



Gathering Suggestion Week 1 - The Advent Spiral



What is the Advent Spiral?

The Advent Spiral symbolizes finding light in the darkness. The spiral image, as with labyrinths, can be found in all cultures, ranging from primitive art to 21st century advertising. The spiral is often associated with the cycle of rebirth, time and seasons and sometimes a spiritual journey.

So for the advent spiral we walk to the centre in search of light and spread that light throughout the spiral bringing light into the darkest days of the year up to Christmas.

The advent spiral itself for this purpose is made from evergreen branches, when it is set up inside you get the wonderful aroma from all the greenery. If there is bright, dry weather, you may like to set up your spiral outside for example on a little beach nearby.



Setting up the Advent Spiral

Step 1

Create your spiral. Collect lots of evergreen branches and arrange into a spiral shape, it doesn't have to be too large. Start at the centre and arrange a largish candle on a small table. From here mark a spiral coming out from this centre and pile up the greenery along this line so that there is a pathway inside the spiral line. The spiral only need turn one and a half times. Don't panic about it not being accurate, it's not about that it's about the journey. Mark it out roughly then just keep layering it up with more greenery to enhance the effect. You might even like to include seaweed if you're on the beach. You could also collect large flattish stones and place them along the path of the finished spiral. (They help to create areas to place the candles during the ceremony, but you don't have to do this.)



Step 2

Collect your candles. One for each child/person who is taking part. Short candlesticks are preferable as they are easy for children to light, but if outside opt for tea-lights in glass jars to shelter from any wind. When you have the candlesticks, collect one apple/orange for each candle and after removing the core sit the candle in the apple, this creates a neat little holder and also carries the significance of rebirth.



Step 3

All gather outside the church/room at the allotted time, just when it's dark is ideal. It's important to create the right atmosphere of reverence. Explain a little about what is going to happen and why we are doing it then all go in quietly. When you all enter the room there is the wonderful smell of the greenery and it looks great with the candle in the centre. Parents watching sit around the outside and children taking part sit near the opening of the spiral path.

Step 4

Music is a bonus and helps to add to the atmosphere. Perhaps even just a percussive accompaniment with a soft drum beat to create a calm rhythm.



Step 5

Each child taking part steps up to the 'Candle Angel' (parent, teacher or older sibling) who passes out the unlit candlesticks in turn. Each child walks on their own along the path into the centre of the spiral and lights their candle from the centre candle. Then they turn and walk outwards through the spiral and select a position within the greenery (where the stones/apples laid out) to place their lit candle. Then return to sit outside the spiral to observe the next child.

Step 6

Each child takes the same journey and places their candle within the spiral so gradually the light grows as more and more candles are lit.

Step 7

After each child/adult has taken their journey begin the reflection time.

Whatever you choose to do to for Advent, may your days be filled with light as the nights draw in and you prepare to celebrate Christmas together.