



## Happy Yule!

The holiday season is upon us again. This year has really flown by. There seems to be truth to the old saying “once you get over the hill you start picking up speed. Seems like only yesterday, it was the 2011 New Year.

This new year looks to bring many changes as we look forward. The weather will probably continue to be a wild card and the political machine will gather steam and

force as it heads toward the next election. Drama will, no doubt, abound.

So let’s take time during this season of rest to rejuvenate our minds and spirit. Let the cold winter nights give rest to our souls so when the green growing things start shooting up, we’ll be right there also, ready to spring forth with renewed energy and joy. Let’s set some new goals as the new year rolls around and at

the top of our list, let’s put some time in to spend with Mother Earth whether it’s by helping her heal the damage we inflict upon her, or just letting the peace of her presence flow over and around us and remind us that we are all connected.

I wish you joy, peace, and harmony during this holiday season from my family to yours.

Bright Blessings

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## Areas of Learning

Here is a general list of areas of learning that you may want to incorporate into your homeschool. Many of these things can be taught not only through materials but just as a part of daily life. Homeschooling is a learning lifestyle not just an activity. Learn to incorporate learning into your daily life while you’re walking, driving in the car, making dinner. Use reports, letters, and games to enhance their learning experience, or vendors.

Math - (adding in the grocery store, measuring making meals, etc.)

Science - (learning about plants, animals, how things work and why)

History - (where did I come from, countries, cities, creation, their Maker)

English - (writing, grammar, spelling, speaking, penmanship, reading)

Physical Education - (play, sports, games)

Social Studies - (our government, map skills, geography [vacations], where do I live, other cultures)

Spirituality-religious studies or paths

Arts - (drawing, painting, music, dance, drama)

Social Skills - (interacting with adults, manners, unselfishness)

And don't forget that cleaning is a part of their learning experience. Make it part of your school day. It teaches your children discipline, organization, home economics, and character.

## Free Online Resources



[www.teachartathome.com](http://www.teachartathome.com)

Your art instruction resource for self-learners and home schoolers. You will find homeschool art curriculum, online art courses, and free art projects

[www.officetutorials.com/](http://www.officetutorials.com/)

Through the generosity of [Microsoft](#) and [Lynchburg College](#), the 51 Office 97/98/2000/XP-2002/2003 and 2007 tutorials contained

on this website, are available, at no cost, to anyone who desires to download them. While the tutorials are copyrighted, you may download, print and share them.

<http://historyplace.com/index.html>

featuring pieces of American History

<http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/>

Darling's Guide to Grammar and Good Writing

<http://www.jamesbrennan.org/algebra>

Guide to high school Algebra I

<http://www.bymath.com/>

Mathematical Web High School

<http://www.eskimo.com/~billb/>

Science resource page

<http://www.lcc.ukf.net/>

Science for 11 to 19



## Spiritual Practices for Youth and Children by Michelle

**Richards (reprinted from the UUA Website)**

Since children are naturally full of wonder and are still able to see magic in the world, they do not need spiritual practices to help them connect; they need them in order to stay connected as they grow and mature. While children are born with an innate spirituality, most of them will lose it as they grow older and are taught (explicitly or implicitly) to ignore their perceptions in favor of intellectual pursuits.

However, engaging in spiritual practices does not necessitate leaving behind reason and logical thinking. Expressing spirituality is a way of connecting with our souls, our innermost spark, the deepest parts of ourselves; any avenue that gets us to that point is a spiritual practice.

Spiritual practices are simply opportunities that enrich our journeys through life.

A spiritual practice may be as simple as lighting a candle and saying a blessing before a shared meal, or as complex as a vision quest or silent retreat at a monastery. It can be a brief, verbal expression of gratitude as part of a bedtime prayer, or it can involve the entire body like the yoga Sun Salutation. Some people find their connections through dance; others prefer inspirational reading of sacred texts. Still others may find meaning with mindfulness meditation or experience the awe of the natural world while standing under a starry sky and brightly lit moon. Children often express their

spirituality most naturally with their physical selves, particularly those who are kinesthetic learners. For them, yoga can promote inner peace as they physically manipulate their bodies into poses. The martial arts can help them establish discipline, concentration, and focus. Free-style dancing ("as the spirit moves") is another great avenue of spiritual expression for children—at least until their inner critic kicks in. While my teenage daughter is moved to create poems and original songs that she sings with abandon and great feeling, my seven-year-old son is a runner. He loves to run as fast as he can, feeling the wind breeze by him as he soars forward. Whether or not this love of running will stay with him as he matures remains to be seen. (continued page 3).

## Spiritual Practices for Youth and Children (continued)

However, they have both found meaning in these activities for themselves and have been encouraged to develop these interests while being exposed to many other forms of spiritual expression.

For, although children naturally express their spirituality through physical movement and teens often prefer creative expression, that doesn't mean their spiritual practices need to be limited to those pursuits any more than an adult must feel limited to intellectual pursuits that expand the mind. In the East, children often learn meditation as soon as they are able to sit upright, and for centuries, Native

American children have been engaging in vision quests or sitting still and silent for an hour or more while experiencing the wonder of the natural world around them. While this may seem amazing and even preposterous to those of us who are dominated by a culture of busy-ness and multi-tasking that equates stillness with lethargy, these children have seen this behavior modeled by adults and older children.

Since a child's attitude toward spirituality is derived for the most part from his or her parents, the spiritual practices we engage in or introduce to our children will have an impact on their lifelong view of spiritual

expression. Therefore, it only makes sense to honor our yearnings by pursuing those practices that give us the most meaning. And while our children may not ultimately choose to express their spirituality in exactly the same way we, they will feel the freedom to explore and engage in spiritual practices that provide meaning and enrich their lives.

What spiritual practices do you find meaningful? Do you share them with your children? Why or why not? Do your children and youth engage in spiritual practices that you don't share?



## Compulsory Attendance Age Increased

On May 18 2009, Governor Bob Riley signed into law Senate Bill 334, raising the compulsory school attendance age for all students in Alabama from 16 to 17 years old. Students of any age who have completed high school graduation requirements for public schools are eligible for an

exemption from further attendance. Presumably, this exemption would include not only public school students but also students in other educational settings if they were taught the public school curriculum. Alabama recognizes four means of meeting the compulsory attendance

Requirements: public school, private school, church school and private tutor. The statutory law of Alabama contains no express provision for homeschooling. Sponsored by Senator Arthur Orr (3<sup>rd</sup> District), the new law affects all students receiving home instruction through (continued on page 4)

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*"The human spirit needs places where nature has not been rearranged by the hand of man." ~Author Unknown*

## Compulsory Attendance Age Increased (continued)

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*“There is no religion healthier for a man’s spiritual and physical well-being than the pagan worship of the woodsman.” –Irwin S. Cobb, Izaak Walton League Monthly.*

enrollment in a church school. These students must continue attending school until age 17, even after completing their school’s graduation requirements, unless the school adheres to the public school curriculum for completing high school. To our knowledge,

We are not aware of any church school whose course of study for completing high school is the same as that of the public schools.

## Driver’s Permits and Testing Information

Just a reminder that if your child is old enough for a learner’s permit, don’t forget to request your permit form from us BEFORE you go to the DMV.

If you are interested in testing your child, please look at Family Learning at

[www.familylearning.org](http://www.familylearning.org).

They have reasonable pricing and are specifically set up for homeschooling children. They offer several testing options and will score your test and return the results to you. Just be sure to follow their directions on administering the test and

submission requirements.

## Book Reviews

I am thinking it might be useful to many of our families to try to get some book reviews on various homeschooling books or articles. I have had several families ask specifically about pagan resources. I have recently come across a book titled [Pagan Homeschooling](#) by Kristin Madden (A Guide to Adding Spirituality to Your Child’s Education. If anyone would like to purchase this book and provide a review, I would

be happy to post it in the next newsletter in the spring and also on our facebook page. I found it on Amazon for a very reasonable price (new about \$12.00 and used for about \$6.00). I have not read this book but it did sound interesting and most of the reviews on Amazon were positive. If it turns out to be a handy resource, it would be good to be able to recommend it to those families who are specifically teaching a

pagan path.

If anyone has any other books they have read that would be helpful (pagan or just general homeschooling), please let me know or post them on our facebook page. It would be great to see more traffic and exchanges of ideas on the facebook page.

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**“The important thing is not so much that every child should be taught, as that every child should be given the wish to learn.**

*~ John Lubbock.”*

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## Policy Reminders!

### ATTENDANCE FORMS!

As part of your enrollment contract, you agree to send in an attendance form for each child enrolled with Sacred Grove Academy, which must contain all months/days from when the child was initially enrolled, until July 1, when all enrollments end. THESE FORMS MUST BE RECEIVED BY 1 AUGUST EACH YEAR REGARDLESS OF WHETHER YOU ARE RE-ENROLLING FOR THE NEXT SCHOOL YEAR. These attendance forms (supplied in startup packet and available on

our website) are required by the State of Alabama to be filled out for each enrolled child. If, by 1 August of the following summer, which is the deadline for re-enrollment, you have not sent these attendance forms for each child, you will be dropped from enrollment with Sacred Grove and an official letter will be sent to your local School Superintendent stating you are no longer enrolled, EVEN IF YOU HAVE PAID YOUR TUITION!!

If you do not send in your

attendance forms, even if you do not re-enroll by August 1<sup>st</sup>, no records or information about that child will be released to you or to subsequent schools that may request such, nor will we provide diplomas, transcripts, letters giving dates of withdrawal for GED purposes, driver's licenses, or any other information requested for that child until these forms are received. If the forms are not received within 12 months of your withdrawal, you will not be allowed to re-enroll at any future point.



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*Just in the United States, Santa also is called St. Nick and, sometimes Kris Kringle. He's called Father Christmas in England, Christkindli in Switzerland, Pere Noel in France, Babbo Natale in Italy and Weihnachtsmann in Austria.*

## New Address & Proper Withdrawals

Inform us immediately if you move (or before you move, if possible). If you move into a new school district in Alabama, the only way for that school board to know that you are legally enrolled in a cover school is if we send them a CSEF (Church School Enrollment Form). If they do not receive this form but discover you are living there and your child is not legally enrolled somewhere, you will be subject to truancy laws. Therefore a new CSEF must be filled out by you and mailed in to us, so we can fill out our

part and send it to the new school board. Time is of the essence in this (do NOT wait until re-enrollment time!) Sacred Grove will not be held responsible for truancy charges brought against families who fail to follow this requirement.

To officially withdraw from Sacred Grove during the school year:

1. Send a notice to Sacred Grove by mail or email, stating that you are withdrawing AND
2. Send in your child's

attendance forms, from the time of initial enrollment up until the time of withdrawal.

An official letter to your local school superintendent will then be sent stating you are no longer enrolled in Sacred Grove Academy (as required by state law). A letter of withdrawal will also be mailed to the parent.



## Sacred Grove Academy

P.O. Box 3338  
Phenix City, AL 36868

PHONE:  
(334) 408-7372

E-MAIL:  
homeschool@sacredgrove  
academy.org

Sacred Grove Academy is a church school operated under legal code 16-28-1, 16-28-3, 16-28-7, and 16-46-3 (church school law) of the State of Alabama

We're on the Web!

See us at:

[www.sacredgroveacademy.org](http://www.sacredgroveacademy.org)

## General Policies

**Length of School Year:**  
You can homeschool as long or as little as you like, according to Alabama state laws. Standard is 180 days, which can be spread out over 9 or 12 months, but remember, this is just a guideline.

**Curriculum:** Each family is responsible for selection

of its own educational method and components of curriculum. All educational methods are considered equally valuable and viable. No specific curriculum is required by the State of Alabama nor by Sacred Grove-you have complete freedom to choose the curriculum and teach in

the manner that you feel is best suited for your child.

**Statement of Faith:** No statement of faith is required, nor is membership in any church. Families participating in Sacred Grove Academy are free to subscribe to whatever faith they so desire.

## After Withdrawing

Unless you have told us to keep your records for you when they are sent to Sacred Grove by your former school, we will always forward them on to you. Therefore, when you withdraw and place your child in a new school,

please advise that school that Sacred Grove does NOT have your child's records (unless you have requested we keep them)! This will save a bit of time and frustration on everyone's part when you are trying to get your child

enrolled in a new school.

## *About Our Organization..*

Sacred Grove Academy was established by Church of the Spiral Tree, a legally incorporated tax-exempt Ecumenical Pagan Church (Section 501(a) organization under

501(c)(3)), in order to serve Pagan families in Alabama who want to homeschool their children but do not wish to do so under the auspices of a Christian or secular cover

school. Sacred Grove serves all of Alabama, and is based in Phenix City, AL

**SACRED GROVE  
ACADEMY**  
P.O. Box 3338  
Phenix City, AL 36868

