

# Gifts of Autumn

**Environment** Circle of chairs with a setting of a Fall display in the center (leaves and fruits of the harvest).

**Supplies** Colored paper (shades of blues, purples and greens), pencils, scissors for participants.



## Introduction

**Reader** The West, the direction in which the Sun sets, symbolizes twilight and Autumn. Its colors are the deeper shades of blues, purples, and greens, the colors of the twilight sky and the waters which become indistinguishable from it. The darkening skies and waters in the West are like the deeper feelings that emerge in the Autumn or twilight of one's life.

**Leader:** The season of Autumn brings a variety of gifts to our earth and to each of us. As we listen to the music of Fall, identify for yourself the images, moods, gifts, thoughts and feelings that Autumn has given you.



*Music:* Play "Autumn" (fall) from Vivaldi's *The Four Seasons*, "Harvest" from Tchaikovsky's *The Seasons*, or other appropriate music.

*(Time of reflection.)*

*Fade the music to a background during the following prayer:*

## Reading

I invite you to enter for a moment  
into Sacred Time and Space,  
into a way of seeing that is broad and spacious.  
See this Day, from the time you arose this morning  
until you sleep this evening, as one Ceremony,  
divided into small and familiar rituals,  
your Heart as the Altar.  
You, part of the Cycles of Light and Darkness.

Now begin to see your Life,  
from the moment of your Conception  
until the time of your Death  
as one long, continuous Ceremony,  
filled with many rituals,  
some familiar, some unknown and challenging.  
Your Home and all Your Relations, the Altar.  
You, part of many Seasons and Cycles.

Now see this Ceremony of your Life  
as part of a much larger Ceremony that extends  
Seven Generations into the Past and  
Seven into the Future,  
made up of many Births and Deaths.  
This beautiful spinning Earth the Altar.  
You, part of the great Ebb and Flow.

Now, if You will, imagine this larger Ceremony  
to be but one part of a Ceremony so grand,  
so magnificent as to be hardly comprehensible,  
a great, vast Ceremonial Circle, rich and vibrant  
with millions upon millions of swirling  
Circles of Dancing Light,  
and You, one of those Dancing Circles,  
a Dancer on the Altar that is the Universe,  
where Time is Eternal.

May You Dance In Beauty.

*(circle wisdom - sedonia cahill from World Prayers)*

## Sharing

**Leader:** You are invited now to express the gift of Autumn for you. Please come to the center and choose a colored paper that best symbolizes this gift to you. You may write words, draw images, or cut

out symbols using your paper; call forth the creativity of Autumn.

*(Allow five or ten minutes for this activity. Then invite individual sharing on the symbols created. This can be done in the group or small groups depending on the number of participants.)*

### Intercessions

**Leader:** We now present to our God, the Creator of all Seasons, our prayers for people and needs brought to mind by the gifts and changes of the Autumn season.

*(Suggest a pause after each intercession to allow naming of specific people or needs.)*

**Reader:** O God, we are grateful for the fruits of the harvest that nourish our bodies with tasteful delights. We ask your blessing for farmers, gardeners and all people whose labors have brought Autumn's produce to our tables.

**All:** O God, source of all blessings, hear our prayer.

**Reader:** O God, the colors of Autumn delight our eyes and give joy to our spirits. Bless those whose physical blindness or blindness of spirit prevent the enjoyment of these fall gifts.

**All:** O God, source of all blessings, hear our prayer.



**Reader:** O God, of life and death, the falling leaves and seasonal changes remind us of the changes and deaths in our own lives. Grant peace and healing to those who mourn the death of a loved one and those who face challenges because of illness or aging.

**All:** O God, source of all blessings, hear our prayer.

**Reader:** O God, the barren trees and the dying flowers remind us to let go of hurtful things in our lives. Grant us and peoples who suffer from clinging to hate and past wounds the freedom of forgiveness and reconciliation.

**All:** O God, source of all blessings, hear our prayer.



**Reader:** O God of hope, as we move into the winter season, let the blessings of fall's harvest continue to nourish our lives with the hope of spring and new life ever your gifts to us. We ask your blessings on parents who give life and

nourish their children and on all people in our lives who give us encouragement and new life.

**All:** O God, source of all blessings, hear our prayer.

### Closing

**Leader:** Let us now pray together that our lives may be sources of justice and God's love throughout all of the seasons of life.

*Soul of my soul, the eternal Nature of the Universe  
Spirit of my spirit,  
the evolving Dance of Relatedness  
And the One embracing All,  
I call upon you, within and without,  
Into the Healing of Restorative Justice.*

*Be within and without -  
that we might 'die'  
to the rigid walls of separation between us,  
Which pain and fear  
have wrought upon heart and mind,  
Like barred cages and rusting chains;  
That the seemingly impenetrable shells  
of Autumn's end -  
Be readied to be broken open, and laid open,  
To the 'seed' of Justice hidden within.*

*Be within and without -  
that we might release the fruits of past experience  
To de-compose within  
the deep rich ground of community;  
Warped and twisted though they might be,  
They took root in a hope of Justice,  
however misguided,  
And in their flesh, lie the stories of Understanding;  
That the dark night of Winter erase false boundaries*

*And in the nourishing transformation  
of Forgiveness,  
Replenish Hope's fertile soil.*

*Be within and without -  
that we might be healed by the rain of tears  
- Of wounds grieved, and joy re-dis-covered -  
Binding once more into  
an life-engendering ocean of Promise.  
That the seminal tendrils of new light,  
and the fragile but un-scarred sprout,  
Stretch faithfully, from above and below, to touch  
And merge firmly in the unimagined greening  
of Spring's Choices.*

*Be within and without - that we might ripen  
-leaf, flower, fruit and future seed -  
Roots intertwined,  
exploring the depths of the fertile ground,  
Branches laced against Life's storms,  
yet breathing deeply of the heavens  
- A Summer's garden -  
Ploughed by courage, planted in true belief,  
and weeded through commitment;  
That the fruits of our labours  
nourish the bonds between us,  
And the winds of change  
scatter the seeds of our Faithfulness*

*Throughout the landscape,  
beyond our culture's current horizon.  
And unto the 7th generation.*

*Soul of my soul, spirit of my spirit,  
Embrace me with strength,  
compassion, honour and reverence;  
Dance through me with beauty,  
passion, humility and mirth;  
That I may lay open the seed within, that I am-  
That my life give fertile ground  
to the roots of Justice  
And restore the greening balances  
of Understanding,  
That my choices midwife  
the laboured sprouting of all those  
Who reach beyond the horizons of separation,  
And cultivated a community which is true to the  
Divine within All.  
Blessed Be.*

*(2003 - invocation for restorative justice - rhyannan; from World Prayers)*

*Leader:* As we prepare to leave, you are invited to  
bless the person next to you, with a prayer for strength  
and hope throughout all of life's winter seasons.

*Music:* Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons"



## Acknowledgments

"Gifts of Autumn" ritual: [Marguerite Samz, OSM](#);  
from [Hill Connections](http://hillconnections.org) (<http://hillconnections.org>), a web site linking [Contemplation](#) and [Social Justice](#).