



DECORATIVE LANTERNS AND CANDLE-LIT LANTERN WALK



As fall moves slowly toward winter, the nights become longer and the days grow short and dark. A lantern walk, enjoyed in late autumn, is a wonderful way to bring light to the darkness, while celebrating the changing season with family and friends.

DECORATIVE LANTERN SUPPLIES

- * Drop cloths or newsprint
- * Upcycled, sturdy glass jar (half-pint, pint-, or quart-size, or 235, 473, or 946 ml jars work well)
- * Colorful translucent paper, kite paper works best (see the Resources section, page 137, for where to buy), or use colored tissue paper
- * Scissors
- * Mod Podge craft glue or diluted white glue (2 parts glue to 1 part water)
- * Small disposable bowl for the glue (the lid from one of your jars would be perfect)
- * ½ to 1-inch (1 to 2.5 cm)-wide craft paintbrush
- * Wire cutters
- * Needle-nose pliers
- * Flexible wire

LANTERN WALK SUPPLIES

- * 1 lantern per person
- * Sturdy forked sticks to hold the lanterns (optional)
- * Candles or battery-powered candles
- * Poster putty or double-sided craft adhesive (optional)
- * Matches

TIME: under 1 hour, plus drying time and 30 minutes for the walk

INSTRUCTIONS

PART 1: MAKE YOUR LANTERN

1. Cover your table with a drop cloth or a few layers of newsprint.
2. If necessary, remove the label and any adhesive from your jars (lavender or sweet orange essential oil work well for this). Let the jars dry.
3. Prepare your kite paper: Cut it into simple shapes like stars, circles, and triangles or tear or cut your paper into ½ to 1½-inch (1 to 3.8 cm) strips.
4. Pour a bit of Mod Podge into your bowl and using your paintbrush, coat the outside of the jar with a thin layer of Mod Podge.
5. Place overlapping kite paper shapes onto your jar, pressing gently to adhere. Use your brush (dipped in Mod Podge) to smooth the paper and reduce wrinkles.
6. Continue placing shapes all around your jar. Let dry.
7. After the Mod Podge has dried, add a second layer to the outside to seal and protect the paper.
8. There is no right or wrong way to attach your wire handle, as long as your method creates a 10-inch (25 cm) or longer wire loop to carry from and is secure. I have outlined my favorite method here, if you're looking for a bit more guidance.
9. Cut one 18 to 24-inch (46 to 60 cm) length of wire. Using a pair of pliers, bend a hook on one end of your wire. Wrap this end of the wire around the jar neck until it makes a complete circle, overlapping another section of your wire loop. Pass the hook over the overlapping wire and pinch closed with pliers to secure.
10. Bend a 90-degree angle into your wire just above the point where the hook has been secured. Using your pliers, create another hook at the remaining unattached end of your wire. Bring the long wire tail up and over the neck of your jar and secure on the opposite side of the jar by pinching the second hook closed.
11. Tighten the wire around the neck, if needed, by bending several S curves into the wire that encircles the jar neck.

(continued)

PART 2: TAKE A LANTERN WALK

Enjoy a peaceful lantern walk with your family on a dark, autumn night. What a magical way to celebrate the turning of the year!



1. Around sunset, gather with friends or family for a quiet, candle-lit walk around your neighborhood or a local park. If you have access to a safe place that lacks streetlights, all the better. (Though even under streetlights, the lanterns are a beautiful sight.)
2. Place a candle in the bottom of each lantern, securing it with poster putty or double-sided craft adhesive, if desired, to prevent slipping. Carefully light the candles.
3. Suspend each lantern from a sturdy, forked stick (if desired), holding the stick at an upward angle to prevent the lantern from falling. Or, carry your lantern by hand, using the attached wire loop as a handle.
4. Gather in a circle to take in the beauty of the lanterns as they light the darkness. Then, set off on a peaceful walk around the block or the park.
5. When you return to your starting point, circle up once more before extinguishing your lights and returning home.

INDOOR ALTERNATIVE

If you prefer to celebrate indoors, omit the handles on your lanterns and arrange them safely in your home. Turn off the electric lights and quietly gather with family or friends for a candle-lit evening indoors.

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Setting a calm, peaceful tone for your candle-lit walk is a must. Walking slowly and being respectful of one another is required of all who participate. The children I have taken on candle-lit walks love the responsibility of carefully transporting a candle in the darkness, but if you feel your family would do best with electronic candles, use them instead. If using real candles, teach the children on your walk how to hold the candle carefully, away from hair, clothing, and other participants. Young children can help an adult, carrying one lantern together.