

Waldorf Essentials

A Journey through Waldorf Grade 4

SAMPLE



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A Journey Through Waldorf
Homeschooling
Grade Four



by Melissa & Eric Nielson

Grade 4 is intended for the child that is 10 or nearly 10 years old. If you need assistance with placement please drop us a note. waldorfessentials@gmail.com

A Journey Through Waldorf Homeschooling
Grade Four

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Chapter 1

Parent Care

Meditations and Pondering for Grade Four

I am always looking for ways to spiritually connect with the work that I am bringing to my children – I know that when I can do so, the content becomes much richer as it lives within my soul. Each year we have a new opportunity to connect with the material in this fantastic curriculum. This year you don't have to think about changing religions and worshipping the Norse pantheon in order to connect spiritually, but you can ponder some of the themes from the stories and how the material will reach your child. Can you feel the trickster energy alive in the stories of Thor and Loki? Is it presenting in your child? There is a journey of the soul that can come through studying these stories. I like what Steiner had to say about it in his work *Mission of Folk Souls*.

“...In primitive times, as we have shown in the case of the Scandinavian and Germanic people, the “I” was revealed clairvoyantly to humanity. According to tradition this “I” was bestowed upon humanity by an Angelic Being, Donar or Thor, who stands midway between the human being and the Folk Soul. We have seen that individuals still felt themselves to be ego-less, devoid of personality; they looked upon the “I” as a gift from the spiritual world.”

Steiner has such a way with words – there is so much here. Steiner's ego wasn't the crazed ego that causes us to argue with our neighbor over who is right, this ego is much different, it is that spark of individualism, that bit that sets us apart. It brings me right into meditating on the animals we are studying this year. Animals don't have that same ego spark. They do have this amazing one sided nature that can be so beautiful to behold. The keen awareness of the hawk is something I can visualize and strive for. The cute snail that carries it's home on his back, the strength of the outer shell – not too different from many of us, a hard exterior that protects our minds and emotions. There is so much to be learned from these creatures. I am often reminded of a quote by Gandhi.

“The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way in which its animals are treated. I hold that the more helpless a creature, the more entitled it is to protection by man from the cruelty of man.”

Of course Gandhi goes on to discuss his personal beliefs on using animals as food, but I feel like what he is saying goes far deeper. The native tribes you will be exploring through your local cultures this year, generally also had a code of treatment for animals. If they were used for food it was only after thanking the animal for giving up its body.

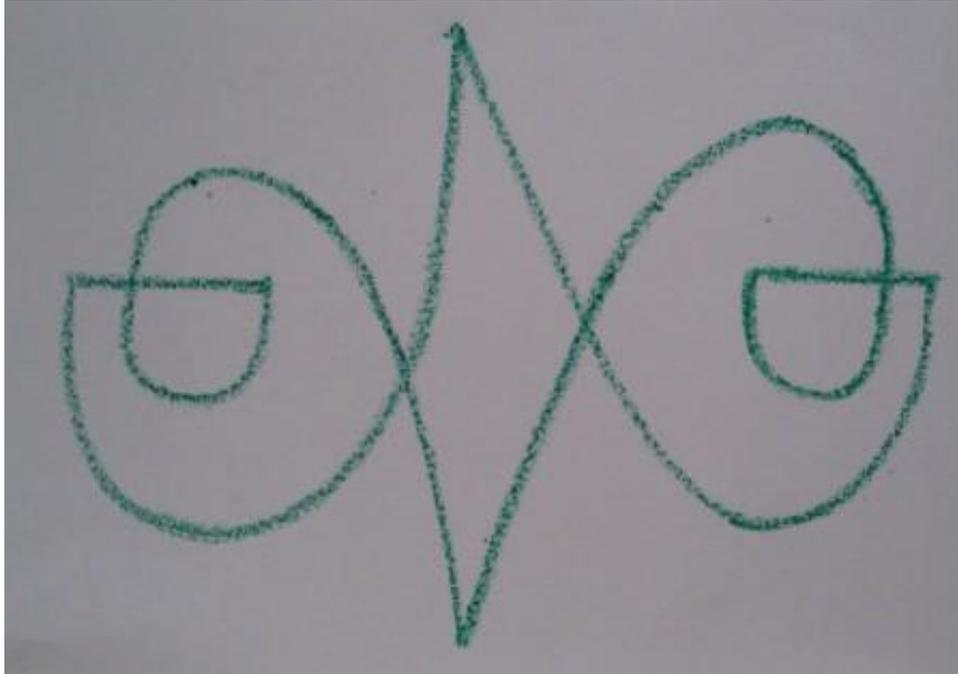
Now of course these are just a few themes to ponder this year, you can also spiritually call to your ancestors, especially as you prepare for the local history blocks. Why do you live where you do? Are you happy? Do you enjoy your life? If so, wonderful, if not, then why? The things we bring to the homeschooling table are unique to each of us, we all have different experiences that brought us here, some are wonderful and some are not so good – let this work heal you. Let it make you whole. Learn as if for the first time. Drink often from this well of knowledge and lean on those you need to for strength. You are a wonderful mother and you can do this, you will have a fabulous school year!

September	
<p>Week 1 – Social studies & local geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 1 – Form drawing. Begin math review. Introduce journal. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 2 – Introduce mapping. Draw compass rose. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 3 – Have your child draw their room from memory. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 4– Draw the rest of your home and yard. <p>Remember daily math practice.</p>	<p>Week 2 – Social studies & local geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 5 – Form drawing. Mapping your street. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 6 – Mapping your neighborhood. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 7 – Mapping your town. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 8– Mapping your state//province. <p>Remember daily math practice.</p>
<p>Week 3 – Social studies & local geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 9 – Form drawing. Work on labeling lakes, rivers, forests and mountains. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 10– Label state roads and highways. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 11 – Label all cities as well as bordering areas. Don't forget counties and parishes. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 12 – Look at your area and go bigger, view the world. 	<p>Week 4 – Social studies & local geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 13 – Form drawing. Find family and friends around the world. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 14 – Explain and experiment with longitude and latitude. Understand terms like equator, parallel, meridian. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 15 & 16 – Review all mapping skills. Finish lesson block.

Main Lessons

Lesson 1. Welcome to 4th grade!! I find this is such a wonderful year of self discovery, these children have crossed over the nine-year change and they are exploring their world. This is a perfect time to begin journaling with them. I like to start on the first day with a nice new journal for them. Something they can treasure. Encourage them to write in it daily. You will also want to have a bit of daily math practice – even more than in your circle time. Circle time is great for tossing bean bags and spouting math facts, but you want to also start thinking about giving a few math problems each day. Make sure these are review problems, nothing new. I would start with things that may have gone to sleep over the school break and ease back into things.

Form drawing for this first week can be from your grade 3 forms, a nice review before moving on to the hard forms that are part of this year. This will limber up the wrist and get them in the groove of forms again. If you are coming to Waldorf late, you will want to go back and experience the easier forms before moving on this year.



This is a lot for your first day back. We often spend our first day getting all organized. Our children have magazine files that we use as cubbies, they like to get all their supplies settled on this first day.

Lesson 2. Introduce mapping. Today you'll want to look at all kinds of maps together. It is great if you can explore the many different kinds. Looking at them on the computer is fine, but having some in hand is even better. This might require a trip to your local library. Take time to look at floor plans, physical maps, climate maps – there are many kinds of maps. Today focus on parts of the map, spend time discussing the importance of a map key. Learn the directions, can your child find north when standing in a building? How about outside? This is a skill that gets better with age. If your child is on the spectrum these mapping lessons may be a complete test of your patience. Take your time and do not worry if they don't get it on the first try.

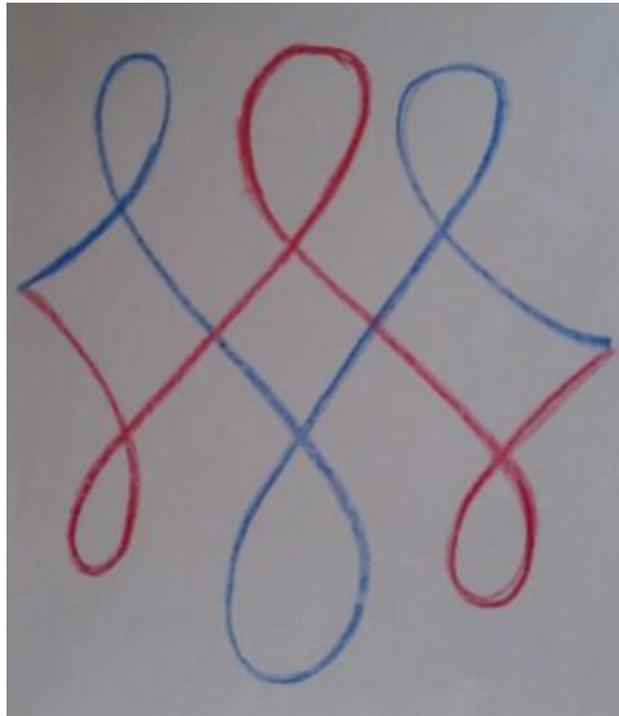
Draw the compass rose.

Lesson 3. Today you will recall the floor plans you looked at yesterday. Floor plans are a special kind of a map of a home or structure. Have your child close their eyes and visualize their bedroom. Have them draw it as accurately as they can. One note here, each child will come to this exercise in a different way. Some temperaments tend to be very detail oriented – I found that my melancholic son did the best on this assignment. My phlegmatic son and my very sanguine daughter didn't do as well. It gave me a great eye on where we needed to strengthen their skills of observation. Make sure their drawings are complete with a map key and properly placed compass rose.

Lesson 4. Today let's finish up the house. See how much your child can draw from memory, each room of your home and surrounding yard. After yesterday's lesson, your child is likely to be more alert. These exercises should bring to fruition the previous years of getting to know their surroundings. The exercises for the next week will test their knowledge outside of the house. Again, make sure their drawings are complete with a map key and properly placed compass rose.

Lesson 5. Form drawing. Today you will start with grade four forms. These are much more intricate and can take you much longer. Do not be limited by the ones we have suggested, there are many that could be part of your work this year. Keep your eyes open for weaving forms of all kinds.

The form below is done with two colors, in colored pencil.



Today you will begin the next part of the mapping lessons. I generally start my day out with a walk, when I do this lesson, I don't let the cat out of the bag! Do not tell them that they will have to map your street! See how well they do first from memory, then you can go back and make corrections together. Make sure your map has a key and a compass rose. Make it fun! Add plenty of color. Where are the trees? Driveways? Gardens?

Lesson 6. Today you will extend your mapping to your neighborhood. Try to do two or three streets. By now your child is on to you. What would be next?

Lesson 7. Focus on your town, city or village. It need not be completely accurate, but enough so you know your child understands his or her surroundings. I want my children to be able to get home if lost – this comes from really getting to know your area. Do you have a bus system? Take a day and just ride the bus and see what you can see.