

16. Sheltering Evergreen Tree

Words and Music by Hap Palmer

Deep in the forest lives a tall pine tree
And the animal friends it shelters and feeds
Making food for the squirrels
and a home for the birds
It shares its needles and seeds

(Chorus): Swaying branches wave in the wind
As the needles whisper softly
And it reaches high to the heavens
Offering help to all who see
The sheltering evergreen tree
To the white tailed deer,
a shield from the winter winds
To the songbirds,
a nest in its loving limbs
To the weary traveler,
shade from the midday sun
To the eagle and the and dove,
a home when the day is done
(Repeat Chorus)

In the cold of winter in a sea of white
In the soft moonlight of the longest night
Its evergreen hue comes shining through
Saying life will soon renew
(Repeat Chorus)



You can use this song for multiple holidays including Christmas, Winter Solstice, and Arbor Day. As you sing the chorus reach high in the air and sway from side to side

Variation: During the verses, children can hold up pictures of each thing named in the lyric.

Verse 1: Tall pine tree, squirrels, birds, pine needles, pine seeds

Verse 2: White tailed deer, songbird (blue jay, red winged blackbird, mockingbird, blue bird, finch, nightingale, robin, oriole, etc.) hiker, eagle, dove

Verse 3: Pine trees in snow, winter moon

In the Northern hemisphere, the shortest day and longest night of the year falls on December 21 or December 22 and is called the winter solstice. Long before the advent of Christianity, plants and trees that remained green all year had a special meaning for people in the winter. The evergreen tree was a symbol of everlasting life and ancient peoples hung evergreen boughs over their doors and windows. Germany is credited with starting the Christmas tree tradition as we now know it in the 16th century when devout Christians brought decorated trees into their homes. When families bring home their Christmas tree, they are following a tradition that is more than a thousand years old.

In 1854, in Nebraska, Sterling Morton noticed a lack of trees, which were needed to act as windbreaks to stabilize the soil. He planted many trees around his home. In 1872, he proposed a holiday to plant trees. This was known as "Arbor Day." About one million trees were planted in Nebraska on the first Arbor Day. All states in the US now have an official Arbor Day, usually at a time of year that is has the best weather conditions for planting trees. Arbor Day was recognized nationally in 1970 and is celebrated on the last Friday in April.

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