

For the Advent Garden
Susan Silverio
Ashwood Waldorf School
Lincolntonville, Maine

In preparing for our Advent Celebration this past season, a question arose about our imagery of the apple, candle and star. We all agreed that we'd like to dispense with the recycled aluminum pie plate and multipointed stars which had so ably served as the receptacles for the children's lighted candles since our first Advent Garden, a family event which preceded the opening of the school, ten years ago. We decided to invest in gold metallic mat board available from a framing shop to cut with mat knives into stars, but the question was, "How many points?"

The five pointed star spoke to us of a certain kind of completion, the image of the upright human being. It was the star which the children know is to be found already within the apple. And yet, with the candle representing the spirit, or the universal, unless it was lit, would the person be wholly human?

Could it be a six-pointed star? One of our committee reminded us that the six-pointed star, with its two intersecting triangles, could speak to us of the marriage of heaven and earth. We found it appropriate for it to be already on the earth when the children enter the garden, carrying their apples. The apple bearing the candle, when lit from the candle in the center of the garden, would be complete, and then placed on one of the six pointed cardboard stars placed at intervals beside the spiral of greens which compose the garden.

A bit of greenery, tucked around the candle stem, seems to soften this image and bring nature into this picture of body, soul and spirit.

Christopher, age 5 1/2, on seeing the classroom on the first day of Advent: "The room looks so pretty that I want to stand somewhere and just gaze."

Megan, age 5 1/2, during Advent: "I'm half Jewish and half Christmas."