

# Journeys in the Spirit



December 2022

Midwinter

## MIDWINTER

Winter is a time of darkness, shorter days and possibly shorter outdoor playtime, and, as John Betjeman's poem [Advent 1955](#) reads 'dark at breakfast, dark at tea'.

On the face of it, this season can appear gloomy and we look forward to lighter days. However, the darkness of this time of year can offer its own gifts and magic if we take the time to discover them.

### To Know the Dark by Wendell Berry

To go in the dark with a light is to know the light.

To know the dark, go dark. Go without sight, and find that the dark, too, blooms and sings, and is travelled by dark feet and dark wings.

## Some wondering questions

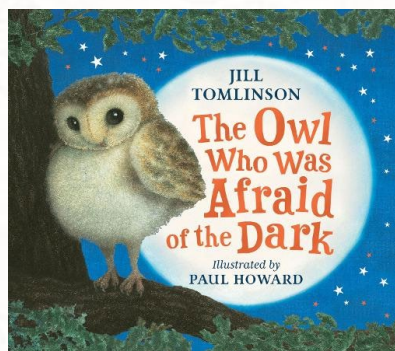
Use these questions to encourage children to think about winter and its joys.

I wonder which is your favourite season?

I wonder if you can think how winter is different to other seasons?

I wonder what you like doing in winter that you can't do at other times of the year?

## Watch and read



*The Owl Who Was Afraid of the Dark* by Jill Tomlinson

Plop the baby barn owl has a large appetite and adventurous

spirit, but is, of all things, afraid of the dark. [This is the story](#) of how, with the help of some kind people, he discovers how wonderful the dark can be.

## Make



The night sky changes with the seasons. Use black card and pastels to create some night sky picture with stars and planets. Find more ideas for winter crafts [here](#).

## Festivals to discover

For many in the UK, Christmas is a significant winter celebration, but there are many others. Some of the most well-known are religious in nature, but others celebrate nature itself, acknowledging the darkest day of the year and the returning sun. Others honour cultural traditions. While some Quakers still maintain the historic testimony against 'time and seasons,' others feel it's also important to acknowledge Christmas in Meeting for Worship, offering spiritual reflection and giving an alternative to the festival of consumption that can dominate society in December.



Hanukkah, Shab-e Yalda, Soyal, Yule, Kwanzaa, and New Year's Eve are just some winter festivals.

Find out about [these](#) and more [here](#):

Watch a magical retelling of the Nativity Story [here](#).

### Sing together

Singing is a great way to spread joy and especially singing with others. [Sing me on a Journey](#) has been created to add further enjoyment to your use of Journeys in the Spirit.

### Play a game

Use [this resource](#) for gathering, active and reflective games suitable for children and young people aged 5-18



## A winter solstice blessing

May the longest night and the shortest day bring rest to your mind and soul, I pray. May you find guidance and may you find peace as the circle of light will slowly increase. Embrace the magic that the darkness bears breath deep in the chill and shift in the air. May you always be blessed with the light from within and may well-being be yours as a new cycle begins.

