

# CHILD DEVELOPMENT

BASED ON THE INSIGHTS OF RUDOLF STEINER  
AND AS USED IN WALDORF / STEINER SCHOOLS



WRITTEN FOR  
THE EAST AFRICAN WALDORF TEACHER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM  
BY  
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Claire van Alphen:	Photos from her Main Lesson books of Grades 6 – 10
Claartje Wijnbergh	Photo of the African chair in Chapter 1.

I wish to acknowledge the invaluable use of the well-written book on the Waldorf Curriculum in South Africa: Peter van Alphen / Sally von Holdt (2000). *Curriculum: Waldorf Schools in South Africa*. Cape Town: Federation of Waldorf Schools in South Africa. I have drawn from it extensively, especially in mathematics and the sciences. To save space I have only acknowledged some entries.

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I wish to acknowledge the following:

The expertise and work of Ann Sharfman in Early Childhood Development, on which the greatest part of Chapter 4 is based. Ann has edited this chapter extensively

Dr Anne Steinmueller, pediatrician, for information on physical growth and its effects on the development of consciousness in early childhood (Chapter 4)

The following excellent source on Waldorf principles and curriculum, from which extensive information on adolescence and the curriculum for Grades 8 - 12 has been drawn: Martyn Rawson & Tobias Richter (Editors), 2000. *The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum*. Forest Row, Sussex, UK: Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship

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## ***The East African Waldorf/Steiner Teacher Development Programme***

The East African teacher development programme was started by the late Adeline Mlai, a Tanzanian, in Dar-es-Salaam in 1997. Adeline recognised the developmental value of Waldorf education and invited Peter van Alphen and Ann Sharfman, teacher educators with experience working in African settings in Cape Town, South Africa, to start a teacher development programme in Dar-es-Salaam. This programme was set up for teachers from Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya.

After the first year, difficulties securing the funds for continuing the programme were experienced, and in 1999 the programme was relocated to Nairobi, Kenya, as a more central venue for the three countries. The Rudolf Steiner School in Mbagathi was able to secure funding for its continuation, and in the eleven years that followed an ever-increasing number of teachers from East African countries joined the programme.

Our grateful thanks go to Zukunftsstiftung Entwicklungshilfe (Bochum, Germany) and Freunde der Erziehungskunst Rudolf Steiners (Berlin, Germany) for their continued support of the programme from 1999. We also wish to thank Sanduko a Ndege (Vejle, Denmark), Internationaal Hulpfonds (Amsterdam, Netherlands), Acacia (Basel, Switzerland) and Stichting Helias (Netherlands) for their additional support.

### ***About this Manual***

This series of manuals answers the need for teachers (or student-teachers) to have notes on the modules they attend. This manual is written for Module 2, which follows on the first module of the program, in which a detailed study of Rudolf Steiner's concept of the three-fold nature of the human being is presented.

This manual is an introduction to Steiner's view on child development from birth to adulthood, forming a basis for understanding the child-centred curriculum of the Waldorf Schools. Further insights into Steiner's view on child development, especially the activity of the life forces (etheric or formative forces), the astral (sentience) and the human 'I' ('Ego') will be dealt with in the next module, when a study of these aspects of the human constitution can be undertaken.

This introduction is intended to form the basis for understanding children in cultures different from the Middle-European culture, where Rudolf Steiner started the first Waldorf School. Although the child developmental stages are broadly speaking the same in all cultures, every culture and every individual child, has its own unique characteristics of development, and the parent, teacher or child carer needs to observe these differences carefully, rather than taking Steiner's global description rigidly.

The principle that teachers need to understand the whole of childhood, and not only the section they happen to be teaching, has been followed. Therefore the entire range from early childhood to middle childhood and adolescence is described, though greater detail is provided for early and middle childhood as the program is designed for kindergarten and primary teachers.

The manual is intended to be handed out at the end of the module for revision and further study. The suggestion is that participants study together in groups in their respective schools, and questions and activities are given in the text for this purpose.

It is hoped that these manuals are also of use in other countries around the world. Comments and suggestions are welcomed, and can be sent to Peter van Alphen on [peterva@mweb.co.za](mailto:peterva@mweb.co.za).



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## CHAPTER 1 - THE THREEFOLD HUMAN BEING AS BASIS FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT

In this chapter we will be reviewing Rudolf Steiner's threefold principle, which forms the basis of his educational approach.

We need to deeply understand the differences between thinking, feeling and the will, as this will tell us a great deal about child development.

*Enjoy reading this story of the three brothers, representing thinking, feeling and will:*

### THE RICH FARMER (A story to describe thinking, feeling and willing)

There was once a farmer who had become very rich. When he was young, he did not have much money, but he was lucky enough to buy three farms close together that had fallen into disrepair. The various owners had not cared properly for the crops, the cattle and the machinery and they had lost a lot in a bad year. They eventually owed so much money that they had to sell the land cheaply to pay their debts.

This farmer, however, knew that to get the best out of this farm he would have to work very hard and slowly repair or replace everything. This he did, first with the help of friends and a good manager, and later by training his three sons to assist him on the farm.

The oldest son was a strong, handsome man called Mark, who had a broad face and a firm jaw. His eyes looked straight at one without any fear and the mighty muscles rippled on his arms. He loved to drive the tractor or the combine harvester out in the sun and if anything went wrong, he would immediately get to work and fix the engine. He was practical and hard-working and he could not bear to be idle. He also had a big black stallion that he rode across the fields on certain days, galloping along with mane and tail flying like a banner. He went out daily to check on all the activities around the farm, to give orders and to organise that things would be ready for market each Saturday. The workers often called him "The Boss" and his father was known as "The Old Man", although he was not really so old, and still very capable.

The second son was called Philip. He was tall and thin with a long nose and deep set eyes. He was much quieter than his older brother, partly because you often found him reading a book. He kept the accounts on the farm, dealt with correspondence, taxes and everything that needed to be recorded like how much milk each cow was producing each day. He also read up about new methods of dealing with crop diseases and knew a lot about all the theoretical aspects of keeping a farm.

He often invited friends round and they would discuss the latest book he was reading. Whenever he did so, he always invited his brother Mark to join the discussion. However, Mark would laugh and say, "I've got better things to do than talk. There's the tack to be cleaned and Bounty to be groomed. I'll see you later."

The youngest son, Felix, was a friendly fellow with twinkling eyes and a ready smile. He was a slighter build than Mark and always seemed to be out talking to other people. He looked after the cows and the workers always came to him with their troubles. He took the produce to market each week, sold it and had an ongoing discussion with his mother and the cook about new kinds of bread or cookies to be baked in order to tempt the customers at the market. Everyone liked Felix. He always had time for a kind word or an offer of help if someone needed anything. The workers preferred to ask Felix before Mark or his father as they knew he would be more likely to agree, unless they were trying to get out of working. Then he looked them in the eye and said, "Do you really expect me to let you get away with this?" Then they would both laugh and get on with the work.

One winter, the farmer went ill. His cold developed into pneumonia and there was a week or so when the family really feared for his life, and the doctor was constantly coming to the house to check on his patient. It was several months before the farmer was better and even then he looked a shadow of his former self.

During this time, the doctor said to the farmer, "Have you made a will for when you die? Who is going to inherit your farm? Will you divide it between your three sons or are you going to give it all to one of them?" This upset the farmer considerably as he had never before considered that he might die. He had been so healthy and strong, it had never entered his mind. So he called his sons to him and told them of his predicament and asked them to help him decide what to do.

The three sons began to talk about it in the kitchen when the father was upstairs. Mark said, "Well, if he's going to give the farm to one of us, it'll probably be me. After all, I'm always going around organising everything."

"Quite right", said Philip with a smile. "Now, I have been wanting to go to visit the Jacksons who have apparently got some new books on breeding cattle. They have invited me for the weekend, so I'll be going up on Friday and will return on Monday. It's about time you learnt how to do the accounts if you're going to inherit the farm, so if you could just deal with the figures from the Saturday market, I'll carry on when I get back."

So that Saturday, when Felix returned late in the afternoon, Mark settled down to add up the figures from the sales before entering them in the book. He wasn't quite sure what to do with the piece of paper Felix handed him, so he decided to look for the book. Mark couldn't find it as he had put his large cup of coffee on top of it and so was searching everywhere else instead. He finally found it. It said Market Sales on the cover but inside was a mass of lines and figures that really meant nothing to him. He went to the last page of figures hoping that some light would dawn, but there seemed to be two columns instead of one and he felt quite stupid all of a sudden. In a flash of anger, he thumped his fist down hard on the table and the coffee cup fell over, spilling a rich smelling stain across the open book. Mark grabbed the table cloth and tried to mop up the mess, but this sent several books flying to the floor into the puddle of coffee dripping from the table. Furiously he kicked them to one side and stormed out of the room!

When Philip returned, he saw the catastrophe that was once his neat desk. He was about to get angry when Felix entered the room and grinned. "That'll teach him to think he can manage without you", Felix chuckled and began to help Philip clean up the mess.

By Wednesday in the next week Felix said to his brothers, "I want to visit my friend Paul this weekend. He's asked me to give him a hand with a cow who is about to have twins. Could you two please manage the market sales?"

"That should be easy enough," they agreed and on Saturday, Mark and Philip manned the stall. They were surprised at how many people asked where Felix was. Several people spoke about how Felix had helped them, how kind he was, how he always tried to get the produce they asked for and how they missed him. When Philip added up the sales for that day, he noticed that the total was considerably less than usual. "Do you think that people stayed away or didn't buy as much because Felix wasn't there?" he asked Mark.

When Felix returned, Mark said, "Well, you two have each had a weekend off, so perhaps it is my turn next." "Wait a minute", said Philip. "You can have a weekend off if you like, but I don't need to try out your job to know that it doesn't suit me. I don't want to do your kind of work. I don't want to inherit the farm on my own. I have a better idea."

"I know what your idea is," said Felix. "Tell us", said Mark curiously.

"I suggest that we don't split the farm at all," said Philip. "We should continue to run it as we do now and merely split the profits. That way we each of us do what we are best at doing. We enjoy our work, we support each other and the farm is a success! How about it?"

And that is what they did.

[Written by Catherine van Alphen]

## ***THINKING***

We discovered that when we think, we are forming pictures in our mind. These pictures are there so that we can gain a knowledge of life - knowledge of human beings, animals, plants and the many things in our world. We can remember these pictures by storing them in our memory, so we can use them when we need them.

Thinking brings structure into our lives. When we know how life works, we can create structure in our own lives, and become productive citizens.

There are different levels of thinking:

At the most basic level, our thinking is attached to the ways of the earth: for example, how to earn a living, how to create a home, who is family and who is not;



how to travel from one place to another; the different kinds of people we meet in our surroundings. This is often called ‘concrete’ thinking.

At a more advanced level, we can think in abstractions: for example, doing maths; being able to read words; knowing how something works. ‘Abstract’ means we can think about things without having to have them in front of us. It also means that we can work things out in a system.

On the highest level, thinking becomes imagination. At this level we gain deep understanding: we understand truth. This is a spiritual level, where we have insight into the workings of creation. Great scientists, mathematicians, philosophers, researchers into the human being have gained deep insights from which we can learn so much. We also can develop our imagination, gaining our own insights into all the different aspects of life.

*In pairs / small groups, find your own examples of the different levels of thinking.*

We also discovered that thinking is a conscious process. One can also say that we are most awake in our thinking. When we are learning, for example, we are trying to make things conscious, so we can work with them. When we are planning our day, we do so consciously. In understanding and gaining knowledge of life, we are continually trying to become conscious of life.

As adults, we are quite used to this. We are unaware that we mainly use our conscious thinking to manage our lives from the moment we wake up to the moment we go to sleep. That this is not so for children, is not easy to imagine, yet very important to understand!

Modern science prefers to name thinking as “cognition.” Cognition is everything we have said above, but emphasises that we ‘create knowledge of’ the world. From the word “cognition” comes “cognitive” which means learning through thinking, which has been the main way of learning in traditional schools.

## ***FEELING***

By “feeling” Rudolf Steiner means the emotions that we, as human being, are continually experiencing. There is a very wide range of feeling:

At the basis of all feeling are the opposites of sympathy and antipathy (“feeling with” and “feeling against”). If we like some-one or something, we immediately want to unite ourselves in some or other way with such a person or thing. We want to “feel together with” a friend, by enjoying each other’s company, by talking about our life experiences, by doing things together. If we dislike some-one or something, we want to avoid or push away such a person or thing. Pain and

pleasure belong to this basis - we avoid pain and seek pleasure. Sympathy and antipathy are continually working in us, though we are not that much aware of them.

There are a great variety of common, everyday emotions: the more pleasant, health-giving emotions such as warm, loving feelings towards others; enjoyment; comfort; homeliness; and the more unpleasant, destructive emotions such as anger; jealousy; depression; hatred. We are mostly dealing with opposites, such as loneliness – togetherness; happiness – sadness; elation – depression; hope – despair.

The highest, most spiritual emotions rise above these opposites. Feelings such as religious devotion; devotion to one's work; wonder, awe and reverence; deep, genuine love; experiences of beauty; empathy (rather than sympathy or antipathy).

*In pairs / small groups, find your own examples of the different levels of emotion*

We are aware of our feelings, though not as consciously as our thoughts. Our feelings are 'dreamlike,' semi-conscious. They live more in the trunk, rather than the head. Often we are not quite sure of exactly how we are feeling or what we are feeling. Some feelings come strongly to the surface, others float around us, not fully recognised, and some remain deeply hidden from ourselves (we may have 'buried' them).

Feelings are very important to us as they bring meaning to our lives. If we have only few feelings, it is like living in a desert; if we have a rich feeling life, it is like living in paradise – then we are really living, able to be creative and respond to those around us.

Modern science prefers the word "emotion" or "affect" rather than "feeling." This is because the word "feeling" can be used in too many other ways, such as "I feel sick," "I feel warm," "I feel like eating," etc. which have to do with the body rather than with emotion.

## ***WILL***

Everything we do in life requires the will to be active and strong. One could say the will is the driving force within us that enables us to live, to be active, to do things, to carry out our aims, to build our lives. We can observe the will working in the following ways:

At the level of the physical body, we learn to move and act out of instinct and imitation of those around us. Instinctively the baby immediately starts suckling as it searches for the mother's breast; the hands learn how to hold onto things; at the right time, the baby learns to sit, stand, crawl and walk. As children and later as adults, we become more and more skilled in using our bodies to do things,

such as making things, building, planting, writing or typing, participating in sports or gymnastics.

At the level of the soul (or psyche), we have strong drives that make us inquisitive, that is, wanting to find out about life; we have the will to learn, to participate in life's activities, to improve, and to prove ourselves; we can have strong motivations to carry out certain tasks, to change our surroundings and to make an impact on others, for good or for ill. We can be self-willed or work together with others; we can be stubborn, forcing our way through life, or we can be open, responding to the opportunities life brings us.

At the level of the spirit, we can allow the Divine Will to guide us. For this we need to be in harmony with our spiritual nature, and open to the Intuition that we have within. The more we transform the soul, working towards the true, the beautiful and the good, the more we are in touch with the Divine Will, which guides us through Intuition in our daily lives.

Important to realise, though, is that the will works unconsciously in us. We are conscious of directing and moving our limbs, but the will that causes them to do the actual moving works unconsciously. We are aware of all our movements, but not aware of how the will is operating so that our movements can happen.

We often know what we should be doing, but do not have the will to do it. Then we have to create the right conditions in our souls to want to do what we need to do, and then the will is there unconsciously, directed by our feelings, to carry out our tasks. Again, we are aware that we have the will to do something, but are not aware of how the will brings us into action.

Strong, deep thinking requires will - but the thinking is conscious and the will that drives it is unconscious.

*Discuss in groups the difficult concept that the will works unconsciously. How can we understand this? Brief, general discussion on this.*

## THE WORKING TOGETHER OF THINKING, FEELING AND WILL



We need to realise that thinking, feeling and will are always working together in a healthy human being. They belong together as one whole, making up the soul (or psyche) of the human three-foldness.

Thinking is always giving direction, feeling is making us aware of how we relate to everything that we do or experience, and will is giving us the power to carry out what we need to do.

All three are present and working in us all the time. Therefore, at the same time we are conscious (or 'awake') through thinking, semi-conscious (or 'dreaming') through feeling, and unconsciously active through will (the

'sleeping' part of us - 'sleeping' because we cannot be aware of how it is working in us).

*[Group discussion on what this diagram tells us. Typical answers one would hope to receive:  
Will is the greatest and most powerful aspect, interpenetrating the other two  
Thinking is our narrowest, most confined aspect (unless we move into Imagination!)  
Feeling is in between, 'mediating' between will and thinking, 'harmonising']*

### QUESTIONS & FURTHER EXPLORATION TO REVIEW PREVIOUS MODULE'S WORK:

1. If we compare thinking, feeling and will, we can describe significant differences. Let us first do this by means of an analogy, comparing them to the different states of water:

Thinking	like	ice
Feeling	like	water
Will	like	steam

What does this comparison tell us about thinking – feeling – will? Typical answers one would hope to receive:

- *Thinking, feeling and will are the same 'substance' ('soul substance') in different states*
  - *Thinking = structure, 'frozen' or rigid pictures (this refers to everyday, concrete pictures)*
  - *Feeling = flowing, tidal (ebb and flow), like calm lake or rushing river or tidal wave*
  - *Will = incredible power, able to be used constructively or destructively*
2. *We know that thinking, feeling and will are related to different parts of the physical body, and can look at this in different ways:*
- *head, heart and hands*
  - *head, trunk and limbs (this is a general way of looking at it)*
  - *head (brain and nervous system), chest (breathing and blood circulatory system) and lower trunk/limbs (metabolic/limb/reproductive system) - this is a specific way of looking at it, the most accurate.*

*Discuss how thinking relates to the brain and nervous system (the whole body thinks, not only the brain); how feeling relates to the breathing and blood circulation; how will relates to the muscles in the metabolic/limb/reproductive system*

3. *Then review what will have done in the previous module artistically:*
- a. *From the painting we did in the last module, what colours can represent th-f-w and why? (if not done in last module, do painting exercises now to deepen this theme)*  
*Typical answers one would hope to receive:*
- *Thinking = blue; has a forming, shaping, structural character*
  - *Feeling = yellow; has a radiating character (we influence others continually through our moods)*
  - *Will = red; very active, powerful colour (don't use too much of it in a painting!)*
- b. *From Eurythmy:*
- *Beat = will*
  - *Rhythm = feeling*
  - *Melody = thinking*
- c. *All three soul forces are working together at the same time - they can never be separated - discuss*
- d. *Discuss the symbolic threefoldness in the following African chair carving:*





Reproduced with kind permission of Claartje Wijnbergh, pioneer of the first Waldorf School for African children in Alexandra, Johannesburg. (Photo by her daughter-in-law, Renee)

## CHAPTER 2 - HEREDITY AND INDIVIDUALITY

### Where does the child come from?

When we studied the threefold aspects of the human being, we saw that Rudolf Steiner suggests there are three parts:

1. Spirit - the Individuality, which is eternal; the 'I' or 'real me.'
2. Soul - my psychological nature; through which I experience thinking, feeling and will
3. Body - my earthly, physical body, through which I experience the world I live in.

This gives rise to the question, where do I come from? All religions and cultures speak of a 'heaven' or 'paradise' or 'divine world' from which we come and to which we eventually return after death.

Consider the following picture: We are all Spirit, coming from the Creator. Each person is a Spirit, an Individuality, made in the image and likeness of God, and therefore have a spiritual nature which can create, develop and grow. As Spirit, we never die - Spirit is beyond birth and death.

As Spirit, we need to develop for ourselves a soul (a psychological 'body'), so that when we are on earth we will be able to think, have feelings and have a will to be active.

In order to be on earth, as Spirit-Soul, we need two parents to create a physical body for us in which we can live. The parents provide this body through conception, and the mother carries this body for nine months, preparing it for birth.

After birth, the Spirit-Soul needs to take hold of this body and make it his/her own, so that the body becomes completely under the control of the Individuality or 'I'. This process of taking hold of the physical body, given by the parents, takes 21 years - the years of growing up into adulthood.

We therefore see two streams that flow together: that which comes, as Spirit-Soul, from 'heaven' (or the 'spiritual worlds') and that which comes from our parents, as the stream of 'inheritance'. A third stream, the environment, society and time we grow up in, also has a powerful effect on our development into adulthood. As we grow up, we bring these three streams together, so that we can become our own, unique selves, able to live and grow as human beings on earth.

At death, we lay aside our physical body, and as Spirit-Soul go through a process of letting go of the soul, eventually to return as pure Spirit to the 'heaven' world, bringing with us the 'treasures' of what we have accomplished on earth.

## The Stream of Inheritance

We receive a physical body from our parents. This is shaped according to a certain selection of the characteristics of our parents, through the ovum produced by the mother and the one sperm cell that unites with it, from the father. The genes in each create the particular physical body that we will receive.

This accounts for the likeness that we share with our parents, not only features, but also our patterns of health, growth, colour and size that we will inherit from them.

## The Stream of Individuality

However, the body that our parents provide needs to become our bodies, suited to our needs. In the first 7 years we will be replacing every single cell of the body we have received from our parents, so that every part of the body has been re-created by us. Now our Spirit-Soul has created the body with its own 'stamp', according to our own Individuality.

The change of teeth - discarding the 'milk' teeth that come from the parent-given body, and replacing them with one's own teeth that will last (hopefully!) for the rest of one's life - indicates that the body has completed the process of making the body its own.

Further changes, especially in the face, but also in the whole body, will reflect the individuality's character, overriding the inherited features of the parents. When puberty brings its far-reaching changes, the young person now begins to take hold of his/her own destiny, different from that of the parents.

In cases of particularly strong individualities, one sees how a child living in difficult circumstances can overcome them and grow to be a leader in a particular field. The Individuality can overcome the environment in which it grows up, so that it can fulfil its particular destiny, in spite of the circumstances in which it is born.

## The Environmental Stream

Once we are born, we inherit more than only the physical body from our parents. We also inherit their environment, their culture, their economic standing, their outlook on life. In fact, environmental influences are far more powerful than inherited influences. This is because we build up our bodies, our understanding of life and our potential for the rest of life from our surroundings and our circumstances. This can easily be proven by observing how a child born in one set of circumstances will grow up very differently, if it is adopted by a different set of parents living in different circumstances.

## Human Destiny

As Individualities that come as Spirit-Soul into a physical body provided by our parents, we have a spiritual purpose for being here on the earth. We are here to grow as human beings, to develop our particular talents, and to serve others through caring for them, educating them, and making the world a better place.

We each come with a particular destiny: a divine wish to serve humankind in a specific way. One person may do this through art, music or dance, creating beauty which inspires and uplifts others; another may do this through becoming an educator, doctor or religious minister; another through being a mother or carer, bringing children in the best possible way into the world; another through working the land ... and so on.

The destiny of each person only gradually shows itself, although there are some children who already know what they are to do in life from an early age. However, as teachers we have a huge responsibility to prepare children as fully as possible so that they may find their destiny and have the will, the enthusiasm and the knowledge to bring it into reality.

## CHAPTER 3 - THE THREE PHASES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

What is so wonderful about Rudolf Steiner's understanding of the three-fold principle in the human being is that it also describes the three phases of child development.

Society has always considered childhood to last 21 years. Only once we are 21 years of age, are we truly an adult. We can divide childhood into three 7-year phases:

The first phase - called Early Childhood - from birth to 7 years

The second phase - called Middle Childhood - from 7 to 14 years

The third phase - called Adolescence - from 14 to 21 years

It is very important to realise that these phases of development are only a generalised map; every child is very individual in his/her own development, and will not follow these phases in the same time and same way as other children.

It is also important to realise that these phases are not rigid steps from one way of being to another. The transition from one phase to another is gradual, and as said above, each child will move into a next phase in his/her own time and in different ways from other children.

This generalised map is useful however to outline the development of children so we can more easily recognise what is happening in them and how best we can respond to their needs in the way we care for or teach them.

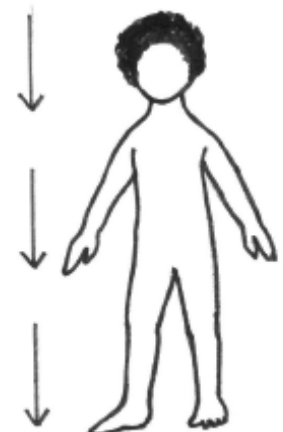
### *The Forces of Growth*

When we look at the development of the child before birth, we see an important pattern of growth: to begin with we are mostly head, and from the head we gradually grow downwards into the chest, abdomen and limbs. We see the same pattern in the development of the child's body after birth. Here we see that the most important growth first takes place in the head, then moves down into the trunk and finally into the limbs.

We see this pattern in a broad way in the three 7-year periods of child development:

In early childhood (birth to 7 years), the main growth takes place in the head and nervous system - therefore we see a child with large head, relatively small chest and short limbs.

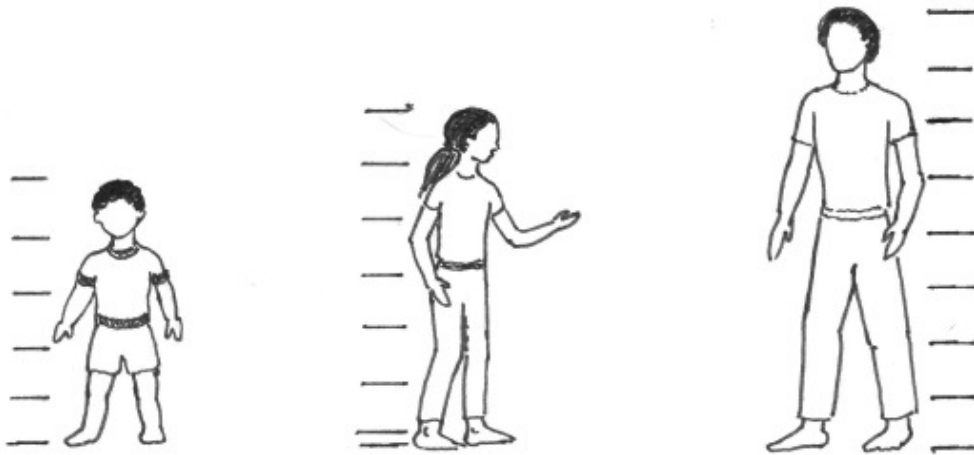
In middle childhood, the main area of growth is now in the trunk (especially the chest) and the rhythmic/circulatory system - therefore we see a greater balance between head and trunk, but still relatively short limbs.





In adolescence, the main growth is in the limbs and the limb/metabolic/reproductive systems

The following diagram shows how the proportions of head – trunk – limb change in the three 7-year periods of childhood:



The next diagram clearly illustrates how we grow downwards, and how the head only grows a little over the years, the chest more and the limbs most:

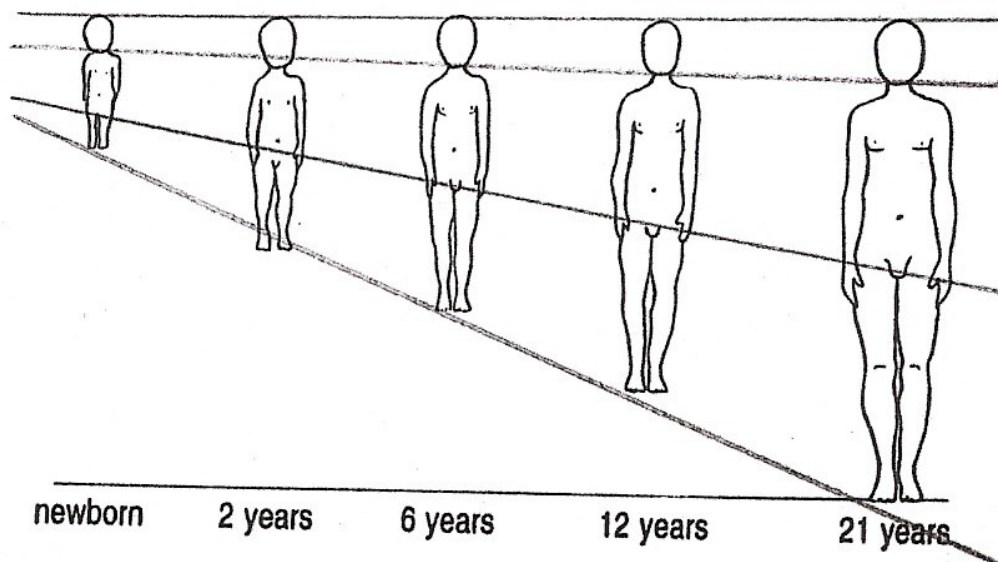


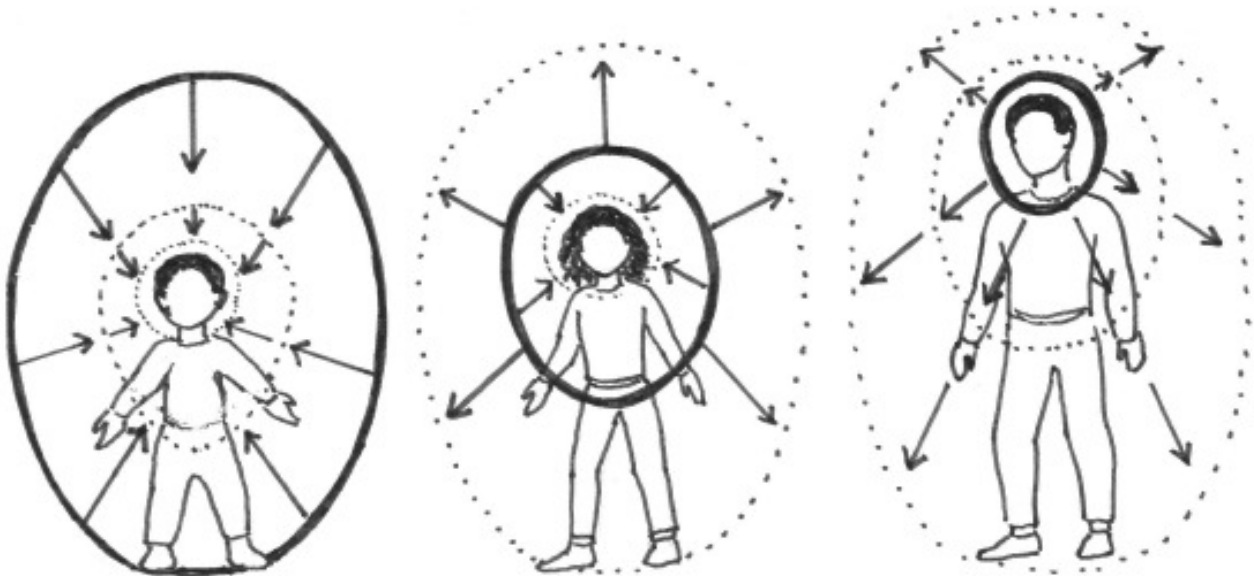
Diagram from A.J. Husemann(1982). *Der musikalische Bau des Menschen*. Stuttgart: Verlag Freies Geistesleben. Page 34; lines added by PvA]

## ***The Development of Consciousness***

As we grow, we gradually 'wake up' more and more within ourselves and towards the world. This process we call the development of consciousness. The little baby is hardly aware; it sleeps a great deal, and when awake, he or she can only take in a small amount of the world around. As the child grows, it becomes more and more aware, both of him/herself and of the surrounding world.

The process of waking up happens from the periphery (consciousness is 'around' the body, but not yet inside the body), gradually moving more and more to the inside of the body.

In early childhood the little one lives in a will-consciousness, a time of doing and experiencing everything by means of the will; in middle childhood this moves inwards into a feeling-consciousness, when the child now lives and experiences everything through the emotions; and finally, the adolescent awakens in his thinking-consciousness, wanting to direct and explore his or her life through thinking, gradually becoming an adult.



Birth – 7 years  
Will – consciousness

7 – 14 years  
Feeling – consciousness

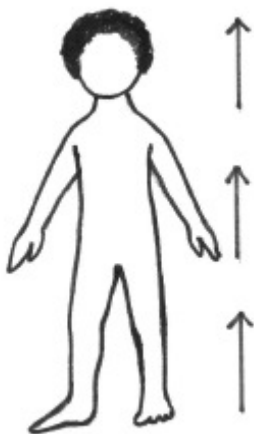
14 – 21 years  
Thinking - consciousness

In the Birth – 7 years diagram above, one can see how the will-consciousness works from the outside (the 'periphery') towards the inside of the child. It works into the will, the feelings and the thinking of the child.

In the 7 – 14 years diagram, the child experiences everything through a feeling-consciousness. Because of this the will of the child is activated by the feelings (arrows going outwards) and the child thinks by means of the feelings (arrows going inwards).

In the 14 – 21 years diagram, the young person now becomes awake and aware in his or her thinking, and therefore develops the thinking-consciousness. Everything the adolescent meets, he or she does within this thinking-consciousness. He or she seeks to control the feelings/emotions and the will, as well as the outside world (arrows going outwards).

It is often said, in a more general way, that consciousness starts from 'below' and gradually moving 'upwards':



In the third 7-year period (14 – 21) the young person lives within a thinking consciousness

In the second 7 years (7 – 14) the child lives within a feeling consciousness

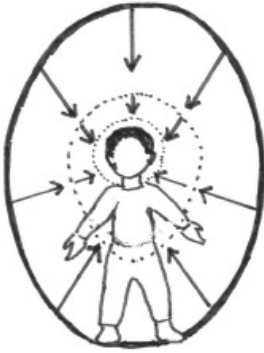
In the first 7 years (birth – 7) the child lives within a will-consciousness

However, it is more accurate to speak about the young child still living 'in the periphery' and that consciousness only gradually moves further and further into the body.

### ***The first 7 years of childhood (Early Childhood)***

The child from birth to 7 years is a child of will. We see how tremendously active the child is in this period, due to the abundant power of the will that is working within him/her. The limbs especially are very busy, continually moving; the whole body is active, as the will expresses itself in the muscular/digestive system.<sup>1</sup> Digestion plays a big role in early childhood, providing the child with the necessary substances to grow and become strong. It is the will that brings this about.

<sup>1</sup> This was discussed in the previous module



The will also works very strongly in the senses of the child. The child has so much to take in, in order to learn about the people and the environment into which he/she has been born; this is only possible because the will is very active in the senses. (By contrast, adults tend to think they know everything about the world, and therefore hardly use their senses at all! We have to become 'like little children' again!)

The young child lives in the periphery, rather than centred in the body as adults do. The limbs are, after all, in the periphery of the body.

This means that the consciousness of the little child still lives mostly outside the body, gradually over the years entering and taking hold of the body. This process of coming into the body is called incarnation.

As said in Chapter 1, the will works in a "sleeping" or unconscious manner. That means, we are not aware of how it works within us. The same is true of the first 7 years of the child's life: the child has a "sleeping" consciousness. This means that the child is largely unaware of life the way we, as adults, experience it. The child does not have reasoning powers - this only comes at a much later stage of its development. (Parents often forget this, trying to explain to the very young child why he/she cannot have something - but the child cannot understand in this way, and remains unhappy.)

Will-consciousness, due to its "sleeping" or unconscious nature, is very good at imitating everything it sees, hears or experiences, but does so without reasoning. The little child imitates the parents, the way the parents speak, the way they move and whatever they do - both the good and the bad, because as yet the child cannot reason what is good and what is bad. The child imitates all the people that it meets - children, youths and adults - and believes that whatever they do is right. The little one also imitates the environment: animals, noises and everything that moves.

Imitation is the little child's way of learning - it learns by doing whatever he/she experiences. If mother (or the caregiver) is washing clothes, the child wants to do the same. Children have incredible will to participate in life, to want to find out about life (curiosity).

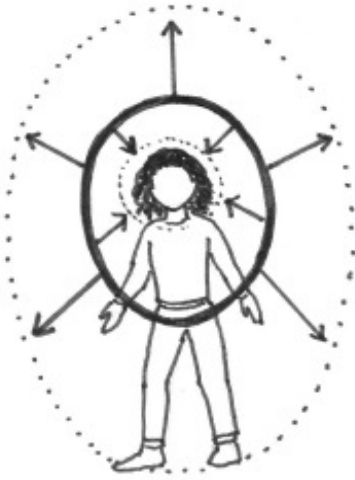
We, as adults, need to provide them with those experiences that are going to build them as positive, happy, involved children, because these experiences, which they take in full of trust, have a life-long effect on them ... because the child imitates the adult in how to be a human being, the adult has to be the best possible example for the child to imitate.

Above all, the little child needs to experience GOODNESS.

*[Discuss this in groups ... the future of our children is determined largely in early childhood - the first seven years of life OR, if there is more time available, each take a turn to answer the question: "what kind of person am I - what did I imitate from my parents/caregivers/important adults in my early life?"]*



## *The second 7 years of childhood (Middle Childhood)*



In the next period of childhood, from about 7 years to about 14 years of age, the child now lives through his/her feelings. This is very different from the first period of childhood where the child lives through his/her will, in which learning was through imitating, doing, continual movement and participating fully in life.

In middle childhood the child learns through the feelings. This means that the focus now shifts more inward: whereas the will is very active and is expressed in outward movement, feelings are felt inside the soul.

Because the child in these years lives mainly in and through the feelings, one can observe that he/she has a “dreamy” consciousness. This can be seen in how children still love to play and listen to stories; how they still see life through imaginative eyes rather than realistic eyes. Their consciousness is gradually awakening to the wider world, but they are still very dependent on the adults around them (especially parents and teachers) for their happiness and fruitful development.

The feeling life of the child between 7 and 14 years needs to experience the beauty of life, the beauty of work, the beauty of each person on this earth. It also needs to experience loving relationships with his/her parents (or caregivers), with teachers and with close friendships.

This child needs to experience beauty and love in everything, so that he/she learns to always seek these qualities in living. If those around the child can provide qualitative experiences, he/she will develop the habits needed for a positive and constructive life in adulthood, approaching everything they do with a sense of beauty and love.

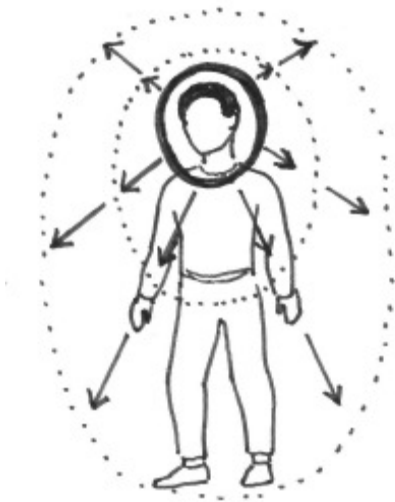
Modern education has mostly failed to understand that the child between 7 and 14 years needs to learn everything through the feelings. It has assumed that the child simply needs to learn the mechanics of reading, writing, arithmetic, science, etc, rather than seeing that these can be taught through qualitative ways involving the feelings of the child.

Therefore rhythm, song, story, poetry, dance, drama, painting, drawing and clay modelling, which all appeal to the feeling life of the child, need to fill the day, enriching the child and bringing the experience of quality in work, play and relationships.

Above all, the child between 7 and 14 needs to experience BEAUTY.

*[In groups, each take a turn to answer the question: “did I have experiences of beauty in my childhood, and how did they affect me?”]*

### ***The third 7 years - Adolescence***



From around the age of 14 years we see the young person gradually becoming an adult. This period is marked by a new way of being, from the will-nature of the little child up to about seven years, to the feeling-nature of the child up to about 14 years, and now the beginnings of a thinking-nature which over 7 years leads into full adulthood.

The young person in adolescence wishes to experience life through his/her ability to think about him/herself, about others and about the world. Above all, he/she wants to build up his/her own opinions, that he can experience being able to think by himself, free from parents, teachers and others.

This gives the adolescent a sense of independence, which he/she needs to become an adult. It is important for the young person to ‘push away’ his parents and those who represent his parent’s world, to find himself as his own self, with his own identity and his own world.

As the adolescent now grows into independent thinking, we can see a new “awake” consciousness emerging. He/she realises that adults are far from perfect, and becomes very critical of them; issues of sexuality become very important; the ‘good’ and ‘evil’ ways of the world must be honestly and truthfully confronted. A critical awareness of life is gradually born, showing that the adolescent is entering adulthood.

To begin with, the adolescent’s thinking seems to be very much bound to the physical world, developing more systematic ways of thinking (as in scientific thinking), loving argument and demanding proof. Towards the end of adolescence, the thinking can become more philosophical, given the right surroundings.

Above all, the adolescent needs to experience TRUTH.

*[In groups, each take a turn to answer the question: “how did I become independent?” “how did I change as I started to become more conscious?”]*

### ***Looking at the 7-year phases as a whole***

Each phase of childhood has its particular developments that are different from the other phases:

In early childhood, it is the will that is developing - in fact, the will is established during this time for the rest of life. If the development goes well, the child will have a strong will, and will be able to achieve much in his/her life as an adult.

In middle childhood, it is the feelings that are developing. Now is the time that the child establishes his/her emotional balance, sensitivity and well-being for the rest of life. Again, if we can successfully help the child to develop the feelings during these years, he/she will have a healthy emotional life as an adult.

In adolescence, it is the thinking that is developing. If, during these years, we can help the young person to think well, to think in a wholesome way, to think deeply, to think in a moral way, then he/she will become a wonderful citizen as an adult, caring about society and the world and working towards their improvement.

Each phase is the right time for developing its particular aspect: the will in early childhood, the feeling in middle childhood and the thinking in adolescence. If the child misses out on the development of one of these phases, he/she cannot easily catch up on what was lost in a later phase. For example:

If the child was not allowed to play the whole day long - as children are supposed to do in early childhood - he/she will have missed out on many developments which are needed for the rest of life. This means that this child will not be able to progress properly in the next phase of childhood, because instead of the will being developed, it is in fact damaged.

If the child did not develop feeling during middle childhood - learning to feel and express emotions, learning to be sensitive towards others, learning to love work and have a rich experience of stories, imagination and all the different Arts - he/she will not have a harmonious, balanced emotional life in adult life; problems in the lack of a healthy, strong, rich emotional life can result in alcoholism, sexual and drug addictions, aggression, etc - all ways in trying to fill the vacuum left by not having the right kind of feelings that bring meaning and beauty to life.

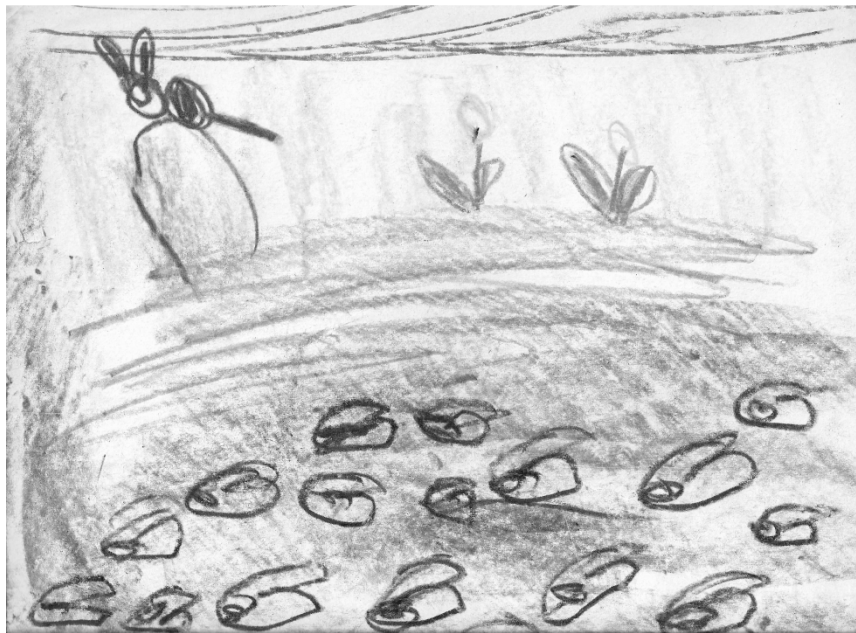
If the adolescent does not experience broader thinking, developing an interest in the world and wanting to discover more and more about life, his/her thinking as an adult will be very rigid, unable to see new possibilities or be able to be creative.

From the above, it can be seen that each phase is the best time to develop its particular qualities, which are needed for later life. Each phase therefore builds on the next, and if something has not been developed at the right time, it causes problems in later phases and lacks in adult life.

Because in each phase of childhood the child has a different consciousness through which he/she learns and experiences life, a very different approach to educating the child is needed in each phase.

Here we find a common mistake: primary teachers think they know how to teach children in the pre-school - but the pre-school child needs something very different from the primary school child; the pre-school child is developing the will, and so needs to be active, to play, to build his/her body. The pre-school teacher therefore needs a completely different training from the primary school teacher; and again the primary school teacher needs a different training from the secondary school teacher.

The understanding that the child's consciousness develops from will (first 7 years) to feeling (second 7 years) to thinking (third 7 years) is most important in education. It gives us the foundations on which to build a curriculum for each phase, based accurately on the child's development.



## CHAPTER 4 - EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (Birth to 7 years)

The first 7 years of childhood are the most important years of our lives. In these years we build up who we are: we lay the foundations for the rest of our lives. We often do not realise the importance of these years, and, therefore, the importance of how parents, early childhood carers and teachers need to have a deep understanding of how to give each and every child the best possible start to life.

### *Will - Consciousness*

#### A child of will

As discussed in Chapter 3, the child from birth to 7 years is a child of will. This means that the child's consciousness (the way the child is aware of life, the way he/she takes in everything and the way he/she does everything) is entirely will-being and will-activity.

This means that the child lives everything, without reasoning as we adults do.

#### The will in the senses

The young child has such trust that everything that you provide is right, proper and does not have the ability, as we do, to say, "no, I don't want that, I don't like it, I am not making it part of me."

The child between birth and 7 years has very active senses: everything that happens around him or her is taken in, absorbed by the child's whole being. During this time, because he or she is a child of will, the senses are so alive that everything that happens in the child's environment is taken in deeply, and the child makes whatever comes in a part of him or herself.

We can see this happening on the level of the body and of the soul:

Looking at how the child takes in the environment into the body, we see that the environment has a deep effect on the shaping and functioning of the organs of the body.

Everything that takes place in the child's environment imprints itself on his or her physical-bodily form ... and works on the whole organism, the lungs, the stomach,



the liver, and so forth; so that our behaviour will influence the child's disposition to health or disease for the whole of its life thereafter.<sup>2</sup>

For example: A child is born to a mother who is bad-tempered and constantly shouts at the child when something goes wrong. Every time the mother shouts, the child is in a state of shock – the breathing is affected, as is the heart-beat. If this continues, the child may grow up to have heart or lung problems. The shocks have caused a weakness in these organs. In the same way, a city child that lives in harsh, ugly surroundings may develop his or her organs in a tight, hardened way.

Taking another example, Steiner<sup>3</sup> describes how a child that is exposed to a father that is continually speaking in an angry tone of voice will suffer ill effects from this, as the glands in his or her body will secrete more substances, creating imbalances that will affect the child's health for the rest of life.

As adults we are aware that our senses are separate from each other. We see with our eyes, hear with our ears, and so on. But the little child, although seeing with the eyes, experiences what the eyes take in with the whole body. The whole body responds to what the eyes are taking in. In the same way the whole body experiences the voices, sounds and noises from its environment that are taken in by the ears.

With the baby, it is the whole body that feels the hunger; as soon as feeding has started, the whole body begins to relax and gradually the baby feels deep satisfaction as it comes to the end of the feed.

The fact that the little child senses with the whole body, makes Steiner to say that the little child from birth to 7 years is “one big sense-organ”:

You must always bear in mind that, especially during the first stage of childhood [up to about 2½ years] but also up to the change of teeth [around 7 years], the child is one big sense organ. This is what makes children receptive to everything that comes from their surroundings.<sup>4</sup>

Gradually, as the child grows in the first 7 years, the experiencing of the senses with the whole body becomes less. This is because differentiation<sup>5</sup> takes over, where the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, etc gradually become localised in their sensing.

The young child ‘drinks in’ the environment in which he or she grows up, without being able to select the sense-impressions, as adults are able to do. The little ones are completely exposed to everything that is around them - not only the physical surroundings, also the attitudes, habits, behaviour, manners and ways of living of parents, siblings and the wider community.

<sup>2</sup> Albert Steffen: *Lectures to Teachers*. A report of lectures by Steiner in 1923

<sup>3</sup> Rudolf Steiner: *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, page 44

<sup>4</sup> Rudolf Steiner: *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, page 44

<sup>5</sup> Differentiation = where the senses become separate; the child experiences touch, hearing, sight as separate experiences.



All this shows how very important the environment is in the forming of children in the first 7 years, and how the children need to be protected from those things that will harm them.

## Imitation

When baby is born, it is potentially human. To become human it can only model itself on the humans around - they are the only source of knowledge of what the human being is. Babies, toddlers and young children completely imitate the humans around them, and the environment the humans have created, because child is born with the inner drive to imitate.

But it [the fact that the child is receptive to everything that comes from its surroundings] also causes them to recreate inwardly everything that is going on in their environment. ... For example, when seeing the father or the mother moving a hand or an arm, the child will immediately feel an impulse to make a similar movement. And so, by imitating the movements of others ... the movements of the baby gradually become more purposeful. In this way the child also learns to walk.<sup>6</sup>

Imitation goes through different stages: at first it is unconscious imitation, when the child absorbs everything in the environment and it becomes a part of the body/organ development (see above). It is also the way children imitate the parent's ways of walking, talking and thinking. Imitation remains unconscious until about 5 years, when gradually more conscious imitation takes over.

Around 5 years we see a clear example of conscious imitation: now the children say, "Let's pretend you are the ... and I am the ..." Here they are consciously acting what they have experienced and know. Sometimes it is an experience that they want to experiment with to understand it or to make it their own creation. All of this is the activity of the will.

During the first 7 years of life we model ourselves according to the environment we are born into. We learn everything from those who care for us, from those around us, from the surroundings, and from kind of life we experience.

We model ourselves through imitation. Everything we experience, we want to do for ourselves. When as babies we listen to others speaking, we also want to speak in the same way; when we see others sitting upright, or walking, we also want to do these things, in exactly the same way. As we grow a little older, we may see mother washing, then we also want to do washing; we see the way other children play, we also want to play the same way. There is no purpose, just activity.....

Everything that is happening around us, we believe to be right and good, even if it is not so. This means that if our environment is full of violence, we learn to be violent; if it is full of disrespect, we grow to be disrespectful; if it is full of tension, we become tense

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<sup>6</sup> Rudolf Steiner: *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, page 44

human beings for life, struggling to feel safe, secure and trusting of living in the world. However, if the environment is caring, we learn to be caring human beings; if it is filled with joy, we learn to be joyful; if we grow up in a loving, safe and secure environment, we have trust that life will bring us everything that is good.

*[Do imitation exercise ('mirrors'): in pairs, face each other; person A does different movements, which person B imitates as exactly as possible; include expressive body movements such as working, dancing, laughing wildly, but also gestures of lovingness, anger, frustration, fear, trust, delight, joy, etc]*

In these first 7 years, the following are established in us through imitation:

- how to be: we learn how to be as human beings from those around us, especially those who are closest to us. Everything they do, think or feel, we imitate. The way in which they do, think and feel is imitated, not only what they do, think or feel. This way which we imitate becomes the habits and attitudes we hold for the rest of their lives!
- how we think: we learn this from parents, carers, other children and adults. Are the parents/care-givers interested in life? Do they read? Do they keep learning new things when they are adults? Do they think in positive, constructive ways? A well-trained carer or teacher can do so much to develop the thinking ability of the young children in the right way - a gift for the whole of the child's life.
- how we feel about ourselves: if our parents/caregivers feel good and have positive thoughts about themselves, the young children imitate this; again, a gift for the rest of life.
- how we encourage the baby and young child by accepting them as they are, by giving them love and affection, by responding with joy and praise as they reach the next stage of their development. We give them confidence and a sense of worth in this way.
- our emotions: we imitate the emotional stability (or instability) of those around us, making this our way of living our emotions; if we grow up surrounded by emotional outbursts, we model ourselves in the same way, and wonder why, in later life, we have these outbursts. If our parents/care-givers easily give up, we will be in the habit of doing the same in later life.
- our health: habits of eating, sleeping, being active, being creative, being happy, all establish themselves in us in these early years - we absorb and imitate everything!
- our relationships to others: we learn how to relate to others by imitating the way those around us relate to each other. If there is fear, mistrust, abuse, aggression, hatred, this is imitated, causing us to have difficulties in our relationships for life, and our trust in the world we have entered. If there are good relationships in the people around us, we will model our relationships in that way.

Imitation in the first 7 years is unconscious imitation. Later, as adults, we are not usually aware of how we have learnt to be what we are from when we were very young. The good qualities we have, we have learnt unconsciously in these early years. In the

same way, the negative qualities we have, we learnt unconsciously when we were very little.

We often see how adults are so similar to the way their parents are! They tend to walk, speak and do things in the same way. Their behaviour tends to be similar to father and/or mother.

As adults, however, we can become aware of many of the things we have learnt unconsciously from our parents/care-givers. If we become conscious of negative qualities we have learnt from them, we can change them if we are willing to do so. We may also have overcome some of the negatives through our own Individuality - so that, in spite of those from whom we learnt certain negatives, our Individuality was strong enough to overcome them.

*[Exercise in looking at oneself: find similarities with parents/care-givers of our first 7 year period, both positive and negative; find at least one negative and think how you can overcome it; then share in groups, if time]*

Imitation is the working of the will-consciousness within us. It is all about doing. Everything we experience we act out, to make it part of us. Huge forces of will are needed to do this. The will is the strongest during the first 7 years of life it will ever be! This is why we are able to learn so much during these years: all body movements, language, thinking, imagination, concentration, being social and developing the will to live to the full!

In these early years when the child is living through the will, he or she is mostly aware of the present moment, and living that to the full. Adults, living largely through thinking, are conscious of the past and the future as well as the present most of the time.

### Will Development

The will is developed for life during these years. For this to happen, children need to be free to move and play the whole day long. They need to use their bodies all the time, explore the surroundings they live in, play with other children. They need to experience life as full of joy, freedom and happiness - this will develop their will, their energy for life, for the rest of their lives.

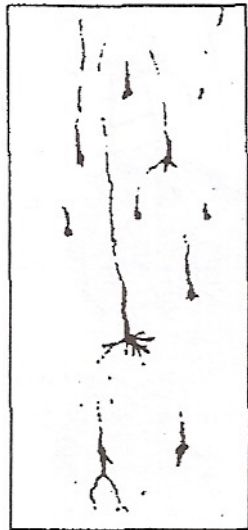
## ***Physical Development***

We showed in Chapter 3 how, in the first 7 years of life, the growth of a child is mainly in the head and the nervous system.

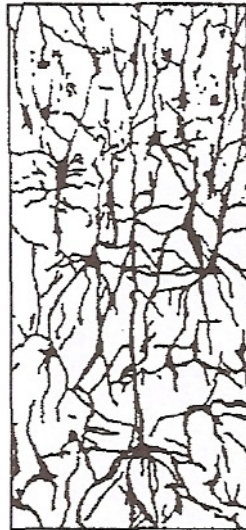
The head becomes larger during these years, allowing for greater brain development. The brain not only grows in size, but also grows in complexity as the child develops

more and more skills in movement, speaking, thinking and the many abilities it learns during the first 7 years.

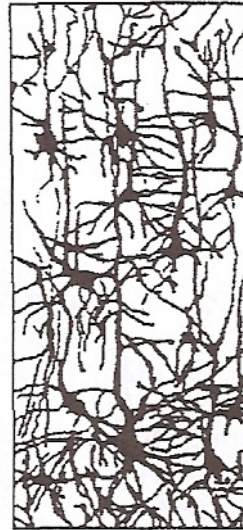
Look at the following pictures<sup>7</sup>:



at birth



3 months



15 months



3 years

Small fibres grow from each brain cell (each 'neuron'). These do not touch each other. There are gaps between them, called synapses. These gaps are filled with a chemical (called a neuro-transmitter) which brings about communication between brain cells. Through the child repeating the new movement again and again, synapses for that particular movement are activated, so they become learned movements (the child does not have to learn them again). The more the child learns different movements, the more synapses are formed in the brain and nervous system.

Synapses also form the basis for thinking - therefore, the more movements are learnt, the more potential the child will have for strong, clear thinking later. Thinking is internal movement, which is not possible unless external movement has first been developed. Therefore, the freedom to move and play - the whole day long, every day - during early childhood is of utmost importance. A harmonious, rhythmic daily routine e.g. the same morning routine, lunch time routine, etc. at the same time every day, builds good habits, and order in life – a will activity in itself, building strong synaptic connections.

<sup>7</sup> from Dr. Michaela Glöckler (2006). Pictures of the Development of Physiology, in *Education - Health for Life*. Michaela Glöckler, Stefan Langhammer & Christof Wiechert (editors). Dornach, Switzerland: Medical and Pedagogical Sections, Goetheanum. Page 32, reference to source missing

## ***The Three Sub-Phases of Early Childhood***

Each 7-year phase can be sub-divided into three sub-phases, which follow the same pattern as the 7-year phases. We therefore speak about “cycles within cycles.”

In physical development we see that there is a pattern of growth from the head downwards. This pattern works over the three 7-year phases, but also works over the three sub-phases of early childhood development:

BIRTH - 7 years: Growth Forces concentrate on the head and brain & nervous system	5 - 7 years	Development of LIMBS and METABOLIC (DIGESTIVE) SYSTEM
	3 - 5 years	Development of CHEST and BREATHING & BLOOD CIRCULATION
	Birth – 3 years	Development of HEAD and BRAIN & NERVOUS SYSTEM

In the development of consciousness we see an opposite pattern:

BIRTH - 7 years: WILL CONSCIOUSNESS	5 - 7 years	WILL CONSCIOUSNESS working in THINKING
	3 - 5 years	WILL CONSCIOUSNESS working in FEELING
	Birth – 3 years	WILL CONSCIOUSNESS working in WILL



Therefore, looking at Early Childhood Development, during the first 7 years of life children are in a will phase, that is, they live through the will to develop their own individuality of being in the three sub-phases of body movement and control, feeling and thinking. This time of 'will' can be divided into three sub-phases:

The will forces work especially in body movement (a will sub-phase within the will phase) - from birth to about 3 years

The will forces work especially in the feeling/emotional life (a feeling sub-phase within the will phase) - about 3 to 5 years

The will forces work especially in the thinking life (a thinking sub-phase within the will phase) - about 5 to 7 years

One must remember that every aspect of the child (physical body, will, feeling and thinking) is growing and developing all the time, but that in each sub-phase there is a specific development that is taking place, such as the will working particularly in the body movements between birth and about 3 years. This development during the first 3 years is happening very intensively, and is the most important development during this time.

Please note:

baby = birth to about 1 year of age

toddler = about 1 – 2 years of age (toddler literally means a very young child learning to walk)

child = 2 years onwards

## ***Birth to 3 years***

### The Need for Mother's Love

It is the mother's love that awakens the child to this world, that encourages it to grow and be well. The baby needs this human contact continually for its well-being. It is only through this human contact that the baby feels welcomed and wants to live - it's will to live depends on this loving connection. Loving attention stimulates the baby's will to live, grow and develop.

If the mother is unable to care for the child herself, a relative or some-one else can take her place, provided this person really cares in a loving way for the child.

Orphan and abandoned children easily die in places where they are cared for physically (kept clean, given food, etc.) but do not receive the love of another human being. In

such cases, they do not receive the human connection which is so much needed for the will to live. Growth and development could be stunted.

Babies need to be surrounded with an atmosphere of wholeness and well-being to grow in a healthy and stimulating way. They need the continual feeling that they are welcome, always cared for, and the security of bonding with a carer (ideally the mother herself). This asks a great deal from parents or those who take care of other people's babies, as how these first years are experienced will determine the children's physical, emotional and mental well-being for the rest of life.

Communities and governments need to recognise the importance of supporting mothers to be able to care for their babies in the best possible way, and not to have to go out to work to keep themselves and their families alive. A nation will be much stronger and healthier if this is done.

### The Will-forces Working into the Body

The newly-born child has to learn to live in the body it has been given. It has received this body from its parents, but now it has to make this body its own. To do this, the will has to be extremely active, both in growing and developing the body, and in gaining control of the body so that he/she can use it for living on this earth. Growth does not necessarily mean development. The body can grow and grow – muscles, bones, brain, etc., but unless the will becomes active the body can DO nothing.

The growth forces move from the head downwards. We can see this in two ways:

#### PHYSICAL GROWTH



The main growth in the first 2½ years is in the head: the brain and nervous system are growing intensively at this time; the skull-bones of the head at birth have not yet grown together, and have spaces between them; they gradually grow together, and at about 2 years of age they have all fused, making the head a closed-off, rounded dome, protecting the brain.

The proportions of the head to the rest of the body at birth is 1:4, that is, a large head and relatively small trunk and limbs.

By comparison to the head, the trunk and limbs grow more slowly in size - they will be growing a lot in the 3 – 5 (trunk) and 5 – 7 year (limbs) sub-phases.

## GAINING AWARENESS AND CONTROL OF THE BODY

Before and immediately after birth the little body makes chaotic, purposeless movements. The child has to gradually bring each part of the body under its own control. This means that the brain, and the nerves running throughout the body, have to develop so that the movements in the muscles become accurate, well co-ordinated and fully controlled by the child.

The new-born child gains control of the body from the head downwards, first in the large motor movements, and later in finer, co-ordinated movements.

The child does this through movement. Tremendous will is used in learning to use the many different muscles of the body, of co-ordinating them to reach the goals it instinctively aims for. The child is full of movement, driven by the will. At first this movement tends to be chaotic and jerky, but gradually each movement comes under the child's control, becoming smooth and directed.

Touch, together with other senses, (which you will learn about in a future Module) makes the child aware of his/her body. For example, instinctively babies want to suckle as soon as they are born. As soon as contact is made with the mother's breast, an awareness is established of the lips, mouth and tongue.

This control and body awareness happens in a beautiful sequence from the head downwards:

- The movements of the eye muscles have to be learnt for the child to be able to see clearly. At first, the new world the child has entered into is a blur, but as it learns to focus - first on the mother, later on things further away - it gradually becomes aware of the surrounding world, as if he/she is 'touching' everything through focussing on it
- Next the child learns to lift the head; when he/she does this, the whole body moves along with the head, as if it is part of the head
- Then the child begins to turn the head as its hearing develops, towards the sounds he/she is hearing
- This is followed by the child beginning to see the hands, after which the child tries to bring the two hands together, at first with great difficulty, but after trying again and again, finally it knows how to bring them together. An awareness of the two arms is established out of the struggle to move them so that the hands can meet.
- The child learns to cross the mid-line at about 6 months of age, the beginning of an awareness of the two sides of the body
- Then the child learns to rotate the trunk, gradually learning to roll over, leading to sitting.

- This is a step towards uprightness; around 7 months, the uprightness only is only in the upper body.
- Then the child becomes aware of the feet, and starts to move the legs consciously, leading towards standing,
- At about 8 months, the child can stand with support from parent/caregiver
- At about 9 months, the child can stand holding onto furniture
- At about 10 months, crawling begins; this requires the child to co-ordinate arms and legs in a rhythm, so that left arm/right leg and right arm/left leg alternate; this is a very important development, as there is a cross-over activity in the nervous system
- At about 11 months, having learnt the co-ordination and cross-over activity, the child makes the first steps in walking, with hand held by a parent/caregiver
- At about 12 - 15 months, the child can stand by him/herself
- At about 12 - 15 months, the child is walking by him/herself, having learnt to manage the whole body from head to feet
- Shortly after walking the child wants to climb – up stairs, onto logs and small tables, chairs, etc.
- Around 2 years the child runs and walks with ease, and can jump up and down
- The child cannot bend down to pick up something without falling over before around 3 years of age. The child has to overcome gravity through the sense of balance, and it takes time for the ability to distribute weight is learned.

It is a great wonder to realise how much the child achieves in its development in the first year : a long path towards becoming upright, standing and walking, including learning to reach for an object, grasp it and be able to consciously release it. Only by 18 months can they perform these actions smoothly.



By 3 years they have a rhythmic control of walking, which becomes smooth, and they can stop, start and turn easily. These are now directed actions of the will, following the child's decisions.

Gradually more and more complex movements are learnt, through the will working at first as instinct, and in working in imitation of others, gradually directing their own movements towards a goal. All these movements have to be co-ordinated, practised and learnt, bringing awareness of the child's own body and of the surrounding world.

These movements also help the child to gain control over its body, making the body a good instrument for everything the child wishes to do. Through this the child also gains a sense of Self, a sense of "I can move, I can stand, I can do many things myself."

It is the tremendously powerful will, so active during this time, that gives the child control and awareness of its own body. The amount of effort that is needed to master the use of the body is enormous - never again in our lives will we have such forces of will working in us again!

The loving, encouraging and joyful responses by the parents or caregivers are essential for healthy development to take place.

### Uprightness

Deep inside the will of the little child is the wish to be like those around him/her: an upright human being. Suddenly, one day, after going through different phases of being held to sit upright and of sitting by him/herself but leaning forwards, the child sits beautifully upright. The same happens later with standing, and finally walking.

What does this uprightness mean in the child's development?

Uprightness means the child can overcome the forces of the earth's gravity. When the child is upright, he/she has learnt to balance the body so that it is no longer limited by gravity - it is free to see, explore and be aware, like all human beings are able to do. While one is still limited to gravity - like the animals - one is always 'held down' by the earth. Only human beings, once they have learnt uprightness, have this freedom from the limitations of gravity.

*Group work:*

*How does uprightness affect us in the following ways:*

- *experience of self in the space around one*
- *experience of the dimensions of space*
  - *front/back*
  - *right/left*
  - *up/down*
  - *diagonals*
  - *distance*

- *direction*
- *the freedom of the hands, to work and give and receive love*
- *being able to see things objectively*
- *in the case of walking*
  - *freedom of movement*
  - *experience of past, present and future?*

In thinking about the freedom of the hands, we can see that everything we as humans have achieved in our long history up to the present day, our rich culture, the wide range of technology from earliest times, we can see the significance of the following statement by Rudolf Steiner:

...through the fact that the movements of arms and hands have become emancipated<sup>8</sup> from those of the legs and feet, something else has happened. A basis has been created for attaining a purely human development<sup>9</sup>

Becoming a human means being able to walk upright, speak, think, and feel compassion and lasting love throughout life.

What brings about this uprightness, which brings such joy to the child?

In the first place, it is the 'I', the Individuality, that raises the child into the upright position. The 'I' needs the body to be upright in order to be able to free from gravity, so that human development can take place.

Secondly, the strong forces of the will make it possible for the child to struggle again and again until he/she achieves this uprightness. When the child has learnt to be upright, it is full of joy at having conquered the ability to be like other human beings.

The perseverance this struggle has taken, and the sense of achievement when a new step is mastered, are very important developments for the rest of life: the child has learnt that he/she can learn and do everything by him/herself, even if it requires trying again and again, and that failure does not matter. This is why it is so important that children are not given walking rings, jolly jumpers or any other aids in learning to be upright/sitting/standing/walking - they need to do it entirely by themselves. Using these aids damages the will of the child, the ability to do things out of his/her own efforts.

### Language development

To begin with, the baby makes crying or grunting sounds. When the parent or care-giver responds, communication begins. It is important for the mother to lovingly talk to

<sup>8</sup> Emancipated = become free from

<sup>9</sup> Rudolf Steiner: *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, 1996:27



her baby, to stroke, hold, rock and sing to him/her from birth - the baby responds to these, and communication grows.

The baby begins to make coo-ing sounds, using vowels, later adding a few consonants: usually 'ma-ma-ma' and 'ba-ba-ba' are the first to appear.

Gradually more sounds are added, combining them into something that sounds like speaking, called 'babbling.' At this stage, children could learn any language, as the basis is laid. Of course, they will continue to develop by learning the language that they hear around them, sometimes more than one.

Around 9 months babies begin to recognise a few words. This happens through the gestures that go with them.

As they grow, they begin to point to something saying, "da!" as if giving it a name. The next stage is the one-word-sentence, such as pointing to a dog and saying, "dog!" Note how, in the development of language, naming comes first (the first indication of human speech in the Bible is that Adam names the creatures!). The child now feels that s/he is the king of creation as s/he names and knows objects in the environment. This cannot happen until the child has experienced uprightness and the objectivity which follows. While the child is still on the floor feeling that s/he is a part of everything, it is impossible for naming, which requires that you are aware that you are separate from the object, to occur. Here we see the connection between uprightness and speech.

Gradually, two-word sentences emerge, such as "give me!" Here we see simple verbs appearing.

Through language, the child gradually begins to realise that words have meaning, and that these can reflect what it experiences.

By 18 months the children have between 40 and 70 words, and by 2 years about 400 to 500 words.

### From age 1 to the third birthday

The will continues to work in the body movements, but from about 1 year of age the child becomes more adventurous. Being able to walk by him/herself opens a whole new world to explore. The child is very active at this age, playing with everything he/she can find in the surroundings. More advanced body movements are learnt, such as:

- walking and running, turning, falling and getting up
- climbing on and off things
- rolling on the ground

- carrying things, packing and unpacking them
- pushing and pulling things

The child is learning to co-ordinate the movements of the body (mostly 'large motor co-ordination' = big movements of arms, legs, body; 'fine motor co-ordination' = small movements with the fingers, comes later). As was said before, all these movements develop synapses in the brain, causing it to develop more and more.

The young child loves moving, and demands to be noticed by parents and others – "Look at me! Mummy look at me!" This recognition of the child's achievements is very important, as it continually encourages the child's developments.

It is also important for the child who is developing a sense of 'I' or 'I can do it'. Through this the child becomes more and more independent.

Imitation continues all the time. Now, when mother is doing something, the child wants to do it with her. It is the doing that the child loves so much, not yet the reason for doing something (the ability to reason only develops later). The mother is sweeping, a little voice says "Me too". The child has a small broom and sweeps vigorously – all the mother's carefully swept dust is spread all over the floor, for the child has no idea that sweeping has a purpose, s/he just wants to imitate the actions. At this age the child is fiercely wanting to become independent and do things for his or her self. Children want to dress themselves – "Me do it!" There is a tantrum if they are not allowed to – and why should they be stopped? Does it matter if the t-shirt is back to front and the shoes on the wrong feet? The sense of achievement is far more important, and the parent is there to help – "Alright – you can dress yourself. I am here to help if you get stuck!" And at the end of dressing – "You are clever – well done!"

By about 2½ years of age, the child has a more advanced, clearer speech. About 120 different muscle movements have to be learnt to make the various speech sounds in one language. Tremendous will forces are needed to learn these muscle movements, but the child seems to do it effortlessly, simply by imitation and repetition.

## Emotional Development

Around 2 years of age, the children often have tantrums. These emotional outbursts are really signs of frustration or anger because they cannot have what they want, whether it is a toy another child has, or something they want to do or do not want to eat; or the pure frustration of not being able to express themselves and explain why they want things to be different. It is not easy to deal with these tantrums, but if one can distract them by offering something else, they easily forget having the tantrum. Worst is when parents give in to every tantrum, just to keep them quiet. This spoils them, and more tantrums follow whenever they cannot have their way. It is better to turn away and ignore what is happening without anger. An angry reaction from the parent only creates a power struggle. It is better that the child learns to cope with the problem

him or herself. When it is over, acknowledge the child by smiling and cuddling, but do not refer to the tantrum, “talk it over”, ask how the child felt, etc. The incident is closed and behind you both.

The child is discovering him/herself as having separate feelings, discovering the “I” in the psyche. The child’s desires bump up against another’s. ‘My wants and needs are not always the same as Mummy’s or other peoples.’ This is another experience of separateness. All through our lives we come up against this problem – other people think differently, buy different things, vote differently. At this early stage the child is beginning to discover acceptance of differences, and how to cope with them. At 4 – 4 ½ the child’s will works more deeply into coping with these feelings, as we shall see.

### The first ‘I’ experience

Around 2½ years, the skull-bones of the head have grown together, and therefore have completely closed off the brain from the outside world. This means a certain process of growth has now been completed, so that something new is possible in the child’s development.

Around this time, children suddenly start using the words ‘me’ and ‘I’ to refer to themselves. In the same way that the head-bones have now separated the brain from the outside world, objectivity has been gained through standing and walking, a new milestone in the development of their consciousness appears: the awareness of being separate from others (‘this is me’ and ‘that is not me’). This separation is important as now they become aware of themselves as individuals, becoming more independent.

Because the growth forces have finished their work on closing off the brain, the brain is now ready for a new development. This new development, together with the first ‘I’ experience, enables the child to learn the complicated grammatical structures of the language(s) in which he/she is brought up in.

If we, as adults, are learning a new language, it takes us a long time and much effort to learn to speak it correctly; we usually struggle to learn and use the correct grammar. Not so for the little child: the powers of will are so strong that he/she learns everything through imitation and repetition, and through the ‘I’ (that is now awakening) the understanding of the structure of language. This understanding is, of course, unconscious - it can be brought to consciousness later in the primary school, when the child is ready for this (from about 9 years of age).

The ‘I’ experience around 3 years also brings children to an understanding of the word ‘no!’

### Memory

From 1 to 3 years, the memory of a child is growing very rapidly. More and more words are being learnt, the recognising of others by their names, the many complex ways of doing things and control of the body (including becoming toilet trained).

However, the memory of the child at this age is what is called 'local memory.' This means that the physical objects have to be seen by the child to remember what they are for and what he/she can do with them. For example, when the child sees grandmother, he/she knows who this is, what her name is, and what she means to him or her (for example, grandmother is a nice person to be with, she gives something nice to eat, she likes to play with the child). Soon s/he will recognise something on the route to grandmother and be excited and anticipate seeing grandmother. Similarly, unpleasant experiences, like going to hospital where you had a painful injection, are anticipated and the child cries and objects.

## Play

Children under the age of 3 years are exploring everything in their environment. By experimentation they see what can be done with different objects, or try to use it the way he/she has seen adults or older children using them. The way they play at this stage is by doing, not with a realisation of purpose, or of fantasy play. We have seen a three-year-old child taking blocks out of a basket and carrying them across the garden one by one, piling them on a low table. This took a long time to complete. The child looked at his handiwork, and then took all the blocks back, mostly one by one, and put them in the basket. This took more than an hour. At the end the child walked away, totally satisfied. This is pre-fantasy play.

Children at this stage play for a short time with one object, moving on to another and another after that. This is because they are only at the doing stage of play, imitating what they have seen or experimenting with something new. They have no concept of putting anything away, but will imitate and 'help' an adult to tidy.

They also do not play together before 3 years of age; they do what is called 'parallel play', that is, playing side-by-side with one or more others, but not playing together. Each child plays by him/herself, and all goes well provided another child does not have what this child wants!

However, they love playing with an adult or older child. This kind of play is usually physical, such as being rocked or swung, bounced on the knees (with a rhyme), or doing finger games ('Round and round the garden ....'; 'This little pig went to market ....') or other traditional games belonging to the children's culture.

## The first three years

The first three years are the most important years of one's entire life, as they form the basis for everything that follows. Jean Paul, a German poet, said

The human being learns more for the whole of life during the first three years, than he does during his three years at university<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Jean Paul (1763 – 1825), quoted by Rudolf Steiner: *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, 1996:25

## ***From 3 to 5 years***

### Physical Development – the Forces of Growth in the Rhythmic System

In the years between 3 and 5, there is a lengthening of the trunk, especially the chest. Because of this lengthening, the 'baby fat' begins to disappear. The dimples on the knuckles also disappear, so one now sees the joints of the fingers. This shows that the 'I' of the child is moving more closely into the body, making it more able and more flexible. Particularly the fingers show this development, so that fine motor co-ordination improves.

In the first three years, from birth to about age 3, the growth forces were mainly working in the head and nervous system of the child. In many ways the growth forces have brought this task to a completion, and in this next phase, from 3 to 5 years, the growth forces are now focussing on the trunk, mainly the rhythmic system. The child can become aware of breathing because the ribs are now moving rhythmically outwards and inwards, whereas before the breathing was done, completely instinctively, by the contraction and release of the diaphragm.

The lengthening and expansion of the chest area (and therefore the trunk as a whole) results in the proportions of the body changing. Because the trunk is growing longer, proportionately the head appears smaller in relation to the rest of the body. Although the forces of growth have mostly completed the development of the head, it is still growing gradually larger in size, although more slowly. The limbs still remain relatively short compared to the rest of the body.

Another development in the rhythmical system is that a rhythmical relationship begins to co-ordinate breathing and heartbeat. Whereas before, breathing and heartbeat each functioned in their own time, now a rhythmical working together is established.

During the 3 to 5 years phase, children tend to have many infectious illnesses - the so-called 'childhood diseases' (colds, temperatures, chicken pox, measles, etc.). These are good for the physical development of the child, strengthening the immune system so that the child is stronger in resisting disease later on. After one of these illnesses one can often see a jump in the child's development.

Unfortunately, many doctors advise parents to have their children immunised against these children's diseases, whereas they are nature's way of strengthening the child for the future of his/her life. Immunisation against life-threatening illnesses is, however, advisable (this includes measles) as well as against German measles (rubella) in adolescent girls.

The child continues to develop what he/she has already learnt: uprightness (learning to balance gravity) in more adventurous jumping, walking on a tree-trunk or plank above

the level of the ground, climbing; being more aware of space (directions in space); and his/her movements and gestures.

### Development of Consciousness - Feeling Sub-phase

The new developments in the chest bring about new possibilities in the unfolding of the child's consciousness. As the activity of the will now becomes focussed in the upper trunk, the centre of the rhythmic system, an awareness of his/her own feelings is born. Now joy and sadness, love and denial of love, are consciously felt by the child.

Breathing is taking air from the outside, bringing it into the body where an exchange of gases takes place, and then breathing out air that has been warmed and moistened by us. In the same way, the child now has the ability to relate to the outside world with feelings. What they take in through the senses is experienced in a feeling way.

As the child matures in his/her feelings, s/he begins to develop his own inner security and is able gradually to let go of the mother as s/he realises that each separation is not a permanent one. S/he becomes able to express his/her needs or wants from another in the absence of the mother. Security development occurs in small steps. A child will play close to the mother or caregiver, then move away a short distance, and return to the source of security. Movement away from the mother or caregiver goes further and further, and the time period spent away gets longer in stages. The child needs always to know that their primary source of comfort and security has not disappeared.

Because the child is awakening in its feeling life, fantasy now begins. The child is able to imagine that an object represents something else, for example, a block can be a car, or a stove, or a house, etc. Without feeling, fantasy is not possible, as fantasy belongs to 'dreaming', to 'dream-images' that we create; and as discussed in the previous module, the feeling realm of the human being 'dreams', whether we are awake or asleep.

These new developments, which happen from about 4 years of age onwards, we call a 'feeling sub-phase.' This means that the will is now working mainly into the feeling life of the child. Whereas before, the will was working into the physical movements of the child, it now develops the emotions and the ability to become social.

When the child was 2½ s/he was learning to feel emotions deeply (temper tantrums, knowing and refusing things which s/he did not like). Now with the will working in the feeling/emotional realm the child learns to bring the emotional outbursts under control. This is helped by his/her increased vocabulary – it is easier to express verbally what is wanted. The child has learnt to know his/her feelings (not their names) and can now inhibit him/herself from expressing them in ways which are not appropriate (not all the time – they are still very little).

This is possible because a firm identity of 'I' has been established, and therefore an awareness of 'another.' The child now develops sympathy for others, showing caring



and concern for them. If a friend falls or hurts him/herself, by five the child will lovingly care for him/her and help to make things better.

Because of this sympathy, we can see the child starting to play together with another child, more able to share things out of a common feeling of togetherness. This new social ability allows the child to connect with others, but also to hold back from connecting - a kind of 'social breathing' which is now possible. In play we see them giving love to soft toys, dolls, etc., wrapping them, rocking and feeding them, and putting them comfortably to bed. They also give love to their parents or caregivers in a new way, consciously expressing love through affectionately cuddling and kissing.



The new awareness of breathing rhythmically gives birth to a love of rhythm. Rhymes, songs, games, stories with repetition, anything that has rhythm in it, appeals to the child as he/she can feel it. When drawing pictures, many children draw 'rainbow curtains' in which colours are drawn rhythmically next to each other. Repetitive patterns are drawn carefully. The child is now able to spend much more time on their drawings (chatting away all the time).

As the child grows further, his/her interest in the world grows. This is very much as a result of freedom of movement, but also because the forces of growth have to a large extent completed the development of the head, especially the brain and nervous system, and so the child is now ready to begin to think more ably than before. We see this in the children's play, for example, in how their play becomes more complex.

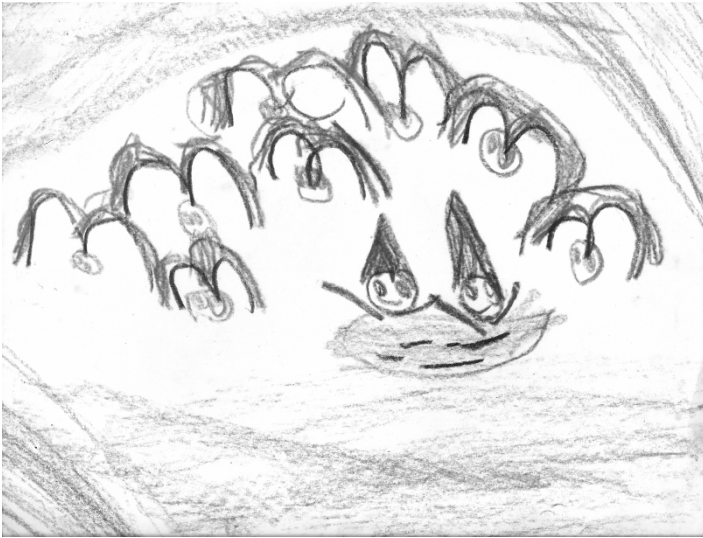
Language and thinking now develop together. Curiosity about every aspect of life and his/her surroundings results, around 4 years of age, in more and more questions being asked, eventually so many that one can hardly keep on giving answers! This interest is a healthy attitude, showing that the child is relating to the world (relating can only come with emotional development!).

### Imaginative Play

As we have said above, fantasy, which is the ability to imagine something, begins to develop in the children at this stage. An object reminds the child of a real-life experience, for example, a doll reminds the child of going to bed, so the child now plays putting the doll to bed. Everything that the mother does when putting the child to bed, he/she now does with the doll. The child imagines being the mother, hugs and kisses the 'child', sings a little song, says a prayer, and tucks the doll under the blankets so it can go to sleep.

To begin with, fantasy play is fairly short, the child's mind moving on to something else quite quickly. As they grow, children are able to imagine without an object to stimulate their play. This happens because the memory of the children has developed a great deal, and they are able to create inner pictures of their experiences. They therefore become less dependent on outer objects to stimulate fantasy play.

These inner pictures arise from family life, work done in their surroundings, events they have attended, stories they have heard, etc. It is important therefore, that children experience a rich cultural life from family, society and education.



Often in today's family life there is a lack of cultural activities: television has replaced the age-old custom of telling stories by the fireside; computer games, videos, DVDs, etc have replaced interaction, games and discussion in the family; growing one's own vegetables and having one's own chickens no longer happen in many homes; religion has less importance in many communities; and city dwellers have lost contact with the earth, the natural environment and how the human being needs to work in harmony with nature.

This is where the early childhood centre, or kindergarten, needs to provide a rich, cultural approach to caring for and educating the young children, so that their imaginative play - the most important preparation for later learning - is developed to the full.

### Language

The children's development of their language between 3 and 5 years is enormous. They learn to express feelings, ideas, stories and memories for which a wide range of words are needed. Because their memory is strong, they can recite whatever they have learnt in the way of rhymes, and sing the songs they know. Again, a rich cultural life is needed to develop their language to the full and therefore their thinking abilities, as thinking is connected to language.

## *From 5 to 7 years*

### Physical Development

From 5 to 7 years the body continues to lengthen, more especially in the lower trunk and limbs. In the trunk, we see the hollowing of the lower back (more curve in the spine) and the rounded stomach flattens. All over the body the 'baby-fat' disappears, and the child is now leaner and longer. This flattening of the stomach and disappearing of the baby fat is due to the forces of growth taking hold of the metabolic system, refining its functions and laying the foundations for healthy digestion.

A waist now appears. This separation of the upper and lower trunk indicates that the forces of growth, so active in the chest / rhythmic system between 3 and 5 years, has now completed that area of its work and now moves into the lower trunk (the abdomen) and the limbs. The waist separates the activity of the intestines (which absorb the nutrients out of the food we have eaten) from the rhythmic system, which is now freed to continue by itself.

In the limbs, we specially see the lengthening of the upper arms and the thighs, and a strengthening of the whole body. By the time a child is about 6½ years of age, the upper arms will have developed enough for the child to do the "Philippine Test" (or "School-ready" test): by placing an arm over his/her head, it is able to touch the opposite ear. (Of course, this is only one of the indicators of school- or learning-readiness).

Because of the growth of the lower trunk and limbs, the proportions of the body change. The head does not grow much in size any more, and so looks smaller in comparison to the rest of the body. The face also changes, gaining more definite features, showing that the child's individuality has taken hold of the body more deeply, making it his/her own body that expresses his/her own uniqueness.

Fine-motor co-ordination now develops a great deal, enabling children to handle scissors accurately, to sew and thread beads, and to make finer things with their fingers. The whole body becomes well co-ordinated (large motor co-ordination), and so the movements of the children at this age become flowing and graceful.

## Social and Emotional Development



If all goes well, children at this age are blossoming. They are confident, can meet others easily, are full of joy, and can happily play with others for hours and hours. The need to cling to mother, or caregiver, should have disappeared before 5 years of age, and they have an independence which allows freedom to be with others.

The children now reach an emotional maturity that can handle situations which do not go the way they would like, for example:

- when something is not working, causing frustration, they can continue to try to find a solution
- when others are teasing or thwarting them, which could lead to fighting, they can accept the situation and handle it in another way to avoid fighting
- they can wait (if for example they cannot have something immediately)
- they can ask for help when needed

Socially, they can also handle being together in a group and adjusting to what happens in the group, for example:

- wait for a turn in a ring game
- accept that play-time is over and tidying up has to begin
- can discuss and come to a joint solution when there are differences of what the group wishes to do
- can take on responsibilities for the group (e.g. handing out the crayons and paper)
- anticipate the next activity and prepare for it (e.g. laying the tables for lunch)
- take on different roles in play, for example sometimes being the leader, sometimes the follower, depending on the situation
- can accept that rules are necessary for good living together (e.g. in ring games, everyone must follow the rules otherwise it spoils the enjoyment of the game)

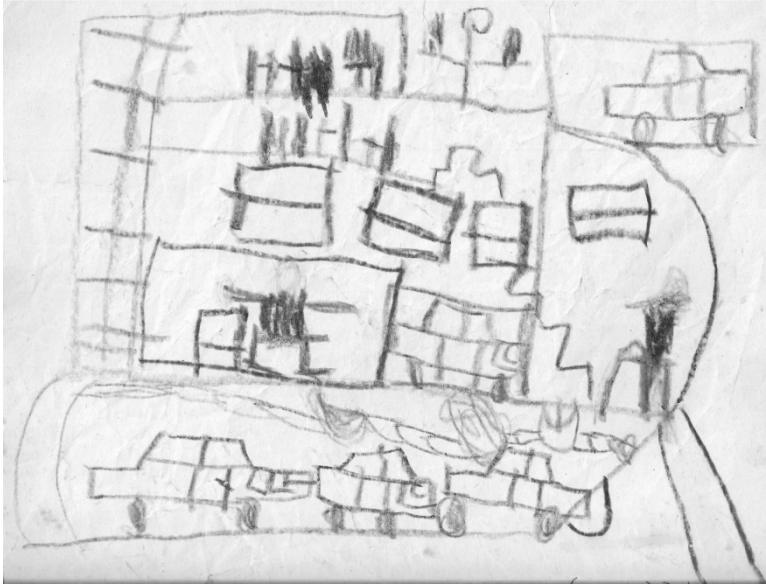
*Ring games essential for the social development of this age group and which reflect the emotional development of children of this age (see all the above points made) are:*  
(English examples)

*Oats and beans and barley grow  
Go round and round the village  
The big ship sails through the holy holy ho!  
Go in and out the swaying grasses*



*Find ring games from our own culture that reflect the same]*

## Intellectual Development



The will is now moving into developing the thinking of the child. This does not mean that the child was not using its ability to think before this age, but that thinking was used in connection with the child's experiences: forming simple mental pictures, simple concepts, all connected with the language the child was learning at the time. Gradually these pictures and concepts became more complex as the child's experience widened, but now the child learns to think using these pictures and concepts.

The brain has undergone a great deal of physical development from birth to about 4 years, forming synapses through movement, allowing recognition, memory and limited thinking to gradually emerge. Now it is mature enough for thinking to start its development.

Children from 5 to 7 years develop the following thinking abilities:

- thinking for themselves (how can I do this? how can I get Mommy to agree?)
- taking responsibility for things (I will do it!). They spontaneously take on advanced tasks (e.g. at 'tidy time' – "Teacher, you take the children into the garden and we (small group of two or three 5½ - 6 year olds) will get ready for story". And they do – tidy, sweep, set chairs, place the story candle in the middle of the circle and decorate around it. All without help or being asked.
- setting own goals (let's build a house with .....)
- plans games in advance – 'lets pretend that .....'
- gathers everything that is needed in advance, makes things like 'money', tickets
- can follow instructions given
- able to discuss and debate ideas
- can set rules for games
- can be critical of own or other's work (I don't like my drawing) This occurs at age 6 – 7, especially after and sometimes during the 5½ year-old crisis – discussed below)

- can imagine well (does not need objects for play)
- know the difference between fantasy and reality

However, it must not be thought that these developments mean that children can now be taught letters and numbers, writing, reading and arithmetic. The children are growing their thinking abilities at this stage. They need time to establish these skills before formal learning begins.

Above all, play is still a most important activity which develops these skills, and enriching activities such as morning rings (full of imagination and movement), storytelling, puppetry, painting, drawing, modelling and various craft activities are needed to stimulate these early thinking abilities.

### The 5½-year-old crisis

The development of thinking, however, brings with it a crisis. This is because thinking tends to separate that which before was always kept whole.

Around 5½ years of age, the child suddenly experiences this separateness from parents, important others and the environment, caused by the new thinking processes that have been developing in him/her. He/she has a sudden awareness of being alone and having to be responsible for him/herself.

This sudden experience of separateness brings fear and withdrawal in child. We see this in many ways: he/she

- is not able to play, the imagination seems to have disappeared
- complains of being bored and that there is nothing to do. They 'stand around'
- seems to be upset for no reason at all, cry very easily for nothing
- behaves in a more difficult way than usual
- seems to regress, wanting to become like a baby again, be held by mother, want to be the 'baby' in every house game
- they may want a dummy or a bottle – parents can allow this, it won't be long before they stop
- want to be cuddled, wrapped up in a blanket
- makes drawings that are empty, have no colour
- is hanging around, no wish to do anything
- does not want to go to school anymore ('I hate school' 'I don't like you Teacher and I'm not coming back'.)

Parents and teachers need to understand this as a transition time, a new development that is happening in the child. The change usually does not take longer than about three weeks, but different children will go through this change at different times, and it may seem that the class is unhappy, dissatisfied over quite a period of time. It is therefore important that teachers inform the parents of these children what happens



around this age, so that they do not blame the school, but see it as a transition that all children have to go through. Teachers should look out for this crisis. It can be very short, but it is a valuable indicator of school readiness and it is certainly preferable for children to go through it in the kindergarten and not in primary school.

The child needs both understanding and loving support while going through this crisis. Parents and teachers need to give such a child more attention than usual, so that he/she does not feel alone and abandoned. The child needs to feel secure, not only that he/she is loved and appreciated, but also through the regular routine of the day. The day needs to be filled with productive activities, giving the child a positive structure within which the inner changes can take place.

Both parents and teachers need to realise that loving support and more attention does not mean that one puts aside the rules for proper living - these must still be adhered to, even if the child resists them during this time. For example, one cannot allow the child to simply do as he/she likes because of being unhappy; the daily routine and behaviour expectations must continue as always, including the things the child no longer wishes to do. Positive, loving, but firm handling is needed.

It is of no use to try to explain to the child what is happening within him/her and in fact should not be done. It is all happening unconsciously within, and as yet the child does not have the awakened consciousness of Self (which only comes in adolescence) to understand an internal crisis. A loving, encouraging support is what is needed at this time.

Once the child has become used to the new way of feeling separate from the world, of being on his/her own, the crisis is over, and a new consciousness emerges. The physical, social/emotional and thinking skills described above (see pages 21-24) now develop to their full, so that by 7 years of age the child is ready for school and for learning.

### The Change of Teeth

Children turning 6 years now go through a highly significant change: the 'second dentition' or more commonly known as the 'change of teeth'. At this age the start to lose their 'milk' teeth (baby teeth) and the new, permanent teeth take their place. The new teeth grow behind the milk teeth, and do not push the milk teeth out - the roots of the milk teeth become infected, whereby they dissolve, and then the milk tooth can be wiggled out.

The new teeth are different from the milk teeth. Whereas the milk teeth in all children are very much the same, the new teeth are very individual to each child. They reflect the Individuality that is taking hold of the body. The permanent teeth are also made of the hardest substance our bodies will ever create!

The new teeth show an interesting rhythm in how they appear: the first new teeth grow very quickly, as if they are in a hurry to come out. Then, the teeth that follow gradually grow slower and slower, taking longer and longer to appear. The 'wisdom' teeth take the longest time to grow, only appearing around 18 or 19 years of age.

The appearance of the new, permanent teeth is highly significant, showing that the forces of growth are completing their work on transforming the body that was given by the parents, into the child's own body. This body now reflects the Individuality of the child, and will serve the child for the rest of his/her life.

The change of teeth also means that the body is now ready for thinking in a new way - the kind of thinking that is needed to begin learning writing, reading and arithmetic. Between 6 and 7 years the first permanent molars begin to emerge. It is these molars that indicate that the child is now ready for the next step in life - to enter the primary school.

### ***Care and education of children from birth to 7 years***

It is important to understand that the care and education of children falls into different groupings, because of the different needs children have as they grow up.

It needs to be remembered that throughout early childhood, children learn everything through doing. The years from birth to 7 years are very active years, during which the child is continually exploring, playing, being physically full of movement. Teachers and carers should work with this characteristic, not against it by requiring the children to sit still for long periods of time.

#### Birth to 2 years: home or care centre

Ideally, babies/toddlers need to be at home with the mother and family. Plenty of opportunity for movement and play is of great importance, as well as a loving relationship between mother and child.

Often today, the ideal situation is not possible. In some cases babies/toddlers are cared for by a grandmother or other family member, or cared for in a care centre. It is of utmost importance that carers understand the importance of love in the awakening of the child and the child's well-being, which they need to give as if the child was their own. A calm, beautiful environment needs to be created, in which the child can move and play as much as possible.

#### 2 to 4 years: playgroup

Children of this age group need simple, little activities such as singing games, rhymes, stories as part of their daily routine, but remembering that the major part of their day needs to be given to play. They need to be separate from the babies/toddlers, who require so much individual attention, and would get in the way of playgroup children's

play, and separate from the 4- to 6-year-olds, who have a more structured program. The playgroup should be as much like a home as possible with the teacher and/or her assistant doing household activities and allowing the children to join them – e.g. washing cloths and dolls clothes, dusting, washing dishes, helping with cooking – or just watching, etc.

#### 4 to 6 years: kindergarten

Children of kindergarten age (from 4 years, not younger) have their own needs. Their program includes morning rings, free play, art and craft activities, and story-time which need to be at their level. The class needs to have mixed ages (4-, 5- and 6-year-olds in one class) as the younger children learn a great deal from the older ones, and the older ones stay in contact with the younger children (as it would be in a family), caring for them and interacting socially with them.

#### Afternoon care

Children who cannot go home in the afternoon need to be cared for by some-one who understands child development and the needs of the children in their care. The afternoon program needs a rest (sleep) period, some art or craft activities and supervised play; and some home activities where possible.

The Afternoon Care person is not there to teach the children in any way, or to try to stimulate the children to learn, but rather to keep them happily busy with constructive activities and free play.

### ***In Conclusion***

It is of greatest importance that people understand that the earliest years of childhood have the biggest effect on the rest of life. How we bring up children in Early Childhood determines how the rest of life will be shaped.

Many times in his writings, Dr Steiner has shown that it is in the earliest years of childhood that things happen which are the deciding factors in later life. Whatever is done well or ill to a child in its earliest age will re-appear in the grown person as faculties or failings, health or disease.<sup>11</sup>

As parents, carers and teachers we need to work on ourselves to provide the best possible environment within which the child can grow up. This means two things: we need to continually carry out good and moral thoughts and actions which are worthy to be imitated by the child; and we need to continually develop our understanding of the child and what it needs at every stage of its development.

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<sup>11</sup> Albert Steffen: [A Report on] *Lectures to Teachers by Rudolf Steiner (Switzerland 1921)*. London: Anthroposophical Publishing Company. Page 39

## CHAPTER 5 - MIDDLE CHILDHOOD (7 to 14 years)

### AGES IN SCHOOL GRADES/STANDARDS

Turning 7 - Grade 1  
 Turning 8 - Grade 2  
 Turning 9 - Grade 3  
 Turning 10 - Grade 4  
 Turning 11 - Grade 5  
 Turning 12 - Grade 6  
 Turning 13 - Grade 7

### ***THE SECOND 7-YEAR PERIOD***

In this second cycle of seven years ("middle childhood", 7 - 14 years), the forces of growth (moving from the head downwards into the rest of the body), meet the forces of consciousness (moving from will to feeling to thinking consciousness) in the rhythmic system: that area of the blood circulation and breathing that connects the alertness of the senses in the head with the less conscious activity of the limbs. As A.C. Harwood says,

"the energy of the children that has been so active in the development of the body before the change of teeth now becomes particularly involved in the building and harmonizing of the rhythmic system, while the consciousness, once so absorbed in exploring the world through 'doing', now becomes open to perception through feeling and imagination. It is a time of development of the heart both physically and psychically and is therefore often called the "heart of childhood."<sup>12</sup>

By "building and harmonising" the rhythmic system, Harwood means that during this 7-year period, the forces of growth are now working mostly in the chest region of the body, on the breathing and blood circulatory systems. These systems grow in size and strength, and are gradually brought into a stable rhythm. The heart and lungs come into a mutual relationship around 9 – 10 years: for every one in- and out-breath there are 4 heart-beats (a 1:4 relationship).

The forces of consciousness are working through the feelings during the whole of middle childhood. This means that everything the child experiences is taken in through the feeling life. Therefore the child between 7 and 14 should not be taught in an intellectual way, but rather through the feelings and the imagination. When we teach imaginatively, thinking, feeling and will are combined in a beautifully balanced way.

<sup>12</sup> A.C. Harwood. *The Recovery of Man in Childhood*, 1963:71

As discussed in the first module, the feelings are “dream-like” in consciousness. It is of utmost importance to realise that children in this age-group need to learn in this “dream-like” manner. It is not good for the child to be confronted with learning hard facts, in a mechanical way, which will force them to think like adolescents or adults. A lot of damage is done if this approach is used, killing their creativity, limiting their thinking and robbing them of their enthusiasm for learning.

Good primary school teachers therefore make every effort to teach using the feelings and the imagination, transforming everything to be learnt into “dream-like” stories and images, and learning through drawings, paintings, modelling, singing, drama, movement and beautiful language (poetry and literature). This “dream-like” approach leads the children to the knowledge and skills they have to learn. Their eagerness to learn is high, because they are able to connect themselves, through their feelings and imagination to what they are learning.

### Three Sub-Phases

The cycle between 7 and 14 years is known as the ‘feeling phase’ of the children’s development and it is divided into three sections:

A will sub-phase within the feeling phase (about 7 to 9 years): this sub-phase is still strongly influenced by will forces and is therefore known as the ‘will’ sub-phase of the ‘feeling’ phase.

A feeling sub-phase within the feeling phase (about 9 to 12 years): this sub-phase is the centre of the ‘feeling’ phase of this cycle, where the children’s feelings undergo a dramatic transformation and are at their most intense.

A thinking sub-phase within the feeling phase (about 12 to 14 years): this sub-phase is known as the ‘thinking’ sub-phase of the ‘feeling’ phase of development, as the children’s faculties for conscious observation and judgement begin to emerge.

## ***FROM 7 TO 9 YEARS***

### ***Children turning 7 years (Waldorf Grade 1)***

Out of the spiritual world, this child has come down to you;  
You shall solve its riddle from day to day, from hour to hour.<sup>13</sup>

#### **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Children around the age of seven years are physically taller and thinner than they were in the pre-school. The spine becomes S-shaped and the stomach is flat, and they have an easy agility of movement that is not completely co-ordinated. The head seems smaller with the growth in height, being now 1:6 in proportion to the rest of the body.

Some children have a somewhat dreamy, soulful expression, showing that they are still living in their own wonderland. Most of them have a steady, eager gaze with a firmness of nose, mouth and chin, especially those chatty ones with lively alert eyes who usually have smaller heads than the others. Others find difficulty in meeting the teacher's eyes and this indicates their lack of individuality at this stage and a preference for just being part of the group. There are often toothy smiles with plenty of gaps as new teeth are growing through, indicating their readiness to chew on material for learning: writing, reading and mathematics in primary school.

The teacher will notice the different handshakes when greeting the children each morning: how soft many of them are, unconscious of that grip of greeting that says "I am here", except for the little rascal who squeezes on purpose. And yet, those little fingers are slowly waking up and love to fiddle with everything in sight, exploring the world of touch, learning to use them purposefully and consciously.

The legs are not always steady, there are many trips and falls and tears, but running, skipping, hopping and climbing on the 'jungle gym' outside in the playground develop strength and balance. The children at this age have not yet come 'down to earth'. However, the longer legs and trunk and the greater freedom of movement, show that Grade 1 children have achieved some measure of independence and are ready for the adventure into learning.

<sup>13</sup> Verse for teachers by Rudolf Steiner.



## THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

### *One with the world*

Emotionally, Grade 1 children experience a sense of unity or oneness with the world around them. At this age the children still imitate everyone and everything instinctively, learning both good and bad behaviour and attitudes from those around them, indicating the necessity for appropriate role models. This shows us that they are in the 'will' phase and are therefore largely unconscious of themselves and their actions. They feel part of their class and the teacher is the most important person for them after their parents. They sense the feelings and attitudes of their teacher deeply and therefore imitate them unconsciously. To be enfolded in the love of their teacher is a wonderful experience for them, making them feel secure and strong in themselves. If that teacher is also filled with an inner joy and love of life, the child will receive a sweetness and light in their souls that will carry them throughout life.

The children show us how vulnerable they still are, how they absorb every sensation, taking it right into their bodies e.g. a little girl with big dark eyes who gets a 'tummy-ache' if the teacher scolds her for anything. When children fall and are hurt, many others want to comfort them, showing how they feel the pain of another. The balance between breathing and heartbeat is still erratic,

For all their quicker breathing, younger children have a relatively slower pulse. This predominance of the breath in the pulse-breath ratio is paralleled in the soul development: impressions from their surroundings – to which, after all, the air they breathe connects them – can easily overwhelm younger children, who are often unable to fend them off.<sup>14</sup>

This shows that the children fluctuate emotionally through the influences of the outside world, becoming part of whatever mood or activity is in their surroundings.

Children are not conscious of their thoughts and feelings, though this does not mean that they are incapable of thinking. They often spontaneously utter amazingly deep or pertinent remarks. They can also be embarrassingly honest. However children at this age do not express ideas or concepts intellectually. The children have a pictorial consciousness that is seated in the holistic, right hemisphere of the brain and is part of their intuitive sense of oneness with the world. Intellectual explanations tend to go 'over their heads' and should be avoided at this stage.

The teacher notices how children enjoy the telling of a story for they sit with wide eyes and expressions that reflect every emotion in the teacher's voice, and a child may even stroke an imaginary beard if the teacher does so when describing an old man. The children drink in the story through the emotions of the teacher, unconsciously absorbing

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<sup>14</sup> Hermann Koepke, *Encountering the Self*, 1989:69

the underlying attitudes and innate wisdom of the story. In preparing the story thoroughly, the teacher infuses it with imagination, feeling and depth of insight, filling out the pictures so that they are easily visualised. Because children live in the pictures, they are also able to remember the story and retell it the next day. In this way we prepare children to have clear perceptions, which lead to clarity of concepts, the foundation of thinking that will emerge consciously around age twelve.

## WHAT THE CHILD NEEDS AT THIS AGE

### *The relationship between teacher and child*

The connection between young children entering primary school at age six to seven years of age and their teacher is a very special one, in which the teacher carries a great responsibility. Openness and acceptance of the children is of paramount importance for creating a good relationship between teacher and child. This attitude forms a basis of trust out of which a deep love can grow.

Many teachers love the children in their class, but if they learn to understand their process of growth, they will find the best way to educate them too. Instead of regarding each of the children as a 'memory box' in which to place all the information required to be learnt, the teacher should view education as a process of development. They need continuously to ask questions of themselves as how best to meet the children's needs in order to foster the growth to their full potential.

Thus the teacher may consider that there is a dialogue between him or her and the children: a dialogue that is largely non-verbal, for the children cannot express their needs in intellectual terms. A dialogue allows both parties to express themselves freely. The teacher, although more knowledgeable and mature than the children, puts aside his or her ego (and also any personal problems) in order to really listen to the children so as to understand where they are coming from.

The observant teacher notices that the children show their response through their actions, which give clues as to how they are progressing: whether they are enjoying the lesson, whether they understand what is being taught and also whether there are any problems. We call this kind of observation 'reading the child'.

On the basis of what the teacher has perceived, he or she can sense how to help the children take the next step in the learning process. The teacher needs to notice where a particular child shows special gifts and encourage him or her; equally the teacher needs to be aware of those who are slower or less able or just dreamier, without thinking they are less intelligent. Here the teacher must find the special gift of the 'less gifted' child. In this way the teacher is continually learning the 'art' of teaching while the children are learning the subject matter that is being taught.

Because children in Grade 1 sense the oneness of the world, the teacher introduces everything as an experience of the whole and systematically leads on from there to the details and concepts to be learnt. We call this method "From the whole to the part." For

example, when learning the letters, the children first hear a story about Big Brown Bear, and then they draw a picture in which the shape of B is seen. Finally they progress to sounding and writing the letter B. This 'oneness' also means that the child is the centre of his own world. Plato has said: "Man is the measure of all things" and thus the teacher connects everything that is taught to qualities of the human being, whether outwardly to the physical body or inwardly to the soul.

### *Learning by doing*

Children in Grade 1 are moving from 'learning by doing' to 'learning through feeling'. What does this mean? Rudolf Steiner has put forward the idea that the child from birth to seven years of age is mainly living in the 'will' or active phase of their development. One may observe how children learn through play at this stage; that everything needs to be explored through the senses and in an active way in order to be integrated through experience.

This 'learning by doing' – by taking in through the senses, and imitating – is now connected with the teacher's authority: how she or he presents everything to be learnt. Here the child will imitate the feelings and the imaginative ideas the teacher brings into all the activities of the day:

There is still a longing in children to absorb through the senses everything happening in their surroundings; this perceiving, which is transformed into imitation, then connects with listening for what comes from the natural authority of the teacher. Truth, at this stage, is not based on the child's judgement, but comes from what the naturally revered authority of the teacher says.<sup>15</sup>

So children entering Grade 1 still need to learn through practical experience and imitation. The cultivation of action games and songs is a simple way of learning through the 'will'. The movement activities assist the children to become co-ordinated. Such children become confident in the use and control of their bodies and become conscious of what they are doing. The teacher continues the pre-learning skills that are begun in pre-school, to develop gross motor and fine motor skills that equip children for learning.

Action songs, games or clapping/stamping rhythms are usually done in a circle around a space in the classroom and help to co-ordinate the whole class, not only the individual child. Like the steady pulse of a heart, a class becomes united in the repetition of rhythm and movement.

Games using 'Body Geography' make them aware of their body and the exercises for 'Brain Gym' assist in developing mental focus and concentration. As they enter the classroom in the morning, children may walk along a wooden beam placed on the floor to help them strengthen their sense of balance. Simple circle dances help children become conscious of rhythm, spatial orientation and social interaction as well as co-ordinating their limbs in a 'fun' way.

<sup>15</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, 1996:98

### *Learning through feeling*

Children are so influenced by the feeling world around them, that the teacher can introduce different moods in the class through stories, poems and songs which the children will automatically take in. And so the teacher allows the children in Grade 1 to 'learn through feeling'. Every concept that must be taught, whether learning the letters, number processes or learning about nature is introduced in the form of an imaginative fairy-tale style of story which is told in a lively way to the class.

It is important that the story is told well, with rich descriptions of surroundings and nature in different moods. The characters must be convincing, and express their thoughts and feelings through dialogue. There must be a good storyline and a satisfying conclusion. Such stories enrich the children's imagination, filling their souls with joy and their minds with curiosity and wonder. Language is developed: vocabulary, grammar usage, self-expression and memory.

The fascination of the story teaches the children how to listen. That night, when the children sleep, they may dream of the pictures experienced in the story. And when the teacher asks the children to retell the story the next day, their understanding has deepened overnight.

### *Rhythm in teaching*

Children in Grade 1 do not have a long attention span to listen to the teacher, and they are easily distracted by all manner of things around them. Even when the teacher thinks the children are listening, they may be dreaming away in their own little world! This can be frustrating for the teacher unless they go along with the children's enjoyment of distraction. The answer is to know when to change the activities or how to create a different mood as soon as they seem restless.

Whatever the length of a lesson, whether a two-hour Main Lesson at the beginning of each day or running lessons of 40 minutes, the principle is the same and a daily rhythm is created. The teacher begins with the rhythmic section (e.g. songs, verses, clapping rhythms or times tables) to gather the class and to activate their memory of aspects to be worked with in the lesson. This is followed by the 'teaching' or main purpose of the lesson and concludes with practical or written work to let the children experience the material.

This structure of the lesson is repeated each day, creating a rhythm in the way children learn. Songs and verses vary as new ones are added on a regular basis. Every day's teaching part will present new material in an imaginative way, full of feeling, that awakens the children to learning with great interest. The work time stimulates them to put what they have learnt into practice, engaging their will through doing.

The teacher is flexible with the time span: some activities or stories take longer than others, but the real guide line is the response of the children – are they eager and

focussed on what they are doing or are they getting restless? In other words, is it time for a change of activity or a change of mood?

What the teacher tries to avoid are the two extremes of spending too long concentrating on one type of learning activity and on the other hand flitting from one activity to the next leaving them breathless and exhausted. What is needed is a rhythm that allows the child times of standing, times of sitting; times of activity, times of listening; times of singing and speaking with the class, times of working or drawing quietly.

This is known as a rhythm of breathing: 'breathing in' with concentrated listening and learning number work or reading; 'breathing out' with artistic and practical activities. If the teacher weaves 'breathing in' and 'breathing out' activities together skilfully, they create a flow of joyful and interesting activities that ensure that a child does not get tired or bored and yet learns all that needs to be taught.

A teacher should also observe how children react to the weather of the changing seasons: they may get floppy in the heat of summer, restless and bouncy on a windy day, irritable when cooped up inside on a rainy day or remain happy in any weather.

More subtle is their response to the phases of the moon. 'New moon' up to 'full moon' brings life and energy and is a good time for starting new projects, teaching new concepts. Certain children may be quite 'out of themselves' at 'full moon'. At 'old moon', in the last days of the cycle, the teacher may find the class limp and inward, preferring to sing old favourite songs, do repetitive work and complete things that are unfinished. The teacher needs to observe the children and respond creatively.

## HOW THE WALDORF CURRICULUM MEETS THE CHILD AT THIS AGE

### *The Grade 1 syllabus*

Everything in the syllabus is selected and taught in a way that fosters the development of the children at each stage. In Grade 1 three subjects are taught throughout the year: language (learning to listen, speak, write and read); mathematics (learning the numbers and the four operations); and environment studies (discovering the world around them, the forerunner of science).

### *Fairy Tales*

Rudolf Steiner has recommended the telling of fairy tales as material that is psychologically appropriate for the phase of development for Grade 1 children. He used the Grimm's fairy tales from Germany, but many countries around the world have their own fairy tales. It is important to look at the hidden wisdom behind Grimm's collection and relate it to the development of the Grade 1 children in order to understand the reason for his choice and then to look for similar types of stories from other countries.

A recurring theme in the Grimm's stories is that of the young prince or princess being sent off to perform a seemingly impossible task. With the help of a dwarf, wild animal or wise woman they go through various adventures. Sometimes there is a spell to be

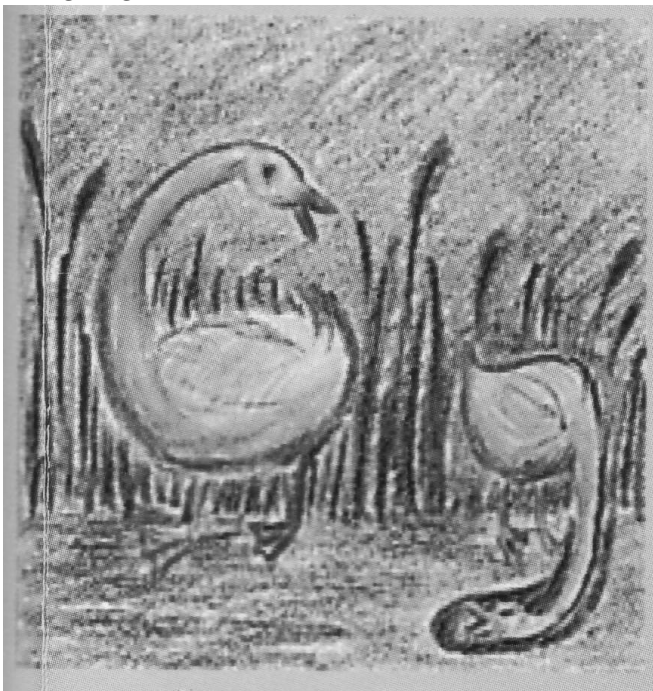


undone, an evil witch or dragon that must be overcome, or something precious to find before they can return home successfully. Often it is the youngest son or a simple woodcutter's boy or girl who becomes the hero of the story.

If we remember that children in Grade 1 live in a state of oneness with the world around them, they naturally identify with the little prince or princess in the story. The truth is that everyone is a child of God, and as a son or daughter of a king and queen, children unconsciously recognise their divine origin and innate nobility.

All the characters represent aspects of the human being, and the young hero is in fact an immature soul who must go through the trials of life as he or she grows up. The 'helpers' represent the children's instinctive nature and their own inner wisdom that can guide them if they are willing to listen. The evil characters are warped or one-sided qualities of soul, usually lacking in feeling. The message is that the 'pure of heart' will overcome evil in any form and reach the goal. This encourages children to go forward in life, knowing that all will be well and in becoming the hero of their own story, they will live 'happily ever after'.

### *Language*



In Grade 1 writing is taught before reading to give the children a practical activity that leads up to learning the concept of the letter. This is introduced through the experience of drawing the straight and curved lines that form the basic shapes of all the letters. (See paragraph on Form Drawing). The consonants are introduced as archetypal characters in a story e.g. Golden Goose. An imaginative story about a Golden Goose and her little one is told, from which the class will draw a picture. The next day, they will discover the secret symbol hidden in the bodies of the two geese - the capital letter G and the small letter g. Slowly and steadily the class learns a group of consonants and then the vowels (sometimes known as angel

sounds) which are expressive of human feelings. They begin to play with the letters, learning to put them together and eventually writing words.

By mid-year the letters should all be known and blends and diagraphs begun as the work of building reading skills progresses. The phonic and the 'whole word' methods are used, where the class writes words and sentences or even a poem that they know before reading them aloud. Simple spelling of words also contributes to the children's encoding and decoding skills.



### *Mathematics*

Numbers relate to the human body: two eyes, ten fingers, etc., and so the children begin with finger games and lots of counting in different ways e.g. Five Little Ducks. They also experience the quality of each of the numbers: “What is ‘One’ in the world?” Answers like the Sun, the moon, or the child, etc give the children the experience of ‘one’.

It is often easier to teach the Roman Numerals first, followed by the Arabic numbers, as the symbols of the former are related to the human hand. If one looks at the back of one’s left hand, one can count the fingers one to four (I,II,III, IIII or IV), while number five is the V between the first finger and thumb. The Arabic numbers can be taught immediately after the Roman numbers.

To introduce children to the four operations, the teacher can create a story, for example, about a king with four advisors (the four operations) to help him rule his kingdom. The children engage with the feelings in the story, identify with the different characters and experience the story as a reality. Thus Farmer Plus is large and generous and is always adding up numbers of apples or cabbages from his garden, while thin Mr. Minus, who is very sympathetic, keeps giving things away to those in need.

The children live in the pictures and so find it easy to remember the story. The concepts are connected to human qualities and are therefore easily understood. This is followed by the teacher integrating the experience of the story through practical and artistic activities that apply the concept. So the children will be given counters or acorns to be used for counting the various vegetables Farmer Plus picked that day, and the concept of ‘addition’ becomes self-evident. The teacher uses a combination of ‘learning through feeling’ in telling the story, followed by ‘learning by doing’ when the children use the counters.

### *Environment Studies*

As much as children love playing in nature and all the elements like sand and water, they are also largely unconscious of the natural world. Hence the teacher finds ways to awaken them by taking them for nature walks and showing them the growth of plants and looking at the birds and little animals in the surroundings.

They notice the changing colours of the seasons by collecting leaves and arranging flowers in the classroom. A nature table where children can bring a special stone or piece of driftwood they have found gives rise to discussion and observation that would not happen without the interest and questions of the teacher. However the teacher needs to bring information in the form of stories rather than explanations.

Little nature stories about Father Sun and Sister Rain assist children to identify with the elements of nature and how they work co-operatively together like a family. Each one has a character e.g. Brother Wind is very mischievous while Sister Rain is sympathetic

and cries easily. Slowly children begin to notice the weather and also small creatures in the garden like birds, snails, ladybirds and worms and they start to appreciate the fascinating variety of the world outside.

Story-telling, as described above, becomes an 'art' in which the children are totally spell-bound, swayed by the different feelings that make a good story so compelling. The children's soul is 'stretched' between joy and sorrow in an experience of beauty.

The story brings the awareness of nature in a pictorial (or symbolic) way, suited to the age of the children:

It is essential that the secrets of Nature, the laws of life, be taught to the boy or girl, not in dry, intellectual concepts, but as far as possible in symbols. ....That behind the parables he divines and feels, rather than grasps intellectually, the underlying law in all existence.<sup>16</sup>

### *The world is beautiful*

It is important that children are surrounded by many forms of beauty during the primary school years. They need to experience the world as beautiful. So many children these days come from difficult home circumstances that deprive them emotionally and mentally, leaving them insecure and lacking in self-worth. Abraham Maslow, in an article on "Fear and Growth"<sup>17</sup>, emphasises the children's need for security and belonging, without which they do not have the confidence to take the next step up the ladder of learning. All forms of art enable children to learn to create this beauty themselves. The healing and educational qualities of art are recognised world-wide, but it is the integration of art in all the different lessons at school that proves its true value.

### *The Arts as teaching tools*

Rudolf Steiner has said that art should be taught for its own sake and not for any ulterior motive. If the teacher introduces the theme in a way that captures the children's imagination, it enables them to become totally absorbed in the experience. Then they draw or paint or model, playing freely with the medium and working creatively out of their feelings. Art allows the child to continue learning through play even after they have left the pre-school.

To a healthy child, playing is in no way just a pleasurable pastime, but a completely serious activity. Play flows earnestly from a child's whole organism. If your way of teaching can capture the child's seriousness in play, you will not merely teach in a playful way but you will nurture the earnestness of a child's play<sup>18</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Education of the Child*, 1965:33

<sup>17</sup> Silberman, Melvin, Allender & Yanoff (editors) *The Psychology of Open Teaching and Learning*. Boston: Little, Brown & Company.

<sup>18</sup> *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, 1996:62

### *Drawing*

Children should draw daily, spontaneously illustrating the story from their imagination or copying a beautiful picture done by the teacher on the board. Drawings reflect the emotional maturity of the children and daily practice improves their skills. However, some children need encouragement and gentle guidance to complete their drawing satisfactorily. Drawing enables children to live in the wholeness of the world of their imagination and to experience the pictures of the story more deeply. This increases their ability to visualise, observe details and to express themselves individually, as well as strengthening their understanding and memory recall.

### *Painting*

Painting requires far more organisation and is best done once a week. If one uses the method of stroking wet paint on to a dampened piece of painting paper on a board, this allows children to experience the qualities and moods of the glowing colours interacting with each other in abstract forms. Children love to see their paintings displayed on the wall with all the others. They feel a sense of achievement and the beautiful tapestry of colour gives a vibrant mood to the classroom.

### *Music*

Music is an essential part of children's education and singing is a time when even quite individual children feel 'one with the class.' Children love to sing, especially simple pentatonic or five note scale tunes that give a gentle mood of nature. They enjoy songs with actions and so much can be taught through songs that relate to the seasons and other themes. Singing is an economic way of consolidating information through repetition.

Songs can be used at the beginning of a lesson to focus the class, at a moment in the middle of a lesson when a break or breather is needed or as a conclusion to a lesson. A lively song will energise a class, while a slow, rhythmic tune will calm down a group that is too chatty. The various activities of the day become rituals through the use of songs e.g. a painting song just before the children begin to paint, a song before story time to draw the children into the right mood for listening.

Songs teach children to listen, to remember a tune, to be aware of keeping time with the others and how to use their voices in a natural and melodious way that makes the music beautiful, especially if the teacher encourages them to sing in a 'listening' way that binds the class together as one body.

As an introduction to learning about musical instruments, it is very good when a teacher has a few simple instruments for improvisation e.g. a soft skin drum, a triangle, shakers of different kinds, a small lyre or stringed instrument, etc. Children need to be shown how to use each instrument properly so that the sound is resonant. Each day the class can listen to a small group guided by the teacher, where the drum has a particular rhythm and the other instruments must fit in with it, each doing different rhythms, either given or of their own choosing. They soon learn to listen to each other and to work together in harmony.

Later the children can learn to play a wooden recorder of their own, first playing by ear following the teacher's fingers and eventually on their own, even making up their own melodies. Playing a musical instrument has many educational advantages: eye/ear/hand co-ordination, concentration and working together with others. The children's sense of hearing is developed and a door is opened to the wonderful world of orchestral music and culture.

It has also been noticed that children who study a musical instrument improve in what they are learning in school. One may think that so much time is spent on music and other artistic activities that there is not enough time for academic learning. However, the opposite is true: once a song is learnt it can be sung in a few minutes, but the effect that it has on the children is so energising and uplifting that the lesson that follows benefits greatly.

### *Poetry*

Poetry is the life blood of teaching. Even in Grade 1, little poems say more in their few lines than any explanation. They also capture the essence or feeling of a theme in a charming way, are easy to learn and children's love of repetition means that they can be said many times over. When enlivened with appropriate actions, they are like honey on bread, bringing sweetness and life into the lesson.

Poems are a wonderful way of developing language in a different way from stories, as they describe things with an aptness that awakens the children to the beauty of words. When children say a poem about something they are learning, it deepens the content and they will remember it easily. The more poems, the richer the experience of language!

"The teacher should be a creative and poetic artist with words", says Bernhard Lievegoed.<sup>19</sup> In the development of rich imagery and lively use of language, all teaching becomes poetic. Thus the teacher "must pour this pictorial element into everything [he or she brings] to the child through language"<sup>20</sup>, enfolding the children in a colourful cloak of feelings and pictures that fill their souls with joy and wonder!

### CATERPILLAR SMALL

Caterpillar, small and slow,  
Eat away and you will grow;  
Green leaves waiting for your lunch,  
Walk right in and munch, munch, munch.

Caterpillar, spin and die;  
In your pupa nest you lie.  
Change and see what you will be:  
A brightly coloured butterfly!  
So fly – fly – fly!<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> *Phases of Childhood*, 1997:84

<sup>20</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, 1996: 52

<sup>21</sup> ©Catherine van Alphen; her book of poems will be published soon

### *Form Drawing*

Another artistic subject, little known in conventional schools, is Form Drawing. It is the drawing of decorative patterns, often found in ancient cultures, which may be symmetrical or repetitive and are often based on circles, spirals, etc. These patterns develop spatial awareness, hand/eye co-ordination, imagination and also mental focus. When drawn in colour, they are very harmonious and beautiful. Well known examples are African patterns painted on homes, Celtic patterns, and the body patterns of the Aborigines, and patterns of early peoples drawn on rocks and in sand.

In Grade 1 the year begins with daily patterns based on the straight and curved lines that form the structure of the letters. The use of A3 paper allows children to observe and experience the principles of the straight and curve more freely without linking them to letter writing at this point. They are also imaginatively introduced through a story, e.g. where a young man rides through a forest of tall trees (straight lines) and comes to a deep circular pool with many ripples (curved lines).

### *Modelling*

Modelling with beeswax or plasticine develops tactile awareness and fine motor dexterity. Beeswax is very hard, but warms up in the hands and the children can create forms with fine detail in the glowing colours of the wax. If the teacher keeps the beeswax or plasticine in little plastic packets they do not get dirty or dry out and it also ensures that there is enough for everyone in the class. Clay is very messy, cracks easily and dries out the hands. It is more suited to older classes.

### *Acting*

Acting out stories is not easy in Grade 1, but if everyone is sitting/standing in a circle and the teacher tells the story, appropriate sections can be acted out by the children. Everyone acts the trees in a forest or the flow of the river, and individuals can act the little boy and girl on their adventures. The circle holds the group together and there is no sense of 'a performance' at this stage. If the teacher wants to do a play for the class parents, they need to find one written in rhyme where everyone says all the words while a few children act out the main parts.

### *Eurythmy*

Some schools may be fortunate enough to have eurythmy, a form of movement to the spoken word and to music, which appears similar to dance and which is taught by a specialist teacher. This develops physical co-ordination, spatial and musical awareness and strengthens the children's sense of self.

### *Handcrafts*

Working with their hands is essential for a child's development. The simple activity of learning to knit through gripping the two needles and winding the wool correctly develops dexterity and fine motor control. The children's minds are stimulated in the effort to understand the process as they have to know what they are doing. Concentration is also developed, otherwise the exciting way in which the knitting grows longer and longer will never happen as stitches fall off the needle and more holes are

created. Eventually that wonderful moment arrives when the activity of knitting becomes automatic and children will even knit through break time in order to see the progress.

Similarly, learning to sew becomes an exciting and creative project even if it is making a simple Hessian bag with wool embroidery on the front for their mother. The activity of learning to cut paper with scissors and then folding paper to create origami paper shapes is another happy creative task that demands mental focus and finger dexterity to get it right. All these handcraft activities assist children to 'come to earth' in an enjoyable way as well as showing them how to make useful things beautifully.

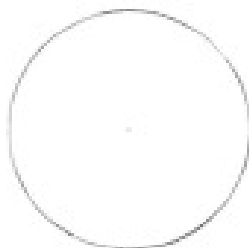
### *Consolidation of concepts through art*

Each of these different arts assists children to experience the learning of academic concepts in a 'feeling' or non-intellectual way, allowing them to integrate an idea by making it their own through a drawing, poem or action song. Discussion around the concept arises naturally once it has been experienced in this way and a child finds it far easier to grasp. There is always a child who 'catches on' quickly, but it is important to consolidate concepts thoroughly.

The arts also show the teacher whether the children are coping with the material to be learnt or if they need extra help in some way. Some children entering Grade 1 are not necessarily as awake, mature or as capable as the others and the arts assist them to 'catch up' and learn in a joyful and affirming or non-threatening way. The emphasis on creating beauty both visually and orally sets standards of achievement that encourage a positive sense of self worth in the children who then find joy in the learning process and love to be at school with their teacher and their class.

### *The symbol for Grade 1*

If we acknowledge the sense of oneness with the world around them; the children's spontaneous connection with people and nature, an appropriate symbol for Grade 1 is the circle. It represents wholeness, a child's ability to live in the present moment and to see everyone as on the same level. The circle is also a natural way of teaching this age group: sitting in a circle on the carpet listening to a story, playing games in a circle or dancing in a ring. A circle allows that feeling of closeness that all young children enjoy with their companions and want with their teacher. It is also the symbol of a loving relationship between the teacher and the children that forms the basis for a love of learning throughout life.





## *Questions, Exercises, Artistic Activities to Review Child Development in Grade 1*

### **DEVELOPMENT**

1. *How do we understand the Grade 1 child's 'oneness' with the world? How must we work with it?*
2. *Discuss the meaning and validity of the symbol chosen for Grade 1.*

### **HOW THE CURRICULUM CAN SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AT THIS AGE**

3. *Demonstration (10 – 15 min) on how to teach Grade 1 during the 'rhythmic' part of the main lesson using imitation to introduce all activities: Morning verse, song with actions, body geography, counting to 50 using different animal qualities (1- 10 slowly like an elephant, 10 – 20 like a lion, 20 – 30 hopping like a rabbit, 30 – 40 trotting like a horse, 40 – 50 flying like a bird). Other ideas may be used.*
4. *Ask yourselves how it felt to be taught that way. Discuss learning through the 'will' and why it is done, and the importance of avoiding explanations as far as possible.*
5. *What is the purpose of the rhythmic time? Why do children not get bored with repetition, while adults do?*
6. *What do we mean by the 'dialogue' between teacher and child?*
7. *What do we mean by teaching 'artistically'?*
8. *What do we mean by 'breathing' in the lesson?*

### **ARTISTIC EXPLORATION**

9. *Painting: Use red, yellow and blue water-colour paint to create a mood of 'oneness'. Wet-on-wet water-colour painting technique.*
10. *Clay modelling: create a sphere in clay. Develop it into an abstract model expressing 'oneness'. Or model a child's face with very simple features.*
11. *Drawing with block crayons, create a playful mood of colours without any forms.*

## ***Children turning 8 years (Waldorf Grade 2)***

For the years of this second period (7-14 years) the magic words are Discipleship and Authority. What the child sees directly in his educators, with inner perception, must become for him authority – not an authority compelled by force, but one that he accepts naturally without question. By it he will build up his conscience, habits and inclinations. Those beautiful words of the poet, 'Every man must choose his hero, in whose footsteps he will tread as he carves out his path.'<sup>22</sup>

### **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

During Grade 2 the children begin to fill out and become broader physically. Their limbs are longer and that tender fragile quality seems to have been replaced by more bounce

<sup>22</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Education of the Child*, 1965:30

and confidence than before. In fact, they often appear to be a troop of young animals rushing all over the playground with boundless energy. Their bodies are more co-ordinated and their hands more dexterous. Their senses are open and awake, and their facial expressions are individual, alert and interested in everything. The children are still in the process of changing 'milk' teeth for permanent ones and as they do their curiosity about the outer world increases.

The children are still in the 'will' sub-phase of the 'feeling' phase of childhood and so will want to experience everything they are learning in an active way. They are more grounded than the year before, but the world is still a subjective experience for them, where magic and fantasy are a reality.

## DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

In Grade 2 the children instinctively look to the teacher for their role model. Not only do they expect him or her to know everything, they also accept their teacher as having the highest motives, as always 'being right'. Thus, "children have naturally an abundant faculty for wonder and reverence."<sup>23</sup>

The teacher must therefore cultivate these qualities through the use of imaginative stories to introduce all topics. At this age their thinking is not yet logical, but has a completely pictorial character. Their imaginations are developing and they need to learn through an artistic and pictorial right-brain approach rather than intellectual reasoning. There are so many wonderful discoveries in the world of nature, which if approached in a mood of wonder will allow the children to experience beauty and gratitude for all of creation.

The children's breathing and heartbeat are not yet in balance and so over this year they are still under the sway of imitative forces, responding instinctively to every situation. At this stage they are full of contrasts: one moment they are rushing around or fighting like little wild animals and then at another time they are singing sweetly or listening to a story with angelic expressions on their faces. Even the same child will be sweet and kind at one moment, and an hour later being spiteful or telling tales about someone else.

Everything is 'black or white' socially. Today Mary and Nomsa are close friends, saying to each other, "You are my *best* friend!" But tomorrow, an insignificant incident provokes an intense reaction and one of them cries: "I'll never speak to you again!" Yet, in a few days, the incident is forgotten.

A 'key word' for Grade 2 is 'polarity' and the teacher needs to help them explore the opposites in the feeling world through the stories that are told so that they come to understand these contrary feelings they are experiencing.

<sup>23</sup> A. C. Harwood, *The Recovery of Man in Childhood*, 1963:76

## WHAT THE CHILD NEEDS AT THIS AGE

The teacher needs to 'live' the qualities of reverence and religious devotion: respect for all life, reverence and love for the child and all that education has to offer. This can only be done if the teacher has made a connection to their own spiritual life and acts with integrity. Then the children will emulate the teacher and freely follow his or her authority. Rudolf Steiner says that this will enable the children to find their own sense of inner freedom later in life.

The bond between teacher and child is of vital importance. It is not enough just to love children; the teacher's voice should have "a ring of tenderness, as if their words were caressing the child, expressing approval and praise"<sup>24</sup> and in this way everything the teacher says touches the child's soul. The children who feel loved and appreciated really listen and learn from the teacher, drinking in all that they have to say. At the same time, the teacher needs to lay down firm boundaries of behaviour, and using his or her authority, must ensure that good behaviour becomes habit in the children.

Steiner encourages the teacher to extend the child's knowledge in many ways. However, the teacher should not just give answers and explanations to all their questions. A good teacher will first find out what the children know and then weave the answer into a story, perhaps for the next day.

Have no fear of going beyond the childish understanding ... Your expression and the tone of your voice, aided by the child's intuitive eagerness to understand, will light up half the meaning and with it in course of time the other half. We are far too prone to credit the teachers with everything the children learn. Those things are best grasped in concepts, which have first been learned simply from memory in this period of life, even as the rules of language are best learned in a language one is already able to speak.<sup>25</sup>

What Grade 2 children need is to be extended in a way that helps them to realise that learning is easy. Rather than presenting them with new skills that are too difficult, this can be done by challenging them to do *more* easy sums or to find *more* easy words – this will give them the repetition they need to strengthen their confidence. It is also a way of using the energy of the rhythmic system that never tires which is why the children love repetition. Many different simple games and activities in language and mathematics will strengthen their basic skills and this is an important task in Grade 2.

## HOW THE WALDORF CURRICULUM MEETS THE CHILD AT THIS AGE

### *The Grade 2 Syllabus*

#### *Animals and Saints*

All children love animals and in Grade 2, animal fables are introduced. The fables are so short that the teacher will need to expand them with much descriptive detail when

<sup>24</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, 1996:54

<sup>25</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Education of the Child*, 1965:36, 38

introducing each character and also use lively dialogue to bring out the contrasting qualities of each animal. Even so, some children will complain that the story is too short. Actually fables are not as much about animals (who do not usually talk to each other) as about the animal qualities human beings have inside them e.g. the pride of the lion, the greed of the hyena, the cleverness of the hare, etc.

Each fable carries within it a moral; however, the teacher never tells the moral to the children, as this would spoil the effect of the story. During the time of reviewing the story on the next day the teacher gets the class to retell the story; in the retelling, the teacher encourages the children to say how they feel about the actions of each animal. There are many wonderful African animal tales suitable for this age.

The fables and animal tales thus allow children to identify with the instinctive animal qualities inside them. There are so many stories about the crafty fox outwitting other animals and children enjoy his clever tricks and games. These tales help children to acknowledge unconsciously the connection between humans and animals as well as recognising that some qualities are kind and helpful while others are quite nasty and people do not like to be treated badly. The children are sometimes quite observant and notice the animal qualities in each other. “Temba is just like the monkey in the story today”.

On the other end of the spectrum stand the saints and holy people who are examples of the very best of human nature: people who are always kind, thoughtful, unselfish and wise. Although many of the stories are examples of Christian saints, there are also stories of holy people from other lands and religions that can and should be used. These stories acknowledge the purity and natural wisdom of young children and feed their need for imitation and growth through ‘unbounded reverence’<sup>26</sup> of these holy people. The children identify with the noble qualities of the saints as much as they did with those more foolish qualities described in the animal tales.

Many of the saint stories are also linked with different animals e.g. St Jerome and the lion, St Columba and the dove. The most beloved of the saints is usually St Francis of Assisi, patron saint of all animals and there are many lovely stories about him that could be told to the class. They can also sing a song adapted from St Francis’ own words about Brother Sun and Sister Moon, showing how he treated all creatures as the children of God and as belonging to the family of Man. Thus a polarity is displayed between the lowly animals and the noble saints and children will embody qualities of both in their soul. This is a different position from the fairy tale where the prince is good and the witch is evil and it shows that human beings have a choice as to how they act in life.

Rudolf Steiner says that there is a fundamental virtue that should be cultivated in the children during the primary school years. He calls this the “will to love”:

<sup>26</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Education of the Child*, 1965:31

Love...has to *awaken*. At first love begins to stir when sympathy is aroused for whatever is taught in the early days at school. At this stage love has a profoundly tender and soul-like quality. This condition then leads to a stronger jolt into wakefulness. About the ninth and tenth years – and especially in the time leading up to the twelfth year – love of nature awakens in the child.<sup>27</sup>

### *Language*

Rudolf Steiner has pointed out the following:

Children live in what comes through language, with its artistic and pictorial element. Thus only what is immersed in imagery will reach the child. That is why the memory is particularly strong at this age. What is this special kind of memory in the young child which later memory is descended from? It is an inner habit. When taking in the spoken word, a refined inner habit is formed in the child who absorbs everything through imitation. And a soul habit is formed when the child begins the change of teeth that is called memory.<sup>28</sup>

Thus the teacher cultivates the children's capacity for memorising by using beautiful and expressive language as an artistic experience. Steiner suggests that the teacher should utilise this capacity by teaching them lots of poems, even longer poems off by heart. The children enjoy a poem where the flow of rhythm and rhyme carries the pictures along. This gives the children energy for repetition that enables them to learn poetry with ease. A play in rhyme can also challenge them, but the learning of poetry feeds the soul and extends the imagination.

The children's growing confidence can be enhanced if the teacher really works to develop clarity of speech through using speech exercises. This is the year when the first individual morning verses are said (written or selected to help each child in his or her developmental needs), and here too, the quality of speaking is important for children to feel good. This affects the reading, spelling and writing skills which need plenty of practice to become fluent. The little animal fables told in Grade 2 make very suitable reading material for class readers.

Writing has progressed to learning to use the lower case letters which makes many more books available to the child as they advance in reading ability. Daily work in phonics is about deepening their confidence in basic skills through thorough practice using many simple exercises. So, rather than getting the class to write down ten 3-letter words with a short 'a' e.g. man, ask them to work together in pairs and come up with as many words as possible in 15 minutes. Perhaps they will find 30 words by the end of the lesson! How proud they will feel at such an accomplishment!

Writing their own news, making up their own sentences are beginning exercises for creative writing. They should be reading little stories from their Main Lesson book and have a store of books from the class library for extra practice. The children really want to

<sup>27</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, 1996:130

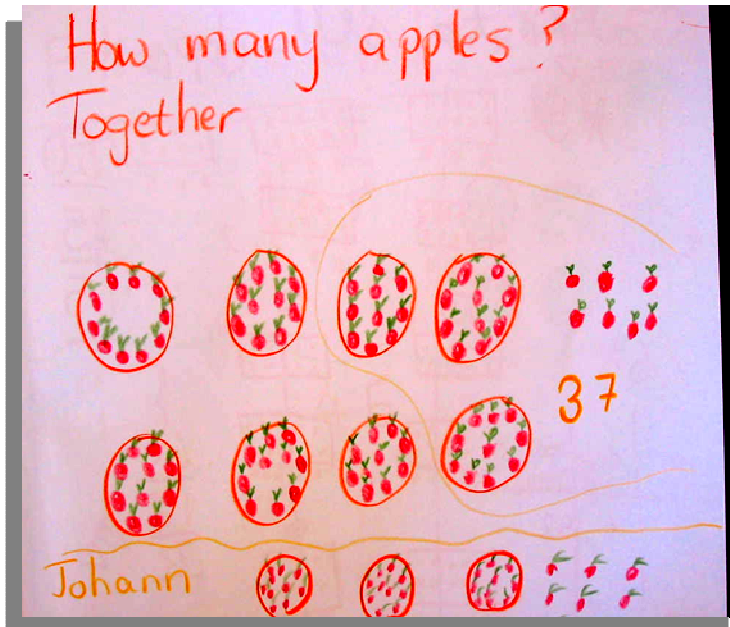
<sup>28</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, 1995:55,56



read now and much practice and encouragement is needed. The teacher can also read a long storybook to the class in short instalments each day to develop a culture of reading in the class.

### Mathematics

This is the year of learning many tables! They can learn the 2x to 6x tables. Then 9x and/or 11x tables could be included. And what about counting in 100s or 50s or 1000s?



Children of this age need to develop mental agility with numbers. So the teacher needs plenty of little number exercises e.g. Add 10 to any number. Go around the class with the first child adding 2 to the number given and the next child adding 3... Of course this means that the teacher must be on top of the tables and number games. Also the teacher can tell little number stories e.g. about Ginny picking fruit and sharing it out evenly with her friends, after giving some away to the poor beggar. The teacher needs to extend the Grade 2 children by expecting many more sums to be written down and completed. They can also make up

some of their own! The class will learn about tens and units, working with 'extended notation' to understand the four operations in more challenging sums!

### Environment Studies

The stories now include little dialogues between two small creatures meeting in the same environment e.g. a mouse and a tortoise. The teacher needs to really get into the character of each one to bring the conversation alive, remembering that animals live in the present only and only know their own life experience. Just because the story allows the little mouse to talk, does not mean that she has the feelings of a child. She remains a mouse and is only aware of her instincts and particularly what her senses of smell, hearing and sight tell her.

The child feels alive and consequently everything around the child must also be alive. Everything must live and speak to children, because they do not yet distinguish between themselves and the world as a whole.<sup>29</sup>

If children bring something special for the nature table, like a crystal or a feather, what an opportunity arises for the teacher to create a story for the next day instead of just giving a verbal explanation!

<sup>29</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, 1996:85,86



### *Ways of extending children in Grade 2*

An important way of extending the children is through the daily recall: on the second day the teacher can ask the class to retell the story, paying attention to sequence<sup>30</sup> and detail and not allowing only the bright 'eager-beavers' to answer. Then, on the third day ask deeper questions: "How did the lion feel about the mouse when he gnawed through the net and set him free?" "How do you think the mouse felt about helping such a fierce lion?" "What do you think about the crafty fox tricking the proud crow?" The teacher can even ask the children to tell their neighbour what they think or feel so as to allow more children to participate in discussion.

Such questions assist the children in transforming their pictorial consciousness into the development of concepts. The children naturally live in their perceptions from the outer world. Now, through stories, they experience their own inner world of pictures: pictures and images which are just as real to them as the outside world. As Bernard Lievegoed says; "the child rises from perception to concepts."<sup>31</sup> By recalling the images, the children deepen their understanding of the story and the subsequent discussion on the feelings of different characters gives moral substance to the story without any moralising. This helps the children to strengthen the concept relating to the picture.

### *Co-operative learning*

Another way of extending the children is by getting them to work together: reading to each other, clapping tables together where they alternate answers or one child says the whole table to the other and vice-versa. Co-operative learning is an important teaching and learning skill that develops independence as one child will help another to practice on their own.

Often a teacher has not the time to assist each child individually as often as they need. Also certain children will mouth words and tables when they do not know them properly and this method will assist them to get it correct. Encouraging children to discuss questions with each other is another way of deepening their understanding. If the teacher is conscious of extending the class in as many ways as possible, they will strengthen all the basic skills, the foundations of which were laid in Grade 1

### *The Arts*

#### *Drawing, Painting and Modelling*

The arts are also tools for extending the capacity of children in Grade 2. The teacher can expect more colourful and more detailed drawings by encouraging the children through lively word pictures full of feeling from the story. Paintings are still 'abstract colour exercises' but it is good to choose colour moods from a story e.g. the teacher tells the children: "Paint how the lion felt when he was caught in the net!" Simple forms can be used; bringing in a suggestion of gesture e.g. a vertical line with rounded top can suggest the human form. It can also be fun modelling all the animals from the fables!

<sup>30</sup> Sequence = telling the story in the correct order

<sup>31</sup> *Phases of Childhood*, 1997:83 Floris Books, U.K

### *Form Drawing*

In form drawing the children learn to do mirror-images. The teacher draws one half of the pattern which the children copy and then they have to complete the other half on their own! Thus their imitative faculties are utilised to develop a sense of symmetry as well as hand-eye co-ordination. The beauty and flow of these images also bring about harmony in the souls of the children. This assists the development of balance between breathing and pulse that is happening unconsciously at this age.

### *Music*

Children respond to music and are easily held by changing rhythms and moods. Music is fun, so keep teaching new songs! Sing several songs each morning and others during the day.

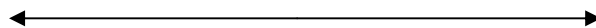
Try to use pentatonic melodies as some of these will be easy to play on the recorder, especially when the class has learnt to use both hands.. Let children make up their own tunes on the recorder, improvising to the mood of the weather or a little bird hopping on a branch or just a happy melody.

The teacher needs to emphasise that playing on the recorder must have a soft, clear, beautiful tone. Whenever a child plays beautifully, draw attention to the sound and encourage them all to play like that. Music must always be beautiful!

### *The Symbol for Grade 2*

I have chosen a line with two ends, indicating the polarity<sup>32</sup> of opposites and contrasts that exists at this age. It is demonstrated in the polarity between animals and saints that the teacher will observe daily in the children.

That line is also about extending the children in every way; getting them to improve the quality of everything they do. The arts give wonderful opportunities for this. In language and mathematics, extending the children with many little games and exercises can be lots of fun and give them a strong sense of confidence through their achievement!



### *Questions, Exercises, Artistic Activities to Review Child Development in Grade 2*

#### **DEVELOPMENT**

1. *Why are Grade 2 children so full of contrasts? What causes the polarity in them at this age?*
2. *Discuss pictorial/right-brain thinking of the child vs analytical left brain thinking of the adult.*

<sup>32</sup> Polarity = two opposites that belong to each other; for example, hot and cold both belong to temperature, and many different degrees of hot and cold can be found between these opposites

3. "Percepts become concepts". What does this mean?
4. Discuss the meaning and validity of the symbol for Grade 2.

#### HOW THE CURRICULUM CAN SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AT THIS AGE

5. The role of reverence in developing authority.
6. Why is poetry so important in teaching?
7. Why do we teach the children that "the world is beautiful"?
8. Why does Steiner suggest that we teach beyond the understanding of the child?
9. Discuss co-operative learning.

#### ARTISTIC EXPLORATION

10. Painting: Using yellow and blue create a water-colour painting that expresses 'polarity'.
11. Clay-modelling: Express 'polarity' using two opposite moods in clay.
12. Drawing: Using block crayons create an abstract drawing to express 'polarity'.

### ***Children turning 9 years (Waldorf Grade 3)***

#### *Essential Reading:*

Hermann Koepke (1989). *Encountering the Self: Transformation and Destiny in the Ninth Year*. Hudson NY: Anthroposophic Press

In the ninth year the child actually experiences a total transformation of his being, which points to a significant transformation of his soul-life and to a significant transformation of his experience of the bodily-physical.<sup>33</sup>

#### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

In Grade 3 the teacher will notice how the children have grown more into their bodies: the trunk and limbs have become stronger and sturdier; the children's bodies are broadening out. The children seem to be more connected to the earth.

As the forces of growth are now moving into the chest area, developing the functioning of the lungs and heart further, the ratio between breathing and heartbeat settles down to a proper 1:4 rhythm. This balance indicates that the children are slowly developing a 'give and take' interaction with the outside world which is becoming possible because they are no longer in a sphere of oneness with their surroundings.

Their ability to imitate has faded away, being replaced by a more personal response to everything around them as they begin to experience the world 'as it is'. The children's facial expressions are more individual now, as the 'I' or Ego enters more deeply into the body, imprinting its characteristics in the face and body as a whole.

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<sup>33</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Renewal of Education*, 1981.

## DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The children in Grade 3 are entering the 'feeling' sub-phase of the 'feeling' phase of development in the primary school, in which they experience a transformation of their feelings about themselves and the world. They have lost that sense of oneness with their surroundings that up to now has given them the security that all is well.

It has dawned on the children that they are no longer in that bubble of safety. Being 'on the earth' gives them a sense of being alone, feeling separate from their family, friends and the rest of the world. They experience everything in a feeling way: quite critically and often negatively, not knowing how to adapt to this new state of being. This critical attitude is a way of asserting themselves as they try to discover who they are now that they are separate and different from everyone else.

What is most noticeable is the change of mood in several children; some seem quieter or more anxious, while others are more moody or aggressive. A parent says: "I don't know what has come over Anna; she used to love going to sleep over with her friend and now she won't go at all?" Children that were quite confident suddenly doubt themselves, while others are becoming more assertive. Fears raise their heads, perhaps of the dark or of the sea. The death of a pet suddenly becomes real and far more upsetting than previously and a child may even be afraid of a parent dying. What is this strange phenomenon?

Now, everything looks different and the old, even easy relationships with their parents can no longer be taken for granted. A boy notices that his father has grey hair and feels that he looks old and worn out; or a girl feels embarrassed with her mother and says rudely, "That dress looks stupid." They compare themselves to other children and see that not everyone in class has the same kind of clothes because some people are poorer than others.

They argue with their parents for now the teacher is the one who knows more. Parents question this strange behaviour that their child is showing and often ask the teacher what to do about it. The children need to be heard and accepted as they are, so that they feel understood. The parents need to be aware of the children's vulnerability yet not over-react to everything they say.

During this 'crisis' of the ninth year, the teacher will find that the children also question where he or she gets all the knowledge, and they will challenge the authority of the teacher in different ways. Rudolf Steiner says that it is most important that the teacher responds to the children with "inner warmth, sincerity and truth"<sup>34</sup> so that they retain their belief in the goodness and love of the teacher for this will ensure their faith in the teacher's authority.

If the teacher thinks deeply about the evolving human being and the significance of the transformation of the breathing process in the child at this time, he or she will meet the

<sup>34</sup>Rudolf Steiner, *The Kingdom of Childhood*, 1988:52

children with inner forces that strengthen their relationship. The teacher who has a meaningful connection to his or her own spiritual life will support the children greatly in their efforts to establish a new way of being in the world.<sup>35</sup>

Thus it is vital that a teacher understands this phase of the children's development and is prepared to handle it creatively. For example, to answer the question of death that meets the child in the world, the teacher can tell the story of the butterfly.

Look at the human body; it is like the butterfly's cocoon. And just as the butterfly flies out of the chrysalis, so after death does the soul fly out of the body. Only the butterfly is visible, the soul is invisible.<sup>36</sup>

Images like that of the butterfly allow the children to understand a situation by experiencing it imaginatively.

In a sense the children too are experiencing a death; the loss of their early life of childhood and at the same time it is a birth into a new awareness of themselves.

However, instead of flying away like the butterfly, they are coming down to earth. Children in this new phase are developing a new sense of individual self-consciousness and this requires a complete adjustment to their feelings about themselves and everything around them.

In this loneliness, the finest, most delicate feelings arise in children, and nothing must disturb this experience, neither pressure nor curiosity. It is in this loneliness that the child finds himself and becomes aware of his own ego. It is in his loneliness that the child senses that he will go out into life from the centre of this ego.<sup>37</sup>

The children are also beginning to see the world more objectively, and even if their observations seem critical, it is because they lack the maturity to make accurate connections between what they feel and what they see. They are now ready to learn more about the outside world. Both the curriculum and stories of separation (see below) support them through this transition.

## WHAT THE CHILD NEEDS AT THIS AGE

In order to help the child in this process of becoming self-aware, Rudolf Steiner suggested telling the children stories that involve separation, followed by a good outcome where all is well again. In the first Waldorf School, in Stuttgart, Germany, he suggested the stories of the ancient Hebrews, as described in the Old Testament.

<sup>35</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *Study of Man*, 1981:23

<sup>36</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *Spiritual Ground of Education*, 1946:29

<sup>37</sup> Hermann Koepke, *Encountering the Self*, 1989:78

The stories from the Old Testament are connected to the religions of the Jews, Christians and Muslims. Using these stories as examples, in every country teachers could look for similar stories from their own cultural traditions.

It is very tempting for the teacher to use these stories as a means of moral instruction. However Rudolf Steiner discourages any form of moralizing on the part of adults wishing to inculcate a religious attitude in children.

We must be clear that the religious element is simply inborn in the child, that it is part of the child's being. This is revealed particularly clearly through the child's religious orientation until the change of teeth. What has eventually become religion in our general civilization belongs to the world of ideas. Only after the fourteenth year is the adolescent mature enough to appreciate the ideal quality and substance of religion...

What we now have to do is appeal, above all to the children's soul life by allowing them to experience feelings of sympathy and antipathy. And so we avoid *Thou shalt* and *Thou shalt not* attitudes because it has little value for teaching a child of this age. Instead we arrange [stories] so that feelings of sympathy are induced for what the child is meant to do. Likewise we try to induce feelings of antipathy for what they are not meant to do.<sup>38</sup>

The experiences of the characters of the Old Testament and other stories that are told live so deeply in the souls of the children that any moral becomes self-evident. However, the most effective religious instruction for the children is the role model of the teacher, who through their own spiritual integrity earns their love and respect.

Grade 3 demands that the teacher listen and respond to the children very sensitively as they begin to enter this phase of development. The recall of the Old Testament stories is very important as it allows the children not only to remember the details of the story, but to discuss the feelings of different characters, e.g. "How do you think Noah felt when God told him the earth would be destroyed?", "How did Noah's wife feel?", "How did Joseph's brothers feel when he told them his dreams?" "How do *you* feel about the brothers selling Joseph as a slave?" Thus the children are encouraged to identify more deeply with the emotions of people who struggled with problems in their lives. These discussions make the children aware of their feelings, strengthening the transition from instinctive learning to a conscious development of concepts

For a Grade 3 play about Joseph, the children were allowed to act out many different roles before the teacher finally chose who was to act which part. Almost all of them, boys and girls, wanted to be Joseph in the scene where Joseph was beaten, thrown into the pit and sold as a slave. Not only was it a very dramatic episode, but the scene epitomised the ultimate rejection and separation from family and home that they might

<sup>38</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, 1996:92



have been experiencing. The play worked well in allowing the children to express their feelings openly and strongly.

The teacher should recognise that they must challenge the class in new ways so that the children experience their own strength and capability. But they also need to recognise that human beings live not for themselves alone, but assist each other and work together. To this end, practical activities, handcrafts, group projects and co-operative learning play an important role in giving them a sense of identity as well as a sense of community.

Steiner says that our soul and spirit are involved whenever we work physically. If a job is to be done properly, the children have to concentrate and know what they are doing. This brings them back to a sense of wholeness rather than separation. The result of their work, done well, will satisfy them and give a feeling of achievement and self-worth.

Whenever a class or an individual child is going through a difficult time, the teacher should try to give them more handcraft or practical work to do, like knitting or gardening.

## HOW THE WALDORF CURRICULUM MEETS THE CHILD AT THIS AGE

### *The Grade 3 Syllabus*

#### *Old Testament or Similar Traditional Stories*

In the Old Testament, Adam and Eve live in the wonderful garden of Paradise where everything is perfect and everyone is happy. Metaphorically this is the state of the young child, blissfully at one with the world and trusting that all is well.

However, when Adam and Eve eat from the apple of the knowledge of good and evil, they become conscious of what they have done and they are driven out of the Paradise garden. This is a picture of this phase of the children's development, that in becoming self-conscious, they move out of that sense of oneness and experience the reality of the world around them. Naturally the children feel very vulnerable in this new state, hence the fears and self criticism.



The stories of the Old Testament are very dramatic and full of the trials and difficulties of the Hebrews in their efforts to find a lasting home on earth. The children can identify with these challenges and with the strong feelings of the various characters such as Abraham, Noah, Joseph and Moses, all of whom had to cope with relocating to a totally new place to live. Here and there are stories of women: Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Naomi, Esther and others. But through all the stories runs the thread of

the protection of God for His people. So the teacher tells these stories to the Grade 3 children so that they recognise unconsciously that they can trust the guidance and protection of God as they go through the wilderness seeking their true home.

### *Language*

The Old Testament or similar traditional stories form the material used for language work: grammar, reading, poetry, creative writing and play-acting.

The year begins with The Creation story which is written into their books and illustrated with beautiful pictures. The children are feeling as if they had been placed in a new world and this story shows them that the earth on which they live is wonderful!

Apart from singing songs or speaking poetry about the creation, the class is learning cursive writing so that they will have a new style of writing for their next Main Lesson book after this one. The written stories are longer and more detailed than the previous year. Plenty of reading practice is still required.

There are so many stories from the Old Testament that it is wise to continue telling these stories throughout the year, even when learning other subjects.

The second main lesson block in language will be devoted to Grammar, where the class learns how Noah built the ark with the help of his sons and daughters, and so they discover the 'doing words'. They remember how Adam named the animals and other creatures on earth and so they learn about 'naming words'. They hear about the contrasting characters of Cain and Abel in vivid descriptions from the teacher and so they learn about 'describing words'.

This is a wonderful opportunity for acting out the different verbs and adjectives or guessing what action another child is doing. Their vocabulary needs to be extended as much as possible, especially as some children use English as a second language and do not understand many words or use few descriptive words. But even those with a good language background need to be challenged with new words as this theme of Grammar is about helping children to express themselves consciously and correctly, thus affirming their sense of self-worth!

It would be a good idea for the class to do a play from the Old Testament - or a similar story from a local traditional source - which will challenge their memory and ability to speak and act. Children love doing plays, even if the main parts are shared or spoken by two children at the same time!

Abraham

Out in the night old Abram stood  
And gazed at the firmament of God  
Where stars upon stars shone forth so clear  
Like tiny lamps in the darkness there;  
Then spoke the Voice he longed to hear:

How many stars light up the sky?  
 How much dust on the earth does lie?  
 How many sands by the shore of the sea?  
 These descendants shall come to thee.<sup>39</sup>

### *Mathematics*

Mathematics takes on a very practical role during this year to assist children to deal with the affairs of this world. One theme is 'time' where they make a cardboard clock and learn to tell the time by working out the hours, minutes and seconds in the old-fashioned way instead of merely looking at a digital watch.

Another theme is 'money' in which they have a little shop and practice buying and selling and mentally working out the change required. Of course they need to be able to write money sums down as well.

A third theme is 'measurement': length in millimetres, centimetres and metres and they measure everything in the classroom for practice. An important challenge is estimation and some of them get very good at guessing the answers. Weight is also part of measurement: learning to balance an old fashioned scale with different weights from grams to kilos as well as using a modern scale. Capacity (volume), using litres and millilitres, is also taught, so that children become familiar with the different ways of measuring the world around them.

They must also be able to do problem or "story" sums, written down and worked out correctly. And all the time, the work with tables and mental arithmetic continues to keep their minds alert and memories well oiled.

### *Gardening and Farming*

Grade 3 children should have a special part of the school where they can create their own garden and grow their own flowers and vegetables. They should prepare the ground and learn how to make a compost heap and understand the importance of earthworms. They can follow the cycle of the year through the changes in the garden and enjoy eating their own vegetables.

In the Farming main lesson, they learn about growing different crops and how the farmer cares for cattle, sheep, goats and pigs on an animal farm. These activities can be introduced through stories about a boy and girl living on or visiting different farms.

If possible, the Grade 3 children should visit a mixed farm to experience what it is like and participate in all the farm activities while they are there. These lessons are very practical and give the children the sense that they are on the earth and can work with the soil, plants and animals and the products produced here.

<sup>39</sup> Catherine van Alphen (the entire poem, which can be dramatised, will be published soon)

A farmer once told the children who were visiting of the importance of manure on a farm:

Look at the stars at night, whirling round in their spiral nebulae. Then look at the plants and find all the spirals in the dandelions growing in the grass and many other plants as well. The cows eat the grass and the dandelions and when they make manure, you will see a beautiful spiral in each cowpat, showing how healthy that cow is. The cowpat is dug back into the garden to help the plants to grow healthily and these spirals show us the connection between the stars, the plants and the animals.<sup>40</sup>

Gratitude for the gifts of the earth is cultivated from the experiences on the farm, and a mutual respect and working together between human beings and the earth. This also encourages a sense of responsibility in the children and a feeling of belonging on the earth.

### *House-Building*

When Adam and Eve left Paradise, they had to find shelter, possibly in a cave. All the creatures that accompanied them to earth made their own holes, nests, webs, etc that protected them from predators and the weather. So Grade 3 learns about a few of the creatures that make homes for themselves.

Then they learn about some of the interesting kinds of houses built by early peoples around the world e.g. an African wattle and daub hut, an Eskimo igloo and an Arabian tent. They also learn how modern houses are built in their area. They learn how to mix concrete and lay bricks. They learn how many different trades come together to assist in completing a house and thus develop a sense of community through house-building. They may also make small models of different kinds of homes (possibly in small groups) and sing a song about building a house.

The children soon begin to build their own group make-shift houses out of all kinds of materials in the school garden if there is space and opportunity for this. It allows them to exercise a natural 'home-making' instinct inherent in every human being, satisfying the need to create one's own place where one can live with one's family here on earth.

"In this activity children experience the forming of their own inner space, and this experience of space is just what the children are seeking. In this way they find themselves."<sup>41</sup>

### *Handcrafts*

People from ancient times have used the materials of their environment to make the things they need in their lives. Some groups of people wove baskets out of grasses or reeds, others used the skins of animals to make things from leather. Others found clay

<sup>40</sup> Jeanne Malherbe: Bloublommetjieskloof Farm, Wellington, Western Cape, R.S.A.

<sup>41</sup> Hermann Koepke, *Encountering the Self*, 1989:79

on the banks of rivers, making their own pots, whereas those living amongst trees would carve their utensils from wood.

When early people began to settle down in houses, they kept sheep and women learnt to card the wool, and spin it into thread that could be knitted or woven. Grade 3 should get the opportunity to see this done and even try it out. They know how to knit and they could do some simple weaving on a small loom.

The people who lived beside rivers learnt to make pots out of clay. The children can visit a pottery and make their own pot or shape that is fired in a kiln. The children could visit a blacksmith and experience how he works with metal, heating it up in a fire and beating it on an anvil to create something new: the head of a spade, a twisted pole for a gate, etc.

There may be other handcrafts in the area that the children could visit and experience too. They should try and make several handcraft objects from different materials during this main lesson, all of which give them a sense of achievement and mastery.

### *The Arts*

#### *Painting*

This new phase that Grade 3 children are going through can be observed clearly in their artistic work. The first five Days of Creation are excellent material for painting as they are largely abstract in form, though very colourful and dramatic. To paint the darkness in deep blue from the outside edge of the paper and allow the white light to burst out of the centre of the page gives the children a wonderful experience of “Let there be Light!”

Now is the time to emphasise the movement between darkness and light that creates different tones or shades of colour, done very simply by adding or taking away colour. These subtle contrasts bring about beautiful moods in a painting and add life and drama to the expression of the theme. Working more consciously to bring in light or darkness will assist the children as they bring more form in their paintings. After all, they are moving into a new world view!

#### *Drawing*

There is plenty to draw from the stories of the Old Testament and similar traditional stories, and the children are now able to draw imaginatively and freely without self-criticism. It is fun to draw a large mural of the creation of Adam and Eve and all the animals with everyone adding their little bit. The wax crayons of the previous years become cumbersome and the children prefer to use stick or pencil crayons in their books.

#### *Shaded Drawing*

A new style of drawing is introduced in this year, namely shaded drawing where pencil crayons are used to create many slanted strokes next to each other. By altering the length of the stroke or the depth of colour, patterns and pictures may be drawn in a soft,



flowing style that describes the life and energy of any form. This technique releases the children from the need to draw outer forms in a linear or photographic style. Free imaginative shapes are very easy to do, once the basic technique is learnt, encouraging the children to be very creative with this method of drawing.

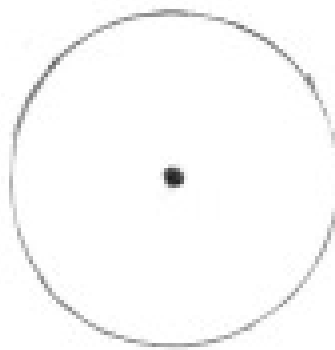
### *Music*

As the children become more aware of their separateness from other people, their ability to stand alone is strengthened by the singing of simple rounds and songs with contrasting moods of major and minor harmonies. The children should now be playing simple tunes on their recorder with a span of up to an octave.

During this year, the teacher can introduce the reading of music: first working with basic rhythms and later writing notes on a music stave for them to read and play. It is best if the children learn to write down their own tunes on three notes and then to play them before learning to read more notes. This cultivates a sense of independence in the children who can now play music from a book instead of relying solely on following the teacher's fingers.

### *The Symbol for Grade 3*

The symbol for Grade 3 is a circle with a dot in the centre. The circle represents the world and the dot is the individual child who is experiencing their aloneness and separation from the world outside. They have to re-establish their connection with the world in a new way and come to realise that they have the inner strength to cope with whatever comes towards them as the Hebrews did in the Old Testament stories. All practical work demands that children use their intelligence, creativity and the natural skill of their hands to master the task before them. The result is that the children develop a sense of being self-sufficient and capable of looking after their needs in the world.



### *Questions, Exercises, Artistic Activities to Review Child Development in Grade 3*

#### **DEVELOPMENT**

1. *Discuss the changing ratio between breathing and heartbeat and why the ratio 1:4 indicates that the children have 'arrived on earth'.*
2. *In what way are the Grade 3 children's feelings being transformed?*
3. *Why are they often fearful at this age?*
4. *Why is loneliness a necessary experience for the children during this time?*



5. *How is it that the children begin to see the world more objectively?*
6. *Discuss the meaning and validity of the symbol for Grade 3.*

#### **HOW THE CURRICULUM CAN SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AT THIS AGE**

7. *The role of the Old Testament stories.*
8. *The question of religious or moral instruction.*

#### **ARTISTIC EXPLORATION**

9. *Painting: "Let there be Light!" Dark blue around the outside of the page fading to white in the centre. The light bursts out, radiating into the darkness.*
10. *Clay modelling: mood of inwardness.*
11. *Drawing with block crayons to express 'loneliness'.*

## **FROM 9 TO 11 YEARS**

### ***Children turning 10 years (Waldorf Grade 4)***

Human soul experiences can arise through the very fact that in man alone the soul is partly emancipated from the body so that in him a self-sustained life of soul, an inner experience, becomes possible as the basis for *conscious personal experience*.<sup>42</sup>

#### **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Physically Grade 4 children have grown taller, but the trunk becomes noticeably longer and broader than the previous year, with boys becoming more muscular in the legs and eager to prove their strength and fitness! The faces of both sexes become more mature, the gaze stronger and more critical of everything they see and experience.

When the child is nearly ten years old the beat and rhythm of the blood circulation and breathing system begin to develop and pass into the muscular system. The muscles become saturated with blood and the blood pulses through the muscles in intimate response to the child's inner nature – to his own heart. So that between his ninth and eleventh years the human being builds up his own rhythmic system in the way which corresponds to his inner disposition.<sup>43</sup>

The above quotation speaks of how the breathing and blood circulation now works into the rest of the body. Because the heart is stronger, the muscles in the body are flooded with blood. The way the heart beats has a direct influence on the muscles,

<sup>42</sup> Francis Edmunds, *Rudolf Steiner's Gift to Education – The Waldorf Schools*, 1975:39

<sup>43</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *Spiritual Ground of Education*, 1946:76

and so the child's feeling life - which expresses itself through the heart - now affects every part of the body.

This means that the child's feeling life plays a deep role in the building up of the breathing and blood circulation system, as well as the muscular system, and builds these organs according to its inner state of being (in the quotation above called his 'inner disposition')

The physical broadening of the trunk area indicates an *inner* transformation of soul and spirit, rather than an outer change: the beginning of the soul becoming free from the body - no longer so tied to the physical body - so that the soul can now have a life of its own.

The well-being of the children's feeling life, their enthusiasms and natural character all influence and support the development of the rhythmic system at this time. Hence the importance of happy, stress-free, imaginative, enriched learning at school, which has a direct effect on the health of the child for its entire life.

## DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Grade 4 children are in the middle of the 'feeling' sub-phase of the "feeling" phase of childhood development. In the previous year the period known as the ninth-year crisis began when the children felt quite lost and disorientated; now they are establishing themselves in their new way of being and making the transition to a new awareness of themselves.

Instead of responding to the environment out of sympathy and imitation as they did two years before, they are beginning to express their feelings about everything, usually critically, thus developing their forces of antipathy. This links back to the period in early childhood when the young child said "No!" to everything, thus learning to assert their ego.

The children need these antipathy forces in order to become conscious of themselves and what they are experiencing. Over the next few years they will alternate between sympathy and antipathy in their feelings until they are able to balance both qualities as a means of perceiving the world around them more accurately. This is the "conscious personal experience" mentioned above from which thinking emerges during adolescence.

The children want to challenge the adults and each other mentally as well as physically! Grade 4 children are assertive, complaining, demanding and boastful; they love riddles and tricks; testing each other, trying to prove who is stronger, faster, better at this or that. They take sides against each other; today's friends may be tomorrow's enemies. They form packs, like wolves, with a leader, enjoying the solidarity of the group.

## WHAT THE CHILD NEEDS AT THIS AGE

The children in Grade 4 are in the process of cutting the ties to their life of childhood and they will never return to the experience of the early years. The children tend to have strong opinions based on their likes and dislikes as they are not yet capable of intellectual judgement.

They need the imaginative, pictorial approach that is linked to right-brain intuitive understanding as a basis for concepts which are then transformed at a later stage into objective thinking. The children must not be limited to left-brain intellectual analysis of facts, but should work with a combination of left and right brain where observation includes a feeling perception of inner qualities.

If the teacher tells a story about the eagle, nesting in craggy mountain heights and wheeling through the air on wide-swept wings with far-seeing eyes, the children can easily imagine this mighty bird. In a flash the eagle dives to capture and kill its prey with its sharp beak and talons.

The pictures<sup>44</sup> that the children imagine, when filled out with details give more information than a mere discussion, and the specialised qualities of the eagle when discussed on the next day can lead to conceptual knowledge that is enlivened by feeling perceptions. By acting out the eagle's flight, by learning a poem, by painting or drawing the eagle, the children will have an unforgettable experience of the king of the birds.

The discipline of the class can become challenging for the teacher, who needs to cultivate a good sense of humour for this age. The teacher needs to become the leader of the pack of often unruly Grade 4's, light-heartedly yet firmly guiding them to new quests and challenges.

It is important to encourage each child to compete against him- or herself, rather than competing against others, setting higher standards than previous achievements. Some of the class may be mature enough to accept 'losing' in a contest between two teams, but the teacher should introduce competitive games carefully, making sure that they do not result in one person or group 'winning' all the time. There are many co-operative games that have far greater value for the children.

Praise from the teacher is the greatest encouragement and every child should experience this appreciation for their efforts, especially those who do not shine as obviously as others. Thus the 'bright' student does not become a show-piece, but part of the rich tapestry of the whole class.

Co-operative learning in pairs or groups for discussions, recall of stories or other activities is also a good method of working with this age. Depth of questioning in lesson recall is important not only for understanding and consolidation of the work but

<sup>44</sup> Pictures made in the mind, as the result of the teacher's rich description, not pictures found in books or stuck on the wall

for encouraging the children to express themselves confidently. To develop this depth, the teacher needs to think deeply about the subject matter itself, so that the questions he or she puts to the children lead to finding meaning rather than only stating facts.

Then there is the teacher's imaginative and artistic approach to teaching which enables him or her to meet the needs of this age. As Steiner said,

Much can be done with the simplest resources, if only the teacher has the proper artistic feeling, joy and happiness in living, a love for all existence, a power and energy for work – these are among the lifelong results of the cultivation of a feeling for beauty and for art.<sup>45</sup>

## HOW THE WALDORF CURRICULUM MEETS THE CHILD AT THIS AGE

### *Grade 4 Syllabus*

#### *Mythology*

The mythology recommended by Rudolf Steiner for this age covers stories that portray the strength of the forces of nature. In the same way that the blood circulation becomes stronger, richly flooding the muscles with blood so that they are full of energy and strength, so the stories speak of mighty gods and giants whose adventures are full of battles and daring. This speaks to the children, who have this abundance of energy in them.

At the same time, the new way of thinking more objectively, using more antipathy than before, is pictured in these stories through the cleverness and trickery that the heroes use to overcome huge forces against them.

Rudolf Steiner recommended the Norse Tales for the Grade 4 children at the first Waldorf School in Stuttgart, Germany. These are rich and wonderful stories, and it may be difficult to find similar stories from the local culture of children who live in other countries. If the teacher decides to use the Norse Tales - and after all, they do belong to the world's stories - he or she could at least search for similar stories out of the local culture, or related cultures, to tell the children at other times during this year.

After the relatively familiar stories of the Old Testament, Grade 4 leaps to the wild and fantastical stories of Norse Mythology. Everything is larger than life, like the gigantic ash tree Yggdrasil on which the nine worlds are built. There is Odin, king of the gods and goddesses in their fortress of Asgard arrayed against the giants of Jotenheim, in the lands of fire and ice!

<sup>45</sup> Rudolf Steiner: *The Education of the Child*, 1996:35

Thor, the warrior god and his mighty hammer Mjolnir are thrown in with the wily half-god, half-giant Loki whose trickery continually brings him and the gods to the brink of disaster, only to be rescued by further contests and escapades in the dangerous realms of the giants. The stories twist and turn with sudden surprises.

Many different worlds and beings emerge in these stories from gold-crafting dwarfs, the huge Fenris wolf and other strange creatures to the courageous hero Siegfried, from the human race, who slays the dragon Fafnir. And what will happen to them all when the Sun God, Baldur dies?

The Norse stories depict the contest between those who are strong physically i.e. the giants and those who are quick-witted i.e. the gods and particularly Loki who tells lies and plays tricks on everyone. The gods distrust him, not knowing which side he is on. He represents the two-sided quality of the mind, capable of good and evil, true and untrue. The children at this age are stretching their minds to test both sides.

In the great Norse battle of Ragnarok, both gods and giants die; later a new world arises where human beings can live once more. This is a complete change from the 'happy endings' of fairy tales and even the Old Testament where the Israelites triumph through following the 'good' guidance of a God that never dies. It depicts the 'death' of the wonderland of childhood and the need for Grade 4 children to stand alone, finding their own strength and uniqueness in a world where the duality of good and evil are realities.

There are also many African stories and legends that are appropriate for this age that depict heroic qualities for overcoming dark and dangerous situations or the struggle to survive in a new country.

### *Language*

The Norse Myths and African Legends form the background inspiration for the language work in Grade 4. Speech exercises are continued, often in the form of alliterative rhymes and riddles, which the children enjoy.

The Norse Creation Story or 'Edda' was originally in alliterative verse and while it was being chanted, the leader thumped his staff down loudly on the alliteration to emphasise the sound. Poems that have strong alliteration (see example below) allow the children to experience the power of the sounds as they are spoken. Poetry in Norse style is very powerful and it is good for the children to experience their own strength of ego as they say it out loud. Language is the vehicle for the individual spirit and it is important that the children learn to express themselves clearly, consciously and confidently.

Forge me with fire a sword for my smiting!  
Shape me a shield both forceful and fierce;  
Stalwart and strong to fend against fear!<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Source still to be found

The Norse stories are excellent material for reading practice with the main lesson book used as a class reader in the first term. The characters are vividly portrayed, so scenes from the stories and especially dialogues are fun to act out in pairs. Then everyone gets a chance to perform e.g. Loki trying to persuade Iduna to give him her golden apples or Loki getting Thor to dress up as Freya and be the giant king's bride.

The stories can then be written down. They are often quite complicated, so it is best for the children to only write up sections, using lively descriptions. Library books should be taken out for further reading practice. Another exciting story is that of 'Erik the Viking' and it makes a good class reader if the children are up to that stage in their reading. Otherwise, let the teacher read it to the class. Try to find a book of suitable African Tales as a class reader.

### *Grammar*

In the Grammar main lesson, parts of speech are taught very actively through games and acting. The teacher needs to expand the children's knowledge of verbs, nouns and adjectives: various tenses of the verb, different kinds of nouns, comparison of adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, conjunctions and punctuation, etc. Here we see that the children have to 'cut up' the whole sentence and analyse the parts of speech before putting it together again.

Vocabulary should be extended and spelling practiced daily. The teacher needs to be conscientious in supporting slow readers to 'catch up' by arranging extra practice. Expectations must be clear and of a good standard!

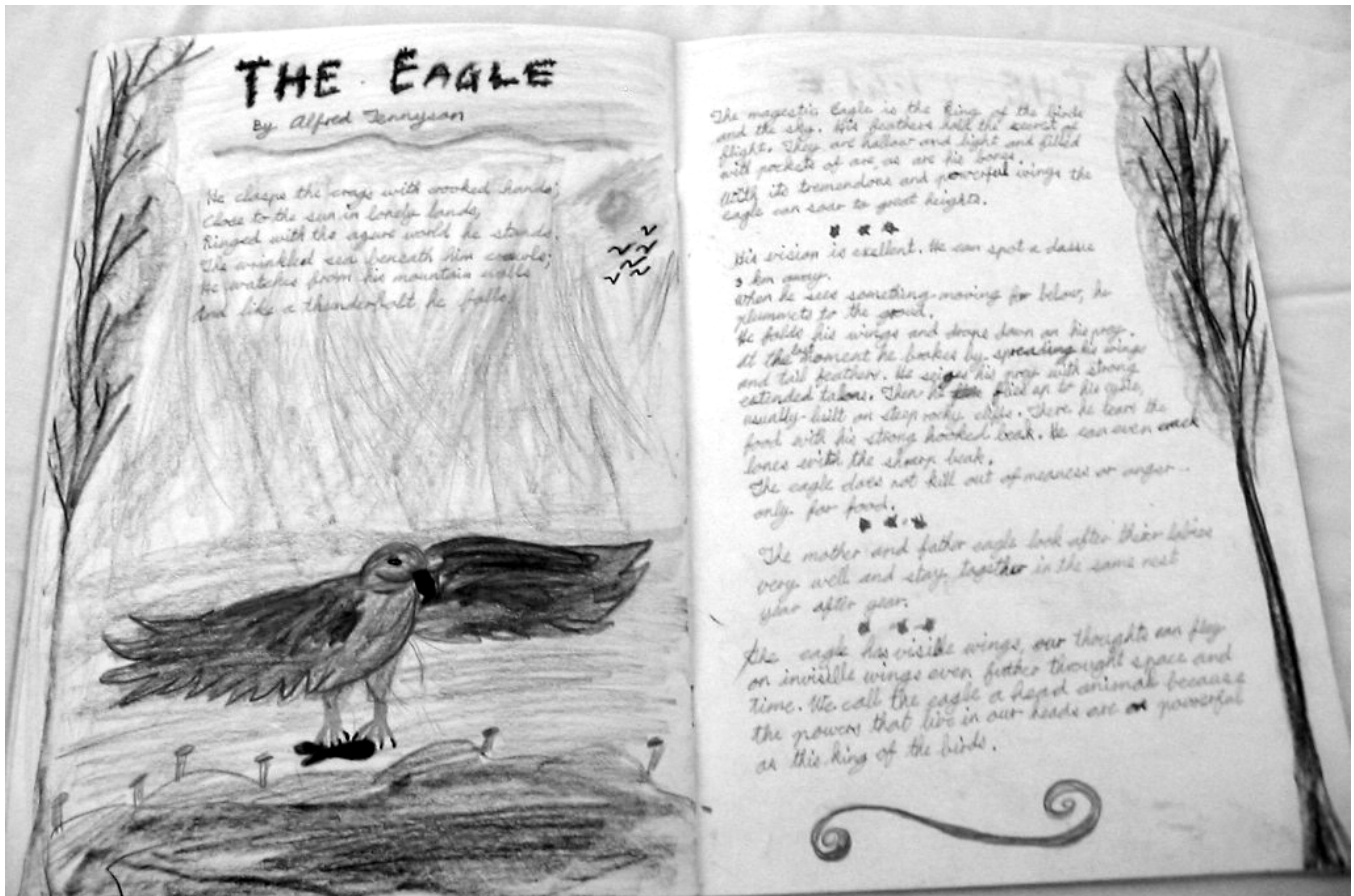
It is great fun to do a long poem or play from one of the Norse stories. The children want to be challenged and will easily manage to learn all the words!

### *Human and Animal*

With Grade 4 children beginning to free themselves from instinctively responding to their surroundings, it is appropriate for them to begin the study of the kingdoms of nature and particularly with the main lesson entitled 'Human and Animal'.

Animals are bound by their instincts to a particular form and habitat. Humans, on the other hand, with their upright spine, language and thought are free to develop in soul and spirit beyond the limitations of form. Human beings with their tremendous potential for creativity and growth are seen as the 'whole', while all the animals, being specialised, are connected to aspects of the human being through their different soul qualities. Thus we say a person is 'as brave as a lion', 'as slow as a snail.'





Certain animals are linked to physical attributes of the human being, e.g. the octopus is a 'head' creature with its huge soft head and soulful eyes dominating the form. A fish is a 'trunk' creature: a body with a mouth at one end and a tail at the other, while the deer or horse is a 'limb' animal because its specialisation is speed of movement.

The eagle is specialised in its sense of sight, and its speed of flight links it to the nervous system in the human being; while the lion, with its powerful chest and hunting instincts is an animal in which the blood-breathing system is perfectly balanced. The gentle cow, chewing the cud while transforming the grass to milk is an animal in which the metabolic system is dominant. These animals are shown as connected to the human being in specific ways, but are also studied through their own instinctive adaptation to the environment. The teacher needs to bring the picture of each animal in such an imaginative way that the children understand not only the instinctive quality, but also the inner connection between the human being and the animal.

Then you will realise that the entire animal kingdom is a 'human being' spread out like an opened fan, and the human physical organisation makes up the entire animal kingdom, folded together like a closed fan.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, 1996:89

Such an approach challenges both the imagination and the observation of the children and much discussion should arise on different topics: e.g. the connection between instincts and the shape of the animal; the comparison between human being and animal senses; the uprightness of the human being in comparison with the horizontal spine of the animal, etc.

All these discussions give them a deep feeling for the animal qualities, but the teacher must take care to allow the children to find their own observations around these topics. Children love animals and this study strengthens the bond between them.

### *Local Geography*

The study of Geography begins in the area in which the children live. The class makes a weather chart for the month in which they draw a picture of the weather daily. They learn about the directions of the compass and they discover how maps were first made. They learn to draw a diagram of the classroom, the school and the way to school and eventually a map of the surrounding area by using a grid.

Regular walks or outings to local places of interest help them to become conscious of the surrounding houses, important buildings and features like a railway station, museum or church.

They are asked questions about the quality or purpose of the village and its people so that they understand the connection between them; e.g. "Why do people want to live here?" "How do they earn their living?" The 'whole' area is discussed, giving the children the sense of knowing and belonging to the village or suburb in which they live or go to school.

Geography demonstrates the interconnectedness of our world: the people, animals, plants, climate and geographical locality and how each supports and influences the others. It is a time of experiencing the "wholeness" of life and how we all belong together on the earth.

### *Local History or Early Peoples*

It is very difficult to separate the Geography and History of a local area and often it makes sense to combine them: first emphasising the land and its physical features, followed by the people who lived there or who created the history of the place. In rural areas, there is often evidence of the tribes or early peoples who lived there e.g. rock paintings which deserve a proper study.

In Africa, we have a wonderful opportunity to teach the children about the customs and life style of the three types of early people: the hunter gatherers, the herders and the agriculturalists. When taught in an experiential manner - for example making their dwellings, their tools, their way of dressing and 'becoming' each type by acting out their way of life - this main lesson allows the children to identify deeply with the different cultures and to understand the challenges they experienced.

The teacher needs to consider the spiritual qualities and inner characteristics of each group, as well as their cultural aspects. It is important that the children are not given facts or cultural customs more suited to older children, but are given the experience of what it is like to be these early people and their simple lifestyle. The children can have a sense of what they can learn from that group through their stories and rituals.

### *Mathematics*

Mental arithmetic and work on the tables continues to keep the children alert and remembering what they have learnt before. The new material comes in the Fractions main lesson where the children learn to fold and cut paper into exact halves, quarters, eighths, thirds, etc in order to understand what 'dividing the whole into parts' really means.

There are two main lessons devoted to fractions, the second one about equivalent fractions, and adding or subtracting fractions. All this practical work is great fun for the children and visually both attractive and self-explanatory. This work of dividing the whole into parts and putting it together again develops the analytical reasoning that will emerge after the onset of puberty. It also gives children the security that nothing is really lost, it all belongs as part of the 'whole'.

Grade 4 also has main lessons on long multiplication and long division, both of which are challenging in understanding the process and putting it into practice accurately. Therefore the teacher needs to find an imaginative approach to ensure that the children enjoy getting their teeth into the mental wrestling with these processes.

If you fail to present arithmetic or writing lessons imaginatively, you will tire your pupils. But if, out of an inner freshness and at a moment's notice, you can call up powers of imagery in the children, you will not tire them. The important thing is that the teacher knows how to teach the various subjects in harmony with the pupils' rhythmic system, and how, through knowledge of the human being, the lesson content can be presented in the appropriate form.<sup>48</sup>

### *The Arts*

#### *Drawing*

During Grade 4, many children become dissatisfied with the spontaneous drawing of the year before and feel that "they can't draw properly". The children begin to feel that their drawings need to be more realistic than before; the outer picture becomes the new standard and later on they say that this was the time when it seemed as if their imagination had died. As Klocek<sup>49</sup> says:

The emergence of the intellect out of the imagination is in actuality a birth, not a death. It becomes a death only when we close the door on the imagination and choose to live

<sup>48</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, 1996:65

<sup>49</sup> Dennis Klocek, *Drawing with New Eyes*, 2000: 3

solely in the intellect. The ideal is to struggle to keep the door open between intellect and imagination so that there can be breathing between the two worlds.

The teacher needs to encourage the children with vivid word pictures to arouse their feelings and stimulate their imagination. It is also important to have beautiful drawings on the board for them to copy.

Shaded drawing continues in the form of headings, borders and illustrations of the stories, always encouraged and assisted by beautiful 'word pictures'. This method of drawing helps the children to feel creative and avoids the disappointment of making 'line drawings' that are not up to the expectations of the children. Map-making teaches the children to view the area from above, like a diagram, not just a picture.

Form Drawing involves exercises in symmetry. Metamorphic exercises are continued and learning to draw the plaited 'Celtic Knot' patterns, but indicating where the threads weave over or under each other. This challenges the children's minds to grasp the 'ins and outs' of the pattern in order to be able to draw it.

These patterns often contain the lemniscate or 'figure of eight' where what is outside changes over to become the inside and vice-versa. These 'lemniscate' forms depict the process of 'reversal' which is happening through the transformation of their feelings at this age. The African sand drawings from Angola, and weaving patterns can also be introduced.

### *Painting*

The contrast and tones between light and dark will bring out the dramatic element so appropriate to the moods of the exciting stories the children have heard. The moods of nature should be painted and connected to the characters in the stories. Stormy, fiery, thunderous Thor; quicksilver, airy, mischievous Loki; gentle, pastoral Iduna with her apples; brilliant Baldur, the sun-god: each one has a nature quality as well as a human one.

### *Clay Modelling*

This is the year when the children begin with clay modelling. They may model the four elements or free imaginative shapes, but the main theme is that of modelling the animal forms. Clay demands that the forms are solid and simplified to bring out the essence of each creature and also to prevent cracking. The teacher chooses simple forms that emerge out of a sphere e.g. a bird from an egg.

The children learn to use the symmetry of their hands to create each creature, without adding or taking any clay away. Children of this age are ready for such instruction and guidance. Modelling the animal assists the children in their observation of the form as well as understanding the different instincts of each animal.

## Music

The child wants to be gripped by music and rhythms far more than previously. If we observe how the child at the point between the ninth and tenth year responds to music – how the musical element lives in the child as a plastically moulding force, and how the musical forces are active in the inner sculpting of the physical body...If we notice how the child's affinity to music easily expresses itself in an eagerness to perform dance-like movements – then we are bound to recognise that the child's real ability to grasp music begins to evolve between the ninth and tenth year.<sup>50</sup>

Singing of rounds and simple part-songs continues, strengthening the children's ability to hold a part and sing in harmony. This gives them an awareness of the beauty of harmonious chords as well as the powerful bond it creates among the singers. They may also be able to play some of the rounds on their recorders. Circle dancing is a wonderfully social and musical experience that all children enjoy, especially as they become more co-ordinated and get to know the steps!

## Handcrafts

The children learn 'cross-stitch' embroidery and embroider a design for a pencil case or small bag. The 'cross-stitch' embroidery is similar to the 'Celtic Knot' form drawings and assists the children in crossing over to a new way of being.

## The Symbol for Grade 4

The symbol for Grade 4 is a sideways cross signifying their coming to a crossroads in themselves - they are finding a new relationship to the world, balancing sympathy and antipathy. It is also a picture of crossed swords; the cross-stitch, the over and under of the Celtic knot and as such, signifies the challenge facing the children in crossing over to a new way of thinking and being:



## Questions, Exercises, Artistic Activities to Review Child Development in Grade 4

### DEVELOPMENT

1. Discuss why it is necessary for Grade 4 children to develop 'antipathy' forces.
2. Discuss the meaning and validity of the symbol for Grade 4.

## HOW THE CURRICULUM CAN SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AT THIS AGE

<sup>50</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, 1996:58



3. Arts as a means of keeping the imagination alive while the intellect is still developing.
4. Conscious personal experience – the gift of being human –what does this mean?
5. Co-operative or competitive games?

#### *ARTISTIC EXPLORATION*

6. Painting: the battle between light and darkness! Red, blue and yellow and how to create dark and mixed colours.
7. Clay modelling: moods of sympathy and antipathy
8. Drawing: abstract theme of death and resurrection.

### ***Children turning 11 years (Waldorf Grade 5)***

The Greek ideal of education was the Gymnast, that is to say, one who had completely harmonized his bodily nature and, to the extent that it was thought necessary in those days, all the qualities of his soul and spirit. A man able to bring the divine beauty of the world to expression in the beauty of his own body, this was the Gymnast.<sup>51</sup>

#### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Grade 5 is known as the heart of childhood, when the children show a greater harmony between body and soul than in the previous years. What is quite noticeable is that both boys and girls are physically well co-ordinated. They have begun to grow taller and the proportions of their bodies and their movements are harmonious and graceful. Both boys and girls therefore enjoy gymnastics, eurythmy and sport.

Grade 5 children have completed the change from milk teeth to permanent teeth, including molars. Their faces are strongly individual, each in their own characteristic manner, yet generally confident and open. The children are full of interest and curiosity about the world around them.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

In Grade 5 the children are in the last part of the ‘feeling’ sub-phase of the ‘feeling’ phase of child development. Having experienced loneliness and separation in the first stage that gave them an awareness of their ego (their own ‘I’), they then moved into the second stage of asserting themselves through their feelings to express that ego.

Now, in the last stage of this time, they have matured to a stage where they are more at ease with themselves inwardly. Although each child reaches this stage in their own time according to their own character, this ease can be observed in the grace and general confidence of their movements, and how they express an aesthetic sense of beauty in illustrating their written work.

<sup>51</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *Education and Modern Spiritual Life*, 1989:40



This year they reached a plateau after the previous year's struggles from which they can look out over the world. The inner harmony of the Greeks is reflected in this age and just as it led to a flowering in the 'Golden Age of Greece', so should it be a time of expansion and development mentally while celebrating the creativity of Grade 5 children through artistic application in music, drama, poetry and the visual arts.

## WHAT THE CHILD NEEDS AT THIS AGE

Grade 5 children want to connect to the world and discover all they can about it. However, they are still living in a pictorial realm and the teacher must use images and metaphors to introduce concepts and ideas in the different lessons if they wish the children to grasp and remember them.

The teacher needs to find many artistic and practical ways to involve them in the experience of the educational material. Even if they do not fully understand the concepts at the time, the experience will be remembered and will enable them to bring it to consciousness later.

Steiner says that it is not essential for a child to understand everything immediately, so long as they have had a rich feeling experience of the topic in the lesson. The artistic work related to the learning material allows the children to integrate the ideas in their own way. From this foundation they will slowly discover the truth of what they are learning.

Thus the teacher needs to lead the children to the mansion of knowledge through the gateway of art<sup>52</sup> and he or she will find that the various main lessons in Grade 5 like ancient history, Greek mythology, plant study and geometry lend themselves perfectly to this purpose.

## HOW THE WALDORF CURRICULUM MEETS THE CHILD AT THIS AGE

### *The Grade 5 Syllabus* *Greek Mythology*

The stories of the Greek gods and goddesses are psychologically appropriate for Grade 5, as they are symbols of human feeling, devoid of morals or compassion, merely acting out their own particular roles. There are also the stories of the heroes, men who did great deeds, like Theseus who slew the Minotaur (the evil bull). All the various stories illustrate their different qualities in delightful and exciting ways.

The Greek myths all carry a deeper meaning, none of which are discussed with the children, but through hearing these stories, they unconsciously come to understand the human race and themselves more deeply.

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<sup>52</sup> From Johann von Goethe.

The most important story is that of the Trojan War, when the Greeks went off to fight to win back the beautiful Helen, wife of Menelaus, who had been abducted by Paris, son of King Priam of Troy. They fight battles for ten years, each side assisted by different gods, but neither side can win. Finally crafty Odysseus, one of the Greeks, puts forward a plan to build a Wooden Horse, large enough to house twelve men and leave it as a gift for the Trojans as they pretend to return home. The plan succeeds; Troy is conquered and burnt to the ground.

This story marks the change in consciousness that occurred during the Greek civilization where men began to rely on their own mental powers instead of pleading to the gods. The Golden Age of Greece was a flowering of minds, hearts and deeds: it saw the growth of philosophy, science, medicine, drama, poetry, art, sculpture, architecture, democracy and more. It was witness to the genius of Homer, Aristophanes, Euclid, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and many more.

It was a time of amazing development of the individual ego. It showed the world what achievements were possible in human beings. And this openness to all possibilities is what Grade 5 children are like. These stories unconsciously show them that they can be whatever they wish to be and that each person's uniqueness should be expressed and celebrated.

The main lesson on Greek Mythology is usually combined with the teaching of language, especially grammar or poetry and creative writing.

### *Ancient Civilizations*

Rudolf Steiner saw a thread running through the cultures of ancient India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt and Greece: they are examples of the evolution of humankind in building civilisations as well as developing in human consciousness.

The people of ancient India were hunter-gatherers. They saw the material world as 'maya' or illusion and looked to the spiritual wisdom from the gods for guidance.

In ancient Persia, human beings saw the world as divided between the powers of light under the god Ahura Mazda and the lord of darkness, Ahriman. Human beings could assist Ahura Mazda by working co-operatively with him and each other: humankind had begun to settle down; to tame animals and to till the soil.

In Mesopotamia, the land of the two rivers (today known as Iraq), the people began to live in city states and became focussed on practical life; the development of crafts, trade, weights and measures, money and the invention of the wheel.

The great culture of Egypt was balanced between Pharaoh, with his priests in the temples who ruled with the guidance of the gods, and the poor people who grew crops along the banks of the Nile. The Sphinx and the mighty stone pyramids are monuments of that age and were decorated with the Egyptian writing known as Hieroglyphs.

When each of these cultures is experienced artistically, whether through stories, poetry, songs, dances, food or clothing in Grade 5, they begin to feel part of the family of humankind. Tolerance of different religions and customs arises through appreciation of their differences and the power of community life is generated through the harmonising events of art and ritual.

The children also experience the development from rural to city life, from spiritual unity with the gods to individual intelligence and autonomy, although the depth of these ideas may only be fully understood years later.

### *Greek History*

However, it was from the tiny cities of Athens, Sparta and Thebes in the land of Greece that a new way of thinking and living sparked off. Under the leadership of Solon, the ideas that led to democracy developed. Socrates and Plato brought new views on philosophy and education, while under the patronage of Pericles, the arts flowered in Athens.

Wars ceased as everyone flocked to the cathartic<sup>53</sup> experiences of the dramatic comedies and tragedies in the amphitheatres. The Olympic Games became a ritual in which the scattered tribes of Greece came together as a nation. The might of Persia was forced to recognise their defeat in the battles of Marathon, Thermopylae and Salamis where strategy surpassed numbers and the Greeks proved the power of their new weapon – the mind! In this main lesson, the history of personalities and events begins, the last and most famous character of the Greeks being Alexander the Great!

People living in Africa or other countries may wish to emphasise the fascinating and complex cultures of their own country and continent. The teacher is free to introduce extra main lessons that are suitable for their children, especially if they can link the study of different civilisations (whether as tribes or nations) to evolutionary development. However, this main lesson and any others of this nature could be placed later in Grade 6.

### *Language*

The rich heritage of stories and poetry from myth and history form the basis for the teaching of language (poetry, creative writing, reading and grammar.) It is important that the children learn several good poems from the different cultures as this will broaden their outlook and understanding of the various eras and peoples. Both choral and individual speaking is recommended. They could also learn a poem in Greek hexameter to experience the flowing rhythm. With the emphasis on drama in Greek times, it is recommended that the children perform a play at some time during the year.

There are so many stories available for Grade 5 that it is wise to spread them out over the year, possibly having a short story time daily which can be used as inspiration for

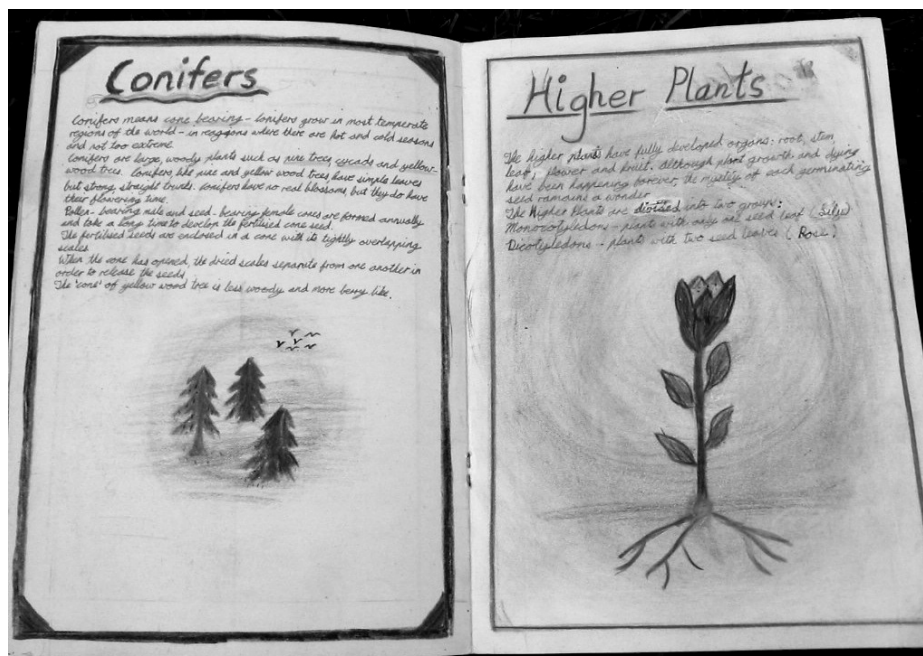
<sup>53</sup> Cathartic = the experience of being cleansed through the emotional power of the drama

creative writing lessons. The children can write stories or scenes and conversations using direct speech. They can be encouraged to write poetry with an emphasis on using lively descriptive language and imagery to keep it fresh and spontaneous, rather than limiting their mode of expression with form and rhyme.

The grammar main lesson expands on the parts of speech taught the year before. This includes active and passive voice and direct and reported speech, often using story material from the Greek Myths.

### Plant Study

In Grade 4 the study of animals was brought because they are so close to the heart of children; now in Grade 5 the plant kingdom is introduced. With the animal kingdom, the instincts are expressed clearly in the physical form; now in the plant kingdom much is invisible and the children need to complete what cannot be seen through their imagination.



The children first learn about the plant as a whole in its most complex form, i.e. the flowering plant group that follows the complete life cycle from seed to flower. Not only are different aspects of the life cycle of a plant hidden from view at times, but many of the secrets of the plant world are best revealed through imagery and metaphor. For example, the teacher

may begin with a seed which can be compared to a little house (with cupboards of food) in which the baby plant is sleeping until it gets ready to open the door and go off on its journey of growth into a complete plant. Even the evolutionary sequence of the development of plants (mushroom, lichen, moss, fern and cone-bearing tree) is better understood through imagining each of them as characters e.g. the mushroom as a baby in a mycelium blanket.

We ought not to be satisfied, for instance, with presenting a plant, a seed, a flower to the child merely as it can be perceived with the senses. Everything should become a parable of the spiritual. In a grain of corn there is far more than meets the eye. There is a whole new plant invisible within it. That such a thing as a seed has more within it

than can be perceived with the senses, this the child must grasp in a living way with his feeling and imagination. He must, in feeling, divine the secrets of existence.<sup>54</sup>

The rhythm of expansion and contraction, the spiral patterns in plants, the metamorphosis of leaf forms or the connection between plants and insects are not things to be explained intellectually, but brought through movement, artistic drawings and walks in nature where what has already been taught is now observed. The children find it very exciting to discover something they have already learnt!

Behold the flower, it is the butterfly held by the earth;  
Behold the butterfly, it is the flower released to the heavens.<sup>55</sup>

The study of plants must always be brought with the awareness of their inter-relationship with the sun, the elements<sup>56</sup>, climatic conditions and the nature of the soil. "And so the plants are linked to the Earth as if they were the hair of the Earth."<sup>57</sup>

The teacher must also have worked with Goethe's way of observing different plants so that they understand the quality or character of the 'being' of the whole plant that determines the form and function of that plant. This will help the teacher to grasp the correct image or metaphor to use at each point. Thus they will perceive that a rose is like a queen among the flowers, a lily is like a young girl, while a palm tree is like warrior with many spears and a proud, spiky headdress.

Drawings and especially paintings of plants will bring out the different qualities of the plants as well as allowing the children to express the beauty of the plant kingdom.

### Geography

The geography of the country where the children are living is studied in depth during this year, through stories of children living in certain areas and visiting friends in other parts of the country. In this way the climate, vegetation, farming and important industries are observed and discussed through the eyes of the children in the story. This integrates the feeling of the family of humankind in the children in a more practical and up-to-date sense than the history lessons. The main lesson book needs to be full of maps, diagrams and drawings that illustrate what has been taught.

The children need to feel that the country they live in belongs to them and where possible, nature or mountain walks to explore the area assist in this regard. If a river is running through the area, perhaps they can follow it up or downstream and see how it affects the lives of the people living there? An outing to an important place of interest is not only fun, but one may ask the children why it was placed there and nowhere else? Again, outings are only of value if the children have learnt about the place beforehand.

<sup>54</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Education of the Child*, 1965:40

<sup>55</sup> Rudolf Steiner.

<sup>56</sup> Earth, water, air and fire

<sup>57</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, 1996:89



### *Animal Study*

This study is involved with the adaptation of animals to specific environments. The teacher may link this main lesson to local geography or focus on birds in the air or fish in the sea. Artistic projects around the drawing or painting of these creatures should enhance their connection to the environment!

### *Mathematics*

Mental agility and ease of calculation is the aim in Grade 5. Plenty of mental arithmetic games and revision of times tables, including squares are practised in order to challenge the children in a fun way! Work on fractions continues, using more complex calculations with different denominators.

This year decimal fractions are introduced with the base of 10, but the teacher must make sure that the children are able to convert from decimals to fractions with ease so that a living relationship is developed. The four operations with decimals are introduced and practised. Geometrical drawings and patterns are explored free-hand, with careful colouring-in to allow them to emerge in jewel-like beauty on the page.

### *Religion*

In Grade 5, the religions of the different cultures are presented as a means of understanding the people living in that particular place or time. Religious or moral precepts are not told to the children, but allowed to emerge from them themselves in the following ways:

We can achieve it if we work by examples, or by presenting pictures to the child's imagination: for instance through biographies or descriptions of good men or bad men. And we should not rob the child of the satisfaction of awakening to morality of his own accord.<sup>58</sup>

The teacher must be careful not to impose his or her idea of good or bad, but to let the children come to their own conclusions from the biographical stories. In this way the children will feel free to find their own moral and religious path later in life.

### *The Arts*

#### *Painting, Drawing and Clay Modelling*

The wet-on-wet medium of water colour painting is most suitable for developing the sense that the plant is completely part of the environment. The background environment is developed first in colours appropriate to the plant e.g. the dark moist earthy surroundings from which space is allowed for the mushroom to arise.

The flowing paint encourages the gesture of different flowers and trees to be expressed. The children can be taught to become aware of the 'life energies' through bringing out the movement both in and surrounding the plant. Landscapes in

<sup>58</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *Spiritual Ground of Education*, 1946:55,56



geography are also very effective in this medium, especially when they are simplified in order to capture the 'feeling' essence of the scene.

Shaded Drawings continue to enhance the main lesson books and the teacher will need to assist the children to develop the peak of perfection in colour and form that they are looking for.

Characteristic gestures of the plant kingdom are explored through clay modelling, showing the connection to the feelings of the human being such as joy and sadness. Clay modelling can be used in connection with history e.g. clay tablets for writing cuneiform, modelling the sphinx and pyramids of Egypt and the Doric, Ionic and Corinthian capitals of the Greek columns.

### *Music*

The children should be introduced to a wide range of songs from different cultures to enhance their sense of the 'global family'. Variety of mood and colour is brought through major and minor keys, also pentatonic and modal songs and the children should be developing their sense of harmony through many rounds and part-songs. The children's musical development and love for melody and harmony reaches a high point in this age. As a result, it is also a good age for them to begin learning to play the treble or tenor recorder or suitable orchestral instruments.

### *Movement*

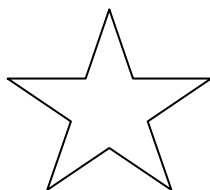
Classes such as eurythmy, circle dancing, drama and gymnastics should, if possible, be encouraged at this age. Athletic sports and the ancient games of the Olympics i.e. running (sprinting and marathon), jumping (high and long), javelin and discus-throwing should be introduced and practised.

### *Crafts*

Knitting becomes more complicated as the children learn to knit socks on four needles, perhaps in exciting stripes of colour! Both boys and girls should begin learning how to work with the grain of the wood by making a darning egg, using a gouge and chisel. The emphasis is on the combination of the artistic and the practical.

### *The Symbol for Grade 5*

The symbol chosen for Grade 5 is the five-pointed star: symbol for the human being at his or her peak of development because of the inner and outer harmony displayed by the children at this age. It also relates to their expansive interest in the world around them and the emphasis on balance and beauty of expression.



*Questions, Exercises, Artistic Activities to Review Child Development in Grade 5*

**DEVELOPMENT**

1. *How is it that Grade 5 have become 'harmonious' after the challenging year of Grade 4?*
2. *Why is it important to 'hold back' intellectual judgement at this age and to still keep up the 'artistic and beautiful' approach with Grade 5?*
3. *Discuss the meaning of Goethe's quote: "Enter the temple of knowledge through the gateway of art."*
4. *Discuss the meaning and validity of the symbol for Grade 5.*

**ARTISTIC EXPLORATION**

5. *Painting: Using red, blue and yellow, create a painting that expresses the balance between darkness and light.*
6. *Clay modelling: abstract form to express harmony between inner and outer.*
7. *Drawing: abstract colour exercise expressing harmony.*

## ***THE PRE-ADOLESCENT STAGE (12 TO 14 YEARS)***

*Essential reading:*

Hermann Koepke (1989) *On the Threshold of Adolescence: the Struggle for Independence in the Twelfth Year*. Anthroposophic Press: Hudson, New York

### ***Children turning 12 years (Waldorf Grade 6)***

"The struggle for independence"<sup>59</sup>

**PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

All of a sudden, the children who have been so beautiful, so harmoniously co-ordinated in their bodies, shift into another spurt of growth! The bones in their arms and legs suddenly lengthen; shirt-sleeves and trousers are noticeably short and it is obvious that the forces of growth have moved into their limbs.

This may happen several times in quick succession over the next couple of years and their movement is severely affected. They lose balance easily, bump into things, fall over their own feet and generally have a lack of control of their lanky limbs.

Boys lose control of their limbs far more than girls, and so have a much more difficult time keeping their bodies well co-ordinated... In the playground, we see a lot of jerky movements, from standing around to suddenly over-reacting and 'tearing around like mad.'<sup>60</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Hermann Koepke, *On the Threshold of Adolescence: the Struggle for Independence in the Twelfth Year*, 1989

<sup>60</sup> Hermann Koepke, *On the Threshold of Adolescence: the Struggle for Independence in the Twelfth Year*, 1989

The children become 'earth-bound' as they experience the weight of their bones and bodies. It is as if the children have 'fallen into matter' and they begin to droop as if struck by gravity and weariness. What was previously quite easy for them seems to require an effort of will on their part. It is a time of transformation of the will as they learn to work consciously to create what they want to achieve.

## DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

This age marks the beginning of the 'thinking' sub-phase of this stage of child development. As the growth forces are now working especially on the skeleton, a new way of thinking begins to emerge. Consciousness is connecting itself with the bones, the most material part of the body. Due to this connection, a new, material form of thinking emerges.

The "power of awakesness is mounting towards the head"<sup>61</sup> and the 'I' of the child begins to take hold of everything he or she observes; becoming conscious of detail and slowly learning to make connections between things. The children begin to see the result of an action, to develop systematic logical thinking and to understand the 'bare bones' of a pattern of thought. This is the growth of intellectual, material, cause-and-effect thinking.

Before the twelfth year the children have been dependent on the love and approval of the adults around them. During this time most of them develop enthusiastic and charming personalities, usually wishing to please the teacher or parents. Now, they yearn for independence and as their self-awareness grows, they need to take some distance from their parents and teachers; sometimes behaving as if they wonder how these adults can be 'so stupid'. They sometimes show a reluctance to shake hands with the teacher and their fingers are often moist and cold.

## WHAT THEY NEED AT THIS AGE

The children in Grade 6 are demanding to be recognised in a different way from before. They no longer want everything to be 'beautiful'. Actually they feel capable of coming to their own conclusions, of making their own decisions. They want to be able to solve real problems, to organise their own schedules and projects, to work out the ground rules of the class. They want to be challenged mentally and allowed to work things out for themselves!

This is a time when co-operative learning in groups or pairs comes to the fore and enables the children to take more responsibility for the content and organisation of the work. The teacher will find the transition to independence far easier if they have built up the use of co-operative learning over the years.

<sup>61</sup> A.C.Harwood, *The Recovery of Man in Childhood*, 1963:122

However teachers must also allow spontaneous humour to inspire the lessons so that the children share teaching experiences on a lighter note, while still seriously engaging in the task of learning. Humour is related to humanity, and we come close to those with whom we can laugh. The teacher's understanding of the children also shows in his or her ability to 'let go' and be real people.

[If] teachers have prepared their lessons properly ... ideas [for humour] will come to them while teaching ... If teaching follows its proper course in this way, the awakening of love will happen, so that the student's soul and spirit are properly integrated into the human organization during the final stage of this awakening – that is, when the approach of puberty begins.<sup>62</sup>

The danger of the new, intellectual development that is now beginning, is that children start to separate themselves from the feeling aspect of learning. It is very important that the teacher finds a new way of bringing artistic activities to deepen the content that he/she presents to the children. More than ever, the children need to be engaged in artistic work to avoid a one-sided, unfeeling way of thinking from developing.

## HOW THE WALDORF CURRICULUM MEETS THE CHILD AT THIS AGE

### *History*

Stories from history now interest the children enormously. They are now ready for history that really happened, not so much history that is clothed in myth and legend any more.

Rudolf Steiner proposed that children at this age hear stories of civilisation in which everything was highly structured, and in which the material world was conquered through a new, systematic way of thinking.

For the Middle-European countries he suggested the history of the Romans. Children living in other countries could be told the stories of similar civilisations in their own region, such as the highly developed kingdoms that existed in Africa. As part of world history, they should certainly learn about the Romans, as we can find the roots of our current way of living in the way the Romans structured their lives.

The stories of the ancient Romans and how they developed from a few scattered tribes along the river Tiber to the mighty empire under the Caesars, is the background material chosen for the Grade 6 children who long to meet the 'real world'. The children learn about the seven kings of Rome and how later the Romans chose to reject the monarchy and rule themselves, instituting the SPQR (Senatus Populusque Romanus or The Senate and the People of Rome) to rule the republic of Rome.

<sup>62</sup> R.Steiner's *The Child's Changing Consciousness* , 1996:132.

Then come stories of how the Romans built up power as a nation, and how they developed machinery of war to deal with the Carthaginian threat under Hannibal. There is the rise of Julius and Augustus Caesar, under whom flourished the development of culture, buildings, aqueducts, laws and ways in which the Romans managed to rule their foreign conquests so successfully. Finally there is the decline of the Roman Empire.

The reason why the study of Rome is so important for Grade 6 is that it illustrates the organisation and decentralisation of power. Our world today is based on this, and this is also what the teacher needs to do with the children at this age. No longer should the teacher be telling the children everything they should know and do and even how to do things.

Instead he or she should be presenting the necessary information for the task and getting the children into groups to organise and solve it. These groups become the teacher's cohorts, reporting back with their answers. The more the teacher 'hands over the power' to the children, the happier will they be, the greater the respect for the teacher and the children will work with increased enthusiasm and responsibility.

### *Local or National History*

This is where the history of the country or continent in which the children are living is studied and is easily linked to the geographical studies described below. As far as possible the teacher should teach history through the biographies of inspiring leaders and people who initiated cultural progress. Underlying themes of cultural, national and spiritual development should be presented rather than allowing history to become a list of factual information around battles for power.

In South Africa, the stories of the Mfecane can be told; of Dingiswayo and Shaka who built up the highly organised Zulu nation (and can be compared with the qualities of the Romans). There is also Moshoeshoe who united the Sotho nation, and other kingdoms can be studied such as the Swazi and Ndebele. Similar stories need to be found for children living in other countries.

### *Geography*

The study of the various climatic zones of Africa is balanced between distance from the equator and height above sea level. The children must study the lie of the land (mountains, rivers and plains) on the map to understand why each area has a specific climate (cause-and-effect). Within these zones the climate, rainfall, temperatures, vegetation and animals are linked to the indigenous people who live closely connected to the environment.

Examples could be the hunter-gatherer Ituri tribe in Equatorial Africa, nomadic North African Tuareg with their camels, the Maasai with their cattle on the plains of Kenya, the Dagon grain-growers, the Ethiopians on the highlands of the Horn of Africa and other groupings, that bring a mass of fascinating cultural material. Important cities, industries, cultivated crops and minerals are also studied.





Use of atlases and a globe in the classroom, as well as drawing of maps from a grid, open the way for the development of general knowledge of world geography and history.

### *Animal Study and Plant Study*

The studies of animals and plants can be integrated into the geographical main lesson or be studied separately though linked up with that main lesson so that they support each other, allowing sufficient time to deal with the material in depth. The adaptation of animals and plants to the environment of different climatic zones e.g. desert, savannah grasslands, equatorial forest and highlands makes for interesting observation!

### *Projects*

The above main lessons on natural sciences are an open invitation for the teacher to let the children do projects on different topics from each main

lesson. These can be done in pairs or individually but the children need to be carefully trained as to what is expected: how to research the material required and how to transform the information into an artistic project that reflects the children's own effort and understanding. This includes that children need to learn to write everything in their own words, and not copy from books.

Too often the parents or older siblings take over in order to achieve high standards. Also those with access to the Internet may be tempted to download all the material which is then copied and presented as being the child's work. Apart from being dishonest (this is known as plagiarism), it is of no value to the child or the teacher in terms of educational learning. Parents need to be informed to encourage their children and help find and understand information if the children get stuck, but not to take over.

Thus drawings, maps and diagrams must be done physically by the child and written work should be done, as far as possible, at school or checked by the teacher to make sure it is the child's work. A poem or story about an animal must show knowledge of the physical description and instinctive behaviour of the animal as well as its connection to the environment. An oral presentation is often a good choice to see if the child has understood the material and is able to verbalise it.



### *Geology*

The study of geology is appropriate at this age when the children are experiencing the weight and gravity of their bones and bodies. Metaphorically the mountains are the bones of the earth, creating the structure of countries and continents, just as the skeleton gives structure to the body.

The main types of rock: plutonic, volcanic, sedimentary and metamorphic are best introduced through characterization and imagery e.g. by linking plutonic rock to the Greek God Pluto, lord of the underworld through whose turning and churning the granite mountains are formed, while metamorphic rock is formed by 'recycling' other rocks through heat and pressure.

The processes in Geology are easily understood through drawings and diagrams, like the cross-section of a volcano. Outings to places of geological interest give opportunities for firsthand observation, but it is important to have plenty of rock specimens in the classroom, allowing the children to handle them and become familiar with them.

### *Physics*

Grade 6 children are introduced to science through the study of acoustics and colour based on experiences in music and painting lessons. Now, however, they are required to observe an experiment directly, learning to describe what happened in the correct sequence. The following day the children reflect on their observations and proceed to draw a conclusion from their investigation. They are not given any answers or theories beforehand, as it is important that they develop the capacity for clear observation and logical, concrete thinking that leads to sound judgement!

In acoustics, experiments explore the laws of pitch in wind and string instruments. Tone quality and volume in the creation of sound are also investigated (for example the effect of the resonating box of the guitar). The children make a simple pitched instrument of their own to demonstrate these laws.

The children explore the laws of colour through the use of prisms on black and white posters, showing that colours emerge from the meeting of darkness and light. Colour experiments also involve the complementary colours and the colour circle. Further properties of light are explored using mirrors, a periscope, pin-hole camera and lenses.<sup>63</sup> All experiments are observed, discussed and written up using a precise method to ensure clarity and logical expression. At the same time, Steiner asks the teacher to retain a sense of humour!

In physics lessons there is every need for the teacher to allow an element of grace to enter the teaching. The teacher must remember the need for a certain 'soul breathing' in the lessons. An in-breathing of soul brings an inherent sense of humour that is always

<sup>63</sup> *Curriculum: Waldorf Schools in South Africa: 2000:86*

prepared to sparkle...where even reflected light is likely to crack a joke. Humour has to be found in the things themselves...<sup>64</sup>

Thus a balance is needed at all times so that both teacher and children enjoy the lessons.

### *Language*

Oral skills are developed through speech exercises, poetry and choral verse speaking. The children's oral presentation of projects and summarising of work that has been read or discussed in groups also assists their fluency of language usage.

Drama improvisation and mime encourage the children to express themselves freely. A play with individual parts and improvised crowd scenes should be done during the year as drama is an excellent way of getting children to experience their individual egos!

The children are encouraged to read a wide range of stories and novels from different cultural backgrounds. The teacher will also read books to them, discussing the content and style with the children. They learn to work with different styles of writing: summaries, note-taking, business letters and free-flowing poetry.

### *Grammar*

Work on the formalising of the structures of verb tenses, pronouns, direct and indirect object and the use of phrases assists the children to organise the sentence construction of written language consciously.

### *Mathematics*

With the children's developmental connection to the earth at this age, they are introduced to business practices and dealing with money. They learn about the use of percentage, simple interest, discount, profit and loss and taxation in the daily life of business. This is best experienced through a fund-raising drive in which all the above activities are put into practice.

The conversion from fractions to decimals and percentages is covered thoroughly. Work on fractions and decimal processes continue, introducing the BODMAS rule, divisibility rules and rounding off. Averages and graphs are introduced.<sup>65</sup>

### *Geometry*

The free-hand geometry of the previous year becomes formalised through the use of instruments (compasses, rulers, protractors, etc) and the intellectual understanding of the processes stimulates the children to think more abstractly. This is balanced by sensitive shading in colour to bring out the beauty and symmetry of the forms.

<sup>64</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Child's Changing Consciousness*, 1996:131-133

<sup>65</sup> *Curriculum: Waldorf Schools in South Africa*, 2000:88

## *The Arts*

### *Painting and Clay Modelling*

Grade 6 painting lessons carry new meaning with the colour experiments done in physics. Exercises from the colour circle lead to the painting of sunrise and sunset; landscapes from different climatic zones, etc. These paintings show how the colour circle operates in nature, allowing the children to discover the laws of colour and colour perspective. Clay modelling of geometric solids develops conscious visualisation in the children as they create these forms.

### *Drawing*

The shaded drawing from earlier years is extended in different ways. The children shade in different directions in order to create movement and texture. Cross-hatching (shading at various angles superimposed on each other) assists them to develop depth and density of three-dimensional forms.

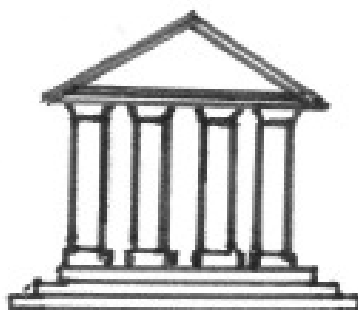
Black and white exercises in pencil and charcoal explore subtle tones of light and darkness and emphasise the dramatic effect of shadows. The children are introduced to 'negative space' by shading around a form. All exercises demand imagination and visualisation of what they wish to create. This is in line with the transformation of the will where they no longer merely 'play' spontaneously with an art medium, but consciously decide on the outcome.

### *Technology*

Sewing: Boys and girls design and make stuffed animals from their studies on Africa.  
Woodwork: Boys and girls carve a wooden spoon.

### *The Symbol for Grade 6*

The symbol for Grade 6 is the Graeco-Roman temple that represents the children's desire to order and structure their lives consciously. The triangular pediment and roof section indicates the focus on the thinking capacity that is being developed at this time. The columns with spaces in between represent the feeling and rhythmic system and the steps at the base are the will system. Thus the aim is to create a harmonious balance between all three areas in the lives of the children at this age.



## *Questions, Exercises, Artistic Activities to Review Child Development in Grade 6*

### **DEVELOPMENT**

1. *Discuss the physiological changes in the children at this age and how they correspond with their changes in behaviour.*
2. *Discuss the need for 'decentralization of power' in Grade 6? What does this mean and how may it be achieved?*
3. *Discuss the meaning and validity of the symbol for Grade 6.*

### **HOW THE CURRICULUM CAN SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AT THIS AGE**

4. *Discuss the approach used in physics experiments to create careful, sequential observations before judgements are allowed.*

### **ARTISTIC EXPLORATION**

5. *Painting: paint the colour circle.*
6. *Clay-modelling: abstract form to express the feeling of struggle for independence.*
7. *Drawing: black and white shaded drawing using charcoal or black crayon to create a temple with a balance of light and shadow.*

## ***Children turning 13 years (Waldorf Grade 7)***

...Something new is dawning in ... [the] children's emotional life ... it's not just sexual maturity they're approaching, it's real earthly maturity, adulthood on all fronts. And that's really a kind of new birth.<sup>66</sup>

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE PRE-ADOLESCENT PHASE**

### **Puberty**

Huge physical changes are taking place in the years before 14: hormones have become active in the body of the young person, bringing about the development of the sexual organs, and therefore the ability to reproduce.

In boys, the testicles become enlarged and develop the ability to produce sperm. The penis becomes longer and larger, and suddenly, one day, the young boy discovers that he can ejaculate sperm. In girls, the ovaries are now able to produce fertile ova, and the menstrual cycle begins. The breasts also develop, in preparation for breast-feeding for when they have children. In both boys and girls, pubic hair starts to grow, an outward sign that they are 'earth-ripe' - that is, able to reproduce sexually.

<sup>66</sup> Hermann Koepke, *On the Threshold of Adolescence: the Struggle for Independence in the Twelfth Year*, 1989:52

Ideally parents must be able to speak to their children about these changes. This needs to be done before these changes begin to take place. However, many parents feel unable to speak about sexuality to their children, as their culture regards sexuality as taboo. Therefore the school needs to have a well-worked out sex education curriculum, so that the children are prepared for what is happening in their bodies, and what the new developments mean for their lives.

One needs to understand that all these developments cause sexual desire in pre-adolescents, which they will explore whether parents allow it or not. Therefore sex-education is vitally important, particularly birth control and precautions against sexually transmitted diseases. Above all, a respect for sexuality needs to be nurtured, so that it is seen as an expression of love rather than only a physical act.

To see sexuality as love, as a committed relationship between two people, is of utmost importance, and as this is not commonly so in society, a way of instilling this is needed. The basis for this viewpoint needs to be laid in Early and Middle Childhood, which can carry them through the difficult years of puberty and adolescence.

## DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The awkwardness in the children's walking and moving is reflected in their behaviour. They feel unsure of themselves and project aloof and 'don't care' attitudes. No longer rushing around the playground, they sit or lounge around in groups for solidarity and are very self-conscious about how they look, what they wear and having the latest hairstyle.

At the same time, the girls express a pride in their new feminine shape, the fact that they now can wear a bra! They may become quite provocative, enjoying their new sexuality. If they are bright pupils, they may develop a 'super-efficiency' mode or attitude that proclaims mental status.

The boys, however, become more withdrawn and shy, especially if their voice is in that embarrassing stage of being alternately squeaky or deep. They also are quite noisy in their interaction with each other, showing off their ability to 'hold their own'. The children enjoy challenging the teacher with questions and arguments to display their knowledge or to try to distract the course of the lesson.

The new intellectual and systematic way of thinking causes the children to only be able to see things from the outside, as they are. They now have a hunger for knowledge about the world - no longer in the beautiful, imaginative, feeling approach of childhood up to about 11 years, but now in a factual, concrete and explorative approach in which they can sharpen their ability to think for themselves.

As the awareness of their individual feelings develops, they reject all that they used to enjoy and respect, becoming "hungry for new experiences: torn between the extremes

of likes and dislikes e.g. the music they listen to must be turned up loud.”<sup>67</sup> As they distance themselves from the adults around them, they seek heroes and heroines from sport, pop and screen idols, putting up posters of them and dressing in similar styles.

## WHAT THEY NEED AT THIS AGE

It is important that the Grade 7 teacher accepts the children’s need for a new identity without over-reacting to their behaviour. This is best achieved through a sincere interest in each of the children and by confronting them in a calm, self-controlled manner.

For this to happen, the teachers need to be fully integrated into life. They need more than just the proper qualifications in educational principles and methods, more than just special training for their various subjects; most of all teachers need something that will renew itself again and again: a view of life that pulsates in a living way through their souls.<sup>68</sup>

The inner life of the teacher strengthens their willingness to put aside their own ego and truly respond to the needs of the children through the stormy years of puberty. The unspoken dialogue between teacher and children that has supported their relationship through all the school years continues to make the children realise unconsciously that the teacher understands them deeply, beyond their need for independence and their need to be heard and taken seriously.

The teacher challenges the children with new experiences through a variety of teaching methods as the children now resist the ‘same old boring routine’. It is important to continue to balance the aesthetic with the scientific in learning to understand and make sense of the world around them. It is also necessary not to lose sight of the value of artistic creativity in spite of the demands for academic achievement.

The children are encouraged to observe all experiences through their feelings, allowing them to sense what is right without the teacher giving them any ‘moral judgement’ on the matter. The teacher assists the children to find their own point of view and yet also come to respect that of others.

Because the teacher understands that the children’s judgement will unfold naturally after puberty, the children have a sense of being loved and trusted to grow up true to their inner selves. This gives children confidence and self-respect as they pass across the threshold of puberty into the confusing realm of adolescence where they must discover who they really are and what their destiny asks of them.

The teacher needs to continue bringing in the Arts in the process of learning the different subjects, in a way that appeals to the new, intellectual approach that the young

<sup>67</sup> Hermann Koepke, *On the Threshold of Adolescence: the Struggle for Independence in the Twelfth Year*, 1989

<sup>68</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *The Child’s Changing Consciousness*, 1996:131-133



people now have. The Arts play a very important role in balancing the emotional ups-and-downs that the children experience, as well as making sure that they develop their thinking skills in a feeling, human and therefore moral way.

## HOW WALDORF CURRICULUM MEETS THIS AGE GROUP

### *World History*

Several historical themes are chosen for Grade 7 and are presented through vivid descriptions of personalities who influenced each period. It is important that these people be presented in an unbiased manner, describing both good and bad characteristics without moral judgement from the teacher. Two contrasting motives or attitudes in different people can give rise to interesting discussions as the children come to their own conclusions. Cause and effect and sequential development can now be used to link different themes or show how one theme grew out of another.

During the spread of early Christianity, Bernard of Clairvaux instituted the first group of monks, from which grew various other monastic orders who lived secluded lives in monasteries. The Dominicans were monks involved in education from which schools and universities later developed. Another theme is the founding and spread of Islam in Arabia under Mohammed.

In Europe during the medieval period, the threat of Viking invasion gave rise to the feudal system with the training of knights and building of castles to protect the lands of kings and nobles. Later the Crusades brought the Christian knights and their leaders, amongst whom were King Richard the Lion Heart of England, into contact with the Arab world. The Islamic sultan of the time was the famous Saladin.

The influence of the scientific and technical progress of the Middle East on the countries of Europe included the invaluable invention of the mariner's compass, when the overland silk and spice trade became too dangerous under the power of the Arabic world. Seafaring nations like the Portuguese and later the Dutch sought a sea-route to India, gradually leading on to the colonisation of Africa and other continents around the world.

Meanwhile the countries around the Mediterranean Sea were being influenced by the invention of printing that began to spread the new ideas of Renaissance writers, thinkers and artists.<sup>69</sup>

The stories of the European middle ages are appropriate for Grade 7 as they describe the profound effect of the spreading of new inventions and ideas and how these prepared the way for the unfolding of the Renaissance Period. The children are grasping at everything new, and so they enjoy inspiring stories of brave and intelligent people who were ready to step into a new and unknown world.

<sup>69</sup> Curriculum: Waldorf Schools in South Africa, 2000:97

The Xhosa and Zulu and Sotho tribes cultivated grains and vegetables.

People craved salt, and used it for trade in very early times.

Modern people mostly have little to do with the production of food, but choose what they want from shops and markets. It is easy to forget the hard work and care that goes into raising good food.



### *African History*

Themes of African History are continued from the previous year. In each country, this is done in a similar way, using stories of important and interesting personalities connected with each theme.

### *Geography*

The continents of the world are described according to their position, climatic zones, mountains, rivers and certain capital cities (for general knowledge). They are related to the oceans with their warm and cold currents.

The northern hemisphere, particularly Europe is studied, focussing on the climate, build, vegetation, peoples, industries, transport and diverse characters of its many small countries. This brings the Grade 7 children into contact with a continent that is very different in many ways from Africa and they may be able to observe how differently the geography of a place can affect its peoples.

### *Astronomy*

This main lesson is linked to geography, bringing an awareness of the relationship between the earth and the sun, moon and stars. Opportunities should be created to observe the phases of the moon, any available planets and the main constellations of the night sky at that particular time. Stories of the constellations of the Zodiac can be told. The excitement of the vastness of space will appeal to Grade 7 children and connect them to the wonder of the universe.

### *Physics*

Experiments on the phenomena of heat are connected to expansion and contraction of metals and other materials in the outside world e.g. expansion joints in bridges. Solid, liquid and gaseous states of water are linked to climatic conditions and industrial uses. Discussions on the phenomena of heat are encouraged, relating them to human relationships (whether between individuals or groups of people) which may be experienced as warm or cold.

Experiments on magnetic energy fields using magnets and a compass show the properties of attraction and repulsion. Static and current electricity is also explored and simple gadgets are made. Human connections may be compared to the energy of magnetism and electricity.

The basic laws of mechanics, lever, wheel and axle, pulley, the inclined plane and the screw are also studied through simple experiments using everyday instruments. The children learn to observe each experiment accurately so that they can recall everything in sequential detail and come to their own understanding of how these phenomena work.<sup>70</sup>

### *Chemistry*

Chemistry is studied through experiments related to observing its appearance in nature and its practical application in daily life. Combustion gives light and warmth while something is burning and ash at the end. Experiments to do with oxygen and carbon dioxide are followed by practical use of ovens, gas lamps, etc. The children are introduced to sulphur, phosphorus and carbon and their practical uses.

The study of salt in nature (lime) is followed by calcium in the human body and experiments with cooking salt. Experiments with the three states of water lead to an understanding of varying weather conditions from the equator to the poles. In each case the class discusses the interconnection between the chemical process in the experiment, its place in nature and the inner or outer life of the human being. Although the children feel different from the rest of humanity, they are constantly reminded of the organic connection between them and everything that they study.<sup>71</sup>

### *Health and Nutrition*

Having studied animals, plants and minerals in previous years, the children now complete the cycle by studying the human body. The nerve-sense, respiratory/circulatory and digestive/metabolic systems of the body are dealt with in overview, but a deeper study is made of the digestive system and of nutrition and health care.

Sexual education needs to be introduced in an open discussion of topics and questions from the children, supported by an attitude of “integrity, love, respect and responsibility” for the sacredness of the sexual relationship. The teacher who guides the session with a non-judgemental approach will assist the children to be frank and open about a subject that they often cannot broach with their parents because of the taboos about sexuality. This also enables the children to feel free to come to the teacher for help in any personal situation.

The effects of drugs, alcohol and other stimulants on health and human behaviour are also discussed in the same way.

### *Language*

Simple debates are begun to encourage children to express their ideas logically and convincingly to each other. Oral presentations on different topics including biographies

<sup>70</sup> Curriculum: Waldorf Schools in South Africa, 2000:96

<sup>71</sup> Curriculum: Waldorf Schools in South Africa, 2000:96,97

and literature stimulate the children's self-expression. Poetry, speech and a dramatic play should be done during the year.

Creative writing is explored in the main lesson on 'wish, wonder and surprise' where the children improve their skills of expressing themselves in different styles of poetry, prose and dramatic dialogue. Note-taking is continued, also summaries and observation of experiments, focussing on accuracy and simplicity of writing. Grammar is extended, including adjectival and adverbial clauses as well as revision of previous work. Analysis is only done with the teacher at this stage.

### *Mathematics*

In Grade 7, the children are introduced to "ratio and proportion, negative numbers, squaring and cubing, and the beginnings of algebra."<sup>72</sup> The children are guided to think objectively, using practical exercises to come to a picture that illustrates the concepts, e.g. If I owe someone 20 cents, I have less than 0 cents, therefore my debt means that I am -20 cents. The children do much work in solving problems from practical life this year.

In the introduction to algebra, the children learn to work with an unknown in the solving of simple equations. Examples from practical life help them to understand algebra in a realistic way.

Geometry is continued, including forms such as parallelograms, trapezium, kite figures and ellipses. Formulae for creating perimeters and angles are explored. Perimeter, area and volume are introduced and finally "the theorem of Pythagoras, which can be proven arithmetically and geometrically."<sup>73</sup> The importance for the Grade 7 children is learning to think in the different modes of arithmetic, algebra and geometry, realising that there are various ways of working with mathematics. This creates flexibility of the mind and openness to new ways of thinking.

### *The Arts*

#### *Painting*

Grade 7 children still need the arts, but long to experiment more freely with new ways of working, even new media.

Further techniques are explored in painting: shadows, reflections, colour perspective, creating a full range of tones within one colour through the use of dark and light<sup>74</sup>. The geography main lesson allows the children to discover various colour ranges related to different climatic regions and they can learn how to mix colours to achieve earth tones as well as pure colours.

<sup>72</sup> Curriculum: Waldorf Schools in South Africa, 2000:99

<sup>73</sup> Curriculum: Waldorf Schools in South Africa, 2000:99

<sup>74</sup> Curriculum: Waldorf Schools in South Africa, 2000:100

The children will enjoy painting a mood of colour on one day and completing it on the next day with a form on dry paper, e.g. a stormy ocean with a fine sailing ship. Mixed media, using crayon drawing covered with a wash of paint can be very effective, especially where one wants to combine detail with colour moods. Experimenting with crayons and genuine turpentine on good water-colour paper gives a beautiful colour effect without form. An overlay of different shades of colour or varying textures can be created by dabbing colours with cotton wool, small cloth or a different size of brush.

### *Drawing*

Simple perspective drawing is taught using construction lines merging in a vanishing point. Drawing boxes at different angles leads to pictures from nature and simple buildings that enable the children to observe perspective in real life. More than one vanishing point is used.

### *Music*

The children are introduced to different styles of music and a variety of pieces from classical, traditional and popular songs are chosen for choir singing, both in unison and parts. Boys like to sing a low alto or tenor part as their voices deepen. Recorder ensembles with two and three part music leads on to listening to orchestral music with possible visits to the orchestra.

Stories of the biographies of prominent composers further opens up the children's interest in music. It is important to offer a wide range of music listening and singing to the children at an age when pop seems to take over, so that they learn to appreciate all styles of music.

### *Technology*

#### *Sewing*

Both boys and girls learn to sew a simple garment e.g. skirt or shirt using different seams and perhaps some additional embroidery. Dolls in national costume or ethnic dress from different countries may be chosen instead.

### *Woodwork*

Girls and boys hand-carve a wooden bowl of their own design, combining beauty with function.

### *The Symbol for Grade 7*



The symbol for Grade 7 is not a recognised form, partly because we do not recognise the child we have known in previous years as they enter this new phase. The lines point upward and downward, representing the extreme highs and lows they experience. The lines cross to show that this age tends to 'cross' or challenge the adults around them. The dot in the centre represents the search for who they are and that the real person may be hidden under a prickly exterior.



It is up to the teacher and parents to accept this new way under which these children are meeting the world and lovingly guide them into the next seven year period between adolescence and adulthood.

If we have received the child in religious reverence, if we have educated him in love up to the time of puberty, then our proper course after this will be to leave the youth's spirit free and to hold exchange with him on terms of equality. Our rightful place as educators is to be removers of hindrances so that the child's spirit may enter in full freedom into life.<sup>75</sup>

### *Questions, Exercises, Artistic Activities to Review Child Development in Grade 7*

#### **DEVELOPMENT**

1. *Discuss the handling of sex education and drugs in Grade 7.*
2. *Discuss the Steiner quote: "Our rightful place as educators is to be removers of hindrances so that the child's spirit may enter in full freedom into life."*
3. *Discuss the meaning and validity of the symbol for Grade 7.*

#### **HOW THE CURRICULUM CAN SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN AT THIS AGE**

4. *The importance of introducing Grade 7 to different cultures/ countries/ biographies through the various subjects.*

#### **ARTISTIC EXPLORATION**

5. *Painting: a sunset using all the colours in order beginning with red at the top of the page and finishing with blue and purple at the bottom. Mixing of all colours is allowed.*
6. *Clay-modelling: faces of child and adult.*
7. *Drawing: draw a symbol for Grade 7 (either your own or the one described) not in line but as a colour experience.*

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<sup>75</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *Spiritual Ground of Education*, 1946:59,60



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## CHAPTER 6 - ADOLESCENCE (14 to 21 years)

### ESSENTIAL READING

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### SCHOOL-GOING AGES IN WALDORF EDUCATION

Turning 14 - Grade 8  
 Turning 15 - Grade 9  
 Turning 16 - Grade 10  
 Turning 17 - Grade 11  
 Turning 18 - Grade 12  
 Turning 19 - Grade 13 (Examination class)

### FROM PRE-ADOLESCENCE TO ADOLESCENCE

We have seen how in pre-adolescence (12 – 14 years) the transition from childhood into becoming an adult begins. It begins with puberty, the lengthening of the limbs and the Ego (the 'I') now moving into the bones (the whole skeletal system) of the body.

These physical changes bring about important changes in the soul of the child: the leaving of the child-like dependence on others, and living in feelings of beauty and love of everything that they experience, to a need for independence, entering the real world with all its opposites, and the development of material, systematic thinking.

The word 'Adolescence' literally means the process of developing from a child into an adult. We will use it specifically to mean the period of time between 14 and 21.

## ***PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT***

The physical changes that have started from about age 12, continue in their development. As discussed before when we looked at the 7-year periods (see Chapter 3), the main physical growth during adolescence is in the limb/metabolic/reproductive system.

The limbs continue to lengthen, bringing an even greater clumsiness due to the lack of control over the legs and arms that have suddenly become longer. This clumsiness is more noticeable in boys than in girls. Speech also tends to become clumsy, especially in boys: the speech organs – the jaw, tongue and teeth – being the 'limb' part of the head, and the vocal chords lengthening, causing the voice to deepen into a man's voice.

The metabolic system is refining itself, developing greater capacities to digest and absorb heavier foods. We see the young people continually looking for more stimulating foods, to satisfy the cravings from the developing digestive system. They also eat a lot more than they used to.

The reproductive system comes to its full development during this time.

## ***DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS***

We know that the period from about 14 years to 21 years is a time of awakening into full consciousness. The 'sleeping' and 'dreaming' stages of consciousness is now over, and the adolescent now becomes fully 'awake' in his/her consciousness.

Becoming fully 'awake' means that the young person now develops consciousness of Self, that is, becoming aware of oneself as an individual, alone and responsible for oneself, without the protection of the parents. It means facing the real world, getting to know it and having the difficult task of finding one's own way into it.

It also means that a new consciousness of the world, of people, of relationships, of issues, of the imperfections of life is born. They have a critical view of these; they want to know the truth in all cases.

Adolescents want to become independent. They need to separate from the parents, teachers and adults that have guided them through childhood, and find their own self. Those that have supported them for the first 14 years of life, can no longer play the same role as they go into their growth into adulthood. As Julian Sleight writes:

A feeling of selfhood begins to arise, and with it the question, 'Who am I?' This new consciousness makes the world around stand back - the 'I' begins to emerge, separate and alone.<sup>76</sup>

This experience of separateness and aloneness is different from the 9-year-old crisis, in that it happens in full self-consciousness, fully awake and aware. The question of 'Who am I' arises from this new awareness - a need to understand the unique Self, the role that one can play in life, and what one is able to do.

## BIRTH OF CONSCIOUS THINKING

Along with the new consciousness of Self and of the world, there is a gradual awakening of conscious thought during adolescence. The young people like to think about everything, to argue, to analyse. To begin with, the emotions can get in the way, but as they mature a clear, perceptive ability to think about life emerges, in which they can challenge those that are older than they are or enter into intensive debates on a wide range of issues.

If presented in ways that awaken their interest, adolescents love the challenges of thinking logically, seeing cause and effect, and deducing their own theories from phenomena that they are presented with.

Because of the development of consciousness of Self, thinking becomes the adolescents' main gateway to experiencing life.

## POWER AND EMOTION

Because the 'I' becomes fully conscious, the adolescents experience they have power - both to achieve things for themselves, but also to hurt or destroy. To begin with, they experiment a great deal with power-play, to understand and gain control over this new ability. If a fellow-pupil or a teacher shows signs of weakness, they can mercilessly tease or seek to destroy their self-confidence. They love upsetting others to experience this new power that they have within themselves.

At the same time, becoming fully conscious also brings about feelings of isolation and aloneness, having to cope by oneself in a world that can be confusing or terrifying. Adolescents are quite uncertain of themselves as they emerge into the world with this new awareness. This sense of aloneness, of loss, can be felt very intensely, leading to mood swings, depression or anxiety.

<sup>76</sup> Julian Sleight (1982): *Thirteen to Nineteen: Growing Free*. Edinburgh: Floris Books; page 8.

*[As suggested by Julian Sleight, look at Michaelangelo's David and Pieta as contrasting images of learning about facing Goliath, experiencing the power of the mind (i.e. the sling), and feeling intense emotions of loss and aloneness]*

## DIFFERENCES BETWEEN BOYS AND GIRLS

Boys tend to become introvert in early adolescence, wanting to hide their faces by wearing hoods or caps. At same time they can act very extrovertly, roughly, loudly - but one must remember that it is all show, testing their new-found strengths, of which they are still quite uncertain.

Girls tend to be far more assertive, self-confident and powerful at this time. Hermann Koepke describes the following:

You can see the excessive strength of a girl's emotions in how very up-front she can be. That can express itself in outrage, anger or hatred. On the other hand, girls can also be tender and devoted to the point of losing themselves ... whatever gets in the way can either be smashed to bits or praised to the skies.

It's different with boys, though. They haven't found their centre at all yet, and that's why they don't get so wrapped up in their own emotions or get so vehement about them. The tragedy of the boys is that they don't really know what to do with themselves, except to stand there helplessly with their hands in their pockets, trying to reveal as little of themselves as possible.<sup>77</sup>

Generally, boys have a far more difficult time growing up than girls. This is because the boys are more connected to their physical bodies, and the physical world in which so much has to be overcome. Girls, on the other hand, are more connected with their emotions, and to the soul world, hence the confidence and assertiveness they display.

This difference results in the boys often being stronger in analytical and logical thinking, whereas girls tend to see things more as a whole (synthetic thinking) and make connections with the human side of what they are learning (relatedness thinking).

## ***THE THREE SUB-PHASES OF ADOLESCENCE***

For parents and teachers, adolescence can be a difficult time, especially if they expect the young person to be obedient and behave as well as before. The story of the Prodigal Son tells us a great deal about what happens in adolescence:

<sup>77</sup> Hermann Koepke (1989) *On the Threshold of Adolescence: the Struggle for Independence in the Twelfth Year*. Anthroposophic Press: Hudson, New York; page 66.

## THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want.

And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

And when he came unto himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and I am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

And he arose and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

But the father said to his servants, bring forth the best robe, and put *it* on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.

And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked him what these things meant.

And he said unto him, Thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.

And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him.

And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we would make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

*[from the Bible, King James version, Luke 15:11-32]*

When the young person of 14 or 15 now rejects the world of childhood in a more conscious way, we know he/she is now 'asking for his inheritance' (all the love and care given during childhood) to go out into the world. The adolescent has to meet the rough, rude, 'evil' world, and like the Prodigal Son seems to squander all that has been given to him or her in childhood. He/she has to meet sexuality, alcoholism, drug abuse, lying and cheating, all the opposites to what we have tried to instil in the child.

The adolescent needs to meet the lowest forms of life, in the same way that the Prodigal Son eventually lands up looking after the swine ... the dirtiest form of life.

Around 16 or 17, the adolescent comes to a turning point. Like the Prodigal Son, he remembers where he has come from and longs for what he has lost. We see a remarkable change beginning to happen, where the adolescent starts to appreciate the beautiful things in life again, where he/she becomes 'human' again.

As the adolescent turns 18, 19, 20, we see him/her becoming thoughtful about life; new ideals emerge, and, all being well, they become positive, useful citizens with much to give to others. Like the Prodigal Son, who returns to his true home where he is welcomed and honoured, the adolescent has become an adult with wonderful qualities, the pride and joy of the parents who brought him/her into the world.

As already seen in the story of the Prodigal Son, the adolescent goes through various stages; that of leaving the parental home and 'squandering' his inheritance, to the turning point where he longs for the values he has lost and seeks them in a new way, and finally to his home-coming. As in the other 7-year phases, adolescence can be sub-divided into three sub-phases:

The period of 'denial' (about 14 to 16 years)

The 'romantic' period (about 16 to 18 years)

The 'philosopher' period (about 18 to 21 years)

## ***THE PERIOD OF 'DENIAL' (14 - 16 YEARS)***

As the young person approaches 14 years of age, we see a period of emotional upheaval that goes together with the physical developments. So many changes are taking place inwardly at the same time, that there is chaos within. These changes have to be gone through alone, making the young adolescents feel insecure and very exposed to others.

Now that they become so aware of self and the many changes in their physical bodies, they become very sensitive to what others may say or think about them. To shield this sensitivity, the young adolescent does two things:

They want to be like everybody else: adolescents have fixed ideas about how to be beautiful and outrageous (in girls) and how to be tough and impress others (in boys); all behaviour needs to prove these adopted qualities, which are a 'code' by which they view each other. If the young person succeeds, he/she will feel 'in' (that is, accepted by the group), if not he/she will feel excluded. One could call this wanting to be 'in' a kind of 'herd' instinct.

They behave in a way that is against everything they have learnt before: rudeness, going their own way, doing things that are against society's code of



conduct. The boys want to explore being 'wild men,' 'thugs,' going back to a savage way of living; the girls want to explore being 'wild women,' going back to being fierce 'witches.' Both boys and girls can become fiercely argumentative, wanting to break down rules that they feel inhibit their freedom.

At the same time, the emotions are now 'freed' from the way they were 'contained' in middle childhood, and so they are less controlled, sometimes even explosive. Because of this lack of emotional control, there can be extreme mood swings, from deep depression (not wanting to do anything, 'everything's boring') to being far too excited and not considering others.

This lack of emotional control is gradually transformed by the development of the Ego - the consciousness - of the young individuals. The Ego is the individuality, which is now becoming fully conscious in the adolescent. Its ability to think logically and to rationalise helps the young people to become conscious of their emotions, thus bringing their emotions under control.

One finds in the 15- to 16-years-olds behaviour that is turbulent, due to their emotional extremes; one sees how they want to break out of society's rules and turn the world they now dislike up-side-down; how they love to challenge authority. One can say that they are in a 'revolutionary' phase, often ruthlessly, aggressively fighting against the old order.

Because of this tendency to be dissatisfied with life as it is, because they are against so much that is regarded as good and right by their parents, we say they are in a stage of 'denial.'

## WHAT YOUNG ADOLESCENTS NEED

Above all, young adolescents need to be treated with understanding. They are going through many changes and it is not easy for them to handle these. Meeting them means not being judgemental of their behaviour, but to meet them as human beings struggling to find their way to coming to adulthood.

They are very sensitive to criticism, being shouted at or being ignored. Therefore things they do wrong in our eyes need to be met in a positive way, always affirming them as valuable human beings, as people that one unconditionally accepts the way they are now.

Of course, rules are needed. The young adolescent needs firm boundaries, but these need to be given in an objective way and not an authoritarian way. The rules also need to make good sense.

Adolescents need some time every day to be alone - alone and undisturbed, in which they can get on with their own activities. This gives them the time to meet themselves, to get used to aloneness, and to get to know who they are.

At other times, they need to find plenty of activities that engage them. This is time to be with others, of their own age group especially, but also with those older than themselves. If they feel accepted and respected by others, it makes their development to adulthood so much easier.

In modern life, adolescents too often have too little to do. This is a danger, as the likelihood of them getting involved in drugs, seeking continual entertainment (such as watching TV), or becoming criminal is so much higher. Negative activities will take them away from their own development, escaping from the necessary aloneness they need or finding meaning in constructive activities with others.

Above all, adolescents need teachers that they can respect: teachers that are fair in their expectations and treatment of their students; teachers who can make them laugh a great deal (humour helps them enormously to overcome their antipathies and moodiness); teachers who are clear in their explanations and are experts in their field; teachers who recognise their need for independence and teach them in a way that asks them to think for themselves, draw their own conclusions, and debate issues.

## HOW THE WALDORF CURRICULUM MEETS THE YOUNG ADOLESCENT

### Waldorf Grade 8 (turning 14 years of age)

Adolescence is already well under way by the time the young people are turning 14 years of age. Physically, they have grown considerably and the sexual development is mostly well established.

Boys are 'breaking' their voices (there is nothing that actually 'breaks' - due to the lengthening of the vocal cords, boys' voices gradually deepen), taking some months to settle into either a bass, baritone or tenor range. The girls' voices develop a deeper range, and the differentiation into alto, mezzo-soprano or soprano gradually becomes established.

The young people's voices move towards what their adult voices will become for the rest of their lives. One's voice is an expression of one's individuality, having its own 'colour' (or 'timbre') and its own range. We can see through the changes in their voices that they are becoming more and more 'themselves' - who they uniquely are.

In terms of development of their new thinking consciousness we see that these youngsters want to know about the world. The information presented to them must be specific, and the teacher must prove his/her knowledge on the subject for them to have respect for him/her.

At this age, the world of ideas begins to take on meaning for the young adolescent and the critical faculties of the 14-year-old are noticeably sharper and parts of the accepted framework - particular rules, for example - are subject to questioning scrutiny. Counterbalancing this critical tendency is the emergence of a reasoning or 'reasonable' side in the child.<sup>78</sup>

Emotionally, this can be a dramatic year in that their feelings - now 'freed' from being 'contained' in early and middle childhood (we say their emotional part is now 'born' - more of that in a later module) - are very strong, even overpowering and out of control at times.

This 'freeing' of the emotions is part of becoming an adult, and as parents and teachers we need to understand that it is a new and necessary phase they have to go through, learning to handle their own emotions so these do not overwhelm them.

During the Grade 8 year, particular attention is devoted to the development of discussion. This is to help individuals formulate and express their ideas, and to find their own voices. Of great importance is to stimulate them not just to discuss the facts of the content in hand, but also to think of the ethical issues, the effects on human beings and nature.

The Sciences play a dominant role in the curriculum of Grade 8, to help counterbalance the emotional turmoil the young students' experience, and to strengthen the 'I' in its thinking abilities. In Chemistry they learn about the organic processes in the human body, including the creation and metamorphosis of substances; in Physics they study the steam engine, Morse telegraphy, hydrostatics (water pressure), hydraulics (using pressure of liquids in levers), measuring air pressure and calculating speed of sound. In Anatomy, they learn to observe the human skeleton and to understand the mechanics of bones and muscles; comparisons are made between human and animal skeletons; the eye and the ear are studied, emphasising how they serve the human being.

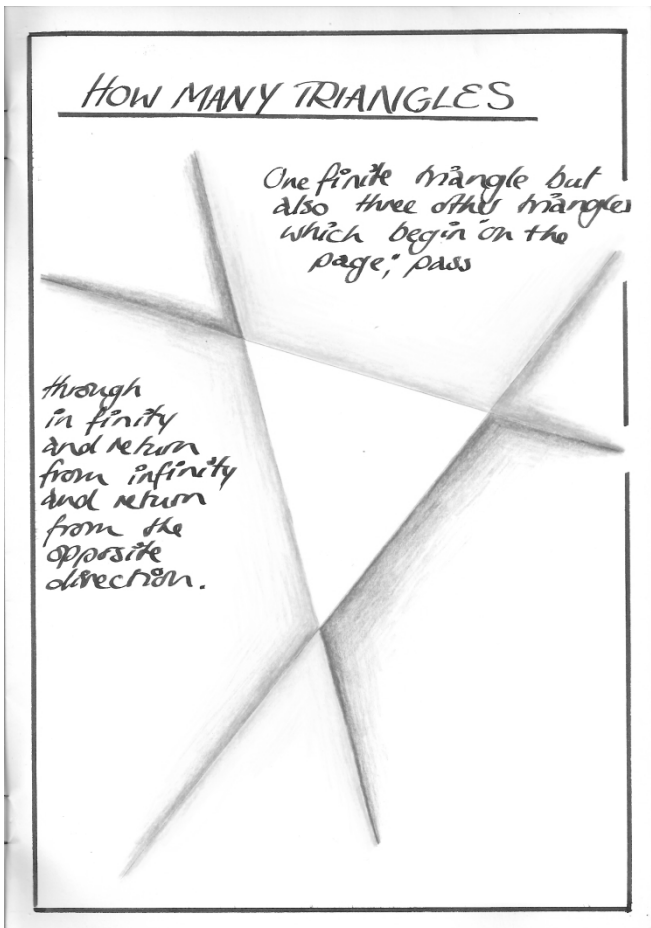
In History, the industrial revolution is studied. This leads to the resultant industrialisation of the world and its effects on humankind and on nature.

As they increasingly enter into the world, Class 8 pupils want to come to grips with world problems. Conversely, their problems also take on 'world' dimensions.<sup>79</sup>

This is also true in the Geography study, in which geographical and cultural differences of peoples from all over the world expand the students' horizons, exercising flexibility and non-judgemental thinking. World problems such as poverty, dictatorships, wars and displaced societies can be discussed in non-partisan ways.

<sup>78</sup> Martyn Rawson & Tobias Richter (Editors), 2000. *The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum*. Forest Row, Sussex, UK: Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship; page 45.

<sup>79</sup> Martyn Rawson & Tobias Richter (Editors), 2000. *The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum*. Forest Row, Sussex, UK: Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship; page 151.



In Language studies, different styles of writing - epic, dramatic and lyric - are explored; poetic devices such as metaphor and simile are practised in the writing and appreciation of poetry. Formal styles of writing letters and reports are also practised.

In Mathematics, practical application in book-keeping and the use of formulae help the young students to understand the relevance and usefulness of maths in daily life; for the development of abstract thinking, algebra, equations and square roots are studied. In Geometry, the Golden Mean is studied, making links with the Anatomy lessons; theoretical proofs of geometric figures stimulate the forming of judgements and the imagination.

As in the previous years, the Arts need to play a strong role in the lives of the young adolescents, to heal and harmonise them

emotionally and to keep them from learning in a one-sidedly intellectual way. The Arts will link up with the subjects they are learning, deepening what they are learning through artistic experience.

Music needs to focus on the expression of human feelings and human striving; this can be explored in different styles of music, and seeing how the biographies of composers have led them to develop their styles in a particular way. Music-making is socially and therapeutically important at this age; the structural elements in music can be explored, and the composition of their own music. In Eurythmy the performance of ballads and humorous pieces will appeal to this age-group.

In Painting and Drawing, the emphasis now lies in observing light and darkness as artistic expression, and the transforming of black-and-white into colour, using their own imaginations.

In Crafts, the sewing of clothes is undertaken by boys and girls; the carving of items (such as a salad spoon and fork, candle holders) from wood, as well as the exactness required in woodwork to make moving toys, challenges the students (boys and girls) enormously to become skilled and practical. Gardening now focuses on the whole cycle of the year, involving sowing, transplanting, cultivating, harvesting, storing, selling.

In many schools, the students undertake a Class 8 project, which they work on during the year and present at the end of it. This encourages independent working on a theme relating to the year, chosen by the student in consultation with the teachers. The project requires written and artistic or practical work.

### Waldorf Class 9 (turning 15 years of age)

The students at this age become extreme in their emotions and behaviour. They have now reached the height of their 'denial' of everything that they treasured before, and seek their own independence in every aspect of their lives.

Thinking, feeling and willing as activities are often entirely at odds with each other. This can manifest in great clarity of intellectual argument and total inability to act out the consequences of those ideas; fierce assertion of emotional independence (don't tell me what to do, think or feel!) with an almost childlike dependency and need for emotional comfort.<sup>80</sup>

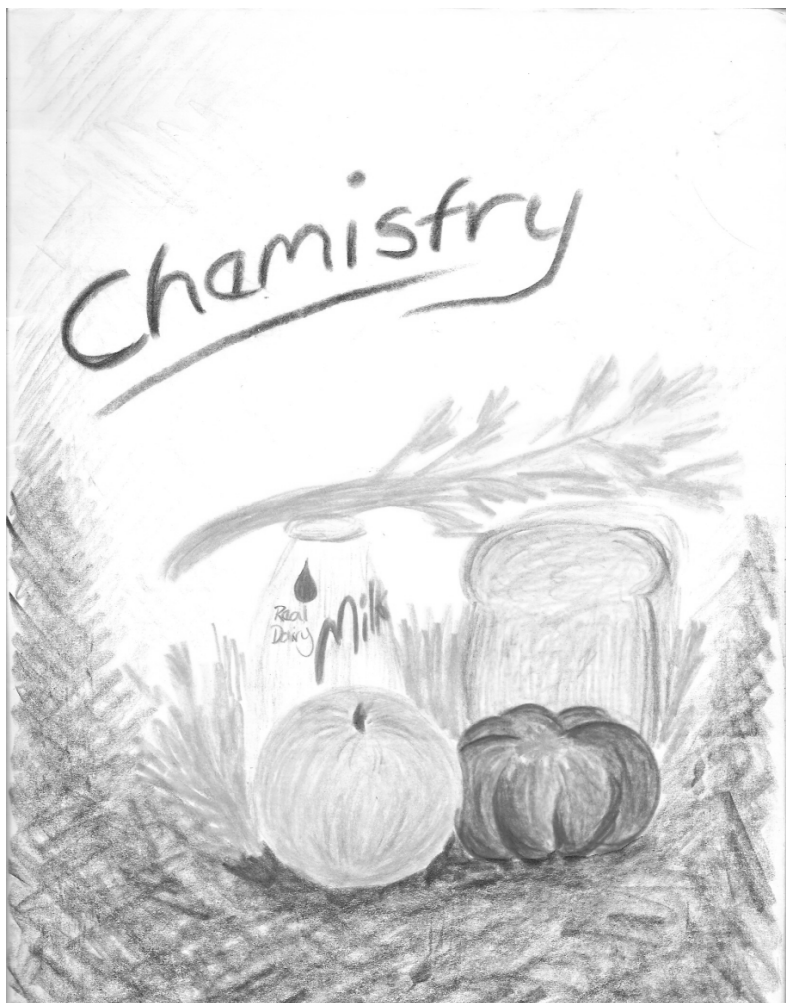
They seek new role models to imitate, and therefore their teachers need to display genuine interest in them, live up to ideals, treat everyone equally and fairly, and be masters of the subjects they teach. When a teacher earns this respect, adolescents will participate with enthusiasm and strong will; when there is no respect, there will be defiance (overt or in the case of a 'dictator' covert).

As the young adolescents reach the highest point of their wish to turn the world up-side-down, their History lessons therefore focus on the revolutions: the French, American and Russian revolutions, in which the ordinary citizens rise up against the authority and control of the royal houses that ruled them. They learn about aggression and power issues in the two World Wars, and the 'Cold War' that only recently was resolved. Of special importance are the de-colonisation of Africa and Asia, and the birth of African and Asian nations as we know them today.

In Physics they learn how humans work with power in technology, and how this power is used and abused in our world. They learn about the steam engine, the car engine, the electric motor and laser technology. They also learn about the rise of the telephone, film, television, computers, internet and how these have brought about the globalisation of the world.

<sup>80</sup> Martyn Rawson & Tobias Richter (Editors), 2000. *The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum*. Forest Row, Sussex, UK: Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship; page 49.





Physics, Chemistry, Mathematics, Biology, Geography all help to strengthen the development of the Ego, bringing in logical, rational thinking to help balance the emotional turbulence the young people are going through at this age.

Biographies of inventors and historical persons help to integrate their emotions, minds and will through the struggles they had to overcome and the examples they have left us.

In Language, they study the birth of drama from ancient times, when drama was part of religious celebrations, to Greek times and up to the present day. To help them with the turbulence of their emotions, drama, with its extremes of comedy and tragedy, is intensively studied and a play is

performed on stage, for which they have to work very hard in endless rehearsals, costume-making and building of a set for the stage.

In Art they study its beginnings in ancient times to the beginning of our modern era. They come across nudity of the human figure, helping them to come to terms with their sexuality and showing how the human form has beauty and meaning. As adolescents tend to see issues in 'black-and-white' with no gradations in between, they now learn drawing in black and white.

In Music it is good to learn about composers who struggled against all odds to create what they passionately desired to bring about in their art. Composers from Africa and Europe could be studied to show how the fruits of their struggle lives on, inspiring us.

In Crafts, exactness and logic are developed in learning carpentry and dress-making. The force needed in copper-beating to make bowls and bangles, etc., has to be controlled to achieve a satisfying and beautiful product. All the crafts help build the feeling that the adolescents can make things requiring skill. This gives them confidence that they can create, that they can enter into the world of work for which they would otherwise experience fear and uncertainty.



### Waldorf Class 10 (turning 16 years of age)

One notices that a certain maturing has started in the young people when they turn 16 years of age. They are no longer as extreme in their emotions as when they were 15, and reason has become the stronger partner. Not that a teacher or parent has an easier time, for now the young people have developed powerful means of arguing, and challenge the traditional ways of living without mercy.

Their interest in the world is sharpened, wishing not only to know how things are in the world, but also how we know how they are.<sup>81</sup> Again, the teacher needs to be an authority in his/her subject, able to answer the penetrating and challenging questions the students ask. Answers need to be substantiated by facts and details that prove the statements made by the speaker.

There is a deep questioning, unspoken, of 'who am I?' This is a sensitive issue they experience, seeking an answer through their relationship to the world and other human beings. Often this is sought in the use and misuse of power, and the strong forces of their sexuality, but ultimately they have to find themselves within.

This age is highly prone to suicide and other lesser acts of self-destruction ... in Class 10 most students have arrived at a certain low point in their overall development ... the students are confronted with a significant threshold experience in their inner development. Those who successfully negotiate the transition over this threshold, will have taken a major step in the individuation process. Those who don't, run the risk of falling prey to their own unredeemed soul forces ... in men this generally takes outwardly threatening forms, in expressions of power. In women, it often takes the form of dependency and self-denial, even self-destruction. The gender differences have many cross-overs.<sup>82</sup>

In this class the focus is on the origins of the world and human life, and an understanding the laws of nature. These themes develop clarity of thought, and increase their ability to form their own judgements, thus helping them to continue to gain control over their emotions, bringing about greater stability in their lives.

In mathematics, the sciences and the crafts they also experience how what they learn can be put into practice in daily life, again giving the young people the confidence that they can do real work in the world, by themselves.

<sup>81</sup> See Martyn Rawson & Tobias Richter (Editors), 2000. *The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum*. Forest Row, Sussex, UK: Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship; page 50.

<sup>82</sup> *Idem* (the same as 81. above)

# GREAT ZIMBABWE

Great Zimbabwe is a mystery. We can only speculate from the evidence that has been found. It was obviously a very wealthy society. A hierarchy developed. Cattle was still a form of wealth. Powerful chiefs controlled the trade and contact with Arab traders. There might have been a kind of fearful authority of the chiefs. There are about 200 smaller settlements around the plateau. The name given to the place where chiefs live is Madzimbabwe (a Shona word). Burials nearby near contained gold and other metal jewelry. There were many smaller chiefdoms which slowly developed into one central city. Great Zimbabwe means place of the chiefs.

The settlements range in size from one family to a community. On the hill is the acropolis then in the middle enclosure is an open space where the huts were, and in the south is the tower within a wall. This southern building is quite mysterious

and could have been some sort of temple or place of initiation. The walls are made of stone and fit extremely well. The open area in between is called the Dava. It was also used as a assembly area. This soon became the centre of trade.

The southern enclosure has an air of secrecy because of its high walls. It has many entrances and passage ways which don't meet, and could have been for girls and boys initiation. The tribal tradition and ceremonies could have been held here and they could have been more spiritually aware.



In History, they study the emergence of the human being from earliest times. They trace the development of human culture as the most powerful force in the evolution of the human being, showing the development of consciousness through the ages. They study the development of technology that has helped humans from earliest days. Finally, they investigate the emergence of the individual from the group (clan, tribe or nation).

In Language, the origin and structure of language is studied, focussing on epic, lyric and dramatic poetry. The transition from myth to literature, and from collected to individual experience.

In Biology they study the human brain as the basis of perception, thought and memory, as well as consciousness and moral conscience, and the heart/circulatory system as basis of emotional experience. In Chemistry they look at acids and alkalis and the process of crystallisation.

In Geography they learn about that which enables life to happen on the earth: the biosphere. They also do a detailed examination of the climatic regions of the earth, and the effects these have on human life. Issues of ecology, the further existence of humans in the face of pollution and climatic change, are discussed and debated.

Mathematics leads to higher powers, logarithms and trigonometry (including the practical experience of surveying some land). In Crafts they learn technical drawing, woodwork, dressmaking, pottery, metalwork, plant cultivation and practical forestry. They learn through doing and making - in this way the emerging adults discover themselves, and learn that they can create useful objects and do useful activities for that are needed for living.

They learn about Technology, how raw materials are processed and then made into products (such as in fibres – thread – woven cloth, and trees – wood – furniture); about bicycle gears, the toilet flush, vehicle maintenance and how computers work. Issues of how technology affects the human being and its responsible use bring lively discussions and arouse much thought about life today.

They learn about the principles of Art and then apply them in painting with colour, creating motifs and sensing the building up of atmosphere and moods. In print-making they have to develop the logic needed to create printing blocks in mirror-image.

In Music they gain a genuine appreciation of choir singing and learn about the laws of harmony through experimenting, observing accurately and discovering the laws at work. In Eurythmy they now create their own forms and movements to poems, following the laws of language.

Finally, to come to the realisation of the importance of being a useful citizen, able to act in the moment when it is needed, they learn First Aid.

## ***THE PERIOD OF 'THE ROMANTIC' (17 - 18 years)***

### **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

The growth of the adolescents in this period shows a greater harmony in their bodies. They will have learnt to master the tremendous growth spurts, and the clumsiness will have disappeared. Physically the young people are very mature, beautifully proportioned and in the 'bloom' of life.

### **DEVELOPMENT OF CONSCIOUSNESS**

Young people of 16 turning 17 years of age go through a remarkable change: something new is born in them. Having gone through the individuation process, and becoming inwardly secure in themselves, feelings begin to emerge for what is beautiful; new interests develop; a new way of relating to those around them begins to show itself.

As these new feelings emerge, we see an interest in culture awakening. The years of wildness of the 'denial' phase give way to a sensitivity towards the finer things in life. Here the uniqueness of each individual begins to show, the one being more interested in music, the other in drama; some become passionate about mathematics and science, others about history; again others are most at home in human relations or design. A new idealism is born, which expresses itself in the areas in which they are passionate.

Many of the young people may have had sexual experiences, but now the romantic emerges: a relationship with another awakens feelings of deep love. Idealistic love flowers in them, and they can now grow into real relationships of togetherness and sharing.

Moving into this 'feeling' sub-phase, social conscience also emerges. The 17- and 18-year-olds can now sympathise with others, feeling their pain. Friendships now take on a new character, as the sharing of deeper thoughts and feelings are possible.

### **WHAT THE ADOLESCENTS NEED AT THIS STAGE**

Young people in the 'Romantic' phase of Adolescence need to be exposed to, and participate in, culture. The finer feelings respond to culture in its broadest sense, from considering truths to appreciating the different Arts, from debating to contemplation. They need to be surrounded by teachers who embody great ideals, not in a preaching or do-good way, but who live their truth.

Above all, the seventeen-year-old is called upon to find his or her own way, to make personal and binding decisions, to consider the full consequences of their actions. Polarities in life have to be resolved, have to find a higher synthesis to a new oneness.<sup>83</sup>

## HOW THE WALDORF CURRICULUM MEETS THE ADOLESCENT AT THIS STAGE

### Waldorf Class 11 (turning 17 years of age)

Whereas Class 10 focussed on the visible laws of nature and of the human being, Waldorf Class 11 now responds to the adolescents' abilities to go beyond the visible to the invisible.

The opposites of emotion, of inner struggles and inner joys, of greed and social awareness, of order and freedom, are explored in order to find an inner balance and acceptance of life as it is. Gaining insight, not by being told but through own discovery in working with the different subjects, brings the understanding the young people long for. This insight is essential for them to have a positive perception of life, and therefore confidence in their ability to find their way into the world.

In History, they now investigate the influence of the religions of the world on the lives that people have led. Deep questions emerge from this investigation, especially the meaning of life and the role of suffering. The conflicts between religion and politics (such as between the Pope of Rome, as head of the Christian Church, and the Emperors, as rulers of different countries) and between religions (for example, between Christianity and Islam) are discussed and debated, the question arising as to how (or even whether) such conflicts can be resolved. Opposites, such as in the feudal system, of lords and peasants bring the adolescent deeply in touch with the conditions of human existence as it has been, and still is in many cases, all over the world.

In Language, the focus is on literature that asks questions about individuals and society, challenging the conventional world view. Experiences beyond the ordinary are an important element in the literature chosen, bringing the questions of the meaning of life and the role of suffering to the fore. Recommended literature is 'Parzival' by Wolfram von Eschenbach, a story of the imperfections of the hero, Parzival, who through his ignorance and lost opportunities has to journey through pain to find his true self and atone for his misdeeds. Parzival ultimately embarks on a spiritual quest, bringing him redemption and fulfilment of his life. Modern literature picks up these themes, particularly the conflict between materialism and deeper human values.

In the Sciences, unseen forces such as electricity, wave-theory (radio waves, X-ray waves, etc.), electro-magnetic fields, radio-active radiation and the nature of matter are

<sup>83</sup> Martyn Rawson & Tobias Richter (Editors), 2000. *The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum*. Forest Row, Sussex, UK: Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship; page 50.



studied. In Biology, the microscope is needed to see things that cannot be seen by the eye: the study of body cells is undertaken. In Chemistry, the periodic table - the unseen structure of all chemical elements - is studied. All these topics require intensive development of the imagination in order to reach some form of understanding of them.

In Mathematics, concepts of infinity are explored; the integration of geometry and algebra, and the laws of Euclidian Geometry are studied, leading to projective geometry.

In Geography, different ways of creating maps – from the oldest maps made to the different projections of the globe – are studied and practised. Astronomy, moving beyond the boundaries of our vision, is studied, including the myths and legends that were connected with the universe from olden times.

World Economics, how it works and how it shapes our lives and those of others, is discussed and debated. The opposites of blind, egotistical greed and ecological, social awareness bring current world issues into the spotlight.

Technology, which dominates our lives to such an extent today, now focuses on energy and matter. The different forms of energy production, the consequences of each and the possible alternatives are studied in detail, highlighting the question of the continuation of life that faces us today. The paper industry, its consequences, and possibilities for recycling are taken as an example of ecological thinking.

To help the young people at this stage of their development, the Arts focus on exploring the opposites to find balance in their own souls. The opposites of form (structure) and freedom (expression) - as seen in the 'Apollonian' and 'Dionysian' streams in the Greek Arts - is explored in painting, sculpture, music, poetry, drama and eurythmy. In all true artistic work, these extremes need to find a balance in order to be of value - so too, the opposites of too much structure and too much freedom need to be balanced in the human being.

Attitudes, moods and gestures of the human being are explored in sculpture and drama, mirroring the life of the soul. Through these the young people can begin to express their own identity in their own, unique way.

Finally, in this year they engage in a Social Practical, during which they work for a three-week period in a hospital, clinic, children's home, a home for the disabled or the aged, to become aware of those whose needs are greater than their own. Working in the real world brings compassion and maturity to these young people.

### Waldorf Class 12 (turning 18 years of age)

The students now wish to know what they individually could do in their own future, asking the question, "What impact can I make on the world? What is my place in the



world?” To help them with this question, the Class 12 curriculum focuses on gaining an understanding of the evolving nature of the human being and of humankind’s place in the world.

Each Class 12 student undertakes his/her own project, which needs to be done outside of school hours, over a period of about 6 to 9 months. The choice of the project is very individual, the idea being that each student explores something that he/she is passionate about. The choice of project has to be approved by the school faculty. Each student chooses a mentor, who will guide and encourage him/her during the period of the project. At the end of the project, the school community gather to listen to the presentations of each student’s project - a special moment for the young person to receive recognition and praise from the parents, teachers and fellow students of the school community.

Some examples of individual choices are: building a scientific model of something that the student has studied of his/her own accord; building up a motor car from scratch, engine and all, making it roadworthy; learning a new craft and producing a range of craft items; learning about herbs and making herbal preparations; writing a book of poetry; learning a new form of dance and presenting a program of dances; creating a range of paintings; playing a concert of music. The choice each student makes is an expression of his/her individuality and talents, helping them to find themselves by undertaking a big project.

The entire Class 12 also produces a dramatic play, in which they can explore taking on the personality of a character in the play, expressing his/her intentions, emotions, moods through voice and gesture. The working together, the learning of the words, the many rehearsals and the public performances do so much for developing self-confidence, personal skills and getting on with others to achieve a common goal.

There can be substantial differences in schools as to what is offered in the Class 12 year, due to the examinations that have to be held to close off the process of being at school. Some schools end the Waldorf curriculum half way through Class 12 to begin the preparations for the state examinations, which they do at the end of Class 13. Other schools compromise the Waldorf program earlier, from Class 10 onwards, in order to write the state examination at the end of Class 12. The ideal Class 12 curriculum will be outlined here to give an idea how the curriculum seeks to bring everything the students have learnt together as they complete their years at school.

History focuses now on comparing and describing the continual rise and fall of cultures, each bringing with it new developments in the evolution of humankind. It also focuses on looking at historical events as arising from the evolution of consciousness in these cultures, and how we are continually in a state of change as humankind develops new forms of awareness.

Language complements History in understanding the special contribution each culture makes to the world through their oral and writing traditions. Contemporary literature

(sometimes in translation from another language), speaking of the consciousness of our times, brings the young people into the heart of the world they live in.

History of different philosophies and comparative religion awaken the emerging adults to the depths of thought of great personalities about individual and society, human purpose, and human nature.

The Sciences focus on transformative thinking which the scientific world is concerned with more and more in the present time, in areas such as quantum physics, the nature of light, biochemistry, seeing the interrelationships between plant-animal-human forms of life, gaining an overview of the geographical divisions of humankind, and the fascinating transformations in embryology.

Mathematics explores calculus, and its practical application in physics (including, for example space travel), whereas Geometry is now applied in areas such as architecture.

A study of Architecture includes the mathematical and technical processes of drafting plans of buildings, as well as studying the different styles through the ages (again reflecting the changes in consciousness of humankind's evolution). Architecture, as bringing all the Arts together (sculpture, painting, drawing, music, drama, poetry and dance), leads to exploring Aesthetics, and its role in human life.

The Arts are studied in relation to developments of the present day; the Eurythmy program, started from kindergarten (where this has been possible), ends in a final performance done by the students.

As stated above, schools have to make a selection of the above possibilities, depending on available timetable space and available teachers sufficiently specialised to offer the above subjects.

## ***THE PERIOD OF 'THE PHILOSOPHER' (18 - 21 years)***

The curriculum has led the students to find inner and outer connections and correspondences between important phenomena in the world. Hopefully they have learned to make an inner personal connection to that which they have learned. Now the question is turned round. The question is no longer how does the world affect *me* in my life, but how can I influence the world? This question needs to be asked in very concrete terms, in terms of economics, in social and personal life, in politics or in science. Am I a pawn or a King, a performer or spectator? Where is my position in the world?<sup>84</sup>

This deep question concludes the young person's journey through the Waldorf School curriculum. Whether he or she now needs to write school-leaving examinations, is dependent on the country's laws and regulations.

However, the question of Destiny is uppermost of the young person in this last phase of 'childhood.' Rudolf Steiner speaks about a time in this last phase when the young adult has inklings of what he is destined to do in his life. This happens especially around 18 years and 8 months (18 $\frac{2}{3}$  years of age), when in the form of one or more pictures (images) in the mind, the person 'sees' something of his or her life to come. It is important for young adults to take note of these images that arise spontaneously in their minds, and write them down in the fullest possible detail, because they reflect what lies deeply hidden in the unconscious - each person's greatest wish that will bring fulfilment to his/her life.

The young adults are very much interested in discussing life with their friends from every possible angle. They are passionate in their ideals, their wish to achieve something of great meaning in their own lives and those of others. If all has gone well in their development from early childhood to early adulthood, they will use their powers of mind and their youthful enthusiasm to guide them onward in life.

All children in our world deserve to reach this stage of their lives, feeling great self-worth, great hope for the future and a sense of empowerment to tackle life positively, in line with who they are. We, as parents, teachers and the community, owe our children the best possible path of development into their full potential, and hence creating a better world.

<sup>84</sup> Martyn Rawson & Tobias Richter (Editors), 2000. *The Educational Tasks and Content of the Steiner Waldorf Curriculum*. Forest Row, Sussex, UK: Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship; page 51.