

Waldorf 101

Would you like to convert your classroom or home to a Waldorf home or classroom? Would you like to know the meaning behind some of the Waldorf activities? I created a packet for the Waldorf parents at my school ten years ago to help them understand what the essence of Waldorf is and what the meaning behind the activities we did at school were. Each week we discussed a different topic from the handout. I called this mini-course “Waldorf 101” because it was a series I designed especially for new Waldorf parents to help get them started on the Waldorf path.

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PHILOSOPHY

WALDORF PHILOSOPHY

Your Children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of life's longing for itself.
They come through you, but not from you,
And though they are with you – yet they belong not to you.

You may house their bodies but not their souls.
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow.
which you cannot visit. Not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,
But seek not to make them like you.

– Khalil Gibran

“Accept the children with reverence, educate them with love, send them forth in freedom.” So said Rudolf Steiner, the Founder of Waldorf Education. And indeed, his vision for schooling the whole child, and not just the mind, still stands today, eighty years after the first Waldorf school opened in Stuttgart, Germany.

Many speak highly of the Waldorf philosophy; but many others don't really know what it is. Rudolf Steiner's views on child development led him to create a system that was designed to teach at the most appropriate level for a child's developmental stage. Rudolf Steiner believed in educating the mind and the soul. There is a stronger focus on the arts, such as music, drama, sewing, and painting; these skills are as essential to a complete life experience as academic subjects. Waldorf schools have programs for students from preschool through to graduation, and focus on balancing the academic with the arts. For example, each day might begin with a math class, followed by learning music or a foreign language. These latter examples are referred to as classes that stimulate the “heart” faculty of the child (as opposed to the head). Academics and the arts often complement each other; for instance, studying a certain period of history might involve not only reading about the events, but also writing then performing a play based on the era.

In the early years of schooling teachers are the main source of learning, not textbooks. Steiner believed that younger children learn primarily through imitation, and watching and working with a teacher therefore better facilitates developing appropriate skills. In later years (high school), Waldorf schools share common traits with public ones; students are taught by specialists in each subject, and take courses that will lead to college acceptance, etc. However, Waldorf schools also foster a hunger for and love of learning: students are exposed to the philosophies of people such as Socrates, and learn about the positive impact a person can have on human history.

The arts continue to play an important role, and even if students don't show special talent in a field, they are still encouraged to create, whether through playing a musical instrument or weaving a shawl. Students discover that they have the ability to learn new skills, even in areas that might seem difficult to master. Waldorf schools also do not focus on competition with others; grades and competitive sports are de-emphasized, for example. The philosophy of this school seems to not only embrace lifelong learning, but also to embrace the sense that all this learning is done for oneself; Steiner's vision of educating the "whole" child is indeed a reality at these schools.

TEACHER/PARENT MODELING

A toddler longs for rhythm, repetition and activities which feel safe. As a parent, you should continue on your daily rhythm or schedule and then slowly add a child, or two, or three within your daily activity. Contact other mothers while your toddler is napping and arrange a play date at the park, or some other place where there is freedom to move about and nature or animals to explore. The key is that this is a natural event.

Being a part of regular activities which the child is used to is calming to the child. The mother doesn't need to feel stressed that she needs to make a certain appearance and that she is "locked in" to a set period of time. This makes everyone a lot more comfortable, and when you are more comfortable and stress free, you enjoy the time more.

Up until about twenty years ago, most children this age spent all of their time at home with mother and siblings. Play dates and groups are a relatively new concept. The age appropriate behavior for a child this age is to observe and learn by modeling YOUR behavior.

Toddlers don't want friends, they want to do what you do! They enjoy hanging on your hip or standing alongside of you doing the dishes, the laundry, going to the market, etc. These daily activities are learning experiences and a joy for children of this age to participate in.

Reassure yourself that there is plenty of time for friends later. They will have the rest of their lives to socially interact with other children, and in a few short years, they will rather run off to play with children than to spend time at your side. Don't worry about your child getting socialized. The same way they learned to talk and walk, they will learn to play and be social.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FREE PLAY

One of the major changes in education in the past twenty years has been the transformation of the preschool and kindergarten rooms from a child's joyful creative play area into a mini first grade rooms full of lessons and worksheets. Some government agencies around the world have even ruled that this is mandatory for the young child and will help the child in his/her academic work and in his/her growth and development in general. In the 90s early education was so popular it was even brought into the "baby realm" in the form of Baby Einstein videos and black and white themed toys designed to stimulate the baby. However, the myth of "early education" is being challenged more and more frequently. Ironically it was Einstein who said, "If you want a child to be intelligent – tell him fairytales. If you want him to be more intelligent, tell him more fairytales."

One researcher, David Elkind, even wrote an entire book on the subject. In his book, *The Hurried Child*, Elkind, child psychologist and professor at Tufts University, discusses the problem of stress that he find in children who come to him for treatment. He points out that, in the great rush to bring children into academic work, we have ceased to ask if children are inwardly ready for such concentrated, intellectually-oriented work.

The clearest example of such research which has come to our attention is a major study undertaken in Germany comparing 100 public school classes for five-year-olds. Fifty of them had only play in their program and the other fifty had academics and play together. The children entered first grade when they were six, and the study surveyed their progress until they were ten. The first year there was little difference to be seen. By the time the children were ten, however, those who had been allowed to play when they were five surpassed their schoolmates in every area measured. One can imagine how startling these results were to the state educators.

The basic reason that children are not ready for early education is because they are not physically, emotionally and spiritually ready. They may be ready in one of those areas – but not all of them. A child has natural developmental stages. When we interfere with this process by starting children on early academic subjects and methods of learning, their imagination may not fully develop and imagination is the basis of all intelligence.

When we follow the natural rhythms of the child they are better able to grasp and retain information they are given and the educational experience becomes a natural flow of their life. When we impose and outside or unnatural rhythm on the child education can become a challenge and/or a task for the teacher and child.

CURRICULUM & RHYTHM

RHYTHM & STAGES IN WALDORF EDUCATION

Waldorf is a form of education that works with the rhythms of the child, the day, the week, the month and the year. It works with the spiritual, emotional and physical rhythms of the body. It works with the rhythm of the earth – natural foods, toys and other materials are used in Waldorf education. When I think of Waldorf I think of a flowing river.

The rhythm of the child is the first thing we consider. What are they ready for and when are they ready for it? Imagine if you are playing in an orchestra and you have a drum that is playing out of beat. Will it help the orchestra? Will it be effective? The same happens with a child. A child is a complex being that has many systems working in synchronicity. To be able to be effective and in harmony with that child you need to synchronize the beat of your drum (their lessons) with the appropriate age.

I have included an index below and some space on each page for you to record and write your own insights into your child's needs, insights shared with you by others, or favorite quotes that inspire you.

Being able to meet a child's needs according to their natural rhythm will:

1. Foster connection, interdependence, compassion, respect, teamwork and community awareness.
2. Will create natural opportunities for conflict resolution as there will be fewer conflicts.
3. Will help the child connect with their natural rhythms in nature and spirit.
4. Will free their minds to be more creative and will encourage creativity when they most need to be encouraged.'
5. Will help you create a rhythm for your family that is "just right" – not too busy and not too slow. It will help you connect with the rhythms of nature, the day, the week, the months and the year.

SUMMARY OF THE NEEDS & RHYTHMS OF EACH AGE FROM PRESCHOOL TO EIGHT GRADE

SUMMARY OF PRESCHOOL NEEDS & RHYTHMS

Themes: Rhythm, Repetition and Parent Modeling. Cultivate Parent Attachment.

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The age appropriate behavior for a child this age is to observe and learn by modeling YOUR behavior. Toddlers don't want friends, they want to do what you do! They enjoy hanging on your hip or standing alongside of you doing the dishes, the laundry, going to the market, etc. These daily activities are learning experiences and a joy for children of this age to participate in. Reassure yourself that there is plenty of time for friends later. They will have the rest of their lives to socially interact with other children, and in a few short years, they will rather run off to play with children than to spend time at your side. Don't worry about your child getting socialized. The same way they learned to talk and walk, they will learn to play and be social.

Fritjof Capra said,

It is not just all about 'playing with the child.' The child also needs to enjoy and learn by watching you work. Doing work that has to be done over and over again helps us to recognize the natural cycles of growth and decay, of birth and death, and thus become aware of the dynamic order of the universe.

SUMMARY OF KINDERGARTEN NEEDS & RHYTHMS

Themes: The Bridge Between Family and Social Life. Cultivate Social Skills.

The Waldorf Kindergarten is the bridge between family and school life. The Kindergarten child learns through imitative and creative play in a warm, homelike environment, using cloths and simple natural materials. Social skills are developed as children play side by side, listening and sharing and helping one another. Rest and circle time follow morning free play and cleanup. The teacher leads games, poems, seasonal songs and little dramas, which work in the children to integrate their whole being. A snack at the lovely table set with candles is preceded by a blessing, then everyone moves outside for playtime.

Each day has an artistic activity which creates a soothing weekly rhythm for the child. Activities include watercolor painting, drawing, beeswax modeling, seasonal crafts, sewing and finger knitting. Hearing a fairy tale, acting it out, or seeing a puppet play completes the morning. Capable and loving teachers specializing in education for the early years plan the school life with the child's special talents and needs in mind.

Nurturing and protecting childhood in a beautiful, warm, homelike setting is a key element of the Waldorf early childhood program. Reflecting a deep belief that child's natural creative play contains the cornerstones of academic ability, the rhythm of the school day flows between lively social and quiet individual activities. In the first seven years, the child seeks to see that the world is a place of goodness. These early years are a period of joy and exuberance during which the child will absorb and imitate everything he or she sees, and during which learning will flow through the movements of the child. Therefore, the teacher seeks to lead the work of the class in a kind, conscious, loving manner that is worthy of imitation ... and the child learns by doing.

Great care is taken in planning and providing an entry into school life that fosters wonder, joy and possibility ... the early foundations for a life-long love of learning. The Waldorf preschool and kindergarten experience is meant to enliven the imagination and lovingly guide each child toward an understanding of the world ... to plant the seeds for a successful school career and adult life.

SUMMARY OF FIRST GRADE NEEDS & RHYTHMS

Themes: Ability to Build Vivid Inner Pictures. Cultivate the Imagination to Plant Seeds for Future Learning.

All children are carefully assessed as to whether they are ready to embark on this journey. Are they ready to learn to write and later read and do arithmetic without thwarting some other part of their development? Are the growth forces all still needed for growing and playing or are some growth forces freed so that they can be used for their next tasks? The children around about seven years should have the concentration to build their own vivid inner pictures when being told a story, and through such imagery will continue learning in the following years. Fairy tales are told by the teacher then retold and dramatized by members of the class. This cultivates the children's imagination. Starting with simple artwork the children learn to draw forms, which lead to letters and numbers. The four basic mathematic processes are introduced addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Nature stories provide an imaginative introduction to the natural world. These stories provide the basis for drawing, writing and the beginnings of reading and science. Elementary German and Spanish are introduced through songs and games. Even simple numbers come to life by the way they are presented. A triangle has a neat quality of "threeness" that is qualitatively different from a square's blocky "fourness." Numbers become more than simply abstractions in sequence.

SUMMARY OF SECOND GRADE NEEDS & RHYTHMS

Themes: Strong Likes and Dislikes. React Strongly to Images. Cultivating and Guiding the Will.

Second graders are at the age when they begin to have strong likes and dislikes. Eight-year-olds react strongly to imagery in the fables and in stories of saints. They hear fables and stories of legendary characters such as saints. These stories teach of human fallibility and present a model for overcoming adversity. Reading opens a new world of words, and the children begin to master the multiplication tables. Second graders continue to paint and explore Nature, and present their first dramatic play. They learn to crochet and play the pentatonic flute.

SUMMARY OF THIRD GRADE NEEDS & RHYTHMS

Themes: Difference Between Self and Others – Where Do I Belong? Cultivate Confidence and Security.

By the third grade, children are beginning to comprehend the difference between self and other and wonder where in the scheme of things they belong. To fortify their growing personal identity, they read creation and Old Testament stories. Around the age of nine comes a very important psychological change. The child has a stronger experience of its own individuality or identity (ego) and therefore begins to question adult authority. It may feel isolated from family and friends and therefore need more sympathy and firmness from teachers and parents. Again, the subjects given to Class Three are carefully chosen and timed to relate to this inner psychological change.

The Hebrew Old Testament stories give the nine-year-old an inner picture of the security of a God who looks after His chosen people. The Old Testament story of the Fall from Paradise is a vivid image of what the nine-year-old is experiencing in its soul. (Other religious traditions may also wish to add things here). In handwork the children crochet a hat, a visible form of something protecting them. In the main lesson they learn about occupations such as house building, farming and traditional crafts. How do farmers provide our food. Unforgettable is an early morning visit to a cowshed with its characteristic sounds and smells, seeing the cows milked, feeling their warm breath, tasting the fresh milk! Farming, housing, building, measurement, and mastery of the multiplication tables and four arithmetic processes provide a practical foundation for scientific study and help ground the children. They go away together to spend a week on a farm. The study of grammar helps them to develop rational thinking. Each child takes up a stringed instrument: violin, viola or cello.

SUMMARY OF FOURTH GRADE NEEDS & RHYTHMS

Themes: Individuality. What is my place in the world? Cultivate Awareness of Local Environment and Character.

From Class Four children have developed to a point where they can be led into the history and geography of their locality. Tumultuous stories of Norse mythology teach about character and individuality in a complex world. Children begin to learn about their place in the surrounding environment with the study of local geography and map making. They write their own compositions and increase math skills by learning fractions and long division. In music they must hold their own in playing or singing a round.

Students will complete the lesson block on humans and animals, which covers the relationship between the human and animal kingdom. The students find strength and comfort in the comparison of the one-sidedness of various animals with well-roundedness of humans. They create the figure of human form and then follow a detailed study of forms and habitats of animals (beavers, bats, lions, foxes, etc.) through poetry, clay modeling and play-acting to feel fascinating skills and qualities that animals possess. The students see the unique and responsible position humans hold.

SUMMARY OF FIFTH GRADE NEEDS & RHYTHMS

Themes: Who am I? Coming into Oneself. Cultivate Awareness of the Macrocosm of World History and How it Compares to the Microcosm of Child's Development.

Fifth graders begin to come to grips with the history of humanity with the study of ancient cultures from India, Persia, Egypt and Greece. They connect history lessons with their growing athletic prowess in a Greek-style Olympics in the spring. In geography they expand out to the United States and North America. In science they study plant life with botany. The math curriculum now includes decimals, percentages, and practical business math skills, as well as the introduction of geometry. Music, handwork and foreign language study become increasingly challenging.

The study of history brings the child into him or herself by beginning in ancient times and working up to the present day. Geography brings the child into the world by starting locally and expanding to the whole planet.

SUMMARY OF SIXTH GRADE NEEDS & RHYTHMS

Themes: "Reality" – Thoughts Switch from Imagination to Intellectual (Cause and Effect). Cultivate Skills to Guide them in their New Thought Processes.

Children at this age are gaining a firmer relationship with the world they inhabit and want a more solid grasp on reality. At twelve, the child experiences another change. At this age the thinking begins to change from the picture building of the child to the intellectual (logical or cause and effect thinking) of the adult.

However, it is only beginning, and science makes a memorable gateway to the awakening intellect for the child in pre-puberty. They study geology and begin physics with the exploration of optics and acoustics and the properties of heat, magnetism and electricity. In mathematics they learn to apply the basic processes to practical situations. They study ratios and begin algebra. English covers the writing of business and personal letters. Geography covers Central and South America. Sixth graders learn about the structural basis of modern society with the study of Roman law.

SUMMARY OF SEVENTH GRADE NEEDS & RHYTHMS

Themes: Looking Towards Adult Life and Larger Issues in Life. Cultivate Awareness of Historical Periods of Change and Current Events.

By seventh grade the young adolescent is beginning to consider larger issues that will shape the course of adult life. Seventh graders study the major changes in civilization of the Renaissance and the Reformation, which are coordinated with principles of science of those times such as mechanics, astronomy and physiology. Geography lessons also focus on Europe. Math covers more advanced algebra. In English the students writing requires deeper levels of thought and personal self-expression. They play on the school's boys and girls basketball teams. The arts—painting, drawing, singing and instrumental music—as well as drama, handwork and movement stay with the children through to eighth grade growing ever more complex and demanding along the way.

SUMMARY OF EIGHTH GRADE NEEDS & RHYTHMS

Themes: Asserting Oneself into the World. Cultivate Awareness of Powerful Historical Movements and Methods of Forming and Expressing Their One's Own Opinions.

By eighth grade students are ready to assert themselves more in the world. They study the American and French Revolutions and the Industrial Revolution and their consequences. They are encouraged to form more of their own opinions. They learn about the lives of key figures of the twentieth century and write a research paper. Science and math touch on such diverse fields as organic chemistry, meteorology, ecology, aerodynamics, solid geometry and algebra. At the end of the year, the whole class goes on a field trip to a distant destination. By the time young people have finished all eight grades at a Waldorf school, they understand something about many aspects of the world they inhabit. Words, numbers, and a cross-section of the sciences have been covered. Many subjects have been coordinated with one another so that the student comprehends how different aspects of the world fit together. Most have been introduced through the arts, so that he or she knows them on a feeling as well as purely intellectual level. The young person is prepared, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually to face young adulthood with enthusiasm and confidence.

SPECIFIC THEMES FOR EACH GRADE FROM PRESCHOOL TO EIGHT GRADE

PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN SPECIFIC THEMES

Morning

- Circle Time verses— finger rhymes and verses are very important for pre-math and pre-language abilities
- Shaping bread/snack
- Story time— puppet show style, repetitive stories like The Little Red Hen, and relational stories about what children did yesterday, about their birth, about children like them or other children their age and what they do
- Playing with natural toys
- Fantasy play

Afternoon

- Nature walk with a focus on touching, feeling, observing, telling stories, asking questions
- Nature based crafts and art done *with* the parent or teacher or older sibling
- Watching and “helping” a parent do handwork
- Modeling parent chores and activities—being included in what parent is doing

FIRST GRADE SPECIFIC THEMES

Trimester One (1/3) Morning

- Math—counting, the four processes
- Form drawing— straight and curved lines
- Folk tales

Trimester Two (2/3) Morning

- Language and cultural studies
- Fairytales from Europe and Americas

Trimester Three (3/3) Morning

- Drama and writing
- Fairytales from Asia, Australia, and other parts of the world

Note that the organization above is how we ordered the year. You can cover these same lessons in any order you want to.

Afternoon

- Nature stories
- Nature walk
- Nature based crafts and art
- Circle Time including songs and verse in other languages
- Knitting/painting/block crayons/beeswax modeling/etc. depending on the monthly focus in the lesson plans
- Pentatonic recorder

SECOND GRADE SPECIFIC THEMES

Trimester One (1/3) Morning

- Math— basics, the four processes with a focus on addition
- Form drawing— fables

Trimester Two (2/3) Morning

- Lower case letters and grammar
- Legends

Trimester Three (3/3) Morning

- Saints and heroes

Note that you can divide these subjects in any way through the year. This is an example only.

Afternoon

- Nature stories
- Nature walk
- Nature based crafts and art
- Circle Time including songs and verse in other languages
- Foreign language games, poems, and verses
- Knitting/crochet/painting/block crayons/beeswax modeling/etc. depending on the monthly focus in the lesson plans
- Pentatonic recorder

THIRD GRADE SPECIFIC THEMES

Trimester One (1/3) Morning

- Math—measurements of volume, space, money, and time
- Cursive writing
- Form drawing— vertical symmetry

Trimester Two (2/3) Morning

- Grammar and spelling
- Native American stories

Trimester Three (3/3) Morning

- Old Testament stories

Note That you can study these lessons in any order through the year. This was our schedule.

Afternoon

- House building and gardening
- Nature based crafts and art
- Circle Time including songs, verses, and rounds in other languages
- Complex knitting/crochet/painting/block crayons/beeswax modeling/etc. depending on the monthly focus in the lesson plans
- Soprano recorder and reading music

FOURTH GRADE SPECIFIC THEMES

Trimester One (1/3) Morning

- Math— division and long division
- Form drawing— Celtic knots

Trimester Two (2/3) Morning

- Grammar, spelling, and essays
- Local history
- Geography— including mapping

Trimester Three (3/3) Morning

- Poetry
- Norse mythology
- Zoology

Note that you can study these in any order through the year.

Afternoon:

- Nature based crafts and art
- Field trips for local geography
- Practice the four math processes
- Weekly review
- Circle Time including songs, verses, and rounds in other languages
- Complex knitting/crochet/embroidery/sculpture/drawing/painting/block crayons/beeswax modeling/etc. depending on the monthly focus in the lesson plans
- Soprano recorder, continuing to learn to read music, and starting learning to do duets or work in an orchestra situation – more than one instrument

FIFTH GRADE SPECIFIC THEMES

Trimester One (1/3) Morning

- Math— geometry, decimals and the metric system
- India and Persia

Trimester Two (2/3) Morning

- Grammar
- Research and reports
- Different kinds of writing and pen pals
- Ancient Egypt

Trimester Three (3/3) Morning

- Greek mythology and Greece
- North American Geography

Note that you can study these in any order through the year.

Afternoon:

- Nature based crafts and art
- Botany/nature walks, vary intensity of study and science v. exploration and discovery
- Practice the four math processes
- Weekly review
- Circle Time including songs, verses, and rounds in other languages
- Phrases and poems in foreign language of your choice
- Complex knitting like socks and mittens/crochet/embroidery/sculpture/drawing/painting/block crayons/beeswax modeling/carving, etc. depending on the monthly focus in the lesson plans
- Soprano recorder— continuing to learn to read music, starting learning to do duets or work in an orchestra situation – more than one instrument
- Doing two and three part rounds, harmonies, and music from Persia, India, Greece, and Egypt

SIXTH GRADE SPECIFIC THEMES

Trimester One (1/3) Morning

- Literature and poetry
- Biographies
- Composition and spelling
- Physics

Trimester Two (3/6) Morning

- Math— ratio and estimation
- Latin America

Trimester Two (4/6) Morning

- Math— geometry
- Physics

Trimester Three (5/6) Morning

- Rome and The Middle Ages
- Astronomy

Trimester Three (6/6) Morning

- Geology— including minerals and gems and studies on their effects in healing

Note that you can do these in any order through the year.

Afternoon

- Nature based crafts and art
- Botany review/nature walks, vary intensity of study and science v. exploration and discovery
- Practice the four math processes
- Circle Time including songs, verses, and rounds in other languages
- Communication phrases in foreign language of your choice
- Knitting and sewing toys and clothing/drawing/painting/charcoal and pencil drawing/clay/carving a spoon or small toy, etc. depending on the monthly focus in the lesson plans
- Soprano recorder— continuing to learn to read music, starting learning to do duets or work in an orchestra situation – more than one instrument
- Doing two and three part rounds, harmonies, and music from Latin America and Rome.

SEVENTH GRADE SPECIFIC THEMES

Trimester One (1/6) Morning

- Math— pre-algebra, geometry, negative numbers, and cube root

Trimester One (2/6) Morning

- Language— writing reports, creative writing, and spelling
- History—the Renaissance

Trimester Two (3/6) Morning

- Legends— such as King Arthur or other native legends from your region

Trimester Two (4/6) Morning

- Physics— review and continuation

Trimester Three (5/6) Morning

- Chemistry

Trimester Three (6/6) Morning

- European and African Geography

Note: You can do these lessons in any order through the year.

Afternoon:

- Nature based crafts and art
- Botany review/nature walks, vary intensity of study and science v. exploration and discovery
- Practice the four math processes
- Circle time including songs and verse in other languages and rounds
- Communication phrases in foreign language of your choice
- Start studying vocabulary lists and building vocabulary
- Knitting and sewing toys and clothing/drawing/painting/advanced drawing/advanced sculpting with clay/Advanced carving, etc. depending on the monthly focus in the lesson plans
- Soprano recorder—continuing to learn to read music, starting learning to do duets or work in an orchestra situation – more than one instrument.
- Doing two and three part rounds, harmonies and music from the Renaissance; ballads are also a good choice for this age

EIGHTH GRADE SPECIFIC THEMES

Trimester One (1/3) Morning

- Math—algebra and geometry
- Shakespeare and other classic literature of your region or culture

Trimester Two (3/6) Morning

- Organic chemistry

Trimester Two (4/6) Morning

- American history
- Current events

Trimester Three (5/6) Morning

- Geography of Asia, Australia, and Antarctica

Trimester Three (6/6) Morning

- Physics

Note that you can do these in any order through the year.

Afternoon

- Nature based crafts and art
- Nature walks, vary intensity of study and science v. exploration and discovery
- Circle time including songs, verses, and rounds in other languages
- Communication phrases in foreign language of your choice, venture into some “real life” experiences
- Start studying vocabulary lists and building vocabulary
- Sewing with machines/drawing/painting/drawing portraits and animals/advanced sculpting with clay/advanced carving, basic woodworking skills, making simple wood items etc. depending on the monthly focus in the lesson plans
- Soprano recorder— continuing to learn to read music, starting learning to do duets or work in an orchestra situation – more than one instrument
- Doing two and three part rounds, harmonies and music

RHYTHM OF THE DAY

THE DAILY RHYTHM FOR PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN

This is one sample of a preschool rhythm. It was my schedule for the classes I ran as a teacher. My schedule with my own children varies and yours might too. But this gives you a good idea of the thought I put into the rhythm of the day. It helps children if your daily rhythm is very similar every day!

- 8:30 – Arrival, free play and settle in
- 8:45 – Bread shaping
 - ✓ “Call to the Bread Table” verse)
- 9:00 – Movement and Circle Time
 - ✓ “Call to the Circle” verse
 - ✓ Songs
 - ✓ Yoga or Eurhythmy to break up Circle
 - ✓ Back to the Circle for music time
- 9:30 – Set the table and snack time
 - ✓ “Snack Time Prayer” verse
- 9:45 – Nature Walk
 - ✓ “Let’s Walk” verse
- 10:00 – Story time
 - ✓ “Fairies of the Story Time” verse
- 10:15 – Craft time for Children
 - ✓ “Come Join our Craft” verse
- 10:40 – Mother’s Time/ Free-Play for children in the Waldorf Room
- 11:00 – Class ends
 - ✓ “Clean-up Fairies” verse

Daily Rhythm for Older children is above in the section of age appropriate learning.

RHYTHM OF THE MONTH

Every month we had a rhythm as well as a weekly and daily rhythm. As you look over my lesson plan guides and the vast amount of material I have provided or that you have yourself, you can use a monthly rhythm block to help you focus each week. Some things you will want to focus over a week and other things you may want to focus on for four to six weeks. These are called “lesson blocks.” The E-books I sell about woodworking, knitting and other topics are meant to be used as lesson blocks. Various units of study in my lesson plans or in your own lesson plans can be used as lesson blocks too.

Here is one example of how lesson blocks can work in the month:

CRAFT BLOCKS FOR THE MONTH

Week One: Beeswax block crayon art technique— progressive

Week Two: Waldorf watercolor painting— various techniques and color skills

Week Three: Felt work craft

Week Four: Craft

Week Five: Craft

STORY BLOCKS FOR THE MONTH

Week One: Tell a story— same story both days)

Week Two: Do a play

Week Three: Puppet show story

Week Four: A story *poem*

Week Five: Read a book

SCIENCE BLOCKS FOR THE MONTH

Weeks One through Four: The water cycle

MATH BLOCKS FOR THE MONTH

Weeks One through Four: Basic math concepts; addition, subtraction, multiplication and division

Some teachers/parents work with the more traditional method of using just one to three lesson blocks at a time. You can find out more information about what Waldorf says about blocks by linking to the next article on lesson blocks.

RHYTHM OF THE YEAR

Here is a sample of some Earthschooling activities I scheduled over the year based on seasonal, holiday and other themes. Earthschooling includes holiday and seasonal themes but is not dependent on those themes and includes many other themes each month as well. This makes Earthschooling suitable for parents and teachers around the world. The themes for the rest of the year are available to all Earthschooling members.

JANUARY

Main Waldorf Holidays

Western Calendar New Year 1st

Three Kings Day 6th

Other Holidays

Martin Luther King Day 21st

Mozart's birthday 27th

Themes

Animals (Chinese Calendar Theme)

Lunar and Solar Calendars

Snow & Ice (Western World)

Handwork Lesson Blocks for this Month

Candle Basics

Parent's Craft for this Month

Make a doll

LESSON BLOCKS

When Rudolf Steiner started the first Waldorf school, he established the “main lesson”—a two hour class during which all academic subjects except for foreign languages would be taught. The subjects taught in the main lesson were studied for a block of time lasting from three weeks to three months. There are many activities that would fall outside of the main lesson block category, however. These include nature walks, bread making, cooking and circle time (which happen daily), some crafts and handwork (which naturally flow into some lessons even if they are not your main lesson block focus) and review (for example, you may include some math review in your circle time even if that is not your main lesson block focus).

Teaching in main lesson blocks is one of the most successful features of Waldorf education, for it allows teachers to cover the curriculum intensively and allows the students to become immersed. I know from experience with myself and my own students and children that immersion is the most effective way to learn many things. Learning in a block allows a student to open up to a subject slowly and naturally learn or to open up to it quickly and fully experience the joy of becoming completely involved in something.

One wonderful and unique aspect of the Earthschooling program is that you can choose to use the program as a monthly enrichment or you can use it to work in blocks with your child. This article will discuss:

1. The importance of blocks and how to use them
2. How to use the Earthschooling program as a block-method
3. Some specific examples for first through eighth grade on how to plan the day

For ages one through seven you will not be working in blocks. Instead you will follow a schedule that balances the head, heart and hands and breathing out activities with breathing in activities. I have provided a few sample schedules for this age in The Waldorf Year Planner that comes with your Earthschooling lessons. Note also that foreign language, eurhythmy, yoga, nature walks, movement, some academic review and some music are not usually done in blocks. A child has exposure to these each week.

If you are wanting to follow a block system with my lesson plans or any other lesson plans then you would include verses, a nature walk, foreign language, and perhaps some review or “short lessons” in various subjects every day in the afternoon. In the morning, however, you would focus on one or two blocks of lessons. Some teachers hold firm to the “one block” at a time method. However, I find that with a smaller homeschooling class that two blocks can often be done at once as long as they are complimentary subjects. For example, if we are doing a lesson block on Native American stories we could easily do a grammar and writing block at the same time as these can “go together.” Or, if we are studying Greek Mythology it is also a natural time to do the block on Greece in general and learn more about the geography and culture of the country.

I have provided a sample of our plans below which include two lesson blocks at a time. However, you can easily change them if you wish so instead of doing two lesson blocks during trimester one, you could do one lesson block at the first part of the trimester and another during the second half of the trimester. I have to admit I have also done that at times when my child needed that. I have three children and sometimes I have other children over for programs so the schedule below is an outline, but even I make changes and adaptations to it from time to time. As Steiner suggested, each teacher is unique. However, I hope this sample can inspire and guide you in your planning.

There is a large variance in the way teachers across the country do it. Even Steiner varied in the length of time he suggested that blocks be done. Some lasted as long as three weeks and others for three months. He also recognized that each teacher would need to establish this time for herself and her own class so he did not set an exact “rule” for an exact number of weeks for each subject. He suggested ranges of time. Additionally, you may plan to do a block for three months but feel “finished” at two months and want to move on. That is suitable too. Part of Waldorf education is to follow the natural rhythms of the child and life in general.

SO HOW DO I INTEGRATE THIS INTO THE EARTHSCHOOLING CURRICULUM? HOW CAN I USE ANOTHER CURRICULUM IN BLOCK FORMAT?

Each month of Earthschooling lesson plans focuses on one handwork block, one literature block and one science block each month, so these are already planned into the year and in “block form.” If you look at the lesson plans for each month you will notice that I provide on only one or two handwork lessons to focus on and only one or two science subjects per month. You may choose just one of these to focus on for your science block that month. However, if you look at the literature I have provided each month you will find that I have provided more stories than anyone could use each month. This is so you can choose the block of literature that is most appropriate for your family, culture and season for that month. All the literature provided each month is age appropriate. You do not need to go through all the stories in one month – it is intended that you choose the ones appropriate for your block each month. However, if you are not working with a pure block method it is also completely acceptable to follow the stories each month as they are provided and according to your needs and preferences.

The only blocks that are not pre-planned each month are the math, cultural and language blocks. This is because we usually spend more than one month on these blocks. If you are a year or lifetime member you are given the math and language program for the year in block format to do when you want. If you are a monthly member you can purchase the math or language block in addition to your lessons (for only \$7.50). However, I do provide a sample of each of these blocks each month so no matter what month you start in and no matter what month you are using to “try out” the program, you will have everything you need for that month without making additional purchases.

IMPORTANT PRE-NOTES AND TIPS IN BLOCKING

You will notice that I have provided many more stories than you will use each month. This is so you have more freedom in your language block planning. Depending on your focus for that month you can choose stories only from that genre and then, after a few months, change the stories you are choosing. For example, in first grade you could do the following in three month blocks: fables and folktales, learning stories, science stories, and finally, fairytales So for August, September and October you may only use the Fables in the lesson plans, for the next three months you may only focus on the science stories and for the next three months you would only focus on the fairytales. You would not be using all the stories each month anyway. There is not enough time.

I usually focus on two blocks at a time for one trimester each. For handwork, science and literature I work in four week blocks. The main lessons below are trimester blocks that we do in the morning. The four week blocks of handwork, science, foreign language and music we do in the afternoon. This is just a sample of what works for us. Additionally, I may sometimes lengthen or shorten a block depending on what my child's needs are.

Note also that just because you are working in blocks does not mean you will not use the skills from all areas. For example for one trimester we may focus on language, but we will still use it the entire year. We will just not focus on it. Or we may focus on math for a trimester but we won't avoid it the rest of the year when it comes up. As much as possible we try to integrate math and language studies into all of our lesson blocks. We also try to integrate science, music, geography and many things. So don't limit your learning possibilities by closing your mind to "tie in" opportunities or even a little "unschooling" or child-led lesson planning. The blocks are a way to focus your lessons and not limit them.

In the summer months my children and I do blocks of handwork and extra lessons such as nutrition, herbal studies, woodworking, storytelling and other subjects. I offer these blocks in the form of e-books. If we have not finished a block during the year we may also work on it during the summer.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO BLOCK OUT THE EARTHSCHOOLING LESSONS

Specific guides for each age and how I organize our lessons are the same as what we included in the Rhythm and Stages chapter. You can revisit pages 13 through 21 or continue if you are already familiar with the layout.

BREATHING IN – BREATHING OUT – BAKING BREAD

This is a sample class schedule that incorporates the principles of “Breathing in and Breathing Out.” I have also explained some of the wisdom behind the baking of the bread below.

SHAPING BREAD – “BREATHING IN”

This is the beginning of EVERY Waldorf day. The children are allowed to slowly ease into the day and focus their energies on the shaping of the dough and start conversations. This is a time of transition, an analogy to the shaping of the day, a way the children can feel involved in the creation of the school and a wonderful ritual they enjoy eating later. Watch the shapes they make as they are often indications of moods or stages in a child.

NATURE WALK/TABLE – “BREATHING OUT AND IN”

The nature walk allows the child to notice the weather of the day, of the season and where they are, thus becoming in touch with the environment around them and centering them and connecting them with the universe around them. Objects are placed on the table as an ever changing display that keeps the classroom in touch with the outside world so children do not become isolated in an artificial environment.

CIRCLE TIME – “BREATHING OUT”

This is a time for teaching both songs and finger rhymes of a Waldorf nature. Usually rhymes that are seasonal and dealing with nature are used. There are many books filled with rhymes and songs. Usually three to five songs/ fingerplays are used for each circle time. The parents usually perform with the child and this is a time for the child to use their outward energy and draw “out” of themselves into the group. Sometimes children will want to play instead of doing the songs and that is OK. Some children take a few times to get used to the idea and will eventually join in. As always parents are expected to make sure their children are either participating or at least not disrupting. As a rule, in Waldorf, a child’s talking and whispering and playing alone quietly or with soft noises is ALWAYS accepted. However, shouting, running, pushing or any behavior that brings attention to them instead of the group should be stopped by the parent with a gentle reminder and re-routing of the child’s attention. In some cases a child must be removed from the room by a parent.

STORYTIME – “BREATHING IN”

At the end of circle time children then change from sitting in a circle and instead sit facing the “storyteller” demonstrating visually and mentally that now is the time to sit and listen and not to play. Instead of sitting in a circle for the story, children are sat in front of the “storyteller” in rows. From ages on through four stories are never read but only “told” using finger puppets, wooden figures or hand motions or other natural tools. Stories for older children until age seven are usually TOLD as well but sometimes read. IF they are read, books with large and beautiful and abundant illustrations are used. Stories usually focus more on higher morals at this time and contain some sort of lesson or moral. Wordy books are usually used for older children or for one on one interaction (parent to child). Circle rhymes and songs for older children usually focus on using numbers, letters and other concepts in an interesting way that children can begin to LEARN from.

SNACK TIME – “BREATHING OUT”

Children are called to snack and during this time the parents discuss topics. One parent or teacher usually set up the snack so the snack is ready and the table is set when people come to the table. The table is ALWAYS set nicely with cloth napkins and cups and bowls made of natural ceramic or wood. There is always a candle lit and a prayer before every meal.

MATERIALS

NATURAL TOYS & CLOTHING

The following article is from an old Waldorf school newsletter. If anyone knows the source please let me know.

Anyone well acquainted with our school will have had their attention drawn at some time to the fact that when it's a matter of cloth being put to use – in the kindergarten toys, in the handicraft lessons, in the curtains – that “natural fabrics,” i.e. pure wool, pure cotton and sometimes pure silk, are invariably chosen. Why is that really? They feel nicer? Is that all? Is that indisputable? Do they look better, for being more expensive?

I would like to explore the differences between natural and artificial fibers, using clothing as an example. First of all, what do clothes have to do? They have to lie right next to our skin as a buffer between us and the weather. Now, our skin is warm, and needs to be kept warm, it is sensitive, covered with sense organs of touch and it gives off moisture. So anything that clothes us must not only warm us, but be soft and smooth, be capable of sopping up extra moisture and getting it out of the way, that is allowing the skin to breathe. Secondly, let us be clear that the clothes we wear are animal, vegetable and mineral, and probably, you are at this moment clothed in materials from all these three realms.

For centuries, man has used plant and animal fibers to make cloth. Since the turn of the century fibers synthesized from mineral substances have become available to us in fabrics, and are in wide use, and, as they are generally cheaper to produce, are to a large extent replacing animal and plant fibers.

The Plant Fibers: Linen is made from the fibers within the stem of the linen flax plant, which is nothing like NZ “flax,” but a sister to the very light and delicate plant, with a small sky-blue flower held high, that grows amongst the grass on our school property. Before cotton came along in the early 19th century from the southern states of America, all things which are still nowadays called “household linen” – sheets, towels, tablecloths and so forth were made of linen. Nowadays scarcely anything of linen is to be found in the “linen” cupboard. Linen was also a word for “underthings,” because that is what they were made of. It could be spun very finely for handkerchiefs, or provide medium-weight material for suits, hardy sailcloth for children's clothes, or in heavyweight form be canvas for tents and sails.

We think of linen as being crisp and cool, rather than as something to warm us, it loves water and take it up greedily, hence its continuing use in towels. It is hardwearing, more so than cotton, and washes very well. One doesn't feel clammy in linen.

Cotton comes from the seed pod of the cotton plant, which likes hot climates. It supplanted linen through its cheapness and availability (though this cheapness depended on the use of slave labor). Like linen, it is thirsty for water, and cool to wear on hot days, as it sops up perspiration and lets it evaporate in the air. Like linen then it is very suitable for wearing right next to the skin. Long after the advent of artificial fibers this was recognized. Although artificial fibers appeared fairly soon in women's undergarments, for a long time children's underclothing remained pure cotton. Now that is no longer the case but by and large men's underclothing is still "natural." Towels are still universally made of pure cotton, as no cheaper material can do such a good job of mopping up water.

The Animal Fibers: Whereas the cool, watery plants offer us fibers that have more a relationship to moisture and keeping cool, the animal kingdom gives us the fibers for really warm cloth. Silk comes from an insect, from the cocoon of the silk worm moth which is unraveled into one long, strong light thread, and makes the cloth that is light, lustrous, smooth and yielding. It has a quite peculiar warmth – think of how a light fine silk scarf immediately brings about a lovely glow of warmth on one's neck. It is also absorbent, kind to the clasp of a sweaty palm. From warm-blooded animals comes wool, camel-hair, alpaca, mohair and others, but let's stay with sheep's wool which we know best. It's a very soft hair with a crinkly fiber, and it makes quite definitely the warmest fabric, knitted or woven. It doesn't lie close to the skin, so air is trapped next to our skin, warms up and stays warm. It has the very special property of being still warm when it's wet. It can become one third as heavy again with water without feeling clammy. For a long time it shrugs off water altogether, because its fibers are covered with tiny overlapping scales. Wool is very suitable for wrapping for little babies. And when trampers were lost not so long ago in the hills, constantly rained on, they took off all the garments that were not made of wool, and plodded on in their woolen ones, and were able to keep warm.

Wool's other special quality is its fire-resistance, it burns very slowly.

The Mineral Fibers: Although the mineral world is "natural," mineral fibers don't exist that can be used to make textiles, instead the fibers have to be made out of the mineral, by man, whereas in the plant and animal realm they are there for the gathering. A silkworm disease, and a resulting long-term scarcity of silk in the mid-nineteenth century prompted scientists to search for a manmade fiber that might replace it, and by the turn of the century viscose rayon was being produced out of the cellulose (cell walls) of certain conifer trees, minced up, bathed in chemicals and finally squirted through fine nozzles into an acid bath to set it into long flexible threads.

Later it became possible to make fibers from coal and oil products, and later still, other substances as well. The chief virtues of an artificial fiber such as nylon, polyester, acrylic, is its great strength. A very thin fiber is much harder to break than a natural fiber of equal thickness. The first notable use of an artificial fiber was nylon for stockings, which became very quickly accepted, appealing as it did to practicality (not so much darning) and to men's ideas of how women's legs should look. It seems that nylon stockings were stronger in those days.

Clothes made from synthetic fibers hold their shape whereas a cotton garment, e.g. cord jeans, will soon stretch here and there and become “comfortable,” although not so smart. Synthetic knits snap back into place after washing whereas natural knitted garments gradually expand – shoulders broaden, knees bag out and socks concertina downwards. Synthetic garments don’t need ironing back into shape so much although one can’t escape ironing altogether and when you do iron them it’s harder. But what of their relationship to the warmth, the wateriness and the sensitivity of the human skin? When it comes to providing warmth wool and silk are far superior to acrylic, nylon, polyester etc.

And cotton, linen, wool and silk are far superior in absorbency. Synthetic fibers are actually water-repellent which is why they are the first of the clothes on the line to dry (hence the easy care label). They can’t dry off our skins and pass extra water vapor on to the environment. The moisture is left building up next to our skins, an environment for bacteria to flourish in.

As to softness – generally synthetic fabrics feel harder to the practiced hand, even if mixed in with natural fibers. Not always though. But as soon as a fabric is dampened (and our clothes do get slightly damper with use) it is apparent. A natural fabric will crush and fold and squeeze up very biddingly and softly but the wetter a synthetic gets the harder and more slippery it feels. The other way of detecting the presence of synthetic of course is by ironing – the fibers start to near their melting point, and up wafts that acrid smell, indicating the fabric’s birth through great heat and chemical processing.

Of course most material sold today is neither 100% natural, nor pure synthetic but a mixture. To the extent that it contains a synthetic fiber, it becomes more hardwearing, less warm, less absorbent. A towel with only 10% synthetic fiber mixed in is fairly useless, and 50/50 mix of polyester and cotton has more the characteristics of polyester than cotton, I find. Synthetic clothing suits the washing machine but not the human body.

The history of synthetic fibers is rooted in the search for a new fiber to clothe man, but they are used for or many, many other purposes than that and I feel that they are rightly used when they are used ropes and rainwear, sails and safety harnesses and in tires, machinery and electrical appliances, where durability, strength and impermeability – their special qualities – are necessary.

WHERE ARE THE WORKSHEETS?

Imagine a world with no quizzes, textbooks or worksheets. That sounds like it would be a dream school for most children!

This is what it is like in a Waldorf school. In fact, Waldorf education engages the student in the learning process to the extent where worksheets or exams would actually interfere with their learning process.

But we first need to ask ourselves where did textbooks, worksheets and quizzes originate? In Early history students learned by lectures alone and did not work from textbooks at all. If their teacher wrote a book or there was a classic piece of work they might work from it together as a class but books were not readily available to “take home and study from” until 1450 with the invention of the printing press. So for thousands of years students learned by listening, observing and doing. Quizzes were not given in any written form. Rather, the instructor would ask the student(s) questions to challenge them on an ongoing basis and would not allow them to “earn the privilege” of learning more until they understood the current lesson.

Upon the invention of the printing press books became more widespread and learning institutions made them more readily available to their students. Some fortunate students were even able to own some or have a small library at home. Students would learn by reading classic pieces of literature from periods in history, work by the great mathematicians and scientists, firsthand accounts of events in history and by doing. Students were expected to show what they had learned by creating their own inventions, books, projects, works of art or music pieces.

In 1620 that John Amos Comenius is credited with inventing the first textbook. The first textbook was like all textbooks that have come after it – it was in one language (his was in Latin), it had pictures to help people understand what was in the text and it provided a standard selection of facts for the student to learn. During his time the “textbook” was thought of as revolutionary because it enabled anyone to pick it up and learn from it – no matter what their social status (man, woman, child, rich, poor) was. In this way, the textbook was very suitable for his time in history.

It also turned out to be very convenient for the time for reasons beyond educational equality. Because steam power created more opportunities for travel it was important that a student could “carry their school” with them and be assured they were learning what their peers were learning back home.

In the past a student was admitted to college on their works, deeds (and perhaps family status) alone. By the time a student had worked with a teacher, tutor or subject long enough they had usually produced something they could show for it and their skill in the subject had been on display in the form of writing, speeches and/or performances. A student did not have worksheets and exams they DID what they were taught, took what they were taught and created from it. These creations led them to college where they continued along the same path.

However, with education becoming more and more widespread there also needed to be a way to compare the progress of each student. As more and more colleges and schools opened, more students enrolled and more governments became involved (public education system) the more of a demand there was to standardize everything. The old methods remained but the larger schools and larger cities that were forming realized that the only way to teach large classes of students at once was to use standard text-books and standard worksheets so everything was “equal” and “measurable.”

Over a short period of time this method of education rapidly overtook the traditional methods and instead of being a method “designed to suit the needs of the time” it became the standard.

Education became defined by textbooks, worksheets and exams. However, it was almost as rapidly discovered that this method was not always the most suitable method of teaching. In fact it was only been a very brief slice of history in which the textbook-worksheet-exam model was popular among educators. Historians of public education pinpoint the first widespread use to the laws influenced by Horace Mann (a powerful leader in the state education policies) in 1837 and to the early twentieth century when new scientific theories were being applied to all kinds of methodologies. This “particularly narrow model of schooling” as they refer to it, became established as the “one best system” of public education.

In his essay *A Brief History of Alternative Education*, Ron Miller says,

According to this model, the purpose of schooling was to overcome cultural diversity and personal uniqueness in order to mold a loyal citizenry and an effective workforce for the growing industrial system. Education aimed primarily to discipline the developing energies of young people for the sake of political and social uniformity as well as the success of the emerging corporate economy.

In 1762, however, less than one person’s lifetime in the “new” standard school system, alternative schooling methods started to challenge this “new method” of education. This movement was led by some of the great thinkers of the time – Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, and Friedrich Froebel and has resulted in a world filled with many different ways to education one’s child. However, interestingly enough, the public school model still remains the same. As a person who works with public schools from time to time I have seen the efforts and desires of hundreds of teachers trying to break out of this model but the main problem is that any change they try to make is like taking a gear out of a machine. If you are in the system, you have to follow the system and any creative means of education must still be performed within the system and provide ways to show student progress through the required exams and worksheets.

Waldorf education, established in 1919 by Rudolf Steiner, as one of the hundreds of alternatives offered to your student in today's world, focuses on the child's process of learning and ability to express what they have learned. The teacher makes sure that the child's learning process takes place through their *head, heart and hands* and not just their head (worksheets and exams).

Activities focus on being as hands-on as possible (*hands*) and each student is given time to think, experience, discuss and even dream (*heart*) before they start on the work of their *head* through their Main Lesson Books. However, even the *head* work seeks balance within itself. It involves a little of the *hands* (creating through writing and drawing instead of just filling in answers) and the *heart* (thinking and experiencing what they are doing instead of just spitting back answers). Instead of filling in worksheets, students create *Main Lesson Books* – which become their own self-created worksheets as well as their own textbooks. Instead of reading textbooks, students read classic literature, first-hand accounts from history and listen to stories told by their teacher (or in books).

A *Main Lesson Book* is a child's creation. It represents what the child has learned that year and what they have created. It represents hours of drawing, writing, thinking, copying, reading, sharing, challenging, figuring out things and creating. After listening to their parent/teacher tell them about a historical event the child may draw a picture of the event in their book or may write about it. After reading a biography about James Watt a child may write a "letter home" from James Watt in their *Main Lesson Book*. Younger children start by copying what the teacher says and draws or copying verses into their books. As the child gets older the books add the element of creating to go along with the use of the book for recording and copying down information.

After conducting a science experiment in class the student will diagram what they did in their *Main Lesson Book* and when a student first learns about the stars they will divide their *Main Lesson Book* in sections and actually draw the night sky at different times in the evening as the night progresses. After learning to do addition, subtraction, multiplication or division, or even algebra a student will be able to create their own practice problems based on the world around them. For example, instead of doing a worksheet with fifteen random problems about area or surface, a student is asked to find the surface and area of items around their classroom. Instead of filling in worksheets with answers to addition problems students are given objects to sort and count as many times as they want and the motivation to do so.

The *Main Lesson Book* is a PART of the child's learning experience and is an expression of so many things. A *Main Lesson Book* is not a substitute for building, doing, creating, reading, painting, sculpting, cooking, playing, stretching, singing and so many other things that are important to your student's education. However, it is also an important part of their day.

It is the child's way of saying "this is what someone told me today" or "this is what I learned today" or "this is what I can create." A *Main Lesson Book* brings the child's focus to the process and effort that goes into their work rather than the outcome (if their answer on the worksheet is "right"). A *Main Lesson Book* allows a child to learn at their own pace and in their own space. They can fill four pages with math problems or they can fill one. They can work quickly through a lesson block or more slowly. They may need many pages to finally produce a final product they are happy with or they may produce that final product the first time they try. A *Main Lesson Book* allows the teacher/parent to see and get to know what is really going on in a child's head instead of knowing only that they can add two plus two to get four.

The way the child writes, what they write, what colors they use, how many pages they use and so many other things about the *Main Lesson Book* are a window into their mind that would not be possible through a worksheet or exam.

Learning to use a *Main Lesson Book* with your child can be compared to learning to use Facebook. Remember when you first started to use Facebook and you enjoyed reading other people's posts and struggled to figure out what to post yourself? But over time your mind became accustomed to it and you actually started to come up with little "Facebook posts" in your head on a regular basis. You started thinking about your life in terms of Facebook posts. OR you can also make an analogy to photography. Try going on a vacation or to a wedding or birthday party without a camera. Most people can't (unless they know there is someone else there recording the event). Because we have learned to "see" our experiences in terms of various snap-shots and memorable moments we can capture. The analogies can go on and on.

However, the point is that once you start using the *Main Lesson Book* your student and you will find yourselves also seeing the world in terms of the *Main Lesson Book*. You will find yourselves more and more saying "Oh! We can put that in the *Main Lesson Book*!"

At first the blank pages will stare at you and it may seem awkward to the teacher and/or student to write in a book with no lines or to draw an assignment. However, very quickly you will find your student jumping up suddenly and saying "Aha! I have something to put in my *Main Lesson Book*" and the teacher saying, "Open up your *Main Lesson Book* so we can"

In first and second grade there is no blue text but what goes into the *Main Lesson Book* will simply be the basics of the math, alphabet, arts and crafts provided in the lessons. We have also provided *Main Lesson Books* for you to look at for examples. However, before third grade the child will be doing more hands-on learning and less with the *Main Lesson Book*. Children do not use *Main Lesson Books* before first grade.

STORIES

THE WISDOM OF FAIRYTALES

Waldorf philosophy addresses the issue of fairy tales as follows:

Parents frequently express concern about violent, even bloody incidents that occur in Grimm's fairy tales. Today, we often see these tales edited to remove or soften these aspects. This results in a kind of deprivation of our children's sense of life that is similar to the effects of painkillers and can dull that sense. At a Waldorf School, these unedited fairy tales are an important part of the curriculum of early childhood and first grade. In a true fairy tale, such as those collected by the Brothers Grimm, human beings undergo trials and suffering and accept that deeds are a part of proving oneself worthy of the reward at the end of the path, whether the reward is the hand of the princess or a kingdom. They confront evil and overcome it. Children experience the greed of the wolf and the evil of the witch quite differently than we adults do. They experience these qualities more as archetypal pictures about life, but do not yet identify themselves personally with the suffering. They trust that there will be a happy ending or that good will triumph over evil. Such stories strengthen the moral lives of children, so that later, after these pictures have lived in them for many years as seeds, this strength and guidance will help them to deal with the challenges life brings to them.

Many stories are classic tales for children that we already have memorized for easy telling such as "The Princess and the Pea," "The Three Billy Goat's Gruff," "The Three Bears," etc....you can also branch out and tell local folktales or some of the rarer tales that you can find in fairy tale books. There are complete works of Hans Christian Anderson and The Brothers Grimm available in magazines.

ART & HANDWORK

WALDORF ART

Central to Waldorf principles is the need to surround children with beauty. Watercolors and beeswax crayons (when used with teacher guidance and purpose) naturally create very beautiful works without technical talent. You will notice that the teachers use care not to allow the children to muddle their colors into a brown mess. At home our children may find joy creating many shades of brown and black in their artistic pursuits, but at the Waldorf school there is a grander purpose than just learning that mixing all of the colors makes mud.

Watercolor paints remind me of the silk scarves Waldorf parents are encouraged to use as drapes over their babies' cradles. When children are small, their perception of the physical world is still veiled. Most young children are not able to perceive strict realism. They are still emerging from their spiritual womb.

This emergence will continue until the child is well into adulthood. As a matter of fact, Waldorf philosophy is quite emphatic that to push a child into realism (through premature reading or denial of fantasy play) can cripple their spiritual development. Working with beeswax is a very sensual experience. The smell of the wax, the feel of it softening in the hand, the shimmering color all create a pleasurable atmosphere for the exploration of three-dimensional creation. The children listen to their teacher's story and manifest an element from the story with their own hands. Watercolor paints and beeswax crayons allow the child to create without literalism. They are continually pushed away from the inside of arbitrary boundaries to the radiating form. In this way children are taught that they do not need to confine themselves, their thoughts or the others around themselves into a preconceived box or how things/people are supposed to be configured.

As with the stories being told to the children, the forms they are being taught have nothing to do with literal representation. The forms are meant to resonate with the child's state of development, to assist with the brain's integration of the surrounding world. The forms, the paintings, the beeswax sculptures all assist in the maturation of the spirit/emotion/body. The fact that the results are beautiful objects or pictures is a lovely by-product, not the primary goal.

SPIRITUALITY

RELIGION AND SPIRITUALITY IN WALDORF EDUCATION

The Waldorf Curriculum for children actually does not teach Anthroposophy. However, Waldorf School's in general are either Christian, Jewish, Muslim or very broadly spiritually based. Each day begins with a prayer and ends with a parting prayer. Each meal begins with a prayer and the notion of "God" is prevalent in the Waldorf school. The Waldorf curriculum stresses the importance of spirituality in everyday life. One does not have to be of a particular faith as the Waldorf schools traditionally celebrate according to the faiths of their students. However, an atheist may not feel at ease in a Waldorf School setting.

Traditional Waldorf Schools come in all varieties. There are Christian schools , Jewish Schools and even Islamic Waldorf Schools. There are also schools which are more pagan or secular in nature.

CELEBRATIONS

WALDORF CELEBRATIONS

One of the celebrations we celebrate during the Waldorf Earthschooling year is Advent. However, contrary to popular belief, the Advent spiral done at Waldorf schools is not inherently Christian. It can be celebrated to honor a number of religious or spiritual traditions – depending on your family or students participating.

WHAT ARE THE ORIGINS OF THE ADVENT SPIRAL?

This quote pretty much sums it all up: “As a universal symbol the Spiral/Labyrinth appears throughout history dating some 4,500 years and appears cross-culturally over the face of our world throughout our known history.”

The meaning usually associated with the advent spiral today is more specific, however. In some Waldorf schools it symbolizes finding light in the darkness. In other schools and churches walking the spiral as an individual carries the image that every human being must make; a journey to an inner place; where we can find a light to carry back into the world to help us in our own journey. The labyrinth is said to be non-denominational because it can be related to many different religions and cultures and because it represents man’s journey on his own spiritual path within his religion, rather than the path of one specific religion.

There are many different kinds of spiral walks. The simplest is the spiral, however, some spirals are modified in to different or more intricate shapes. Some of the earliest forms of modified spirals, also known as labyrinths, are found in Greece, dating back to 2500—2000 B.C.E. This labyrinth is called the Cretan labyrinth or classical seven-circuit labyrinth. So much a part of the fabric of this early society was the labyrinth, that it was embossed on coins and pottery. Early Christian labyrinths date back to fourth century, a basilica in Algeria. The Chartres design labyrinth is a replica of the labyrinth laid into the cathedral floor at Chartres, France in the thirteenth century. The Chartres design is a classical eleven-circuit labyrinth (eleven concentric circles) with the twelfth being in the center of the labyrinth.

THE WALDORF BIRTHDAY STORY

Invoke a sense of the sacred on a child's birth and are performed with the teacher reading, the child acting and the parent watching.

Once upon a time there was a little child named _____ who was still with the angels in heaven and he/she was very happy there. He looked at the beautiful colors and listened to the lovely music, and that was where he belonged. But one day the clouds parted in heaven and _____ saw the beautiful green earth below with all the people happily playing and working and he suddenly longed to go there and see what it was like. He saw all the rainbow colors of the earth, He saw butterflies visiting flowers and birds flying in the air. They seemed to be beckoning him. He saw fish swimming in the sea and all the different plants that covered the earth. He saw children climbing trees running and jumping in the meadows and walking through sand and leaves. It was all so beautiful!

So he said to his angel, "Please, may I go down to earth now?" But his angel looked at him and said, "No, it is too soon. You must wait a little while yet." So the child went and was happy and soon forgot about the earth. Then one day again he saw a glimpse of the earth through the clouds again. He saw mothers and fathers doing their work. He saw bakers and engineers and writers and farmers. He saw mothers and fathers loving their children. Then he saw a beautiful mother with love and longing in her heart for a child and he asked his angel now, "May I go to her?"

The angel said, "You must go through the land of dreams first."

*The next night the little child had a dream. He dreamed that he met a man and a woman and they stretched out their arms to him and asked him to come be their child. The child told his angel the dream. The angel said, "It is now time for you to go."

So the child asked, "So may I go now?"

"You shall see." Said the angel.

That night the child went to sleep into dreamland and while ten moons waxed and waned he rocked in a little boat. And at the end of that time a beautiful rainbow bridge stretched from heaven to earth and on it came the child as a tiny baby and slid into his mother and father's waiting arms. They looked in awe at this new life and said "We shall call him/her _____"

*** EZEKIEL'S STORY: EXAMPLE OF HOW YOU CAN CHANGE THE STORY**

The next night the little child had a dream. In it he dreamed that he went to the mother and she held out her arms and said, "Please come and be my child." The little boy went to the angel and told him the dream. The angel said, "It is now time for you to go. But we must first find your father." The angel looked and looked. Finally the angel came back and said to the little boy. I have found your father, only you must understand one thing. You will have two fathers. For the first I have found is able to give you your first life and unlock the rainbow bridge for you to come to earth. However, he is unable to give you the love and guidance you need in life. Your second father, Mario, will be waiting for you a few years later and he will give you your love and guidance in life.

So the child asked, "So may I go now?"

"You shall see." Said the angel.

That night the child went to sleep into dreamland and while ten moons waxed and waned he rocked in a little boat. And at the end of that time a beautiful rainbow bridge stretched from heaven to earth and on it came the child as a tiny baby and slid into his mother's waiting arms.

VERSES

THE BASIC VERSES

GOOD MORNING SONG

Traditional Waldorf

Good Morning Dear Earth
(hands as if holding earth on abdomen)
Good Morning Dear Sun
(stretch arms above head in a circular arc)
Good Morning Dear Trees
(stretch arms to side, like tree branches)
And the Flowers Everywhere
(hands holding flowers on ground)
Good Morning Dear Beasts
(hands as if petting a dog, etc.)
And the Birds in the Trees
(hands “fly” away like birds flying away)
Good Morning Dear You and Good Morning Dear Me.
(hands reaching to each other, then hands cross over our chest)

STORY TIME SONG

Traditional Waldorf

Fairies of the story time
Come and share your stories with me
I am listening with my ears
And I’m sitting quietly

SNACK BLESSING

Traditional Waldorf

Earth that grows for us this food
Sun that makes it ripe and good
Dear God we thank you for sending us these gifts

AFTERNOON SONG

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I greet the noon with open arms
The sun has risen in the sky
I spread my arms just like a bird
I want to soar and jump and fly!

Oh Sun...
Play with me,
Sing with me,
Shine your lovely rays on me
Oh Sun....
Walk with me,
Talk with me,
Dance with me so happily!

My friends and I we gather here
And make a circle like the sun
We play the afternoon away
The Earth, the Heavens and we are one.

Oh Sun...
Play with me,
Sing with me,
Shine your lovely rays on me
Oh Sun....
Walk with me,
Talk with me,
Dance with me so happily!

BEDTIME VERSES

A member asked, "my son's teacher recommended we say a verse before bed to signal getting ready for sleep time. My sons are four and seven. Any suggestions?"

GUARDIAN ANGELS

Guardian Angels who we love
Shine on us from up above
And as I lay me down to sleep
I pray the lord my soul to keep
And in the morning when I wake
Show me the path of love to take

STAR, SUN, AND MOON

Draw a star, then sun, then moon and then a kiss in turns with each line on my children's foreheads while saying:

A star for you to wish on
The sun so warm and bright
The moon for you to wish on
Pleasant dreams goodnight.

VERSE & PRAYER

Now I lay down in my bed
I pull the covers up to my head
I'll dream of dragons and fairies bright
And pixies and wizards and elves tonight
I'll dream of some sort of magical place
And wake in the morning
With a smile on my face.

Now I lay me down to sleep
I pray the Lord my soul to keep
May He watch me through the night
And wake me in the morning's light.
Amen.

BLESS THE MOON

Keep the curtains open so we can look at the moon when lying in bed and say:

I see the moon
The moon sees me
God bless the moon
And god bless me.

GOODNIGHT KISSES

Blueberry eyes
(kiss his eyelids)
Button nose
(kiss his nose)
Strawberry lips
(kiss his lips)
And tickly toes
(tickle his feet)
Off to the land of nod he goes!

GALAXY VERSE

Gentle night,
Let her run through your fields of darkness
Let her drink from the cup of your Milky Way
Rock her to sleep in your blanket of stars
And when you depart, Kiss her waking soul with wisdom.

BLESSINGS

Bless this head,
(touch forehead)
Bless this heart,
(touch upper chest)
Bless these hands,
(touch each hand)
To sleep this night,
God our Father,
God our Mother,
Amen.

SPANISH PRAYER

Angel de mi guardia
Mi dulce compania
No me desampares
Ni de noche ni de dia
Hasta que me pongas en paz y alegria
Con todos los santos
Jesus y Maria

SLEEP, CHILDREN, SLEEP

The lavender and the moon
Tonight are sleeping soundly
The flower petals rest
And now they close up tightly
Sleep, children, sleep
Sleep, children, sleep
Sleep, children, sleep
Sleep, sleep, sleep...

TEMPERAMENTS

TEMPERAMENTS IN EDUCATION

Even Samuel Hahneman, the father of homeopathy recognized the importance of type and related that it was important to know a person's type to discover the different ways they would exhibit the same disease and the different ways they would react to similar medicines.

In his essay, Suppression in the Four Hippocratic Temperaments, Samuel Hahnemann observed that each type reacted differently to the medical suppression of rashes. Sanguine people would get piles, hemorrhoids colic and renal gravel after the suppression of an itch. Phlegmatic people would suffer from dropsy and delayed menses in consequence of such suppressions and melancholic people would become mentally imbalance or sterile by a suppression He stated that Each innate constitutional temperament has its own unique reactions to stimuli. For this reasons the same pathogen will affect the four temperaments and their twelve mixtures in a different manner. For example, the phlegmatic and melancholic temperaments are usually aggravated by cold while the choleric and sanguine temperament are usually ameliorated by cold.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SANGUINE, CHOLERIC, MELANCHOLIC, AND PHLEGMATIC TEMPERAMENTS

THE SANGUINE ELEMENT as a physiological trait provides motive energy of the body and stimulates the logical faculty through the veins and arteries. Signs excess sanguine humor are usually displayed in terms of the circulatory system. A person having excess sanguine or a sanguine person may observe that their veins are bigger (or at least appear so), and fuller than ordinary, their skin is red, they may have pricking pains in the sides, and about the temples they may sometimes experience shortness of breath

or headache and may have thick, colored urine. Practitioners have observed over time that many sanguines possess all or some of the following qualities: ruddy, smooth, firm, moist and warm skin, dark brown or fair hair, hairy body, medium stature, muscular body build, a good appetite, quick and good digestion, light yellow urine, brown firm feces, happy dreams and happiness. Sanguines typically would eat everything in sight and in a restaurant they enjoy talking so much that they almost never look at a menu until the waitress arrives. Sanguine types are often light footed and rhythmical much like their counterpart, the circulation system. They usually have expressive faces and sparkling eyes and may often have curly hair, rather than straight hair. The sanguine will be most extreme or imbalance in Spring or Summer or when exposed to wind or heat (going out in the heat to shop, or leaving the car window open when driving, etc....) and after eating sour, greasy and spicy foods . Any sort of stimulants such as sugar, coffee, drugs (even prescription) and in some cases wheat and meat products are dangerous to the sanguine type. Sanguine types or people with excess sanguine condition should eat greens daily in the form of swiss chard, parsley, mint, coriander, chives, arugula (jarjir), rigla, dark greens, and lettuce (dark green) and avoid rich or sugary foods.

Sanguine types tend towards yeast infections, fatigue and high nervous system stress because they usually are abusers of stimulants, especially sugar and bread. They find that sugar offers a temporary relief during their low cycles and that bread offers comfort during their high energy cycles (it slows and cools them down) so they use these substances constantly in a subconscious effort to balance themselves. When a sanguine person learns to balance without abusing food and to eat more balancing foods in general they will become more balanced themselves and usually have less struggle with the yeast infections and other illness. When a sanguine person is acting dreamy or not there check their sugar consumption or blood sugar levels . An excess of sanguine in general can be corrected by consumption of all foods and herbs that are cold, by lemon juice, oxymel, or cooling activities such as yoga, meditation or reading. Donating blood can also be beneficial for this type.

THE PHLEGMATIC ELEMENT as a physiological aspect of man has expelling properties and functions to expel substances not required by the body. This role of phlegm in the body is famous during boughs with the cold and flu, when copious amounts of it are expelled by the body through the nose in an attempt to clear out toxins and bacteria. The phlegmatic humor has a beneficial cooling and moistening effect on the heart and strengthens the function of the lower brain and the emotions. Phlegm maintains proper fat metabolism and the balance of body fluids, electrolytes and hormones through the circulation of lymph and moisture in the same way the sanguine or blood provides nutrition through the circulation system. The receptacle for the phlegm humor is the lungs. Signs of excess phlegm in the system can be exhibited by sleepiness, dullness, slowness, heaviness, cowardliness, forgetfulness, much spitting, runny nose, little appetite to meat, bad digestion, and white and cold skin. Many practitioners have observed that the phlegmatic types often possess many of the following qualities: pale, smooth, soft, cold and moist skin, dark blond or blond hair, hairless bodies, shortness of stature, flabby and fat body build, poor appetites, slow or weak digestion, thin and pale urine, pale and loose feces, dreams of water and the emotion of apathy. At the dinner table, phlegmatic types are the most deliberate eaters of all and are invariably the last ones through eating. This can mean that they gain weight easily because they stay too long at the table. Phlegmatic types often complain of soreness and pain in the lumbar region, loose teeth, deafness and/or tinnitus, thinning and loss of head hair, weakness and pain in the ankles, knees and hips, weakness in hearing and vision, impotence, infertility, miscarriage and genetic impairments. They may also exhibit disorders of growth and development, including problems of fertility, conception and pregnancy. Phlegmatic types may have disorders of the central nervous system (MS, Muscular dystrophy, or cerebral palsy) , diseases of the spinal column, bones, teeth and joints, and disorders of fluid metabolism. Phlegmatics can be balanced in general by keeping away from phlegm inducing foods such as milk, wheat and sweets, eating more heating foods and engaging in more heating activities. They are benefited by the herbs anise, cinnamon, valerian root, fenugreek, cardamom, garlic, and ginger.

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL CHOLERIC ELEMENT is closely associated with the nervous system and acts to increase its rate of function. The choleric element has a warming effect on the body and stimulates the intellect and increases physical and mental activity and courage. Its receptacle is the gall bladder. Signs of excess choleric element are: leanness of body, hollow eyes, anger without a cause, a testy disposition, yellowness of the skin, bitterness in the throat, pricking pains in the head, a swifter and stronger pulse than usual, troublesome sleeps, and dreams of fire, lightning, anger and/or fighting. Practitioners have also observed that choleric also possess many of the following qualities: yellow, rough, warm and dry skin, dark brown or red hair, very hairy bodies, short stature, a lean body build, a strong appetite, overactive digestion, orange and thick urine, and dry and yellow feces. At the dinner table choleric seldom vary their menu from one day to another and when the food arrives, they bolt it down in big chunks, often talking while chewing their food. The choleric type may experience problems with anxiety, agitation, and frenzy and may frequently suffer from nervous exhaustion and insomnia. They may also have palpitations, hypoglycemia, rashes or palsy or strokes. They have a tendency to migrate to mind-altering substances (anything from coffee to chocolate or alcohol and illegal or prescription drugs) and they typically have problems with disturbed sleep, bed-wetting as a child, disturbances of the heart, disturbances of speech or sensation, and blood pressure and circulation problems. Choleric need to eat foods that moisturize and cool. Good things for the choleric are: juicy fruits and vegetables, warm soups, and adequate liquid intake, denser root vegetables, sea vegetables, legumes, and fish protein. Raw and cooked foods can be used to balance the choleric states of hyper and hypo activity. Warm, cooked foods can stimulate the choleric when they are slowed down and tired, and cool, raw foods can cool her down when they are overexcited. Choleric should rarely use ice cream, spicy condiments, yogurt, and icy drinks. Adult choleric need to avoid overindulging in curry, sugar, alcohol, caffeine, tea, chili, and salt. Choleric children need to avoid colas, sugar and processed foods.

THE MELANCHOLIC ELEMENT in the body consists of a cool and thick earthly aspect which is prone to coagulation and a more fluid, vaporous substance. In normal quantities the element of melancholy stimulates memory and makes the nature of a person homely, practical, pragmatic and studious. However, the coldest part of the melancholic element is adherent and if not eliminated properly, can settle on or in tissues and form tumors. The spleen removes the melancholer from the blood and body fluids and is the receptacle of melancholer. Signs of excess melancholy element are fearfulness without a cause, fearful and foolish imagination, skin rough and swarthy skin, leanness, want of sleep, frightful dreams, sourness in the throat, weak pulse, solitariness, thin clear urine, and sighing. Practitioners have also observed that melancholic types may often display the following characteristics: brown, rough, dry, cold skin, dark brown or black hair, balding hair, medium build, slim body build, large appetite, slow digestion, thick, pale urine, dry and black feces, nightmares, and the emotion of worry or grief. At the dinner table melancholics are very picky eaters. It takes them forever to make up their minds about what to order, but once it arrives they savor every bite.

Melancholics tend to drag their feet and use their body as if it were a burden to them and may often experience major physical pain from even the most minor if injuries. The most effective therapies for the melancholic excess or the melancholic ailments involve purging or fasting through use of cleansing fasts or herbs such as senna pods (always use with cinnamon or cumin and at most one cup a month). Warming foods, activities and herbs are good for this type.

A simpler method of balancing the types can be followed by combining food properly according to its cold or hot attributes. In the time of the prophet, it was common to combine foods in certain ways according to their properties. In fact, healing and health maintenance can be achieved to a large degree through the simple observation of excess heat or cold in a person. In general you can observe excess heat (the sanguine or choleric element) in a person by noticing that they have a high fever, they feel hot, they are easily fatigued, they have excessive thirst, they have a bitter or burning sensation in their mouth, they cannot tolerate hot foods, they enjoy using cold foods and things, and they suffer more in the Summer or suffer greatly from inflammatory conditions.

If there is an access of this heat in a person or they are naturally sanguine or choleric they would do best on cooler foods such as beef, fish, cow's milk, butter, goats milk, cheeses, buttermilk, lettuce, celery, sprouts, zucchini, tomato, turnip, cabbage, okra, broccoli, white and sweet potatoes, carrots, cucumbers, apples, melons, pears, figs, apricots, oranges, brown rice, barley, lentils, sunflower oil, green tea, coffee, dill, thyme, rose, vinegar, sour things, and water. They are advised to eat very few or no nuts and seeds. They should also engage in cooling activities such as praying, meditating, yoga, tai chi, resting, sitting or reading.

You can observe an excess of cold (the phlegmatic or melancholic element) in a person if they complain of weak digestion, lack of thirst, and catarrhal conditions. A person with an excess of cold will report that they suffer most in the Winter and cold things in general upset them. If there is an access of cold in a person or a person is naturally phlegmatic or melancholic they would do best with warming foods such as lamb, liver, chicken, goose, duck, eggs, cream cheese, cream, ghee, beets, radishes, onion, mustard greens, leeks, eggplants, red peppers, chick peas, green peppers, turnip, parsley, peaches, plums, limes, lemons, bananas, raisins, dates, figs, olives, dried fruits, sesame seeds, almonds, walnuts, pine nuts, wheat, thin-grain rice, basmati rice, sesame oil, black tea, basil, cinnamon, cloves, coriander, garlic, ginger, mint, honey, anise seed, and curry powder. People with excess cold often do better with sweets or modern medicine than the other types, who often react badly to them. Phlegmatics or melancholics should also involve themselves in more heating activities such as running, walking, intense exercising, and intense conversations and activities.

THE PERSONALITY OF THE SANGUINE, CHOLERIC, MELANCHOLIC, AND PHLEGMATIC TEMPERAMENTS

A quick definition of each temperament personality is usually given by how they react to stimuli in their environment. Thus, the sanguine temperament is marked by quick but shallow, superficial excitability; the choleric by quick but strong and lasting; the melancholic temperament by slow but deep; the phlegmatic by slow but shallow excitability. The first two are also called extroverts, outgoing; the last two are introverts or reserved.

A choleric person is won by quiet explanation of reasons and motives; whereas by harsh commands he is embittered, hardened, driven to strong-headed resistance. A melancholic person is made suspicious and reticent by a rude word or an unfriendly mien; by continuous kind treatment, on the contrary, he is made pliable, trusting, affectionate. The choleric person can be relied upon, but with a sanguine person we can hardly count even upon his apparently serious promises. Without a knowledge of the temperaments of our fellow men we will treat them often wrongly, to their and to our own disadvantage.

With a knowledge of the temperaments, one bears with fellow men more patiently. If one knows that their defects are the consequence of their temperament, he excuses them more readily and will not so easily be excited or angered by them. He remains quiet, for instance, even if a choleric is severe, sharp-edged, impetuous, or obstinate. And if a melancholic person is slow, hesitating, undecided; if he does not speak much and even if he says awkwardly the little he has to say; or if a sanguine person is very talkative, light-minded, and frivolous; if a phlegmatic cannot be aroused from his usual indifference, he does not become irritated.

People aiming at finding the right mate, or improving their relationships with their family or even striving to be better spiritually are encouraged to explore their type and those of the people around them and use this as the map of their path in life. Rev. Conrad Hock says: One of the most reliable means of learning to know oneself is the study of the temperaments. For if a man is fully cognizant of his temperament, he can learn easily to direct and control himself. If he is able to discern the temperament of others, he can better understand and help them. Scientist and Psychologist David Keirsey says that although people dislike the idea that they cannot change, that they must learn that we were each created as different types because the world needs different types. He says, Of course, some change is possible, but it is a twisting and distortion of underlying form. Remove the fangs of a lion and behold a toothless lion, not a domestic cat. Our attempts to change spouse, offspring, or others can result in change, but the result is a scar and not a transformation. Similarly, says that when we strive to be

more spiritual and better as a person that we would have much more success if we realized the attributes of our type so we could better avoid the pitfalls (sins) and better strive towards the successes our type is most likely to have.

THE SANGUINE

Is self-composed, seldom shows signs of embarrassment, perhaps forward or bold. Eager to express himself before a group; likes to be heard. Prefers group activities; work or play; not easily satisfied with individual projects. Not insistent upon acceptance of his ideas or plans; agrees readily with others wishes; compliant and yielding. Good in details; prefers activities requiring pep and energy. Impetuous and impulsive; his decisions are often (usually) wrong. Keenly alive to environment, physical and social; likes curiosity. Tends to take success for granted. Is a follower; lacks initiative. Hearty and cordial, even to strangers; forms acquaintanceship easily. Tends to elation of spirit; not given to worry and anxiety; is carefree. Seeks wide and broad range of friendships; is not selective; not exclusive in games. Quick and decisive in movements; pronounced or excessive energy output. Turns from one activity to another in rapid succession; little perseverance. Makes adjustments easily; welcomes changes; makes the best appearance possible. Frank, talkable, sociable, emotions readily expressed; does not stand on ceremony. Frequent fluctuations of mood; tends to frequent alterations of elation and depression.

Superficiality. The sanguine person does not penetrate the depth, the essence of things; he does not embrace the whole, but is satisfied with the superficial and with a part of the whole. Before he has mastered one subject, his interest relaxes because new impressions have already captured his attention. He loves light work which attracts attention, where there is no need of deep thought, or great effort. To be sure, it is hard to convince a sanguine person that he is superficial; on the contrary, he imagines that he has grasped the subject wholly and perfectly. The sanguine is always changing in his moods; he can quickly pass from tears to laughter and vice versa; he is fickle in his views; today he may defend what he vehemently opposed a week ago; he is unstable in his resolutions. If a new point of view presents itself he may readily upset the plans which he has made previously. This inconsistency often causes people to think that the sanguine person has no character; that he is not guided by principles. The sanguine naturally denies such charges, because he always finds a reason for his changes. He forgets that it is necessary to consider everything well and to look into and investigate everything carefully beforehand, in order not to be captivated by every new idea or mood. He is also inconsistent at his work or entertainment; he loves variety in everything; he resembles a bee which flies from flower to flower; or the child who soon tires of the new toy. Tendency to the external. The sanguine does not like to enter into himself, but directs his attention to the external. In this respect he is the very opposite of the melancholic person who is given to introspection, who prefers to be absorbed by deep thoughts and more or less ignores the external. Optimism. The sanguine looks at everything from the bright side. He is optimistic, overlooks difficulties, and is always sure of success. If he fails, he does not worry about it too long but consoles himself easily. His vivacity explains his inclination to poke fun at others, to tease them and to play tricks on them. He takes it for granted that others are willing to take such things in good humor and he is very much surprised if they are vexed on account of his mockery or improper jokes.

This lack of deep passions is of great advantage to the sanguine in spiritual life, insofar as he is usually spared great interior trials and can serve God as a rule with comparative joy and ease. He seems to remain free of the violent passions of the choleric and the pusillanimity and anxiety of the melancholic. He feels happy when praised and is therefore very susceptible to flattery. Cheerfulness and inordinate love of pleasure. The sanguine person does not like to be alone; he loves company and amusement; he wants to enjoy life. In his amusements such a person can be very frivolous.

Dread of virtues which require strenuous efforts. Everything which requires the denial of the gratification of the senses is very hard on the sanguine; for instance, to guard the eyes, the ears, the tongue, to keep silence. He does not like to mortify himself by denying himself some favorite food.

The life of prayer of the sanguine suffers from three obstacles: He finds great difficulty in the so-called interior prayer for which a quiet, prolonged reflection is necessary; likewise in meditation, spiritual reading, and examination of conscience. He is easily distracted on account of his ever active senses and his uncontrolled imagination and is thereby prevented from attaining a deep and lasting recollection in God. At prayer a sanguine lays too much stress upon emotion and sensible consolation, and in consequence becomes easily disgusted during spiritual aridity.

The sanguine is very helpful to neighbors and friends and always willing to lend a hand. He is sociable and easily makes contact and talks to new people. He is entertaining to listen to and usually very willing to please. They may get mad easily, but they just as easily forget they were mad and usually bear no grudge. Even if the sanguine is occasionally exasperated and sad, he soon finds his balance again. His sadness does not last long, but gives way quickly to happiness.

To make the best of who he is a sanguine person must give himself to reflection on spiritual as well as temporal affairs. It is especially necessary for him to cultivate those exercises of prayer in which meditation prevails; for instance, morning meditation, spiritual reading, general and particular examination of conscience, meditation on the mysteries of the rosary, and the presence of God. Superficiality is the misfortune, reflection the salvation of the sanguine. In regard to temporal affairs the sanguine person must continually bear in mind that he cannot do too much thinking about them: he must consider every point; anticipate all possible difficulties; he must not be overconfident, over-optimistic. He must daily practice moderation of the senses, the eyes, ears, tongue, the sense of touch, and guard the palate against overindulging in exquisite foods and drinks. He must absolutely see to it that he be influenced by the good and not by the bad; that he accept counsel and direction. A practical aid against distraction is a strictly regulated life, and in a community the faithful observance of the Rules.

He must cultivate his good traits, as charity, obedience, candor, cheerfulness, and sanctify these natural good qualities by supernatural motives. He must continually struggle against those faults to which he is so much inclined by his natural disposition, such as, vanity and self-complacency; love of particular friendships; sentimentality; sensuality; jealousy; levity; superficiality; instability.

The education of the sanguine person is comparatively easy. He must be looked after; he must be told that he is not allowed to leave his work unfinished. His assertions, resolutions, and promises must not be taken too seriously; he must continually be checked as to whether he has really executed his work carefully. The sanguine child must be consistently taught to practice self-denial especially by subduing the senses. Perseverance at work and observance of order must be continually insisted upon. The child must be kept under strict supervision and guidance; he must be carefully guarded against bad company, because he can so easily be seduced. Leave to him his cheerfulness and let him have his fun, only guard him against overdoing it.

Remember the sanguine type is like a plant in a vegetable garden. The Spring comes and the plant grows larger and larger and stronger and stronger until one day it blossoms. How well the plant does is directly related to the soil it grows in and the gardener that tends it. Then in the Summer its blossoms become fruit and it offers this fruit to those around it. Then comes the fall, the fruits start to become less, the richness of the green plant fades, and it starts to go into a cycle of decline. The leaves change color and the fruits eventually fade away, the plant wilts and starts to mulch itself into the soil around it and decompose. After the Fall comes the inevitable Winter time. The plant is completely mulched into the ground and dies. But then the Spring comes again and the plant once again starts to blossom. And this time (the next year) it blossoms even more splendidly than before because the mulch from the year before has enriched its soil even more. It does not matter what the soil was to begin with, the next year is always better for the plant as each year its mulch enriches the soil around it.

So the sanguine person is very effected by the people around them, the place they live in, the weather and all other external stimuli including books and movies. The sanguine person is also very effected by the gardener that tends them. This usually is the spouse, mother, father, friend or doctor. The key thing to watch in a wood person is over stimulation (over watering the garden) which creates a selfish and dissatisfied attitude or under-stimulation which creates an angry and dissatisfied individual. The sanguine type themselves also need to realize what stage they are in. They will be either under or over stimulated most of the time so they need to seek balance and when they are not balanced they need to hold their tongue about their TEMPORARY dissatisfaction and instead administer the cure (which would be either to cut down or increase activity and nurturing and/or nutrition).

A sanguine child THRIVES on structure and as an adult they crave and need organization. They are often skilled at organizing their homes, people or projects. Ironically, though, they often have trouble staying within their own organizational bounds because of the constant balance seeking they are doing. As a sanguine person becomes more aware and balanced they will find it easier to stay within their own bounds.

THE CHOLERIC

The choleric man is a man of enthusiasm and passion; he is not satisfied with the ordinary, but aspires after great and lofty things. He craves for great success in temporal affairs; he seeks large fortunes, a vast business, an elegant home, a distinguished reputation or a predominant position. He aspires to the highest also in matters spiritual; he is swayed with a consuming fire for holiness; he is filled with a yearning desire to make great sacrifices for God and his neighbor, to lead many souls to heaven. Many dictators, commanders, rulers and missionaries are of this type.

He sees only one road, the one he in his impetuosity has taken without sufficient consideration, and he does not notice that by another road he could reach his goal more easily. If great obstacles meet him he, because of his pride, can hardly make up his mind to turn back, but instead he continues with great obstinacy on the original course.

The choleric has a great deal of self-confidence. He relies too much upon his own knowledge and ability. He refuses the help of others and prefers to work alone, partly because he does not like to ask for help, partly because he believes that he is himself more capable than others and is sure to succeed without the help of others. It is not easy to convince the choleric that he is in need of God's help even in little things. Therefore he dislikes to ask God's help and prefers to combat even strong temptations by his own strength. Because of this self-confidence in spiritual life the choleric often falls into many and grievous sins. The choleric may be proud and aloof, secretly or openly feeling he is superior to his fellow man.

However if the choleric develops his faculties and uses them for good and noble purposes, he may do great things for the honor of God, for the benefit of his fellow men, and for his own temporal and eternal welfare. He is assisted by his sharp intellect, his enthusiasm for the noble and the great, the force and resolution of his will, which shrinks before no difficulty, and the keen vivacity which influences all his thoughts and plans.

The well-trained choleric is very patient and firm in endurance of physical pains, willing to make sacrifices in sufferings, persevering in acts of penance and interior mortification, magnanimous and noble toward the indigent and conquered, full of aversion against everything ignoble or vulgar. Because the choleric has not a soft but a hard heart, he naturally suffers less from temptation of the flesh and can practice purity with ease.

The choleric is very successful also in his professional work. Being of an active temperament, he feels a continual inclination to activity and occupation. He cannot be without work, and he works quickly and diligently. A choleric needs high ideals and great thoughts; he must draw them from the word of God by meditation, spiritual reading, sermons, and also from the experience of his own life. The choleric will make still greater progress if he can humble himself to ask his fellow men, at least his superiors, or his confessor, for instructions and direction. The Choleric Temperament is self-composed; seldom shows embarrassment, is forward or bold. Eager to express himself before a group if he has some purpose in view. Insistent upon the acceptance of his ideas or plans; argumentative and persuasive. Impetuous and impulsive; plunges into situations where forethought would have deterred him. Self-confident and self-reliant; tends to take success for granted. Strong initiative; tends to elation of spirit; seldom gloomy or moody; prefers to lead. Very sensitive and easily hurt; reacts strongly to praise or blame. Not given to worry or anxiety. Seclusive. Quick and decisive in movement; pronounced or excessive energy output. Marked tendency to persevere; does not abandon something readily regardless of success. Emotions not freely or spontaneously expressed, except anger. Makes best appearance possible; perhaps conceited; may use hypocrisy, deceit, disguise.

The Choleric in relationships tends to burn up those around them. They are very free in giving and in taking emotion, things and support. Since they are very free in giving and very enthusiastic in their generosity they do not feel they ask too much of others. What they do not realize is that others (who are not choleric) do not have their burning passion and energy and are actually UNABLE to give what they can. So the fire person ends up burning up their friends and family with their requests and needs, but at the same time always feels unsatisfied because their own needs are not met. The fire person needs to understand this. They need to understand that other people are willing to give them what you want. They DO love the fire person and want to make them happy as their friends and family, but they are unable. It is not their fault, nor does it mean they are shallow, unloving or unworthy of a choleric person. The choleric person also needs to understand that the demands they put on their friends and family may be too much. Not just for their sake, but for their own. For when the fire person asks for too much and are constantly disappointed, they will be hurt and sad and withdraw. Instead, they need to expect less from the people around them and disperse your fire.

THE MELANCHOLIC

The melancholic must cultivate great confidence in God and love for suffering, for his spiritual and temporal welfare depend on these two virtues. He should always, especially during attacks of melancholy, say to himself: It is not so bad as I imagine. I see things too darkly, or I am a pessimist. He must from the very beginning resist every feeling of aversion, diffidence, discouragement, or despondency, so that these evil impressions can take no root in the soul. He must keep himself continually occupied, so that he finds no time for brooding. Persevering work will master all.

St. Theresa devotes an entire chapter to the treatment of malicious melancholics. She writes: Upon close observation you will notice that melancholic persons are especially inclined to have their own way, to say everything that comes into their mind, to watch for the faults of others in order to hide their own and to find peace in that which is according to their own liking. St. Theresa, in this chapter touches upon two points to which the melancholic person must pay special attention. He frequently is much excited, full of disgust and bitterness, because he occupies himself too much with the faults of others, and again because he would like to have everything according to his own will and notion.

The Melancholic Temperament is self-conscious, easily embarrassed, timid, bashful. Avoids talking before a group; when obliged to, he finds it difficult. Prefers to work and play alone. Good in details; careful. Deliberative; slow in making decisions; perhaps overcautious even in minor matters. Lacking in self-confidence and initiative; compliant and yielding. Tends to detachment from environment; reserved and distant except to intimate friends. Tends to depression; frequently moody or gloomy; very sensitive; easily hurt. Does not form acquaintances readily; prefers narrow range of friends; tends to exclude others. Worries over possible misfortune; crosses bridges before coming to them. Secretive; reclusive; shut in; not inclined to speak unless spoken to. Slow in movement; deliberative or perhaps indecisive; moods frequent and constant. Often represents himself at a disadvantage; modest and unassuming.

Inclination to reflection. The thinking of the melancholic easily turns into reflection. The thoughts of the melancholic are far-reaching. He dwells with pleasure upon the past and is preoccupied by occurrences of the long ago; he is penetrating; is not satisfied with the superficial, searches for the cause and correlation of things; seeks the laws which affect human life, the principles according to which man should act. His thoughts are of a wide range; he looks ahead into the future; ascends to the eternal

Love of retirement. The melancholic does not feel at home among a crowd for any length of time; he loves silence and solitude. Being inclined to introspection he secludes himself from the crowds, forgets his environment, and makes poor use of his senses eyes, ears, etc. In company he is often distracted, because he is absorbed by his own thoughts.

The melancholic is a stranger here below and feels homesick for God and eternity. This is where the melancholy comes from – not because he is sad. Inclination to passivity. The melancholic is a passive temperament.

He is reserved. He finds it difficult to form new acquaintances and speaks little among strangers. He reveals his inmost thoughts reluctantly and only to those whom he trusts. He does not easily find the right word to express and describe his sentiments. He yearns often to express himself, because it affords him real relief, to confide the sad, depressing thoughts which burden his heart to a person who sympathizes with him.

On the other hand, it requires great exertion on his part to manifest himself, and, when he does so, he goes about it so awkwardly that he does not feel satisfied and finds no rest. Confession is a great burden to the melancholic, while it is comparatively easy to the sanguine. What he could do today he postpones for tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, or even for the next week. Then he forgets about it and thus it happens that what he could have done in an hour takes weeks and months. He is never finished. For many a melancholic person it may take a long time to decide about his vocation to the religious life. The melancholic is a man of missed opportunities.

He is slow in his thinking. He feels it necessary, first of all, to consider and reconsider everything until he can form a calm and safe judgment.

He is slow in his speech. If he is called upon to answer quickly or to speak without preparation, or if he fears that too much depends on his answer, he becomes restless and does not find the right word and consequently often makes a false and unsatisfactory reply. This slow thinking may be the reason why the melancholic often stutters, leaves his sentences incomplete, uses wrong phrases, or searches for the right expression. He is also slow, not lazy, at his work. He works carefully and reliably, but only if he has ample time and is not pressed

The pride of the melancholic has its very peculiar side. He does not seek honor or recognition; on the contrary, he is loath to appear in public and to be praised. But he is very much afraid of disgrace and humiliation. He often displays great reserve and thereby gives the impression of modesty and humility; in reality he retires only because he is afraid of being put to shame. Because of their peculiarities they are frequently misjudged and treated wrongly. The melancholic feels keenly and therefore retires and secludes himself. Also, the melancholic has few friends, because few understand him and because he takes few into his confidence.

The melancholic practices with ease and joy interior prayer. His serious view of life, his love of solitude, and his inclination to reflection are a great help to him in acquiring the interior life of prayer. This temperament causes difficulties at prayer, since the melancholic person easily loses courage in trials and sufferings and consequently lacks confidence in God, in his prayers, and can be very much distracted by pusillanimous and sad thoughts.

One must always encourage him. Rude reproach, harsh treatment, hardness of heart cast him down and paralyze his efforts. Friendly advice and patience with his slow actions give him courage and vigor. He will show himself very grateful for such kindness.

Because melancholics take everything to heart and are very sensitive, they are in great danger of weakening their nerves. It is necessary, therefore, to watch nervous troubles of those entrusted to one's care. Melancholics who suffer a nervous breakdown are in a very bad state and cannot recover very easily.

In the training of a melancholic child, special care must be taken to be always kind and friendly, to encourage and keep him busy. The child, moreover, must be taught always to pronounce words properly, to use his five senses, and to cultivate piety. Special care must be observed in the punishment of the melancholic child otherwise obstinacy and excessive reserve may result. Necessary punishment must be given with precaution and great kindness and the slightest appearance of injustice must be carefully avoided.

THE PHLEGMATIC

The Phlegmatic Temperament is Deliberative; slow in making decisions; perhaps overcautious in minor matters. Indifferent to external affairs. Reserved and distant. Slow in movement. Marked tendency to persevere. Consistency of mood. The soul or mind of the phlegmatic person is only weakly or not at all touched by impressions. The reaction is feeble or entirely missing. Eventual impressions fade away very soon. He has very little interest in whatever goes on about him. He is not easily exasperated either by offenses, or by failures or sufferings. He remains composed, thoughtful, deliberate, and has a cold, sober, and practical judgment. He has no ambition, and does not aspire to lofty things, not even in his piety.

The training of phlegmatic children is very difficult, because external influence has little effect upon them and internal personal motives are lacking. It is necessary to explain everything most minutely to them, and repeat it again and again, so that at least some impression may be made to last, and to accustom them by patience and charity to follow strictly a well-planned rule of life.

Phlegmatic types have a quiet will of iron. They may seem quiet and push-overs at times but they will turn into a wall when pushed against their will. They may resist change and seem lazy at times and may not be the most exciting people you know but they are kind, take time with their friends and family, are easy to get along with, and inoffensive, good listeners, they have compassion and concern and do not get upset easily. Keep in mind that the life of the water type is to be appreciated for its steadiness rather than its excitement or romantic nature. This type is often unappreciated since they do not provide the glitter and glamor that attracts a lot of people, but they are usually appreciated by their friends and family who know they can always depend on them.

TEMPERAMENT SOURCES

The Traditional Healers Handbook: A Classic Guide to the Medicine of Avicenna by Hakim G.M. Chisti, N.D.

Natural Childhood by John Thomson *Please Understand Me II* by David Keirse

Personality Plus by Florence Littaner

Between Heaven and Earth Chinese Medicine Complete Herbal and English Physician by Culpeper

Childhood: The Study of the Growing Soul by Hydebrand

Teaching as a Lively Art by Marjorie Spock

TEACHER TASKS

MEDITATION & INNER WORK

One thing that Steiner saw as very important for Waldorf parents and educators was to maintain a constant awareness of ourselves through meditation and self-reflection. The beginning of his work, *The Foundation Meditation*, expresses his thought the best when he says, "Soul of man! You live in the limbs That carry you through the world of space Into the sea of spirit-being: Practice spirit remembrance In the depths of soul, Where in the reigning Cosmic creator-being Your own I In God's I Is begotten; And you will truly live In the cosmic human being."

Phlegmatics are natural meditators. Remember Winnie the Pooh from the 100-acre-woods? He always seemed to be in a constant state of meditation – always looking at the clouds and seeing Hephalumps in them or something! People of the phlegmatic type don't usually need instruction in meditating or finding time to meditate. For a phlegmatic, meditation happens when it will, throughout the day, alone or in a crowd, in the form of daydreams, short naps, sleeping in and sitting peacefully. While others may find this behavior irritating phlegmatics are often told to get up and do something useful we could all learn a bit about meditating from their natural state of being. The phlegmatics challenge in meditation is to focus on themselves instead of distractions. If one is trying to center themselves they need to spend some time meditating on their own inner being and life. A phlegmatic can easily get distracted by thoughts of Hephalumps and honeypots.

Melancholics love order and are easily distracted and disturbed when things are out of order. So for a melancholic to be able to meditate they need to find a time of day and a space in which they will be able to be completely alone and at peace. A meditation class, a special room in the house, an early rising time or sometime after everyone else goes to bed, is a good time for the melancholic to meditate. Melancholics have an uncanny ability to rise before anyone else in the house because they cannot think clearly when anyone else is around and they need that meditation time every day to stay grounded. The melancholic's challenge is being able to spend that time in meditation focused on themselves instead of other people. Melancholics are often distracted by what may be good for other people and often do not spend enough of their meditation time on real inner work for themselves.

Sanguines are only at peace when there is movement involved so it will come as no surprise that it was a sanguine who wrote the book *Walking Meditation*. Sanguines are the people who find that they think most clearly in cars, trains and planes or on walks. There is something about moving in a steady rhythmic motion that creates the peace that a sanguine needs to meditate. The perfect meditation for the sanguine is a morning walk, an evening stroll, chanting, yoga, or some other form of meditation that involves movement. Sanguines are some of the most intense meditators and often spend too much time thinking about what they want to work on. The challenge for a sanguine is to be able to moderate their meditative focus and focus on one issue at a time, rather than all of them at once.

Cholerics often meditate by doing things. But not in the same way a sanguine does. A sanguine meditates by moving in some way and in this way the peace and thoughts of inner work are brought to the surface. For a choleric, meditation often needs to involve even more doing. A choleric could create a piece of art, write a book, or sculpt a sculpture and this would be both their way of meditating and the result of their thoughts in the visual realm. Cholerics meditate best when they are talking, writing or creating something in some way. The challenge for a choleric is to keep focused on the inner meaning of their creations and to make sure their speaking, journaling and art remain a healing way for them to work on their own selves and do not become stifled by what society may expect from their writings, expressions or art. This short article only touches the very surface of what inner work can be for each person. If you are interested in reading more there are many books published on the topic.

FURTHER READING ON STEINER AND MEDITATION

Full text of The Foundation Meditation
at: http://wn.rsarchive.org/Articles/FSFTSe_index.html

Inner Work, A Study Guide for Rudolf Steiner's Heart Thinking by Mark Riccio

Verses and Meditations by Rudolf Steiner

EDUCATING THE TEACHER/PARENT

Have you ever heard the term "What's good for the goose is good for the gander?" (It means, basically that what a man can do, a woman can do to or what is good for the man, is also good for the women) I would like to coin a new phrase and dedicate it to Waldorf schooling: What is good for the gosling is good for the goose.

Over the years I have heard so many parents reflect that sentiment – even myself. When I attended the parent-child class with my children in the Chicago suburbs I used to joke that I was going for me and they were just along for the ride. At my Waldorf enrichment school overseas many mothers commented to me that they were surprised how much THEY looked forward to coming to my program and just the other day someone commented that they didn't know who was getting more out of Waldorf – their kids or them!

This is one aspect of Waldorf education that makes it so appealing and healing at the same time – it encompasses each person as a holistic being. In striving to be the best teachers we learn the skills of inner work and meditation, in creating paintings with our children we can sometimes heal ourselves from our own rushed childhood years. In teaching a main lesson on mythology our own fire for learning is re-lit and in taking nature walks we re-learn appreciation of nature from our own children. In noticing the ways that Waldorf can be good for us as well as our children, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the teaching methods as well as for the efforts we put into our teaching hours. We can also discover new and wonderful things about ourselves and enrich our own lives.

As a parent we are also learning and a main lesson book can be something that we can use to record that learning, express ourselves, honor what we are learning and create a sacred space for it. As a baby we are cheered with each new skill we learn. Our first laugh is rewarded with praise and photos. Our first steps are rewarded with hugs and squeals of excitement from the adults around us. However, when we learn something new as an adult how often do we get praised for it? Keeping your own main lesson book can be a way for you to honor that.

The reason I call it a “main lesson” book rather than a journal is that I want to emphasize that the scope of the book is to record lessons and processes rather than a mixture of lessons, photos, and experiences. A memory album is a record of the past. A journal is a record of our inner thoughts and experiences. A main lesson book is a record of lessons we are working on now – academic, artistic, and spiritual. In my main lesson book this week I have written out two of my favorite quotes and decorated them with a flowery border. The next page is a mandala meditation I did when I needed to work through some frustrations. Mixed in with those kinds of entries is a page I did with the kids on herbal form drawing and another page on a story we created together.

Another area of Waldorf we can learn from is the skill of rhythm in our lives. Modern society teaches us to schedule things by the hour and accomplish as much as we can in one day. We are told that we must be on time to work, on time to school and on time to everything we do. We are given cereal so we can rush through breakfast, frozen meals so we can rush through cooking and cars so we can drive quickly to wherever we are going. In this rush we often lose our sense of rhythm and can become quite overwhelmed and confused.

In Waldorf education, rhythm is a central part of the day. In Steiner’s writing it is hard to find a lecture in which he does not refer to rhythm and cycles – of the day, of the month, of the year, of the life and even of the life of earth and mankind itself. In his lecture, *The Christmas Festival*, Steiner says,

Man seems to become more and more akin to the great rhythms of Nature. If we think of all that encompasses the life of the soul, of the course of the Sun and everything that is connected with it, we are struck by something that closely concerns us, namely, the rhythm and the marvelous harmony in contrast to the chaos and lack of harmony in the human soul. We all know how rhythmically and with what regularity the Sun appears and disappears. And we can picture what a stupendous upheaval there would be in the universe if for a fraction of a second only the Sun were to be diverted from its course. It is only because of this inviolable harmony in the course of the Sun that our universe can exist at all, and it is upon this harmony that the rhythmic life-process of all beings depends. Think of the annual course of the Sun. — Picture to yourselves that it is the Sun which charms forth the plants in spring time and then think how difficult it is to make the violet or some other plant flower out of due season. Seed-time and harvest, everything, even the very life of animals is dependent upon the rhythmic course of the Sun. And in the being of man himself everything that is not connected with his feelings, his desires and his passions, or with his ordinary thinking, is rhythmic and harmonious.

By realizing this within our children and ourselves we realize how important “little things” like morning circle time, regular meals, regular bedtimes and regular routines are to our holistic well-being. There are many theories today that most psychological issues we deal with as a society are greatly attributable to our lack of rhythm. Depression can often stem from days, months or even years of sleep deprivation.. ADHD can become manifested when a child or adult is exposed to an environment lacking in rhythm and many illnesses, especially of the digestive system, can be directly related to our habits of eating out of rhythm with the seasons and with our own physical needs. However, although we may spend hours planning the rhythms of our child’s day, we sometimes forget our own. While we definitely reap the benefits of the morning circle time and other rhythmic routines we sometimes forget that our own routines often need a rhythm. In the same way we schedule a different activity for each day (bread making on Monday, painting on Tuesdays, etc....) we can also schedule our own chores in this way.

In my personal situation, I schedule both my household and my business duties in this way. On Mondays I clean the animal cages and change the sheets on the beds. On Tuesdays I scrub the kitchen floor and clean the bathrooms. The list rotates every week. In my business I have a similar list. On Mondays I list things for sale online, I do home and business related shopping and I ship any weekend orders I have. On Tuesdays I do finances for the home and the business and on Wednesdays I write BLOGS, articles and do my main work on the Waldorf lists. On Thursdays I see consulting clients and on Fridays I have office hours for students from my natural healing classes. In the same way I also have a rhythm to my day, which reflects the rhythm of breathing in and breathing out that the children follow. After spending some time on breathing in (E-mail, gardening, doing dishes) I make sure that I spend some time on breathing out activity (i.e.: running errands, lessons with the kids, healing work). I also make sure my day contains the three elements of head (writing articles or mental work), heart (chatting with friends, being with my kids, partner and pets, meditating) and hands (knitting, baking, creating something).

The morning is a natural time of awakening when a person can best function in creating projects and writing. Afternoon is naturally the peak of the day when more physical activity is required, such as a walk. Many people who ignore this natural rhythm can experience a “low” or feeling of fatigue daily sometime in the afternoon. The evening (and early morning before the sun comes up) is a natural time for inner work and peaceful activities as a family. On days when I do not follow these rhythms I can feel the difference in my mood, productivity, outlook on life, ability to work and levels of inner peace and balance. If you reflect for a while you will find that there are many ways in which you can incorporate Waldorf into you own life as well as your child’s life.

THE FOUNDATION STONE MEDITATION EXCERPT

Soul of man!

You live in the heart-lung-beat

That guides you through the rhythm of times

To the sensing of your own soul's being:

Practice spirit contemplation

In equanimity of soul,

Where the surging

Cosmic creative deeds

Unite

Your own I

To the cosmic I;

And you will truly *feel*

In deeds of the human soul.

MODERN WORLD

WALDORF & TELEVISION

WHAT DOES WALDORF EDUCATION SAY ABOUT TV?

References for this article are listed below. As a naturopath, writer, and teacher this is one of my favorite projects to take on. I enjoy researching the historical uses of herbs and healing therapies and then tracing their usage up until the modern day where we find that they are still being used for the same ailments – only now their usage is “proved” by modern research. After writing many of these articles I have come to the conclusion that there are many visionaries that have existed that were able to convince hundreds of people of their vision, but sadly, they were not fully listened to until “modern” methods could be used to prove what they say is true.

And some visionaries are still waiting! In the book, *The Field*, Lynne McTaggart researches some fringe science such as EMF waves, light therapy and ESP research and shows how even these fields are finally getting the “proof” they need to stand up in modern society.

WHAT DID STEINER SAY ABOUT TELEVISION?

So what did Steiner have to say about television? Nothing. There were no televisions in his time. But, he said enough about early childhood education that we can surmise what his views on the tube would have been. These reasons center on Steiner’s view of the astral body, imagination and the way a child learns.

A cornerstone in Steiner’s educational theorems was the fact that children go through three stages in their lives. First, from ages zero through seven, the spirit inhabiting the body of the child is still getting used to its surroundings. This explains many standards in the Waldorf curriculum such as the standard of teaching the alphabet at age seven or eight. During the second stage, from ages seven through fourteen, the child is said to be driven by imagination and fantasy, and during the third stage, starting at age fourteen, the astral body is said to be driven into the physical body, creating the onset of puberty.

Waldorf educators saw a direct link to this astral body and the watching of television. The scenes, the lack of imagination involved, and the topics covered on most channels would obviously bring on the astral stage of the body at an early age. This was one reason that television was banned from Waldorf schools.

Modern researchers, however, have just recently made this connection when they recently announced, “Watching Television may Quicken the Onset of Puberty” (Dr. Laura Markham, 2006). In her article, based on thirty five different research studies she states that this connection has a lot to do with the hormone melatonin. Melatonin is a hormone produced by the pineal gland in the brain, which plays a key role in regulating the body’s internal clock. Light emitted by television screens suppresses melatonin levels in the blood, which disrupts sleep patterns of children and teens as well as the age at which they enter puberty.

It is also interesting to note that the problems of early onset puberty have baffled researchers since 1950. This was the same date in which televisions became widely owned in the United States.

This is not the main reason given when Waldorf Schools state on their websites that children should not watch television. When I reviewed forty Waldorf school websites I found that thirty six of them stated their main reason for discouraging television was that it hinders the imagination in the child.

And this is indeed one of the most important elements in early childhood education that Steiner, himself, promoted. Rudolf Steiner, in his 1919 Essay, "An Introduction to Waldorf Education," states, "Of prime importance for the cultivation of the child's feeling-life is that the child develops a relationship to the world in a way such as that which develops when we are inclined towards fantasy." Fantasy, in Waldorf education, is not the fantasy of Disney movies or only the fantasy of fairy tales. It is a holistic process of allowing the child to expand their imagination into expanded realms. Fairy tales are one aspect of this process.

Recent studies show that television hinders this process in young children. In a study led by Dr. Aric Sigman, an associate fellow of the British Psychological Society (and concluded in 2007). He shows that television affects the brain in many ways that would weaken the imagination in children. The first effect that translates into a weaker imagination is the occurrence of "jump cuts" in television that fracture attention spans. At the same time, studies show that the brain is then programmed to reward itself with "dopamine" (the happy drug) for being able to cope with this fractured attention span. Basically, people become addicted to functioning with a fractured attention span. Extreme multi-tasking and children being enrolled in tens of "after-school activities" are also a result of this addiction. Imagination is naturally lost when our minds cannot focus. Have you ever tried to write an article while being interrupted every five minutes?

As far as being educational, brain scans performed by neuroscientist have shown that television and many interactive media games do not stimulate intellectual areas of the brain.

Teachers in Waldorf schools also discourage the watching of television because of the effects it has on the child's behavior at school. But any teacher could tell you that! Not just a Waldorf teacher. And we have all heard that enough times to be tired of that reason. But how can we bring Steiner's research into this and understand it on a deeper level? Steiner said, "From birth to about the sixth or seventh year, the human being naturally gives himself up to everything immediately surrounding him in the human environment, and thus, through the imitative instinct, gives form to his own nascent powers." If I didn't know that Steiner was not alive during the time of television I would expect his next words to say something about the effects of television. But his next words are even more powerful. He says, "From this period on, the child's soul becomes open to take in consciously what the educator and teacher give, which affects the child as a result of the teacher's natural authority."

So, what, then, would happen when that “teacher” is the television? What Steiner is saying in his statement is that the child is in a stage where he/she is imitating everything around them. Everything becomes their teacher. Any parent who has been embarrassed by a child’s actions that reflected their own knows this to be true. Rahima Baldwin Dancy’s book “You are Your Child’s First Teacher” explores this issue in much depth. It becomes only obvious, to a Waldorf teacher, then, that if you allow television to be a teacher you open up the child to many things you do not want them exposed to.

On the website of one Waldorf school in Ireland it states,

Television, as well as film, videos, DVDs, recorded music, computers and electronic games have a very powerful effect on children. It can take several days for the effects of a single video to wear off. If children are watching every day, the effects never wear off at all; many children now speak a lot of the time in ‘cartoon’ voices, make ‘sound effects’ to accompany their jerky movements (kicking, punching) and compulsively repeat lines from videos they have seen over and over again. This is now seen as normal childish behavior, but it really comes from these media, not from the children themselves.

Another concern about television watching is that it will hinder the child’s ability to reflect on and carry through on the lessons they were taught during the day. Steiner believed that “What is learned more slowly at any given age is more surely and healthily absorbed by the organism, that what is crammed into it.” (Spiritual Ground for Education by Rudolf Steiner). This is one reason that when a child is given a lesson in a Waldorf manner that they are allowed time to reflect on it and often given the “same” lesson twice. Lessons often depend on the child taking in the content of the first lesson, sleeping and reflecting on it and then coming back the next day to recall and work through it. During this time of sleep and reflection the lesson will have been digested, together with mental pictures a child has made for themselves and it is this that makes the lesson really “sink in” to a child’s being.

If children are watching television or using any other electronic devices during this process, these devices will “over-ride” the lesson. So instead of reflecting and creating images of the lesson, the child’s head will be filled with images of the television or media. Once again, his own imagination is denied him. This view on the damage of television ties into the modern studies done on television watching and its effects on concentration that I discussed earlier.

Recent studies are also showing that TV can be linked to obesity, autism, and even diabetes. Steiner gave numerous lectures on the topic of nutrition and education and believed that the health of the body was greatly affected by how it learned, and how a person learned was also greatly affected by their health. Knowing, what we know today about the health effects of television on the body, we can assume that Steiner would not have approved of this as a healthy medium for holistic learning.

HOW DO VIDEOS ON THE EARTHSCHOOLING CURRICULUM TIE INTO THIS?

The videos we provide are intended for adult viewing only.

I do realize that some children may choose to watch some of the videos in an instructional way with their parents. Videos that children may be watching for instruction are meant to be “instructional lessons” and not “shows to watch.” So if your child chooses to watch a show then they should be aware of the presenter as their “teacher” and they should participate with the presenter and their parent together as a way of learning new things. This is a way of bringing Waldorf into your home via the incredible tools of the Internet in the modern world and is NOT a way to bring TV into your Waldorf home.

MP3s provided by Earthschooling are intended to be listened to by parents alone or parents and children together. After listening to a show parents should be able to re-create the stories for their children and children should be able to recreate the stories in their own way – including creating plays. This is one way to bring the magic of storytelling and fantasy into your home as a family together.

WALDORF & TELEVISION SOURCES

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“Why Do Steiner Schools Discourage TV Watching?” by the ISKA (Irish Steiner
Kindergarten Association) at: <http://www.steinerireland.org/faq/#11>

“An Introduction to Waldorf Education” by Rudolf Steiner, 1919. Published at:
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<http://www.whale.to/b/sigman.html>

“Why Do Waldorf Schools Discourage TV?” St. Michael’s School in London at:
http://www.stmichaelsteiner.wandsworth.sch.uk/html_site/index.html

“The Field” by Lynne McTaggart