



Welcome to a sampling of our work! We are often asked if we can give some detailed samples of our layout, table of contents, some of the lessons, etc. My aim is to give you good information so you can make an informed decision. We do our best to represent our products well. If you have any questions, please email us at waldorfessentials@gmail.com

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My Journey Planner

How to use this planner. This planner was created out of my need to be able to keep my homeschooling and family tasks in order, after all, most days they are one in the same! I had a few moms test it and this is what was borne out of those tests. It is my intention to revise it regularly, so if there is something that you really wish was included that I may have missed please email me and let me know for future printings. It was originally my intention to have Rudolf Steiner's *The Calendar of the Soul* printed on each week but was unable to obtain the rights to it at this time, it is a goal for future editions.

The planner contains:

- Verses
- Festival and their approximate dates
- Nature table planning help
- Grains and days of the week chart
- Inner work with Steiner's six basic exercises
- Notes and ideas on planning your year
- Goal setting for the year
- Year-at-a-glance (one in the front for this year and one in the back for next year)
- 12 undated months with inspiring quotes each month
- Tasks and notes for each month
- Two pages per week with plenty of planning space
- Plenty of room for notes and journaling (use these pages for book lists, assessments of your children, your year, etc.)
- And a contacts section

Verses

Morning verses

I place myself steadfastly into existence
With certainty I tread the path of life
Love I nurse in the core of my being
Hope I lay into all my doing
Confidence I impress into my thinking.
~ Rudolf Steiner

When I look at the sun, then I think God's spirit,
When I move my hand, then lives in me God's soul,
When I take a step, then stirs in me God's will.
And when I behold a man, then God's soul lives in him.
And so too it lives in father and mother,
In animal and flower, in tree and stone.
Never can fear come near me
If I think God's spirit;
If I live God's soul;
If I bestir God's will.
~Rudolf Steiner

Warm our hearts, O sun, and give
Light that we may daily live;
Growing as we ought to be,
True, and good, and strong, and free.

Nature table progression. Putting together the nature table can be a daunting task. I found that using this weekly plan at the beginning of each season can help. Then we leave the table for the balance of the season most of the time, unless we notice things going on outside that we want to bring in, then we will change the table to reflect the nature around us.

Week one: Mineral

Week two: Plant

Week three: Animal

Week four: Human

Grains/days. It can be fun to play around with this chart. Many ancient cultures believed that each day had a different grain, color and scent that accompanied it. This is often used in Waldorf circles as well. We try to eat the grains of the day, dress in the colors of the day and at times, when it permits burn incense for the scent of the day.

Day	Planet	Grain	Color	Scent
Monday	Moon	Rice	Purple/violet	Jasmine
Tuesday	Mars	Barley	Red	Clove
Wednesday	Mercury	Millet	Yellow	Copal
Thursday	Jupiter	Rye	Orange	Cedar
Friday	Venus	Oats	Green	Rose
Saturday	Saturn	Corn	Indigo	Myrrh
Sunday	Sun	Wheat	White	Frankincense

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
<p>_____</p> <p>5am</p> <p>6am</p> <p>7am</p> <p>8am</p> <p>9am</p> <p>10am</p> <p>11am</p> <p>12pm</p> <p>1pm</p> <p>2pm</p> <p>3pm</p> <p>4pm</p> <p>5pm</p> <p>6pm</p> <p>7pm</p> <p>8pm</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>5am</p> <p>6am</p> <p>7am</p> <p>8am</p> <p>9am</p> <p>10am</p> <p>11am</p> <p>12pm</p> <p>1pm</p> <p>2pm</p> <p>3pm</p> <p>4pm</p> <p>5pm</p> <p>6pm</p> <p>7pm</p> <p>8pm</p>	<p>_____</p> <p>5am</p> <p>6am</p> <p>7am</p> <p>8am</p> <p>9am</p> <p>10am</p> <p>11am</p> <p>12pm</p> <p>1pm</p> <p>2pm</p> <p>3pm</p> <p>4pm</p> <p>5pm</p> <p>6pm</p> <p>7pm</p> <p>8pm</p>
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Before the Journey

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Introduction

A few months ago when I had the prompting to write this volume, I intended for it to be an answer for those with preschoolers that were unsure of how to weave a life with a child in that age group without actually moving forward in academics. Many things became apparent to me as the book came together, one is that we often as mothers worry about our children far more than we should, we lay guilt on ourselves and on one another for things that should just be enjoyed. All of us have been to the playgroup where someone has been bragging about how smart little Johnny is or how Betsy knows all of this or that... those moms are easy to find. What I didn't expect was to realize just how insecure many of those mothers really are – this is why they often extol the academic virtues of their three year old! For some reason mom needs a boost and rather than being comfortable with herself, she will often hunt for that recognition through her child. When I realized this, I was pretty shocked. I thought about how much we lie to each other – I used to think we really only lied to ourselves, but we lie to each other! The other interesting thing I observed while researching this book is that when mothers are balanced and cared for, meaning they feel spiritually strong and they are honored by their mate and the rest of their family then they do not play the lying game. These moms just play with their kids! When mom starts to feel frustration at dad or pressure from her family over this or that, coupled with neglecting prayer or meditation, time alone, etc. then we start to see a mom crying for help – she may not see it that way and she may get really upset when someone tries to point it out to her, she has to discover it on her own and then make her own path toward a healthy relationship with herself – when she does that then everyone else will honor her too. I found that moms who can learn to do this honoring of herself when her children are young often have no need to even think about the lying game and are in fact pretty good at noticing others that do it and steer clear of that energy.

It is my hope this book will help mom relax a bit and enjoy the journey, to get to know herself as she enjoys the rhythm of life. I believe our time here on Earth is to learn and gain knowledge, knowledge about ourselves and those we came here to be with, knowledge that we will need later.

When my older children were younger I had a pretty good Waldorf support community most of the time and I never felt like I *needed* something more. Today things are different, the method is growing by leaps and bounds around the world and parents are coming to it with younger children wondering where on Earth to start. Most information on the market does not begin until kindergarten age, which in Waldorf speak isn't until age five or six, and for new families that are coming from more mainstream thinking, that is a hard transition. I see a troubling trend of parents so worried they will miss something that they lay out money for guides that appear to be Waldorf but really only start this process of schooling with a young child, so I decided to write this as a guide to flowing through life with a little person, in doing so, it became so much more. I think families of all sizes will enjoy this book and I hope that most moms will find themselves in at least one of the characters. It is written quite different than all my other books, it is my first stab at fiction! It was a lot of fun to put together, a bit of me lives in each of the mothers at their various stages. If you are blessed with a toddler or preschooler, I encourage you to take advantage of this time to learn new skills and build your library. There are several books mentioned in the appendix that you can take your time to purchase while your children are young that will stretch you far beyond these beginning years. Learn the crafts of Waldorf education, knitting, doll making, painting and drawing – this time is such a blessing for you, you have the wonderful luxury of tending to the daily needs of a small person that thinks the world of you, your only job is to play. Have fun Mom!

Chapter 2

Winter

Meet Jennifer: She is the upbeat divorced mom of three active children, William is 8, Sariah is 6 and Hannah is 2. Along with being divorced she is trying to find herself, she has two best friends, one is Pagan and then other Jewish, right now Jennifer is falling somewhere in between. She runs a business from her home and works to have a good relationship with her children's father, Jack, although it can be a challenge. She longs to have someone love her the way she deserves to be.

December 1

Jack called me this morning. He sure knows how to start my day off! He wanted to discuss our visitation this month. Sometimes I think being divorced from him is as hard as being married to him was! If it wasn't for the divorce decree I just don't think we'd get anywhere. I asked him if he would be willing to let me have the children for Saint Nicholas and the Winter Solstice and then he could have them for Christmas. I hate feeling like they are being bartered – they are children, not things. Things got heated and so I excused myself from my end of the conversation to go pray. I am always amazed at the affect it has on me and how I present myself. I called Jack back and apologized for getting upset and we decided he would come to my house for St. Nick and the Solstice and I could go to his for Christmas morning. Thank goodness that is resolved.

The kids are so excited for Saint Nicholas, they have been buzzing for the last two months. I am putting the finishing touches on Waldorf dolls for both girls and with William being so into knights these days, I was able to talk Jack into getting him a great castle set I found.

I am trying not to be overwhelmed with Advent. There is so much I could be doing. I decided that since the kids would be with Jack for Christmas that I would have my Advent ending just before Yule so we don't miss anything. I have this long list of things I want to do... baking, knitting, crafting, more baking, reading... but I think I came up with a plan that will keep me sane and the kids loving it. I am going to take the month off from teaching school like I have done in the past just so we can have fun, we work so much, I work so much – we need a break.

Last week, we started advent and we had a ball. The kids got home from spending an overindulgent Thanksgiving weekend with their dad and I greeted them with a fire in the hearth, hot cocoa and sugar cookies I spent the day making and decorating and was all ready with the *Festival of Stones* (by Reg Down) book! We have fallen in love with the book this year. I think they are all at the ripe age for it. We started it in the fall and I was so excited to see that they are a series. I just love that they are a collection of little stories that can take us through the season. Of course I spun my own tale as well. I can't get one over on them, they wanted to know what our gnomes were doing for advent – good thing I was prepared! I spun a story based on the nature table cycle that way it will be easy for me to add to each week.

I have also been working through a great Steiner lecture for inner work, *Signs and Symbols of the Christmas Festival* and I am so impressed with what I have taken from it and so confused by what I don't yet understand! I know that it just takes time. I know that my understanding deepens each time I read his work or listen to the audio lectures. I know that since my divorce, I

have allowed myself to really dig deeply into my spiritual self, a side that I could only scratch the surface of when I was with Jack. I don't blame him, I just think our relationship consumed so much of me that I wouldn't look at myself the way I needed to. I dream of a man that I could share this journey with, one who I didn't have to explain myself to everyday, someone who just knows me. Does he exist? For now I'll just spend my evenings with Steiner!

The Gnome's Yule Tide Advent Mystery Part 1

Deep inside Mother Earth where the root babies sleep, the gnomes are working all year long, tending the root babies, gathering the stones, making sure all is well. All of the gnome kingdoms over the Earth work together by taking care of their own space and enjoying their own inner work of gaining wisdom. King Melchizedek, the high king and ruler of all the gnomes, was righteous and wise and led his gnomes to do their work with great care and helped them to gain all the wisdom they came to this earth to gain. Each year the king issued a wisdom challenge to all the gnomes. The Creator picks three of the wisest gnomes to come before the king for the challenge. If they complete the challenge, they move up to help in other parts of the kingdom.

Knock, knock, knock went King Melchizedek's crystal gavel as he called the gnomes to order. "My brethren and sisters, please come to order. We have much business to cover on this first day of Advent."

All the gnomes filed into the great crystal meeting hall and took a seat on their amber benches. King Melchizedek gave the signal to Alpha and Omega, the wisest of the number gnomes and all at once the cavern was lit to splendor, including a large beautiful pine tree adorned with beautiful lights and shapes from nature.

"Three of you have been called by our Creator to take the wisdom challenge, if you are one of these three please step forward." said the king.

Out of the corners of the hall came three gnomes, one was a boy gnome, and two young girl gnomes. The boy was William, a young gnome that proved wise for his age and the girls, Sariah and Hannah, were both born wise and very beautiful with long golden braids and vibrant green eyes. The three approached the king, walking brave and tall. The king looked very pleased for he knew these young gnomes well, they had been wonderful at tending the root babies and had shown great potential at knowing just where to gather the prettiest of stones.

"Are you three ready for your challenge?" asked the King.

"We are," said the three as they looked at one another with hope and faith.

"Then let us begin," announced the King. "You can see our tree has many symbols from nature on it. Your first challenge is to bring me something from the mineral kingdom. It must be something that is a symbol of strength and stability."

The king excused the three from the hall to start their challenge and the remaining gnomes finished their meeting by singing winter songs.

"In the Advent garden,
Dark the night below,
Earth is waiting, waiting, waiting,
For the stars to glow."

William, Sariah and Hannah walked to the gnome kingdom doorway and talked about what they were to find.

Sariah spoke first, "There are so many stones it could be! Chrysocolla is a great stone for strength but isn't known for its stability."

"Perhaps," pondered William, "we should take a walk in the night air and that will help." The girls agreed and they each stepped through the mushroom doorway into the night. The air was brisk and quiet. Only the owls could be heard and even they were low. It was the first night of advent, all the creatures of the Earth waited in anticipation for the Winter Solstice and the return of the sun. The days had grown so short and even though the first snow had just fallen, everyone in the forest seemed to look forward to the arrival of spring.

Hannah walked meditatively and then suddenly squealed with delight. Her happy sound could be heard all across the forest, even the trees groaned as their sleep was disturbed.

“What is it?” asked William. “Have you solved the mystery already?”

“Yes I think I have!” she shouted. Again the trees around her groaned as if to tell her to quiet down, but Hannah was a happy gnome, she was never calm, never quiet and the trees knew they would just have to wait until she went back to the mushroom doorway before they would get proper rest.

“Carnelian is a perfect stone. It clears negative energy and sorrows, it protects against fear and anger and it helps to stabilize energies...” she paused and said “My mother is always sending them to me to help me with my outbursts.”

The other two gnomes giggled. They both loved Hannah very much and knew that her outburst were part of who she was, she was just energetic and happy, like a butterfly jumping from task to task until she was done.

“Why don’t we meet near Hematite’s cave tomorrow and ask him for some guidance in mining carnelian so we can take it to the king at our next meeting?” asked Sariah. The three gnomes agreed and parted for the evening.

With that, I ended the first night’s story. The children were delighted that I used their names for the gnomes, I hadn’t done that before and they got all giggly and silly on their way to bed. Hannah tried so hard to stay and listen but of course she’s still so little so we let her walk around and play blocks while we curled up to the hearth. I am a lucky mother.

I also started the first week of our advent nature table. I wanted to put together a fun progression for the kids that went with our stories so each week when they come home from their dad’s house they have something new to look forward to. Last week it was completely bare, save a white cloth for snow and some of our favorite stones. Since the first week of the nature table represents the mineral week, I had a little fun and went to the candy store to find some rock candy – they loved it! I had it waiting on the nature table with some of our favorite crystal clusters and stones we had gathered in the fall.

Oh dear, I just looked at the clock, I do lose track of time at night when they are gone. I miss them so much. I guess I’ll write this week’s gnome adventure in tomorrow’s entry. I think I’ll knit and go to bed.

**Author’s note: Advent can be tricky depending on if you want your advent to end the Sunday prior to Christmas or the Sunday prior to Yule (Winter Solstice) in this book, because of the blended family situation I am going to use Yule as the end point to show how easily it can be done, but will give examples of verses that can be used for both Christian and non Christian homes in the festivals section at the end of the book.*

Also, traditional advent has a wreath lighting as part of the weekly gathering, feel free to include this as well. I have omitted it for this book because I wanted to include other ideas that perhaps were not so well known.

Grandma's Sugar Cookies

1 cup shortening
2 cups sugar
2 eggs
1 cup buttermilk
4-5 cups+ flour
½ tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking soda
2 tsp. baking powder

Cream shortening, sugar and eggs. Add buttermilk. Sift salt, baking soda and baking powder with 1 cup of the flour. Add to mixture. Add remaining flour. Mix until it can be worked by hand then roll out and cut or drop by the spoonful on a cookie sheet. Bake at 375 degrees for 10 minutes. Suitable for royal icing decoration.

Royal Icing

3 TBL meringue powder
4 cups powdered sugar
6 TBL warm water
1 tsp of flavoring

Beat until peaks form, five minutes plus depending on your mixer. Thicken or thin for proper consistency to decorate sugar cookies. Dries hard.

December 2

I tend to run and run when the kids are gone, getting work done so I can play more when they are home. It was so late last night when I crawled into bed even Food TV had infomercials on it! I do think I am very lucky to have the alone time to recharge each week, between that and getting up at 5 a.m. I feel like I get the inner work time I need – it's a good thing too, I've got stories to brew! This week my meditations for advent have focused more on the Steiner lecture I have been enjoying (*Signs and Symbols of the Christmas Festival*). The imagery is amazing. I feel so blessed to have resources like the Steiner archives to grab the lectures for free when I have extra reading time.

I have been pondering this verse by Steiner:

*Deep in the ground of the human soul,
Of victory assured,
The Spirit-Sun is living.
All through the winter of the inner life
The faithful heart divines it.*

A Journey through Waldorf Homeschooling Kindergarten

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An introduction to the Kindergarten years: ages 4 through 7

*“I met a child who stopped me with a glance
And, reading from my darkened eye in disbelief and fear,
Said, “Why have you forgotten how to dance?”
The Universe is sounding. Only be awake, alive, and hear...”
~ Michael Hedley Burton*

Our modern society would have everyone thinking that if your child doesn't read and write by age seven then there must be something wrong... with either the child, or you as the parent! I submit to you that there is no shame in not reading until age seven or even beyond if that is the drum beat your child follows. Children in our culture need to almost be retrained in how to be children... how to play and pretend... without the influences of television, loud music, computers and movies.

Media. I highly suggest that if the television is a crutch in your home that you find a way to leave it off, at least from the time you get up and start your day until after the child goes to bed at night, you will find life so much more enriching. My husband and I have this funny bantering about the new big screen HDTVs... you walk into any store that sells home theater equipment and there seems to be this race by television manufacturers to see who can create the most life-like television picture quality. I stand there staring at the television wondering instead of watching movies that look more life like on your big screen... why not just go live life??? I will admit to having some of my own favorite shows and what a treat it is to me to watch them when I take some time for me. I find that there are very few shows that are a series that I follow during the regular season, if it's something I really want to watch, modern technology gives it to me in a boxed season set at the end of the season and allows me the peace to watch it in the middle of the night if I want. So put a cloth over that TV if it must stay in your home or put it in a room where the children won't want to watch it. Our TV/family room is an extra bedroom converted, it is nice because I can shut the door and no one even misses what is in there! This is a great idea if you have a spouse who is not so supportive of getting rid of the television, this way s/he can go in that room and watch in privacy... my guess is that when you are out living life though, your spouse will realize what s/he is missing and want to come and live life too! If you doubt the effect of television on children and their behavior, just take a break for a week and then reintroduce it and see what happens.

Now of course many families enjoy an occasional family movie night and in my opinion those are completely fine if not done too often. I personally try stay away from movies that are high marketing targets for children such as those put out in recent years by Disney or Pixar. I have found older live action Disney movies such as *Mary Poppins*, *Bed Knobs and Broom Sticks*, *The Three Lives of Thomasina*, and movies like *The Secret Garden* and *A Little Princess* are far more appropriate than the potty humor that seems to invade movies today.

Music is another arena that I get groans about when I discuss it with parents new to Waldorf. I will be the first to say that I don't always follow my own rules. We are a family with strong political opinions so we have music playing that often times follows our beliefs, but for the majority of the children's listening, parents want to limit the radio as much as possible and stick to beautiful sounding music that goes along with the age group their child is in. I again try to stay away from heavy commercialism even in children's music. I found that the 4 to 7 crowd enjoys seasonal songs, church hymns and many folk music titles that are pleasing to the ear.

Some people fear that if they are not musically inclined that they will fail their children as a teacher of Waldorf, I say put those thoughts out of your mind! While it will affect you in a curative way if you can learn the recorder and other instruments, you can still enjoy the music with your child and pay someone to help them learn!

“The musical element, however, does not live in me at all; it lives in inhalation and exhalation.” ~Rudolf Steiner

Computers are another device that while it can enrich our lives, it can also enslave us. Young children should not become prey to that enslavement, there are many other avenues to playing games and learning that do not include the computer.

“We cannot really avoid using the ahrimanic skills in the present age — taking shorthand, for instance, and using a typewriter. These are highly ahrimanic elements in our civilization. But we can also bring the spirit into it, and in this way raise such ahrimanic influences as stenography and typewriting into the sphere of the spirit, redeeming Ahriman in the process. It is only possible to do this if we bring the life of the spirit fully to mind. People who live as materialists today, using stenography and typewriters, get deeply caught up in the ahrimanic element. You see, it is not my purpose to preach reaction against these things; the demonic world that has come on us is not to be given a bad name; but the demons themselves need to be redeemed.” ~ Rudolf Steiner

Environment. I find that many people new to the Waldorf method, stress far too much about their home environment and forget to enjoy the journey. Coming away from the mainstream is a bit like becoming vegan after eating meat. While a new vegan would likely make the choice not to buy leather shoes ever again, it doesn't make a lot of sense to throw out every pair of shoes you have and start new, rather phasing into your new life is a much smoother transition. While it might make you feel like a better vegan, it would put an unnecessary strain on your budget and then you would have to decide what to do with all those old shoes! The same is true for Waldorf. It may take you two years to rid your home of all the synthetic plastic, loud toys, through a process of making better purchases at birthdays and holidays. Many people find that their children have far too many toys that aren't played with at all; this is a perfect place to start. I found it best to go through and do one large purge of things I knew were not being played with, then you can easily do the same thing on a much smaller scale monthly. A child of this age is generally happy with a few treasured items. You may just find that purging for your child will also help you purge for yourself, transforming your home into a simple, space filled with gratitude and peace.

“To bind the Self to matter means to shatter souls. To find oneself in the Spirit means to unite mankind. To behold the Self in man means to build worlds.” ~ Rudolf Steiner

This is a sample schedule geared more toward second year kindy (5-6yrs) The entire year and all of our school plans are paid out in this manner.

September	
<p>Week 1 - Harvest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 1 – What is the Harvest? Tell a fun story like The Giant Turnip. Draw it together. • Day 2 – Bake corn bread, make corn husk dollies • Day 3 – Paint an apple tree, eat plenty of apples for snacks. <p>Field Trip idea – visit an apple orchard or farmer’s market.</p>	<p>Week 2 – Seasonal Story (using <i>Lono & Coco Boato</i> by Susan Whitehead)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 1 – tell the first two pages of <i>Lono</i>. Use clay (the real stuff) to make a <i>Lono</i> island, make her bare and let her dry (you will add stuff to her later) • Day 2 – tell the next two pages of <i>Lono</i>. Plant some seeds for an indoor fall/winter kitchen herb garden or talk about how seeds get transplanted from one place to another. • Day 3 – tell the next two pages of <i>Lono</i>. Paint the story so far.

A Journey Through Waldorf Math

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Chapter 1

Waldorf Math: The Nature of Whole to Parts

By now, if you are not well versed in Steiner's work, you are probably wondering what on earth this "whole to parts" business is! The best way to describe it in short is like this:

While 3×4 is 12, 12 is more than 3×4 . 12 is 6×2 , 2×6 , 4×3 , 12×1 , $6 + 6$, and so on.

So how is that translated practically for a child? Well, it starts far earlier in the work we do and in how we speak to them when they are younger, but practically you can ask a child the open ended question of "what is 12?" and allow many answers because there are many answers, allowing them to see the big picture of all that 12 really is, rather than only giving them a small representation of 12 and telling them later "and by the way, XYZ is also 12." Discovering numbers for a child is an experience that comes very much from their core of how they understand the world around them. They see the family as a whole, they rarely see just Mom, or just Dad when they are young (before seven years) and so to bring them only pieces goes very much against how they see the world.

Steiner says in *Teaching Arithmetic*:

"The living thing is always a whole and must be presented as a whole first of all. It is wrong for children to have to put together a whole out of its parts, when they should be taught to look first at the whole and divide this whole into its parts; get them first to look at the whole and then divide it and split it up, this is the right path to a living conception."

This is very foreign to most of us and how we were taught math. Many of us were counting and trying to memorize numbers and their abstract symbolism far before we could really understand it – I am amazed at children's television programming and so called "math help" for preschoolers and babies! Babies need to be babies, not counting machines! Most of us were taught to add and subtract first only to be bombarded with multiplication and division in later grades. Steiner's math concepts have children learning all four math processes on the same day! Steiner believed that introducing them all at the same time would allow for true freedom in thought as children grew into adults – think about that for a moment... there is freedom in knowing that there is more than one way to derive an answer, this is true for all things, not just math. He discusses synthesizing versus analyzing – when we synthesize something, we have to add something together working up from the parts, but when we take time to analyze something we can separate it out or divide it into parts. Steiner believed that thinking had these two major components (synthesis and analysis) and that children by nature will choose to analyze things. With an education system that forces synthesis over analysis in these early years, he believed it would have strong consequences later in life – spiritual ones! Now whether or not you believe it, take some time to look at the world around you. Materialism abounds from the thought pattern that we must add more and more to become whole. How many of us have gone on spiritual journeys as an adult to become *whole* only to find out we already were *whole* and our ego just didn't know it? How much time would we have saved if we could have seen ourselves as whole? When we teach a child they are whole from day one, then we give them a great gift – a gift they can share with others. Much of Steiner's work sounds a lot like today's work in quantum physics, but this shouldn't be surprising... remember, truth is everywhere.

Now of course there are plenty of instances when synthesis is necessary and appropriate, but teaching from an analytical standpoint first allows the child the freedom to see what method will work best to solve each of life's challenges.

In *The Renewal of Education*, Steiner has this wisdom to share:

“If I have to add two and five and three in order to find the total, I am not free, for the answer is fixed by an underlying law. But if I begin with the number ten, I can view it as consisting of nine and one or five and five; or I can arrange it into three, five, and two and so on. When analyzing, I am able to act with complete inner freedom, whereas when synthesizing, I am forced by outer circumstances to adapt my soul activity to an external necessity.”

This is a sample lesson, each lesson for each block in each grade is given in depth, with the exception of a few lesson days when more practice is encouraged before moving on.

Math main lesson one: teaching numbers and Roman numerals

Lesson 1:

In our story, the great and wise King Equals recites the riddles, in preparation for this you could make a King Equals from our pattern to introduce on this day.

The first riddle goes like this:

*I live in the sky
Up far away
I brighten the earth
I bring light to our days
And each night when the day is done
You will be sure, I am the only one.*

What am I? (The Sun, and the Roman numeral I)



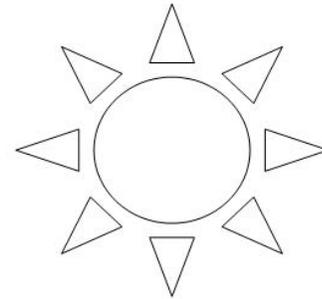
Additional, optional lesson: tell a fun story about the sun such as “Why the Setting Sun Turns Red” from the book of the same title by Eugene Schwartz or “When the Sun Rose” by Barbara Helen Berger.

Your main lesson book might have a drawing of the sun or moon or your child. By this time your child should be able to write some short sentences so even something so simple as “Our sun is I.” This may seem like a short lesson – it is meant to be, toss bean bags in preparation for bean bag math, work on counting together, marching or skipping rope. Remember that it is natural for children learning to count to have trouble with the teens (13, 14, 15, etc.) as they don't sound in English like the other numbers do, some have found it helpful to teach them to count “10 and 1, 10 and 2, 10 and 3, etc.” all the way to twenty when the numbers begin to sound like the first then again (21, 22, 23, etc.) These sorts of activities will fill in the gaps as they work up to harder math that will come once the processes are introduced in later lessons. Also, remember hopscotch? This is a good time to introduce it! It is a counting activity.

Lesson 6:

For today we will work with Times. I have again included a lesson page and a verse for your work today. Introduce the other name for Times, the one her mom calls her, Multiply. When Times puts things together, her answers are called the product. Just a note too, I don't always use "=" in the beginning but you can, follow your child and see what they seem to need.

Times knows quite well
That 2 times 2 make 4
She always likes to multiply
So that she'll have much more.



2×2 are 4	4×4 are 16
3×4 are 12	6×2 are 12
$VI \times 4$ are 24	8×1 is 8



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A portion of Chapter 2:

Children in the next stage, the one you are about to discover, need a bit more. You are still tasked with providing a happy place to live and be, but you also have a new set of responsibilities. After age seven, children are very much in their feeling stage of soul development. They are understanding things a bit differently and behaviors might arise, especially in the time between ages six or seven that really frustrate parents if they are not ready for these changes. They are leaving Eden per se and are moving on to the “lone and dreary world.”

In Waldorf circles, this time is often compared to Adam and Eve leaving Eden. While it was a wonderful time in the garden, they could not progress there. The garden was a playpen of wonderful things but in order for growth to occur, Adam and Eve had to transgress, God had to send them on to the next place. As a parent, this can be a challenge, but only if you let it! Stay on top of your game by staying connected, then watch for the changes. Some children withdraw and become sad during this time. Michael Hadley Burton, in his book *In the Light of a Child* describes this time very beautifully:

“Something comes between Nature and the soul, and the child becomes aware of himself as a unique individual whose inner life confronts another world ‘outside.’ This situation can mean for many children times of great loneliness. Shadows begin to be cast by a gradual deepening of the process of thinking. This activity, which should one day restore the human being to a conscious, knowing relationship to life, filled everywhere with the presence of God, is experienced at first as something which divides.”

During this time, providing firm boundaries, loving limits and wonderful school lessons can help children bridge this gap they may be feeling, this new place where life doesn't seem quite so rosy anymore. This age group can be very emotionally taxing for moms. I have three in this place right now and many days Erik and I feel like we are playing mental gymnastics! Playing with our four-year old, who is in a very physically taxing place is often a pleasing escape to the responsibilities of constantly being “on task” for this older set. Changes that are coming between now and 14 are going to stretch you as a parent. As you begin to approach age nine, you will find you are being challenged more and more. The time to set those firm (but loving) limits is now. Many attachment parenting couples struggle with this. Being firm is not being mean. Being firm is actually a very loving place to be. Children need direction and they need to know that you will be there to guide them. This stage also needs to know that you answer to a higher authority. These children are learning to control their will forces and need to have parents that are also actively controlling their own will. They need to feel reverence in the home and know that the adults caring for them are striving with respect and responsibility. If we do not cultivate natural authority and respect in them now, they will struggle throughout their lives in inappropriate rebellion. WOW... what did I just say? Yep! Think about rebellion... it is never wrong to question a situation where unrighteous dominion is being practiced. No one deserves abuse; everyone should be given respect and love. These are situations worthy of rebellion. All of us know (or maybe we were or are) someone who rebels just for the sake of rebelling. Just for the sake of stirring things up. One phrase that I often hear teens use is “whatever, I'll do what I want.” It bites just to type it, couple that with a popular commercial on television prompting adults to have all they want right now by upping their credit card spending limit to the tune of the Queen song *I Want It All* and it sets our society up to rebel against all things and fulfill the urges of the natural man. We live in a time where as a culture we are trying to find balance between our abundance and our duty to each other and our planet. Teaching our children with firm and loving limits is the beginning of helping them understand the appropriate times to stand up and

fight verses times when we should hold the peace. This journey will be a constant will building activity for you that can in turn be passed on to your children.

Children in the next phase, termed “adolescence” by Steiner, have different needs as well. While the youngest stage is all about imitation, the second about understanding authority and living through their feelings, this final stage of childhood marks the real birth of the intellect. Roberto Trostli gives many great descriptions of this time period in his book *Rhythms of Learning*, this is one:

“Because adolescents experience life so differently than before, they often feel ill at ease in the world. Steiner describes the reason for these anxious feelings. He says that what young children brought from the pre-earthly existence was gradually interwoven with their whole being, but at the onset of puberty, adolescents feel cast out of the spiritual world. Adolescents unconsciously compare the world that they left behind with the world they have entered; this brings about great inner upheaval. ... the high school curriculum must address adolescents’ feelings of alienation by strengthening their sense of self and connecting them to other people and to the world.”

It is so rewarding to watch our children grow and having this understanding will help to shape how you teach and understand the “why” behind the material and its introduction.

You will often hear references to the different “bodies.” This can be very confusing when you first come to the method and many Christians might worry that this view will conflict with their spiritual teachings. It is important to view Steiner both spiritually *and* developmentally. His work is intertwined for he saw everything thing as working together. I will give some basic descriptions in this chapter, and then discuss it a bit more in depth in the section on grade one readiness. I have also included on the companion materials for this curriculum, some podcasts that we have done on this topic and others pertaining to grade one.

Each of us, humans, animals, plants and minerals all have a physical body. This physical body is governed by processes and chemical laws. Humans, animals and plants also have an etheric body or life body. This is the body that enables us to live and grow. Steiner describes this body:

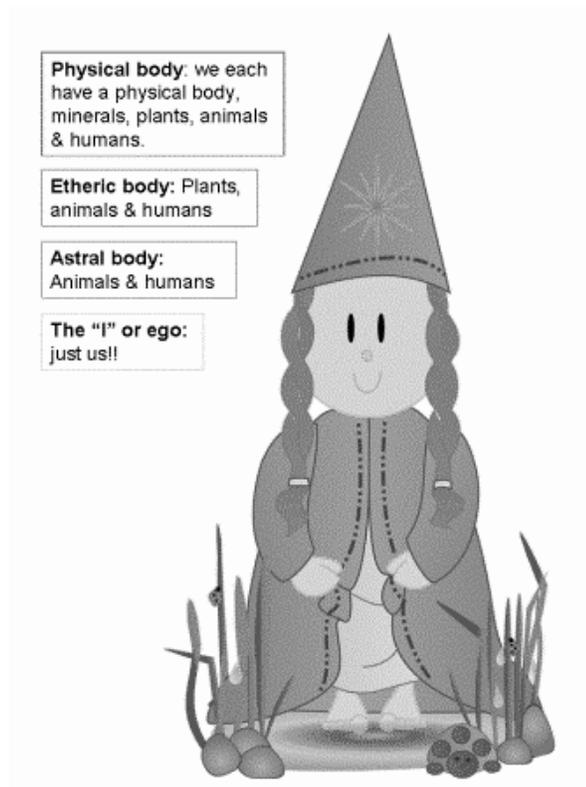
“The life-body works in a formative way on the substances and forces of the physical body and thus brings about the phenomena of growth, reproduction, and inner movement of vital body fluids. It is therefore the builder and shaper of the physical body, its inhabitant and architect.”

Animals and humans have an astral body. Steiner sometimes called this the “sentient body” – it allows us to perceive sensations and be conscious. Plants do not have this body. Even though they are changed by their environment, these are shown in the etheric level through growth, reproduction, etc. The astral body gives humans and animals a chance to experience their inner world, inner life. The final body is one that is unique to humans, the ego or “I.” I think Steiner’s description is best:

“This little word “I,” as used in our language, is a name that differs from all other names. Appropriate reflection on the nature of this name opens up an approach to understanding human nature in a deeper sense. Any other name can be applied to the corresponding object by all of us in the same way. Everyone can call a table “table” and a chair “chair.” But this is not true when it comes to the name “I.” No one can use it to mean someone else; we can only call ourselves “I.”

This ego or “I” sets us apart and is one thing that we each have as a connection to God, for we are told from a young age that we are all created in his image. This ego allows us to have freedom, to love, to have responsibilities and to give back.

Having these bodies and life stages in mind as you work your way through the Waldorf curriculum will help you with the “why” questions. I encourage you to go deeper and form understandings that work for you. Perhaps this graphic will help.



A portion of Chapter 6:

Chapter 6 Grade One Overview

“Three salient features characterize the Waldorf approach to education:

- 1. Waldorf education is based on a developmental approach that addresses the changing needs of the growing child and maturing adolescent.*
- 2. Waldorf teachers strive to transform education into an art that educates the whole child – the heart and the hands as well as the head.*
- 3. Waldorf schools are committed to developing capacities as well as skills so that their students will become self-aware, compassionate individuals with a sense of responsibility for the Earth.” ~ Roberto Trostli, Rhythms of Learning*

Is your child ready? There are so many factors that go into grade one readiness. Unfortunately our society is so quick to get these children from the womb to college that we often do not question it. By now you know that Waldorf education is different! Steiner gave some pretty clear indications for readiness. These were not just reading readiness signals but also for academic work in general. Steiner’s counsel was often “seven springs” meaning that a child should be seven or about there. I used to be okay counseling moms with children that are six and four months to start grade one, but after watching my own children and consulting with countless families, I am very firm in believing the closer to age seven, the better. Children that are closer to seven generally are more ready to take direction and meet mom as a student than their counterparts that are even two or four months younger. The blessings of homeschooling allow you to shift activities so that you can start instruction closer to the age rather than the traditional grade. This doesn’t mean I would tell a child “you are still in kindergarten” – sadly, even the young ones know the grade system, I would affirm they are in grade one, but that is all they need to know. You are the teacher, you determine the material. Now I am not trying to frighten you! If you have a child that is on the younger side of grade one, take the environmental block that I have for May and make that your first lesson block, then move slowly through the curriculum, giving your child plenty of time. Remember that reading before age seven is not a quest, it is not a goal, and there will be rare exceptions of children that have learned to read entirely on their own, but remember this is rare. Now if you are new to the method and your child is already reading, don’t worry! Your child still needs the material of first grade. Remember that Waldorf is based on development and not on speed. If your child is already reading, do not discourage it; allow them to read to you for short periods each day from age appropriate material. Continue with the lessons as laid out, you are welcome to skip the letter introductions, or use them as handwriting practice, but the stories are a must for this age group. If you have questions about placing your child, feel free to email us, we are happy to help.

We spoke in chapter two a bit about the different “bodies” Steiner believed we all had. I want to expand on that now and why these bodies even come into play when we are discussing readiness, for first grade and life in general. One of my favorite authors, Joan Almon, has a wonderful piece on first grade readiness. She beautifully explains the changes in the bodies during the first seven year cycle.

“What does it mean when we say that a child shows the signs of first grade readiness, or as the Germans so wisely say, that a child is *schulreif* (ripe for school)? There are many changes in the child’s physical, emotional, social and mental life that one looks for, which can be listed and

observed in a fairly objective manner. But there is also a *qualitative* difference that is more difficult to describe, yet very important to sense. The good gardener knows from one day to the next when a piece of fruit is ripe for picking, and when this process is translated into childhood, it relates to Rudolf Steiner's statement that a whole new aspect of the individuality is born around the age of six or seven. This new birth is not as physical and clear-cut as the physical birth of the child, but it is an important time in the growth of the child. It is the underlying reality for the many changes that are visible around age six to seven."

We often think of life itself as a linear process, development doesn't really follow this as there are many other steps going on underneath. I like to think of a seed. It is alive, it will give life. It must be nourished; the living forces within the seed must break free from the outer shell in order to move on to the next part of its existence. This is not a linear process, for it was alive still as a seed. In order to take the next step, things had to happen. Joan compares it to the life of a caterpillar that spins a cocoon to become a butterfly. It can now fly when before it could only crawl. These are a lot like the forces at work in our bodies from birth to about age seven.

Joan goes on to say:

"At this time, Steiner describes the birth of a new body, which he calls the life body or etheric body. He goes on to describe two more periods of birth in the growing individual. The next is around age fourteen when the body of feelings, called the astral body, is born. And then at around age twenty-one, the Ego or individuality comes to birth. All of these are present in the human being from the embryological stage, but they are in protective sheaths in which they grow like the embryo in the womb until their time of birth is at hand."

By understanding this birth of bodies, we can begin to watch for these changes. We spoke in chapter two about leaving Eden; this becomes part of that process. A veil is parted and a new part of our children is born. They stand a bit firmer on the earth, are a bit more inquisitive about school subjects but still enjoy playing. Before now they have been entirely in a place of imitation and now they are ready to take direction. They are ready to move from the place of copying a loved one to learning from one. Just as we had to give them appropriate things to imitate, now we have to be ready to give them instruction.

There are very subtle changes that you can observe if you are careful. A child of four or five is capable of telling you how old they are by holding up their fingers. A few weeks ago, I was out and got a call from Samuel, he is four, to tell me about the wonderful cookies he and his sister had been baking. I asked, "How many did you have?" His simple, sweet reply was "This many." We were on the phone, I couldn't see how many "this many" was! Children of this age have not yet come to understand that the fingers are counting devices. Somewhere between six and seven they begin making this connection. They can do simple math facts without prompting.

In our age of technology, many children at five or early six seem to be "ready" for education. We have many parents begging us for permission to start early. "Oh my son is really ready for first grade, he does _____." These children still need to play. Play is so very important and humanity is the only species that ceases play after early childhood. More and more studies are coming into view reinforcing the need for play. These studies are revealing that children who are allowed to play fair better in later academics than their early educated peers, they seem to be more emotionally and socially developed as well. Our babies have the rest of their lives to know how to read, but how many years will they want to serve you pretend tea and wooden toast?

Language Arts. Many families worry that Waldorf is weak in the areas of grammar, punctuation and other things covered in a traditional language arts program. When you can view the entire curriculum for a child grades one through 12, you will find the opposite is true. Waldorf makes good use of time and resources. One thing that has always been a joy to me is that there is NO separate grammar program needed, all skills are taught within the history and literature lesson blocks. In grade one, there is no emphasis on grammar, children are consumed with learning their letters and the beginning stages of reading. Painting, drawing, modeling and writing skills are taught as integrated parts of each lesson block, giving the child a full view. In second grade, concepts of verbs and nouns begin and they are carried through and deepened in grade three. Steiner believed that a child of age nine or 10 was primed and ready for an understanding of grammar as this is when they begin to write more on their own, before then, much of the written work is imitation or collaboration. All the concepts are built upon, a gentle layering process that leads to interest and understanding of the parts of speech. While I am by no means perfect, understanding the Waldorf approach to English and grammar has healed me in more ways than I could have ever imagined. I feel a bit like Eliza Doolittle some days.

Many children in a Waldorf school would only learn the capital letters in grade one, the lowercase would come later in grade one or even in grade two. I believe this is completely up to you. I have found it easy to introduce both side by side. If you have a younger first grader then it may be a good idea to only begin with the uppercase.

The story content for grade one should come from fairy tales. There is much recent debate over the use of Grimm's tales because they can seem so dark – we have to remember that we are reading these tales with our adult lenses on. Children have a much different experience of these stories. Steiner was very serious about the content of main lesson stories for each grade, in *Discussions with Teachers* he says:

“You see, when we receive the children in Class 1 we must first of all try to find the right material for telling and retelling stories. Through this telling of fairy tales, of legends, and also of outwardly realistic happenings, and through the children retelling these stories, we train their actual mode of speaking. We form the transition from dialect to educated speech. If we see to it that the child speaks correctly we lay the foundations for a correct style of writing.”

I found a wonderful article by William Harrer called *The Value of Grimm's Fairy Tales* where he shares some wonderful nuggets about the use of Grimm's tales for this age group:

“Rudolf Steiner inspired teachers to make use of the fairy tales in a much deeper and more extensive way than it had been done heretofore. It is a well known fact that fairy tales have their origin in the period of humanity's own childhood, in far-distant times when people lived in a naïve dreamlike state of soul, before the unfolding of intellectual capacities. According to the principles of biogenetic law, children pass briefly through the different stages of mankind's evolution. Children between the ages of four and eight correspond approximately in their development with that period of humanity's childhood in which fairy tales originated. An unspoiled child absorbs fairy tales during this period of its life, with eagerness similar to the hunger and intensity with which a baby absorbs its mother's milk.”

“The fact that the contents of the most famous fairy tales are to be found, in one form or another, in legends, mythologies and folklore of all nations seems to indicate that they all have the same origin. Whether they all came from Central Asia, as some authors claim, is to my mind questionable. I should rather imagine that fairy tales came into being in different localities much

in the same way as today various people might relate the same dream. They are imaginative pictures of successive stages of human development and probably were perceived independently in different countries. It is a quite frequent occurrence in the history of inventions that the same idea springs up in different localities simultaneously.”

This journey they are on as they leave Eden is a gradual awakening and fairy tales provide the support needed for this next phase of childhood. They are learning about their own personality and the vivid depictions of these fairy tales are therapy for the quest. They are the nourishment this age group needs.

A portion of A-Year-at-a-Glance

<p>September Letter introductions, form drawing, Michaelmas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 3 weeks letter introductions <input type="checkbox"/> 1 week Michaelmas 	<p>October Letter introductions, form drawing, Halloween/All Souls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 3 weeks letter introductions <input type="checkbox"/> 1 week Halloween/All Souls 	<p>November Letter introductions, form drawing, Martinmas, Thanksgiving</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 2 weeks letter introductions <input type="checkbox"/> 1 week Martinmas <input type="checkbox"/> 1 week Thanksgiving
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A portion of the weekly/daily guide

<p>Week 1 – introducing the story <i>The Wise Sophia</i>. This entire week is lesson 1. You can take the entire week or work in some painting practice in addition to the story.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Tell the first part of the story and introduce the first form drawing. <input type="checkbox"/> Tell the second part of the story and introduce the second form drawing. <input type="checkbox"/> Tell the final part of week one and introduce the third form drawing. <input type="checkbox"/> Review together the first week of the story, this will begin to lay a foundation for summarizing. See if your child can retell the story to you and remember the forms. Spend time drawing what the family may look like to you, what about their farm? What are their surroundings? From there you can also draw or paint your own surroundings. 	<p>Week 2 - introducing letters M and V</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 2 – Tell the next part of the story and introduce this week’s form drawing. Introduce the letter M and tell the story of <i>Mount Simeli</i> and draw or paint about it. Draw the letter M. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 3 – Have your child retell <i>Mt. Simeli</i> to you and come up with a short summary together for you or your child to write. Review the sound for the letter M. Take some time to look at your surrounding landscapes and the world’s geography as a whole. Do you live near mountains? If so plan a road trip together. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 4 – Tell the next part of the story. Introduce the letter V and tell the story of <i>The Vagabonds</i>. Draw or paint about it. Draw the letter V. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 5 – Have your child retell <i>The Vagabonds</i> and write a summary together. Review the sound of V.
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Lesson 2 – After a full day of journeying, the family set up camp near a mountain. Joseph built a fire and Ben helped him pitch their tent. Once settled, Katie would receive her first lesson. Joseph would teach her about the letter M. He began to tell the magical story of *Mount Simeli*.

Letter introduced: M



Lesson 2 form.

Simeli Mountain by the Bros. Grimm

There were once two brothers, one rich and the other poor. The rich one, however, gave nothing to the poor one, and he gained a scanty living by trading in corn, and often did so badly that he had no bread for his wife and children. Once when he was wheeling a barrow through the forest he saw, on one side of him, a great, bare, naked-looking mountain, and as he had never seen it before, he stood still and stared at it with amazement. While he was thus standing he saw twelve great, wild men coming towards him, and as he believed they were robbers he pushed his barrow into the thicket, climbed up a tree, and waited to see what would happen. The twelve men, however, went to the mountain and cried, “Semsi mountain, Semsi mountain, open”; and immediately the barren mountain opened down the middle, and the twelve went into it, and as soon as they were within, it shut. After a short time, however, it opened again, and the men came forth carrying heavy sacks on their shoulders, and when they were all once more in the daylight they said, “Semsi mountain, Semsi mountain, shut thyself”; then the mountain closed together, and there was no longer any entrance to be seen to it, and the twelve went away. When they were quite out of sight the poor man got down from the tree, and was curious to know what really was secretly hidden in the mountain. So he went up to it and said, “Semsi mountain, Semsi mountain, open”; and the mountain opened to him also. Then he went inside, and the whole mountain was a cavern full of silver and gold, and behind lay great piles of pearls and sparkling jewels, heaped up like corn. The poor man hardly knew what to do, and whether he might take any of these treasures for himself or not; but at last he filled his pockets with gold, and left the pearls and precious stones where they were. When he came out again he also said, “Semsi mountain, Semsi mountain, shut thyself”; and the mountain closed itself, and he went home with his barrow. Now he had no more cause for anxiety. He could buy bread for his wife and children with his gold, and had extra for wine. He lived joyously and uprightly, gave help to the poor, and did good where he could. When the money came to an end he went to his brother, borrowed a cart and so he could haul more from the mountain. He still did not touch any of the most valuable things.

After a time he had made three trips with his brother's cart to the mountain. The rich man could not figure out how his brother's fortune has changed and had become envious of his brother's possessions and comfortable way of life. He also wondered what his brother needed with his cart.. Then he thought of a cunning trick, and covered the bottom of the cart with pitch, and when he got the measure back a piece of money was sticking in it. He went at once to his brother and asked him, "What have you been hauling in my cart?" "Corn and barley," said the other. Then he showed him the piece of money, and threatened that if he did not tell the truth he would turn him in to the authorities. The poor man then told him everything, just as it had happened. The rich man decided he would take better advantage of the mountain's treasures. When he came to the mountain he cried, "Sensi mountain, Sensi mountain, open." The mountain opened, and he went inside it. There lay the treasures all before him, and for a long time he did not know where to start. He greedily grabbed as many precious stones as he could carry. He wished to carry his burden outside, but, as his heart and soul were entirely full of the treasures, he had forgotten the name of the mountain, and cried, "Simeli mountain, Simeli mountain, open." That was not the right name, and the mountain never stirred, but remained shut. He was alarmed, but the longer he thought about it the greater his confusion, and his treasures did him little good. In the evening the mountain opened, and the twelve robbers came in, and when they saw him they laughed, and cried out, "Fool! Did you think you could keep coming back and we wouldn't catch you?" Then he cried, "It was not I, it was my brother." The rich man begged for his life, but the robbers, satisfied that they had caught their man chopped off his head. THE END

With that, Joseph tucked Ben and Katie into their sleeping bags and the family drifted off to sleep.

After the story, draw or paint from it. Also, draw the letter M.

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Chapter 1 Parent Care

“...we need to consider three human virtues – concerning, on the one hand, the child’s development, and on the other hand, what is seen in relation to society in general. They are three fundamental virtues. The first concerns everything that can live in the will to gratitude, the second, everything that can live in the will to love, and third, everything that can live in the will to duty. Fundamentally, these are the three principal human virtues and, to a certain extent, encompass all other virtues.”

~ Rudolf Steiner, “Gratitude, Love, and Duty”

The importance of inner work as you walk the Waldorf path. If you worked with us for your first grade year or you follow our work on this subject, then this chapter is no surprise to you! Inner work and self care for mothers and families is a great passion of mine, but it tends to shock people that are coming to Waldorf education from other methods. Steiner’s work often calls us to ponder... if we don’t we are doomed to be frustrated with it! Inner work is something beyond pondering. Many parents get through the early years of parenting and even through the first grade curriculum with no trouble... eking their way, learning little by little about Steiner’s view of the stages of development and hopefully learning how to connect to Deity. Yes... God. Source... Goddess... what ever you want to call that entity for yourself – for this is a personal relationship, one between you and the divine, no one else.

The suggestion of inner work gets me a lot of frustrated parents but it is often these same parents that are trying to maintain order and instill virtues within the home. Refusing to look at our spirit when we are working through a spiritual curriculum is a lot like ice skating uphill. Your children turn to you for guidance in all things. The Waldorf curriculum is a beautiful flow of cultural concepts that when studied can bring so much love and mercy to our own lives – humbling us and allowing us to live a life of tolerance, forgiveness and peace.

In 2009, we began a program called “Be a Beacon” with the intent on bringing mothers closer to owning and loving motherhood while cultivating a direct connection with the Divine. For some mothers this comes easily because it was cultivated in a healthy way for them as children; for others this is a struggle, someone, somewhere along the line used God to harm them. If you are one of these mothers, understand that you can heal that within yourself. Waldorf is a wonderful beginning as each turn begs you to understand your child the way God does. It is such a humbling journey.

If prayer and meditation make you nervous, start small. Ask yourself “how do I see my life?” This question seems superficial but can easily lend itself to deep pondering. If you have been living on borrowed faith since you started your mothering journey or before, then the concept of seeking guidance from Source will stretch you. Mothering forces us to take a good look at ourselves – our strengths and our weaknesses. Sometimes we want to just brush those weaknesses aside and not think about them... doing that assures that the Universe will give us a swift spanking at some point! I prefer to look at my life, take stock and be responsible for my failures for they are every bit as much a part of me as my victories. Every step I have taken has brought me to where I stand right now. There is strength in knowing that we can look at our weaknesses and learn to overcome them.

Think about the virtues you want your children to carry with them. I heard recently that financial poverty is not nearly as bad as moral poverty. This really made me think... moral poverty? It is the decay of standards, morals and virtues in our fast paced society. It has less to do with religion and more to do with our floundering... trying to do everything better than the generation before without looking at what we are losing in the process. Now this isn't a call to join a church if you aren't inclined, this is more of a call to understand the role of Deity as you parent this ever changing child. Trust me, they grow so fast and one day that eight-year-old will be 14 and begging for their box to get a little bigger... you will have to ask yourself... did I teach them? What do I want them to know? It is more than just schoolwork – it is beyond the basics of the Waldorf curriculum, it is at the core of loving and feeling and knowing that you took every opportunity to not just work on them, but also on yourself. It is knowing that you are an example to them.

Wow... I hope I haven't lost you! Remember this isn't about religion, this is about teaching morals and virtues that supersede religious impulses. Just how does this relate to Waldorf and why do you need to keep working on it? I think this quote, from the foreword of the book "Rhythms of Learning" says it best:

"The self-education of adults is essential for the Waldorf approach to educating children, because Waldorf does not consist solely of methods, techniques, or structures, but rather the development of human capacities – those of the children but also, and more importantly, those of the teachers and parents."

Our task is to understand them... body, mind and soul, we can't do that if we don't understand ourselves. Taking the time to not just understand the curriculum, but also to understand who you are – how you want to mother and how you want to bring forward your strengths will be the best asset you can have on this journey. My hope is that you will allow Waldorf education to not just nurture your children, but also to heal you. This method can bring things to the surface that you may not even know you carry inside. Our job is to work with that and heal it as best we can before we face our children.

I find some of Steiner's suggestions to be very helpful as I walk this path. He has many meditations that can work well with motherhood – especially while playing both roles – mother and teacher. One of my favorite exercises are ones that can be practiced each day of the week. These exercises can be started one per week to get grounded and then turned to a focus per day. There are eight exercises, one should be done along with the other for each day. Sounds confusing, so let me explain.

Let's begin with the one exercise you will do each, Steiner calls it "Right Meditation" – "From time to time, turn your gaze inward, even if for only five minutes at the same time each day. You should sink into yourself; take careful counsel with yourself; test and form your principles of life. In your mind, go through your insights – or the opposite. Weigh your duties. Consider the substance and the real goals of your life. Experience serious displeasure at your faults and imperfections. In other words, try to discover what is essential and permanent, and earnestly propose the appropriate goals – for instance, the virtues you should acquire." When my days aren't going right, this simple exercise can help bring me right back to perspective – it allows me to see how much I have accomplished and really gain wisdom into what my next move should be. It is a little like counting your blessings and taking stock of what is ahead. This should be a daily exercise, it is a great developer of the will.

Beginning daily exercises with Saturday, Steiner calls this “Right Thinking” – “Be aware of your thoughts. Think only meaningful thoughts. Gradually learn to separate in your thoughts the essential from the nonessential, the eternal from the transitory, and truth from mere opinion. When listening to conversation, try to become inwardly still, renouncing all agreement and, more important, all negative judgments (criticism and rejection). Do this in both thought and feeling.”

The next exercise would be for Sunday, Steiner calls this one “Right Judgment” – “Decide on even the most insignificant issues only after full, well-founded deliberation and reflection. All unthinking behavior and all meaningless actions should be discarded from the soul. Our reasons for everything we do should be fully deliberated. We should abstain from doing anything that has no significant reason. Once we are convinced that a decision is correct, we should adhere to it with inner steadfastness. This is “right judgment,” because it was made independently of attraction or aversion.” While this exercise seems like it could pull the fun out of everything, I learned to really use it to help me balance my impulses. When I stand back and look at everything, while it slows me down, I am always happy that I took the time to really explore it.

Monday’s exercise is something Steiner calls “Right Word” – “Only serious, meaningful speech must leave the lips of those who strive for higher development. All talk for the sake of talking – to pass the time, for example – is harmful. Avoid the usual sort of conversation that involves jumbled, simultaneous crosstalk. This does not mean that you should cut yourself off from interacting with others. Especially in such interaction, your speech should gradually become increasingly meaningful. Listen thoughtfully to every statement and answer. Consider every approach. Never speak without a reason. Prefer silence. Try not to talk too much or too little. Listen quietly and process what you hear.” This one is tough! We are mothers, we have to speak right? Of course! We are called though, more than others I think to really think about our words. It is so easy to just talk and not really say anything – our children do it often! There is something to be said for modeling this for them. Start with short intervals, an hour or even 30 minutes if an hour is a stretch. Focus on *doing* rather than *talking about doing*. They follow our lead so well when we just set forth and DO.

On Tuesday, the exercise turns to “Right Deed” – “Our outer actions should not disturb others. When you are moved inwardly (by conscience) to act, carefully weigh how best to employ the occasion for the good of the whole, and the happiness of others and the eternal. When you act from yourself and your own initiative, weigh the consequences of your actions in the most fundamental way.” This is one of my favorites, probably because it is often not present in our modern society. Often we are faced with people or situations when we want to say “what were you thinking?!” Well this one really helps me to not be part of the problem. This is a great one to model for your children at this age, while they are out of the age of imitation, they are very much into a place of feeling, they will be watching you more and more as they approach age nine and really try to discern whether or not you are who you say you are.

Wednesday’s exercise, Steiner calls “Right Standpoint” – “In ordering your life, live in harmony with nature and spirit. Do not get buried in the external knickknacks of life. Avoid all that brings restlessness and haste to your life. Be neither impetuous nor lazy. Consider life as a means of inner work and development and act accordingly.” WOW... have you thought about your life as an act of inner work? It took me several years to really understand how this can work while being a mother. It almost sounds as though Steiner expects us to become monks. Maybe... mothering monks? When we can order our lives to be so we can truly understand our role with our children and our partner and how that translates to us... how we can really obtain peace

AND happiness. It takes time, practice and realizing that we are more than this place... we are more than those knickknacks that we hold so tight to.

Steiner describes Thursday as “Right Striving” – “In human striving, take care not to do anything beyond your power. At the same time, however, do not leave anything undone that is within your ability. Look beyond the moment, the ordinary, and pose goals (ideals) for yourself that are connected with the highest of human responsibilities. In relation to these exercises, for example, try to develop yourself so that later – if not immediately – you may be better able to help and advise others.” This one speaks so deeply to me as a wife and mother. Each day is about having the right mix of doing and letting go. Our school planning needs this mix as well. This year, you will be watching your child transform as they begin to understand striving a bit more... striving to better their reading (or learn to read), striving to understand their math, to learn about the inner core of wonderful people. Second grade is a perfect year to see striving in both you as the beacon for your family and in your child as they begin toward the next phase in development.

Friday’s exercise is great, it reminds us to recall what we have learned from our experiences. Steiner called Friday’s exercise “Right Memory” – “Strive to learn as much as possible from life. Nothing happens that does not give us the opportunity to gather experiences that are useful for life. If you have done something incorrectly or incompletely, it becomes an opportunity to do it correctly or completely later on. When you see others act, observe them with the same end in mind (but not without love). Do nothing without looking at past experiences that may help in your decisions and actions. If you are attentive, you can learn much from everyone, including small children.” I have learned so much from my children, they teach me far more than I teach them. I am forever thankful.

With time, these exercises can become a part of your life and you won’t have to think twice about them. They shouldn’t take up too much time in your day. I like to ponder them as I get up in the morning and then allow my mind to drift back to them as the day goes on. It is helpful to have a notebook handy when you are working through them, it allows you to write down observations about each experience.

Finding comfort in fables and saints. This year will have you looking at morality and virtue within the curriculum far more than in first grade, not just with the introduction of saintly people but also in the fables that are part of this year. You don’t have to be Catholic to gain wisdom from the characters of study this year. There are many saintly stories, from traditional Catholic saints to Hindu saints and many others. This is a perfect year to connect with the saints through the festivals. I don’t suggest you pray to the saints, as I know many are uncomfortable with it, but there is something deeply moving about pondering and meditating on their lives and struggles. As a Waldorf parent, I find it so enriching to lose myself in the material I am going to be teaching. Some of my favorite reading moments have been from books that I have chosen to further my understanding of the topic. Historical movies are great for this too, especially as your children grow through the history portion of the curriculum.

I love the way Manette Teitelbaum describes the second grader in the book “Waldorf Education: A Family Guide” – she says: “...the second grade child still delights in the mystery of a spiritual world where he still dwells at heart. He sits in rapt attention to legends of those spiritual being who have the forces of nature in their service.” Knowing this, allows me to also keep this in mind myself. Falling in love with the qualities of these people. Not their service to their church, but their service to humanity. When we can be lost in this concept it helps us bring virtue to our children’s lives in such a meaningful way.

I recently began reading “Saint Francis” by Nikos Kazantzakis, it is so warming to read the pages as they transform me to a place of meditation. “My heart is being watered. It cracks open, sends forth a shoot – and you, Father Francis, appear. All the soil inside me has blossomed, Father Francis.”

I encourage you to take the time to read deeply about the topics you will be teaching, find ways to allow them to penetrate you. When you feast yourself on the material then you can also give them the feast they need, rather than left overs and table scraps! Now don’t panic... you can do it. We’ll talk more in later chapters about just how to go about your planning so you can enjoy the curriculum as much as you want your children to. For now, just ponder the idea of falling in love with the material and using it as a tool for spiritual growth. Delight in the stories of holy people and in the comedy of the fables.

One objection I often get with the saints block in this grade is that families of non-Christian background don’t want to expose their children to this concept. I also get the same objection, believe it or not from very conservative non-Catholic families. It is important to look at Waldorf as a whole rather than breaking it down. As a whole, Waldorf education is multi-faith. I delight in knowing that my children can take comfort in being of this world but not worldly. While the second grade curriculum might seem overly Catholic or Christian in origin, third grade could be considered Jewish (Old Testament stories), while fourth grade might be seen as old world Pagan (Norse Myth), fifth grade can be characterized as Pagan and Hindu with the introduction of Egypt, India and Greece, while sixth grade takes us back to Christianity with the life of Christ and then over to Islam with the life of Mohammed. In the end, if we allow the curriculum to work, our children will have a beautiful understanding of some of the major world cultures.

It is important to remember that these lessons are not a replacement for religious education in the home and just because the Old Testament isn’t studied in depth until third grade, this doesn’t mean a Christian or Jewish family should shy away from it. Steiner reminds us that children need religious upbringing – note he doesn’t say they need a particular religion, just religious upbringing. To many this raises a giant red flag but really it just goes back to the thoughts I laid forth before about reverence and virtue. Virtues are from the Divine, these are what we are seeking to cultivate – love, honor, humility, etc. teaching these at home will often do more than a month of Sundays with our bottom in a pew. Keeping in mind that we are their best first teacher, allows us to cultivate these virtues at home, within ourselves first and then with them. Talk about them with your partner, get on the same page about how you feel in regards to their religious upbringing. Work together to grow this within your home.

This quote by Steiner says it best:

“No hands can bless in old age, unless in childhood they have been folded in prayer.”

A bit from Chapter 6
Chapter Six
Grade Two Overview

Who is ready for second grade? I am often asked this question especially in how it pertains to first grade, but almost as often for second grade. If you are newer to Waldorf education then the idea of teaching to the age and not using the standard grades system we grew up with can be a bit mind boggling. Steiner believed that there was a certain set of lessons for each grade and unlike traditional school, it isn't a race to see who is the smartest, fastest or tests well. Waldorf is really set up to enhance your child as he develops. The fairy tale material that was perfect for the first grader, has now turned to stories of fables and saints. How do you know if your child is ready? If your child is going on eight years old or has just turned eight then this is the correct year for him or her.

Coming to Waldorf late, what should I know? If you are new to the method, it is tempting to go back and try to experience all that your child missed in kindergarten and first grade, I don't blame you! These are magical years and it can be frustrating to have not found the method sooner. You can certainly work to put those fun elements into your year... if this is your oldest child and there are some to follow, then you can enjoy those parts as your younger children move through the curriculum. If this is your only or your youngest child, then go over the elements you are craving, perhaps it is all the baking and singing? Or maybe it is just the story content from those early years? The stories could easily be used as extra stories before bed or during an afternoon rest time. There are so many options, don't feel like you are missing anything, just work to incorporate it into your plan. Remember that you are in charge!

Sometimes parents worry about the academic portions of grade one that they might have missed. These might include mathematics and form drawing. If your child is already reading then you can continue to build those skills. If you are concerned with writing and grammar, don't be, writing is introduced slowly in first grade and built upon each year. Some grammar will be introduced this year, but the bulk of it begins in third grade. I would consider form drawing from grade one as it is an important part of the curriculum and worth understanding and reviewing the forms from grade one that you may have missed. Also review the way the Waldorf curriculum introduces mathematics. There is no need to purchase a full grade one curriculum to catch up, our *Coming to Waldorf Late* guides cover these topics for you.

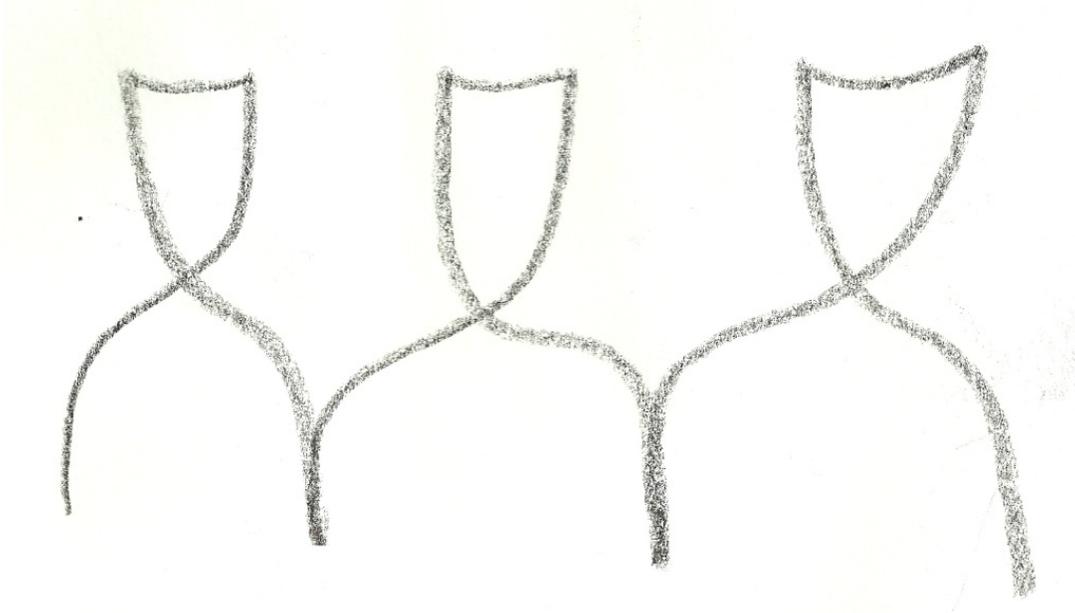
A portion from A Year at a Glance

<p>September Saint stories, form drawing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4 weeks legends of saints</p>	<p>October Fables, form drawing</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 4 weeks fables</p>	<p>November Animal stories, saints, form drawing, holiday break</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 2 weeks Burgess animal stories</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 week St. Martin</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> 1 week holiday break</p>
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A portion from the weekly/daily guide

<p>November</p>	
<p>Week 1 – In preparation this week, practice the form drawing, read the tales and practice your paints, drawing or sculpting.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 33 – Form drawing. Buster Bear</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 34 – Recall and summarize.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 35 – Little Joe</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 36 – Recall and summarize</p>	<p>Week 2 – Saint Martin. In preparation for this week, read the story and be sure to have all supplies on hand for your festival. Practice your form drawing and your lesson pictures.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 37 – Form drawing. St. Martin story.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 38 – Recall and summarize.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 39 – Make lanterns</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 40 – Martinmas feast</p>
<p>Week 3 – Thanksgiving- if you are not American or do not celebrate this one, then just shift your weeks up or take the week and focus on gratitude.</p>	<p>Week 4 – – In preparation this week, practice the form drawing, read the tales and practice your paints, drawing or sculpting.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 41 – Form drawing. More Buster Bear.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 42 – Recall and summarize.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 43 – More Little Joe.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 44 – Recall and summarize.</p>

Lesson 5 – This is a great story and it lends itself to a couple of activities, you could certainly paint or draw the lion, but what about using modeling beeswax or clay to shape him?



***Saint Jerome* by Melisa Nielsen**

Long ago lived a man named Jerome, he was a kind man and people say that children and angels were always around him, listening. Jerome was a very smart man and people came from hundreds of miles away to visit him, he was a doctor, a philosopher and a historian. Jerome was also a priest, he roamed the hills near his village to observe plants and be with the animals. Jerome was a lot like Francis, he could talk to the animals and they didn't fear him.

One day, while walking, Jerome came upon a monastery. "Curious," he thought as he walked through the gates. "the gates are open but this place seems abandoned. Where could all the monks be?" Jerome searched and before long he heard whispers.

"Father Jerome, is that you? Take care, a lion roams the grounds!"

Jerome walked toward the sound of the whispering. "How did a lion get into your keep?" asked Jerome.

"We usually take great care to lock the gate each evening but three days ago we were tending to an ill monk and we forgot to lock the gate. The lion appeared in the night," explained the frightened monk. "He is terribly angry and very fierce."

Jerome took leave of the monks and went to the chapel to pray. "God give me the strength to find a peaceful answer for the lion and by dear brothers, the monks."

Jerome left the chapel in search of the lion, while he searched, he whispered the words "God give me strength." Jerome finally spotted the lion, he was angry, but Jerome noticed he was limping. Looking closer, he saw a large thorn in the lion's paw.

"I am Jerome," he began, "I am a healer and I love to help beasts in need. Will you allow me to look at your paw?"

The lion seemed to understand him and bowed before him, raising his paw. With the greatest of care, Jerome pulled the thorn from the lion's paw. While the lion yelped, he seemed grateful to have the thorn removed. He nuzzled Jerome while Jerome patted his mane. Jerome realized that the lion wasn't there to hurt anyone, he just wanted someone to help him with his paw. He assembled the monks and introduced them to the lion.

"This lion is now my friend, he wishes to remain here at the monastery to protect you from invaders."

The monks all circled around the lion, groomed him and brought him some food. The lion lived at the monastery for many years protecting the monks and helping them in their daily tasks.

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Chapter 2

Ages and Stages: The Nine Year Change

“Something especially important happens to children between the ages of nine and ten. Speaking in an abstract way it can be said that children learn to differentiate themselves from their environment...”

The nine-year-change is such a pivotal time for children. It is often the first real hurdle that parents encounter when they may ask themselves “what am I doing wrong?” The answer is “nothing.” Just as you were starting to feel comfortable and confident in your parenting and homeschooling abilities, your child then comes to this place where you might feel like you don’t know them. Children that were very close to us might begin to show distance or they might want to stick to us like glue. The nine-year-change is different for many children; some get very bossy, others get fearful easily, some become overly critical – or you may see all of these behaviors. I have always felt that this age group is the one that keeps me on my toes more so than others. Sure the little ones exhaust you and the adolescents have their own shenanigans to watch for, but these nine-year-olds, they will catch your every mistake. This age can have us really wondering how to parent effectively. Should we turn to punitive punishments? Should we yell? Ground them? Or show them only love? The answer is a mixture. Steiner recommends that we continue to show the presence of authority in our parenting and if we haven’t been holding that space, then it is time we step up to the plate.

In *Kingdom of Childhood* Steiner relates:

“For the child has now come to a crisis regarding the principle of authority. If you can meet the situation and can preserve your authority by the warmth of feeling with which you deal with these particular difficulties, if you can meet the child with inner warmth, sincerity, and truth, then much will be gained. The child will retain its belief in your authority, and that is good for the child’s further education, it is also essential that just at this age between nine and ten then child’s belief in a good person does not waver. Were this to happen then the inner security that should be the child’s guide through life will totter and sway...This is of great significance and must constantly be remembered. In handbooks on education you find all kinds of intricate details laid down for the guidance of teachers, but it is of far greater importance to know what happens at a certain point in a child’s life and how you should act with regard to it, so that through your action you may radiate light onto the child’s whole life.”

Holding authority may be a hard thing if you have previously not done so. We often think authority and authoritative mean the same thing – not so. To hold authority means to command the space of parenthood that you are walking, it means you are emotionally prepared for each day and that you have taken the time to do your inner work so you are happy and secure in who you are as Mom, Partner and Teacher. This is a tall order; it takes a lot of work on your part. (Our first and second grade curriculum detail many ways that you can gain a good inner work life, these suggestions are also available in our series *Coming to Waldorf Late*.) You will not be perfect at holding authority, but striving is a good thing. Knowing how you will approach situations and also being sure that your child(ren) understand boundaries and limitations. Often holding authority can be a challenge if this is our oldest child and thus far we have led through imitation and not needed to assert our authority (at least in outer ways) – right now, your child needs you to be the boss. For many of us that have followed the Attachment Parenting model for parenting, this might feel wrong or sound wrong – it isn’t. Holding authority *is not* mean spirited

or spiteful or angry or even rude, it *is* being firm, being impeccable with your word, it is knowing what values and virtues you hold dear and impressing those upon your child. It is also giving an expectation and being confident they will rise to it. Holding authority is loving. I can't think of a more loving gesture than to give your child boundaries and chores, all the while modeling yourself a home filled with peace and unity. How does it look? Well Johnny might be having a moment of anger and frustration because his friend (perhaps even another Waldorf child) has more privileges than Johnny, maybe this child gets television or computer time that Johnny really wants to have. Do you give in? Do you allow your values to be trampled? A good response would be to stand your ground and then take the time later to discuss with your partner Johnny's changing needs and whether that should change your values for him. If Johnny doesn't want to do his chores, do you make him? It will of course be helpful if he sees you doing your chores, Dad carrying his weight and everyone contributing, but that isn't always enough for this age group – they will balk and fuss and make you wonder why God gave us ears! This is not the time to be Johnny's friend, he needs a mother. We will discuss the role of authority more in depth in the next chapter.

What behaviors are normal during this nine year change and how can you meet your child and help them feel supported? Normal behaviors I have noticed are things that may seem silly to us on some levels. Your previously confident child may suddenly have irrational fears of strange things, they may also become obsessive about some things. You might see them arguing with you more or with siblings – most often that things are not fair or that some grave injustice has been lobbied upon them. They might be outspoken or angry. Steiner says that during the ninth year the child experiences “a total transformation of his being, which points to a significant transformation of his soul-life and to a significant transformation of his experience of the bodily-physical.” These are big changes and they are likely to show themselves in big ways.

In the book *Encountering the Self*, Hermann Koepke says:

“Fundamentally, every child follows this path through the crisis of aloneness. We notice it particularly in the child's eyes. We no longer see the merry, roving, starlike eyes, but rather a look that is much steadier and tinged with a touch of melancholy. Nightmares can occur at this age, and the children often complain about physical symptoms, such as headaches and stomach-aches. Thus, you can see that the child experiences an absolute crisis. But in this crisis, the child comes to experience that he or she bears an *I* within.”

He goes on to discuss the need for the Waldorf curriculum to support this emerging sense of self. The stories of the Old Testament and the teaching of occupations can help the child experience how the world came to be and how humanity has grown and changed since the beginning of time. The stories given are a comfort to the child – if we let them be.

This is echoed in a 1977 *Waldorf Clearing House Newsletter*:

“Children at this age are coming to the end of an epoch. They are emerging from early childhood and getting ready for childhood proper, which is represented by the intermediate grades of the elementary school. Fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eight grades will be a foreshadowing of adolescence, just as the primary grades were an echo of pre-school babyhood.”

This is also a time for us to really be careful what they may be watching on television or in movies. Keeping their viewing age appropriate is important, too much violence may have them acting out, so we are impressed more than ever to understand what they are watching or desiring

to watch (and read). This is an age when many parents begin allowing some media, we just have to be mindful that what we are giving them will support their emerging senses rather than have them more frightened, more angry, etc.

Chapter Six

Grade Three Overview

Who is ready for third grade? As we have discussed in earlier chapters, the third grade is a time of great change in your child. The development occurring in and around the ninth year is often very hard for your child – they have left Eden and now are questioning... “is this it?” and “why?” and often the accompanying feelings of utter frustration for things that are not seeming fair, that sense of justice is awake. The stories and activities of this year are so important for the child of this age. They are like little pioneers just itching to know about life and consequences.

In the book *Education Towards Freedom*, the author puts it so well:

“When the children wax indignant about Adam and Eve, or tremble on account of the Flood, sigh with relief when Abraham is spared the command to sacrifice Isaac, or wonder at the revelation on Mount Sinai, rejoice with David, or clench their fists against Goliath and the Philistines, then they experience in great pictures the problems with which they are wrestling more or less consciously within their own souls – the new Covenant, which at their stage they have to enter into with their fellow beings, the experience of both reverence and resentment, of obedience and willfulness, and, not least, the dim awareness that something new is happening in their own development. This is the crisis at the age of nine, the “new age of defiance.”

To be properly placed in grade three, your child should be nine-years-old or nearly nine. A good rule of thumb is that December-February birthdays are generally fine in this year, March and April become a gray area, and anything later should most likely wait for the next year. You want a situation where they are nine, ideally for more than half the school year. This isn't always easy to explain to extended family or to government officials if you are doing reporting. As a homeschooler, I encourage you to call it what ever grade you would like and think less about what grade Johnny is in and more about his soul development. Steiner's work is so different than anything else and having a good understanding of human development will help you in this process. If you are new, our *Coming to Waldorf Late* series will really help you with this work.

Coming to Waldorf late, what should I know? If you are new to the method, it is tempting to go back and try to cover all the stories you may have missed in the first two grades, it is a magical time and if you have missed it then you might feel a bit robbed. Don't. The entire curriculum is magical. If you have younger children then you will have the opportunity to experience it through them and if this is your youngest or only child, put your energy to making their years magical now. If you want to use the first and second grade stories as bedtime or extra story time then you can, these also become great readers for those that are ready.

As far as technical or academic work that may have been missed, you will want to catch up on form drawing, which shouldn't be very hard, you can easily catch up with a little work. You may also want to review Waldorf math and how it is introduced as it is fairly different from other methods. Picking up on art and other aspects of the curriculum can come in time with a little work and good planning. If you need help integrating the material in slowly, please let us help you or see our *Coming to Waldorf Late Series*.

Movement, circle time and music. While eurhythmy is an important part of the movement curriculum in Waldorf schools, it can be a tough act to follow at home if you don't live near a school for lessons or know eurhythmy yourself. Do not let this discourage you, there are plenty

of things that you can do at home. The third grader is ready for fairly complicated clapping games.

Barbara Bresette-Mills, a eurhythmy teacher in Texas has some wonderful suggestions:

- Third graders enjoy a challenge and one can do more complicated clapping games or stepping of rhythms that alternate foot and arm movements, that change tempo or directions in space. This helps with coordination and accuracy in execution of the movements.
- It is [still] helpful to bring movement in relation to the stories or material you are studying.
- Listening exercises that involve bringing a rhythm into stepping or clapping help with the relationship between our senses and limbs.
- One could bring simple group dances that involve contraction and expansion of the circle, changing partners etc.
- Moving mirror patterns with a partner.

Circle time might really be changing for your child, especially if this is your youngest. There may be a lot of balking or your child might feel like it is time to give up those songs and finger plays that once echoed through your home. This might be a time of mourning for you more than them! Changing your focus to more anchoring activities is appropriate for this age. You likely made some changes last year already, this year you will continue as you turn more toward times tables and poetry or verses. Playing spelling games and practicing the recorder or pennywhistle during your anchoring times is also appropriate. I would encourage you to step up the reverence in your morning anchoring activities and either begin with a prayer or a verse that brings to mind our relationship with the Divine.

Music can be intimidating or overwhelming if you don't have a music background – or even if you do! There seem to be so many factors that come into play, like all things, we are determined to get it right. Release yourself from this idea of creating the perfect Waldorf homeschooling experience and instead strive for an achievable goal and then set your sights a bit higher the next time. If you have been with Waldorf from the beginning then you are probably either comfortable with a musical instrument or you are using your voice regularly to enrich your schooling experience. This year is an extension of that.

Steiner writes about the child of this age and music:

“All the child's forces, now that he has passed through the change of teeth, strive towards what is inwardly plastic and pictorial. And we support this picture-forming element, when we ourselves, in everything we impart to the child, approach him in a pictorial way. For between the ninth and tenth years something remarkable happens. Now, much more than formerly, the child feels the need to be gripped by what is musical, to be gripped by rhythms. When we observe how the child takes in music up to this stage of life between the ninth and tenth years – how what is musical also lives in the child as something essentially plastic, and how this plasticity naturally becomes an inner formative force of the body, passing over extraordinarily easily into what is dance-like, into movement – then we must recognize how the inner grasping of music as such comes into being only between the ninth and tenth year. This will be quite clearly apparent. Of course, these things are not clearly separated from each other; and those who have insight into them will also foster the musical element before the ninth year, but in the right way – tending more in the direction which I have just characterized. For the child between nine and ten would

get a shock if the musical element were suddenly to take hold of him, before he was inwardly ready and accustomed to being gripped in this strong way.”

So what instruments would be appropriate for this age to bring about music the way Steiner suggests? In the first schools he recommends recorders (a blowing instrument) or violins along with daily singing. This age is perfect for learning to read music and will generally pick it up rather quickly even if they haven't before.

In the end, keep in mind that while striving to bring your child all the best parts of Waldorf, you first must bring them the best parts of you! Work to integrate in only what you can handle and do those things well before taking on another portion. Remember the old saying “jack of all trades, master of none?” This should not be your mantra! Keep school simple, keep it alive and above all, enjoy yourself.

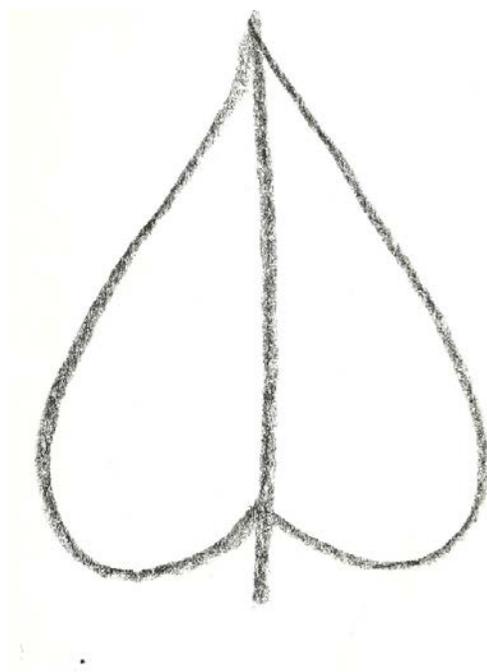
A SAMPLE FROM THE YEAR-AT-A-GLANCE

September	October	November
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 2 weeks review: math & form drawing <input type="checkbox"/> 1 week: who are the Hebrew people? What is the Torah? 7 Days of Creation (review of verbs) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 week Rosh Hashonah 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 week: Sukkoth (building) <input type="checkbox"/> 3 weeks: Old Testament stories, grammar review and punctuation introduction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 week: Noah & his math <input type="checkbox"/> 2 weeks continued Math main lesson, linear measure <input type="checkbox"/> 1 week holiday break

A SAMPLE FROM THE DAILY LESSONS

October	**In planning for this month, be sure to find out when Sukkoth is celebrated this year and place it appropriately in your schedule.
<p>Week 1 – Adam & Eve. Review nouns and adjectives. To prepare for your lessons, be sure to practice your drawing, painting and modeling as well as your form drawing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 17 – Form drawing. The creation of Eve and the naming of the animals. Noun review. Draw, paint or model from your story. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 18 – Retell and summarize your story, continue noun review. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 19 – The Fall. Draw, paint or model from your story. Introduce adjectives if you didn't in second grade, otherwise review them. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 20 – Retell and summarize your story, continue your review. 	<p>Week 2 – The descendants of Adam and Eve. Introducing punctuation. To prepare for your lessons, be sure to practice your drawing, painting and modeling as well as your form drawing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 21 – Form drawing. The story of Cain and Abel. Draw, paint or model from your story. Introducing the period. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 22 – Retell and summarize. Introduce the comma. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 23 – Tell the story of Jabel, tamer of the animals. Draw, paint or model from your story. Introduce the question mark. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 24 – Retell and summarize. Introduce the exclamation point.
<p>Week 3 – Descendents of Cain. Building a sentence like a house. To prepare for your lessons, be sure to practice your drawing, painting and modeling as well as your form drawing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 25 – Form drawing. Tell the story of Jubal, bringer of music. Draw, paint or model from your story. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 26 – Retell and summarize your story. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 27 – Tell the story of Thubal-Cain, inventor and black smith. Draw, paint or model from your story. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 28 – Retell and summarize your story. Tell the story of how the brothers came together to build houses for the first people. Build a sentence together. 	<p>Week 4 – Sukkoth. Prepare to build a Sukkoth and celebrate the week together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 29 – Form drawing, prepare for Sukkoth. <input type="checkbox"/> Lessons 30-32 – build a Sukkoth, discuss how the early Hebrew people may have lived. Continue to read other Old Testament stories together, stop when you get to Noah.

Lesson 4 – Today will be another review of the four processes, get a bit more aggressive in stretching them and helping them remember. Some children may not need this much review, others will still seem as they are struggling. No matter where your child is, it is okay, everyone learns at a different pace.



$$\begin{array}{r} 3 \\ + 4 \\ \hline 7 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 3 \\ \times 4 \\ \hline 12 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 3 \\ + 6 \\ \hline 9 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 3 \\ \times 2 \\ \hline 6 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 5 \\ + 4 \\ \hline 9 \end{array}$$

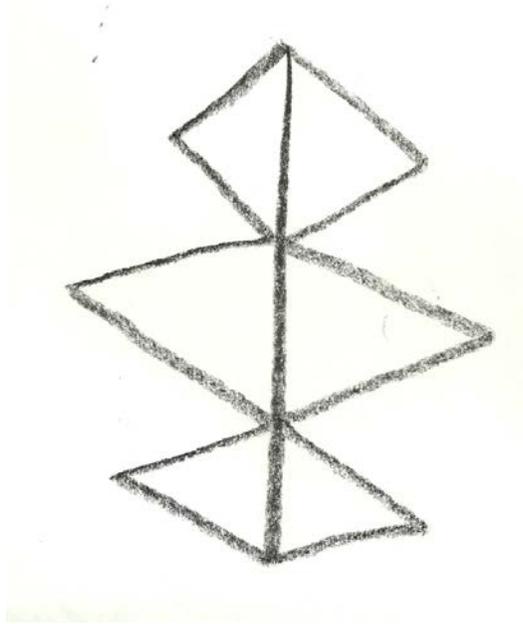
What is 10?
What is 20?

$$\text{III} \times \text{IV} = \text{XII}$$

$$6 \overline{) 24} \begin{array}{r} 4 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

$$5 \overline{) 30} \begin{array}{r} 6 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

Lesson 5 – Today your review will be to practice great than, less than and equal to. Have fun with this, remember these first two weeks are to get back in the groove of things after the summer break. By the end of this week, your review should be complete so you are ready to start on new material.



This is from our second grade curriculum, perhaps your child will remember the story! Be sure to draw, model or paint from your lesson.

Times and Minus on a Walk by Melisa Nielsen

Minus is always so grumpy and today was like all others. If it isn't enough to have robes with holes in them, one of the root gnomes had left some fertilizer outside his cave door and Minus stepped right in it. Seeing that Minus was having another one of his bad days, Times decided to try and cheer him up by taking him on a walk through King Melchizedek's gardens. It was such a pretty day, the sun was shining and the birds were singing. The garden was full of blooms just waiting to be picked. Minus could be very competitive so he challenged Times to a flower picking contest, Times always loving a good contest agreed. They went off running and for a short time Minus appeared to be enjoying himself, he even laughed a time or two. When they reached the big oak tree at the center of the gardens, they fell down laughing with arms full of flowers. Minus decided that he wanted to start counting his right away. After enjoying the breeze, Times sat up under the tree and counted hers as well. In the end it was a tie! They had both gathered the same amount. Times was thrilled for she really just wanted to enjoy an afternoon with Minus in the garden. Minus however was furious and stomped off yelling "silly flowers, I never get things my way." On the way back to the mushroom doorway (this is the doorway between our world and theirs) he tripped over a garden rake.

$5 < 7$

$10 > 6$

$12 < 15$

$3 > 1$

$4 = 4$

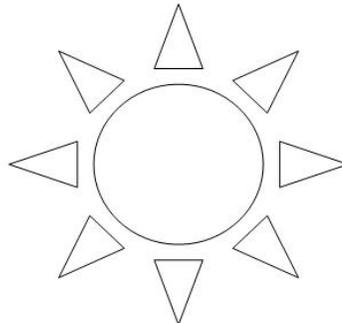
$4 < 6$

$10 + 2 > 4 + 6$

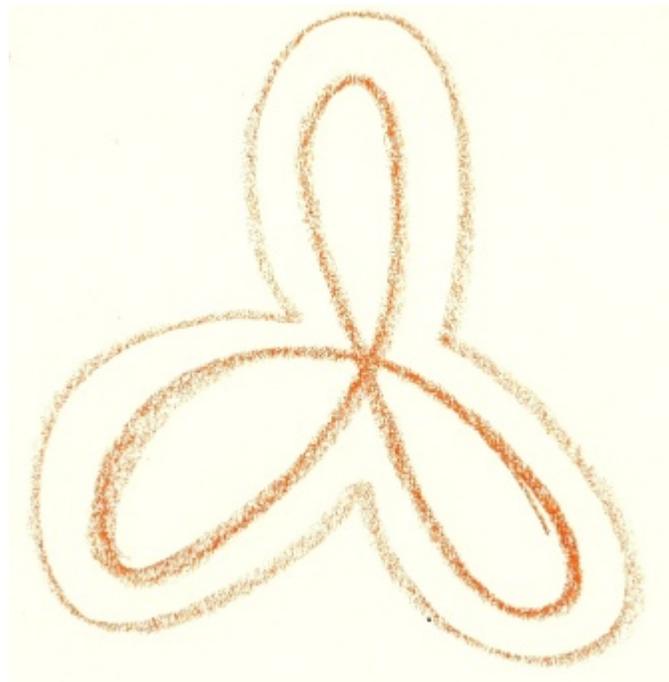
$15 - 2 < 20 + 5$

$11 - 3 < 15 + 6$

$15 - 4 = 14 - 3$



Lesson 17 – Today's focus is Adam and Eve, as well as a review of nouns through a writing exercise. From your chosen resource, tell the story of Eve's creation and their time together in the garden, refer to Bereshit or Genesis, chapters one and two. Draw, paint or model from the story.



Writing exercise, noun review. In your story today, Adam was given dominion over all the Earth and sets out to name the creatures in the garden. For your noun review, write sentences together that follow that thread.

Adam named the dog, the cat and the goat. He named the lion and the cheetah.

Go on in this manner, naming all the animals you can think of.

A Journey Through Waldorf Homeschooling
Grade Four

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Grade four container story, *Katie's 10th Year Travels* by Melisa Nielsen

This container story is in two parts, part one takes the student through grade four and part two through grade five. (This volume contains grade four only.) They blend together as the two years integrate the concepts of man verses animal and then the mirroring of plants and the Earth. Elements of the entire curriculum for the two grades are woven throughout the story, including form drawing, history, geography, literature and science. As the travelers cross the continents they are picking up seeds here and there that will be planted in grade five, so be mindful of flowers that could come from certain regions and insert a day here or there in your main lesson studies where you may have the character pick up for instance a Tulip bulb, well in order for her to not forget what a tulip looks like, she draws a picture of a tulip in her journal (not a scientific picture at this point, just a picture) so your child's main lesson book/journal for these studies will have flowers dispersed here and there as they are collected from the countries the family visits.

I have been asked about the main lesson book for these two years and what I recommend... I would use a regular lesson book for math, and then perhaps a journal or sketch book for the rest of the year. Sketchbooks cost a bit more, but since this will have a "journal" feel to it, it may be more fun that way, it is up to you. A globe or map of the world is also a must have for your own reference and then to be able to show your child where the family is in their travels. In contrast to the earlier grades where the story progressed several times per week, this time the story slows and you may only be telling a portion at the beginning of each week, but with the activities suggested, they will take you the week to complete.

I give the back story and the lesson plans come from this story, if there are elements that do not work for you then by all means change them to fit, also this can just be a jumping off point, you can make the story far more detailed if you would like. One fun idea might be to do chalkboard drawings of what the character's journal may have looked like and make some journal entries for your child to experience, it is all in what your time permits. The story is also perfect as a sole source stand alone type of product. Good luck!

WEEK 1

Our little family introduced in grade one and followed in grade three is growing so much. Katie is now approaching her tenth birthday, Ben is thirteen and baby Samuel is no longer a baby! He is a rough and tumble toddler that everyone loves to chase around the farm. Last year, when Katie was almost nine, their grandmothers came to visit bringing stories from their family heritage, one grandmother was Native American and the other was Jewish. One day, while Joseph, the children's father was milking the cow, Katie came into the barn looking very contemplative. "what is on your mind young one?" Joseph asked. "Well father" Katie replied, "I have been thinking about some of the stories that Oma told us from the Torah and I was wondering some things."

"What things were you wondering?" asked Joseph.

"Well, I remember the stories of the garden of Eden and I was wondering where all those plants and animals were and what they looked like. Then I started thinking about the story she told us about Babel and I wondered what the people in other lands might be like and what sorts of stories they might read about," said Katie.

“Wow!” laughed Joseph as he put his arm around his daughters growing frame, and he looked into her eyes and said “I was sitting here milking this cow wondering just where I was going to take you on your birthday journey, you have given me a wonderful idea. Let’s go inside with this milk and talk to your mom a bit.”

The two went inside where the farm house kitchen smelled of fresh bread. Sarah, the children’s mother was cleaning up Samuel with the help of Ben.

“I think we should have a family meeting. Katie’s 10th birthday is approaching and I have a great idea for her birthday trip.” Remarked Joseph

The family gathered around the table as Sarah cut a slice of bread for each member of the family and got some butter and jam out for them to enjoy. Katie gathered cups for water and they all sat and listened to what Joseph had to say. You see, each child got to go on an expedition with their father on their 10th birthday to mark the first decade on their human journey. Ben had chosen New Zealand and Australia for his trip and came home with tales of kangaroos and wallabies. His trip journal was filled with magical creatures and wild adventures.

“Well,” Joseph began, “I was thinking that for Katie’s trip we could visit the Nordic lands and then move on to the lands of India, Persia, Greece and Egypt. Along the way we could study some of the animals of our land and Katie you could learn a bit more about how our area came to be settled.”

Katie squealed with joy! “Father this is perfect! I can also bring back seeds from other lands and mother and I can try our hand at planting them in our garden next year.”

Joseph turned to Ben and asked him if he thought he could handle the farm while they were gone on the journey. Ben puffed up his chest and took the burden on with pride, knowing that he could make his father proud.

The following days were consumed with preparations for the long journey (the boat ride alone would have been 4-6 weeks then.) It was a five day walk from the farm to the ocean to catch the boat that would take them on their trip. Sarah would need to pack enough food for Joseph and Katie on their walk and then Joseph would plan to gather more food at the port before leaving. Sarah gathered books for her daughter to read on the journey, books of far away lands and labeled them each with a number in the order that Katie should read them, she packed a journal for Katie to keep about the trip and a rope so that Katie could practice tying knots if she got bored on the boat. Sarah included pencils and crayons and all manner of things, for this was no vacation, it was an expedition and all sorts of learning would be taking place. Ben gave Sarah his trip journal to read so she could learn about the animals of New Zealand and Australia. Sarah expected that Joseph would make sure his daughter came home with a great knowledge of the cultures of the world and the plants and animals that inhabit it.

Two days before the trip, Joseph asked Katie to draw a map of the farm and village so that when they were gone she could have that as a piece of home. Katie took great pride in her map.
**FIRST MAPPING ACTIVITY- MAP SURROUNDINGS*

The day finally came, they were ready, the mule was packed with food for the trip and goods for trading, clothes for them to wear and all of Katie’s supplies were neatly packaged with a letter from her mother **FOR LETTER WRITING PRACTICE HAVE CHILD WRITE A LETTER AS IF*

IT WERE FROM SARAH TO KATIE preparations were made on the farm, an extra farm hand was hired to help Ben, the horses all got new shoes, and Joseph gave Ben final instructions for the planting and harvesting that would take place while he was to be gone.

As they walked from the doorway of the farm, Katie could not help but remember the last time she left on a trip with her father. She took his hand and asked “Father, do you suppose we will see Roak before we get to the sea?”

“Oh I am sure of it” answered Joseph with confidence as they started down the walkway.

“Now Katie, I want you to take note of our surroundings. Try to remember each day what you see so you can put it in your book each night, making a map of our journey to the sea.”

**MAPPING ACTIVITIES OF LARGER LOCAL AREA – GO FROM NEIGHBORHOOD TO TOWN, THEN LOOK AT LARGER MAPS OF THE STATE/PROVINCE*

Right away Katie set herself to paying attention to her surroundings, she wanted her map to be as accurate as possible. Joseph began their first day’s walk with a lesson about their area and how it came to be settled. He recalled as a young child being told that the settlers liked the area for it’s rich soil, and how his father decided to stay in the area because of the friendly native people.

**USE THIS AS A TIME TO DEVELOP SOME LOCAL HISTORY CONNECTIONS WITH YOUR CHILD, IT DOES NOT NEED TO BE IN GREAT DEPTH, BUT ENOUGH FOR THEM TO COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING AS TO WHY THE FIRST PEOPLE MOVETO YOUR AREA AND WHAT NATURAL RESOURCES WHERE THERE THAT THEY PUT TO USE – be brief as this will be touched on again in more depth later – this is also a good time to pull out a globe or world map and explain longitude and latitude to your child as it will be a handy tool to incorporate over the next two years as you locate each country the family will be visiting.*

END OF FIRST SCHOOL WEEK

September	
<p>Week 1 – LA/social studies- introduce the container story.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 1 – Form drawing. Tell the first part of the container story. Introduce your child to their journal or go shopping together for one. You want one large enough for their work, but small enough to give them the “journal” feel. Begin your lessons by mapping your surroundings. You could do several little activities with this for instance have your child start by mapping your home from memory and then see how they did. Later in the week you could do the same with your neighborhood, go on a fun treasure hunt together, etc. • Day 2 – Have your child write a letter as if they were the mother, Sarah in the story. What would that letter say? Have your child imagine him or herself as the one going away for the next year, how would they feel about the family that was staying behind? What sorts of things would they hope you would tell them in the letter? Focus on proper letter writing form and have them record the letter in their journal. • Day 3 – Map a larger area now, go from neighborhood to town. Look at local maps and discuss what the symbols mean. Take a trip to your local tourism office (most Chamber of Commerce offices are one.) • Day 4 – Talk about local history. Is there a local history museum you can visit together? What resources are local that caused people to want to settle in your area? Write in their journal about it. <p>Don't forget to start some daily math practice. Math in circle time is good, also a few problems written in their main lesson book of concepts they already know and are reviewing is a good idea. I get sample problems from workbooks or from math websites on the internet. I generally only use a few problems a day.</p>	<p>Week 2 – LA/Social Studies/Science – Animal introductions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 1 – Form drawing. Tell the next part of the story. Begin the man and animal lessons by doing some good comparisons – how is a rock different from a seed? How are they the same? How are we different from animals? How are we the same? These are great themes for writing in their journal and provide great ideas for drawing as well. • Day 2 – Buffalo study (see animal study section for information) To keep the writing activities with these studies from getting too dry, I would have my son meditate on what he thought it would be like to be each animal and then he approached his writing that way. So this might begin “I am a buffalo, I live in Yellowstone National Park. I live with my family, we are called a herd.” And go from there, you may need to help with the first sentence. Their writing should cover the basics of each animal presented. • Day 3 – Work together to find another animal of interest with an overdeveloped metabolic system like a cow or a pig. Write about it in their journal. • Day 4 – Mule deer study (see animal study section for information) Do the above activities. Also if you have the opportunity to see some of these animals in the wild via a national park or wilderness area, go and try to view them. It is such a rewarding experience.

A Journey Through Waldorf Homeschooling
Grade Five

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Introduction

*“Rich in royal worth and valour,
Rich in holy Vedic lore,
Dasaratha ruled his empire
In the happy days of yore”
~Dorothy Harrer*

Grade five is such a fun year, full of so much, it really begins to bridge the gap between the folklore they have had and the history they are encountering. I have to say that writing this grade was a bigger challenge than I originally thought it would be, not because the material was difficult but because there is so much of it and I really had to wrestle with what to bring the children. I stuck to many of the common Waldorf suggestions, but also stepped outside those lines a bit and brought in more cultures, lest they be forgotten. There were many more cultures that I did get to! I would have loved to spend time on ancient China and Japan but with all the other cultures in the mix it was impossible. I do encourage you to study these on your own, to seek out resources from your library and give these stories to your children, find stories too that they can read on their own and allow them the opportunity to really explore what interests them.

I found that while writing this year I really looked at faith in a different way. Reading about all these ancient cultures really brings together the idea, the thought and the peace that comes from knowing we are all one body. One can really look at these ancient stories and see roots of many modern day faiths embodied there. It is comforting to me to know that the Universe, God, whatever name you give that energy, hasn't changed a whole lot and that we are still all learning.

May the folklore in this year inspire and ignite not just your children, but you as well!

Blessings!

February	
<p>Week 1 – LA/Social Studies/Science – Egypt Continue container story.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 1 - Form drawing. Introduction to Egypt. Find it on the map. Together draw out your own map of Egypt. Introduce the Egyptian pantheon as a family tree, draw it together (see example on companion CD.) For extra main lesson work and handwriting practice, copy one of the Egyptian works from the stories section and illustrate it. Introduce the concept of a pharaoh as a leader, how is this different from the leadership in the country you live? • Day 2 – Introduce hieroglyphics, the concept of using pictures or symbols to write rather than our system of using letters to make words. Using the hieroglyphs found on the companion CD, have your child draw out their name for their lesson book. Explore what a modern hieroglyph might look like, how would you tell a story through pictures? What is the Rosetta Stone? Why is it important? If extra work is needed, continue the theme of copying one of the Egyptian works in the stories section and illustrate it. • Day 3 – What did ancient Egyptians eat? How about modern ones? When Erik went to Egypt he and my father in law decided to play it safe and eat at McDonald’s! Would you or your child do this? Or would you sample the local food? Can you make some Egyptian food? Also, what sorts of plants might our travelers be collecting for the seed collection? And what animals might they be encountering? Take time to put these in your lesson book. • Day 4 – What do we know about the pyramids? What is their purpose? How were they built? Compose a piece together (or have your child alone) about the pyramids and illustrate it. Ask your child... if they were a pharaoh what would they take with them into the afterlife? What might their burial place look like? This might be another good time to employ the library for some great videos on this subject. 	<p>Week 2 – LA/Social Studies/Science – Egypt Container story.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 1 – Form drawing. For this week’s form drawing, spend more time on hieroglyphics. Spend time talking about mummification, why was it used? Is this the only culture that used it? Start the first half of the story of Isis and Osiris from the stories section and illustrate from it. • Day 2 - Read the last half Isis and Osiris, finish illustrating the story and write a report about it. How fun can this report be? Could you perhaps use hieroglyphs to make a cover? What sorts of things from the last two weeks can be included in this report? • Day 3 – These next two days, the last on ancient Egypt, spend some time exploring what sort of pharaoh your child would be... a fair and just ruler? What sort of head dress would they wear? Jewelry? For additional work, copy one of the Egyptian works from the stories section and illustrate from it. You could even get some scrapbook papers that look like papyrus to write the report on before adding it to your journal. If you have access to the real thing that would be a wonderful treat! • Day 4 – Finish up your studies of Egypt. Take the time to tie up any ends from this study. If you have time you could discuss and play the game of senet, it is a little like parcheesi or backgammon. Basics can be found easily on the Internet. <p>There is so much to learn about Egypt! This short block did not even cover popular pharaohs – if time permits you could cover them, at least some of the more popular ones. Many larger city museums have displays of Egyptian artifacts, take advantage of these exhibits if you can.</p>

This is a continuation of our family from previous years, their story, etc.

February

Week 1. Darius tells Katie about the wonderful land of Egypt. He showed her ancient writings known as hieroglyphs and teaches her how to write her name. He also talks to her about the food Egyptians eat, the types of plants they might harvest and the animals she would see.

Egypt. So much can be said of Egypt. Try not to be overwhelmed or to overwhelm your child! It is covered much more in-depth as they continue through the grades, for now keep it simple and dig deeper only if your child leads you in that direction. If by chance you are teaching both a grade five child and a grade three child, this would be a great time to discuss some Torah/Old Testament references to Egypt, including the selling of Joseph by his brothers. This is also a great time to combine some studies of clothing and farming if you are also teaching a third grader. Maximize your time Mom!!

Ancient Egyptians were some of the first farmers, existing about 8,000 years ago. Their culture was so rich that it is easily a favorite to study. While they were not world travelers of their time, they did travel parts of Asia and Africa and they had a good amount of trade set up for things such as wood, gold, ivory, and spices. Their farming practices made them a very rich culture. It is said that Osiris taught them to farm wheat and barley and then they became civilized. Egypt was ruled by a king called the pharaoh. Older dynasties worshiped Ra the sun god who was thought to be the first pharaoh. Temples were built to honor Ra and other gods. Pharaohs were more than just men, some were women and even children that had help from older relatives until they were old enough to rule. It is thought that the Egyptian pantheon (directory of gods) could have contained as many as 2,000 gods and goddesses. They had a god or goddess for many different human functions, a god of learning, one of children and babies, ones for the seasons, and many others.

Today, nearly 78 million people live in Egypt, most of them along the Nile River. It is called the Arab Republic of Egypt and is located at the top of the continent of Africa.

Mummies. If your children are anything like ours, it is likely that by this year you have discussed mummies and how they can not possibly come back to life. My children have this on going banter that doesn't serve them well where they tease each other about Ramses chasing them down – Erik has to remind them that he's seen Ramses resting place and there is indeed no way that he can chase them down! A mummy is a dead body that has been prepared in a certain way to last thousands of years. Egyptians believed that their dead traveled to other worlds and needed preparations before they could take these journeys on to the afterlife. Priests took great care to prepare the bodies perfectly so that nothing would be lost in the next life. They took all the major organs out of the body and put them into jars that were buried with them. Bodies were laid out to dry for 40 days and then washed, rubbed down with ointments and then wrapped tightly. Rich Egyptian families also made sure their families were mummified right along with them and while many people were mummified, only the rich could afford a beautiful funeral send-off. The pyramids were huge tombs for the dead pharaohs – many however were moved because of grave robbing and hidden in secret places.

Food, crops and clothing of ancient Egypt. The Nile River in Egypt is a rich area that floods each year helping the farmers be abundant in their crops. They grew wheat and barley, grapes for wine and vegetables. They also developed a systems of ditches so they had irrigation during the floods, directing the water where they needed it to go. Egyptians used their feet not just to stomp the grapes for wine, but also the knead the dough they used to make their breads. Some of the tombs have had breads in them for the mummies to snack on if they got hungry on their way to the after life. Ancient Egyptians would have eaten a fairly simple but beautiful diet consisting of many raw and natural foods as well as prepared meats.

The clothing of ancient Egyptians would consist mostly of linen that is from a plant fiber known as flax, weaving this together would have produced yards of very fine, airy clothing perfect for

those who lived in this region where the heat can be well into the 100's of degree Fahrenheit in the warmer months. The workers and poorer people would have worn very simple clothing while the richer classes and pharaohs would have been richly adorned. Jewelry and ornamentation was an important part of how they dressed for both men and women, great care would have been taken to be sure that they always looked their best. Both men and women wore face make up. Their shoes would have been made from reeds that were woven and had to be replaced often as they quickly wore out.

Papyrus was a paper that was made from the tall reeds that grew along side the Nile River. The word paper comes from "papyrus" – these were scrolls that took a long time to make – the process had several steps that began with cutting of the reeds and then laying them criss cross in a weaving type pattern to get them to stay together, then pounding out the plants juices and making the paper smooth with a tool, the shorter pieces were then glued together and rolled into a scroll used later for writing. Since the process took such a long time, often old broken pieces on clay pots were used as "scratch" paper. The inks used were made from the soils that were rich dark browns or red depending on where it came from.

Popular animals of Egypt. In ancient Egypt, hippos were known to live in the Nile River, boaters had to be very careful as hippos can be very dangerous. Ostriches were hunted for their feathers that were made into fans to keep the rich class cool during the hot months. It is also said that Egyptians may have been the first ancient culture to tame cats. They were used to help with mouse control in graineries and homes.

A Journey Through Waldorf Homeschooling
Grade Six

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Chapter 1 The Sixth Grade

“At the age of twelve, children become awkward and clumsy. This is because they are not quite happy in their body. The spirit is taking a firmer hold and entering, so to speak, the bony system.” ~ Roy Wilkinson, “The Curriculum of the Rudolf Steiner School”

Does this describe your child at all? A year or so back, Erik and I were shopping at Target, just walking the isles enjoying a quiet date night and getting some walking in during the cold winter months, when out of nowhere this loud crash! We both looked at this child that somehow had managed to fling her body at the oddest angle right into the display of dog toys – poor thing, she was mortified. My guess is she was also twelve. The hardest part this year might not be the schooling or the brave new worlds they are discovering, it may just be not laughing in front of them when they do something silly!

This year may be a hard transition for some as they discover their bodies a bit, are you ready Mom? Check out our chapter on inner work for some thoughts on helping you both on this new journey. Take advantage of this time moms! Boy or girl, this is a great time to get them into more healthy habits, not because they should care about what others think, even though this may be where it will be taken for them, but because they can really start to see the reasoning behind asking them to shower daily, wear a clean shirt, etc.

Steiner had some great things to say about children of this age. Roberto Trostli summarizes him well in “Rhythms of Learning” –

“After age nine, as the etheric body begins to be permeated by the forces of the astral body, thinking becomes imbued with a feeling element, and thus becomes more vivid. The etheric body can also work reciprocally upon the astral body, illuminating sensations and feelings with the light of thinking so that students can become more objective about their perceptions and experiences and can form judgments. The mutual activity of these bodies makes the child of twelve especially receptive to two realms: the study of literature, history, and geography, which develops empathy and understanding; and the study of mathematics, physics, and chemistry, which develops objectivity and clarity.”

** For those new to the method the terms astral body and etheric body may be new. Most people see the word “body” and think only of the physical, Steiner had a different meaning when he spoke of humanity, thinking more of our higher selves. Of these bodies, which there are four, only the physical body is noticed by our outward senses, the others are not. There are three higher bodies known through his work as the etheric body, the astral body, and the I or the ego. The physical body is subject to the laws of physics and chemistry. The etheric body brings about growth, reproduction and “living” – it is also often called the “living body” by Steiner. The astral body is the body that allows us to perceive emotion, sensations and be conscious. Then of course the “I” or the ego. The differences are easily seen if you compare the human being to plants or animals. All three have a physical body, all three have an etheric body, but only humans and animals have an astral body – go further and realize then that only humans have an ego. Animals, while aware, do not carry with them the sense of “I” that we as humans do – and that we fight so hard to shake off sometimes! **

Trostli goes on to say that children that are young see the world as a reflection of themselves and science for those ages shows them how the world often mirrors those human qualities. Of course, after the age of nine, things really begin to change for them. They start to see how separate they are from the world, especially as they begin to realize their relationships with the animal and plant world, no longer are they seeing animals as cuddly little figures, they are seeing them for their own qualities (as studied in grade four) and also with plants as studied in grade five. Plants take on a whole new view when they are more than just pretty things to look at, they become alive in a new way when one can look at a flower and realize how connected it is to the sun, the earth, the animal kingdom and humanity.

“Only when students are twelve, can they begin to look at themselves more objectively and begin to recognize how physical forces manifesting in the world are also at work in the human being.”
- Trostli, *“Rhythms of Learning”*

In Steiner’s lecture “Education for Adolescents” he discusses how he believes thinking occurs. He says it comes together in three stages, first we draw conclusions, then we pass judgment, then we form concepts. He believed that only the last one, forming concepts, was actually connected with thinking, where passing judgment is connected with our rhythmic system and our feelings and drawing conclusions relates to the legs, the feet and then the ego. Think about this for a moment – break it down in momspeak – we pass judgment from our feelings (i.e., a certain situation makes us feel...) we draw conclusions often from our ego without finding out all the information (sound like any nine-year old you might know?!) but it is only when we are old enough to reason and pull the three together that we can use our head (thinking) and think through something we may have seen or heard that may have in fact hurt us or frustrated us. It is this “thinking” that can only occur around the age of twelve – before that much of their existence is that of knee-jerk reactions and “you stepped on me on purpose” kind of behavior.

Steiner goes on to say that conclusions are perceptions brought into the realm of consciousness. He uses an example of hearing verses listening. Hearing is often done on auto pilot whereas it takes our active involvement to listen. Our judgments allow us to make sense of our impressions. *“Conclusions develop awareness, judgments result in knowledge, but concepts form the basis for wisdom, allowing us to understand ourselves and the world around us.”* – Trostli, *“Rhythms of Learning”*

It is easy to see that many changes are happening within the children of this age group, you may have noticed the more tangible ones first, that of physical development, but the changes in the astral body are likely becoming quite noticeable as well. This can really be a fun time for you and your child. Enjoy it!

September

Week 1 – Physics of silence and sound, see page 53 for this week’s full lesson background.

- Day 1 – Welcome to grade six! Officially in middle school and the realm of the pre-teen! Ease back into school with lessons on silence and sound this week. Begin with the silence and sounds in nature. What do you hear? Draw together what you think the sounds might be. Writing practice (verses in lesson background section.) Math practice.
- Day 2 – The sounds of creation. Sound provokes emotion. Today again try to rise early, together with your child explore how sounds make you feel, through the spoken word, through music, both listened to and created. What emotional responses do you get? Writing practice. Math practice.
- Day 3 – Foley arts and music. Today will cover different sounds used in movies and plays to create other sounds. We have many of these sounds on our companion CD for this book. Also take the time to do some of the sound experiments with glasses of water and musical instruments. Writing practice. Math practice.
- Day 4 – Sound travel. Today you will explore a bit about how sound travels through the air, through solids and through water. Writing practice. Math practice.

Week 2 –Social studies and geography, see page 59 for this week’s lesson ideas.

- Day 1 – Review the geography of your homeland, if your child has gaps, then spend the next two weeks getting them filled. Americans, this means your child should know where the states are, at least most of them. The work of this week will help. Start a timeline of your homeland. Who were the first settlers? When? Writing practice. Math practice.
- Day 2 thru 4 – Talk about major movements through your country’s history, this isn’t in-depth but keep track on your timeline and show a relationship of time for your child, what things happened and in what order. Pick scenes from history stories to draw about and have your child write a bit about them too. Another thought for writing this week is to work on your nation’s anthem; most are composed of beautiful poetry. Writing practice. Math practice.

Keep in mind that while this is a short block on the history of your country, there will be much more in depth study later on. In grade seven and eight, there will be much more on these topics as revolutions are covered and more geography is covered. Think of this block as a good, first layer.

Free reading over the next two weeks should back up what you are studying.

Physics of silence and sound. Welcome to week one of this year and welcome to physics! This first block will focus on silence and sound. In preparing for this book, I read a lot about teaching sound physics in grade six and how the teachers in school approach it using a lot of the observation skills the children have been building for the last six or so years. It starts with nature walks when they are in kindergarten and before and nicely flows into the skills they need now to really look at the science. One thing that came to my attention, something that I really have taken for granted since I live in a Waldorf bubble, is that Waldorf science always strives to keep humans at the center. Mainstream science often pulls humanity apart from science and splits us into wavelengths, cells, atoms without looking at the whole – there's that whole to parts thing again! It is important from the Steiner perspective to realize that everything is alive and we are the center of it, without us this study wouldn't be relevant or necessary so keeping a connection is central to teaching these principles to your children. Even if you aren't of a mainstream faith organization, I suggest you take the time to really give thanks for all that has been created for we live in a truly amazing world.

This week you will journey not only into the world of sound but also inside yourself into the world of silence. Many faiths explore silence and I have tried to give several references to verses that would easily flow into your lesson plans. Start the week with a pre-dawn or dawn nature observation with your child. It would be best if you could perhaps get up with him/her alone, if this isn't possible on your first day, traditionally being Monday, then see if you can do the observation portion on Saturday or Sunday when dad is also home. Most children do not know the sounds of early morning. Sure many families have solstice celebrations that may center around the rising or setting sun, but these are often family events and it is easy to not notice the sounds coming from nature when you are worrying about the sounds coming from your toddler! So take this time with your child. I would suggest perhaps doing a dry run of this alone before hand, I try to greet each morning this way as a moment to get centered and the benefits are amazing. You may find yourself *wanting* to rise before dawn more often.

As you rise on this day, see how much of it you can do in silence (this will take preparation on your part in letting your child know this is the plan!) – as you quietly dress for your nature exploration, notice the sounds in your home at this time of the morning. From inside what do you hear? Can you hear the birds yet? Cars on the street? Be sure to have your lesson book handy and some drawing pencils and crayons. Go out and see if you can find silence. Is it possible? What sounds do you hear? Which ones are of nature and which ones are of man? Practice being entirely present – is this hard for you? For your child? If it is, you may want to work together and do this exercise more often. After you have observed for a while, take the time to draw and write about what you observed.

Writing practice ideas for this lesson:

The Breeze at Dawn by Rumi

The breeze at dawn has secrets to tell you
Don't go back to sleep.
You must ask for what you really want
Don't go back to sleep.
People are going back and forth across the doorsill where the two worlds touch.
The door is round and open.
Don't go back to sleep.

A Journey through Waldorf Geometry

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	Conclusion
	Slideshow

Lesson 2 (Grade 5)

Ancient Egyptians constructed near perfect circles using ropes. Records show that they had knowledge of circles as early as 2630 BCE! Working some of these lessons in with your grade five ancient cultures block would be very appropriate. Before you take this lesson to paper, take it to the park! Gather a few materials: a rope, some chalk and a child or two. You'll want to find a spot that has an area of at least ten feet so you have plenty of room to move. Mark the center of the space with an "X" – this is where your child stands with one end of the rope. Decide how big your circle will be and extend your rope to half that size. With your child holding one end, you will draw a chalk circle as your child rotates in the center of the circle. This is the same basic exercise you will do on paper for many of the geometry forms in the following lessons.

This lesson is reminiscent of the times table lessons in earlier grades, only we won't be focusing on the times tables, just the beauty of shapes. Construct a circle with a string and pencil (like you did above with the rope and chalk) – this lesson is constructed on the companion DVD.

On the outside of your circle, mark it off like you would to make a clock with all 12 numbers.

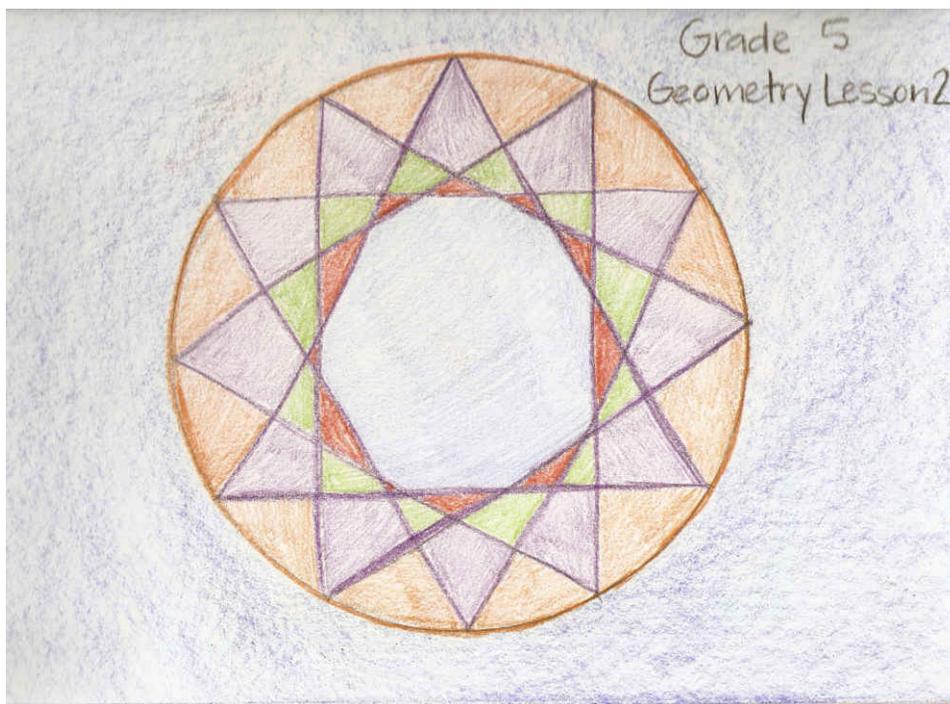
Freehanded, connect :

1 to 5 with a line, 5 to 9 with a line, 9 to 1 with a line.

Once you have this initial triangle constructed, finish this drawing by joining:

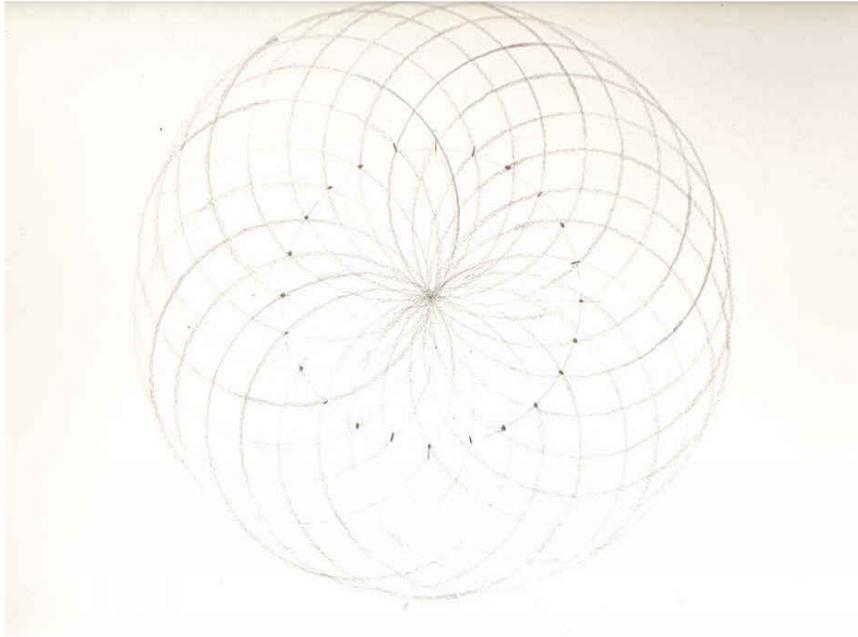
2 to 6, 6 to 10, 10 to 2, 3 to 7, 7 to 11, 11 to 3, 4 to 8, 8 to 12, 12 to 4

Now that you have your circle constructed with triangles nestled inside, begin to make it beautiful! Congratulations! Your first freehanded geometric drawing is done!



Lesson 9 (Grade 6)

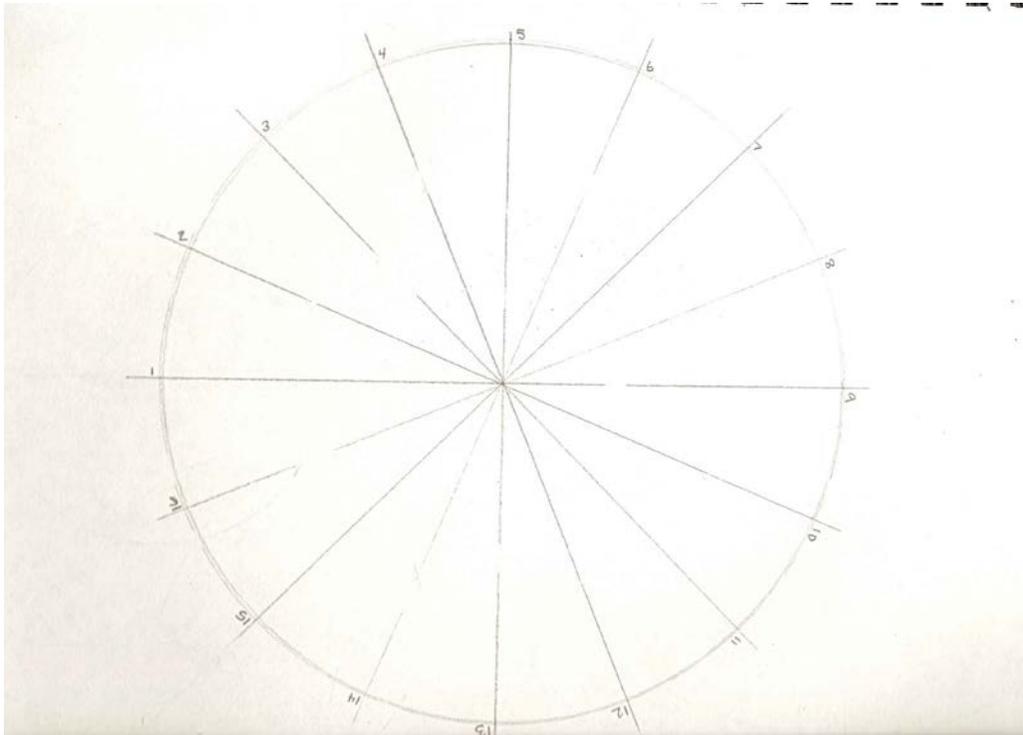
These circles look hard but really they aren't. Construct a 24-gon and erase all your arcs, keep your markings for each division. You should have 24 points around your circle. With your radius the same as your circle, place the point of your compass at each of the 24 points and construct a circle. See the figure below. This construction can take on many variations – have your child play around with how it changes based on changing the width of the compass or skipping some circles. Have fun with it!



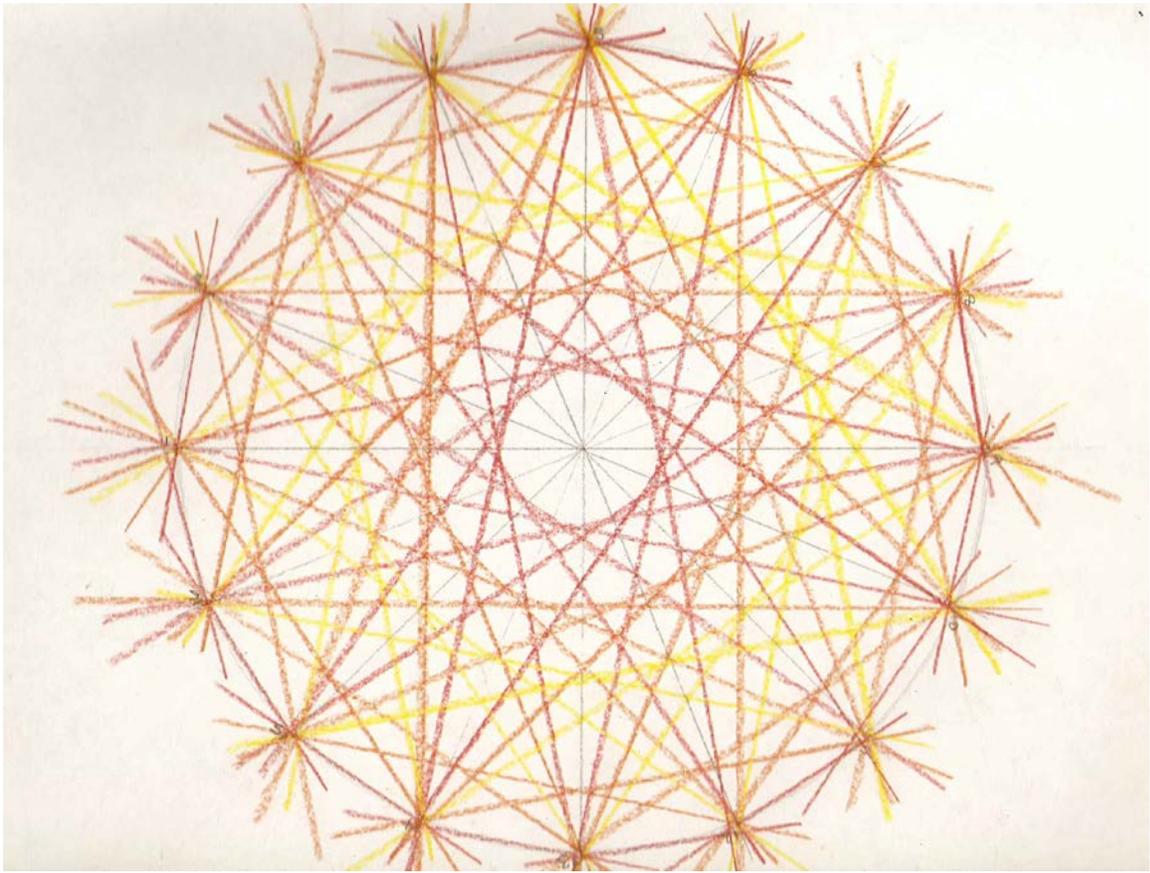
Lesson 10 (Grade 7)

This lesson focuses on circles, the construction looks complicated but once you get all the angles bisected then you have the basic construction done. You could use a protractor for the angle bisections but it is good practice to use the method in lesson nine and also generally more accurate. You could use the protractor to check your work.

Begin with a set of perpendicular lines and putting the point of your compass at the center, draw a circle with a radius of approx 3.75 inches. Bisect the first four 90° angles and then bisect those, giving you sections that are 22.5° - 16 of these sections. Erase your arcs and number your points.



Start with connecting every fifth point around the circle and then you could do sixth and seventh as well – that is what is shown in our picture. I used colored pencils for the figure to easily show the progression – you could go one step further and color it in. Think about where in nature these circles can be found.



I hope this preview of our work was helpful to you in understanding our style.

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Many blessings on your journey!

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