

WINTER SOLSTICE





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EAR ONES,

HELLO, hello a warm hello.
This gift is for you and your family!

I bet you've noticed that the seasons are changing again.
Every day, the sun goes down a little bit earlier.
So now, it's often dark before dinnertime.

Even though there are many things to celebrate at this time of year
I want to tell you about one special, magical moment...

The Winter Solstice.

It's the longest night of the whole year.

On December 21, the night and darkness
grow longer than the hours of daylight.
This marks the official beginning of winter.

In this bundle is everything you need
to spend a really cozy evening with your family
at this important time.

There is a white candle for everyone
and a box of wax sheets for decorating the candles.
You'll be really good at this because you are all very creative!
Every candle will be different,
won't it be fun to see what everyone makes?

After you decorate the candles, guess what happens next...
You'll turn off ALL the lights in the whole house
and have dinner in the candlelight.
Then, the best part, everybody will take turns
to say what you love about each other.
Ask your grownups to help you follow the directions included.

All the best & bright wishes to each of you,



Notes for Grown Up Helpers

This gift bundle includes everything you need to create a Winter Solstice Gathering. The solstice falls on December twenty-first, but you can celebrate on or near that time, whenever it works best for your family.

Supplies Included:

These instructions to guide you.
A plain, white candle for each person.
A box of colorful sheets of wax to use for decorating.
One taller red candle taper, to help light the other candles.

You will also need: simple candle holders, cutting boards and something to cut the wax with.

The Process:

Pick a late afternoon/evening time for the gathering.
Plan ahead, make a meal to share as you light your candles.
Gather and decorate your candles together.
Light your special candles and share your meal.
Tell each other what you love and appreciate about each other.



STEP 1

Step One: Decorate Candles

At the time you have chosen, once everyone is together,
begin by decorating the candles before the meal.
Open the box of wax sheets & spread them out to see all the color choices.
Invite everyone to make colorful patterns,
shapes and pictures with the wax.
Make a favorite thing or something that you wish for in the New Year.
Cut out the shapes with a knife, or pull apart the wax and roll it,
or stretch it. Press the wax to stick it on the candles.

Allow enough time for everybody to finish.
Remember you cannot do it wrong, all the candles will be unique
in their own ways. If it helps you to feel creative while you are decorating,
play some quiet music but PUT AWAY all the other distractions
like phones and computers, so you have no interruptions.

When everyone finishes, put the decorated candles in a circle
in the middle of your table... but wait, don't light them yet!
Put the tall red candle in a candle holder in the center of the circle.
Have some matches nearby so you will be able to find them.

Turn off all the lights in the rest of the house.
Keep one small light on to follow these directions.

STEP 2

Step Two: Light the Candles and Share Dinner Together

Stand or sit around the table, with your candles arranged in a circle, while someone reads the part below (in *italics*) out loud:

Welcome Everyone to the Longest Night, the Winter Solstice.

While we come together here in the dark house, let's take a minute to imagine what it was like in the olden days with no electricity, only candles, lanterns and firelight in the wintertime.

What do you think it would feel like to have no hot water in the faucet and only wood or coal for heat? People had to help each other and work together so they could survive this long, cold season.

Even though nowadays we have lights and heat in the dark months, there are still times that we feel sad, alone or discouraged, when life feels hard or painful.

It's still important that we work together and lean on each another for help. When we slow down to notice, appreciate and take care of each other, rough times become easier.

Also, each one of us carries, every single minute, the bright shining light and love of all the people who came before us. Those people are called ancestors: grandparents, aunts, uncles, and their parents, all the way back, years and years and years. Their love for us and presence is always here, surrounding everything we do. So, on this special night dedicated to love and closeness, let's light the tall red candle for them as a symbol of their love and support.

Now when I turn off this last light, let's hold hands in the dark. Let's take a moment just to feel the dark together before I light the red candle. After that, everyone will, one by one, light their candle from its flame.



Pick up your matches and turn off the last light. Pause for a few moments in the full, quiet darkness, encouraging everyone to really pay attention to how it feels. Then, when you are ready, light the one special, red candle. From there, one at a time, help each person light their own candle from the strong red flame, until all the candles are glowing on the table.

Let everyone talk about their candle and how they decorated it.

Take a little time to appreciate all the creations.

Be sure to point out how each candle makes the room much brighter as you enjoy your meal together in the candlelight.

Step Three: Speak and Receive Appreciation

After dinner, there is another very important part: sharing appreciation.
Go around the table to tell each person the things you love about them.

Pick one person to be spoken to first.
Then one by one, tell that person what you appreciate and love about them
and give examples. If it's helpful, pick from some of the suggestions below.

_____ (name of the person you are speaking to)

I love the way you_____.

I admire how you_____.

I am grateful to you for_____.

You are really good at_____.

My favorite thing about you is_____.

It's so fun when_____.

It's so special when_____.

I remember when/remember that time when we_____.

I'm so proud of you for_____.

I've wanted to tell you/I hope you know_____.

Something meaningful I noticed about you this year is_____.

You have taught me so much about_____.

Thank you for _____.

Share anything else you want and take your time.

Repeat this for everyone at the table.

Don't skip anyone.

EVERYBODY gets a turn to hear all the ways they are loved.

Step Four: Afterward

When you have finished sharing with each other, take some time for a giant hug or big snuggle or have dessert in the candlelight.

Consider leaving the lights off for the whole night, for a special time.
(But be sure to blow them out before you go to sleep!)

After this Solstice night, use your candles again at the dinner table.
They will probably last for a few weeks,
until warmer weather and more daylight return.



**Now you are a part of the Solstice Circle,
a growing community of warm hearts.**

**We hope you return, along with us
to this cozy place each and every year.**

SUPPLIES YOU NEED TO MAKE YOUR OWN SOLSTICE

Letter of Invitation Packet

download & print the pdf

One tall taper candle

preferably red

3" x 3" preferably light-colored, unscented candles

(one for each participant)

the size of the candle does not need to be exact, just small enough to decorate easily

Suitable candleholders

to catch any dripping wax (in a pinch, use a plate or cookie sheet)

Stockmar Decorating Beeswax Sheets

(one box per 4 to 6 people)

available online from a variety of vendors including Bella Luna Toys & Amazon

& incorporate any other creative candle decorating medium that you imagine

Protective work surface: cutting boards or cardboard squares

Age appropriate knives, scissors or small cookie cutters