

FIRST GRADE OVERVIEW

for Homeschoolers

Waldorf Curriculum
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

The First Grade Child

- Parent Preparation

- Signs of First Grade Readiness

- Online Resources

How First Grade is Different From Kindergarten

- Reading Steiner

- Teaching Through Imagination

Curriculum Highlights

- Storytelling Resources

- Nursery Rhymes

The School Day

- Sample Daily Schedule

- Head/Heart/Hands

- Starting Your Day

- The Question of Textbooks

- The Main Lesson Book

Setting up the School Room

- The *Atelier*

Journaling and Assessment

- Remedial Work

- Consultants

The First Grade Curriculum

- Preparing for a Unit

- Keeping a Plan Book

- Setting Up Your Plan Book

Sample Plan Book Pages

Binder Cover Page

Weekly Plan Page

Daily Plan Page

Journaling Page

Good Curriculum Planning

First Grade Skills & Understandings Checklist

Resources

Form Drawing

Beginning Recorder

Quality of Numbers

Learning to Knit

Handwriting

Equals the Raven

Math Gnomes

Environmental Studies

Singing

Physical Education

Miscellaneous

FAQs

Suggested Booklist

Appendices

The First Grade Child

Welcome to First Grade!

I'm sure you are very excited about starting to homeschool your child this year. But you may also have a lot of questions, like where to start, how to make sure you're doing it right, what to cover, and more. This First Grade Overview is designed to help and should answer many of your questions.

Your first grade child is likely between the ages of 6 and 7. Waldorf schools generally take children into first grade after the change of teeth, along with other signs of first grade readiness. Your child has moved from the willing stage (birth to 7) to the feeling stage (7 to 14). If you are not familiar with the general view of child development laid out by Rudolf Steiner, please take special note of the section "Reading Steiner." It's really important for your teaching and your parenting that you thoroughly understand Steiner's point of view on the three stages of development.

If you homeschooled your child for the preschool and kindergarten years, you know that there is a lot of emphasis on children using their hands (being will-driven). You reach a preschool child through their body. In the second stage of unfolding, which is when you introduce your child to academic subjects for the first time, your child is moving from their "hands" to their "heart". You reach a school-aged child through their love for you and by being an authority figure. It is important to remember that your child is not yet head-driven; this comes in the third stage of unfolding. **Although you are studying academic material, you do not reach your child through explanation.** Story-telling, and encouraging imagination, is the key. There is also a lot of memorization which takes place in this stage – your child will hold the information in their minds, although they do not yet understand it – and it will work on them unconsciously. Only later in life will they see the value of what they have memorized.

In the second stage of unfolding, parents often find it difficult to know how to handle their children. Previously, the catch-phrase for the willing stage was "teach through imitation" and we have all become accustomed to parenting in this way. But the feeling child is a different creature and your new catch phrase should be "teach through imagination". Knowing that imagination is the key to catching your child's heart will help you in both your parenting and your teaching.

Your child also has new physical capacities as he reaches this new stage. The Waldorf curriculum is designed to meet and support your child at each stage of his development – physical, emotional, and mental – and each school year's course of study is carefully coordinated to help your child reach his fullest potential.

We have left space for your notes throughout. Please consider this curriculum overview as only a starting point, and continue to explore more about homeschooling and the Waldorf method. Of course, you can feel free to contact us at any time:

waldorf_curric@yahoo.com

Parent Preparation

There will be a lot of additional information about parent preparation later on. But here is an overview and some general notes.

You don't have to have formal education training to be a homeschooling parent. It does help to be familiar with the philosophy behind whatever program you choose, however. The Waldorf approach emphasizes learning in an authentic context as well as educating the entire child (head/heart/hands). Using hands-on learning methods also helps meet the different strengths of the child, which are often described as multiple intelligences. We know that people have many different ways of absorbing information; this

"...can be exemplified by the learning of skills ranging from riding a bicycle to delicate surgery, painting a picture or fine carpentry. Each kind may be called a center of learning or intelligence.

The Waldorf model has long confirmed that there are many different centers of intelligence. A child who may have trouble spelling may be a gifted handworker. The child who writes beyond their years may not focus as well on math. The child who draws and has artistic promise may not be graceful in movement. Traditional school models have often focused on the intellectual center alone to the detriment of other centers of learning. Thus children who may be extremely gifted, but in an unaddressed center of intelligence, may feel they are underachievers and have low self esteem. Our job as educators is to find the strengths of our children and allow them to blossom fully. To do this we must expose them to and help them explore as many different centers of learning and ability as possible.

We also must address the learning weaknesses of our children. One of the most effective ways to do this is to combine a strong center with a weaker center in a single activity. When we can combine two or more different centers this way, the stronger or more developed center can induce the weaker one into new understanding. Seymour Pappert, in his book "The Children's Machine", talks about 'kitchen math'. He observed that a person who could not reason out a fraction problem on paper was able to solve it simply by measuring out the fractions using flour and a measuring cup. Thus a practical, hands on experience overcame a difficulty in abstract reasoning. **When we combine a new subject with something a child already knows and enjoys, we enhance learning."**

Quote taken from
<http://www.weirdolls.com/misc/homeschool.html> (emphasis added)

The most vital part of any curriculum, however, is something which cannot be packaged. It's you, the parent and instructor. Your mental preparedness for school is a key part of each day and it is your main task each morning. Look through the lessons for that day and reflect on how best to present them to your child. Be completely prepared by thinking through each step of the activity, gathering and ordering the materials, and taking the time to review any background information you may need in order to address your child's questions. Make sure you are at your best!

At the conclusion of each day, use the journalling pages to observe your child's development. It will be helpful to you if you date each journal entry. This will be a valuable source of assessment both of your child and of your own growth as a teacher.

Signs of First Grade Readiness:

Physical Development

There are more signs of First Grade readiness than just losing your first tooth! (If that were the case then my daughter, who knocked out one of her front baby teeth by falling against a bookcase at the age of three years and one month, would be extremely precocious indeed!)

Waldorf teachers look for a variety of symptoms of physical development to determine whether a child is ready for First Grade:

- ❖ the change of teeth
- ❖ ratio of head to body
- ❖ visible joints
- ❖ an observable arch in the foot
- ❖ individualized facial features
- ❖ S-curve in spine
- ❖ consistent heartbeat of 60 beats/minute
- ❖ respiration once every four heartbeats

The change of teeth:

In Steiner's time, this traditionally happened around age 7; however, it seems to be occurring earlier in modern children, so this is not necessarily as good a guide as it used to be. Look for your child to have at least seven of the eight physical characteristics described above for deciding he is ready for First Grade.

Ratio of head to body:

Your child's limbs begin to lengthen and his head becomes smaller in relation to the rest of the body. An infant has a ratio of 1:4 between head and body. In a First Grade child this ratio is 1:6

As a sign of this change, the child becomes able to reach his arm over his head and completely cover his ear with his hand.

Visible joints:

Check to see if your child has visible knuckles and kneecaps instead of dimples.

Individualized facial features:

Your child should have an enlarged and clearly defined chin and nose and a loss of fat on his cheeks.

Signs of First Grade Readiness:

Skill Development

Consider whether your child can do the following things before entering him in a Waldorf First Grade program:

- ❖ walk forward on a balance beam, maintaining balance
- ❖ catch and throw a large ball
- ❖ climb stairs, alternating feet with each step
- ❖ tie knots and bows
- ❖ zip and button clothing
- ❖ hop, on either foot
- ❖ hop, with both feet together
- ❖ skip
- ❖ habitually walk by swinging opposite arm when stepping out with one foot
- ❖ shake hands by offering hand with thumb outstretched
- ❖ sew
- ❖ finger knit
- ❖ play finger games
- ❖ have established dominance (left-handed or right-handed)
- ❖ have a conscious goal in drawing or painting a picture

When in doubt, do your child a favor and wait.

Online Resources

Be sure to check out the following for lots of helpful information about homeschooling your first grade child:

Contributions on First Grade:

<http://www.waldorflibrary.org/Clearing%20House/Fall%201982a.pdf>

First and Second Grade Knitting:

<http://www.waldorflibrary.org/Clearing%20House/Spring%201973.pdf>

Verses for Lesson Prep: <http://www.waldorfhomeschoolers.com/lessonverse.htm>

The First Grade Circle:

<http://www.waldorfhomeschoolers.com/grade1circle.htm>

(this is your morning movement time, about 20 minutes before the main lesson)

Waldorf Alphabet: <http://www.waldorfhomeschoolers.com/alphabet.htm>

Waldorf Writing: <http://www.waldorfhomeschoolers.com/unlined.htm>

Math Stories: <http://www.waldorfhomeschoolers.com/mathstories.htm>

Handwork: <http://www.waldorfhomeschoolers.com/handwork.htm>

Form Drawing: <http://www.waldorfhomeschoolers.com/formdrawing.htm>

Class One Crayon Bag: <http://www.raphaelhouse.school.nz/index.php?pid=128>

Verse/Game for Losing a Tooth: <http://www.waldorfhomeschoolers.com/toothfairy.htm>

The Waldorf School Curriculum – Grade One:

<http://www.millennialchild.com/Grade%2001%20Curriculum.htm>

Wonder Ranch Homeschool is also a very helpful site with a lot of information for homeschoolers: <http://www.wonderhs.com/wonderhomeschool/id84.html>

Find more resources compiled for First Grade on our Parent Resources page:

http://www.waldorfcurriculum.com/lower_resources.html

Online Resources

My Notes:

How First Grade is Different From Kindergarten

The first grade child has entered the second stage of unfolding and is developing new skills and capacities. The change between the first grade curriculum and the kindergarten curriculum mirrors this transition. Instead of a traditional school program, where the alphabet and numbers are taught in kindy (to give children a head start) and then again in first grade, Waldorf teachers hold off on academic learning in the early years. The child's will forces are, at that time, focused on developing the child's body. If you draw the forces away from this task and pull them up into the head, teachers believe, the child will suffer in later years from health problems due to this interruption. Waldorf kindergarten teachers allow the child to spend the time from birth to around 7 years of age in building a strong healthy body.

A Waldorf education is often referred to as educating "head" – "heart" – "hands". "Hands" is the earliest stage, birth to seven. In the years from seven to fourteen (the elementary and middle school years), the child is focused on developing "heart". Finally, in high school and beyond, the intellectual capacities come fully into being and are the emphasis of adult life. So, although your child is moving on from his body-development stage, that does not mean he is ready to develop his intellectual capacities full on. The key word to this middle stage – where you are beginning now, with the first grade curriculum – is Heart.

Reading Steiner

There are two writings by Steiner available online FREE which explain further the three stages of childhood and how the curriculum is based on the capacities of the child at each stage. **Please** click on the following links and read these documents. It is much easier to understand the entire curriculum if you understand Steiner's view of the child:

The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy
(also translated as "spiritual science")

http://wn.rsarchive.org/Articles/EduChild/EduChi_index.html

The Child's Changing Consciousness as the Basis of Pedagogical Practice

http://steinerbooks.org/research/archive/childs_changing_consciousness/childs_changing_consciousness.pdf

We also recommend purchasing or borrowing the following two books by Steiner:
The Kingdom of Childhood and Practical Advice to Teachers.

To borrow books by mail, contact the
Rudolf Steiner Library, 65 Fern Hills Rd, Ghent, NY 12075.
(518) 672-7690.
rsteinerlibrary@taconic.net

Further documents by Steiner, in all areas of his writings, are available online at the Steiner Archive: <http://www.rudolfsteinerarchive.com/>.

There are a wide variety of readings on all topics there; the education section is <http://www.rsarchive.org/Education/>. You may also want to read some of his spiritual writings; spiritual "inner work" is an important part of the role of Waldorf teachers.

This site is entirely run by donations so *please* support it if you can.

Reading Steiner

My Notes:

Teaching Through Imagination

We have written before that, in the second stage of unfolding, parents often find it difficult to know how to handle their children. Previously, the catch-phrase for the willing stage was "teach through imitation" and we have all become accustomed to parenting in this way. But the feeling child is a different creature and your new catch phrase should be "teach through imagination". Knowing that imagination is the key to catching your child's heart will help you in both your parenting and your teaching.

But what does it *mean* to teach through imagination? How do you approach presenting information to children – where, on the one hand, you are told that they are ready for academic content but, on the other hand, you should not be directly addressing their intellect?

Here are some notes I took from a seminar with Jack Petrash, focusing on "The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy":

The second stage is built on **imagination**. When you want to get a child to do something you don't give them an abstract, like "When we get to the doctor's office I want you to behave". You paint a picture for them, like "In five minutes I'm going to ask you to put on your coat and hat, we'll walk out to the car and I will buckle you in. We're going to the doctor's office. When we get out of the car we'll walk into the lobby and push the button for the elevator. When it comes we will get in and push the button to tell it to go to the second floor. When the doors to the elevator open we'll walk out and around the corner to the doctor's office. You will find a chair to sit on while I say hello to the receptionist and put your name on her paper so that the doctor knows that you have come. Then you can take your coat and hat off and choose a book. I will choose a book also. We will sit and read together until the doctor comes to the door and calls your name."

In this way you are *painting a picture in their mind* of what to expect, it's concrete not abstract, and calls on them to use their imagination and memory, both of which are strongest during this time. Activating the imagination and **memory** works on the etheric body. He talked a lot about memory work. In Waldorf, from the very start of school, children memorize verses, poems, stories, and songs. Most of the writing you do in your MLB is the child remembering the story which was told the day before. The memory is the strongest in 3rd grade. Choose fairy tales and poems which will help the child to develop conscience, which does not fully awaken until the final stage of childhood development. For example, he said he had to memorize "Abou Ben Adhem" by James Leigh Hunt (1784-1859) in 5th grade. The significance of the poem was not something he understood until he was much older but it was there in his mind the whole time, working subtly on him as he developed. Memory plants the seed for understanding, an important way to work towards developing the etheric body.

Along with storytelling -- and choosing stories with morals that you want the child to absorb -- and memory, the thing he talked about the most was **habits**. This is the prime time to develop habits you want the child to have throughout life. A set place to do your homework, without interruptions, which is organized, and doing your homework at the same time every day, not putting it off to the last minute (homework doesn't come in until 3rd grade, but that was the example he gave) -- learning to hang up your coat and put your shoes away as soon as you come in the door. In the first stage of development, we *show* children what we want them to do, they work through imitation. In the second stage, we work through their feelings. They love and revere us and want to please us. in this way we can get them to develop good habits.

Working with feeling means storytelling with morals, that's why fairy tales are so often used. There's the clear Good and Evil. He talked about Snow White, how children always see the Queen as ugly even though physically she was beautiful -- because she was ugly in her heart, what they are most able to sense at this stage, and full of hate -- and they see the dwarves as beautiful because they were full of love.

"Abou Ben Adhem"

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An Angel writing in a book of gold:

Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the Presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?" The Vision raised its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord
Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."

"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the Angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerily still; and said, "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one who loves his fellow men."

The Angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blessed,
And, lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest!

by James Leigh Hunt

Curriculum Highlights

Here are several Waldorf school websites; you can look over their outline of the first grade curriculum and, in many cases, view sample main lesson book pages:

http://www.waldorfcriculum.com/Index%20page/waldorf_method.html#mlb

This is an excerpt from Teaching as Lively Art by Marjorie Spock about first grade:

"In Grade One, the morning begins with the group recitation of a poem. After the morning exercises, the children go on to the main lesson, which occupies the first two hours of the morning, and is devoted to a single subject for two to four weeks. The first main lesson subject is painting and drawing, until the children have a facility in handling crayons, paints, and paintbrush. Writing, reading, numbers, nature study and handwork are all taught in ways involving color and design.

Letter writing is presented in a lively pictorial way with the help of fairy stories. "S" may be a fairytale snake sinuously slithering through the grass on some secret errand. The teacher draws on the chalkboard, showing how the letter is embedded in the picture, how perhaps the W is hiding in the drawing of the waves. The children draw the letter in the air with their hands and on the floor with their feet; their whole being participates in the writing experience. Then the children make their own pictures of waves, and then W's, creating an illustrated book as each letter is presented and experienced.

When the children have mastered the sounds and can name and write them, they are ready for their first reading experience. The episodes of a story are illustrated by a series of pictures drawn on the chalkboard by the teacher and in notebooks by the children. The class composes short descriptive sentences to accompany each picture. The wording is then copied from the teacher's model. Through these activities the children learn word and sentence structure without conscious effort and have the joy of creating their own illustrated books for reading material.

Exploration of numbers begins with solving riddles such as "What is one thing in the world that there can never be more than one of?" ("Me!"). So the characteristics of one, two, three, etc. are explored in the children's inner experience and in nature. Children take delight in counting, especially when the strong, rhythmic choral-speaking of the numbers, is accompanied by stepping and clapping. Through activities, the children befriend the form and movement of the number element, and then begin to practice the four arithmetical processes, always moving from the whole to the parts.

Nature study takes the form of experiencing the world and talking of life and its adventures. The child learns the true facts of nature, but always in vivid, dramatic story form.

Handwork serves several important purposes. Knitting is an indispensable first grade activity as there exists a close relationship between finger movement, speech and thinking. Modeling is done with beeswax. Music periods are devoted to singing and playing the pentatonic flute, which also helps develop dexterity.

The imitative genius of early childhood is still active in the first grade child, making this an ideal time to learn foreign languages by hearing and speaking them— in our school, both Spanish and German.

Eurythmy, the art of movement developed by Dr. Steiner, is taught by specially-trained teachers. It affects the children's grace of movement and enlivens hands and feet. Eurythmy heightens drawing and modeling ability, relieves strain and tension, and stimulates musical, poetic and dramatic senses."

Marjorie Spock
Teaching As a Lively Art

<http://www.waldorfhomeschoolers.com/gradeone.htm>

Storytelling Resources

Storytelling is an incredibly important part of the Waldorf first grade curriculum, as it is the way that nearly all information is imparted to the child. Here are some of our favorite storytelling resources:

Marsha Johnson's online group, Waldorf Home Educators, is a marvelous resource for homeschooling parents and she has a file there on storytelling (also others for circle time, and other aspects of homeschooling). To join this group, visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/waldorfhomeeducators/>

Wonder Ranch Homeschool's page on reading and storytelling:
<http://www.wonderhs.com/wonderhomeschool/id9.html>

The Way of the Storyteller by Ruth Sawyer

There are also many wonderful workshops (including some on storytelling) available from the Waldorf in the Home online store: <http://www.waldorfinthehome.org/waldorf-store.html>

Storytelling also takes place through puppetry and drama. For more on this, I recommend Suzanne Down's workshops. To find one near you and to sign up for her newsletter (which contains little storytelling tips, suitable for kindergarten or first grade) visit <http://www.junipertreepuppets.com/>.

Suzanne's work focuses on telling stories with needle-felted puppets. You'll want to purchase Making Magical Fairy-Tale Puppets by Christel Dhom (excellent dry felting instructions and patterns, including characters from many of the Grimms' Fairy Tales).

Online needle-felting directions and examples:
<http://www.allfiberarts.com/cs/felting.htm>

Amazing Nature table photographs:
http://www.flickr.com/photos/irit_dulman/sets/72157594153272348/

Storytelling Resources

Here are my notes from the two workshops I took with Suzanne at the Washington Waldorf School:

Puppetry Workshop

To make a story apron, (see a picture: <http://www.junipertreepuppets.com/School.htm>) wet felt a piece of wool about the size of a 12 inch dinner plate -- the size to cover your chest -- make it the colors of the season of your story or create a scene such as a pine tree covered hill. Choose a piece of corresponding silk. Fasten the silk (a long enough piece to completely cover your lap and knees when you are sitting down) to the felted piece and add ribbons, one to go around your neck and two to tie around your waist.

You can store puppets in the pocket to come out at appropriate times. You can also take a puppet and put it on a bamboo skewer and poke a hole in the bottom of your pocket and rest him inside. Then when the puppet comes up (such as the little brown bulb turning into a flower and coming up out of the ground) you can manipulate the stick and the puppet from under the silk, hiding your hands.

If you cannot make an apron, you can simply lay a large piece of silk against you. Take one end around your neck and tuck it in the back of your shirt (or your bra strap) and lay the rest down your front. Take the left hand side and tuck it under to form a sort of cave on your lap where you can store the puppets and easily bring them out from behind the silk or replace them without disturbing your silk too much.

When your body is the stage, you have to be very careful and deliberate about your movements. Place both feet firmly flat on the ground to ground you. Hold your back up very tall. Keep your knees level. Hold the children's attention with your eyes. To begin, look out and all around at them when introducing your story. Then as the characters begin to appear always keep your eyes down on your lap, guiding the children that the direction they should be looking is the tableau. And you are also modelling how to be an audience, paying attention, feeling a connection with the characters.

We needle felted a Lady Spring, a little brown bulb, a little flower child, and a small ladybug. This takes a lot of different colors of roving to be successful; the nicest shapes have many different colors layered on top of one another (see examples: http://www.naturalworldarts.com/seasonal_dolls.html). Suzanne sells bags of wool which she dyes herself, the type of wool she prefers is from a sheep called Border Leicester which is slightly curly and adheres to itself well. To sign up for her seasonal newsletter and get the Spring news with how to purchase her wool, visit her website <http://www.junipertreepuppets.com/School.htm>.

She told me that she includes many colors as well as some white and measures it by

arm-lengths instead of weight. A good sized bag is \$20.00 and a bag of white is \$15.00. Again, you'll want to be on her mailing list for more information.

You will need quite a lot of white but a little (however, of a lot of colors) colored wool. The dry felting needle she uses is an all-purpose needle, which she says she does 90% of her work with, size for this is 38. To make a form for your Lady Spring you will need three pipe cleaners. Also, get an unused kitchen sponge for a safe base for your felting -- the needle is sharp!

Take your first pipe cleaner and fold in half, then twist about 1/4 way down a circle for the head. So you have a circle and two legs coming down. Take the second and fold both ends in towards the middle. Make them even. These are the arms. Take your arm piece and push it right up under the neck then twist to secure. If you are making a male figure, such as a gnome, you would use this form -- head, two arms, two legs. Bend the wire just the littlest bit up at the bottom of each leg to keep it from being sharp. For Lady Spring, and other women with a gown, it's best to have a form to help you achieve that cone shape and to help her be sturdy. Take your third pipe cleaner and make it into a circle, keep it proportionate with the rest of your figure, so the two ends of your wire won't just meet -- they will *cross* and extend about halfway around the circle. You want it to be about the size of the bottom of a drinking glass. Again, proportions are everything. Either it will look right or it won't. Make it the way you like it now because no matter how much wool you add, your form determines your success.

You can also needle-felt around a foam core but for puppetry she recommends the flexibility of a wire shape. You want your Lady Spring to bend down to the bulb to wake him up and to pick him up and carry him off to get his new spring gown.

Now you are ready to fill out your shape. I will tell you as best I can but it will sound vague unless you have the project in front of you to guide you -- sorry! Take a small ball of wool and roll it in your palms to felt it somewhat with the friction, then place it inside the loop which is your head. Then take a short piece of roving -- this is all the white, you are making the form, not decorating it yet -- about the length of your fingertips to your wrist and pull it so it is very open and airy. You should be able to see right through it. All the wool you use will be this way. But you use many many little layers. The interesting thing for me is that you want your wool to very airy but you wrap it so tightly! You really tug the heck out of it. Take your pieces and begin to wrap them around the head to make the shape. *** You are making your doll here *** The needle-felting is more for touching up, she calls it "holding". Don't think you can make it all loose and thump it down later with the needle. It actually should be wrapped so firmly that the ends don't need to be held down with your fingers. Each little piece should hold on its own and the doll's head should be smooth and shapely. Just work at it a little piece at a time. Use the needle only lightly to adhere before moving on to the next part. To use a felting needle, hold it about half way down -- hold it up to the light so you can see where the end gets sharp -- and the little teeth in it which provide the friction for the felting. You don't want to push it in too deep. Keep the sponge under your shape to protect your lap. Don't poke yourself! Also, when working closely near the wire form, be sure not to push your needle in too deep and break off the tip.

After forming your head, wrap your arms. Again, keep the wool airy but pull it firmly. Use your first two fingers in the shape of a "rock/paper/scissors game" scissors -- grasp the wool between your fingers to keep it fully extended along the arm at all times and wrap around and around. It's easier to do this than to wrap the arm near the body, then the arm near the hand, and try to join the two.

Make two small balls for the hands and push them over your pipe cleaner ends like little caps, then wrap a little bit around the wrist to secure. Felt into place.

Next the bodice. Criss cross from one shoulder to the opposite hip, wrapping all the way around, then criss cross in the other direction to make a firm X shape. Again, pull pull pull. Really tug on the wool. It should hold on its own. You need several layers here, as with everything. Think about what you are making while you are shaping it. A Mother Earth is more plump and matronly; Lady Spring is a more girlish figure, so don't make her too thick around the middle.

Below and slightly overlapping with the bodice make a waist. Then begin on the skirt. This takes a while! At first, you are wrapping tightly around your legs and it's all flat and you think it will never be the cone shape you want. Don't despair. Just work at your own pace. Slowly it will become more and more. Finally wrap a thin layer down over the edge of your pipecleaner skirt form and pull it across the bottom to cover the wire there.

For the costume, here is where the character comes to life. First, in the colors chosen. Second, in the accents. You can spend a lot of time working on the details of your doll! For the dress again wrap the bodice first, then the arms, then the waist, then the skirt.

To add hair, pull a piece of wool loosely into an oval. Rub briskly between your palms to felt somewhat then attach at the hairline first. Loosely so you can move it around some to get it just the way you want it. Then arrange the hair and lightly attach.

For flowers, take the smallest possible piece of colored roving. Hold together your thumb and forefinger to make a loop and wrap the wool tightly around itself in a little coil, pulling it in and out of the loop -- that is, around and around between the thumb and forefinger. Then set your little coil down on your sponge and felt lightly, then attach to your doll. I found this was tricky, when I went to attach it I was just felting the flower more and not really attaching it any. The trick is to keep the edges of your flower (or any accent) loose and go around the perimeter to attach. Don't try to attach it by poking your needle in the middle.

Keep in mind that unlike the white wool, you need to "fluff" the dyed wool a bit more to get it loose and airy. It is somewhat compacted in the dyeing process.

We spent most of our time on Lady Spring. For the other characters, we did not use a form. They are smaller, for one thing, and don't need to have so much animation and movement and life to them. The little brown bulb and his successor, the little flower child, were made more simply. Take a piece of white roving about the length of your fingertips to wrist. Tie in a knot -- the knot should be in the middle with the loose ends to either side. The knot is his head. Then take the ends and roll them up to be a larger ball under him -- kind of like making a snowman -- and this is his body. Felt to bring it some shape. Add your colors by taking three or four loose layers of color (several different browns is nice) about the size of your palm and laying them over one another then rub briskly and shape into sort of a nest. Sit your bulb on it and bring the ends of the nest up all around him to become his clothing. Felt to adhere. For a hat, make a little circle, rub between your palms and attach something like a beret or acorn cap. A little stem is cute, too.

Your flower child will need to be the colors of the flower it is representing, such as yellow or purple for crocus. Make as above but with colors (instead of the brown) for the gown and the hat. The hat can also take the shape of the flower blossom it is representing!

For the ladybug, make a small ball of red. Felt firmly against your sponge to give it a flat base and an oval body shape. Use some dark brown to make a small triangle and place over the red, forming the head. Use dark brown for the spots.

The story she told was like this (I would just like to say that a silkscape, the kind for a play stand canopy, would be the perfect size for this because it's long enough to cover your whole body when you are sitting):

Start with just the silk and your lap clear of characters. Hide your little puppets under the silk. Then gently focus all your attention on yourself as you carefully bring little brown bulb out cupped in your hands and lay him down on your lap.

"Little Brown Bulb was sleepy. He had been sleeping all through the winter and he was still very sleepy. He lay deep in the earth, resting, and dreaming little brown bulb dreams. One day along came Lady Spring. (here she comes out from under the silk -- hold her waist with your thumb under one arm and your middle finger under the other arm -- use the pointer to move her body to bend over -- tuck the other two fingers behind her so your body is as unobtrusive as possible, you want the children to be looking at her, not so conscious of you)

Little Bulb, Little Bulb, wake up. Spring is coming! Spring is coming and it's time for all the little bulbs to wake up and put on their new gowns. (She bends over and looks at him, gently shakes him).

Then Lady Spring went away to wake up other little bulbs and get them into their new spring gowns. But Little Brown Bulb did not want to wake up. He just rolled over and went back to sleep. (Roll him over with your hand. Then bring Ladybug scurrying out from under the silk)

Along came Ladybug, hurrying, scurrying, getting ready for Spring. He was so busy that he walked right over Little Brown Bulb. (Little Brown Bulb wakes up -- hold him and the ladybug just pinched between your thumb and first finger, again, to keep your hands from being in the front of the characters and the focus of attention)

Oh, says Little Brown Bulb. You just stepped on me.

I'm so sorry, Little Brown Bulb. I didn't see you there. I was in such a hurry. Don't you know it's Spring? Look at me. I got a bath and a new gown. Don't I look fine? All clean and shiny and new. I must hurry. Spring is such an exciting time. And Ladybug scurried off. (Little Brown Bulb is awake now and looking around)

Spring? What is Spring? How can I get ready for spring if I don't even know what Spring is? (Here comes Lady Spring again)

Oh, Little Brown Bulb. Good, you are awake! Are you ready for your new Spring gown? (She picks him up in her arms, use the pointer to manipulate this and the thumb and middle finger to slightly pinch Little Brown Bulb and hold him firmly in her arms, she carries him off stage and back under your silk. Then with nothing on your lap but the silk, narrate how he got all cleaned up and ready for spring and then he grew and grew and grew [this is where he comes up on a stick from the pocket] and looked out over the world. Make him move and turn and look all around)

Oh, said Little Brown Bulb. I love Spring!"

And you can, of course, extend the story. But this was the gist of it.

You can also tell simple stories by acting out verses, such as this one:

Little Brown Bulb

*A little brown bulb
lay asleep in the ground,
In his little brown nightie
he made not a sound.*

*King Winter he roared
and he raged overhead,
But the little brown bulb
never stirred in his bed.*

*But when spring came
tip-toeing over the leigh, (or sea)
With fingers to lips
as soft as can be,*

*The little brown bulb
just lifted his head,
Slipped off his nightie
and jumped out of bed.*

A good source of verses is [A Journey in Time Through Verse and Rhyme](#); also the Gateways Kindergarten series (Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter, Gateways, Spindrift). Suzanne Down has also written a series of books which are available on her website.

Storytelling Resources

My Notes:

Nursery Rhymes

You may be surprised to find that nursery rhymes are still strongly a part of the first grade curriculum. These rhymes don't belong only in the kindergarten classroom; they have a powerful and important effect on children up until the age of 9 (Waldorf teachers refer to this transition as the nine-year change). Although the first grade child is moving on to new challenges, he is still like the kindergarten child in some ways. And the primary way that this is so is that he does not yet really see himself as an independent human being, an "I". The child goes through many levels of uncovering his "I". The first is at 40 months and he goes through it again and again as he grows. There are some important notes in my next workshop with Suzanne about how to protect the child from incarnating too early. This is especially important if you are pulling your child out of a traditional preschool and beginning with Waldorf for the first time.

The Healing Power of Nursery Rhymes:

When the child is coming down from heaven, she passes first through the zodiac and receives her gifts, one of them being the consonants, then passes through the planets and receives her gifts, one of them being the vowels. This is the anthroposophical belief. We focus a lot on fairy tales for the first grade child, which are said to strengthen the soul forces. But the nursery rhymes are equally important and strengthen the physical body. In this way, they complement each other. The nursery rhymes have a focus on rhythm, which helps the child with breathing and stimulates good circulation, and sound. Hearing the consonants spoken clearly actually helps the child grow properly. Nursery rhymes build and strengthen the body in a healthy way.

There's lots of talk now about the historical background of nursery rhymes, where they come from, what they are "really" about. Ignore all that. Look at what do they do for the child.

The deeper breathing that you encourage -- we all breathe so quickly and shallowly now, even adults -- helps bring the child back into themselves and prevents them from incarnating too quickly. It also helps soften them if they have become hardened by daily life. The child, when presented with stimulus that is too much for them or is unhealthy, has to harden in reaction to it to prevent from being damaged. Nursery rhymes help reverse that process and soften them again. For this reason, Nancy Mellon (a therapeutic storyteller), says to use them extensively not just through the kindergarten years but in first and second grade, until the nine year change.

Children love nursery rhymes. They are fun and unusual, they really play with the sounds of our language. They love to hear them over and over and it is good for them. The more repetition the better. When doing a nursery rhyme as a puppet show you repeat it over and over. She did once speaking, once singing, twice speaking.

The first rhyme she did as an example was Jack Be Nimble.

**Jack be nimble
Jack be quick
Jack jump over
The candlestick.**

With a silk draped over her body to be the stage, she had a puppet Jack (fashioned like the walking gnome in The Gnome Craft Book) and a dry felted candle. Jack peeked out from behind the curtain, looked around, then lightly stepped out and danced a bit. She began the first part of the rhyme then he jumped over the candle. Went around the front, did it again as she sang, then did it again and she spoke, then jumped over it backwards on the fourth time. Then he retreated behind the silk again. He was dressed all in yellow, yellow shirt and pants, with an orange collar and orange boots.

Then she broke down the elements of what she did. Don't tell it on the beats, with your emphasis on the syllables, it's not a march. That encourages short breathing again. You want it to flow. The entire line of the nursery rhyme is your breath. "Jack be nimble" is one breath. If you try it chanting every syllable you'll see that you breathe in between. Try to speak with a balanced fluid pace, not a trip-trap.

Next, you have to make sure the end of each line flows into the beginning of the next. You don't speak your line and then it drop off like a cliff. It's more like a lemniscate (the infinity symbol, a sideways figure 8). She had us practice the rhyme moving our hands in the air in a lemniscate to feel the rhythm.

The form of the consonants should be *really clear*. This is important for strengthening your child's physical constitution. So in addition to deep breathing and a flowing pace, you have to speak very clearly. (I was really overwhelmed by this, it was too much. But she's a master storyteller so it was easy for her. I just stopped breathing completely because I was focusing on my voice. It takes a while to learn to do it all together)

The 4th thing is a sense of wonder and joy. It's not, oh Jack is so cute. It's joy. Isn't this marvelous. Isn't it just marvelous to be alive. Your mouth should have a small smile playing around it. Your eyes should be twinkling. Let me tell you, having your partner watch you to make sure your eyes are twinkling is really intimidating! This workshop was hard!!!! And I'm not sure how much of it I can convey in writing, since you can't see or hear what she was trying to show, but I hope this helps somewhat.

So, in summary:

Tell like a lemniscate

1st breathing

2nd not dropping the end of each line

3rd consonants clear

4th sense of wonder and joy

She says, "speak on the flow of inner warmth".
You are welcoming the children to enlivened language.

Next example she did was Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star with the starry night silkscape (which many of you should have from the Sun, Moon and Shadow unit). She had a dry felted girl doll but she said a bunny would be nice too. This is easier to convey a sense of wonder because we've all been overjoyed by the beauty of the night sky.

**Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are.
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky.
Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!**

Soft silks and ethereal dry felted puppets nourish and soften the eyes (the first thing in the child to harden, putting a veil between them and the harsh world). The scene is very welcoming.

Number three was called Froggy Boggy which I didn't know.

**Froggy boggy
Tried to jump
On a stone
And got a bump.
It made his eyes
Wink and frown,
And turned his nose
Upside down.**

She did mention later on the Oxford Book of Nursery Rhymes as a good source. Rhymes with one or two characters are best, easiest to work out.

Next was Mary Mary Quite Contrary.

**Mary Mary quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells and cockle shells
And pretty maids all in a row.**

For this she had a rainbow silk, very neutral background, a rod puppet as Mary and dry felted little flower children. Rod puppets are capable of a lot more gestures and movement than the felted ones and so she had this one doing some eurythmy gestures for some of the sounds of the rhyme. With curative eurythmy, she says you just do the beginning of the gesture and the child completes it from within themselves. So she did M, C, O, S and one more which I don't remember. Maybe P. It was beautiful. The rod puppet was of green silk with a dry felted face and green flowers in her hair.

When you tell a story you can see that the children are receptive and open. Truly open. Their eyes will be open, their mouths will be open, and their hearts will be open.

Then she talked about how to introduce a very simple puppet show, the first one for young children. To prevent them from jumping up and wanting to touch you always start and end with the characters hidden. She draped a blue silk (she recommends 36 or 42 inch squares) and then had her arm held out straight in front of her and then bent to the left, about chest height, so her elbow is out to the right and her forearm facing the audience and sheer blue silk gauze draped over it to form a kind of cave/aquarium. So the other hand had a fish finger puppet on it. The pattern from Feltcraft, all blue with little blue scales and clear glass beads to make it a little sparkly. And the fish swam all around in the sea and came up to look out at the audience every once in a while but it was very clear for small children that puppetry is its own little world and we don't grab. The rhyme she did was called Ickle Ockle Blue Bockle

**Ickle ockle, blue bockle,
Fishes in the sea,
If you want a pretty maid,
Please choose me.**

Next example was Rock a Bye Baby (which she sang).

**Rock-a-bye baby, in the tree top
When the wind blows, the cradle will rock
When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall
And down will come baby, cradle and all**

She had a mother archetype rod puppet (purple dress, grey hair, lace collar) holding a small pink swaddled dry felted baby and singing to it. She says to the children, help me sing the baby to sleep. And she had this puppet at the beginning of the school day for children who came in and needed to feel that nurturing presence, maybe mom was rushed and busy at home and they needed another dose of a mother figure at school.

The rod puppets were incredible and I missed the workshop on how to make them. Find online directions here (but you would want to make it with a Waldorf head):

Make a Rod Puppet <http://www.kenspecklepuppets.co.uk/rodpuppet.htm>

Then she did Old Mother Hubbard. No dog, just the woman (dry felted doll like the way we made Lady Spring) as if she was looking in her bare cupboard. Again with the rainbow silk. Old Mother Hubbard wore a green gown with an orange/yellow apron and a orange/green cloth on her hair.

**Old Mother Hubbard
Went to the cupboard
To get her poor doggie a bone,
When she got there
The cupboard was bare
So the poor little doggie had none.**

Then we chose a nursery rhyme character to make and one of the women at the workshop had a Nursery Rhymes for All Keyboards book which we passed around for ideas. Of the group, we made Old Mother Hubbard, Old King Cole, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star, Jack and Jill, Mary Mary Quite Contrary, There Was an Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe and Little Miss Muffett. Mine started as an Old Mother Hubbard but became Mary Mary Quite Contrary. You tend to make puppets which resemble you unconsciously I think, and my Old Mother Hubbard ended up very youthful with light brown hair and a big red gardening hat with a cheery pink flower on it! It was funny.

When choosing the colors of wool for your characters, consider their age, station in life (maid, king, etc), temperament (she said Jack Be Nimble was dressed in yellow as a sanguine), season, element (gnomes are in earthy colors), or to coordinate with the silk you plan to use as background.

Also, and this may come as a surprise...

she said if you don't feel comfortable with a rhyme (like There Was An Old Woman Who Lived in a Shoe) feel free to change it! So this may make some of you feel better. For Peter, Peter, Pumpkin Eater, one of the women says she has Peter put his wife in the pumpkin then at the end Peter gets in and stands in it with her so they are together again and they just look at each other happily but she (the teacher) doesn't say anything.

Finally, a note on the importance of puppetry:

Steiner said that when young children are involved in puppetry, they do not fall in adolescence. Meaning, they resist peer pressure and come out on the other side of adolescence OK. It helps children learn that they can be in charge of their world. Also, when you do a puppet show for them you tap into your higher self – this lifted quality goes out to them and they absorb it which helps develop the moral capacity in their brain. They hold it in themselves and want to reenact it. Remember, you are working with children who are developing their *heart* capacities.

Definitely give your children puppets to play with during free play BUT do not expect them to be able to tell a "real" story (ie. to tell the story of Jack and the Beanstalk) and act it out simultaneously. This requires far too much of them. Don't put on a performance for family and friends where the child is doing the show. Too much ego presence. You can tell the story and they can act it out (for a show with this age, or acting out a story in circle time, use table puppets, not marionettes).

*** If you are doing something with a group of children they must all be the same character *** She says don't assign each child a different role. They are not individualized yet. They must work as one body. Do not individualize children (that is, give them different roles to play) until third grade.

She gave the example of The Little Troll book by Thomas Berger (excellent for this age). Through a series of good deeds the little troll becomes enobled and is welcomed into the human world. This is a very good story for children and they can all be enobled by the end, which is also wonderful for them to experience. They are *all* the troll. In The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy, Steiner says "between the time of the change of teeth and puberty we must bring into his environment things with the right inner meaning and value. For it is from the inner meaning and value of things that the growing child will now take guidance. Whatever is fraught with a deep meaning that works through pictures and allegories, is the right thing for these years."

When introducing a puppet show, it works well to read the story (or tell the story) first and have the children be aware of it then to do it as a puppet show.

Lastly, she said it's best to have all the elements of the scene the same as much as possible. For example, don't dry felt an Old Mother Hubbard and then use a little dog from Feltcraft. The child is too busy looking at the difference between them and it's distracting from the rhyme.

Nursery Rhymes

My Notes:

The School Day

So, you have this wonderfully rich imaginative curriculum all lined up and you are ready to dive in. But exactly how do you arrange your school day?

From Waldorfhomeschoolers.com: "The pattern of the day at a school consists of the main lesson in the first two hours, followed by a special lesson until lunch time. The daily timetable takes account of the ebb and flow of the children's energy, and is varied accordingly. Therefore the afternoon lessons are more relaxed with an emphasis on games and practical activities."

Now, as far as your EXACT school day schedule, this can vary between families. In Educating the Will, page 43, Michael Howard calls for a three block day. Main lesson block (academic content) first, then a second block in the late morning for languages and performing arts, and then an entire afternoon for arts and crafts. Each section of the day corresponds to head/heart/hands which is also how Alan Whitehead lays out his entire curriculum. I agree with it but I think that sometimes families only can realistically do two blocks of school in their day so you can adapt it as need be.

Here is a sample daily schedule. Feel free to modify the times written in this schedule, but be sure you keep the essential elements of the day. These are:

- Breakfast (and regular meals throughout the day)
- Morning verse (with lit candle) and other verses throughout to the day to serve as transitions
- Circle time (20 minutes or so of movement before beginning your main lesson)
- Main lesson time -- head (academic content, follow the three day rhythm)
- Heart
- Hands
- Quiet time or a nap if your child needs one (first grade may be very taxing to your child in the beginning)
- Remedial work/ one-on-one time with each child
- Independent playtime, both inside and outside
- Time for parent/teacher to reflect and do some journaling
- Lesson planning time
- A good night's sleep

Sample Daily Schedule

8 am	wake up, yoga or pilates, shower, get dressed
8:50 am	make breakfast
9 am	breakfast
9:30 am	morning chores
9:40 am	morning verse, circle time
10 am	main lesson block – “head”
10:45 am	break
11 am	morning school time – “heart”
11:45 am	make lunch
12 pm	lunch
1 pm	free time/nap
2 pm	afternoon school time – “hands”
3 pm	break (snack)
3:15 pm	continue with afternoon school time take each child aside for remedial work as needed or one-on-one time
4:15 pm	free time
5 pm	make dinner
6 pm	dinner
7 pm	bedtime
8 pm	reflection/journaling time lesson planning

Our Daily Schedule

Head/Heart/Hands

How do you know if a subject falls under the category of head, heart or hands so that you can place it at the proper time in the school day?

Here are some guidelines:

Head – Early Morning: this is your academic content. The head elements of the first grade curriculum are Math, Writing, and Nature Studies. Form Drawing is the first main lesson block of the first grade year but moves into Heart after this time and is done only once a week.

Heart – Late Morning: Form Drawing (Mondays), Foreign Languages, Performing Arts (puppetry), Eurythmy (once a week, preferable in the latter part), Music (singing and practicing your musical instrument), Painting

Hands -- Afternoon: Knitting & other handwork projects, Cooking, Gardening, Building, P.E. (Fridays)

Head/Heart/Hands

My Notes:

Starting Your Day

A successful school day **begins with you**. For this reason, our daily schedule begins you getting breakfast, a shower, and a workout or meditation time. This meditation time is absolutely essential. You *must* take the time each day to prepare yourself for teaching by reviewing the knowledge to be transmitted, your goal for your child's learning, your child's developmental stage, the nature and temperament of his being and your own, as well as planning how to maintain the rhythm of your teaching and your day in the face of any obstacles which may arise. For example, knowing that you have a first grade child and a two-year old, you wouldn't try to begin your main lesson block while the toddler entertains herself independently in another room – you would shortly be interrupted by tears of frustration or boredom from the younger child. Then getting up and leaving, saying briefly to your older child, "I'll be back," coaxing the toddler into a new entertainment, rushing back to your first grade lesson, saying "now then, where were we?"... this undermines the entire purpose of your teaching. Remember, children learn from what you do but they learn much more from how you do it. Showing your child that learning together is a precious time, to be treasured and enjoyed, will go a long way toward building what teachers like to refer to as a "life-long learner."

One of the first things Rudolf Steiner told the original Waldorf class teachers was: teach the children to breathe and to sleep. It will be very helpful to your children if you practice some deep breathing before you start your lessons each day.

For example, light a candle and say your morning verse:

Morning Verse for Grades 1 - 4

*The Sun with loving light
Makes bright for me each day,
The soul with spirit power
Gives strength unto my limbs,
In sunlight shining clear
I revere, Oh God,
The strength of humankind,
Which Thou so graciously
Has planted in my soul,
That I with all my might,
May love to work and learn.
From Thee stream light and strength
To Thee rise love and thanks.*

Rudolf Steiner

Then practice some deep breathing – just make it very matter-of-fact, this is how we start our school day – perhaps with eyes closed, then begin the lesson. If your children really have a hard time with breathing, try adding some yoga or pilates to your daily routine. If anyone has a problem with sleep, I highly recommend Sleep: An Unobserved Element in Education by Audrey McAllen for some helpful exercises.

Our favorite circle time resource is One, Two, Three! by David Adams.

The Question of Textbooks

All resources given are parent resources. Waldorf is not a methodology where you can hand a workbook to your child and then go do some laundry, coming back at the end of the lesson to check the work using a provided answer key. The Waldorf philosophy of learning requires that the teaching adult consistently be the main provider of knowledge, which is done primarily through storytelling, as well as through art, music, movement, nature, and handwork experiences. There are no textbooks as such in the primary school years. All children have 'main lesson books', which are their workbooks that they create during the year. They essentially produce their own 'textbooks', which record their experiences and what they've learned. Upper grades use textbooks to supplement their main lesson work.

Main Lesson Book Pages

A main lesson book page is not an "assignment", per se. It is, rather, an opportunity for the child to reflect upon, digest, and articulate what he had learned. The main lesson cycle is typically three days. On the first day, new information is presented and explored. On the second day, the information is repeated, explored in new ways, and the child is asked to present back to you orally, artistically, musically, or dramatically his explanation of what has been learned. On the third day, your child dictates a brief statement of the lesson content to you which you transcribe for him and which he copies into his main lesson book page, accompanying it with a full-color illustration.

The Main Lesson is one of the basic elements of the Steiner curriculum. It involves the thorough working of the main subjects (such as geography, science, history, mathematics or literature), taught in main lesson blocks of about two hours per day, over several weeks. It is always conducted in the morning, when the children are fresh and is followed by a change of activity.

The topics are approached through a variety of means, including stories, painting, recitation, a physical group project or a game, until the children have made some connection to it with every part of themselves. It is then set aside to 'digest' and a further topic is taken up. This pattern is natural to children, as anyone who has observed the success of 'crazes' in a playground will know. The result is a thorough and satisfying assimilation of knowledge, thus maintaining the child's enthusiasm for learning.

The Main Lesson Book

Your main lesson subject integrates all the academic subject areas in a multi-disciplinary approach. For example, you will not have half an hour devoted to math and then a 40 minute reading lesson and a 20 minute science lesson. Your storytelling, math practice, and nature walk will all be included as parts to the math gnomes lesson.

See sample main lesson book pages here:

http://www.waldorfcriculum.com/Index%20page/waldorf_method.html#mlb

There are lots of example pictures online. You can also purchase CDs of sample main lesson book pages for each grade level (Grades 1 through 8) from Mother to Mother Homeschool by Kathe Forrest for \$17 each.

<http://www.mothertomotherhs.com/CD's.htm>

There is a lot of flexibility in how you plan your main lesson block schedule. Here's an article which shows just how many times Steiner mentioned the MLB and how he gave different indications for its length:

http://www.waldorflibrary.org/Journal_Articles/RB6107.pdf

However, I think it is easiest to think of each main lesson as a month. My outline has 10 MLBs (the 10th is a summer block, optional -- some families homeschool all year round, some do not).

You deliberately take a break from the subjects you are not studying in your MLB. There is a reason for learning and then "forgetting" (which is covered in the article I linked to above). You let the information simmer under the surface and then when you return to math or reading or science, the children are ready to integrate what they have learned before with new concepts. It is **not correct** to do a little math each day, a little reading each day, etc.

Here's Lucie Smoker's article on the main lesson book:

<http://www.wonderhs.com/wonderhomeschool/id70.html>

It is nice to use The Seven Year Wonder Book by Isabel Wyatt as as the final transition into the world of formal schooling from kindergarten (or our Bridge program). Read this together and create your own Wonder Book, as an introduction to the Main Lesson Book your child will be creating in First Grade.

Main lesson books, block crayons, watercolor paints, eurythmy shoes and other essential items for the first grade curriculum may be purchased from the Waldorf Curriculum store

http://www.waldorfcriculum.com/Store/store_overview.html

Setting Up the Schoolroom

A dedicated space is essential to successful homeschooling. It doesn't have to be an entire room, so don't get discouraged if space is tight. But it is necessary for you to have thought through the purpose of the space and organized it for maximum effectiveness. If you are organized, you will be a good teacher. It's really that simple!

There is a beautiful picture of a Waldorf homeschool classroom on Sarah Baldwin's site: <http://www.farawaymaine.com/sarah.html>

Eric Fairman's book Path of Discovery Volume 1: Grade 1 contains the most detailed information about how the schoolroom should be set up. Here are some notes based on what he wrote:

- appropriate wall color (see our lazure page for information on color choices: <http://www.waldorfcriculum.com/Articles/lazure.html>)
- windows, plenty of natural light, and sheer curtains
- desks and chairs of the right height (see Teaching Children Handwriting for more on this and making sure your child has correct posture)
- a chalkboard (painted with green chalkboard paint, not black – do not use a whiteboard)
- a nature corner (see The Nature Corner for patterns and directions for each season of the year, this is a nice handwork opportunity for the children)
- a play area (wooden blocks, shells, pinecones, dolls, cradles, dress-up clothes, puppets, etc)

He also talks about having each child bring a houseplant in for the schoolroom on the first day of school. This is a nice tradition which you could start with your own children, to enliven the space and help them feel they have played a part in creating it. Each year you can add to your plant collection.

The *Atelier*

One thing which has inspired me (but which is not Waldorf) is the *atelier* used in Reggio Emilia preschools. In the Reggio philosophy, children use art to express and explore their ideas about what they are learning. There is an art center set up in one part of the school where the children go in small groups to work with the *atelierista* (something like an art teacher, who works closely with the classroom teachers to plan projects together) and they may use any of the displayed materials which they want to create their pieces. Classrooms may also contain *mini-ateliers*. These are beautifully organized inspirational areas with natural items and art materials as well as materials donated by the families (such as buttons, pieces of beach glass, and other things).

To learn more about Reggio Emilia, I recommend the following books:

- Working in the Reggio Way: A Beginner's Guide for American Teachers by Julianne P. Wurm
- Beautiful Stuff: Learning with Found Materials by Cathy Weisman Topal and Lella Gandini
- In the Spirit of the Studio: Learning from the Atelier of Reggio Emilia by Lella Gandini, et al.
- Bringing Reggio Emilia Home: An Innovative Approach to Early Childhood Education by Louise Boyd Cadwell

Journaling and Assessment

The main lesson book is used as the primary source of documentation for your child's work. The journaling pages that you do each night will also help you to assess your child's progress. You will have to check with your state to determine what type of records you are required to keep; that is your own responsibility.

Your state's laws regarding homeschooling: <http://www.hslda.org/laws/default.asp>

Another source of documentation and assessment can be audio or video recordings of your lessons. You may want to have someone tape you while you are teaching, or have a recording going while your children work on their lessons. Taking notes while you walk around the room is also another choice. Again, many of the books on Reggio Emilia focus on different types of documentation and may be an interesting read. At the conclusion of a project, teachers at these schools prepare a display with finished student work, photographs of different steps along the process and quotes from the children as they were working. This can be quite a boon to your homeschool evaluation as you show the evaluator what Waldorf looks like in action, instead of trying to explain why you are not teaching certain things.

Remedial Work

Should you determine, through your evaluation of your child, that there is some kind of learning problem, there is a special time in the day set aside to address this. Waldorf teachers speak of an "Extra Lesson" which is the time in the day that you meet one-on-one with a child who needs some extra help. In the case of the first grade curriculum, there are not many areas where you would need to be concerned with your child so early on. Writing comes before reading so if your child is not reading, that is fine. Steiner spoke of mathematics coming as a later subject as well, so if things don't seem to "click", you don't need to be concerned. However, one major area which you should monitor with your child is movement and balance. Problems in these areas can lead to both learning difficulties and emotional struggles later on. If you are looking for resources to help you with your child, we recommend these two *excellent* books:

- Take Time: Movement exercises for parents, teachers and therapists of children with difficulties in speaking, reading, writing and spelling by Mary Nash-Wortham and Jean Hunt
- Resource Teacher's Developmental Exercise Manual

Between the two, Take Time is more for the child about whom you have serious concerns and need specific diagnostic tools and remedial exercises and the Resource Teacher's Developmental Exercise Manual is more a set of fun exercises which any teacher would want to incorporate into circle time or a main lesson for extra support.

Since nearly all of the activities focus on movement exercises, you can pull your child aside for extra help without him feeling singled out or uncomfortable. The work is fun! This is also why we placed it at the end of the school day, as it is somewhat akin to some inside P.E. time. For children who you will be working with on a daily basis, whether through movement or through painting or drawing, just make it a matter-of-fact part of the school day and don't feel guilty. If your child struggles with something, it does not mean you are a bad teacher. Rather, it is an extra sign to you that your child is greatly benefiting from being homeschooled – where you can closely monitor him and provide that one-on-one attention – rather than potentially being lost in a classroom. Of course, if you feel that there is something wrong which is more than you can cope with, don't hesitate to refer to a professional. Many former Waldorf teachers work as consultants.

Bob & Nancy's Bookshop has an excellent category on books for remedial work; please review it for more assistance:

http://www.waldorfbooks.com/edu/thr/remedial_education.htm

Consultants

Some consultants are listed below. Also, contact your local Waldorf school to see if they can offer assistance in assessing your child.

David Darcy	ddarcytx2000@yahoo.com
Barbara Dewey	www.waldorfwithoutwalls.com
Kathe Forrest	www.mothertomotherhs.com
Melisa Neilson	lacmama@yahoo.com
Donna Simmons	www.christopherushomeschool.org/
Rhoda McGrane	www.waldorfcurriculum.com

The First Grade Curriculum

module one

September

Form Drawing
introduce Beginning Recorder

module two

October

Quality of Numbers 1 – 12
Roman and Arabic Numerals
introduce Knitting

module three

November

Handwriting: Capital Letters
with one sound
B, D, F, J, L, K

module four

December

Equals the Raven (pre-algebra)

Environmental Studies –
hibernation, migration

module five

January

Handwriting: Capital Letters
with one sound
M, N, P, R, S, T

module six

February

introduce Foreign Language

module seven

March

Handwriting: Capital Letters
with more than one sound
Z, G, H, Q, V, W, C

module eight

April

introduce Math Gnomes

4 Processes of Math:
Add/Subtract/Multiply/Divide

module nine

May

Handwriting: Capital Letters
X, Y, A, E, I, O, U

Environmental Studies –
4 elements, 4 seasons

module ten

June (optional)

Reading
transition to fables/animal stories of 2nd
grade

Preparing for a Unit

A Waldorf education can be very expensive, mainly because parents have to do so much to prepare for teaching the units. There's not a lot on Waldorf methodology available for free online (although we try to give as many links as we can) and it is true that you'll never be able to do the job of a fully-trained Waldorf teacher. But it's important to take the time, buy the books, do the readings, and try to – as much as possible – teach your child in a way that takes into account their developmental stage.

Ideally, you should begin to prepare for a main lesson one month before the expected teaching date. Read as much as you can on the topic as well as how the topic is presented in Waldorf methodology. **Do this in advance.** You may find you have questions, or you may think of a great connection. Like you have a book on hand, or there's something going on in your town, that would go well with it. I find a lot of connections when I'm reading the newspaper. Always look around you for additional resources which you can bring in to the lessons. It is very important that you have a keen sense of local resources – zoos, museums, libraries, art galleries, parks, beaches, forests, farms, etc. If you don't have a homeschooling cooperative near you, you'll have to do a lot of this legwork on your own but don't be discouraged. There are usually many wonderful connections you can make. Visit a farmer's market and find someone who shears their own sheep. Talk your grandmother into teaching your kids how to knit. Take field trips and don't be afraid to ask lots of questions. There are people all around you enthusiastically ready to pass on their knowledge and skills, especially in the case of some "lost arts" such as handwork. Brainstorm as much as possible who you might know that can help you teach the topic.

I would say ideally something like this:

- 1 month before teaching the unit, gather all the books. Read through them and let it sink in.
- 2 weeks before teaching the unit, brainstorm some other ideas that you might want to incorporate. Get all materials, such as art supplies, gardening supplies, etc.
- 1 week before teaching the unit, review it again. Then you'll be good to go.

Keeping a Plan Book

A plan book is a necessity. You won't do exactly what you thought you would each day, but you absolutely need to be prepared. Use your plan book to schedule what you expect to do – list the verses, stories, activities, supplies and materials, and anything that you have to have all lined up the day before. Then, each night before you go to bed, spend some time thinking about the day, make notes in your planbook about what you plan to do tomorrow, and set up your schoolroom for the next day. Although you can fly by the seat of your pants and rush all around in the middle of a lesson, looking for the paints, it is not a good idea. It does not set a positive effective tone for the day's work and will gradually undermine your children seeing you as a "real" teacher. It's also not something you want to model to your children, or you'll see that procrastination surface later in their schoolwork.

So, when the topic gets closer, begin to plan your daily activities. It is best to review what you plan to do each day the day BEFORE you do it. Say, you start a unit on Monday. That Friday read through Day 1 and make sure you're prepared. Practice the activities – this is especially true of the form drawing and painting exercises. It never hurts to try it yourself. You want to be able to answer any questions. I find that you never know that you don't understand something until you're in the thick of it. Sometimes you find typos and this gives you time to redo the worksheet. I have found errors in worksheets, foul language in books, disturbing images in videos, etc. when I was teaching in the public school and using what was recommended to me. I learned the hard way -- always preview! This goes for recipes too, which are famous for having typos. Stay about 3 days ahead. So Saturday, read and plan Day 2. Sunday, read and plan Day 3. That way, on the first day of the unit, if things go especially quickly, you are already organized for the next three days and able to move an activity up in your schedule. *Being organized is the key to being flexible!* If things take longer than you thought, you haven't gotten too far ahead of yourself, you can slow down. Definitely don't try to plan out the whole month right away because things always come up, people get sick, etc. Just a few days ahead in your plan book is perfect.

Try each night to do some journalling if you can. It really helps you be a better teacher.

Setting Up Your Plan Book

I think it works best to use a three ring binder as a plan book – have a daily plan page and a daily journaling page face to face (so punch the holes in the daily plan page on the right hand side of the paper). This way, you can alter the template you use if you find it isn't working for you without having to throw out the whole book. You also can look back at exactly what you did that day to help you recall the day's events, as you're journaling. Then flip the page and use the journaling you just did to help you sketch out the next day.

You will need two three ring binders, paper (either computer paper and a hole punch or a pack of lined paper), four dividers, a pack of file folders and a filing cabinet or crate.

One binder is for the unit you are currently teaching (A). The other binder is for the upcoming unit (B). You can print out a cover page and slide it down in the clear plastic cover to identify each with the name of the unit. In binder A, set up the four dividers. On top is your notes for the unit. If you purchased one of our units, it goes there. If you wrote down your own notes, they go there. After the first divider (labeled Week One) put your plan book pages for the first week. The Weekly Plan goes on top – after that, the pages for each day. After the second divider (labeled Week Two) put your plan book pages for the second week. And so on.

In binder B, simply keep a stack of paper on which to write your notes and brainstorm. I like to keep it by my bedside as I often think of teaching ideas while drifting off to sleep. When the first unit ends, move all the papers from binder A into a file folder, labeled with the name of the unit and the dates and the child you taught it to, and file it away. Move the notes you made from the binder B into the binder A. Now use binder B to prepare for the next unit.

Here is a sample binder cover page, a weekly plan page, a daily plan page and a journaling page.

FIRST GRADE MODULE ONE:
FORM DRAWING
WATERCOLOR PAINTING
BEGINNING RECORDER

Susie Q. McGrane
September 2006

WEEKLY PLAN

HEAD

This week we will be working on:

Day One -

Day Two -

Day Three -

Day Four -

Day Five —

HEART

This week we will be working on:

HANDS

This week we will be working on:

DAILY PLAN

DATE:

Circle Time Verse/Movement:

HEAD	HEART	HANDS
Topic:	Topic:	Topic:
Materials/Resources:	Materials/Resources:	Materials/Resources:

Breakfast:

Lunch:

Snack:

Dinner:

JOURNALING PAGE

DATE:

Good Curriculum Planning

No matter what curriculum you purchase, you still have work to do. No pre-packaged curriculum knows your child like you do.

1. Begin with a basic knowledge of how children grow, develop, and learn.
2. Recognize that children learn best:
 - ❖ when they have a good self-image and are accepted as they are by both adults and other children
 - ❖ if given repeated opportunities to discover, explore, be challenged, and problem-solve through direct experiences
 - ❖ through a rich environment that considers their total development as well as each child's individual needs and interests
 - ❖ when supervised by adults who protect and ensure each child's rights without sacrificing any individual child's right to the freedom to learn
3. Provide and allow for a balance of activities:
 - ❖ structured/unstructured
 - ❖ informative/creative
 - ❖ active/quiet
 - ❖ indoor/outdoor
 - ❖ observing/participating
 - ❖ alone/together
4. Capitalize on the individual strengths of parent teachers and the assets offered by the community.
5. Recognize weaknesses in yourself and plan for individual personal growth. Constantly search for new ideas and ways of improving teaching skills by
 - ❖ reading
 - ❖ visiting other schools
 - ❖ sharing ideas and problems with other educators
 - ❖ attending workshops
 - ❖ inviting resource people from the community
 - ❖ joining a group (such as the Waldorf Curriculum Yahoo Group)

http://www.waldorfcriculum.com/new_website/login.html

*Imbue yourself with the Power of Imagination;
Have Courage for the Truth;
Sharpen your Feeling for responsibility of Soul.*

First Grade

Skills and Understandings Checklist

Language Arts: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking

- be able to identify the uppercase letters of the alphabet in and out of sequence
- recognize sounds of all vowels and consonants and sound them out appropriately
- given a letter sound, child should be able to come up with the correct letter (the process of encoding)
- given a letter, child should know the correct letter sound (decoding)
- know that letters are linked together to form words
- recognize his or her own name in print
- be able to order pictures in proper sequence for telling a story (refer to Workjobs)
- listen and respond to a variety of age-appropriate texts, including fiction and nonfiction books, myths and legends, fables and folktales, and poetry
- know the definitions of *title*, *author*, and *illustrator*
- recite in chorus and can speak short verses alone
- accompany poem with fluent and appropriate gestures
- know proper methods of holding and positioning writing materials (refer to Teaching Children Handwriting)
- be able to print all the letters of the alphabet (uppercase)
- listen to, restate, and follow two-step directions
- retell familiar stories
- invent and tell fantasy stories or recount stories about real-life happenings
- be able to tell a story in proper sequence
- participate in short dramatizations: charades, pantomimes, plays
- know the uses of a dictionary, encyclopedia, and card catalog

First Grade

Skills and Understandings Checklist

Mathematics: Number Sense, Computation, Algebra, Geometry

- be able to group objects into sets (refer to Workjobs)
- identify and continue simple repeating patterns
- understand one-to-one correspondence
- be able to count from 1 to 100
- know Roman numerals from I to XX (1 to 20)
- identify ordinal positions from first to twelfth (in mathematical language, *ordinal* numbers indicate position in sequence – such as first, second, third, etc. – where *cardinal* numbers indicate amount or quantity)
- given a number, be able to identify one more or one less
- understand the concept of one-half
- know meaning of – and use – mathematical symbols for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division as well as the equals sign as process and as symbol (in both verbal and written form)
- know by heart addition and subtraction “facts” from zero to twenty
- do simple mental arithmetic in narrative form (explain how they are combining the numbers)
- successfully solve simple equations in a variety of forms
- write and solve equations for word problems
- identify right and left hands
- be able to use terms of position and orientation such as closed/open, over/under, in front/in back, etc.
- recognize and identify the basic two-dimensional (plane) figures, such as square, rectangle, triangle, circle, etc.
- do freehand drawings of common geometric forms
- have a sense for symmetrical completion of forms

First Grade

Skills and Understandings Checklist

Science: Nature Studies

- recognize and name common trees and plants in locality
- know which local plants are hazardous
- know the names and features of the four seasons
- be familiar with different types of weather
- explain how animals adapt to each of the changing seasons
- know that different animals have different habitats
- explain hibernation and migration and give examples of animals which do each
- define and discuss extinction and endangered species
- identify the four elements (earth, water, fire and air) and have experiences with each
- understand the dangers of pollution and environmental destruction, and the benefits of conservation and recycling

First Grade

Skills and Understandings Checklist

Other Skills

Foreign Language

- begin to learn a foreign language through experience and imitation

Art

- be able to name and describe colors, shapes, and lines and to identify these in works of art
- participate in field trips to artists' studios, museums, art galleries, and exhibitions
- observe famous works of art by a variety of artists from a range of historical periods (refer to [How to Use Child-Sized Masterpieces for Art Appreciation](#))
- identify and classify different kinds of pictures: portraits, still lifes, abstract art, and landscapes
- experiment with a range of art techniques and media (drawing, painting, sculpture, fiber arts, collages, printmaking, mosaics, pottery and mobiles)
- know the primary colors and how these are mixed to produce secondary colors

Music

- be familiar with such basic elements of music as rhythm, melody, and harmony
- listen and respond to a range of different musical selections, both classical and multicultural
- recognize instruments by sight and sound
- memorize and sing simple songs
- begin to learn a musical instrument through experience and imitation

Physical Education & Health

- know the importance of exercise, cleanliness, good nutrition, and sleep
- participate in age-appropriate athletic activities (basic *locomotor movements* such as running, hopping, jumping, and skipping; as well as *nonlocomotor movements* such as bending and straightening, curling, stretching, and twisting)

Form Drawing – Resources

Form Drawing books

- Form Drawing for the Homeschooling Parent – from Waldorf Without Walls
- Form Drawing for Beginners – from Christopherus Homeschool Resources
- Form Drawing: Grades One through Four
by Laura Embrey-Stine & Ernst Schuberth
- Form Drawing by Hans R. Niederhauser & Margaret Frohlich
- The Write Approach book 1 & 2
- Creative Form Drawing books 1, 2 & 3 by Rudolf Kutzli
Hawthorn Press
- Form Drawing by Arne Breidvik
- Dynamic Drawing by Hermann Kirchner

My personal recommendation is

Form Drawing: Grades One through Four to start.

Form Drawing for the Homeschooling Parent if you get stuck.

Creative Form Drawing book 1 if you love it and can't wait for more.

There is also a wonderful passage on Form Modeling in Educating the Will.

You will find that, no matter what book you choose, a specific suggested sequence of forms is given and you will need very little else.

You can also use picture books to inspire your forms, such as Verdi by Janell Cannon, or tell your own stories:

John's Journey – by Lucie Smoker

<http://www.wonderhs.com/wonderhomeschool/id25.html>

<http://www.wonderhs.com/wonderhomeschool/id26.html>

Form Drawing Verse

(Hold up thumb, index and middle fingers of right hand so that arm is straight)

*Three companions who always serve
To help me draw straight lines,
To help me draw curves.*

Form Drawing Article

Notes on a Form Drawing Course by Margarit Junemann

<http://www.waldorflibrary.org/Clearing%20House/Spring%201986a.pdf>

Form Drawing notes from Waldorfhomeschoolers.com

<http://www.waldorfhomeschoolers.com/formdrawing.htm>

There are a lot of helpful links and some very clear how-to directions to on this page!

Form Drawing – Why

The first Main Lesson block in a first grade Waldorf education is always Form Drawing. Form drawing is a subject unique to Waldorf and was first conceived of by Rudolf Steiner. To prepare yourself to teach form drawing, you must fully understand the purpose behind it. Not only are these exercises used to prepare the child for the challenges of learning to read and write through developing discipline in the body and mind, but they are inherently educational in their own right.

Many young children can repeat their “ABCs” with nary a clue that the shapes are a concrete reflection of the abstract concept of the sounds which make up our language. English is complicated by the fact that not every phoneme has a distinct letter; therefore, far beyond a simple one-to-one correspondence, many letters in our alphabet are used to represent a wide variety of sounds. To teach a child that A means “a” as in apple is to lead them down a certain path to confusion in the future. They must be brought to understand that the sounds in the language exist first – and then to learn their shapes. To comprehend this, a child must be able to understand the concept of abstraction.

Form drawing is a beginning of the developing consciousness that that which is abstract can be rendered concrete; also the possibility that there always exists an abstraction in the distance, beyond our concrete perception. Plato’s theory of eternal forms makes a distinction between physical objects and the concepts we hold of them in our minds. He likens our “real” world to shadows dancing on the walls of a cave in firelight – we cannot ever see reality, we can only perceive its consequences. I am sitting in a chair as I write this, but I cannot ever truly know “chairness”, I can only know my chair. What about this piece of furniture makes it a chair? Is my printer a chair? Would it become a chair if I sat on it? The answer is the closeness the object bears to the concept of chair; that is, a physical chair is the concrete manifestation of the closest we humans can get to the perfect Form, the “chairness” which makes an object a Chair.

The goal of modern furniture making has sometimes been to distill “chairness” into its simplest and most perfect form without distraction – reading the Design Within Reach or Museum of Modern Art catalogues is an interesting way for an adult to begin to explore this concept.

www.dwr.com

www.moma.org

Regarding the chair I am sitting on now, the closest ability I have to understand its Form – its essence – is by learning and knowing the relationship between the chair and my body, understanding how it supports me, and then creating one with my hands.

By knowing its external form as perceived by me, I can come as close as possible to knowing its self. However, it would be completely impossible for me to build a successful chair if I had no concept of chair, if I did not know its purpose. Thus, we

move back and forth between knowing the Form by finding it in our environment and by trying to create it ourselves. In creating it, we come to know it better, and in knowing it, we are able to create it better.

In this way we introduce the ideas of straight and curved lines to the child. We ask them to identify examples of straight and curved in their environment and then to distill that into the concept of a Form. The goal is not so much to be able to draw a perfectly straight line freehand, but to perfectly understand the concept of straight. One could not draw a straight line without this knowledge. The line drawn is the result of the understanding of the Form.

more on Plato's theory of forms:

<http://www.anselm.edu/homepage/dbanach/platform.htm>

Form drawing is also used in connection with the four temperaments. Forms for the phlegmatic temperament gently bring the child into connection with the outside world, forms for the choleric help the child learn to enclose the inner life, and so on.

See the Appendix for an article on the temperaments.

Further Reading

Anthroposophy in Everyday Life

Rudolf Steiner

Note on forcing the letters (and bypassing form drawing)

"It is thoroughly unnatural to require a child during the sixth or seventh year to merely copy the signs that we, in this advanced stage of civilization, now use for reading and writing. If you consider the letters we now use for reading and writing, you will realize that there is no connection between these letters and what a child of seven is naturally disposed to do. Remember, that when human beings first began to write they used painted or drawn signs that reproduced things or occurrences in the surrounding world. Or they wrote from will impulses, so that forms of writing expressed processes of the will - cuneiform characters, for example. Today's entirely abstract form of letters, which the eye must gaze at or the hand form, arose from picture writing. When we confront a young child with such letters, we are bringing something alien, something that in no way conforms to the child's nature. Let us be clear about what it means to "push" a foreign body into a child's organism. It is just as though a child, from the very earliest years, were being habituated to wearing very small clothes that do not fit, and therefore damage the child's organism. Today observation tends to be superficial, and people are even unaware of the damage done to a child's organism by simply introducing reading and writing in a wrong way."

- Rudolf Steiner, The Spiritual Ground of Education

Form Drawing

My Notes:

Beginning Recorder

Traditionally, the recorder or pentatonic flute is the first instrument taught in a Waldorf school. Children continue to play it from 1st grade through 3rd; in 4th grade they choose a stringed instrument and begin to form an orchestra.

There is some debate as to whether one should choose a plastic or wooden recorder. Eric Fairman recommends plastic because you don't waste most of the music time tuning your recorder each day and it is not so difficult to take care of. Also, they are much less expensive. If you choose a wooden flute, the brand most often recommended is Choroi. Teach your children how to take care of a wooden flute from the very beginning. It requires a special flute oil which is sold separately.

David Darcy has the best book on teaching your child to play the recorder. This book includes a story for introducing the flute (or you may wish to use The Greatest Treasure by Demi). He also includes simple songs as well as a companion CD. It is available from him directly (email: ddarcytx2000@yahoo.com). Here is the link to his blog, which is full of wonderful teaching ideas: <http://ddarcysview.blogstream.com/>

In addition to learning to play the recorder, one of the first projects in the First Grade year is knitting a simple recorder storage bag. These can be made quite beautiful, with stripes of different colors.

To teach your child to play the recorder, you must first be able to play the recorder. You are teaching strictly through imitation at this point – your child is not required to learn to read music. Some of the best books for sources of pentatonic songs suitable for this age are:

Clump-a-Dump and Snickle-Snack
A Change in the Year

Johanne Russ
Peter Oram

I prefer David Darcy's book to the others I reviewed (including Oak Meadow and Usborne) because it comes with a CD, which is helpful for adults who prefer to hear and example and are made more confident by hearing that they are doing it correctly. Here is his description of his book:

I have taught many homeschooling parents and children to play, so I began with the assumption that the parent knew nothing about the flute or about reading music. I have included exercises to teach reading music to the extent that it is needed for the flute. Since I know that some people learn better by ear than by reading music, the CD covers the same ground from a slightly different perspective. About a dozen songs I have written over the years are included both as written music and on the CD.

This book can be used with a pentatonic recorder, but the conventional soprano recorder has different fingerings for the notes than what I have explained for the pentatonic flute and pentatonic recorder. The pentatonic flute was specifically designed for classes of young children. It is easy to play and has a more mellow tone than the recorder.

Choroi makes the pentatonic flutes that are used in many Waldorf schools. I have no hesitation recommending these, but they cost about \$45. The scale of the p flute, and the scale I use in my book is, from low to high, D E G A B D E. Since the D and E are repeated, you have seven notes, even though the scale is five notes. Some flutes available, particularly Native American flutes, and some pentatonic recorders, only have five notes. So check carefully for that.

To order, send me a check at 8805 Tara Lane, Austin TX 78737 and be sure to include your mailing address. The cost is \$20 plus \$4 for shipping and handling.

You can also recruit a friend, relative, or professional teacher to teach your child the recorder if you feel completely out of your element. It is best in this case to give them the Waldorf teaching manuals and song books you want them to use so that the lessons are consistent with the philosophy you have chosen.

Beginning Recorder

Just as with form drawing, you can tell stories to accompany the songs that your children learn to play.

Clump-a-Dump and Snickle-Snack

- "Saddle My Pony" page 6
is the perfect complement to The Sleep Ponies by Gudrun Ongman
- continue throughout the book in this way – there are many stories you can read (or tell) about gnomes, angels, snowflakes, Christmas, apples, and the other topics of these songs.

A note: this book is more suitable for a family which is looking for songs for Christian holidays, and, overall, is comfortable with the gnomes and fairies and so on. Not all families implement this side of Waldorf education so if you are looking for simple songs to use throughout the year, celebrating the seasons in a more secular manner, you may prefer the one below.

A Change in the Year

Peter Oram chose many pieces of significant poetry to be the texts of his songs – including Blake, Wordsworth, and Shakespeare. For this reason, you can recite the poems first and then teach the child the accompanying music. This book is somewhat harder to find. As far as I know, it is available only at the Bookstore at Rudolf Steiner College (in the US).

<http://www.steinercollege.org/newbookstore/files/EarlyChildhoodWaldorfResourcesCatalog.pdf>

Beginning Recorder

My Notes:

Quality of Numbers

The Quality of Numbers block is your child's first formal mathematics block. I recommend buying Eric Fairman's excellent math resource book (which covers all the grades) A Steiner-Waldorf Mathematic Resource as I prefer it to Dorothy Harrer's book for this block. Harrer's book is more helpful when it comes to writing your math gnome stories later on.

In this block, your child is developing math sense, learning to count forwards and backwards from 1 to 12, as well as learning verses (which may be found in Fairman's book as well as in A Journey Through Time in Verse and Rhyme if you have it) to help her feel the *quality* of each number. For example, One is wholeness, the earth. Since Steiner recommended always working in math from the whole to the parts, you really need a Waldorf math book to help you understand this approach, instead of using a regular math textbook for this block. It's worth the investment.

Fairman's book also includes helpful exercises for step counting (see <http://www.wehomeschool.org/wehs/numberstories.php> for a partial example of the verse and how to use it). Active Arithmetic by Henning Andersen is FULL of movement exercises to reinforce math sense (covers grades 1 through 4) although many of the activities will need to be modified for a homeschool class, since he is referring to making circles with large numbers of children, and so on.

Fairman suggests introducing the Roman numerals as well in this block. Knitting is begun at this time as it gives plenty of practice with counting.

My other suggested purchase for this block is Workjobs by Mary Baratta-Lorton. These are a series of independent activities she developed for children in her preschool classroom but they are actually more suitable for the Waldorf first grade. Covering a variety of different skills, there are more than enough activities for you to begin now and introduce a few new ones each month of the school year. Number sense and the development of language are both covered – you can choose which activities seem most suitable for your child. Skills included are perception, matching, classification, sounds and letters, sets, number sequences, combining and separating groups, and relationships. These activities are wonderful to add to the play area of your classroom so your child can use his independent time to reinforce concepts he's exploring.

In this block, you'll concentrate on Roman Numerals from 1 to 20 (I to XX) and the *quality* of numbers 0 through 12. In later blocks, you'll perform math operations using numbers up to 20 and practice counting forwards and backwards to 100.

Some math notes from Lucie Smoker's site:

<http://www.wonderhs.com/wonderhomeschool/id34.html>

Why 12?

Why teach numbers up to 12 when most math books go up to 10?

I think that the numbers 11 and 12 have their own presence and qualities. Many languages have separate names for eleven and twelve, whereas thirteen and higher are ten plus whatever extra amount. Also, there are 12 months in the year (Anno's Counting Book is a good counting picture book which goes from 1 to 12 for this reason). Counting to twelve gives children experience in the concept of place value (although it is not explained until computation with math gnomes later on (to make it easier to carry, once they are placed in sacks of ten)).

12 is also a magical number for exploration, as it is divisible evenly by 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 12.

Quality of Numbers

My Notes:

Learning to Knit

As with Form Drawing, Knitting is first introduced as part of a main lesson block and then moves to another slot later in the year. In this case, it becomes part of your afternoon handwork time. (It's especially nice to do a family handwork time, even if you have very small children, where everyone can sit and work on projects side by side.)

Although it's not considered the standard Waldorf learning-to-knit book, we prefer Kids Knitting by Melanie Falick. It has the clearest diagrams! If you need more pattern ideas quickly, you can branch out to additional knitting books but I would begin with this one. Make your knitting needles together (this makes it special) and then start with a VERY simple project. Bulky needles (around a size 10) make it easier for your child to pick up stitches and to see their work and wooden needles are less tiring on the hands. All the same, don't push your child to do too much on any given day. Start the year with a long strip which is folded in half and sewn up the sides to be a flute case. Knitting projects for all year round may be found in The Children's Year. Check our website for my knitting blog – what projects I chose as I taught myself to knit and my notes on them: http://www.waldorfcriculum.com/Articles/learn_to_knit.html

The Recalcitrant Knitter

If your child hates to knit, here are some suggestions. First, if your child thinks knitting is stupid, examine every textile in your house – is it knitted (the telltale v's) or woven? You'll be surprised at how prevalent knitting is.

If your child thinks knitting is boring, choose quick projects which you can whip up easily or change the projects so they are gifts. Sometimes, a child delights so much in making something for someone else, it suddenly becomes fun.

DO NOT make a bargain with your child that if they knit two rows, you will knit two rows (or something similar). This only teaches your child that you are so eager to see them succeed that you will actually do the work for them – not a message you want to pass on!

If your child wants projects which are more challenging, try making a series of knitted animals. Again, we have collected notes on where to find these patterns; visit http://www.waldorfcriculum.com/Articles/knit_animals.html.

Tips by Temperament

I am quoting here a section from Alan Whitehead's section in A Steiner Homeschool? about how to persuade a reluctant child that homeschooling is the way to go. Use it to give you ideas on how to persuade your reluctant child to learn to knit. You appeal in the *same way* to each temperament, regardless of the topic.

"With children 7 to 14 we appeal not to the hand or head but to the heart, the **feelings**. We must devise a strategy to make them **want** to be homeschooled -- even if we have to use a few emotional conjuror's tricks to do it! One handy rabbit in our magician's top hat is the four temperaments, which are unfolding in this age.

Promise the *choleric* child lots of red-blooded excitement and challenge, especially in relation to the outer world. Conversely tell her/him how suffocatingly banal is normal schooling, with its institutionalized mentality -- yawn!

The *sanguine* child will be appealed to by the amount of fun homeschooling provides. This is reinforced with descriptions of the rich variety of lessons -- no, make that experiences -- the child will enjoy. Also promise lots of social interaction for the sanguine child. When you add that all the longsuffering 'inmates' do in normal schools is sit at desks doing sums and writing all day (true in spirit if not in fact), you'll probably clinch it with the sanguine.

Phlegmatic children would rise to the artistic bait. Tell them how often you'll be doing lovely paintings and drawings, and music, and weaving, and visiting schools and gardens and nature parks and -- anything but formal schoolwork! Ram your advantage home by telling them of all the horrible competitive sports they will be forced to do in school, and the endless tests and exams -- and the playground victimisation.

The *melancholics* are trickier, mainly because they're smarter, in the canny if not cerebral sense at least, taking things in on a deeper level as they do. Actually the rational approach, similar to that applied to the adolescents can work well here. In any case, you have to promise academic advantages. 'You'll learn so much more at home than in the chaos and inefficiency of the classroom.'

Another tactic with the melancholic is how homeschooling would make you -- yes YOU - - happy; and how sad you would be if your precious child was to suffer at the indifferent hands of production-line education. This is inversion of emotional logic, but it works; melancholics respond best to someone else's suffering!

With all the four temperaments, promise them an ejector button if, after a reasonable homeschool trial (say half a year) they don't like it, they can go back to school. If their home education is that awful, it's probably the best thing anyway. This would however be the exception."

Alan Whitehead

Learning to Knit

Verses for Learning to Knit (traditional)

How to Knit

In through the front door

Around the back

Out through the window

And off jumps Jack.

How to Purl

Under the fence

Catch the sheep

Back we come

Off we leap

Personally, the thing that helped me the most when I was learning the difference between the knit stitch and the purl stitch was that I looked at how you hold the needles when you begin. When knitting, the needles are side by side, coming together. When purling, they are coming at each other, like sharks attacking. I recommend before you teach your child the knit stitch, that you read Red Berry Wool by Robyn Eversole. Before introducing the purl stitch, read Pippi and the South Seas by Astrid Lindgren. I like to think of the sharks coming at one another as Pippi is diving for pearls in the sea and she wraps her arms around one's neck and throws him way up high in the air! As long as you tap into your child's imagination, there's no limit to the wonderful stories you can tell as you teach the stitches.

Knitting as a way of life article from Waldorf in the Home:

http://www.waldorfinthehome.org/knitting_as_a_way_of_life.html

By the way, don't get overly enthusiastic and try to teach your child to spin even though it is mentioned in Red Berry Wool (although you can certainly use hand-made yarn that you or another child has made) – this is a skill reserved for the 3rd grade curriculum. However, you and your child can certainly dye your own yarn and there are many recipes online for natural dyes, or have fun experimenting with your own combinations.

Find an overview of the Waldorf handwork curriculum in the Appendix in the article "The Relevance of Handwork and Craft for the Child, the Adolescent and the Adult."

Learning to Knit

My Notes:

Handwriting

Learning to read with the Waldorf method is achieved not through drills but through a process of discovery. The first series of discoveries is the letters of our alphabet. These letters are taught one at a time, beginning with those consonants which have only one sound, moving to those consonants with more than one sound, and ending with the vowels, the most complex and challenging letters to learn. For this reason, there are no basal readers in Waldorf education; no child learns to sound out those simple stories with bland characters and little plot... this is perhaps the most enticing part of a Waldorf education, as those stories cannot be said to encourage a joy in reading and desire to learn further! When a child learns to read through the Waldorf method, it is as a blinding light breaking through the cloud cover, that glorious moment when it all comes together and, instead of reading just the most common 500 words in the English language as presented by Dick and Jane, your child will be able to pick up any text he wishes and dive into it a confident and competent reader. And this is, in fact, the true meaning intended when we say the phrase "learning to read."

The teaching of writing before reading is one of the most distinctive aspects of the Waldorf school and much has been written about it. Here are a few articles we recommend:

"The Teaching of Writing" by Eileen Hutchins

http://www.waldorflibrary.org/Journal_Articles/teachingwriting.pdf

"Learning to Read and Write in the Waldorf Schools" by William Ward

http://www.waldorfcriculum.com/Lower%20grades/learning_to_read_and_write.pdf

You should already have purchased Teaching Children Handwriting and Practical Advice to Teachers, both of which you should reread before teaching any of the handwriting blocks. Bear in mind that reading comes later, as your child (over the summer or at the beginning of second grade) begins to copy what you have written on the board into his main lesson book and slowly sees that he can read what he has written.

One passage describing this sudden exhilarating ability to read has always stuck in my mind (and I have long wished this experience for my children). It is from Raising Demons by Shirley Jackson:

At about ten o'clock on an evening late in February the entire pattern of our collective lives was violently altered. My husband and I, sitting in the kind of companionable stupor that sets in when all children are in bed and presumably asleep, were startled at hearing a sudden astonished "Oh!" from Sally's room. As we half rose, looking at one another, her voice lifted in the greatest, most jubilant shout I have ever heard: "I can READ! I can READ!"

It turned out she could, too. After we had calmed down the other children ("Sally had a bad dream") and put them back to bed with another piece of candy each, Sally came down and sat in the living room in her red pajamas and read to her father and me the first chapter of *Ozma of Oz*, the book I had been reading *her* before she went, as I thought, to bed. She explained that every night after I had turned out the light and gone downstairis, she had been going over and over the book I read her, trying to apply the reading knowledge she picked up in kindergarten [presumably, this was the letters and their basic sounds], and tonight, without effort, the letters on the page has fallen together and become readable; she had gone along for a page or more before she realized that she was reading the words. We listened, congratulated her, remarked on how surprised her teacher would be, and asked what she had been using for light, teaching herself to read up there in her bed. After some hesitation, she admitted that she had found it was possible to slant the book so it caught light from the hall, where we always left a nightlight burning. My husband, who used to read at night when he was a boy with a flashlight under the covers, said that inadequate light was harmful to the eyes. I, who used to read at night when I was a girl by the street light outside my window, said that little girls who stayed awake reading at night were very apt to be sleepy in school the next day. Sally agreed soberly, as befitted one newly admitted to an esoteric societly, and went back upstairs with *Ozma of Oz*. When I went up to cover her later she was asleep with her light on and *Ozma of Oz* open on her stomach."

from Raising Demons by Shirley Jackson

Further Reading

There's More to Reading Than Meets the Eye:
<http://www.awsna.org/renmoretoread.html>

Note: In our program, the lowercase letters are introduced in second grade along with the basic elements of beginning grammar – capitalization and punctuation rules and spelling words. Some families choose to do lowercase and uppercase letters both in first grade. You'll have to decide for yourself what works for you.

Handwriting

If you plan to teach your child the letters by using Grimm's Fairy Tales, I recommend purchasing Waldorf Reading for Homeschoolers by Barbara Dewey. She gives recommended order for teaching the letters, suggested stories for each (as well as page numbers for the two main Grimms' Fairy Tales collections used by Waldorf teachers) and sample main lesson book illustrations.

If you would like to use your local library as much as possible, make up your own alphabet and choose corresponding books. You can also, of course, tell your own stories. Eric Fairman chose to make up his own stories, and told them as a narrative series about a group of explorers, finding different things as they traveled. When choosing what item will represent your letter, you *can* change the orientation of the letter slightly (Steiner's example for *d* was *dach*: roof) but try to keep it as close as possible to the way the letter truly should be written. Here are some examples:

B – butterfly, bee	shape of butterfly or bee wings
D – dough	turned sideways, dough rising in a bowl
F – flame	flames in a fire, also could be fish, fountain, or feather
J – jump	jump up, spread out your arms, kick your legs up behind you
L – ledge, lizard	
K – king, key	draw an old skeleton key where the bottom (teeth) resembles a K
M – mountain	could also be manger (seen from the side – <u>The Donkey's Dream</u>)
N – nails, nest	three nails lined up, also could be three sticks in a nest
P – prince	
R – river	
S – snake, swan	
T – tree, table	sideways look at a pedestal table, could also be tunnel or toadstool (<u>Thumbelina</u>)
Z – zoom, zigzag	bumblebee flying in a zigzag, could also be zephyr (breeze)
G – goose	also could be grape leaf or grapevine (<u>Elphabet</u>)
H – harmonica	
Q – queen	
V – valley, view	take paper and tape it over a window in a V shape
W – waves	
C – cave, cat, curl	entrance to a cave, also could be cat sleeping curled up, or hair curl (there was a little girl, who had a little curl...)
X – xylophone	crossed xylophone sticks
Y – yawn	stand, stretch out your arms and yawn

By the way, Barbara Dewey suggests skipping X and Y.

A, E, I, O, and U are taught as sounds (exclamations) rather than pictures of things. If you plan on doing eurythmy with your children, this is the time to start.

Barbara Dewey suggests teaching first consonants which have only one sound, then consonants which have two or more sounds, and then the vowels which also have several sounds. It is traditional for short vowel sounds to be taught first, then you can explain long vowels by saying that is when the letter "says its name." That's how it was explained to me in school. Putting it all together is a combination of encoding, decoding, and just plain experience. Give your child as many possible reading experiences once you hit the summer (block 10). Write things on the board for him to copy down – read out loud with him sitting next to you or with his own copy of the book – play word games like find me a word on the page that starts with this letter, name something you see that starts with this letter, tell me a word that rhymes with what-have-you, etc. There are lots of online resources for fun pre-reading games which you can play as well as other ideas; for example:

<http://shop.store.yahoo.com/nationalgardening/13-1036.html>.

Donna Simmons' first grade curriculum has the prince on an adventure (like Eric Fairman's way of framing the stories) – and I think it is a good idea, which you should emulate. You can, in fact, have the same adventurers from the Quality of Numbers block, where they find sticks on the beach in the shape of Roman numerals and have to figure out what they mean, be the people who travel around and discover your letters.

If you'd like to see some eurythmy in action, to decide if it's something you want to explore further with your child, I recommend the Eurythmy DVD available from Bob & Nancy's Bookshop: http://www.waldorfbooks.com/heal/movement_therapy.htm

It includes the five-pointed star (vowels) exercise as well as some examples with copper rods. There is no instruction. You follow along and let the exercises speak directly to your heart.

Once your child knows all the eurythmy gestures for the vowels, you can do the movements along with this verse:

the vowels are the eurythmy gestures

(A)--- Guarded from harm

(E)--- cared for by angels

(I)--- here stand we

(O)--- loving and strong

(U)--- truthful and good

Handwriting

You can also choose a Waldorf alphabet book (the two main ones are Waldorf Alphabet Book by Fammke Zonneveld and L M N O P and All the Letters A to Z by Howard Schrager). You don't need both. The advantage of L M N O P is that there is also a series of alphabet cards which show each illustration and you can line them up along the classroom wall as you learn each letter. He also provides a corresponding verse for each letter.

Oak Meadow's Kindergarten curriculum uses mainly stories by Beatrix Potter to teach the capital letters – this is another option. It is easy to find used copies of this curriculum but it's an expensive way to get just alphabet ideas.

Finally, if your child already learned his letters (if, for example, he went to a traditional preschool but you are switching to using the Waldorf method now), I recommend using The Wise Enchanter by Shelley Davidow. This book is told as a chapter book, where the characters encounter a letter each day (proceeding from A to Z) and sample main lesson book illustrations are given at the start of each chapter.

Additional Reading: Eurythmy

The Healing Art of Eurythmy

Truus Geraets

Come Unto These Yellow Sands

Molly von Heider

Appendix

Eurythmy movements

Handwriting

My Notes:

Eurythmy

My Notes:

Equals the Raven

Equals the Raven is a block of my own devising, which takes some time before computation is introduced to work some more on number sense, particularly, pre-algebra. When you turn in your curriculum to whomever is observing you, this unit is pre-algebra and form drawing is pre-geometry.

The texts for this unit are:

Feltcraft: Making dolls, gifts, and toys. by Petra Berger.

The Burgess Bird Book for Children. by Thornton W. Burgess.

The Big Snow. by Berta Hader.

Seed Leaf Flower Fruit. by MaryJo Koch.

Equals is a raven (find a bird pattern in Feltcraft) who helps your child learn the meaning of the equals sign. Basically, he flies around his pile of loot until he finds the middle point and rests there with his wings folded. You can sew him so that when he folds his wings they form an equals sign, or simply embroider it on his back with contrasting thread (similar to how the gnome are made).

Why take the time to do this? Recent studies have discovered, at around third grade, that children don't realize that the equals sign means the two sides of the equation equal the same amount; that is, that they balance one another. They have come to conclude that equals means "put the answer here". This is not their fault; rather, it is due to their teachers giving a limited style math problems from the very beginning. I recommend Roy Wilkinson's book Teaching Mathematics if you are having difficulty coming up with a variety of ways to present math problems.

The six elements of algebraic thinking this unit is designed to teach are:

- modeling
- exploring
- arguing
- predicting
- conjecturing
- testing

This unit makes heavy use of Cuisinaire rods – I really advise that every family purchase a set of these. They also come with very good teaching materials.

You can also introduce a balance at this time (or later, in a Nature Studies unit). A wonderful book for doing this is The Saint and the Circus by Roberto R. Piumini.

Further Reading

"It's Elementary: Introducing Algebraic Thinking Before High School"
by Leslie Blair

<http://www.sedl.org/pubs/sedl-letter/v15n01/5.html>

Equals the Raven

My Notes:

Math Gnomes

Math gnomes are, I believe, one of everyone's favorite Waldorf teaching ideas for the early grades. The children learn their numbers and all four computational skills in first grade—adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. That is a little bit different from most public schools where they learn division later. Math is taught in a concrete manner, showing the connections between these processes. Each child might get a little bag filled with jewels or a basket of acorns. They add and subtract them, making groups and piles.

Barbara Dewey's math book is of help here, as is Dorothy Harrer's math book but it is quite simple to make up your own math stories if you just know which gnome is which. Likewise, you can make your own set of math gnomes instead of purchasing them. Just use The Gnome Craft Book for patterns.

If you already purchased Eric Fairman's A Steiner-Waldorf Mathematic Resource, you will have verses to use when introducing each of the gnomes; otherwise, here they are. The gnomes are named Plus, Minus, Divide, and Multiply – and are always gaining, losing, or allocating treasure in ways suggested by their names.

Fairman describes Divide as being a Red gnome, Plus is a Green gnome, Minus is a Blue gnome, and Multiply is a Yellow gnome. These gnomes collect jewels in different manner to give to the king of gnomes for his "treasure store".

When drawing the gnomes in your math book, be aware that their appearance also reflects their personality (in addition to their colors which are a reflection of each of the four temperaments – see Appendix for notes). Plus is fat and jolly and always adding jewels to his sack. He loves to gather more and more. Minus is rather forlorn. His pockets have holes in them and he is always losing his jewels. He always starts with the right amount of jewels but they tumble out of his pockets and his sack. Divide wants everything to be fair and equal and is constantly rearranging his jewels into different arrays of equal parts. Multiply is thin and lively and always in a rush. He doesn't want to go slowly and say 1, 2, 3, 4. He wants to say 2, 4, 6, 8. He loves to add things to his sack but he wants to do it very quickly.

If you don't agree with the concept of gnomes, make them children. I have notes here from a teacher who named her characters "Dana Divide", "Timothy Times", Peter Plus", and "Minny Minus." Children in her class dressed up as these math helpers, in costumes (tunics of the appropriate color with symbols stitched on the back and matching hats) and they acted out story after story together. In this way the arithmetic problem is acted out in a concrete, visual and very imaginative way and children acquire a wonderful feeling for numbers

I also recommend Liputto by Jakob Streit before you begin this block if your child has not heard a lot of gnome stories in the past. It is nice to do a read-aloud for fun and then begin to use those characters (gnomes) in your lessons – makes for a good transition. Another gnome book is Puck the Gnome but I think it is too scary for first grade.

Another alternative, if you are doing the alphabet by having a group of travelers explore and find different things, is to end your alphabet series from the previous block with the letter *C* for *cave* and begin the Math Gnomes/4 Processes of Math block as they enter the cave, travel deep down into the earth, and discover the gnomes hurrying busily about.

Math Gnomes

My Notes:

Environmental Studies

Hands down, the best book for helping you plan your Science homeschool curriculum is From Nature Stories to Natural Science by Donna Simmons. This gives an overview of the Waldorf science curriculum from the early years through high school. Science topics touched on in first grade are listed in the skills and understandings checklist, reiterated here:

Science: Nature Studies

- recognize and name common trees and plants in locality
- know which local plants are hazardous
- know the names and features of the four seasons
- be familiar with different types of weather
- explain how animals adapt to each of the changing seasons
- know that different animals have different habitats
- explain hibernation and migration and give examples of animals which do each
- define and discuss extinction and endangered species
- identify the four elements (earth, water, fire and air) and have experiences with each
- understand the dangers of pollution and environmental destruction, and the benefits of conservation and recycling

A wonderful book for explorations in the four elements is Earth, Water, Fire and Air: Playful Explorations in the 4 Elements by Walter Kraul.

Fairy Worlds and Workers by Marjorie Spock is an interesting read for the teacher (in preparation for teaching the four elements).

Environmental Studies

My Notes:

Singing

The beginning of the school year is also the time to establish your music curriculum. All of your children should take singing lessons, preferably separately. Many children feel uncomfortable singing in front of someone who they think may tease them. The same is true of their work with musical instruments. Arrange for a recital twice a year (perhaps December and June) where the family – perhaps the adults as well – can perform separately as well as in duets. Singing in rounds is usually begun in third grade and singing two-part songs is usually begun in fourth grade. If you are not planning to teach singing yourself, pass these books on to the children's singing teacher:

Let's Sing and Celebrate!

by Colin Price

Let's Sing and Celebrate! includes songs for all grades, 1st through 8th, and clearly indicates recommendations for each. Another wonderful book, intended for children ages 8-14 (which you may want to get for next year) is The Waldorf Song Book by Brien Masters.

You should also have the singing teacher read Towards Freedom in Singing, a short book about the Waldorf perspective on teaching singing, which is quite unique.

Singing

My Notes:

P.E. Program First Grade

Water Games: learn to swim

Ball Games: circular games (hot potato, duck duck goose, etc.)

Bush Games: hiding games (hide and go seek, sardines, etc.)

Field Games: chasing games (such as capture the flag)

Indoor Games: floor games (such as hopscotch)

I also recommend working with a parachute and balance beam.

Equipment Games: sliding and swinging

If you don't have a swingset, visit a local playground or park.

**Creative Games: allow the children to make up games of their own
devising**

Dance: circle dances (such as Maypole dances)

From my notes on Touch the Earth, Gently by Alan Whitehead

<http://www.waldorfcurriculum.com/Articles/PE.pdf>

Looking Forward by Molly von Heider is also an excellent resource for game suggestions.

P.E. Program

The goal of the P.E. program is to provide your children with exposure to a wide variety of games and sports, as well as a new type of dance each year. Take the time to arrange each month's sport in advance – you can find classes for your children to take, borrow sports equipment from a friend, get together with other homeschooling families... whatever works best for you. Try to get your children involved in devising some of their own athletic activities as well – the creative games block is perfect for this. Variety is the spice of life.

If you find a sport which your child really wants to continue with throughout the school year that's fine, but *don't* let it keep you from staying with the schedule and trying new things each month. It is easy for children to label themselves as to what they are "good at" and stay within that comfort zone. It is your job as parent and teacher to expose them a wide number of activities – both so that they can discover more and more things they are good at, and so that they learn that trying something and not being great at it is just part of life and is absolutely OK. Model this to your children by jumping into each month's new sport or game with enthusiasm. Learn together! Don't let your fear of being good at something keep you from trying it. Don't teach your children to be leery of new things. Model a positive attitude and enjoy your fitness program!

Please always check with your child's doctor before beginning any fitness program.

P.E. Program

My Notes:

Miscellaneous Resources

There are many excellent resources for giving your child a Waldorf education. Here are our suggestions of additions to round out your program:

<u>Painting in Waldorf Education</u>	Dick Bruin & Attie Lichthart
Watercolor Painting DVD (available from Waldorf in the Home: http://www.waldorfinthehome.org/waldorf-store.html)	Kelly Morrow
<u>Learning About the World through Modeling</u>	Arthur Auer
<u>In the Light of a Child</u>	Michael Hedley Burton
<u>Plays for Grades One through Four</u>	Michael Hedley Burton
<u>Phonic Rhyme Time</u>	Mary Nash-Wortham
<u>Poems and Speech Exercises for Grades I and II</u>	John C. Miles
<u>A Path of Discovery Volume One: Grade One</u>	Eric Fairman
AWSNA curriculum chart (large)	

For more on the festivals which are celebrated in Waldorf schools, I recommend
All Year Round Ann Druitt, et al.

or visit this website: <http://www.detroitwaldorf.com/programs.php?program=16>

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

The Question of Lined Paper

Main lesson books are made completely of unlined paper. The reason for this is so that your child learns to find the straight line within – it is a will-developing exercise. Try it yourself and you'll see what I mean.

Why Do Form Drawing?

Steiner was vehement about this.

"It is thoroughly unnatural to require a child during the sixth or seventh year to merely copy the signs that we, in this advanced stage of civilization, now use for reading and writing. If you consider the letters we now use for reading and writing, you will realize that there is no connection between these letters and what a child of seven is naturally disposed to do. Remember, that when human beings first began to write they used painted or drawn signs that reproduced things or occurrences in the surrounding world. Or they wrote from will impulses, so that forms of writing expressed processes of the will - cuneiform characters, for example. Today's entirely abstract form of letters, which the eye must gaze at or the hand form, arose from picture writing. When we confront a young child with such letters, we are bringing something alien, something that in no way conforms to the child's nature. Let us be clear about what it means to "push" a foreign body into a child's organism. It is just as though a child, from the very earliest years, were being habituated to wearing very small clothes that do not fit, and therefore damage the child's organism. Today observation tends to be superficial, and people are even unaware of the damage done to a child's organism by simply introducing reading and writing in a wrong way."

- Rudolf Steiner, The Spiritual Ground of Education

If your school system objects to this mystery subject, simply put it down as geometry (freehand geometric drawing).

How to Teach Foreign Language

Like music, foreign language is taught through imitation. This means you have to model it – which means you have to learn it first! Picture books and music for the language you are teaching your child are a good idea but save the formal language learning programs for your own use. We recommend a foreign language block in the middle of the year, so you have the first part to learn some of the language yourself. For the MLB on this topic, practice total immersion for that hour and a half. Follow it up with some "Heart" time learning about the country and its culture – for "Hands" cook traditional recipes, learn some of the native dances, etc.

Physical Education/ Health

We've given indications for a PE program – Health at this point is an awareness of the importance of hygiene, nutrition, and physical activity. Please do read Touch the Earth, Gently by Alan Whitehead as it gives valuable additional information above and beyond what I could include here.

Fun and Games

Of course! We're still talking about young children here. There should be games at circle time, during free play, in P.E. class and as part of your festival celebrations.

Organized Sport

Not so much. We are opposed to the current cultural habit of putting children in organized sports from an early age.

What About Social Development?

What about it? If your child seems to have too few friends, meet some more (this is one advantage of sports programs but there are other ways such as activities at the library, nature center, parks and museums, homeschool groups, and church). You'll have much more control over the friends your child makes when you homeschool – and therefore, you have the ability to choose a peer group which you feel will help your child grow in a healthy, happy, and confident way. Socialization is not just play; it is learning how to be human. Children get that from other children but they also get it from adults.

The Computer Question

No. No computer worksheets, no computer research, no computer games.

Should I Be Homeschooling All Year Round?

If you wish. I like to do all year round (except August) with a daily lesson for the 1st through the 24th of each month and a break at the end before the next topic. Lots of families do Monday through Friday. If you want your spouse to be involved, plan your homeschool schedule around the times when he/she can teach. Perhaps your family will do school from Tuesday – Saturday. Find what works for you and feel free to change it as need be.

How Much Should My Child Work Independently?

In first grade, not too much. You'll be doing the storytelling, modeling the hands-on activities, and writing anything which gets copied into the main lesson book (to ensure proper spelling and grammar). However, we do recommend some independent work for your child to get additional practice in fundamental concepts – see Workjobs.

Curriculum Options

Some curriculum options for first grade include

- Oak Meadow (use their kindy curric)
- Live Education!
- Christopherus Homeschool Resources
- Spiritual Syllabus

And then, of course, there's

Eclectic – finding all your own stuff and putting it together your own way

Eric Fairman's book Path of Discovery Volume 1: Grade 1 I consider to be more of a resource than a complete curriculum. It is handy to have, though.

Support, Support, Support

You need support or you'll burn out. Get a consultant or join a Waldorf homeschooling group (or several – there are a lot of them). Don't skip this step!

How to Find a Consultant

We have a list of them at the beginning of this curriculum overview or contact people and ask for their recommendations.

Meeting Other Waldorf Families

This may backfire but it's worth a shot. Sometimes you get more new ideas from meeting people who don't know about Waldorf than sitting together with a group of folks and patting yourselves on the back. I say this somewhat tongue in cheek, but I think you know what I mean. Visit the Christopherus Homeschool Resources networking page <http://www.christopherushomeschool.org/networking.htm> to find or start a group near you.

The Montessori Question & Other Homeschool Methods

Yes, people combine all sorts of things with Waldorf. Reggio Emilia, Montessori, Charlotte Mason, unschooling, and so on. I don't think anyone can tell you not to – do what seems right for you and your child – but just think through whether you are sending the child mixed messages by combining things in the wrong way. For example, Montessori materials are wonderful and I love them for academic work. I just would wait and use them with an older child (such as first grade) instead of preschoolers. So I am using the materials and teaching ideas but in a way which is compatible with my beliefs about child development and what is appropriate at each age. If you're really concerned with whether you are going too far off the Waldorf path, read Steiner. I think the best way to get a handle on the philosophy is to hear it from the horse's mouth and you'll get a good feeling for whether the way you use other methods is compatible with his beliefs or not.

The First Day: Having Authority As a Teacher

This is important! Eric Fairman's Path of Discovery Volume 1: Grade 1 has the best description of how to prepare for the first day of school and what to do.

Where to Get School Supplies

Some basic supplies are available through the Waldorf Curriculum Store by customer request: http://www.waldorfcriculum.com/Store/store_overview.html

We have a list of other vendors on our website under Parent Resources:

http://www.waldorfcriculum.com/Index%20page/Parent%20Resources/parent_resources_materials.html

If there's something mentioned in the curriculum and you're just not able to find it, just contact us to ask.

Identifying Your Resources

This is important and we wrote about it earlier under "Preparing for a Unit." Alan Whitehead's book A Steiner Homeschool? also has a lot of good suggestions for this.

Using Family Members As Teachers

Do this. It's a good break for you, very good for your child, and helps family feel involved and not "stupid" for being an outsider who doesn't get why you're doing the things you do. If your child only ever has you for a teacher, he is missing out! Not because you are doing a bad job but because education comes from all parts of life and can be found in every situation. Let the people around you share their talents. Remember, "it takes a village".

What If My Child Isn't Learning to Read?

In first grade this isn't a big deal. It should click over the summer or at the start of second grade. If your child isn't reading at all by the middle of second grade (around January) have him or her evaluated.

What If It Isn't Fun? What If My Child Hates Me?

If it isn't fun, don't do it. Homeschooling is usually the better option but there are rare cases where this is not so. If you are miserable and your child is miserable, STOP.

Can I Really Do This???

Of course you can! And you'll probably have a lot of fun. Remember, you may not have as much training as a certified school teacher (or you might have more) but you definitely have the two qualities which matter the most: *dedication to your child's education* and the desire to give him or her the best future possible, and *years of knowledge* about every aspect of your specific child.

Have more questions?

Contact us at waldorf_curric@yahoo.com

SUGGESTED BOOKLIST

Reading Steiner

The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy

The Child's Changing Consciousness as the Basis of Pedagogical Practice

The Kingdom of Childhood: Introductory Talks on Waldorf Education.

Practical Advice to Teachers.

Storytelling Resources

The Way of the Storyteller

Ruth Sawyer

Making Magical Fairy-Tale Puppets

Christel Dhom

A Journey Through Time in Verse and Rhyme

Heather Thomas

Gateways Kindergarten series

Nursery Rhymes

The Oxford Nursery Rhyme Book

Iona Opie

The Gnome Craft Book

Thomas and Petra Berger

Feltcraft

Petra Berger

Making Waldorf Dolls

Maricristin Seeley

The School Day

Educating the Will

Michael Howard

A Steiner Homeschool?

Alan Whitehead

Sleep: An Unobserved Element in Education

Audrey McAllen

One, Two, Three!

David Adams

SUGGESTED BOOKLIST

Setting up the School Room

Teaching Children Handwriting

Audrey McAllen

The Nature Corner

M v Leeuwen & J Moeskops

The *Atelier*

Working in the Reggio Way: A Beginner's Guide for American Teachers by
Julianne P. Wurm

Beautiful Stuff: Learning with Found Materials by Cathy Weisman Topal and Lella
Gandini

In the Spirit of the Studio: Learning from the Atelier of Reggio Emilia by Lella
Gandini, et al.

Bringing Reggio Emilia Home: An Innovative Approach to Early Childhood
Education by Louise Boyd Cadwell

Remedial Work

Take Time: Movement exercises for parents, teachers and therapists of children
with difficulties in speaking, reading, writing and spelling
by Mary Nash-Wortham and Jean Hunt

Resource Teacher's Developmental Exercise Manual

SUGGESTED BOOKLIST

The First Grade Curriculum – ESSENTIAL BOOKS

We recommend that you purchase several books a month – this will allow you to build up quite a good library of Waldorf teaching resources at a reasonable pace. As much as possible, books are chosen which also cover material taught in later years to reduce further expense. However, first grade, being so different from kindergarten, can be quite an expensive year to prepare for.

Form Drawing

Teaching Children Handwriting

Audrey McAllen

Form Drawing Grades One through Four

Laura Embrey-Stine and
Ernst Schuberth

Educating the Will

Michael Howard

Beginning Recorder

(to begin)

Playing and Teaching the Pentatonic Flute

David Darcy

(for later in the year)

Clump-a-Dump and Snickle-Snack

Johanne Russ

A Change in the Year

Peter Oram

Quality of Numbers

A Steiner-Waldorf Mathematic Resource

Eric Fairman

Active Arithmetic

Henning Andersen

Workjobs

Mary Baratta-Lorton

Learning to Knit

Kids Knitting

Melanie Falick

Handwriting

There are no essential books for this block but here are some recommendations if you wish to develop a eurythmy program:

The Healing Art of Eurythmy

Truus Geraets

Come Unto These Yellow Sands

Molly von Heider

Math Gnomes

The Gnome Craft Book

Thomas Berger

Liputto

Jakob Streit

Environmental Studies

From Nature Stories to Natural Science

Donna Simmons

Earth, Water, Fire and Air:
Playful Explorations in the 4 Elements

Walter Kraul

Singing

Let's Sing and Celebrate!

Colin Price

(for the music teacher)
Towards Freedom in Singing

Dina Soresi Winter
& Theodora Richards

Physical Education

Touch the Earth, Gently

Alan Whitehead

Looking Forward

Molly von Heider

Miscellaneous Resources:

Painting

Painting in Waldorf Education

Dick Bruin & Attie Lichthart

Watercolor Painting DVD

Kelly Morrow

Clay & Beeswax Modeling

Learning About the World through Modeling

Arthur Auer

Verses for Around the Year

In the Light of a Child

Michael Hedley Burton

Drama

Plays for Grades One through Four

Michael Hedley Burton

Speech

Phonic Rhyme Time

Mary Nash-Wortham

Poems and Speech Exercises for Grades I and II

John C. Miles

Additional Curriculum Suggestions

A Path of Discovery Volume One: Grade One

Eric Fairman

AWSNA curriculum chart (large)

SUGGESTED BOOKLIST

Books from the Preschool Curriculum that also serve for First Grade

We recommend that you purchase books with as long a life as possible – nearly every book for the preschool curriculum may be used again this year. Here are some suggestions:

Children, Clay and Sculpture

Felt Wee Folk

Toymaking with Children

A Dyer's Garden

Creating With Paint: New Ways, New Materials

The Art of Feltmaking

Fly Like a Butterfly: Yoga for Children

Like a Fish in Water

Off-the-Shelf Fabric Painting

Soul Mate Dolls

Storytelling with Children

Exploring Textile Arts

The Storyteller's Start-up Book

Seeing Stars

The Little Book of Hand Shadows

More Magic Wool

Collage Discovery Workshop

Nickel Quilts

Watercolor Pencil Magic

Making Gourd Musical Instruments

The Sanctuary Garden

Zen and the Art of Knitting

A Pebble for Your Pocket

Eurythmy for the Young Child

Making Waldorf Dolls

How to Use Child-Size Masterpieces for

Art Appreciation

Children and Painting

The Children's Year: Crafts and clothes for
children and parents to make

The Massage Deck: 50 Soothing Techniques

The Great Clay Adventure

Roots, Shoots, Buckets and Boots

Spring: Nature Activities for Children

Cathy Weisman Topal

Salley Mavor

Freya Jaffke

Rita Buchanan

Sherrill Kahn

Anne Vickrey

Shakta Kaur Khalsa

Isabelle Koch

Sue Beevers

Noreen Crone-Findlay

Nancy Mellon

Margaret Read MacDonald

Charles Hobson

Phila H. Webb

Angelika Wolk-Gerche

Claudine Hellmuth

Pat Speth & Charlene Thode

Cathy Johnson

Ginger Summit & Jim Widess

Christopher Forrest McDowell

and Tricia Clark-McDowell

Bernadette Murphy

Thich Nhat Hanh

Estelle Bryer

Maricristin Seeley

Aline D. Wolf

Cathy Weisman Topal

Stephanie Cooper, et al.

Katy Dreyfuss

Ellen Kong

Sharon Lovejoy

Irmgard Kutsch and Brigitte

Walden

as well as favorite picture books, poetry, chapter books, and more!

Appendices

DETERMINING YOUR CHILD'S TEMPERAMENT

Melancholic	Sanguine	Choleric	Phlegmatic
AUTUMN	SPRING	SUMMER	WINTER
color: mauve element: earth	color: yellow element: air	color: red element: fire	color: blue element: water
balanced – considerate, understanding	balanced – socially aware, caring	balanced – selfless, leader	balanced – reliable, faithful
unbalanced – self-pitying	unbalanced – superficial	unbalanced – destructive, dictator	unbalanced – lazy

Temperament is really predominant between the ages of 5 and 14. It is crucial during the elementary years to be aware of both your child's temperament and the recommended parenting and teaching strategies to help your child develop in a balanced fashion. We do not strive to change the child, only to understand him and to nurture his inborn tendencies in a way that they will become assets and strengths. For example a melancholic child, if not taught to come out of himself from an early age, will sink deeper and deeper into watching the outside world from deep within himself, uninterested in social activities and mulling over the meaning of life. This tendency will then lead toward an excessively egocentric and self-pitying adult. On the other hand, developing the melancholic's interest in research and analysis leads to a child who can work on problems with great depth and absorption and not lose focus.

Form Drawing is the first subject where the Waldorf method asks you to determine your child's temperament and then gives recommended forms to help your child reach inner balance. The following is a series of brief notes on a chapter entitled "The Role of Temperament in Understanding the Child" by Rene Querido, found in Waldorf Education: A family guide. Please refer to that text for further information. These notes are mainly concerned with how to recognize someone of each type and they detail mainly the results of letting the temperament predominate to an excessive extent. Please do not become alarmed that your child is on an irrevocable path toward a slew of undesirable traits! The afore-mentioned article contains a lot of practical information on ennobling each temperament and helping your child to find balance. It is a most valuable resource.

Note that all young children are naturally sanguine; that is, until the age of five you are certain to feel that sanguine best describes your child. Childhood is naturally a state of joy and excitement, curiosity, enthusiasm, sociability, and being caught up in the here and now. As the "I" begins to develop further, you may begin to notice that one of the following describes your child:

THE FOUR TEMPERAMENTS

Melancholic

- grows tall quickly
- shuffles, walks with head bent
- feet and hands seem far away
- thinks about the meaning of life, broods
- likes to be a spectator
- asks awkward questions of adults
- becomes disillusioned with teachers
- interested in grammar, meaning, structure, knowing why
- concerned with **past**, with remembering
- holds grudges
- *prone to being egocentric*

Sanguine

- light-hearted
- fleet-footed
- smiling, delightful
- learns quickly
- tremendously enthusiastic
- feet hardly touch the ground
- charming
- concerned with the here and now
- changes mood quickly
- more concerned with influences around him than his own mood
- concerned with **present outside themselves**
- sociable
- *prone to being superficial*

Choleric

- races through the door shouting, "I'm home!"
- needs a huge garden, trees to climb, things to build
- concerned with **future**
- barrels through things
- stocky build
- tremendous warmth
- it's obvious when they're stormy, obvious when they're excited
- can be very negative, destructive temper, looking for a fight
- *prone to being destructive*

Phlegmatic

- comfort-loving
- loves repetition
- placid, great evenness of being
- faithful, loyal
- hard to move
- still waters run deep
- can become obstinate when pushed
- practical
- concerned with **present inside themselves**
- loves to feel content and warm
- *prone to being lazy*

Eurythmy Gestures

The following information is intended for informational purposes only. Before you undergo any treatment regarding your (or anyone else's) personal health, please consult with your board-certified physician (M.D.), and your qualified eurythmist.

A (Ah)

"The gesture for Ah is made by letting the arms grow symmetrically out into an open angle, the size of which can be experienced to be the same as the angle of the opening of the throat. This can be in any direction, but it is created by the experience of wonder and awe, and by a feeling of having the content of the world flow into one's heart."

B

"The archetypal Eurythmy gesture for /b/ is created by reaching with both arms backwards, deep and low, and then imagining oneself to take hold of a long cloak. One then pulls this cape forward, in a rounded gesture, to form a round 'mantle of protection.' One experiences an inner fullness, which presses outward against the force of compression coming from the rounding arms; there is thus a tension which is ready to burst when the lips open apart with the /b/. Being a labial sound, there is much tension in the hands of the gesture."

D

"The first is done by lifting one or both arms, and then directedly pointing them at something, reaching across space towards an intended goal. The second is done by lifting both hands to the height of the head, and then pressing them both firmly downwards along the length of the body, into gravity and heaviness, while one feels that the head is becoming freed and lighter. Being a dental sound, there is much consciousness in the fingertips of the gesture."

E (A as in face)

"The gesture for /e/ is created by touching oneself, and feeling oneself at the point of contact. The classical /e/ is created by bringing one arm over the other, and crossing at the forearms. This mirrors the narrow angle created in the mouth when pronouncing the sound."

F

"The gesture /f/ is forceful. The arms are pulled back behind the body at chest level, by bending the elbows strongly. This causes a strong inhalation of the breath, and makes one feel like a taut bow ready to let an arrow fly. Then the tension is released, and the arms shoot forwards. The power of the gesture passes through the chest, and unfolds the arms all the way to the outmost fingertips. Being a labial sound, the gesture culminates in the hands."

H <http://www.hermeshealth.co.uk/euryth.htm>

I (ee)

"The gesture for /ee/ is a long straight stretch, from the tips of one hand to the other. This feels like the narrow straightness of the breath as it is exhaled in speaking the sound, and is accompanied by a feeling of being drawn into polarities and awakening to oneself holding the balance between them."

K

"The gesture is expressed in the upper arm, where one has the strongest muscles. The arms are lifted into a preparatory position, and then explode outwards or downwards with a short, sharp movement."

L

"The /l/ is the most liquid and flowing of all the sounds. It describes an entire cycle, but only certain parts of it will be emphasized in any word, corresponding to whether it follows or precedes a vowel in a word. The arms are held out to the sides, at shoulder height, with the palms down. The arms move downwards and inwards, as if moving along the sides of a large ball. When they come together at the bottom of the arc, they are heavy, as if in gravity or darkness. They then overcome heaviness by lifting up through the central axis of the ball, like a rising fountain. The movement culminates when the hands come together at the top of the fountain and then unfold to the sides, open to the space above like an unfolding of grace."

M

"The gesture for M requires a condensation and concentration of effort. It can move in any direction, upwards, downwards, forwards, backwards, in, out. The essential aspect of the M is that the arms feelingly move through space, tasting it as they go. Their effort condenses space, so space seems no longer to be empty but to be filled with substance. The /m/ movement culminates in the hands, as is appropriate for the labials."

O

"The gesture for /o/ is a large rounding of the arms, mirroring the rounding of the lips. One feels drawn out of oneself into relationship with something outside of oneself, as in love."

R

"The gesture for /r/ is a vigorous rolling. In its classical form, it describes a 360 degree circle down, backwards and upwards, over the head, and descending again into the front space. Being a tongue sound, the movement engages the entire arm, from the shoulders to the finger tips. Its form varies in different languages: in German and in other languages in which the /r/ is 'rolled,' the entire circle is engaged, but in English only the upper curve is active, corresponding to the abbreviated pronunciation. The guttural /r/ of Dutch uses more the back portion of the circle."

S

"The Eurythmy gesture for S is strong and serpentine. As is typical for dental sounds, the gesture creates tension throughout the length of the arm, culminating in the fingertips. The arms feel like whips, which carve curved forms through space, as they sinuously wind upwards and downwards, either symmetrically or asymmetrically."

T

"The Eurythmy gesture for /t/ is tremendously large. One starts with the hands low, at the hips, with the palms turned outwards, and then lifts symmetrically upwards, gathering an enormous armful of space. One feels that one is reaching towards the stars, reaching towards God, towards what is great and inspiring. At the highest point, the arms curve together, the backs of the hands are laid against one another, and the entire harvested dynamic is directed downwards, landing on the top of the head in a point. Alternately, the /t/ can be directed anywhere in space, taking accumulated energy and directing it towards a point, touching a vividly imagined goal. As with its partner dental sound, /d/, there is much tension in the fingertips of the gesture."

<http://www.hermeshealth.co.uk/euryth.htm>

U

"The gesture for this, the vowel most far forward in the mouth, is made by bringing the arms close together and parallel to one another, as if in making a tube. In so doing, one feels oneself contained and yet able to flow forth in whatever direction the tube flows."

Notable Links:

http://www.rudolfsteinerweb.com/Rudolf_Steiner_and_Eurythmy.php

<http://www.openwaldorf.com/eurythmy.html>

Eurythmy: A Look at Eurythmy in the Waldorf School

<http://www.eurythmy.org/Article2.htm>

Centering Verse

(I)--- Strong as a spear I stand

(A)--- Strength fills my arms and legs

(O)--- Warm is my heart with love

Eurythmy

Eurythmy is one of Rudolf Steiner's proudest achievements. To better understand what Steiner says about eurythmy, you should read his self-titled "A Lecture on Eurythmy" Not always one to boast, Steiner says:

EURYTHMY has grown up out of the soil of the Anthroposophical Movement, and the history of its origin makes it almost appear to be a gift of the forces of destiny.

Steiner, Rudolf. A Lecture on Eurythmy, 1923

Clearly, Steiner felt that eurythmy was something very special, and of great importance. As such, eurythmy is a tool of Anthroposophy used to reveal and bring about a certain "spiritual impulse" in our age:



For it is the task of the Anthroposophical Movement to reveal to our present age that spiritual impulse which is suited to it.

I speak in all humility when I say that within the Anthroposophical Movement there is a firm conviction that a spiritual impulse of this kind must now, at the present time, enter once more into human evolution. And this spiritual impulse must perforce, among its other means of expression, embody itself in a new form of art. It will increasingly be realised that this particular form of art has been given to the world in Eurythmy.

Steiner, Rudolf. A Lecture on Eurythmy

When your child practices eurythmy, they practice an art-form designed to elicit a specific spiritual impulse in themselves and others.

Read the text of "A Lecture on Eurythmy" online:

<http://wn.rsarchive.org/Eurhythm/19230826p01.html>

Eurythmy as Visible Speech

Every Waldorf student practices "eurythmy." Eurythmy is a type of body movement that results in "visible speech." Philosophically, it acknowledges a person's capacity to communicate through non-verbal gestures. Eurythmy is made up of discreet movements that represent various phonetic sounds. Steiner says eurythmy is "art." While eurythmy has often been compared to modern dance, martial arts (e.g. tai chi), physical therapy, and performance art, eurythmy is none of these things.

There are many [pictures of eurythmy](#) on the net. Try a Google Image Search for eurythmy.

You can find more information on eurythmy at eurythmy.org.

See what Rudolf Steiner says about eurythmy at the Rudolf Steiner Archives using [Google: eurythmy site:elib.com](#)

There are also some great articles on eurythmy at WaldorfResources.org.

Vowels

Moon-diphthong Ah-ee (English "I" Ah-ee)
Sun- diphthong Ah-oo (English "ou" or "ow")
Venus- A (phonetically "ah")
Mercury - I
Jupiter - O
Mars - E (phonetically "ay")
Saturn - U (phonetically "oo")

Consonants

Leo - T or D
Cancer - F
Gemini - H
Taurus - R
Aries - V
Pisces - N
Aquarius - M
Capricorn - L
Sagittarius - G
Scorpio - S
Libra - K
Virgo - B or P

THE RELEVANCE OF HANDWORK AND CRAFT FOR THE CHILD, THE ADOLESCENT AND THE ADULT

edited transcript of a lecture given by Bernard Graves

What is the role of hand and craftwork in the unfolding of human and social development? This long, rhythmic process of development continues from early childhood into adulthood and on throughout life - a human being is in fact never complete, finished, as it were, with his or her development. A human being is continuously in the process of becoming. When and where such an attitude survives, is cultivated by parents as regards their children, teachers in respect of their classes and amongst adults generally in relationships with each other in daily life and work, only then, I believe, can there be a fertile foundation for the potential creativity in each individual.

In whichever area we work, there are certain intentions, attitudes to our work that can be shared, including an appreciation of each other. For those of us involved in handwork, craft or manual skills education, whatever the age of the pupil, student or trainee, we share in and bear witness to an area of activity that is uniquely human, namely that creativity of the human spirit which is carried out by our hand, perhaps the one organ that most differentiates us from all of the animal world.

In the animal realm there are of course numerous examples of fine and, to us, unobtainable achievements. Take for example a spider's web or a bee's honeycomb. These animals, however, all work within certain fixed parameters and the bee can only do what a bee can do. A human being, on the other hand, is not created to be fixed, patterned to a certain existence, stereo-typed in his or her movements. The body and hands are meant to be the instrument for the human spirit that seeks expression within the body and beyond it into the material world as revelation of itself.

When making a candle, for instance, taking the raw materials provided by nature, in this case beeswax and the cotton for the wick, we start a host of creative processes that culminate in the single act of lighting the candle. What was previously held within the raw materials is released, through human activity in creativity, in the light and warmth of the burning candle. Such an image, I hope, helps serve to show the purpose of a human being's creative power. There should moreover be no boundaries in a human being's creativity, for unlike the instinct of the bee out of which a honeycomb is built, human actions are not meant to be actions in response to given situations but free actions that transcend the limitations imposed on the animal, actions that serve the well-being of one's neighbour.

Rudolf Steiner, when speaking of handwork in the school curriculum, said the purpose was not to train weavers, potters, etc., but rather for the pupil, by practising such work, to be able to stand more secure on leaving school, with a basic confidence for managing the practical affairs of life. This grounding is what helps keep the body, soul and spirit together. The practice of handwork activity works inwards, as it were, weaving an inner multi-coloured garment whose colours will not fade or threads snap and unravel at the first hurdle presented by life.

Today, with technological achievements providing for our every need, practical involvement with the material world has all but terminated. There are now diminished opportunities in life for children and adults to be creative in their play or work. Not only do we forego the joy and sense of achievement that making something can give us, but without the possibility to be creative there is limited or minimal access to the essential formative powers handwork can foster in the growing child and adult.

THE UNDERMINING OF THESE FORMATIVE POWERS

It was at first a relatively simple machine and tools that almost overnight changed our approach to life and work. The machine that has now largely replaced the hand can be seen in its actions as mimicking motor-activity. Today we have the smallest machine possible, a long way from the spinning jenny and the steam engine: the micro-chip. The brain function of man has now also been copied in the micro-chip. It forms the brain of the computerised machine so that with just a few adjustments this useful component can direct all manner of functions.

We know that practically every artefact used today can be made from oil derived plastics, in factories somewhere, by machine-minders whose chief quality is to survive a life of intense boredom. This is manifest where machine operators who can only respond in a mechanistic way to the commands of the machine by repetitive motor movements (actions), not lifted to the realm of skill, tire easily and cannot take real interest in their work. The basic need for meaningful work by which the individual can find expression and be of meaningful service to others, is scarcely met.

Toys and other artefacts produced in this way, and not as a result of the labour and love of the worker, take on a cold and uninviting appearance. Those who are surrounded by such a world of dead objects have little to please the eye, or in the case of the child's toy, little to stimulate fantasy and develop imagination.

In such a situation, where the truly creative process of the maker or receiver is obstructed, how can willpower be transformed to beautiful shape? For beauty in an artefact or a toy depends on the nature and texture of the materials, combined with the skill and love with which it was created.

As a further and far reaching consequence to which we are all subject with the increasing proliferation of all manner of artefacts intended for the home, for use in school etc., we have almost no need any more to do anything ourselves, except be consumers of goods. There is very little incentive to be practical, let alone artistic in daily life, since someone, somewhere has thought of relieving me of my practical involvement by offering me, at competitive prices, just that product that would do the job with ease and more efficiency. With each step down this road of a purely material response to meeting human needs, the sense for the artistic, that which is uplifting to the human mind, and the ability to be creative are in great danger of being lost.

It is interesting in this light to recall what Rudolf Steiner set as challenges to the teachers of the first Waldorf School:

- to awaken the artistic sense in the one who beholds
- to awaken the faculty of creativity itself.

The question then also is, how do we balance the inevitable march of science and technology, that in so many ways can cut short our opportunities to be creative and produce what might be called a lameness of the will?

CHANGING IDEALS IN EDUCATION

Before approaching this question from the perspective of education, it is worth noting what Rudolf Steiner said in his lecture cycle, *The Modern Art of Education*, given in 1923 to teachers at Ilkley: *“For man today as a being of body, soul and spirit, to find his right place in social life, education must be based, founded on knowledge of man as he is in the present epoch, irrespective of pressures and outer changes in attitude and expectation we experience put forward by educationalists on human development.”*

He describes how our trends of thought as to what is essential in the education of children have changed along with changes in attitude to what used to be and is now considered important, the ideal of human perfection. This he follows through the Greek and Roman cultures, to the ideals of the Middle Ages and on to the time when a new aspect appeared: a swing to the development of the intellect. He who knows something, the knower, then became the ideal. Whereas previously those who could do something with their powers of soul through speech were considered the ideal teachers of education, all that is now required is knowledge. What has emerged is the ideal of the Doctor, the Professor, the man who knows, who no longer works with the soul nature as manifest in the body but is only concerned with what is invisible in the inner being of man. Attainment of knowledge is all-important. This ideal of the perfect human being has remained with us into our time in spite of many other changes.

Rudolf Steiner, however, describes a further ideal - one that has slowly emerged alongside materialism - the ideal of the universal human principle: a longing again that the whole human

being be educated, led out into life, educated in body, soul and spirit.

WALDORF EDUCATION AND THE HANDWORK CURRICULUM

One could say that Waldorf education is in fact about teaching out of universal, human principles, whatever the subject.

However, handwork and crafts were to have a specific task in the curriculum, namely to awaken creative powers which would find fruitful and useful application in as many ways as possible in later life and work. The reason for this is based on one of the fundamental precepts of true teaching, namely that when we engage the child in physical, practical activity, such as handwork, we are working on the soul spirit nature of that child. However, when we address the soul spirit nature, for instance, in story-telling, the results are to be found in the bodily organism.

It is consequently no less important for the handwork teacher to be familiar with the nature of soul life and the development of the child than for the class teacher. Both should work in accordance with how the child is at any time, how he or she perceives him or herself and the world.

The three phases of development from *play* (up to the age of 7), through the experience of *beauty* (the school child from 7 to 14) to the attainment of *truth* (the adolescent years) help the child transform what was play into the basis for his/her motivation in the realm of work.

This golden path in education forms the guideline in handwork as well. The younger child learns by play to fashion simple toys, developing what he or she makes out of stories. The handwork teacher then gradually leads the child to the awareness of colour and form in order to create artistic forms, to have a sense for what is beautiful. Later with the older child and the teenager, the sense for what is practical is awakened and developed out of the artistic way of working: learning to respond to the material, the development of manual skills and the correct use of tools. That all articles made in handwork should express beauty in some form goes without saying. It is however, equally important that the functional aspect, the way to use the article is also apparent in the particular design given to the article.

Soft and hard handwork

Some confusion has, unfortunately, arisen regarding the different areas of handwork.

Handwork refers to the soft material work using mainly unprocessed raw materials.

Handcraft includes clay, wood, paper, leather etc. and is mainly taught to children from 12 years onwards.

Craft is a specific type of work and only applies in Waldorf schools where pupils have already achieved a general knowledge and range of skills in the use of different materials and tools, which they now apply to a specific craft, such as weaving.

Children are first introduced to *handwork* by way of soft natural materials. Here, in response to the subtle direction of the teacher, the child creates out of his or her feelings, whilst being shown and guided how to care for the materials and the simple tools used. The sensitive use of colour plays an important part in the child's enjoyment of the handwork lessons: helping the child form a meaningful, personal relationship to colour can also serve to bring that child's feeling nature into harmony. This in turn can work beneficially on the breathing and blood circulation of the child.

Later in *handcraft*, using harder materials, for instance, stronger forces of will are needed. The limbs and the whole body are engaged in this activity. There is a difference in the experience of making soft toys, a stuffed animal for instance, to that of an animal carved out of wood. In the first instance, soft material, flat pieces of material, receive their nature from inside. In the case of carving an animal out of wood the hard material receives its nature from outside. Again in the first instance, the child makes manifest in the stuffing of the animal, the filling out processes in his or her own body. In woodwork, however, a person works like the action of water, sculpting the rock over which it flows. A child is only really ready for this sort of activity from about the twelfth year on, after the child's formative forces have developed his or her body. Only then is it possible for the growing human being to harness these inwardly acting forces and work with them outwardly, fashioning his or her materials.

Finally, in *craft* work, the adolescent should have a chance to find a growing sense of confidence and ability in the realm of work. Correspondingly, the desire to find where he or she can contribute something in the world around can awaken an interest in the practical affairs of life. (See further under the handwork and craft curriculum notes).

To sum up, it could be stated that while all handwork engages the whole human being, it is essentially in the following ways that handwork affects a growing child:

- it lifts motor activity to the realm of skill
- it transforms willpower into beauty of form
- it changes what would otherwise be an insignificant activity into a virtue.

Only when the worker, the pupil, the craftsperson responds sensitively to the nature of his or her materials and the correct use of his or her tools, is motor activity raised to the realm of skill.

Only in working artistically with design, colour and form is willpower transformed into beautiful form.

And only when these two aspects are combined in work that also allows the person to have a sense of fulfilment, a sense of true purpose in his or her work, can what might otherwise be an insignificant act be raised to the status of a virtue.

These then could perhaps be called the three transforming powers of handwork, powers that are essential for the unfolding of true human development.

HANDWORK AND CRAFTS

Curriculum

WHY

True education aims to serve the needs of the whole human being, **Head**, **Heart** and **Hands** are brought into a particular relationship with each other in the practice of handwork and crafts. In these lessons pupils have the opportunity to ‘tangibly grasp’ the world and give expression to their latent creativity.

Handwork and craft activities not only serve to educate the pupils in the nature and processes involved with the different materials, the use of tools and equipment, etc., but there is also inherent the therapeutic aspect from which the pupils benefit.

For it is in the very nature of handwork/crafts to BRING ORDER and to BESTOW ORDER. To bring order to the materials used and to bestow order upon the maker.

In the practice of ceramics, for instance, a potter not only leaves his imprint, his thumb print on the clay, but is also inwardly impressed by the creative process at work.

In addition to the educational and therapeutic benefit that crafts can offer there is the definite element of manual skill training and for the older students a useful introduction to an experience of real work.

Apart from any therapeutic contributions crafts can offer, the involvement in craft work offers the pupil the challenge to learn to work from the conceptual through to the material. In this process the pupil will be guided to experience and become conscious of exercising, at the hand of the work place, very human attributes, both on an emotional and intellectual level.

WORKING PRACTICE

1) PREPARATION

{Design -

CONCEPTUAL

{Ideation

Thinking activity

{Preparation of Material

{Plan ahead

2) ACTION - Process

The craftsman brings his/her hands to bear upon the materials - workpiece, and works out of the mental picture that he/she has formed.

ACTIVITY

Practical Involvement

3) JUDGEMENT

As I proceed I exercise judgement as to the shape of workpiece. Forming element.

Engagement of Feelings

LESSON PLAN

Where possible younger pupils (classes 1 – 6) will receive handwork lessons on a weekly basis, guided by the class teacher and practised at home.

From classes 6 - 12 the handwork and craft lesson take on a more formal approach with increasing time spent in the various craft workshops.

The following curriculum is an indication of the Development the handwork curriculum can take and a brief description of the pedagogical relevance for each activity.

HANDWORK CURRICULUM

CLASSES 1-12

Nursery Class

At this age things that are done by the children are done in response, in imitation of what grown-up people do in their surroundings. In the case of the rag doll, it is better that we give the child a simple, knotted doll - one where the head piece is made by filling a silk cloth with a small bundle of wool tied around the neck, than to give the child a real look-alike doll to play with. For the child needs to exercise its powers of imagination, which it can better do with the rag doll, than the one that is realistic in every detail. The nursery class teacher also encourages the children to go outside to collect things, shells, cones, twigs, etc. These activities help the children to become acquainted with the form and the shapes of things. Imaginative arrangements of the things the children collect outside can then be arranged on a table to form a seasonal garden in which the child can play out its imaginations.

Class 1 - the 6 to 7 year old child

One of the first handwork activities that can be introduced is knitting, an activity for which Rudolf Steiner had particularly high regard concerning its pedagogical value. 'Stuttgart 1921 - When we teach a child to knit or to make something, of course the thing he/she makes must have a purpose and a meaning. We are then working on the spirit of the child, and often more truly so than when we teach him subjects that are generally thought of as spiritual and intellectual'.

A child may learn to knit a simple pot holder or a scarf for his/her doll. When a child has accomplished the basic techniques of knitting he/she could then be shown how to knit a simple animal form which is then stitched together and stuffed with wool to give it form. By knitting we introduce the child to mechanism, we bring the child into movement of his/her limbs and fingers and we train the power of attention for stitches are easily dropped.

Class 2 - the 7 to 8 year- old child

Knitting continues into the second year of school but in class 2 we introduce the child to crochet. We do this by way of making small articles: a ball net, a tea cosy, perhaps a small cap. In this activity the, right hand is engaged differently from that of knitting. Here the one limb is allowed to work almost independent of the other. Already at this age the child should be encouraged to choose his/her own colour materials with which he/she wants to work. In the case of the pot holder he/she could finish the edge with a blanket stitch using a coloured thread of his/her own choice.

Class 3 - the 8 to 9 year old child

We continue crochet, making small articles, such as jackets, possibly a jumper. Knitting also continues, and by now a personal relationship to colour should be established. Form and design should be now encouraged to involve the child's own design, not only a copy of the article made by the teacher.

This brings to a conclusion those activities in which the child's main experience is in creating solid objects out of a single thread by the formation of loops. By now the children should have acquired a sense that things not only should look beautiful, but also be functional. They should practise design, a recorder bag, for instance, where the opening to the recorder bag is obvious from the design placed on the outside of the bag. The design could be done with simple embroidery stitches.

Class 4 - the 9 to 10 year old child

The 9 to 10 year old child places himself/herself more consciously into the world, he/she is now ready for bigger challenges. The pupil could perhaps be encouraged to make a simple shoulder bag by sewing suitably coloured bits of material together and embroidering the front side of the bag to a design of his/her own choosing one that expresses his/her particular growing personality. At this age practising cross-stitch in embroidery and braiding help a child to maintain an inner uprightness; these are outer activities that can accompany his awakening objective consciousness.

Class 5 - 10 to 11 year old child

By now on processes have reached down to the feet. In handwork the child may now learn to make simple articles of clothing, for instance, socks or gloves or possibly a hat. In the making of these articles the child becomes more aware, more consciously aware of the extremities of the body, of the feet, of the hands, the head, of the human form.

Class 6 - the 11 to 12 year old child

Now a child is able to construct things in handwork in a much more conscious and living way. Until this time it was very much through the feelings that a child approached his/her handwork. Now he/she has become aware of the physical structure of man and animal, his/her work, handiwork can take on a more realistic nature. His/her interest and ability to participate in the world around him increases. This can be seen as a kind of balancing activity to the growing awareness of his/her own inner bodily nature, of his/her bones, and skeleton.

At this age formal woodwork lessons are introduced. For, as has been already mentioned the child has now available formative forces that once worked inwardly, informing his own organism, to work outwardly in fashioning his/her material. The hands now, not only give expression to the feelings, but are more consciously directed by the will.

A suitably challenging project for class 6 would be to make a pair of slippers using leather to form the soles, knitting or felting the upper part of the slipper in a suitably strong fabric.

As well as continuing with making soft toy animals children of this class could make a set of puppets and help to build with their teacher a simple puppet theatre.

Class 7 - the 12 to 13 year old child

Now that the pupil has a more conscious awareness of his/her anatomy he/she should be encouraged to hand-sew larger articles of clothing. Boys and girls can sew shirts or blouses or other articles of clothing. The boys may prefer to make a waistcoat. Apart from practical work done in this class they should now begin to learn about the making and processing of the materials they use, and how to recognise the different qualities of material.

Class 8 - the 13 to 14- year old child

To counteract the broodiness at the time of puberty pupils need to be drawn out of themselves. Introducing youngsters to wider range of skills can help them to re-establish their interest and confidence in practical affairs of life.

Apart from continuing hand-sewing techniques a suitable challenge at this age is to introduce pupils to machine sewing, starting with simple techniques, for example, hemming a tablecloth which can then be embroidered by hand or cutting out a pattern for an apron, machine sewing the edges and stitching on a pocket

Pupils should also learn to care for their clothes, how to wash and iron different articles so that the shrinking and running of colours does not occur.

Classes 9 and 10 - the 14 to 16 year old pupil

Pupils in the upper school start to express new attitudes to life and work. From this point on the critical thinking and judgement of the pupils should have a part to play in what they do and make.

The younger child has executed his/her work out of his/her colourful feeling life, and in response to his/her love and respect of his/her teachers. Now the pupils come with their own ideas of what they wish to make, one has to allow the material to temper their expectations of what they can make. After puberty the young person takes more conscious notice of work. He/she begins to understand the meaning of work. He/she can start to respond to work, to the need of things to be done, being motivated now more from within.

Woodwork

A suitable project in woodwork for boys of this age would be to design and make a bookshelf to fit a certain corner. This type of handwork challenge would allow for artistic design but also the practise of working accurately, where the shelf must fit the corner and hold the books. We should find as many ways as possible to help pupils become conscious of form and its relationship to the function of the article that is made.

Crafts

Handwork of all kinds such as cushions, clothes, cane-work, basket-work, hats and dresses should be made from the pupils' own design, the design should also be suitable for the purpose of the article.

Class 10

The same holds good for the tenth class as the ninth class. Here we need to add what also holds good for all classes:- that the pupils should do handwork which will actually come in use. Pupils should be encouraged to complete pieces of work which are suitable for some special place and which are actually needed. The form and colour of the object could be chosen and even determined by its use.

Crafts - Further Education Programme

Pupils continue throughout these two years to practice and develop skills in various craft workshop activities (e.g. Weaving, Pottery, Woodwork, Candle-making and Willow basketry and Tool Refurbishment) dependent on what is on offer in the school and through the community and environment outside the school.

See separate workshop programmes

Class 11 & 12 - 16 to 17 years - 18 years

Introduction of paper crafts i.e. paper making, box making, note-pads and books using traditional book binding methods.

Craftwork with the older pupils - An Introduction to work

Craftwork has proved time and time again to be of enormous help in introducing the young students to the realm of work. This threshold is particularly difficult for those with special needs. For the normally developed person it is a time when he/she is concerned with further schooling and has the possibility to absorb large amounts of facts and information - special needs students require something more: they need increasing guidance into many fields of human activity, a widening of their horizons, not through text books but through a practical introduction to all realms of learning. What was for the younger child learning through play must now become transformed into learning whilst working.

We have of course to be motivated to do, to work. Once being motivated we create with our hands, in practising crafts the end product will inevitably fall short of the original ideal, there is always an element of imperfection in my work: which in turn gives rise in me to wanting to do better. And when I attempt to do better, at my work, my true morality expresses itself. It is just in the realm of craft work that the young person and adult can come near to this fundamental, human, Christian experience.

It is in the very nature of craft activity that our hands and will actively bring ideas to expression. It is in the very nature of crafts that our manual creativity brings ideas to expression. Here we see the real meaning of work as that human activity that gives expression to individual creativity. Doing crafts offers an ideal opportunity for students to experience an essential motivating factor in all kinds of work; in that they can work in response to requests from local customers. When these two elements, of creativity on the one hand and human need on the other come together, the pupil can take real responsibility for what, he/she does in the workshop and may rightly experience that he/she has made a valuable contribution both in the social and economic life of his/her immediate environment.