
✨ The Midnight Wish

Classroom Guide

A new year is a garden of 365 unplanted days

CASEL Competency: Self-Management

Grade Level: Pre-K–2

Duration: 40–50 minutes

Category: Seasonal

Learning Objectives

- Practice reflecting on the past — what grew, what changed, what mattered
 - Understand that wishes are seeds that need daily tending to become real
 - Learn that new beginnings are exciting AND uncertain — both feelings belong
 - Set intention-based goals using the wishing-seed metaphor
-

Overview & Preparation

Key Vocabulary

Wish • Midnight • Reflection • New beginning • Intention • Seed • Grow • Stars • Hope • Resolution

Materials Needed

- The personalized story
- Small pots and seeds (or paper cups)
- Paper stars
- Crayons
- Glitter
- Optional: New Year countdown props

Before Reading

Connection Question

*If you could make one wish for the new year, what would it be? Not a **THING** — a way of **BEING**.*

Background Building

The last day of the year. The hero looks back at everything that happened — the good, the hard, the surprising. As midnight approaches, the excitement builds. And at the stroke of twelve, the hero makes a wish — not for a toy or a trip, but for something to **BECOME**. They plant the wish as a seed in the garden, and the new year stretches out: 365 unplanted days, each one an opportunity.

During Reading — Pause Points

- **When the hero looks back at the year** — The hero is remembering the whole year. What's one thing from **YOUR** year that you want to remember?
- **At midnight when the wish is made** — The wish isn't for a **THING** — it's for a way of **BEING**. What kind of person do you want to be this year?
- **When the wish is planted as a seed in the garden** — A wish planted in the ground needs daily watering. What will you do every day to grow your wish?

Discussion Questions

1. The hero wished for something to BECOME, not something to GET. What's the difference?
 - ↳ Which kind of wish lasts longer?
2. Looking back at the year was important before looking forward. Why do we need to reflect before we can grow?
 - ↳ What did you learn from a hard moment this year?
3. The hero planted the wish as a seed. What does it mean that wishes need daily tending?
 - ↳ What would "watering your wish" look like in real life?
4. 365 unplanted days — that sounds exciting and a little scary. How does possibility feel?
 - ↳ What's the first thing you'd plant in your year-garden?

Facilitation Tips

This is perfect for January or December. Use actual seed-planting as a tangible anchor. If children default to material wishes, gently redirect: "What do you want to BECOME or FEEL this year?" The shift from having to being is the heart of the lesson.

Emotional Payoff

The old year is honored, not discarded. The new year isn't a blank page — it's a GARDEN of 365 unplanted days, each one waiting for a seed. The hero's wish-seed is not magic — it requires daily tending — but that's what makes it real and earned.

After Reading Activities

Plant a Wish Seed

Duration: 15 min | Materials: Pots, soil, seeds, wish cards

Each child writes a "becoming" wish: "I wish to become more ____." Plant a seed with the wish card. Tend daily. When the seed sprouts, check in: "How is YOUR wish growing?"

Year-in-Review Reflection

Duration: 10 min | Materials: Paper divided into 4 sections, crayons

Draw 4 panels: (1) Something that made you happy, (2) Something that was hard, (3) Something surprising, (4) Something you're proud of. Share voluntarily. Looking back helps us look forward wisely.

Star Wishes

Duration: 10 min | Materials: Paper stars, glitter pens, string

Write a "becoming" wish on a star. Decorate with glitter. Hang on a class wishing tree or string across the ceiling. Each star is a commitment, not just a hope.

Writing Prompts

- Write a letter to yourself at the end of this year. What do you hope will be different? What do you hope stays the same?
- Draw your "year garden" with 12 sections (one per month). What would you plant in each?
- If you could only wish to become one thing this year, what would it be and why?

Home Connection

Family Letter

Dear Families,

Today we read "The Midnight Wish," about reflecting on the past year and planting wishes for the new one. Your child planted a real wish-seed and learned that wishes aren't magic — they require daily tending. Their wish is about BECOMING, not getting.

Here is how you can continue this learning at home:

- Do a family year-in-review: each person shares a highlight, a challenge, and a surprise
- Make family wish-stars for the new year and hang them where everyone can see
- Ask: "What kind of person do you want to be this year?" (not "what do you want to GET")

With warmth,

Your Child's Teacher

Related Books

- The Tiny Seed by Eric Carle
- Waiting by Kevin Henkes
- Miss Rumphius by Barbara Cooney
- The Wishing Year by Noelle Oxenhandler