Don't you hate it when a group ritual turns out to be a boring, tiresome slog? You know the drill: you're shuffling in pain, and losing focus. Maybe you can't hear or see what's going on. Maybe there is nothing you're supposed to do except watch passively from the edges--while standing in place, eaten by mosquitoes.

Is this witchcraft, or am I just the audience at the theater? If you're in a magickal rite, but you can't wait for it to be over, then I call those lost opportunities "church-in-a-circle" or CHUR-cle for short.

How I can engage everyone with a Pentacle Approach? Meaning, how can my ritual intention be reinforced through all of the five senses, engaging all 5 of my bodies? My mind, heart, body, will and spirit all have to get in on the action. Once I'm opened and flowing with the natural power we are raising, how will this rite help align the personal will of the individuals with their Highest Divine Will? ritual intention?

Links to full ritual instructions in the Sojourner Tradition Style:
https://www.patheos.com/blogs/witchonfire/2017/03/ostara-ritual-large-coven/
https://www.patheos.com/blogs/witchonfire/2017/05/litha-ritual-highlight-shadow/

Techniques for engaging everyone: Awakening the Inner Temple

Pre-Ritual Discussion: Etiquette and Expectations
• State the ritual intention up front, and what sort of contribution we will ask of them.
• For example: if they will have a chance to speak or share, let them know that up front; give them an alternative.
• Go over songs, chants and teach the dance movements
No more Chur-cle: Ritual Techniques to Engage Everyone - Heron Michelle          blog at witchonfire.net

• Tailor movements to one’s abilities. Like, feel free to step to the edge for a breather, or sit when you need to.
• We don't have to maintain a perfect circle's edge the whole time.
• Inner circle is the fast lane, and the outer circle is the slow lane.
• Chalice Alcohol and Foods disclosure; offer alternatives.

Consent and sacred permission
• Physical interaction? holding hands, hand on a shoulder, etc. Gain knowledgeable consent from everyone BEFORE they go into circle.
• Sacred permission for them to say "no, thank you" or to be silly or serious and fully Divine.
• Sacred permission to be free and alive, and present in any emotions that well up.
• Tell them they are the magick, they are the temple, and they are safe to be divinely messy human beings.

Call and response model:
• When the person speaking speaks with power a punctuated phrase such as “So mote it be!” “Blessed be!” Hail and Welcome/Farewell" the group echoes that phrase in response, with power in the voice.

Write a ritual that looks at the whole thing as a wave form:
Think of ritual like a journey: We begin on earth, remembering our place here in the middle world and our connections on all levels. Build the temple. Begin a pace that is low and slow and shifts everyone into magickal mindset, a light meditative or trance state. Then ramp up in energy and awakening to our connections on the unseen levels, above and below. Build power until a crescendo is reached, tune that energy into your desired change, direct that power to its goal. Then wind down back into the body descending back to earth low and slow again. Open the temple.

Plan to Engage all the Senses

Visual/Mental

• Present a ritual that looks appropriate to the mood and intention; aesthetic, drama.
• Ritual is the Divine inner mysteries enacted outwardly upon the stage of this physical life.
• Lighting, the richness of color and texture evoke a mood that sets that stage.
• Visualizations are also of paramount importance. This falls to the ritual leader to guide all the participants with imagery and poetry that paints vistas in the mind's eye.
• This engages the imagination and aligns the Mental Body to the magickal intention.
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Sound:
• Background music, drumming, the chiming of a bell or singing bowl, the crackling of burning logs on the fire...the crickets singing. Have a Shruti app playing?
• When there is awkward silence at first, people get distracted and fill it with idle noise.
• The key to building cohesive ritual attention, is in the play of sound against silence.
• I have found, however, that most often I find the silent open places within me where the God/dess speaks most clearly, are found while my other senses are kept busy listening to the cacophony of drums and chants.

• Leader uses Tone and Volume as Cues

Smell:
• Incense, anointing oils
• Releasing the scent and energies of plant allies through ritual burning, sets the vibration of the temple.
• To involve everyone, I like to set a small cauldron of dried herbs or special wood chips near the ritual fire, and invite people to grab a handful, throw it in, and purify themselves by walking in the smoke. It is visceral, and gets your hands dirty. As far as I'm concerned, until you're dirty and smell of strange smokes, the witchcraft isn't done yet.

Taste:
• The shared ritual feast of "cakes ale" is another great way to engage both taste and smell.
• The whole ritual can be the charging and crafting of a Magickal Brew that everyone drinks,
• We can magickally prepare foods to eat during ritual can also engage everyone.
• Grapes of Gratitude ritual, Lammas Rite charged corn on the cob.

Touch:
• Getting into the motions, dancing with bare feet on the ground and the wind in your hair.
• Holding hands and singing out the Awen Cone of power.
• Digging your hands into making something like ripping back the leaves from an ear of corn at Lammas.
• Getting oily and gritty with herbal powders.
• Heart rate up! Tired muscles, rapid breath, Laughter. Be fully alive and engaged in the body as an act of gratitude.

Physical Postures
• Elemental: Ritual of gestures adapted from suggestions made by Scott Cunningham in his first Wicca Book. (page 144-145) The physical posture we stand in as we face the cardinal directions, helps engage the body, while the mind pictures what the gatekeeper is evoking.
• Divine Postures: Goddess Invoking position, crescent moon hand mudra, Horned God, Posture of Esoterism, Osiris pose
• Mudras: hand positions which evoke and align you to various spiritual states and energies.

Casting our Energetic Temple
• Energy flow visualization: World Tree and elemental grounding and power-tapping.
• Gather around for altar consecration: Everyone can hear and see.
• Hallowing together: chant together for the whole lap: "I consecrate this circle by the powers of ____." Not only does everyone engage their voices and their ears with a droning chants, but we are all making affirmations, therefore shifting our consciousness.

Statement of intention:
Be very clear to state the purpose of the ritual up front. Affirm reminders of that intention often. Reinforce it in the quarter-calls, and evocations.

Circle Cross
Macrocosm to Microcosm, Get Thee to the Cross-roads
The Circle Cross is also the astrological symbol for the planet earth, the middle world, and the circle itself.

Often in magick, you'll hear about going to the crossroads. The crossroads describes an intersection of worlds, the liminal place, betwixt and between, where gods and mortals can meet. When witches cast a circle, we create an energetic construct of this very symbol at the macrocosm level – we carve out that sacred place between the worlds. Then we open the gates to the four elemental realms. We then evoke our Deities and spiritual guides and ancestors to join us on consecrated ground, in celebration of existence and partnership in growth and evolution.

But the occult mystery is that the microcosm crossroads lies within yourself. In order to expand your consciousness into the greatness of cosmic-level divinity, you'll have to take the deep dive within yourself.

“And thou who thinkest to seek Her, know thy seeking and yearning shall avail thee not unless thou knowest the mystery; that if that which thou seekest thou findest not within thee, then thou wilt never find it without thee. For behold, She has been with thee from the beginning; and She is that which is attained at the end of desire.” Charge of the Goddess, Doreen Valiente
Awen Cone of Power to cast Sphere: Of what is the circle made?
- Final point of the Pentacle, and the fifth element of Ether
- Ether is the ground of being; the implicate order; it is what interconnects the web of existence. I would call this the transcendent synergy of Divine Love. I might even go so far as to say this is the collective consciousness of the cosmos that mystic folks like us appeal to as The Great Spirit.

Opening the Elemental Gates:
- Can everyone hear? Cross-Calling: Speaker stands behind group to face the direction.
- Engaging all 5 bodies, Above and Below, Call is a visualization and summoning.
- Posture, Ritual of Gestures inspired by Scott Cunningham in Wicca Solitary Practitioner (I think.)
- Awaken that corresponding body in ourselves.
  - Air: Mental Body. Mind, Intellect, Creativity, Wisdom. Stir the Breath
  - Fire: Body of the Will. Will power, courage, fortitude. Stir the Passion.
  - Earth: Physical Body. Foundation, Manifestation, Ease. Stir the Bones, the blood

Opening the Upperworld Gates
Evocations of Spirits: Above and Below
To be in balance within our Spiritual Body is to awaken from the illusion of separateness. We remember our interconnection within that eternal Great Spirit, throughout time and space. To seek spiritual balance is to embrace our wholeness – dark and light, day and night, the good and bad, ugly and beautiful, as all part of being an incarnate God/dess. Wholeness is perfection; we are Perfect Love.

Calls Goddess: Great Goddess, in the dust of whose feet are the hosts of heaven, whose body encircles the Universe; Welcome!
You who are the beauty of the green earth, the white Moon among the stars, and the mystery of the waters. Welcome!
You who are the heart’s desire! That which we seek, awaken within us. Flow through us in these rites. Hail and Welcome!

Calls God: High Priest: Great God, in the fires of your Will burns a thousand suns, whose seed brings forth our sustenance, Welcome!
You who are the power of the wild hunt, and the shorn grain of sacrifice, graciously given. Welcome!
You who are the mysteries of death and the miracle of rebirth. That which we seek, awaken within us! Flow through us in these rites! Hail and Welcome!

Opening the Underworld Gates
Calling the Mighty Dead, the Ancestors of Land Blood and Spirit with awakening movements
Giving Offerings

Ritual Body: Inner Work
Outer Work with individual contributions and group focus. It isn't witchcraft until

Raising Energy to charge the Ritual Intent, then Direction of energies
Music, song, drums, Free-flowing work with multiple engagements: Don't make everyone stand there watching each person do private devotions…allowing for conversation and free-expression to dance or spontaneous chants to erupt.

Don't be afraid to call an audible: If your plan isn't working, make a quick change. If people are fighting or not paying attention, strike up a dance or a chant.

Cakes and Ale to ground, get back into the body, and engage the senses again.

"Prayers and Thanksgiving" is a casual way to allow everyone there to speak a prayer or ask for aid, and personal magick to be done in sacred space. We all aid in visualization. Also helps wind down from the group focus, back into individual focus, shifting consciousness.

Release/close all six gateways counterclockwise using the same postures.

Temple Closing: Jump-shot
Ritual Etiquette of The Sojo Circle Coven

- It all starts with the four rules of modern witchcraft:
  - Don’t burn the witch.
  - Don’t be the asshole.
  - Don’t be the weak link.
  - Must be present to win.

- **Invitation to Ritual is a Privilege:** We reserved that privilege for those whom we believe to be responsible, discrete, sober, relatively healthy, in reasonable emotional/mental balance at the time. All will enter in a reciprocity of Perfect (complete) love and trustworthiness.

- **No observers.** All attendees participate in the ritual to the best of their abilities, following the direction of ritual leaders, and respectful of their hosts and their property.

- **Attention, Please.** Our rituals can be fun, frolicking and full of mirthful laughter, or reverent, somber and challenging, according to the season and purpose of the rite. However, focus needs to remain on the business at hand. If a personal need arises, honor that, but use subtlety.

- **Sacred Permission.** Physical movement, chanting, singing, sharing will raise energy, and develop shared intimacy with Spirit and each other. You have sacred permission to “look silly,” push the edges of convention, and possibly the “comfort zone” imposed by modern society. However, you may adjust as necessary to be true to yourself. At no time should you feel coerced to do anything in violation of your ethics, sovereignty or free-will. You are in charge of you.

- **Chalice Etiquette:** Alcohol of some sort will be in the chalice during rituals; however, do not feel obligated to partake of alcohol. You may pour out your sip in libation. Same goes for the cakes. Alternatives may be provided. Again, you are in charge of you.

- **Honor your physical needs.** If you need to step to the edge for a breather, to sit, need a restroom break, or to follow your intuition, please do so in the least disruptive way possible. In case of emergency, let someone know right away!

- **Opening/Closing the gate:** Once in circle, only leave circle if your health and well-being require it. Energetically open the gate, then reseal it behind you.

- **Movements deosil (clockwise) build energy,** so be mindful of your movements as you walk around the circle, and turning on the spot, passing items, or taking turns are always done clockwise. The exception to this is when for ritual purposes we are deconstructing, or reducing energy. Follow the cues of the ritual leaders.

- **Call and response.** When the person speaking ends with a phrase such as “So mote it be!” “Blessed be!” Hail and Welcome/Farewell” echo that phrase in response, with power in the voice.

- **Divine Invitation:** Remember that there are some Spiritual beings ever-present, and we do not presume to “command” them when and where to go. We extend an invitation and honor the presence of Gods, Angels and beneficial and protective ancestors and spirit guides, etc. When the rite is complete, we express gratitude and release.

- **Gate Closing:** Elemental energy is different. We open the gates at the quarters and direct that raw energy to build the temple. At the end of the rite we “close the gates,” sending them back from whence they came. We do NOT want elemental energies still present outside of a protective circle. To me, this is more like turning a faucet off and on.

- **Perfect Love and Trust:** Know that we hold everyone in perfect, unconditional love and trustworthiness. Do not let fear of “Messing up” stop you from jumping in and trying new techniques. We will gently guide you until you are a pro. In the interim, simply ask for guidance when you need it. All are safe here.
An Altar Consecration Ritual:

This is written as if done privately, but can be adapted to include others.

- Arrange your altar with reverence and intention.
- Chime the bell three times.
- Light the Spirit Candle. Spirit is ever-present.
- Face the altar, stand in Goddess position with hands raised up to the sky, remember that you are like a tree who’s branches reach up through the atmosphere, touching air and the fires of the sun, and tap into Father Sky and the heavens above.
- Draw down that power, crossing your arms over your chest in Osiris God position, feeling how that power flows through you reaching all the way through the soles of your feet.
- Remember that like the tree, your roots reach deep below into the earth and water, to Mother Earth and all the underworld below.
- Kneel, touch the ground. Draw up the earth energy to cross arms over your chest again in Osiris God position.
- Feel the flows from above and below meeting and anchoring at your heart chakra--you are a vessel of The Two Who Move as One in Divine Love, an open channel of their creation flows through you.
- Stand, power flowing through your heart and down through your hands.
- Hold the incense, saying, “I charge this incense as a being of air.” See yourself drawing yellow light from the atmosphere to imbue the incense, awakening it to its purpose.
- Light the incense from the spirit candle, if it is a stick. Light the charcoal tab, and then when ready sprinkle your loose incense on the tab. (Instructions for creating loose incense here.) While drawing an invoking pentagram over the altar with the incense, then encircling the altar, say, “Powers of air, blow free any impurity from this sacred space.” Visualize a yellow energy glowing around the altar.
- Hold the red candle, saying, “I charge this candle as a being of fire.” See yourself drawing red light from the fires of the sun and stars to imbue the candle, awakening it to its purpose.
- Light the fire candle from the Spirit Candle. While drawing an invoking pentagram over the altar with the candle, encircling the space, say, “Powers of fire, burn free any impurity from this sacred space.” Visualize a red energy glowing around the altar.
- Hold the bowl of water. “I charge this water as a being of water, and cast out all impurity.” See yourself drawing blue light up from the water table to imbue the water, awakening it to its purpose. With fingers or athame, add three pinches of salt. Stir by drawing the invoking pentacle in the water, say, “Powers of water, wash free any impurity from this sacred space.” Sprinkle the water over the altar three times. Visualize a blue energy glowing around the altar.
- Hold the bowl of salt. See yourself drawing green light from the earth itself to imbue the salt, awakening it to its purpose. Say, “I charge this salt as a being of earth.” Draw the invoking pentacle in the salt, saying, “Powers of Earth, ground free any impurity from this sacred space.” Sprinkle the salt over the altar three times. Visualize a green energy glowing around the altar.
- With your hands or wand, stir the air around the altar by drawing the invoking pentagram 5 times, saying, “As above, so below; As below, so above; macrocosm to microcosm. Spirit, you who are ever-present, indwell within this altar, you are honored in this sacred temple between the worlds. Blessed be.” Visualize a white light containing all colors now glowing around the altar.
- Chime the bell three times. Commence with the creation of your temple.