

## Fall Equinox

By Beth Beall

Let's join in celebrating the goodness of God's earth by focusing on the fall equinox. (Equinox is pronounced "EEK-wih-nox.") We'll begin by reading some verses from the Bible that remind us how amazing God's creation is. Then we'll have the option to observe the outdoors near our home, or to draw a harvest moon. As we pay closer attention to God's world and the changing seasons, we can learn to love God's creation more deeply.

### For

Just for Kids

### Season

Fall

### Needed

Bible reading (provided on page three), paper, pen/pencil, crayons (yellow, dark blue and black would be especially useful), an internet connection (optional)



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### Activity Plan

1. Here is a prayer you might use to begin this activity. Perhaps you prefer to pray by using words that come from your own heart. You may also want to pray by not using any words at all, but rather by being still and silent for a moment.

*God, out of your love you have created the universe, with all of its solar systems and galaxies, its sea creatures and strong mountains. Thank you! Help us to love and care for planet Earth all the days of our lives. Amen.*

2. Read the Bible passage on page three. After reading the Bible passage, pick one or two of the questions on page three to think about on your own or with a friend or parent.
3. Here are some interesting things to know about the fall equinox:
  - "Equinox" means "equal night." On the date of the fall equinox, the day and night last for roughly twelve hours each.
  - Some people call it the September equinox. Why? Because the equinox in September marks the beginning of fall in the northern hemisphere, but it marks the beginning of spring in the southern hemisphere. Which name do you prefer?
  - The date of the fall equinox changes every year, but it usually occurs between September 20-24.
  - The equinox in September is the official start of fall in the northern hemisphere. Depending on where you live, you might see leaves changing colors or even falling from the

trees. The outside temperatures will become cooler—a little cooler in some places, and a LOT cooler in others.

- In the northern hemisphere, the fall equinox occurs around harvest time. The first full moon after the autumn equinox is called the “harvest moon.” It is usually a very bright moon that looks to be quite large.
4. The following National Geographic video offers you the opportunity to learn more about the September equinox from a scientific standpoint. The video would probably be a good fit for those in third grade or older. [Equinoxes](#).
  5. Choose one or more of the following activities:

- **Explore the outdoors on the evening of the equinox.** Ask a parent if you can go outside on the evening of the equinox. Your parent might like to go with you, which would be great because then you’d have a partner.  
  
Then, with your parent’s permission, go outside at about 8:00pm on the evening of the equinox. **Take a piece of paper and a pencil or pen with you.** (If you can’t go outside, look through a window.) Take about 5 minutes and pay attention to what’s going on. What do you see (animals, flowers, trees, people)? If there are flowers or trees, what do they look like? If there are people, how are they dressed and what are they doing? If you see animals, what are they doing? And what do you hear? Write or draw as much of it as you can. Put the date on the paper. On the back of the paper, you might write a prayer such as this: “Dear God, help me to take care of your creation. Everything I see tonight gives praise to you. Amen.”

Do this same activity, at about the same time of night, when the spring (March) equinox arrives. What differences do you observe on the two sheets of paper?

- **Draw a Harvest Moon.** Get a piece of paper, along with some crayons. (Yellow, dark blue and black crayons would be especially useful.) You want the paper’s orientation to be vertical as you lay it on a workspace. Use the yellow crayon to draw a very large moon. You want the moon to begin near the very top of the page and almost reach out to both of the sides of the page. The bottom of the moon should stop about 1/3 of the way up from the bottom of the paper. Fill in the entire moon with yellow.

Now use the dark blue crayon to fill in the sky around the moon. Press hard with the blue crayon, so that it looks like a night sky. You could lightly add some black coloring on top of the blue if you’d like. Finally, you might want to use the black crayon to add animals or other shapes at the bottom of the page. You are placing them at the bottom so that they look small in relation to the large harvest moon.

As with the activity above, you might want to write these words on the back of your harvest moon drawing: “Dear God, help me to care for your creation. I want others to enjoy this beautiful moon for a long, long time. Amen.”



## Psalm 104 (*selected verses*)

Note: "Psalm" is pronounced "Sahlm."

God, you are so great!

You make springs of water gush into the valleys,  
and the animals drink until they are full.

Birds of the air build nests in the trees and sing from the branches.

You cause grass to grow for the cattles.

You cause plants to grow so that people can produce food.

The high mountains become a home for the wild goats,  
and badgers burrow among the rocks.

The moon keeps track of all the seasons,  
and the sun knows when it is time to set.

You make animals who come out at night,  
and people who come out during the day.

What an amazing world you have made, dear God!

There are more creatures than I can count in the sea.

All of creation looks to you.

You are so good.

I raise my voice in praise of you.

Amen.

***Some questions to think about on your own, or to discuss with a friend or parent:***

1. I wonder if there is a sentence in this Psalm that you especially like?
2. The Psalm talks about how the moon keeps track of the seasons. I wonder if you have a favorite season of the year?
3. I wonder if you think God loves one part of the creation more than another? For example, do you think God loves badgers more than goats? Or people more than birds? Or night more than day?
4. In this Psalm the world is very healthy and happy. Can you think of two or three things that make the world sick, broken or sad?

