

# Journeys in the Spirit



Living a full Life

December 2023

## Living a full life

Perhaps the most neglected of all the advices is that we should live adventurously. If there is one wish I would pray the Spirit to put into our Christmas stockings, it is warmth, openness, passion, a bit of emotion that doesn't mind making a fool of itself occasionally.

Gerald Priestland, 1977

## A Quaker reflection on Christmas

'All days are equal, and we should remember the birth of Jesus all year round. On this basis, early Quakers didn't celebrate Christmas.' For more insights on Quakers and Christmas, click on [this link](#).

Whilst Quakers don't traditionally celebrate festivals or special days winter is filled with festivals such as Winter Solstice, Hannukah, and Bodhi Day. Have fun discovering more about these and the stories behind them.

## Read



There was something truly magical that happened in this story when the boy decided to share his tree with others. The tree itself wasn't anything special - in fact, it was just a free tree that was going to be thrown away. However, through the simple act of sharing, the boy's joy became contagious and was a gift to many others that night. Listen to the book [here](#).



## Pause

This time of year can get busy with all kinds of exciting things to see, places to be, different food as well as all the lights and decorations. It's very easy to get overwhelmed with all the busyness. Slow things down for a moment and try some relaxing yoga with the children.

### Christmas Tree pose

- Find a space away from others in the room.
- Stand tall and straight with your eyes fixed on one spot. Take a deep breath in and out, feeling your feet rooted to the ground.
- Lift one leg by bending the knee and place your foot on the ankle of the other leg.
- Inhale and exhale slowly, imagining yourself covered in decorations or snow.
- Lift your arms up in the air and hold the pose for three slow, deep breaths.
- Slowly place your foot back on the ground and repeat on the other side.

## Reverse Advent Calendar

Advent calendars generally focus on getting something each day. But what about giving something instead?

To help those in need, you can involve the children in a fun activity of decorating a cardboard box that can serve as a collection point for non-perishable food and toiletries. Encourage Friends to set aside an item each day during the month of December if they can and donate it to the box. These donations can be delivered to your local food bank or warm space in time for Christmas.

## Christmas Cracker

Laughter can be contagious too! What's your favourite cracker joke? What do you call a reindeer with bad manners?



Ask the children if they have a favourite Christmas cracker joke to share with the group. You could use the jokes in the game "Try Not to Laugh" Two participants compete against each other. One person plays the role of the "jester" and tries to make the other person laugh using silly faces, noises, or even cracker jokes! The other person, known must resist smiling or laughing, regardless of what the "jester" does.

## Reuse and Recycle

The Christmas season can result in a great deal of waste, as decorations and toys are often discarded and end up in landfills shortly after the New Year. Instead, consider using items from your [recycling bin to create](#) sustainable decorations. Alternatively, you could make decorations for the outdoors that will provide nourishment for the birds during

the winter months. The [RSPB](#) can offer you guidance on which birds require what kind of sustenance.

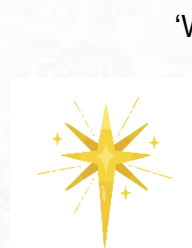
Making bird cake for the winter is an easy and fun activity. To make bird cake, melt some fat (suet or lard) and mix it with a combination of ingredients like seeds, chopped nuts, dried fruit, oatmeal, cheese, and cake. The ideal ratio is one-third fat to two-thirds mixture. Stir the mixture well in a bowl and let it set in a container of your choice, such as an empty coconut shell, plastic cup, or tit bell. Once solid, you can place it on a bird table or use it as a bird cake feeder. It's a great way to help birds during the winter months.

## Make

The Winter Solstice, which marks the shortest day of the year, signals the end of Autumn and the beginning of Winter. Traditions have been established to commemorate the birth of the sun, which typically include poetry readings or blessings, singing, and feasts. Orange pomanders can be used to symbolize the sun and will last beyond the Christmas season. Use cloves to create patterns on an orange by first marking out the design with a toothpick to make it easier to insert the cloves. These would make a lovely gift to mark the Solstice or Christmas.

## Share

### [The Journey to Bethlehem](#)



'We remember the mystery at this Christmas time of year, but this story is for all times and all places. The light and love in this story can always be with us.'

Melinda Wenner Bradley  
F&P

