

A RITE OF PASSAGE TO RECOGNISE A PERSON'S TRUE GENDER

Ceremony intention

- Give thanks for the gift of different genders and freedom to express the beauty of who we are.
- Recognise the important and sacred steps that [name] has taken.
- Mark this rite of passage as a time of transition from one period of (her/his) life into another.
- Celebrate, give thanks for, and affirm [name's] identity and integrity.

Setting, Props

Optionally: Gathered stand or sit in a circle around a simple ground-spread altar, presented with one or more meaningful objects, e.g. an open birdcage to symbolise new freedom. The ceremony might be held at sunrise on a hilltop location. Held just before or following a person's transition or full-time adoption of their preferred gender.

Ceremony elements

Introduction: welcome, explain why we are here, opening prayer/indication

Reading (optionally by a friend): reflecting on courage and self-affirmation.

Introduction to the ritual (purpose, what we will do).

Ritual: [name] stands and moves to the centre, wearing a veil over their shoulders (representing their former obscured self, carrying the burden of an identity to suit the expectations of others). [Name] also carries a candle (artificial if outdoors), as a symbol of their self that had not been allowed to shine, not easily being seen by others.

[Name] or Minister reads words to remind [name] where they have come from, then where they have come to. Minister invites (name) to step forward and to cross a golden ribbon that has been placed on the ground, representing the threshold that they have crossed, ready for their burden to be removed and for their light to shine.

Minister removes the veil and accepts the candle from (name), which is placed on the altar at the centre. [Name] invited to lift their arms to embrace their new freedom. Optionally they may be given a gift by a friend representing the group as a common acknowledgement of who they are.

Poem (optionally may be read by a friend): e.g. *Today I come home to me*

Blessing: laying on of hands.

Prayers, including thanks for bringing [name] home and for their future happiness.

Silence, followed by an opportunity for anyone to share words, optionally including brief poems/reflections/words of encouragement for (name).

Giving out of gifts to the congregation by (name).

Closing prayer.

Friends and family gathered around [name] and applaud (her/him).

Music: selected by [name] (suggested: light, hopeful, celebratory).

Poem:

Today I come home to me

Always I have been precious, always I have learned
My going forward, my hesitations and my fears – no day can I regret
Today has been a long time coming,
But it's not a day I want to rush
My time for celebrating has come at last –
Today I come home to me
No longer moving to the artificial inventions of others' design
Today I come home to me
Freed from confusion, freed from censure
Today I become who I'm meant to be
Today, at last, I'm free to be me.