

Journeys in the Spirit

January 2023 Hope



January



New Year is often a time people make resolutions, changes to their life style or hatch new plans. Sometimes these ideas can take hold and flourish but often plans don't last beyond mid-January. After the excitement of the Christmas season, this month can feel a bit bleak, with the weather to match. However, there is still beauty to be found if we look, even in towns and cities. Here are some things to look out for in winter: <https://www.discoverwildlife.com/how-to/watch-wildlife/british-wildlife-in-january/>

A mindful winter walk

If you have a garden or park nearby, you could organize a walk and look at how nature is behaving in winter. Be still. Listen for the sounds around. Have a seat on a tree stump in the woods. Encourage people to let their mind empty, and breath deepen and to enjoy being outside in winter, perhaps gathering some natural wonders to share with others. Talk about spending these winter months recharging. Be still, enjoy this moment of rest. While we appreciate the here and now, there are also hints of things to come. Buds are beginning to appear, daffodil tips poke through, there's evidence all-around of the coming spring.

Hope

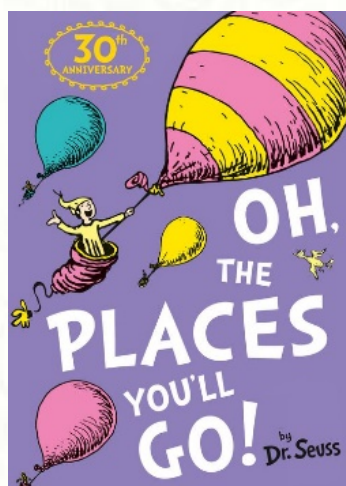
Instead of New Year's resolutions, you could talk about hope. In the book *Active hope*, Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone suggest hope can be "a practice...something we do rather than have". It can be a choice of how we live in the world. It can be something we practice, that changes things.

Tree of Hope

Create a simple tree outline in paint or felt tips. Invite children to write their hopes for this New Year on a cut out leaf and stick it to the tree. Talk with them what they might do to achieve this. This could be an all age activity too.



Read



Dr Seuss's light-hearted children's story, "Oh, the Places You'll Go!," has a meaningful message about the importance of seizing new opportunities, keeping an open-mind, and trying new things, even when things don't go your way...as

they often don't!

Song

Play, or teach this song to the children, *Hope for a Better Tomorrow*

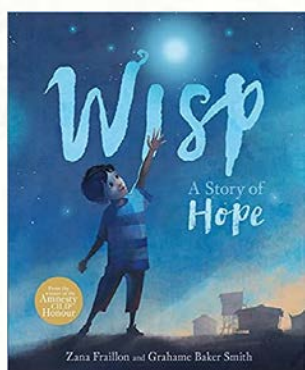
<https://youtu.be/wiQBRAWn8lo>

Play a game

Magic blob - a funny and creative game that needs no equipment. Stand or sit in a circle. One person starts by taking the 'magic blob', imaginary material used to make anything, and shaping it into something, e.g. a hat.

This is done in silence. Everyone else then tries to guess what it is before the blob is passed onto the next person, who then remakes it. Theme alternative: everyone has to shape the magic blob into something that relates to the theme. For example, for the theme of hope- you could ask participants to make the "blob" into what each of them hope for in the coming week or month.

Further reading and action



Wisp: A Story of Hope

by [Zana Fraillon](#) and [Grahame Baker Smith](#)

Idris is a child refugee, born into a world of tents and fences. He has known no other life than this. He has no memories of the world outside.

Storytelling and imagination have the power to offer hope in this extraordinary picture book from the Amnesty CILIP Honour-winning author.

How can we help others to have hope?

See the resources created by Amnesty International designed to approach the issue of asylum in a way that is accessible, and appropriate to primary school aged children <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/resources/activit-y-pack-seeking-safety#.VikDBvIVhHw>

Reflect

How do we encourage children, young people and their families to consider ways in which their Quaker faith, our shared testimony and practice can support and strengthen them in their lives?

Query 5 taken from All Are Welcome, Growing our all – age community:

<https://www.quaker.org.uk/children-and-young-people/work-quaker-setting/resources-all-age#heading-15>.



