

Celebrating Seasons and Directions

Introduction

Advent is the time the Church year begins. Advent is the time we await Jesus' birth. Advent is the time when the dark grows longer each day in the northern hemisphere. Advent is a pregnant season for thanking God for all seasons and blessing the directions as the Native Peoples do.

Preparation

Divide into six groups to write thanking and blessing prayers for the six directions—East, South, West, North, Earth, and Sky. Talk through with them what Native Peoples traditionally pray for at each direction. Start with the ideas below.

East: spring beginnings, sunrise, new day, newborn babies, planting, peoples of the East

South: summer, full sun, kids growing up, beauty of blooming flowers, running streams, lakes and lakes, crops, peoples of the South

West: sunset, endings, elders, harvests, peoples of the West

North: winter, hibernating animals, seeds resting in the ground, peoples of the North

Earth: the stable ground, source of food, our home

Sky: God Creator, source of hope, sustainer of all that lives

Each prayer begins, "We turn to the ____."

Then the prayers continue, "We thank God for _____. We ask you, creator, to bless _____."

Activity

Release all the tension from your shoulders. Let your shoulders droop. Leave aside all the pressures of the day, everything that already happened and everything you still must do. Just relax. Feel your body sink into the floor. A peaceful heaviness overcomes you. It relaxes your entire body; you feel all the tension in your entire body drift away.

Closing Prayer Experience

LEADER:

Great Spirit, Creator of all that lives, we come to thank you and ask your blessing. Let us turn to the East and begin.

Conclude, "Go in peace."