

Journeys in the Spirit



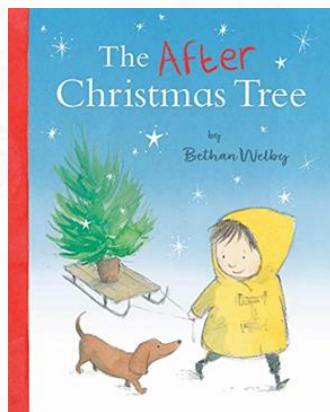
January 2024 – Children's work

Caring for our world. Caring for ourselves. Caring for others.

"I expect to pass through this world but once. Any good thing, therefore, that I can do or any kindness I can show to any creature, let me do it now. Let me not defer or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

[Stephen Grellet](#)

Read



[The After Christmas Tree by Bethan Welby](#)

Wondering

After reading, ask the children some wondering questions:

"I wonder what part of the story you liked best?"

"I wonder what is the most important part of the story?"

For more on wondering questions visit

['Wondering with Children'](#)

By Melinda Wenner Bradley

Recycling Christmas

Brian discovered a discarded Christmas tree and was able to repurpose it instead of it being sent to the landfill. Talk with the children about recycling and the importance of taking care of all the items that were used during the holiday season. Can they come up with ideas? Gift tags from cards, saving wrapping paper for next year? [This site](#) has more ideas.



Brian's tree has become a haven for the wildlife in his garden. Have you considered what the wildlife in your area might require? Where can they be found? It's important for children to learn how to care for creatures during the winter, regardless of whether they have a garden or not. If your meeting house has a garden, you could wrap up warm and go on a nature hunt to find out who's there and see what needs to be done. Are there any places for the wildlife to drink or have the ponds and puddles frozen over?

[How to help wildlife survive in winter](#)

To add some excitement to your walk, consider creating a nature bingo game. Prepare a sheet of paper with pictures of trees, berries, animals, insects, and animal tracks that the children might encounter on their walk. As they spot each item, they can tick it off on their sheet.



Make

You can create a large nature picture together if you have collected items during your walk. Once finished, display the picture and encourage others to discuss the importance of protecting local wildlife. [Winter tree art project](#)

Would you rather?

How about playing a fun game of "Winter Would You Rather" with the children? To get started, come up with some winter-themed comparisons and divide the room into two parts, assigning a preference to each side. For instance, you can ask the children whether they would rather wear a winter coat at the beach (move to the left) or a swimsuit in the snow (move to the right). Once you run out of ideas, encourage the children to think of their own winter-themed "Would You Rathers." You can find a free printable version of the game on [this website](#).

Joyful January

Sometimes the darkness of the winter can feel difficult, and some people struggle. There's less daylight for playing outside and it's cold and damp. Are there ways to bring some cheer to these dark days? Intergenerational events can be a lovely experience for all involved.

Sharing stories, games and particularly food would be a good start to the year and a way to enrich our communities. Could the children plan and organise an all-age event? This could be a simple shared lunch or afternoon tea with board games or simple crafts. If you feel more adventurous how about a January singalong. Singing is good for the soul and if there were



musicians in the meeting then they could accompany some of the songs from [Sing me on journey](#) or alternatively you could use an online singalong.

Mindfulness

At this time of year, we tend to look forward to what's coming up in the future. It could be possible that this year, children move to senior school or reach double digits. However, sometimes it's easy to overlook the present and wish time away. Mindfulness can be a way of being in the moment and appreciating what we have, which in turn helps us feel contented. To learn more about mindfulness, you can watch a brief introduction on the [Newsround website](#).



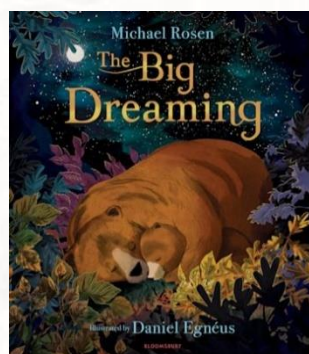
[Here](#) is a 4-minute wintery mindfulness video.

"Mindfulness is an exercise in training our minds to be in the present moment. If we are more aware of what we are feeling, seeing, sensing or even doing... we can better choose how we respond to it and what we might do next."

Claire Kelly , Mindfulness in schools project

Hibernation

During winter, it becomes challenging for animals to find food as there is not much growing and fruits have already fallen from trees. However, some creatures have the ability to hibernate, which means they go into a deep sleep for a prolonged period and wake up when the weather becomes warmer and life becomes easier for them.



Michael Rosen and Daniel Egneus have created a new story about two bears preparing to hibernate. Read the story with the children and then talk about how little bear was worried so went to find help. His friends in the forest were kind and shared their dreams with him. This made him feel better. This was a good way of them caring.

"We do not own the world, and its riches are not ours to dispose of at will. Show a loving consideration for all creatures and seek to maintain the beauty and variety of the world. Work to ensure that our increasing power over nature is used responsibly, with reverence for life. Rejoice in the splendour of God's continuing creation."

Advices and queries No.42

