



Magic Wands

Background: The ancient Celts, who lived in and around Ireland, worshipped trees because of their importance for the peoples' survival. Their Ogham alphabet was even based on trees, with each letter representing a different species, as well as special qualities that the people associated with that tree. Here are a few examples:

- Birch: Represents transformation and new beginnings, as it is one of the first trees to colonize fields or forest clearings (a pioneer species)
- Oak: Represents strength and endurance, as it is a long-lived tree with hard wood

Materials: Sticks, 4 or 5 colors of strips of wool or felt

Set-Up: Explain that you are each going to create a magic wand from a stick today. Explain how many people through human history have believed that certain tree species have certain powers, and that by making a wand with that tree species, that the people could take on that tree's powers. Invite the kids to find their own stick to make a wand. (They can either follow the Ogham alphabet's associated qualities for tree species, or they can make up their own mystical quality for their stick!) Then, encourage the kids to decorate their wand with other naturally-found materials, like leaves, feathers, or seeds, that might add magical powers of their own. Tie the decorations on with the colored wool, or wind the wool up the stick in a spiral or crisscrossed pattern; anything you want to make the wand unique!


Wrap-Up: Ask the kids to describe their wands and what features or decorations on the wand make them powerful. Subtly point out identification features of trees as they do this (like that paper birch has white, peeling bark) to weave in some natural history, if you want!

On the next page is a list of the Ogham alphabet tree species and their associated powers. We found this on Pinterest, of all places, so its historical accuracy is questionable at best, but it's fun to use for wand-making inspiration!



GRASS RIVER

NATURAL AREA

Ogham symbol	Ogham name	Tree	General meaning
	Beith	Birch	New beginnings, bringing change, birth of new ideas, general good fortune
	Luis	Rowan	Protection, control of the senses, the strength to turn away negativity, vitality, healing, magick
	Fearn	Alder	Prophecy, divination, scrying, intuition, remaining true to your ethics, music, poetry
	Saille	Willow	Feminine energy, fertility, psychic powers, intuition, cunning, new forces flowing, enchantment
	Nuin	Ash	Fate, divine process, connections to the world, spiritual inspiration, take action
	Huathe	Hawthorn	Protection, purification, learning through adversity, sexuality, self-sacrifice
	Duir	Oak	Strength, endurance, opening new doors, new paths, power to endure, protection, leadership
	Tinne	Holly	Balance, integrity, justice, tests and ordeals, courage, mastery over self, legal or money matters, growth
	Coll	Hazel	Creativity, poetry, intuition, the powers of divination, perception, inspiration, arbitration
	Quert	Apple	Choosing that which is beneficial, love affairs, beauty, healing, nourishment, living fully
	Muin	Vine	Psychic senses, harvest, visionary states, patience, releasing logic and reason, examine life's lessons
	Gort	Ivy	Follow the spiral of life, explore personal paths, transformation in self, career and education
	Ngetal	Reed	Awareness of environment, creating order from chaos, progress through vigilance, harmony of will, action
	Straif	Blackthorn	Fate, wheel of fortune, trials and tribulations lead to change, true liberation, rebirth
	Ruis	Elder	Passing of old cycles, looking ahead, change and renewal, new residence, career, health