

Texas Local Council Covenant of the Goddess

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What form does the practice of Witchcraft take?

The form and context vary from group to group and between each ritual, and may run the gamut from elaborate ceremony to spontaneous ritual to simple meditation. Generally the practice is to consecrate a sacred space, the "circle" and then work magic and worship the Goddesses and Gods within it according to the forms agreed upon by that particular group of Witches.

Q. How do you see the Goddess?

As the immanent life force, as Mother Nature, the Earth, the lifeblood of the people, the Cosmos, the interconnectedness of all life.

Q. How do you see the God?

As the immanent life force, as Father Sky, the Land, the sustenance for the people, the Cosmos, the interconnectedness of all life.

Q. Do all Witches practice their religion the same way?

Yes and no. Wicca is a highly individual religion. Moreover, the number of different sects within the Craft may give the impression that no two groups practice the same way. Though practices may vary, most traditions have many similarities, such as the working of magic and a respect for nature. Most Witches find enough common ground for mutual support and productive networking throughout the Craft community.

Q. Is Witchcraft a "cult"?

No. A cult is generally taken as a gathering of people who owe blind allegiance to one charismatic leader who ostensibly represents "truth". They indulge in "extravagant homage or adoration" (Webster's Dictionary), usually of their leader, thus trading the ability to think for themselves for "salvation" and a sense of belonging. This is the antithesis of the Witchcraft experience. Most Witches come to the Craft through reading and communing with nature and later finding like-minded groups. Witches tend to be highly individualistic.

Q. Do Witches have a "Bible"?

No. A bible is supposedly the word of a deity revealed through a prophet, or more generally, "a book containing the sacred writings of any religion" (Webster's Dictionary). Witchcraft is a Pagan folk-religion of personal experience rather than transmitted revelation. A Witch may keep a "Book of Shadows" which is more like an individual's workbook or journal -- meaningful to the person who keeps it -- containing rituals, discoveries, spells, poetry, herb lore, etc. Covens may keep a similar group book. There is no one document taken by all Wiccans as authoritative, as in Judaism, Christianity, or Islam.

Q. Do Witches cast spells?

Some do and some don't. Since a commonly-held belief is that what is sent out is returned to the sender, Witches tend to be very careful with spells. A spell is a formula, or series of steps, to direct the will to a desired end. Energy is drawn from the earth, concentrated, and sent out into the world. It is believed that with proper training and intent, human minds and hearts are fully capable of performing all the magic and miracles they are ever likely to need, through the use of natural psychic power.

Q. Do Witches fly on brooms?

No. Brooms were (in rural Europe) and sometimes still are ridden astride in ceremonies. In one such ceremony, people ran through the fields astride a broom to coax the grain to grow, or participants would leap over a broom, telling the grain to grow to the height of the highest leaping. Uninformed observations of such ceremonies could lead to tales of flying on brooms.

Q. Do Witches worship the Devil?

No. The concept of "the devil", a personification of a supreme spirit of evil and unrighteousness, is a creation of

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Middle Eastern thought which is fundamental to some religions of that region, including Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam. Worship of this being as "Satan" is a practice of profaning Christian symbolism and is thus a Christian heresy rather than a Pagan religion. The gods of Wicca are in no way connected with Satanic practice. Most Witches do not even believe Satan exists, and certainly do not worship him. Historically, the gods of an older religion are often branded as the devils of a newer one in order to promote conversion.

Q. Are Witches only women?

No, but in this country women do predominate in the Craft overall (in Britain, men predominate). Some traditions have only women practitioners, just as others have only men. Most traditions admit both. Men are also called "Witches", and most take exception to being called "Warlocks".

Q. With the bad mental image people get at the mention of Witch and Witchcraft, why do you still use these names?

Virtually every religion can look back into the dark corners of history and find a period when it was held in disrepute. Some religions were accused of crimes through ignorance and malice (e.g. Medieval Christians were sure that Jews ate Christian babies). Other religions face prejudice because their practices are different from those of their accusers (e.g. the Mormons for their polygamy). Others defame each other for being on the opposite side of some power struggle -- consider the many incidents from the Crusades through the Inquisition to current affairs in nations such as Ireland or Iran. Just because a group was or is persecuted and maligned is not a reason for it to change its name. The practices of prejudice and scapegoating seem to be universal human pastimes, and we have all had our share of being victimized.

Q. How can someone find out more about Witchcraft?

Wicca is not a missionary religion and does not proselytize. One must seek rather than be sought after. There are excellent books available, and many Witches teach classes or facilitate discussion groups. In this way, people may connect with a like-minded coven or form a study group of their own. There are also many good periodicals, networks, and national and regional festivals through which a seeker can make contact with the larger Craft community. The Covenant of the Goddess (CoG) is one such group fulfilling all of these functions and the Texas Local Council of CoG is available to answer questions. Send a note to contact-txcog@txcog.org or pio@txcog.org.