

Birth Bundle

Making a Birth Bundle is a simple but powerful ritual of preparation that acknowledges and draws upon the three energies that ideally come together during this rite of passage: mother, father/partner, and baby. It also acknowledges and balances another important triad of energies: the body, the mind, and the spirit.

Begin by choosing a piece of cloth that is large enough to hold the three special objects you will collect, and that can form a “bundle” by tying the corners together. The cloth can be any fabric or color; it can be bought new or be a family heirloom. One mother used a square of satin from her wedding dress, another used her husband’s favorite hiking bandana.

What’s important about the search for symbolic objects is the “search,” not the objects themselves. The search for objects activates an internal search for values and resources you will need in labor and postpartum. Traditionally, this search is done in solitude: it is neither a couple’s project nor would you get ideas from a friend. It may not be as easy as it sounds to find symbols that speak to you. Don’t rush to choose a symbol that is familiar or commercial, unless it really resonates within you. When you hold it in your hand, or when you look at it, it should speak to you. If it doesn’t, keep looking.

The **THREE OBJECTS** represent and celebrate the primal energies that will arise in you in labor. Whenever you open your Bundle, it opens into a kind of traveling altar; upon seeing your specially chosen objects, you will feel and be reminded of the meaning they hold for you.

The **FIRST SYMBOL** speaks to you, the Mother. It may remind of you of your connection to the strong women in your family and to all women who have ever given birth, your spirituality, or perhaps it will be a symbol of Opening, or one that awakens your new identity as a Mother.

The **SECOND SYMBOL** represents the energies the Father or your partner (either physically or spiritually) is bringing to this transition. Find an object that acknowledges his or her presence, transition into Fatherhood, or your love for one another. This object could also represent the energies you will draw from your birth companions.

The **THIRD SYMBOL** represents your Baby, a reminder that you and your baby are working as one to be born, and that the energies of Beginner’s Mind, Innocence, and Trust are within you.

When you’ve collected your special objects (and there might be a few more than three), place them on the cloth and tie it to form a bundle. Tie your Bundle securely enough so it won’t open until it is time to open it, but loosely enough that when it is time, it opens easily (like your cervix!). Keep in mind that although a symbolic object may evoke strong feelings in you, the power is in you, not in the object. You can strengthen the connection between the object and the meaning the object represents by meditating upon the meaning before labor, and by having the objects touch your conscious mind often as they sit in the open on the cloth as an altar. Then, when you see or hold the objects in the haze of labor, they may invoke an instant unspoken reminder. Some mothers never open their Birth Bundles in labor, but still appreciate the influence that preparing it had on their mindset in labor. After you give birth, your Birth Bundle may serve as a reminder of your rite of passage, or become an heirloom for your child. Or you might bury it in the Mother, giving thanks for how it served you.