

# Mother Bear

## Notes

You will be provided with the Mother Bear costume; fur coat, fur paw gloves, mask and ears.

Go to the Goddess Realm as soon as you hear the participants being drummed to snacks. Change into costume in the Goddess Realm. Bring a bag to put your black clothes in and give to the Co who will take all bags to the materials room where you will get changed again after the session. One of the facilitators will come to you, once you're dressed and in position, to answer any questions.

## The Mother Bear piece

[music – use track #6 from SW tape – Barber's Adagio??]

When the initiates enter the Goddess Realm and walk around you are sitting on a chair in the bear cave created at the back of the room.

When it's your time the facilitator will gather the women before you. Stay where you are, while she tells the women about Mother Bear. You can look at them through the mask, maybe it will be possible to make eye contact with some of them as they listen. It may be possible to pick up on some who are particularly touched by what they're hearing. The facilitator will say something like this:

*Hear the call of Mother Bear. See how she protects her cubs. She is the one who knows what it means to give birth, to feel life inside of herself, to bring forth life into the world from her own body, from her womb.*

*And sometimes she's not always the one who protects life inside. Sometimes she the one who knows that it is best for life not to bring in life, so she makes the sacrifice to say no to the life she finds herself pregnant with. Sometimes there's shame.*

*There is a place where we're longing for the good mother, the mother who is strong and we can depend on. Who can protect you and do the right thing. With that longing in your heart for the good mother. This archetype is the mother who can hold*

*all love. When she sees one collective holding in the place that we all need to be held. She protects life. She embraces you and takes you just as you are. She knows every inch of you. She holds you.*

The facilitator will speak in a way which makes clear when it's time for you to move out from your cave towards the women, allowing them to form a circle around Mother Bear and feel their grief. As you move towards them, the facilitator will encourage the women to move into you and feel Mother Bear's embrace. Open your arms to them. They will be very close, the closest hugging you, others hugging those around them. You will have very little room to move, but use your eyes through the mask to connect with as many as possible, particularly those you can't reach any other way. Hold eye contact where you find it's being received. Move your arms gently as far as possible, to make physical contact with as many of them as you can - hold heads, stroke cheeks and hair. The facilitator will continue to talk as all this happens – it will go something like this:

*Feel down inside you where we as women hold our collective wail. Great mother. Connect with part of yourself. Find that place. The collective women's wail. Down inside our hearts. We don't give ourselves room to grieve. We just move on. We make space for that here. Allow yourselves to join. Feel the sadness of everyday life. Keep feeling into it. Feel into it. Is there more? Have you felt it? Feel the source of the pain. Feel the holding. Sometimes it is a loud cry, sometimes a deep sigh. Your very body knows the suffering. We have things to grieve about. Grief's never spoken. Feel yourself held in this circle.*

*And now, begin to look around and know that you are not alone. Feel the strength of us together. Very gently begin to withdraw your body as we thank Mother Bear. Bow down here to that part of ourselves who protects us here and our longing for life.*

When the facilitators draw this section to a close – it will be obvious from what's being said and the invitations being extended to the women - go back to your chair. Your work is done. Once the focus has shifted, cos will come to check that you're OK, and bring water if you need it.

The facilitators will indicate when it's time to quietly leave, which is just before the initiates do the meditation to find their animal name. Go get changed and return any costumes that you've borrowed to the materials room.

