

Satanic Bay Area Black Mass, 2019 edition

Historically, the term “Black Mass” referred to religious rituals that provided a parody or subversion of a Catholic mass, or perhaps some other orthodox religious ritual.

While our ceremony does employ some elements of satire and inversion of the practices of other religious groups, we’ve defined the term much more broadly as simply a group ritual for Satanists to share in self-expression, statements of identity, and independence from toxic or outdated cultural norms, or simply to have fun.

As the word “mass” in a eucharistic sense derives from the Middle English word meaning “to dismiss”—in that believers are at the conclusion sent forth into the world more steadfast in their faith—our mass similarly aims to provide tools that affirm and validate Modern Satanists.

See the creative notes at the end for some sources and advice on execution.

Required:

- Altar.
- At least one person to conduct the ceremony.
- One FIREPROOF vessel.
- Matches, alcohol.
- Communion wafers.
- Blood and/or red wine (see notes about sourcing).
- Cup, bowl, or chalice.

Suggested:

- Between four and 12 candles. Black is traditional, but whatever works for you.
- Bell or gong.
- Knife or sword.
- Incense.
- Black book.

- One or two additional people to help conduct.

Altar setup:

The altar should be a table high enough for you to comfortably reach everything on it but low enough for everything to be visible to the entire room.

Position the altar either in the center of the room or at one end. If you prefer to conduct without an altar, make sure all of your implements are nearby anyway.

We recommend a centerpiece for the altar, something big and eye-catching to set the mood. In the past we've used a goat's skull or a statue of Baphomet, but whatever seems appropriate for you can serve the same ends.

Cover the table with an altar cloth or just a simple tablecloth—black is generally the default color, but red, deep blue, purple, or even white can work, depending on your mood.

The altar should contain all of your implements. It can also hold additional elements for creating atmosphere—candles, incense, decorative additions, etc. If you're employing a book in your altar setup, make sure that it lies open.

Sequence:

- Introduction.
- Dark Lord's Prayer.
- Invocation.
- Desecration of the Host.
- Mark of the Beast.
- Close.

Part 0: Introduction

Spend a minute or two welcoming your participants and walking them through what to expect. Explain why you're all here and lay out any rules. If you need volunteers, select them now.

Participation in something like this should be consent-based, so give everyone as clear an idea as possible of what the ritual will consist of so they can make a

conscious decision to include themselves. (Which they should have done before showing up of course, but even so.)

We strongly recommend that music accompany the ritual, and if you're employing a soundtrack this is the place it should kick in.

Part 1: The Dark Lord's Prayer

You or a volunteer should stand in front of the altar or at the center of the circle to lead the "prayer." Since this is an easy task it's a good way to include someone else in.

Conduct the recitation call and response style, first delivering a line and then letting everyone repeat it back:

***Our Father, who art in Hell
Unhallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom is come, thy will is done
On earth as it is below
We take this night our rightful due
And trespass on faithless taboos
Lead us into temptation
And delivers us from false piety
For yours is the world
The riches
And the glory
Forever and ever
Hail Satan!***

Part 2: The Invocation

One or more of you can deliver the "sermon" (for lack of a better word), dividing up the text as you see fit. We've hopefully composed it so that it's fairly easy to move, remove, or add additional statements.

Whenever the invocation uses the phrase "Hail Satan," it's traditional and appropriate for everyone participating to repeat back, "Hail Satan." With a big enough crowd this can get quite forceful, which is awesome.

If you have a bell or a gong, punctuate the “Hail Satan” with that. It might be useful to have one volunteer who is just on bell duty.

Satan: Just god, reasonable god, administrator of sumptuous sins, we address you.

You, the mainstay of the overlooked, the persecuted, the exiled, who defends us against the children of god who are the rich, the powerful, and the corrupt.

You uphold the resolve of those whom injustice would crush. Patron of virility, you demand neither chastity nor deprivation. You alone hear the petitions of poor but covetous families, granting them the gifts of ingratitude and pride. (Hail Satan!)

Assure us of the joy of delectable misdeeds, oh Satan, and lead us to glory, riches, and power, you king of the disinherited, the son who will overthrow his inexorable father.

Centuries have wept waiting for salvation from mute and fugitive gods, all the while their priests command, “Be patient and suffer.” Now the priests have forgotten the poverty their god preached and become the servants of riches and privilege.

They watch the masses crushed beneath the weight of wealth, hear the pleas of the timid, and offered only excuses, evasions, promises, and fraud, then damn us in the name of sins only they perceive. And so we say, (Hail Satan!)

You breathe, O Satan in our words, when we challenge wicked pontiffs and bloody kings.

Art and poetry first lived for you: Azazel, Leviathan, Mastema, Sammael, Ahriman, Babalon, Urian, Lilith, Lucifer.

Both beautiful and awful, you span the oceans and the land, and we hear your voice in the wind whisper: “Great Satan passes by,” bringing blessing from place to place.

A refugee of the mind, the people welcome you amongst their household gods, and you fill their hearts with your fervor. You inspired the witch, the alchemist, the sorcerer, the scholar, the scientist, revealing bright new heavens beyond the confines of drowsy cloisters, and drearier minds fled from material things, where you've always dwelled.

You in the bright blood of grapes, by which transient joy persists, restoring fleeting life, keeping grief at bay, and inspiring us with love. (Hail Satan!)

Satan: The wisest and fairest of the Angels, betrayed by destiny and deprived of praise, Prince of Exile, you have been wronged but when vanquished always rise up again more strong.

You who know all, great king of hidden things, the familiar healer of human sufferings, You who with Death, your mistress old and strong, have begotten Hope.

You who give the convicted outlaw and the condemned witch their calm and haughty look that damns the whole multitude around their scaffolds.

You who know in what nooks of the miserly earth a jealous god has hidden precious stones.

Kind minister to humankind, mighty king, who teaches us to love that we may know the sweetness of paradise in this, our only life. (Hail Satan)

Staff of those in exile, lamp of the inventor, adopted parent of those whom in a foul rage god has orphaned.

Prayer, glory, and praise to you, O Satan, in the heights of Heaven where you reigned and in the depths of Hell where vanquished you dream in silence!

Grant that my soul may someday repose near to you Under the Tree of Knowledge, when, over your brow, Its branches will spread like a new Temple. (Hail Satan!)

Part 3: The Desecration of the Host

Communion wafers or some appropriate substitute should be present on the altar or easily at hand. If you are distributing them yourself, grab them now. If an assistant or volunteer is distributing, have them ready.

We interrupt your sermon for a brief history lesson: In the year 1247 in the German city of Beelitz, city records remember that an unidentified Jewish man was put to death by burning.

The charge: He was accused of profaning and destroying the consecrated host, the earliest recorded instance of so-called "host desecration," thereafter considered one of the most reviled and dangerous of all mortal sins.

The superstitious reverence for the supposedly magical power of the wafer led historical governments to enact the most dire and cruel of punishments on those convicted of these desecrations. But we contend that an attack on the alleged body of a god is in fact the very definition of a victimless crime.

To express our independence from archaic gospels and their inhumane punishments, we invite everyone participating to approach and treat the pale and insubstantial body of this god in whatever fashion you deem appropriate.

Call participating members up to the altar one by one and present the wafer, which they should crush, break, burn, spit on, trample, etc in whatever fashion they find most gratifying. If a knife or sword are part of your altar setup, this is a great time to incorporate it.

Remains are then deposited into the fireproof vessel. Once everyone has taken part, douse the ruined hosts in alcohol and set aflame.

As so many in the past were sentenced to burn unjustly, we consign these myths to the flames also. (Hail Satan.)

Part 4: Mark of the Beast

Blood or wine should be on hand, in an easily accessible vessel. Whereas in the previous step participants approached the altar, this time you should approach the circle or seated participants to administer the mark.

Ask each person whether they prefer to be marked with wine or blood. And where. A simple smudge or X on the forehead or the right hand is sufficient, although feel free to get more creative.

After each marking, have the participant repeat after you:

“Hail Satan.”

Or any other appropriate sentiment. Once you’ve made the rounds to everyone, return to the altar for the conclusion.

Part 5: Conclusion

Returning to the altar, extinguish the candles or other lights one by one, until only one remains. At this point ring the bell once, close the book, and before putting out the final light say:

So say we all: Hail Satan.

Once everyone repeats, blow out the last candle. Fin.

Creative Notes:

-Most of these props are easy to obtain, but sourcing blood can be tricky. In major cities, butcher shops will often have animal blood on hand, as will markets catering to communities where it’s sometimes used as an ingredient, like in Filipino blood stew.

Some people may prefer not to use blood out of concern for animal rights or just distaste. That’s your call, but the longtime and consistent association of alleged devil worship and black magic with blood rites and the religious taboos associated with blood in religious ceremonies makes it an attractive option.

Various fake blood recipes may create the same effect for those who shy away from the real thing, although we usually just employ red wine as a substitute when needed. We don't recommend using actual human blood as a prop for reasons related to health and sanitation, but some other Satanic groups have employed it.

-The use of open flame in the ritual is a simple but surprisingly effective way to create both spectacle and visual catharsis. But it should go without saying that basic fire safety should be taken very seriously, and be wary of smoke detectors and other fire alarms that can spoil the mood.

Also note the importance of having a legitimately fireproof vessel at your disposal. Although the one time we had a bowl unexpectedly explode in the midst of the Mass it was admittedly a nice touch, we don't actually recommend this.

-The altar gives people something to focus on, sets the mood, and of course serves a practical purpose as just somewhere to keep everything you'll need.

I will admit that personally I find the model of a traditional religious service in which attention and thus importance is focused on one person or a small number of people who become de facto authority figures for its duration not quite satisfying and too much like the archaic practices of mainstream religions.

I think the ideal Satanic ritual would involve as many people as possible—up to and including everyone in the room—and avoid artificially (however briefly) elevating any one, as a formal rejection of traditional dogmas that try to invest imagined power and importance into “priests” and similar figures.

But I also admit that that's really difficult to both plan and execute, and as with most other things in life it's just plain easier if someone runs the show. You can't win them all.

-While it might seem perfunctory, the introduction is one of the most important parts of the proceeding. Some people may not know what to expect from the proceedings, some may be anxious, or some may be unclear on what their role is (if any).

While it would be fair to say that anyone who consciously chooses to attend a Satanic ritual is pretty much setting themselves up for almost anything that

happens, a theme of mutual respect and basic consideration goes a long way toward establishing the trust needed for authenticity.

Just as consent is the byword in intimate matters, it should be in religious ones too. In both cases, basic and straightforward communication is the most valuable tool.

-With a few exceptions, we've made a conscious decision not to include any Latin phrases or antiquated English language (no "thou art" or "thy will" stuff here), simply because in my experience we often end up employing these terms incorrectly. Even the ubiquitous "Ave Satanas" may not actually be correct Latin.

If you feel that these sorts of rhetorical flourishes create a certain gravity or theatrical touch that you value then feel free to add them. But for the time being the text is intentionally written in standard English.

-The Dark Lord's Prayer is just another in a long variation of the theme of inverted or perverted "Our Father" invocations going back centuries. The call and response style is an easy way to involve everyone in the room, and leading the prayer is a simple but rewarding task that almost any volunteer can conduct without practice.

-The Invocation is a pastiche of Satanic rhetoric from different sources: JK Huysman's novel "Las Bas," Italian poet Giosuè Carducci's "Hymn to Satan," and French poet Baudelaire's "Litanies of Satan," although the language has been modified and adapted to convey the message we want to emphasize.

The theme is of Satan as an exile figure who represents the disenfranchised, in which we find both sympathy and power for those who themselves feel outcast. The text also emphasizes the rejection of arbitrary authority, particularly that related to political, economic, and religious institutions.

-The Desecration of the Host—here technically just a simulation, as no actual church blessing of the communion is performed or required beforehand—is the most intentionally provocative element of the ritual, and laden with explicit anti-Christian and particularly anti-Catholic overtones.

We include this element to the ritual for several reasons, first being that it's an easy way for everyone in attendance to participate and that the destruction of the

offering represents an opportunity for everyone to express themselves in an individualistic manner.

Second, many people attend Satanic rituals expressly for catharsis associated with negative experiences with mainstream religions, very often religions they themselves left behind because of toxicity and abuse, and the desecration is a simple but affecting way of invoking that sentiment, which is by no means the exclusive intent of this ritual but at the same time should not be overlooked or disregarded as a potentially therapeutic and holistic experience.

Third, the very phrase “Black Mass” in its earliest forms referred to the alleged destruction of consecrated hosts, which some church authorities imagined was happening at all times in all manner of clandestine meetings. It would be difficult to overemphasize how crucial this imagined infraction was to the development of the Black Mass first as a myth and eventually as a real practice.

As mentioned in the text of the ritual, the mere allegation of theft or destruction of the host—an infraction so petty in material terms as to barely be observable—put the accused person in very real danger. And make no mistake, there are people alive today who would very much like for religious authorities to wield this kind of power over us once again.

On the principle that your rights don’t actually exist until you exercise them we celebrate and affirm our own religious liberties and reject in the strongest possible terms the imagined authority of ecumenical forces with this ritualistic observation.

Some critics suggest that practices like the Desecration risk turning Satanism into a mere parody of Christian religions. However, just as Christian communion has its roots in earlier Jewish and pagan religious feasting practices, it’s not only natural but inevitable that new religious movements adapt familiar cultural elements from existing religions; no creative endeavor springs from a vacuum.

-Similarly, the Mark of the Beast is partly a parody of Ash Wednesday observations—the Roman Catholic Church’s abuses in recent times and historically make them a ripe target for satire—but by and large is a way of poking fun at protestant evangelicals paranoid obsession with the “End Times.”

No doubt about it, when fundies imagine the horrors of the Satanic society they’re irrationally convinced will soon be persecuting them per their alleged

prophecies, they're really imagining a world informed by the values we most prize: plurality, feminism, bodily autonomy, secular government, scientific reason, sex-positivity, and LGBTQ rights.

The initiatory nature of the marking carries psychological and emotional gratification fulfillment for the participants—a conspicuous indicator that they've had an experience. While it's perfectly acceptable to wash the mark off once the ritual concludes, we've seen that many people prefer to keep it for a while.

-The ringing of the bell, closing of the book, and extinguishment of the candle are gestures traditionally associated with excommunication, but here employed as a celebratory gesture.

