

**Waldorf Essentials**



by Melisa & Erik Nielsen

# Circle Time Creation

By Melisa and Erik Nielsen

The primary task of a Waldorf teacher is to understand the human being in body, soul, and spirit. From this understanding will grow the approach, the curriculum, and the methods of an education capable of addressing the whole child. ~ Roberto Trostli, Rhythms of Learning

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## Circle Time Creation

### Introduction

If you are familiar with circle time at all outside of Waldorf schooling, then this might feel different and even intimidating at first. In mainstream schools, circle time is often just referred to as time spent together as a class, sitting in a circle. A teacher might tell a story or sing some songs, but often that is where it ends. In a Waldorf school setting that circle has more meaning. An opening circle often starts the class day or lessons for the early childhood and younger grades and then a closing circle completes the class day. At home, we can approach things a little differently.

This chapter will take you through the what, why and how of circle time at home with Waldorf. It will also take you through your child's growth and questions like, "When are we done with circle?" or "What do I do when my 9 year old refuses to come to circle?" and my favorite, "How do I do a circle with mixed ages?" These are all hot questions! We will also discuss my six keys to circle time creation. In the Appendix to this book you will also find a large bank of songs and verses to use as you are creating circles for your children. In the course you will also find templates you can print to make your own circle time song collection, and finally, you will also find a recording for each song or verse. These are all found in the course on our website.

As mentioned above it, circle time is used a bit differently depending on the school setting. We are focusing on the Waldorf school setting and then we'll translate that to our homes. In a Waldorf school, the teacher would likely greet the child as they walk in with a handshake and an opportunity to welcome each child to school that day. This brings the child into the classroom. Likewise, we greet our children as they rise each morning. Hopefully we have gotten up before they do and we are centered and ready to meet them. If we have been busy with chores, hopefully we take the time to really welcome our child into the day. This sets the tone for so much and will often be the barometer for the rest of the day.

In the school kindergarten setting, the children first have free play and then come together for circle time, greeting one another as a group. Often this happens with a "Good Morning" song or a song that might start with "Let's make a circle..." These calls to circle give the child the understanding that a transition is taking place and replaces words like "Come on children, let's make a circle." In a home setting this might take place after breakfast, chores and a walk, just before the day's lessons are about to begin. For early childhood and kindergarten, the circle or gathering is where their lesson takes place. In contrast, for the older child it might be the place where math practice, spelling practice, flute lessons, etc. are realized.

It is easy to get hung up on the words "circle time" but let's deconstruct it a bit so it is easy to see how they are different in the home setting and at school. At school, the circle brings the children back together after they have been apart as a group. At home, however, that is not the case. At home, we are together all the time, so circle or gathering time, if you prefer, has a different meaning. For homeschoolers that gathering often signifies the start of the day's lessons. It helps to realize that while you will have some formal rhythm in the circle, it isn't nearly as rigid when it is two or three children than it would be if you had 20 or 30 in your charge.

### What should be included?

Now that you know how a circle can be different at home, what should it include? Well, really that can vary but as a general guideline for early childhood you will include some movement, a story and some songs and/or verses. Building them up so they work with the whole is part of the art of circle time that can sometimes feel overwhelming. We will break it all down. I promise that if this is one of your stressors then it is likely that you are overthinking and paralyzed needlessly by fear. Remember, they are young and very forgiving so don't take yourself too seriously.

Planning a circle for an older child will look different as well and might feel more like "warm up" exercises than a circle; in truth, that is all they are. As children grow, the traditional Waldorf circle time morphs into main lesson warm up. Remember that it changes as they do. We'll cover those logistics later in the chapter.



# CIRCLE TIME

**Spring Circle 5-6yo**

□ **#1 early spring** □  
THEME/MONTH

Opening/Call to gather:

**Good Morning to You**

Verse/Songs:

**Mother Earth**

**Eee Says the Bee**

**Spring is Coming**

Story:

**The Brave Acorn**

**Little Gnome**

Closing (optional):

**The Earth is Firm**

○ Complete

Self Evaluation: How did it go?

Props & Notes:

**acorn**

**plant some seeds**

**field trip to**

**botanical gardens**

## Sample Circle Time and Story Books for the 3-4 Year Old

When we know the author we list it. Keep in mind there are many more songs in the appendix.

Theme	Circle Time Songs	Story/Book Recommendations
<p>Base Circle - generally always included</p>	<p>Good Morning Song</p> <p>Good morning, good morning, good morning to you,            Good morning, good morning, good morning to you.            Good morning is what we say, good morning is what we do,            Good morning, good morning, good morning to you.</p> <p>I Can Reach So High</p> <p>I can reach so high, I can touch the sky,            I can reach so low, I can touch my toe.            I can turn around, and quickly sit down.</p> <p>Oola Woola by Ellersik</p> <p>Oola woola, oola woola, oola woola, CLAP.            Oola woola, oola woola, sits in the sack.            Pin pun, pin pun, Pout jumps OUT.            Hurray, hurray, he's back, hurray!            Pin pun, pin pun, play and AWAY!</p> <p>Finger Fairies</p> <p>Fairies funny, five are we            Laughing happy as can be            HA HA HA HEE HEE HEE HO HO HO            WEE WEE WEE and away we go!</p> <p>The Wheels on the Bus</p> <p>The wheels on the bus go round and round,            Round and round, round and round.            The wheels on the bus go round and round,            All through the town.</p> <p>Standard verses:</p> <p>The people on the bus go up and down, up and down.            The people on the bus go up and down, all through the town.</p> <p>We also do:</p> <p>The windows on the bus go up and down.            The driver on the bus says move on back.            The wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish.</p> <p>The Cobbler Song</p> <p>This one is occasional. It is really good to get the wiggles out.</p> <p>There's a cobbler down the street, mending shoes for little feet,            With a BANG and a BANG and a BANG, BANG, BANG            Mending shoes the whole day long,            Mending shoes to make them strong,            With a BANG and a BANG and a BANG, BANG, BANG!</p>	

## Song and Verse Bank

This section will give you the songs and verses. They are numbered and correspond to the index as well as the audios included with this course. I have collected many of these over the nearly 20 years that I have been holding circles with my children and in gatherings. Some have lost the original author; where possible I list the author. If you find one that is not properly credited, please bring it to our attention and we will remedy it in the next printing. You will notice that if a song or verse does not have a title we index it by the first line instead. The numbers correspond to the number in the audios and they should match up. Should you find any that are off, please let us know. We edit and edit and edit again but we are human.

### Verses for Parents

1

Receive the Child with Reverence  
Educate the Child with Love  
Relinquish the Child in Freedom  
~ Rudolf Steiner

2

Steiner's 6 Exercises from the Point of View of Rhythm

1. Thought control. This means that, at least for a short time each day, you stop all sorts of thoughts from drifting through your mind. For a space of time, you allow peace and tranquility to enter your thinking.
2. Initiative in action. You must perform some action, however trivial, that originates with your own initiative. (Don't get hung up on this one; it could be as easy as planning to water a plant at the same time each day.)
3. Detachment, imperturbability. You must learn to regulate your emotions so that you are not up in the sky one moment and down in the dumps the next...[it] means that you master yourself throughout the greatest joys and deepest grief.
4. Impartiality or freedom from prejudice. This quality sees goodness in everything and looks for the positive element everywhere.
5. Faith. You must always remain open to new experiences. (Work to have faith with what stands in front of you rather than always making assumptions. Be open.)
6. Inner balance. Inner balance is a natural result of the other five qualities; it is formed gradually from the other five qualities. You must keep these six qualities in mind, grasp life, and progress gradually - like drops of water wearing away a stone in the proverb.~ Steiner, September 1906

3

To bind the Self to matter means to shatter souls.  
To find oneself in the Spirit means to unite mankind.  
To behold the Self in man means to build worlds. ~ Rudolf Steiner

4

Now the heart's spring of hope beholds  
The sun, His coming glory  
In this light of blessing  
Token of the highest life  
In winter's deepest night. ~ Steiner, *Solstice*

## Indexes

The following pages contain the indexes for this volume. We have indexed the songs and verses, stories, recipes and handwork.

### Song and Verse Index

Songs and verses are indexed by the first letter of the title (where given) or first line. It is then followed by the corresponding number and then the page(s) it can be found on.

#### A

A fairy wakes (30) 28  
A leprechaun is small and green (73) 34  
A little seed so small, so small (76) 35  
A long green snake in the grass are we (78) 35  
A lovely rainbow, see it span (122) 45  
A proper crop of poppies (135) 47  
A ram sam sam, a ram sam sam (111) 42  
As I sit under a weeping willow tree (77) 35  
Autumn showers, autumn rain (36) 29

#### B

Betty Botter bought some butter (133) 47  
Big feet (96) 40  
Blessings on the blossoms (17) 25  
Blow wind blow (94) 39  
Brave Saint Michael is my guide (32) 28  
Busy gnomes (61) 33  
But...before the oats, peas, beans and barley grow (118) 44  
By the salty sea shore there are little homes (29) 27

#### C

Caterpillar wind about (80) 35  
Cobbler Song (92) 39  
Come little sister dance with me (98) 40  
Come, O come, ye little gnomes (24) 26  
Come sing a song with me (10) 24  
Crocus, crocus waken up (65) 33  
Cross path, draw the latch (95) 39

#### D

Daisies so bright, grasses so green (85) 36  
Dear little violet, open your eye (60) 33  
Deep in the ground of the human soul (5) 23  
Deep within the oak tree's heart, lives a little gnome (120) 45  
Down is the earth (126) 46  
Drip...drip...drip (113) 43

#### E

"Eee!" said the Bee (93) 39



# Additional offerings by Melisa Nielsen...

## *aurielslight.org*

- Auriel's Light is an inter-faith ministry with roots in Anthroposophy, honoring many paths.
- Auriel's Light nourishes children through the workings of Steiner's seven years cycles of human development.
- Auriel's Light builds community, lives in the seasons and celebrates together the spiritual rhythms of the year through a rich festival life.
- Auriel's Light guides parents to an individual relationship with Divine Source and the personal seeking of esoteric truths in their lives.

## *waldorfessentials.com*

- Full Curriculum- Early Childhood through Class 12.
- Alphabet Cards-created in collaboration with Sieglinde de Francesca who colored them with blocks crayons.
- Planning for Peace- your guide to planning out an amazing school year.
- Thinking Feeling Willing- Waldorf Inspired Homeschool Teacher Training and Community.
- Homeschool and Parenting Coaching
- Plus many other homeschooling resources to support you on your journey.

## *seasonsofseven.com*

- Waldorf Inspired virtual school offering online learning with teacher guided lessons and a class community.

**You can also find us on social media!**

## *Waldorf Essentials*

[instagram.com/waldorf\\_essentials](https://www.instagram.com/waldorf_essentials)

[facebook.com/WaldorfEssentials](https://www.facebook.com/WaldorfEssentials)

[facebook.com/groups/askmelisa](https://www.facebook.com/groups/askmelisa)

[youtube.com/@waldorfessentials](https://www.youtube.com/@waldorfessentials)

## *Seasons of Seven*

[instagram.com/seasonsofseven\\_virtual\\_school](https://www.instagram.com/seasonsofseven_virtual_school)

[facebook.com/WaldorfInspiredvirtuelschool](https://www.facebook.com/WaldorfInspiredvirtuelschool)

[youtube.com/@seasonsofsevenvirtuelschool](https://www.youtube.com/@seasonsofsevenvirtuelschool)

# Child Development

BIRTH TO TWENTY-ONE



melisa nielsen



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