

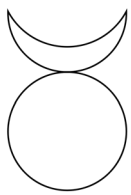
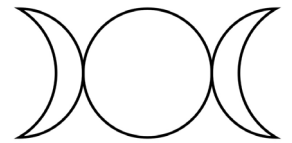
Creating Your Altar – Symbols for eBook Readers

... A circle of any kind is an immensely powerful symbol. A shape without beginning or end, it captures the essence of unity, eternity and the continuing cycle of life. Magical rituals take place within them because they mark the boundary between the worlds, as well as being able to create a protective barrier that can contain the energy raised and keep out negativity. Any other magical symbols you feel an affinity with can also be incorporated into your altar, either permanently or for a specific working. You could set your objects up in that shape, include a representation of it as an altar piece or use it in any way that works for you. Here are a few examples, but go within to discover the symbols that have the most meaning to you.



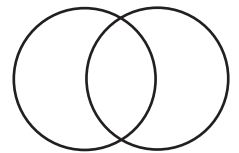
Seven-pointed star. The faery or elven star acts as a portal to bring in faery energy, and represents magic and the harmony of the seven elements. You could sprinkle salt, crystal chips or ground herbs into the shape of this star, then place an object at each point, or embroider it onto your altar cloth, carve it into the wooden tabletop or draw it on paper and place that on your altar.

Triple moon or triple goddess: This pretty symbol represents the three major phases of the moon – waxing (as it increases towards full, appearing as a crescent), full (where it appears as a perfect round disc) and waning (as it decreases towards dark, represented by the opposite crescent). It is also symbolic of the triple goddess and her aspects of maiden, mother and crone, and the three major stages of the feminine life cycle. In the northern hemisphere this symbol reflects the moon cycle, with the waxing crescent appearing as a backwards C, followed by the circle of the full moon and the C shape of the waning crescent, but in the southern hemisphere this is reversed, appearing as (C)O(C).



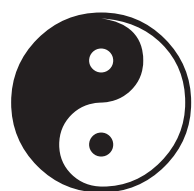
Horned god: This symbol represents the horned god of nature and fertility, known variously as Cernunnos, Pan, Caerwiden, Herne and the Green Man. He is the pagan god of the forest, the hunt, wild animals and fertility, and is associated with horned male animals such as stags – and erroneously with the devil. He reflects the seasons of the year and the cycle of life, death and rebirth, and is considered the guardian of the forests and its wisdom, the defender of all animals and the masculine half of the divine.

Vesica piscis: This is the ancient sacred geometric pattern of two interlocking circles, which symbolises the merging of the conscious and the unconscious, the physical and the spiritual, yin and yang, god and goddess, and the inner and outer worlds. The space where they intersect represents this union, and the Christians adopted it for their own, using it as their symbol, which they called the ichthys. The vesica piscis is also the symbol of Glastonbury's sacred Chalice Well and all the magic it holds.



Triquetra: From the Latin “tri quetrus”, meaning three-cornered, this magical symbol represents the eternal cycle of life, death and rebirth, as well as other threefold aspects, such as maiden, mother, crone and physical, mental, spiritual. To the Celts it also symbolised the realms of earth, air and sea that made up their universe – and later the Christians adopted it as a symbol of their holy trinity (father, son and holy spirit). Today, thanks to TV's *Charmed*, it has also come to represent magic and the power of three.

Triskele or triple spiral: From the Greek for three legged, this symbol also represents the triple goddess, and all the triple aspects of life – maiden, mother, crone; life, death, rebirth; body, mind, spirit; waxing, full, waning; sun, moon, earth. It's drawn in one continual line, with no beginning or end, which is how ancient peoples saw life and existence. There is a triple spiral carved in the entrance stone at Newgrange, Ireland's Neolithic burial chamber, which some believe was an initiation chamber and others claim is a faery mound, and the symbol is known to some as the spiral of life.



Yin yang: The yin yang symbol represents the Ancient Chinese understanding of how the universe works, and how everything is interconnected. The outer circle represents all that is, while the black and white spaces within the circle symbolise the interaction of two opposite yet complementary energies that exist within the greater whole. Yin, the black, symbolises feminine, night, passive, cold, introspective energy, while yang, the white, represents masculine, day, aggressive, hot, active, expanding energy. Neither can exist without the other, signified by the dot of the opposite shade within each shape, and we all have elements of both within us.