

## **Autumn Solstice**

### *Childhood Memories of Autumn*

**What childhood memories do you have of autumn?**

**What feelings do you associate with autumn? Was there struggle or joy with the coming of autumn?**

**Would you like to share a memory or a feeling that you associate with this season?**



**Time to Share**

### *Leaf Meditation*

**Each person has been given a colored autumn leaf.**

**The season of autumn is a good time to unclutter.**

**Nature is busy doing her own housecleaning in this season of transformation and relinquishment.**

**We might reflect on what we need to unclutter in our life in this season.**

**I invite you now to look closely at the leaf you have in your hand.**

**Once it belonged to a tree.**

**The tree and the branch that were once home to your leaf is now becoming barren.**

**I invite you now to close your eyes and imagine your leaf on its tree. In your mind's eye imagine it green, full of life, swaying in the summer breeze.**

**Notice now your leaf gradually losing its greenness as it slowly changes color to red and gold.**

**Maybe it turns brown before it eventually lets go from the tree.**

**Watch it as it slowly makes its journey to the ground.**

**What caused it to let go? Was it the wind, the rain, a storm or was it just the right time for it to fall. Whatever the leaf's history it has now come to rest in your hand.**

**We now take some reflection time to allow the leaf to speak to you of what you may need to let go off during this time in your life.**

**..... 2 minutes of silence.....**

**I am now inviting you to hold up your leaf in an offering during this prayer.**

**O Breath of God,**

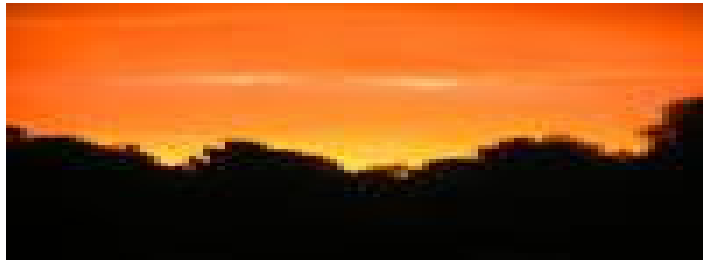
**This leaf is indeed my life. Come with your transforming breath.  
Descend from the heavens; rise up out of the earth.  
Surround me with your liberating breath.  
Free me from the things in my life that keep me tied only to what I know.  
Reveal to me the things that hinder me from being a blessing in the lives of others.  
Take away my leaves of self-hatred and discouragement.  
Empty me so that there may be a beautiful space  
within me for joy and love.  
To you I offer this lovely leaf of my life. Receive me. Amen**

*Carrying Autumn in My Heart*

**We now honor the ancient custom of celebrating the four directions of the Earth  
during this autumn season.  
The symbols used will represent the four directions.**

**East**

**Hold a leaf or leaves in your hand and let them gently fall one at a time as a sign of  
surrender and letting go.**



**Great Spirit of the East,  
I stand before the place of the rising sun  
Knowing that the time to let go has arrived.  
The chill of this season challenges my hopeful dreams.  
A persistent voice in me nudges my tough hold on inner security.  
Bless me with the rays of your love as I struggle with my needs and desires.  
May autumn's brilliant colors give me hope for the days and weeks ahead.**

## South

**Light some candles one at a time. Then slowly blow each one out as a sign of the approaching darkness.**



**Great Spirit of the South,  
I turn to you with nostalgic awareness.  
Summer flowers are gasping good-bye.  
Baskets of abundance sigh with farewell.  
Now comes the season of diminishment.  
The rays of the sun are more distant.  
The vibrant greens are turning brown.  
The time of surrender now arrives!  
May you love settle quietly in me  
like a mother bear entering the cave.  
Amen.**

## West

**Hold a pitcher of water and while the prayer is spoken pour the water a little at a time in a large bowl.**



**Great Spirit of the West,  
I bow to the place of goodbye  
where the sun slides behind the horizon.  
I stand in the presence of my ancestors  
whose wisdom invites me further.**

**As they learned from their transitions,  
so will I look to the teachings of this time.  
I will fall into the embrace of emptiness  
trusting new life to emerge.  
Draw me near as my fullness slips away.  
Amen.**

### **North**



**Place seeds/dead flowers slowly on a bowl of soil.**

**Great Spirit of the North,  
The land is stripped of what was strong.  
The long months of waiting soon will begin.  
I move towards a vigil of emptiness.  
Keep alive the memory of harvested seeds  
While autumn stretches frosty fingers around  
The corners of my watchful heart.  
I will enter the lengthy darkness  
with the strong arms of your love  
wrapped around my waiting heart.  
Amen.**

### **Concluding Rite**

**Sharing of Wine Symbolizing Our Communal Greeting  
of the Season of Autumn.**



