

Apple Ritual

Introduction

A bowl or basket of various kinds of apples--enough for an apple for each person participating in the ritual.

Leader

We gather in faith for we have been marked by the sign of Christ's Cross, and we pray in the name of the Creator, in the name of the Redeemer and in the name of the Sanctifier.

All Amen

Leader

May the tenderness of Abba our Father,
the love of Jesus our brother
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be always with us.

All

*May the tenderness of Abba our Father,
the love of Jesus our brother
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
be always with us.*

Readings

Leader

Hear People of God!
Hear the Word of God, sung by Moses:

Reader I Deuteronomy 32: 8-10

"When the most high apportioned the nations, when he divided humankind, he fixed the boundaries of the peoples according to the number of gods; the Lord's own portion was his people, Jacob his allotted share.

He sustained him in the desert land, in a howling wilderness waste; he shielded him, cared for him, guarded him as the apple of his eye."



Sung Response

*Glory and praise to our God
Who alone gives light to our days.
Many are the blessings God bears
to those who trust in God's ways.*

Leader

Hear People of God! Hear the Word of God, given to Huub Oosterhuis:

Reader II

*Adapted from "At
Times I See" by
Huub Oosterhuis:*

"God was walking around the universe one day.

All the solar systems and the nebulous stars
ran under God's feet like a field.
Then the Creator found a treasure, lying hidden
like a fallen apple in a field.

It was this earth, with a person on it.
And in the great joy,
God sold all that God had--
the Almighty's omnipotence and all-seeing Eye
God's heaven and God's hell--
And the Creator bought the apple, this earth."

Sung Response

Glory and praise to our God...

Reflection

Leader

Invite participants to each take an apple and mull over it during the reflection.

- What is an apple?
low-rent public housing for worms?
nature's attempt to create a baseball?
the tears of trees that bleed to give us food?
- My mother used to tell me that an apple a day kept the doctor away...
(if only all our medicines came as cheaply!)
- My father told me to polish an apple for my teacher; perhaps she'd never notice my skipped homework.
(it never worked, though)
- Apples aren't jealous:
red apples, yellow apples, green apples,
brown apples, they all seem to get along
they don't care who moves in next door
the color of the skin of their neighbor-apple
if their daughter marries a Winesap
instead of a Delicious
if their children get bussed
to the Learning Apple Tree.



---Just remember, though:

"One bad apple spoils the barrel."

---Apples are adaptable:

-They don't care if they end up
as American as apple pie or
as European as stuffing for a roast suckling pig.

-They get shellacked and be-ribboned for Christmas
and hung in brand new clothes
on old-fashioned Christmas trees.

-They'll even turn into apple-jack,
if your throat's dry and your spirit's need lifting.

---Apples are a world:

a globe with thin fragile skin,
so easily bruised by wanton children.

---Apples are a source of pilgrimage:

just ask Johnny Appleseed--he'd tell you one could
live a meaner life than serving the apple.

---Apples make great prayer starters:

that's because there are
as many kinds of apples
as there are kinds of people,
and there are as many kinds of prayer
as there are kinds of people.

-When you bite into a Delicious, think
"Taste and see the sweetness of the Lord."

-Or, when you chew a Concord think of...
the "kingdom of Concord and Peace."

-Don't forget the noble Macintosh...think ...
"If someone asks for your shirt,
give them your Macintosh as well."

-There's even the crabapple, for those days
when you have to talk to your spouse
before you've had your morning coffee...

---Apples are a sign of The Mystery of God

to really understand an apple,
you just can't look at it and weigh it.
You have to sink your teeth into it,
get inside it, digest it,
make it a part of yourself.

There'll always be an irreducible, indigestible core,
something that can't be assimilated,
can only open out onto new growth.



The death of the appleseed
in the cold tomb of autumn earth
becomes the springtime resurrection
of pink white apple-blossoms.

Sung Response

Glory and praise to our God...



Ritual Action

Leader

*Take a few moments to study your
apple, and invest it with whatever meaning you dis-
cover in it and in your life. Then, give it, complete with
the gifts you've invested in it, to someone else.*

Closing Rite

Leader

And now please rise and lift your apples with me in
blessing:

Baruch Atoh Adonai--
Blessed Are You, Lord God of all creation!

Through your goodness you have given us
the fruit of the Earth

It has become for us the sign
of the mystery of your life.

All (sing twice)

Oh, the Lord is good to me
and so I thank the Lord
for giving me the things I need.
the sun, the moon, the appleseed.
The Lord is good to me.

(from "Johnny Appleseed")

Leader

May God bless us and keep us.
May God's face shine upon us
and be gracious to us.
May God look upon us kindly
and give us peace.
And may we all be kept
as the apple of God's eye
in Jesus' name.

All Amen.

Acknowledgments

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