

Environmental Ideas: Winter & Spring

The Activity:

Simple activities to explore environmental themes and protect the natural environment during the winter and spring.

Activity Type:

Patrol Activity
Troop Activity

Roles:

Activity Leaders

The Crean Award:

Discovery:

Patrol Activity
Skills

Terra Nova:

Task/Role in Patrol
Patrol Activity
Environment

Endurance:

Planning
Develop Teamwork
Environment

Polar:

Patrol Activity
Environment

SPICES

Intellectual
Emotional
Spiritual

Helping wildlife during the winter

1. Feed the birds - put out as wide a range of foods as possible, and regularly clean feeders and bird tables. Check out how to make bird feeding cakes below.
2. Put out water when it's icy as natural sources might have frozen over.
3. Hedgehogs need places to hibernate, so if you can put out a hedgehog box or leave piles of undisturbed vegetation - please do. Check any bonfire you create, before lighting it - hedgehogs may well have gone to sleep there.
4. Food is scarce in the winter months so putting out small treats can help the animals visiting your garden. Just remember: only leave small quantities of food so your guests don't become dependent on handouts.

Photo Scavenger Hunt

1. Each of the patrols can set up a nature photo scavenger hunt for another patrol. With your phone or a digital camera, take pictures of trees, leaves, flowers and anything else related to nature that you can see your area.
2. Share or print-off a set of photos for another patrol, who can then try to match the items in the photo to the real plants, flowers etc.
3. Gather back and compare what each patrol found.

Greening-up your Meeting Place

Look at ways each patrol can help your meeting place become more environmentally friendly. For example:

- Organise waste recycling bins with good signage of what goes into each
- Start a battery recycling campaign
- Fit light sensors & LED energy saving light bulbs
- Make "Switch off" signs for your scout den's lights and extractor fans
- Research the possibility of installing **Solar Panels** at your scout den
- Organise carpools and 'Walking Buses' (Scouts walking together to the meeting lead by a PL collecting members along the way) for meetings and activities
- Fit water filters or install a water fountain at your den to reduce the use of single use plastic bottles
- Ban the use of disposable plates, cups & cutlery at the den and on activities
- Start a Green Scout Den initiative to turn your den into an exemplar of best environmental practice using some of these ideas
- Make environmental awareness posters
- Design a green code for your den

Spring Scouts' Own

In the Celtic Pagan calendar, 1st February marked the beginning of Spring with the feast of Imbolc, which became St Brigid's day in the centuries after the arrival of Christianity. It is a reminder that spring is beginning and nature is starting to come alive after the rest season of winter.

A Scouts' Own is as short spiritual and reflective activity that allows us to explore a particular theme, especially during a camp or longer activity. It should involve a selection of components such as prayers, stories, songs, simple activities, fables, thoughts and silence. List below are some ideas to help you run a Spring Scouts' Own.

- Make St Brigid's Crosses out of reeds or straw. The simple design and natural materials means the crosses can easily be made in the lead up to 1st Feb. They are symbols of belief and traditionally were believed to offer protection by being put up in houses. It is likely that the cross design is much older than the arrival of Christianity to Ireland and was part of the pagan feast of Imbolc. Check out these guides to making Brigid's Crosses:
<http://www.ipcc.ie/discover-and-learn/resources/how-to-make-a-st-bridgets-cross/> or <http://scoil-bhríde.com/how-to-make-a-st-brigid-cross/>
- Visit a local natural spring or holy well. Water is a symbol of purity in most religious traditions, you can visit a local well or spring to have your scouts' own. People collect the water to bring it home, symbolically cleanse themselves, or bless themselves with the well water. There are many wells across Ireland which can be found on Ordnance Survey maps.
- Set up a vegetable or herb box: spring is a great time to plant in a box in your meeting place or at home; you can plant things like spinach, beetroot, carrots, rocket, parsley. You can then use these items for your patrol camps later in the year.
- Giving to Others: One of the traditions associated with St Brigid is 'Putting Butter Out' by placing some butter or cake on a window sill outside to welcome in the Saint; the food was also meant to feed those living in poverty. Think about how you can honour this tradition by doing something for the needy in your area. Link up St Vincent de Paul or another charity to fundraise or help out on a soup-run or gather donations for those who are homeless or living in direct provision centres.

Spring Scouts' Own: Thoughts and Prayers

Spring Prayer:

In the lengthening of days,
Snowdrops emerging,
from winter's frozen ground.
WE SEE THE CREATOR'S HAND
In the sight of a tiny lamb
joyfully bounding
across hillside farm
WE SEE THE CREATOR'S HAND

Imbolc prayer

Blessed be the earth, and all who dwell
upon it.

We give thanks for the season now
departing from us,
For the blessings it has bestowed upon
us,

And upon those with whom we share
this world.

Blessed be the new season.
We pray that it will be a time filled
with peace,
With abundance, with prosperity,
With wisdom,
With love.

Blessed be all who share this feast.
Let us now prepare for the time ahead
By opening our hearts, and our minds,
and our spirits.
Blessed be.

“That is one good thing about this
world...there are always sure to be
more springs.” L.M. Montgomery,
Anne of Avonlea

“You can cut all the flowers but you
cannot keep Spring from coming.”
Pablo Neruda

St. Brigid's Blessing

May Brigid bless the house wherein we
dwell.

Bless every fireside, every wall and
door.

Bless every heart that beats beneath
its roof.

Bless every hand that toils to bring its
joy.

Bless every foot that walks portals
through.

May Brigid bless the house that
shelters us.

It Must Be Spring

Hush, can you hear it?

The rustling in the grass,
Bringing you the welcome news that
Winter's day is past.

Soft, can you feel it?

The warm caressing breeze,
Telling you the sticky buds
Are bursting on the trees.

Look, can you see them?

The primrose in the lane.

Now you must believe it -
Spring is here again.

- May Fenn

Patrol Review

What environmental actions did your patrol take?

How did you help the natural environment?

What commitment did you make to help fight climate change?

What SPICES are relevant?
Check them off on the next page

Review SPICES

Social

Relationships

Communication Skills

Other Cultures

Community Involvement

Promise and Law

Physical

Eat Well

Personal Hygiene

Balanced Lifestyle

How the Body Works

Physical Limitations

Health Choices

Access Help

Intellectual

Achieving Goals

New Ideas

Develop Creativity

Learn from Discussions

Team Member

Character

Promise and Law

Friends and Friendships

Plan before do

Ensuring Fairness

Respect

Differences and Views

Following Dreams

Live the Scouting Spirit

Emotional

Aware of Feelings

Asking/Giving Help

Responsibility for Emotions

Controlling Emotions

Going Further

Beliefs and Values

Developing Talents

Spiritual

Promise and Law

Impact on the Environment

Reflection

Changing Beliefs