



Waldorf Homeschool U Module 1: Transcript Understanding Waldorf

Hi! This is Donna with The Waldorf Connection and welcome to class 1 of The Waldorf Homeschool U and this first class we're going to really just get down to the basics and talk about Rudolf Steiner, who he is and how Waldorf education got started and we're going to delve into a little bit about how anthroposophy relates to homeschooling. We'll also talk about the 12 senses and the bodies and all that great stuff and you will have a handout too that goes with this that has everything listed, like a transcript, a pdf workbook. You can look through and that might be handy to reference back.

Let's get started. I'm going to go ahead and just kind of rattle on here for a little while and don't forget to ask questions on the webpage if you have any questions about what I'm saying, you want me to talk a little bit further. I'm going to try, we've got so much to cover so I'm going to try to just get to the basics and know there's a resource with at the end of this pdf workbook and I will also be listing this on the website so that you can have these resources to do further reading and if you really want get in a lot more because there is so much, there is so much to read about Rudolf Steiner and about Waldorf. It's just certainly nothing we could cover during this first module but I'll try to get the basics for you so that you can understand but there is plenty more out there to read, all about him and there's plenty of lectures and a lot of that is all online where you can access all that stuff for free and I gave you the links there.

Let's just start here with Rudolf Steiner and Waldorf Education. The first Waldorf School began in 1919 in Stuttgart, Germany and it was created for the Waldorf Astoria Company as a new kind of education for children of the factory workers. This method of education is about creating a balance and this kind of education calls the Nazis to close the school in the 1930 because it was really based in individual and creating individual and independent thinkers which of course didn't really match up at that time but luckily there were schools in Holland and the US that had already been established so Steiner's method was not lost during that war time and really the first Waldorf school was very revolutionary for its time. It was open to children from all social, religious, racial and economic backgrounds and by 1928 it had grown to become the largest, non-

denominational school in Germany serving as a model for other Waldorf schools in Germany, Switzerland, Holland, England and the United States.

Waldorf education was created to meet the child and to nourish the child's body, mind and spirit and it's very linked to the developmental stages that a child goes through.

Rudolf Steiner believed there was 3 different periods of the child's life and they are divided up into 7 year cycle – 0 to 7, 7 to 14 and 14 to 21. The 0 – 7 is really considered early childhood and obviously there's a really vast span there of change that goes on but academics are not to be offered to the child until after the change of teeth, that's loosing of the baby teeth or the milk teeth and there's really a lot of theory behind that and we'll get into that a little bit. I'm just kind of go through sort of a little history here.

During the early years, the forces of the child are used to create balance and movement and they are working on strengthening their limbs and just working in their bodies. This really leads into understanding the basic concepts of Waldorf. There are a lot of little things along the way here, lots of ideas and lots of whys but the whys behind we do the certain things basically it really comes down to where your child is during their development and why you should do it. When you get down to the nitty gritty of it, the things that Rudolf Steiner says to do and things to bring to your child at certain times is based on the development of your child.

Basically, in a nutshell the reason behind Waldorf and what we do is all to meet the child where they are developmentally. By you understanding where your child is developmentally will really help as far as why you do things at certain ages and at certain stages in Waldorf. We're going to kind of get into that here and that is relating anthroposophy to homeschooling.

Waldorf is the living, breathing form of education. It requires you to be constantly observing your child and that really is something that you may or may not thought about doing. You may be there playing with your child. You may be even teaching your child or throughout the day your children or child, they're there and you're kind of going through the day but are you really looking? Are you really observing and seeing where your child is? What are they actually doing? How are they actually doing it? And that will really come into play especially when they start to get into the grades and actually doing the homeschooling to kind of see where they are with. What are they struggling with? What do they need right now? It is really about that. It gives you the opportunity to be in the present moment and bring your child exactly what they need during that moment. It's a really big part of this.

Steiner wants us to provide an antidote to modern times and materialistic thinking. Waldorf really honors the whole child – body, mind and spirit through art, music, handwork, sculpture, movement. It educates the child's mind, nourishes their soul and leaves their spirit at developmentally appropriate stages.

Waldorf honors the child by allowing them to have true childhood through being out in nature and playing and it protects childhood and simplicity through fostering these relationships with

the seasons and nature and festivals and by waiting to teach academics until the child has completed their job of mastering movement and their body, we'll get into that a little bit. As a parent that is planning to homeschool and use the Waldorf method, it's very important to understand these reasons so that you're not constantly saying "why do we have to wait? Why do we have to wait until the child turns 7 before we begin teaching the letters?" Just so you'll have this understanding and also so that you have this understanding when questions come up to you by family members or friends because I know that one of the biggest things and we will get into that is about, I don't want to say delayed academics. I don't even like that term but just waiting until the child is developmentally ready. A lot of questioning could come into "why are they not learning to read until they're in the first grade?" because it's very different than what is going on in a public school or the regular school system and so having that information and understanding it and believing it is a big part of that homeschooling and a big part of Waldorf during those earlier years.

There is no manual, however there are things that Rudolf Steiner recommends and that the Waldorf School have created over the years as sort of a guideline curriculum and you can find this online. In fact, I may try to put that into our thing that just have the listing of what you do in each grade. First grade we cover this and second grade we can cover this. There is no absolute here either. It can change and I know it does change from Waldorf School to Waldorf School even because I have talked to different teachers and there are some basic ideas but it can be moved around and that's the joy of homeschooling as well, is that you can if you think the child is not ready for something or you'd rather do it next year or group it whatever, there is no hard and fast rules.

Example like first grade, usually is about teaching the fairy tales. We teach the four math processes. We do nature stories. We talk about the quality of numbers. We teach recorded and knitting. Those are kind of the main things that would go on in first grade. Again, it's very helpful if you understand the reasons why that we're doing these things and we are going to get into some of these and I hope that you guys will ask questions on our forum, comments so that I can get more individualized into the questions that you have there. Knowing the reasons why will really make it a lot easier and it will allow you to relax and not feel like you're missing something, like "oh I just feel like we're not doing enough" or "I feel like I'm doing too much and I'm rushing, I'm trying to push" because there is a whole different feeling to homeschooling and you'll know you're on the right track where your child needs to be.

Let's get into the 12 senses and meeting the child's developments and you may or may not have heard this but Rudolf Steiner believed there was 12 senses and I'm sure many of us had grown up thinking there was 5 senses but again, looking online for the 12 senses you can find a lot these days and a lot of scientific discoveries and things, not just Rudolf Steiner but now there's a lot more that jumped on board, that there is so much more there. I encourage you to expand if that feels like something that would be right for you to delve into but I'm just kind of go on an overview here and as a quote I put in here, not really a quote but a little line I'd like to say that I have in the worksheet and that's "with Waldorf Homeschooling we are looking at this human being in a different way" and keep that in your mind because really that is what we are doing.

We are looking at things in a totally different way. The schooling is done in a different way and everything is a little bit outside the box but that being said, it's very natural feeling once you kind of get into it and you kind of think "wow!" it's not that it comes naturally but it starts to feel like this is the right thing and it's hard to believe that it's done a different way once you really get into it.

Let's talk about the 12 senses here. Steiner defined 12 senses that are broken into 3 different groups and there's a lot of stuff about this like I was saying.

These are the sense of knowledge, the sense of feeling and the sense of ego but I'm going to go through these because I hear this more about the lower senses, the middle senses and the upper senses and basically there's a lot to this. The lower senses are usually what you're born with, sort of that 0 – 7 what the early childhood, with the young child comes into the world with and starts to have and then the middle senses start to kick in as they get into that next 7 year cycle and then the upper senses.

Let's just go through these again. You have this in the pdf that you could pronounce or look at. The sense of touch, of course some of these are going to be familiar to you and I don't have to go into a lot of it about that but basically it's contact through the organ of the skin and that includes what's inside as well as what's outside and having a tactile experience is the best – meaning hugs, being held and caressing, touching versus through artificial means like TV, media, books and that kind of thing. You want your child to touch things. You want them to get their hands in the dirt and get dirty and touch things and play and feel and experience all of that so they can feel what different things like and I'm sure you've seen those sensory books. This is like sandpaper and something fluffy and something soft and all of that. That's really what our young child is doing right there, going around and discovering how things feel and they're fostering that sense of touch.

The sense of life or the sense of well being and that's the way that our body is working and how it connects with the rhythm of the world around us and that is able to determine if we're hungry, if we're thirsty, if we're tired, if we're cold and if we're hot, like how your body is feeling and how we're feeling. Really the best way to boost this is to provide your child with a rhythm to help support them while this sense is developing and that's one of the reasons why having a good, solid rhythm is really important especially in those early years and we'll be delving into that next week on our next module.

The third one is the sense of self movement, that's knowing that you're moving and everything is in a sense of movement. It's the effect of moving. Childhood games are good hopping where they start and stop, start and stop. They can tell when something is moving and then it's stopping so clapping games and hopping and things like that. Movement games can really help affect that sense.

The sense of balance and that's the physical balance as well as the balance in life or being centered. Steiner says "look at the sense of balance. We acquire this sense only gradually in life. We don't just think about it because it also remains in the night of consciousness. We're thinking

about how we could hop in one foot or just being able to walk. Think of a child who's just learning to walk and learning that sense of balance; riding a bike and balancing themselves, kind of getting that equilibrium and whatever and then also being balanced in their life, feeling centered and balance. I'm sure that that is an ongoing thing that we all strive for, to have that balance.

Now we're going to move on to the middle senses and I have a note here that these cannot be filtered during the early years, so really watch out for sensory overload. Your younger child will be having a hard time if there's too much of these senses. The first one is the sense of smell which is interesting and it relates to the memory and again a note here, to protect this sense for the first 7 years. Too many smells, especially artificial smells like air refreshers and those candles and things like that, if there is some smells it needs to be something that's natural. Nothing too overloading with smell smells everywhere. Interestingly, your memory and probably we'll talk a little bit about this when we get into the next section but when you think when your memories in your own life begin, of course we all have some memories or maybe we do. I have some memories of maybe when I was 5 or 6 but I can't remember much really before I was 7 or 8 years old and it's so interesting how it says the sense of smell is related to memory.

The next one is the sense of taste and this is not only just tasting things physically but also emotionally knowing experiences like that with the sour experience or a sweet experience and relating that of course, sense of taste with food and drinks and things and I don't have to say a whole lot about it. I think you guys got that one.

The next one is the sense of sight, which is our vision and the ability to distinguish color and form and really studying something deeply so instead of just looking at a lot of different things but really looking at one thing deeply and that is sort of that ability to distinguish form and of course seeing everything in their different colors.

The last one in this middle senses is the sense of warmth. I want to talk about this one when they may not be as familiar with. This is a really important one. It says this sense did not fully developed until age 9, our sense of temperature of things and our inner warmth. That means like nurturing and joy and love and just feeling that sense of warmth and again rhythm I think really comes into this because it's feeling that you're not protected but picture like a happy home where you're cuddled by the fire and you're feeling warm, not only that the warm fire is going but you're just feeling loved and nurtured and cherished, that whole inner warmth.

The upper 3 senses, the upper senses is developed during adolescence. Not that you don't have these other senses but I guess it's totally developed where you're saying "okay my senses are developed" and for the first one is hearing and that just means of course with hearing is hearing vibrations of sound through the ears. The sense of hearing I guess doesn't reach its peak or whatever until this time. The sense of speech or the sense of the word and this is interesting. When I was looking through this, it means another person and not yourself and what this means is to really hear someone is saying, the meaning behind their words and I'm sure if you've ever had a conversation with a child or someone else and you say "how are you doing?" and they're like "fine". They are saying fine but you know for a fact that they are not fine, right? It's to be able to distinguish that something else is happening or that they're telling you something but

there's a whole different meaning behind their words. I think that's a really interesting one to bring in here.

Then the sense of thought, which is really thinking through things and realizing ideas, like really concentrating and coming up with something. Not that you can't of course do this in the younger years but to really have those thoughts and to process that.

The last one is the sense of ego, of individuality and we're going to talk a little bit more about it in just a minute and this is who am I and what is my place in this world? In our experience as an individual and how that can bring us back into oneness with everyone else and we see that that is much later on closer to age 21 as we get into the next section.

That's just a quick thought there about the senses and I remember when I first heard of it I was like "wow I had no idea. I never heard of these things like this" and it's not you have to study these or anything but I think it's just to have them in the back of your mind and to understand a little bit more into depth about Waldorf and what it's based on and what are some of the things that Rudolf Steiner brought into Waldorf and why they do the things they do.

Now we're going to talk about the bodies and the aspects of the soul. You may have heard some of these and you may not and it is kind of confusing so I tried to really break this out and when you get your sheets and if you want to print them out while you listen to this, that's even good too because even though I've heard it many times it was like I had to put it all down here where I could understand. We're going to talk about the threefold aspect of the soul and you may have heard this as head, heart and hands.

If you've come to Waldorf and you've heard that term before, those are the three soul activities and so I've broken this down here by three different sections. Again, it's the three 7 year cycles that we're dealing with between ages of 0 – 21 and they're divided up and you may have heard several different things. I've grouped everything together here so you could really see. Let's talk about the first 7-year cycle and that is the 0 – 7 and that would be considered hands. This is the willing, this is the willing part. The child is in a sleeping state of consciousness and they're learning through movement. It's about being in motion. It's about doing, not much of memory because the memory just starts at around age 3 and 4 so the child is in that sleepy state and again as I was just saying before, not many of us can remember many things when we were that young and we saw the world in a whole different way than what we do now as adults of course but I can see it so interestingly in my children that it's not that they don't have a clue what's happening around them but they're in a totally different state.

They just don't realize that things are happening and I encourage you guys to really get into this if you want to because it's really interesting and I gave a couple of resources at the end, *The Child's Changing Consciousness* is one by Rudolf Steiner, *King of the Childhood*. A lot of those really will go into this a lot more and I have a couple bonus audios for you as well to listen to that will really go into this in a lot more depth.

Just so you kind of know, with this early childhood this is the time where we're protecting our child and they're living through their will and through their movement and that is really what they're job is at this time, is to play and to run around and to experience things physically while they're working on their body and if you think about the changes that a child goes through during those early years, whether just they're babies, they can barely move and they crawl and then they're walking and then they're running. It's all about mastering their body and making

their body do what they want to do. Jumping and skipping and clapping and climbing trees and all those, riding bikes and all that stuff. That's all going on during this 7-year cycle.

The next one is the feeling and this is the heart. It's age 7 -14 and it's a dreaming state of consciousness. They've awoken a little but they're still not fully awake. They're still sort of in that dreamy state, maybe that state you're in kind of halfway in between where you're not quite asleep but you're not really fully awake. It's sort of that in-between age and they learn through pictures and images and feelings and stories to connect to their heart and souls. They're learning through polarities, opposites – slow, fast; hot, cold; up, down and through the arts, through beauty and music, things that touch their heart and feelings. It's all about feelings and learning to express themselves and emotions and that's where my children are right now. It's a lot about feeling. Not that they still won't run around and do the things that they will do but that it's moved to a different state.

It's interesting because I've heard my children so many different times. It's like they come to this realization like "oh!" they realized. It's like the light bulb kind of goes on in their heads and things that had been right there in front of them all this time that they just were not able to see, they can now see and I'm sure it will go again when we move to the next 7-year cycle. It's like they just aren't able to see that stuff that's right there and now they can and now they start to process things in a different way and this is where academics and things start coming in and we'll talk about that in a few minutes.

The next aspect of the soul is thinking and that's the head. Of course, you start to get into the intellectual. That's an awake state of consciousness, around age 14 – 21 so now they're learning through intellect. They're not reacting as quickly and as much but they're thinking before they do. Going back to the other ones, those younger children sometimes they just do. They can't stop themselves from doing these things even though they know that that might not be right. They don't have the capacity to really stop themselves for doing things and now they're getting into this where they're really thinking before doing. They're having more common sense and rational thoughts and they can really get into more of an intellectual state and I'm sure that all of the consciousness again will be raised and they'll be more awake and they'll see more of what's really happening or what we see as adults. They'll be up a notch there and really just more aware. I hope that helps a little bit with that. Please ask more questions that you want about the head, heart and hands and I try to put it all together there so you would understand. Those are the threefold aspect of the soul or also the 7-year cycle you may have heard about.

Now we're going to move on to the four bodies and this is something else but it all is very related. As we go back here, just like the senses and everything, it's all related but it's just kind of the way things are divided up until you can sort of understand it. I tried to make it pretty simple here so that you could really grasp what we were saying. The four bodies of the human and this is what Rudolf Steiner said, there were 4 bodies. I went ahead and also put in age over here so you could understand when these bodies come into play. When a baby is born or when a child is born, of course they're born with a physical body and this is kind of ages 0 – 6 and it relates to the mineral elements and this is your actual physical body, inside your skin, your mass. I'm tapping my arm, this is your body. It has the element of the earth and what came to me with this ashes to ashes, dust to dust thing, you come in with your body and you leave with your body but of course we know there's much more there but we're talking right here about a physical body and then at around age 7 the etheric body is born which relates to plants. It's also called the life

body. It's your energy. It's your life force, if that makes sense because I know some of these is very foreign and you have to hear this a few times and really get into this before you totally understand it. I'm just trying to kind of give it to you in an elementary version. It's your life force. It's what makes you, you.

Around age 2 or 3, usually the child will start to discover "I" and he'll start to say "I'm going to be with...I'm going to..." sometimes before that they won't say anything or they'll say "Donna is going to do this". I don't know if you have young children who have said that. It's suddenly around 3 they discover the "I", it's the beginning of the very beginnings of their memory and the child during this time is mastering their physical body and its ability to move around in space. Just kind of what we were talking before around that age of the 7.

Then at age 14 the astral body which relates to animal is born and that is your consciousness, the independence of thinking; again, what we've said before, the thinking – the awake stage and having their own perceptions and ideas and thoughts and decisions, making their own decisions about ways of behaving. Again, it's just kind of going back to what we said in the last thing about those 7-year cycles.

At 21, the fourth body is born and that's the ego and this is not the "boy he has a really big ego". This is the "I" and there's so much again more, you can read into that stuff. Basically what I was reading here it says when your home has finally been built, the physical body, the etheric body and the astral body has all been worked and you've been mastering all of that and have really built that part then the "I" comes in to take on the consciousness of the individual. It's like a spiritual connection of why you were here. There's a lot to this I and really being here, what your purpose is and all of that and that is born around age 21.

One more thing about this before we get into a little bit more homeschooling and that's the transitions of the child and you may hear these three times in a child's life, especially in the Waldorf realm we've heard it. Age 3 is sort of that birth of memory and the "I" which we discussed and then there's the 9 year change around age 9 where you step out stronger spark of feeling and you start to feel separated and realize you are your own person and you start to feel a little bit more separate from the world. You start stepping away a little bit from that childhood and from the fairy tales and fairy land and start to edge on a little bit more and then age 12, like a 12-year change where you're really out of the child, out of the heart of childhood and beginning the intellect and kind of getting into that pre-adolescence and these are three transitional times in a child's life which seem to do kind of change quite drastically or there's a period there where they go through change and we can certainly talk more about it. I've just gone through the 9-year change with twins so I can certainly talk about it if anybody has questions about that.

You'll also hear a little bit sometimes about that 7-year where the change of teeth but I think that's a little bit more of a physical thing and these are a little bit more of just the consciousness changing about these transitions of child.

Moving on a little bit more, what I thought we would talk about here a little bit are some of the understandings behind the method and of course there are so many of these that I could sit here for days doing it but I wanted to get some of the bigger ones and then we can talk about more on the website here if people have other things that they are curious about and one of the biggest thing is the waiting for academics and so I want to go ahead and talk about that now. I talked about it a little bit before but Steiner felt that academics should not be taught until the change of teeth.

A child is born with their set of teeth but once the milk teeth fall out or begin to fall out really, you don't have to wait until they're all fallen out. When they start to fall out, now you start to create something of your own. Something that you have created or the child has created from this place that they are now, their permanent teeth. They've become more of a grownup human now than they are on the past.

There are many indications when should you start academics and I think it depends a lot on the child and I gave a link in the pdf that you can go over and look at. There's a whole page-full, is your child ready kind of thing and it lists all kinds of physical things on there.

7 springs is one indication your child is ready, that they lost their teeth or began to lose their teeth. Hopping on one foot, reaching your hand over your head and touching your opposite ear, which means that their arms are long enough and if you think about here, what we're trying to make sure is that the child's physical body is ready. That they've had enough time to master their physical body, that they've had enough time to running and jumping and skipping and doing all those things they need to do before moving up to their head and starting to teach academics and learning and reading and thinking.

It's about moving at this age and it's been said that if a child learns to read too early, that they can never get back those lost years where they weren't able to finish whatever they need to do in their physical body but academics will always be learned and always be taught and reading can always be taught. You can check that link out there.

I know there's a lot of discussion about this and people have their own thoughts about when to start the academics and when to start first grade. I'd be happy to have a conversation about this and just to give you a little background. If you may not know I have twins and one of my girls started losing her teeth almost a whole year before the other and we started, because they have October birthdays we started first grade when they were just about to turn 7 and they would have also been in the same grade because of their birthday in a public school, just to kind of give the foundation here.

However, when we went through first grade and learned letters and everything, the one who had lost the teeth was reading and was very interested in everything we were doing.

My other daughter who had really not lost any teeth, or maybe just one, I don't think she'd lost any, had no desire to learn to read whatsoever and interestingly enough between the summer between first and second grade, her teeth started falling out and then she started wanting to learn to read and for a while I was a little worried because she really was about 6 months or more, I don't want to say behind but kind of behind my other girl but I wasn't like pushing. I just thought I'm going to let it go. I'm sure it's all going to work out and I'm so glad I did because she is the most voracious reader. I think she must be reading at a 5th or 6th grade level at least, maybe more and she's in the 4th grade. Her reading is amazing. She's reading 500 and 600-page book and she absolutely loves to read.

I think I have a little bit of that, having gone a little farther in the grades and can come and look back to try and help you to be patient and to wait, if I have that issue, should I do a second year of kindergarten? Maybe we should start first grade now. What are they going to do? They're going to be so bored but I'm so glad I waited. One of them was barely even ready to do it when I was doing it and she was 7 and the other one was just at the perfect time.

There's a lot of pressure to start reading in these early years. You can look online and start looking at some of the studies that are coming out now about that and about how children are burned out by the time they're in 3rd and 4th grade now because it was kind of shoved at them so early, learning their letters at age 3 and 4 and learning to read in kindergarten and earlier that it spoils it almost because they're just not ready. We can talk more about this if you like. I just want to give sort of a background about me and kind of what happens for me because I think it's interesting that I had two exactly the same age but yet not exactly at the same developmental stages. You have to look at your own child and see where they are and sometimes you just have to go with what feels right.

Again it's this observation. You need to look at your child and say "what feels right?" and the other thing about homeschooling that you might not consider is that you don't have to wait an entire year because if you think "I think they're almost ready but they're not quite", you don't want to start first grade in September if you're in the northern hemisphere, you can start in January. You can start anytime because that's the beauty of homeschooling. It gives you the opportunity to be very flexible or to do a light first grade and then get into it a little bit more or whatever. You can gauge and we'll talk more about that when we get along into our course.

Let's see here, there are some more great development ideas here why we do what we do and I can't go through everything because like I said I could be here forever. I just have a couple of things here. Example knitting in first grade; Steiner felt that knitting was one of the first things that children should learn in handwork and he felt that thinking is cosmic knitting because when you're knitting you're just making loops. You're taking loops and then you're making more loops and you're pulling through loops and loops and loops. The more you pull through the loops then suddenly you've got a little fabric or you've got a little piece of something that's all knitted together. Basically that is kind of what's happening with your child at this time. They're starting to formulate concepts and these random thoughts in their head, they're starting to be able to put them together and that's kind of where they are in the first grade.

Second grade, you've got crocheting and your child at this age may not have even determined if he's left handed or right handed yet. I know I had one that is totally right handed and then I have one that went back and forth and back and forth but when you start to crochet you've got to hold it in one of their hands so they can start and say "okay, you just got to choose one" it really comes down to something like that. Is it my right? Is it my left? It kinds of pushes forward deciding that; second grade children are testing. They're sort of this right and wrong, I should do this and now I don't have to do this.

They start to feel that tug where they start to say “hey I don’t have to actually listen to what’s going on here” and it meets them with the curriculum of fables where they’re learning lessons, through this, the animals in the stories of the fables. There’s this whole learning thing and the consequences in each of those fables and the legends and saints stories kind of fit right in there perfectly and that’s what I mean we’re meeting the child where they are developmentally with the curriculum, with the literature, with the handwork, with the art and everything and the math all at developmentally ages and stages.

Third grade introduces the Old Testament where they start to see the consequences for not listening and that really meets their 9-year change head on and we just went through this last year where they’re starting to say “hey”, they really go through this kind of a little bit rebellious phase of the 9-year change and I saw all kinds of different things here in my own household, depending on temperaments of your child and we can talk a little bit about temperaments later on. The stories meet them where they need and you may have heard of the word pedagogical stories. These aren’t really pedagogical stories but they do meet them and feed them without actually saying “now if you do this, you’re going to have the consequences” instead they’re hearing stories about other people who are going through not the exact same situations of course but maybe something similar or going through trials and they’re kind of discovering what happens.

Fourth grade brings the Norse Myth which is what we’re discussing and doing. It’s a time for opening their eyes a bit more into the realities of the world and this adventure and balance that’s shown through these stories is really where the 10-year old will be. Also we start to get into local geography where we are starting at home with mapping and local right in our town and then moving out to state. Again, there’s a bigger world out there and they’re slowly kind of seeing that as they go through the grade.

Fifth grade is on to Greek Myth and study of ancient civilizations. They’ve come across that bridge out of the heart of childhood and they’re moving into adolescence and getting into more serious literature and things and again I’m not going to go through all this because they’re so much but we can talk about specifics if you guys have questions.

Why the in-press and the out-press and you may have heard this to balance your day, to have this in and out press and basically again it’s about the polarities and about balance and it goes back to rhythm. That’s what I love about Waldorf. It all weaves together even if we look at individual pieces here of this puzzle, it all fits together and weaves itself over and over throughout your learning. Whether it’s the harmony and the rhythm of your day or your activities that you plan during your lessons, balancing the in and the out is very important. You wouldn’t let a child just run all day without resting or you wouldn’t keep them sitting all day without moving because they would get antsy. It’s the same thing of having this in and out breath, in and out breath.

By in-breath it means something that’s more quite. That’s something that’s more kind of within them like maybe painting or drawing and depends on reading, depending on what it is and then of course playing outside, music. In could be in, it could be out depending on what the situation

is. Even eating, it depends if you've got a quiet meal you could be very in or if you've got a loud family meal it could be more of an out press. You've probably seen this with your children; you'll be like "okay it's time for us to just get out and move."

We need to get out and get some energy out" and it works the same in lessons, that of planning circle time, within circle time planning, something where they're running around and then they come back with you and they're clapping and they're doing something or they're paying attention or they're doing something quite like a finger play or acting something out slowly or saying a verse. It's about experiencing these opposites and polarities to help balance them so they can feel and it helps you. It's about rhythm really here to kind of balance the in, the out, the whole thing there, kind of balancing. We can certainly talk more about that.

Another thing I want to bring up is learning out through stories. Waldorf's lack of textbooks doesn't mean that your child will not get a full, rich dose of literature. I'm amazed at the stories and the things that my children have already experienced. Story telling is like a lost art these days but it brings life back into teaching and through this method it's really amazing.

One of the first things that I discovered as I stopped reading directly from a book, not that I haven't; I still read books to my children in the evening when we're reading chapter books but during the school and during these early years I started story telling as well and I was just amazed how I could watch in their eyes and gauge their feelings and their reactions to what I was saying and if I saw they were getting a little sleepy or doesn't seem to be very entertained, I could stick something in that story that would wake them up a little bit or just watch them as their feelings and their facial movements.

As I went through the story, I guess I've never had experienced that before, reading a book you're not looking at your child, you're looking at the book and the pictures and it really brings that part of you into the mix and that's one of the keys to this Waldorf Homeschooling is that you learn the material and you learn what you need to do, the thing that you're able to bring yourself into it and we're going to talk a lot more into that as we go through.

One more thing here I wanted to cover before I wrap this part up is natural toys and materials. Waldorf encourages using natural materials and beautiful surroundings like wooden toys and silk and also things from nature, shells, acorns, walnuts, pinecones, anything else and it's about the child to get the feel of the real material, again going back to the senses where they will feel real things instead of plastic toys or a loud noisy toy.

Again, as we talked about protecting their sense with those loud electronic games with the flashing lights and noises, rather just having them play with some pinecones or acorns and some silk, some little wooden animals or something where they can really feel and I just love the way these things feel. I love the toys, when we go shopping I'm like "these are amazing. I wish I had toys like this when I was a kid".

The art and school supplies too are also very high quality and if you look into any of them you have probably seen because we want to give the best and truest experience to the child. It's about beauty and it's about that whole, getting that richness and you might be "well these cost more to buy" and they do. They do cost more upfront but what I can tell you is that the quality and the value of these items are so well worth it; literally we have crayons from when the kids were 4 that we still haven't bought crayons because they last forever. The paints, you buy one set of paints that last at least a year, unless you're painting every day. The stuff will last and it's so well worth it.

The wooden toys, my girls are rough on their toys, I will say and we have glued and fixed so many of them and if we have them plastic, we just have to throw them away because those plastic toys break, there's no way to fix them. The wooden toys can be fixed and instead of just throwing them away. It's like you're actually saving and we have stuff from years ago that they still are good. They really are worth it. You can have less toys and less items but are more high quality and I think that's the whole thing, simplicity here. You can just start small with that and work items in as you go.

You don't have to have an entire house full of wooden toys. You can just get a few, start replacing some of the other ones if you do have plastic around or some of the other ones that may not be so desirable. You can also make a wish list for birthdays and holidays and you can check out the resources section here. I listed some of my favorite website to purchase toys and supplies. One of them even I think has that wish list where you can just click a bunch of stuff and make a wish list and your family can go in and purchase right from the website there. I know that's been an issue at my house. They'll never know what to get the kids because you won't let them have this or you won't let them have that.

Anyway, we're going to talk more about that in one of our other classes, living in pop culture. Okay, that is sort of a very broad overview there of Waldorf and just kind of getting into this a little bit, just dipping our toes in a little bit and we'll learn a lot more as we go along. Please ask questions if there's something in particular that you didn't understand or you want me to expand a little bit more about. There's so much here that it can't all be...it is a process and I think it's better for you, I want to give it to you in small doses and just absorb and then we'll go to the next and then we'll go to the next rather than just give you a whole huge pile and you can certainly, like I said research Waldorf and Rudolf Steiner and I gave some examples on the resource pages there to really go in and delve into it if you need to get more information.

Alright, I'm going to wrap this first lesson up. Again if you have questions, please I hope you do share and we'd love to hear from you on the page there, on the web page and until next time. I'll talk to you, bye.

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