

Norse Mythology I

Waldorf Curriculum
www.waldorfcurriculum.com

© 2007

Booklist

Main Text

Gods & Heroes from Viking Mythology. Brian Branston.

Supplemental Activities

Painting book:

Painting in Waldorf Education. Dick Bruin and Attie Lichthart.

Modeling book:

Learning About the World through Modeling. Arthur Auer.

Form Drawing book:

Creative Form Drawing: Workbook 2. Rudolf Kutzli.

Handwork book:

Making Magical Fairy-Tale Puppets. Christel Dhom.

Eurythmy book:

Come Unto These Yellow Sands. Molly von Heider.

Parent Background

A Path of Discovery: Volume 4. Eric Fairman.

The Prose Edda: Tales from Norse Mythology.

(the translation recommended in Come Unto These Yellow Sands is the one by Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur)

The Norse Stories and their Significance. Roy Wilkinson.

Suggested Read-Alouds

The Wonderful Adventures of Nils. Selma Lagerlöf.

The Best Bad Thing. Yoshiko Uchida.

Hitty: Her First Hundred Years. Rachel Field.

Norse Mythology

Unit Introduction

Norse Mythology I and Norse Mythology II are both four week long units (that is, 20 days each). The anthology of legends, Gods & Heroes from Viking Mythology, contains 28 stories. Therefore you should plan to cover 14 stories in each of the 20 day units. The outline of Norse Mythology II is included here so that you can see how the stories unfold. The entire content of the anthology is used. **Please** find this book by Brian Branston – I have looked at other collections of Norse myths and this one is by far the most superior.

The basic unit structure is that you will tell (that is, read or tell from memory) a story on the first day. On the second day, the child will be asked to retell the story and you will explore it further – in composition (by adding it to the main lesson book), art (a main lesson book illustration or a modeling exercise), or drama (acting out the legend). Sample main lesson book illustrations are given throughout the anthology and are indicated in the unit outline by green type. You can, of course, also choose your own sections of the stories to illustrate if you prefer.

In several situations, you'll be telling a story and then moving on to the next story on the following day. When this happens, you can ask the child to remind you both of what happened yesterday and then continue the story with that day's reading. In this case it will be as if the story had a part A and a part B, extending over the two days before it is added to the main lesson book.

Along with the basic telling/retelling structure, I have indicated extensions, such as activities suggested in various other books to accompany the Norse Mythology unit, and poems and dramatic pieces which are related to the story currently being studied. Painting, modeling, eurythmy, and drama are all wonderful ways to continue to explore these legends.

Basic exercises for the teacher, found in Painting in Waldorf Education are recommended before one begins *teaching painting* in fourth grade and, specifically, painting the stories from Norse mythology. These are found on pages 92-94 and should be done before you begin this unit with your child.

Some Notes on Eurythmy

Eurythmy for the Elementary Grades by Francine Adams has this to say about what is studied in eurythmy during the Norse Mythology main lesson block:

“During the time when the Norse myths are studied, the the child will be hearing and speaking alliterative verses. In eurythmy we want the the child to experience restraint and movement in a living way. When Rudolf Steiner speaks of this in lecture fifteen of *Eurythmy as Visible Speech*, he begins by using the sounds in German for “B” and “V.” The whole context by which alliteration of these sounds came about is historical and that is what makes it so important for the fourth grader to experience. The main lesson will teach them how the Norse gods learned to do great deeds but in the process had to learn to live together. When the the child speak poems from the old sagas, they have to take hold of themselves because the words do not flow along easily. When they try to show the repeated sounds with their gestures in eurythmy they must be awake because the flow of consonants is unpredictable. Ask a group to stand in a circle and then move, one at a time, in a wave-like fashion on the spoken alliterative sounds. Make sure there is a group of the child doing the speaking and that both groups take turns doing both activities. When it is brought to them as a challenge and one that they may not all be able to do, they will storm the gates to be allowed to try. This simple wave form may be made more exciting and holds many surprises for them when they begin. I have used many examples of verse for this and try to use those things that come out of their main lesson. It is just when they think they know a part well that they are surprised by a change in the sounds, and this happens more then they are in movement.

Norse Mythology I

Unit Outline

20 Days

Week One

1	p.11	The tricking of King Gylfi
2	p.15	The world of ice and fire
3	MLB	pp.18-19
4	p.20, p.24	The creation of the world, Night and day
5	MLB	pp.26-27

Week Two

6	p.29	The first humans
7	p.31	Yggdrasill, the World Ash
8	MLB	pp.34-35
9	p.37	The Golden Age in Asgard
10	MLB	pp.38-39

Week Three

11	p.44, p.46	Heimdall in Midgard, The Norns
12	p.48	Loki and his evil the child
13	MLB	pp.50-51
14	p.52	War in heaven
15	MLB	pp.54-55

Week Four

16	p.60	The walls of Asgard
17	MLB	pp.62-63
18	p.65	The apples of eternal life
19	MLB	pp.70-71
20	p.72	Odin prepares for the Ragnarok

Norse Mythology II

Unit Outline

20 Days

Week One

- | | | |
|---|------|-----------------------------|
| 1 | p.78 | Sigurd the dragon-slayer |
| 2 | MLB | pp.82-83 |
| 3 | p.89 | The story of Trembling Hood |
| 4 | p.97 | Fenrir the wolf is bound |
| 5 | MLB | pp.98-99 |

Week Two

- | | | |
|----|-------|--------------------------------|
| 6 | p.101 | How Thor got his hammer |
| 7 | MLB | pp.102-103 |
| 8 | p.107 | Thor fights the giant Krungnir |
| 9 | p.112 | Thor goes fishing |
| 10 | MLB | pp.114-115 |

Week Three

- | | | |
|----|-------|--------------------------------|
| 11 | p.116 | Thor in the giants' stronghold |
| 12 | p.124 | Thor's holiday |
| 13 | MLB | pp.126-127 |
| 14 | p.131 | The stealing of Thor's hammer |
| 15 | MLB | pp.130-131 |

Week Four

- | | | |
|----|--------------|--|
| 16 | p.134, p.141 | The death of Balder, the gods' revenge |
| 17 | MLB | pp.143 |
| 18 | p.144 | The Ragnarok, doom of the gods |
| 19 | MLB | pp.146-147 |
| 20 | p.149, p.151 | The gods return, King Gylfi is tricked again |

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.

Use the cover page at the beginning of this unit for your binder cover page. I have also given you a sample weekly plan page, a daily plan page, and a set of journaling pages.

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:

Norse Mythology I

Journaling Page

Week One:

Norse Mythology I

Journaling Page

Week Two:

Norse Mythology I

Journaling Page

Week Three:

Norse Mythology I

Journaling Page

Week Four:

Norse Mythology I

Introduction

Begin by showing the child the illustrations on pages 6 & 7 of your anthology, Gods & Heroes from Viking Mythology. Study the intricate weaving in and out of the tree branches, and the sinuous serpent in the lower right hand corner. Introduce Form Drawing Celtic knots at this time (Creative Form Drawing: Workbook 2).

Teach the child the new form drawing verse provided by Rudolf Kutzli:

I think in will
I flow in form
I form the flow
I "will" the idea

I order the living
Enliven the law
I stimulate movement
I move within order

I hold in the chaos
I release the rigidity
Enlighten the weight
And substantiate light

In lightening and weighing
In loosening and binding
In willing and thinking

The all human "I" is created

Begin your form drawing work with form 11 and progress throughout the book for the rest of the school year.

Activation

Turn to the next two page spread in your anthology, pp.8-9. The small “bookmarks” along the bottom of these pages are reduced size illustrations from those found throughout the book, at the beginning of each legend. Photocopy these small illustrations and allow the child to choose one to color. Perhaps you can use these 11 bookmarks, after they have been carefully colored by each child, as birthday presents for friends and family. They really are quite beautiful!

Spending some time with these illustrations will give them an idea that this is an interesting series of stories you will be studying, get them curious about the plots and characters, and inspire them in their form drawing (especially the 6th and 10th ones).

Parent Background: Read “Symbols in the Nordic myths” on page 156 of the anthology to discover the symbolism in the illustrations which come at the beginning of each chapter.

After some coloring and wondering about what is shown in the pictures, turn to page 10. This is a beautiful full-color map of the region in which these Vikings lived. Have the girls find this region of the world on a globe. How close it is to where you live now?

Choose and begin a read-aloud book for this unit. I picked one which gives some geography of the region as well as an interesting story (if you want to make the characters from The Wonderful Adventures of Nils, you can find directions on p.61 of Making Magical Fairy-Tale Puppets). The other two are more general adventure stories.

Norse Mythology I

Week One

Day

1	p.11	The tricking of King Gylfi
2	p.15	The world of ice and fire
3	MLB	pp.18-19
4	p.20, p.24	The creation of the world, Night and day
5	MLB	pp.26-27

Day 1

The first story you'll be telling, which frames all the legends in the anthology, is "The tricking of King Gylfi." You have to decide if you want to memorize the stories or read them, or a combination of the two. Find a pronunciation guide for the Viking names in the Index (pp.154-155). This story begins on page 11.

Day 2

Have the child restate what happened yesterday and then continue the story with "The world of ice and fire," beginning on page 15.

The 4th grade section of [Painting in Waldorf Education](#) (section 2.6) discusses painting the Creation story from Norse mythology to help the child transition from soul mood to nature mood while painting. On page 83 a description is given of approaching landscapes based on the four elements (earth, water, air, and fire):

"In the Norse Creation stories there are two worlds. 'Niflheim' [Mistland] is the home of mist and darkness, cold and vast wastes, with even blowing icy winds. In 'Muspelheim' heat reigns supreme, scorching and fiery, burning everything. Between these two areas is a deep chasm, the 'Gunnungagap.' The the child paint the cold, chill colors on one side and the warm, intense heat colors on the other side."

Practice painting this *yourself* so that you are prepared to do the main lesson book illustration tomorrow.

Day 3

Today, have the child retell and write the story from yesterday, and add a corresponding illustration, to their main lesson books. A possible main lesson book illustration for this day is found on pages 18-19 of your anthology.

In the afternoon, introduce the next several exercises from Painting in Waldorf Education. These can be continued throughout the week:

“We can expand this image further in a second exercise. The children are given the task to paint these two worlds with different blue colors: the cool Prussian and the warm ultramarine.

As a third exercise the two worlds are created with the two red colors. They make ‘warm and fiery’ with the vermilion and find the icy, cold climate in the carmine, mixed with other colors (while keeping it predominantly red).

With exercises of this kind the child develops further nuances of feeling. Surprisingly enough the children discover many a landscape in the results: heavier, earthy, cool below and the warmer above. But turn this painting down and it becomes even more impressive. From this sketch it becomes possible to set up color conversations about the landscape, landscape in warm and cool colors, in other words, landscapes in warm countries and landscapes in cold regions.”

Day 4

Today’s story is in two parts: “The creation of the world” (beginning on page 20 of your anthology) and “Night and day” (beginning on page 24).

If you are doing grammar lessons in conjunction with Norse Mythology (as is suggested in Come Unto These Yellow Sands), begin them at this point. As mentioned in the book, the creation of the world is a good time to talk about nouns. See pages 104-105 of Come Unto These Yellow Sands for suggestions on teaching nouns, verbs, and adverbs. If you’re interested in reading more of The Prose Edda (suggested translation is the one by Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur) you can purchase a copy or find it online: <http://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/pre/>

Day 5

Today, have the child retell and write the story from yesterday, and add a corresponding illustration, to her main lesson book. A possible main lesson book illustration for this day is found on pages 26-27 of your anthology.

A verse to transcribe in your main lesson books at the end of this week, perhaps in calligraphy (you can also have The child memorize it if you wish) is *Voluspo*. Find it on pages 108-109 of Come Unto These Yellow Sands.

Norse Mythology I

Week Two

Day

6	p.29	The first humans
7	p.31	Yggdrasill, the World Ash
8	MLB	pp.34-35
9	p.37	The Golden Age in Asgard
10	MLB	pp.38-39

Day 6

Today's story is "The first humans" which begins on page 29 of the anthology.

Continue with the grammar lessons begun last week.

Eurythmy lesson: *Words of the High One*
Come Unto These Yellow Sands page 108

Day 7

Have the child restate what happened yesterday and then continue the story with "Yggdrasill, the World Ash," beginning on page 31.

Day 8

Today, have the child retell and write the story from yesterday, and add a corresponding illustration, to her main lesson book. A possible main lesson book illustration for this day is found on pages 34-35 of your anthology.

As part of the retelling, the child could form the World Tree out of modeling beeswax, following the directions on page 75 of Learning About the World through Modeling. Later you can create an entire forest as well as Idun and her golden apples. Perhaps the scenery for your play "Iduna and the Golden Apples" can be made of modeling beeswax in this way.

Day 9

Today's story is "The Golden Age in Asgard", which begins on page 37.

Day 10

Today, have the child retell and write the story from yesterday, and add a corresponding illustration, to her main lesson book. A possible main lesson book illustration for this day is found on pages 38-39 of your anthology.

Painting in Waldorf Education advises painting the gods with their various characteristics as a continued exploration of color (pp. 91-92):

“Odin with Freya, Thor with his hammer, the sly Loki. One of the most exciting moments is the shooting of the arrow by the blind Hodur to his brother Balder while Hodur is supported by Loki [the death of Balder happens in Norse Mythology II]. The children will find the colors for these figures without much difficulty.

The surroundings can be adapted around the gods in many colors. The rainbow with Heimdal, the guardian of the Bifrostbridge between the realm of humans and gods, is a favorite for the children to paint.

Initially themes from Norse mythology are best painted in clear colors and sufficiently strong where the moods so require. The Ugrasil and Bifrostbridge continue to be dreamlike images. The landscape tends toward black in the battle of the gods; this is an important moment for the fourth grade pupil.”

Consider these things as you progress throughout the unit. You can either have the child each do a series of practice paintings before planning her final main lesson book illustration, or paste a watercolor painting into her main lesson book in lieu of a crayon drawing.

Norse Mythology I

Week Three

Day

11	p.44, p.46	Heimdall in Midgard, The Norns
12	p.48	Loki and his evil children
13	MLB	pp.50-51
14	p.52	War in heaven
15	MLB	pp.54-55

Day 11

Begin the week with the two stories "Heimdall in Midgard" (beginning on page 44) and "The Norns" (beginning on page 46).

For your grammar work, Eric Fairman recommends using "The Norns" to introduce the three tenses: past, present and future. (page 7 of PoD 4)

Day 12

Have the child restate what happened yesterday and then continue the story with "Loki and his evil children," beginning on page 48.

Day 13

Today, have the child retell and write the story from yesterday, and add a corresponding illustration, to her main lesson book. A possible main lesson book illustration for this day is found on pages 50-51 of your anthology.

Day 14

Today, tell the child the story of "War in heaven", which begins on page 52.

Day 15

Have the child retell and write the story from yesterday, and add a corresponding illustration, to her main lesson book. A possible main lesson book illustration for this day is found on pages 54-55 of your anthology.

*Parent Note: Prepare materials for next week's play
"Iduna and the Golden Apples"*

Norse Mythology I

Week Four

Day

16	p.60	The walls of Asgard
17	MLB	pp.62-63
18	p.65	The apples of eternal life
19	MLB	pp.70-71
20	p.72	Odin prepares for the Ragnarok

Day 16

Today's story is "The walls of Asgard", which begins on page 60 of your anthology.

Day 17

Today, have the child retell and write the story from yesterday, and add a corresponding illustration, to her main lesson book. A possible main lesson book illustration for this day is found on pages 62-63 of your anthology.

Day 18

Today's story is "The apples of eternal life" which begins on page 65 of your anthology.

The story of Iduna and the Golden Apples is also found in the form of an excellent play in Come Unto These Golden Sands (pp.115-125). Add this play to your lesson today after the story is told. You'll need to make several backdrops with scenes painted on them, as well as these characters:

Iduna – as a woman

(Iduna must have movable arms which can hold things)

Loki – as a man and as a falcon

(Loki must have movable arms which can hold things)

Odin

Watchman

Bragi

Asas

Thiassi – as a man and as an eagle

(Thiassi must have movable arms which can hold things)

For the Chorus roles, just sing or speak them behind the scenes, leaving the stage blank. These are the different combinations of characters which are on stage at one time:

Scene 1

Backdrop: Iduna's grove

- Stage is blank, Chorus role spoken & sung
- Iduna enters
- Bragi enters
- Bragi departs – Thiassi and Loki walk on
- Thiassi hides behind a tree (prop)
- Loki and Iduna talk
- Thiassi grabs Iduna

Scene 2

Backdrop: Iduna's grove

- Asas
- Bragi enters
- Loki enters
- Odin enters

Scene 3

Backdrop: castle with cutaway interior room showing, blue sky up above

- Thiassi and Iduna are there, with the golden casket
- Thiassi exits
- Loki enters (as a falcon) and brings her wings, which she needs to be able to put on
- Loki and Iduna fly out of the castle and up into the sky
- Thiassi (as an eagle) pursues them

Scene 4

Backdrop: Asgard – mountaintop with ocean below

- Asas
- Watchman
- Odin
- Odin commands a fire to be lit – add this prop to the scenery
- Loki and Iduna fly in
- Thiassi follows them, as an eagle, but is captured by the flames and falls down into the ocean
- Odin, Loki and Iduna talk
- Curtain falls, Chorus talks and sings to conclude the tale

Prop list:

- Iduna's golden casket
- A tree for Thiassi to hide behind
- A set of wings to fit Iduna
- Fire

I recommend that you learn the play and make the backdrops, characters, and props yourself and keep it as a surprise from the child. It doesn't *have* to be a surprise, of course, but you and they might enjoy it more that way. Then when it's time do to the story, you act as the narrator and puppeteer.

It is a simple play with no more than a few characters on the stage at one time, which is essential when there's just one puppeteer. In some situations, you will have more puppets than you have hands and you'll have to put them somewhere. How you handle this will depend on what type of puppets you make. Either add some hooks to the back of the backdrop and loop the puppet's strings over the hook – or, if your puppets are on sticks or are otherwise held underneath, make some kinds of stands which they can rest on while you attend to the other characters. You can also do some of each, with the bird characters held up high on hooks and some of the others held from below.

Since your child is writing a script for a play as his/her cumulative project, this will help inspire them to see how it is done. My personal feeling is that it would be better for you to perform this one as an example and to not allow them to use *this* play as their cumulative project but to have them write their own collaboratively – however, you can use your own judgment on this based on how much time you have available for your cumulative project.

Day 19

Today, have the child retell and write the story from yesterday, and add a corresponding illustration, to her main lesson book. A possible main lesson book illustration for this day is found on pages 70-71 of your anthology.

Eurythmy lesson: retell the speech from Scene 4 from yesterday's play, orally, with the accompanying eurythmy movements as indicated in Come Unto These Yellow Sands (pages 124-125).

Day 20

The story for today will conclude Norse Mythology I and set the stage for Norse Mythology II. It is not necessary to add it to the main lesson book. "Odin prepares for the Ragnarok" begins on page 72 of your anthology.

Extension – Language

Eugene Schwartz mentions in his notes for this block that he studied words in our language which came from the Vikings. Have your child search through a dictionary (one which contains etymology information) and make a list of words they find of Viking origin.

Norse Mythology I

Cumulative Project

The cumulative project for this unit will be to act out a legend of your choice dramatically.

1. Around the halfway point of the unit, have the child choose which story speaks to her or she shows the most interest in and begin to list the necessary characters.
2. Next, choose the backgrounds needed to tell this story. One project which is manageable for the child is to build *by themselves* a doorway puppet theater (find directions here: <http://howtouniverse.com/ACH/dwaystage.html>). They can either find fabrics which represent each scene or paint backdrops themselves (a nice tie-in with the silk painting in the ink mini-unit from the morning work).
3. Next, choose how you want to make your puppets. Dry felted characters (such as those found in [Making Magical Fairy-Tale Puppets](#)), silk marionettes (such as those found in [Toymaking with The child](#)), and rod puppets (find directions here: http://www.bbc.co.uk/norfolk/kids/puppet_make/puppet_make_01.shtml) are all good options.
4. In choosing costumes, remember that the colors and details of costumes should reflect a person's station in life as well as his or her temperament.
5. Let your child write the script including the dialogue and stage directions and begin to practice it. Let them know that they will not have you along as an additional puppeteer as needed. Give your child the freedom to change the play as needed once they see what is working well and what isn't. Don't make them feel like they have to stick to their original plan – encourage them to be flexible and learn from their experiences. Have as many practice sessions as they feel they need before the big performance.
6. The child can also compose and record music to accompany the dramatic retelling. Tape this music in advance (this is tricky, to determine the pacing of the play and to make sure that the music and puppets work well together).
7. Put on a show for family and friends.

Assessment Criteria

Content/declarative knowledge: how well does the student know the **content**?

Assess your child's work during introduction, activation, exploration, and extension components of the unit. For example,

- Can she explain who the Viking people were and some of the effects they had on current society?
- Can she explain the Viking creation story and some of their major gods and figures?
- Is she able to retell the legends accurately?
- Can she use drawing, painting, modeling, drama and movement as well to retell these legends?
- Did she memorize pieces of verse and prose as directed?

Quality of the **product**: how well did the student present the work in writing, speaking, etc.

Assess the quality of your child's main lesson book work. For example,

- Did she concentrate on using her best handwriting and work diligently on her illustrations?
- Were her stories clear and easy to follow?
- Did her illustrations accurately reflect what was happening in each story?

Assess the quality of your child's art and movement pieces. For example,

- Did she show improvement in her drawing, painting, and modeling skills while performing basic exercises as well as final pieces?
- Did she adequately convey the events of the story, as well as the *mood* of the story through her color choices?
- Did these supplemental activities help her to gain a deeper understanding of the stories and to make connections (unconsciously) between them and her own developmental stages?

Quality of the **application**: how well did the student execute the knowledge application process?

Assess your child's cumulative project. For example,

- Did she gain a deeper understanding of the legend through the process of writing a play about it?
- Did she carefully create the backdrops, scenery and characters?
- Did she write effective dialogue (and music, if used) to convey the story?
- Did she practice her play diligently and work to make it better?
- Did she successfully present her play to her audience?