.

Also, you may decide to use a different Chant/play music instead. However, the power of women singing/humming together is amazing, so I highly recommend that you encourage the women to sing along privately in their homes listening to you and the recording.

9.35pm Soul Moment

9.45 pm Uncasting the Circle, Closing Sacred Space

9.55 pm Notices and Photographs with permission

This is a good time to take a photo of the group on screen asking for permission as not all women will want to be on your social media page. Take another photo or mini video of your Shelf/Table Altar. Please do post these on our private Facebook page so your tribal sisters can see all you have created.

10.00 pm Switch off Zoom/Sweep Your Tracks

Clear up your things and place them back in your Lunar Kit having enjoyed this immense opportunity to host this beautiful Theme. Close your private Sacred Space and savour having hosted like-hearted women to release their grief and honour the ancestral women who were the Mná Caoineadh.



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