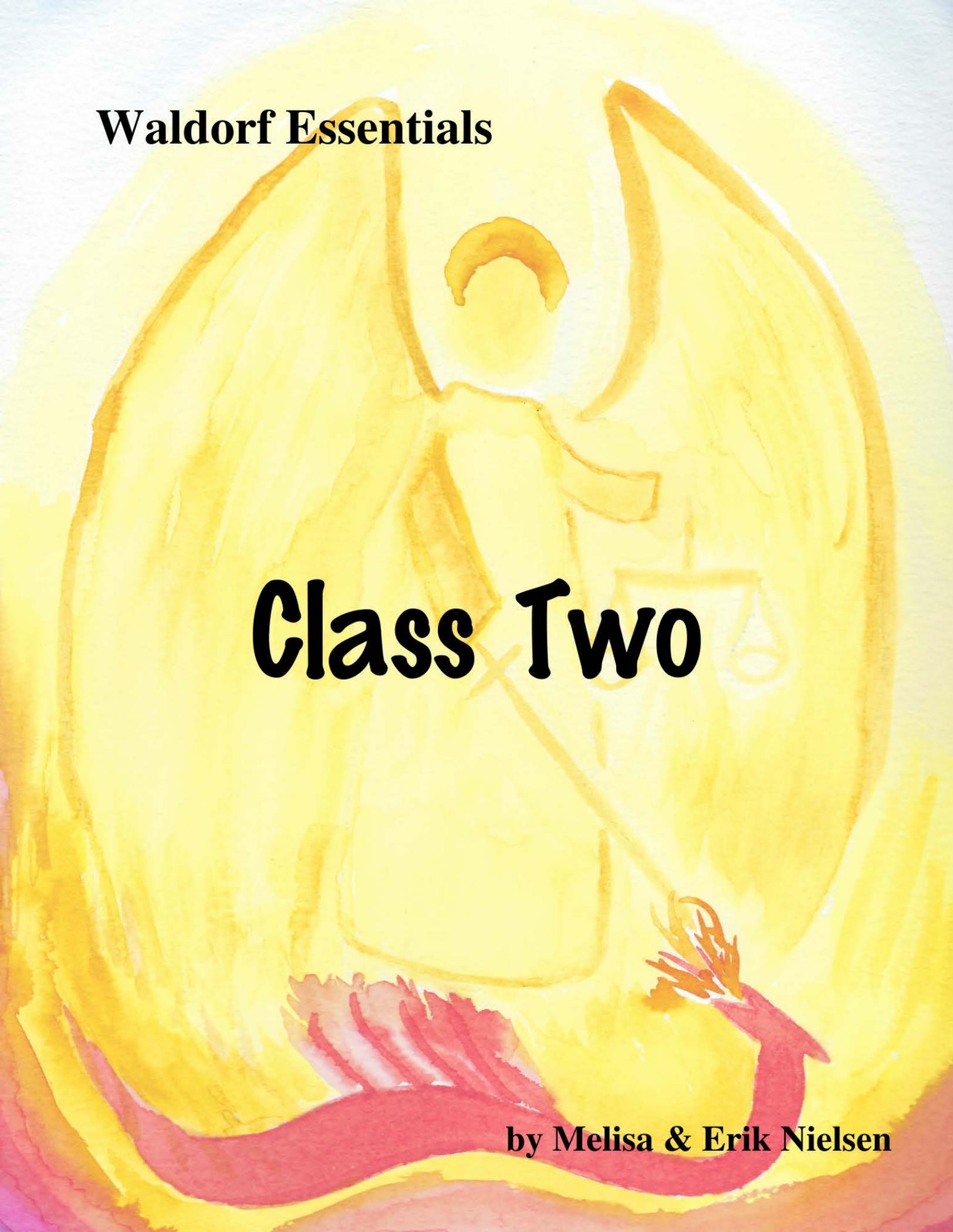


**Waldorf Essentials**

**Class Two**

**by Melisa & Erik Nielsen**



Waldorf Essentials

# **Class Two**

Melisa Nielsen LLC

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## Block One - Legends of Saints

Welcome to the first block of second grade. The story content for second grade largely consists of fables (animal stories) and legends of the saints. In the book *A Handbook for Waldorf Class Teachers*, the author lists the objectives of using these stories for second grade:

“To give a picture of the striving of the human being in respect to the ideal (saints) and to morality in earthly action and impulses (fables)...to introduce the morality of the fable – the moral should, of course, remain implicit and not be given...to encourage reverence for that in humanity which aspires towards the Divine and confidence in the natural order.”

All through this volume I have been making a case for those saint stories; if you still have reservations about this subject, rest assured that many religions are represented through the Waldorf curriculum. While this grade might seem Christian, grade three will have a Jewish feel to it, grade five a Hindu feel and six will include Islam. This curriculum is multicultural and these stories of the saints have more to do with human striving than with religion. We have worked to bring you many stories so you can choose those you feel comfortable with – but don't be afraid to stretch yourself!

I love this bit by Steiner that relates religion to the teachings of the curriculum:

“Now I need hardly tell you that with the teaching material of which we have spoken up to now, very many things will be developed through the child's consciousness – that spirit permeates everything in the world; that spirit lives in speech; that spirit lives in what as geography covers the earth; that spirit lives in history. When we attempt to feel the living spirit in everything we shall find the right enthusiasm for bringing this living spirit to our pupils. And then in the future we shall learn to make good what has been sinned against by Religious Confessions since the beginning of modern times.”

We have the opportunity with this curriculum to help our children be part of a generation of children that can stand for their faith and also be tolerant of others. This is something that Steiner faced in his time and we continue to face in ours. We are teaching our children to be of this world, not worldly; that takes strength and bravery.

“Just as the content of the fairy tales told in Grade One gave the children “spiritual” nourishment, so too do the saint stories, for here we meet with the manifestation of human spiritual striving. By aspiring for a higher level of spiritual development, the individual gains mastery over his/her lower (animal) instincts.”~Eric Fairman, *A Path of Discovery, Volume Two: Grade Two*

I encourage you to think about your religion. Each faith has some heroic tales of founders, early pioneers, those who shaped the way we believe. For Pagans and others attending a Unitarian church, there are always those founders and those in history who were believed to be Unitarian Universalist at heart; for Mormons, there are pioneers and prophets both past and present, for Lutherans there is certainly Martin Luther, for others, gurus, founders, and so on. This is a wonderful time to make these leaders come alive for your children.

We have included saint stories for your lessons; if these don't work for you then by all means seek different versions of their lives. I have drawn mainly from the public domain work of Amy Steedman but abridged or altered some works as needed. Most public libraries have several books on these wonderful people; the internet can also be a great resource.

Through the years, I have found it fascinating to feed my children with these stories. These stories can also help with your child's temperament and any behaviors you may be working through. For instance, when I was laying out a plan to teach St. Francis to my middle son, I looked at his mostly melancholic temperament. He is a loving and sweet boy, but he can also be spiteful and self loathing... he and Francis became fast friends! Francis was so very devoted and conquered so many fears in his life, including one of lepers which in that time was no small fear. We spent two weeks on his life, poring over stories and talking about how he was able to overcome his fears and become one with nature, ceasing even to have enmity between him and wildlife. Saint Francis speaks to so many children, ones that just love his devotion to animals but also those who need help with humility and kindness. If you have a perfect child with no



## **Saint Francis, Part 2**

*Review yesterday's story and talk about Francis. For art today you might consider building a little church together or model one from clay or beeswax.*

Soon Francis made his way back to Assisi and to the little ruined church and began building up the walls with his own hands, carrying the stones on his shoulders, happy and contented to be doing work for God.

It seemed to Francis that no one had really loved poverty since the days when Jesus had lived amongst the poor on earth. And he began to think of poverty as a beautiful lady who had been despised and ill-treated all these long years, with no one to take her part or see any charm in her fair face. For himself he made up his mind to love her with all his heart, to be as poor as his Master had been, and to possess nothing here on earth. Even his coarse brown habit had been given to him in charity, and instead of a belt he tied round his waist a piece of rope which he found by the way-side. He wore no shoes nor stockings, but went barefoot, and had no covering for his head. And being so truly poor was the greatest joy to him. He thought the Lady Poverty was a fairer bride than any on earth, though her clothes were ragged and her pathway lined with thorns. For along that thorny path she led him closer to his Master, and taught him to tread more nearly in His footsteps than most of His servants have ever trod.

*We see poverty much differently now than in Francis' time. It seems to mean something very different. A child of eight is not ready for these conversations, but they can understand serving others that do not have the ability or means to do for themselves.*

*A beautiful poem to share about Francis' view of the world is "Canticle to the Sun." A portion of the poem is included below. Since today's story is shorter, it might be a good addition to your lessons; read it aloud and talk about these brothers and sisters.*

Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures,  
Especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day;  
And you give light through him.  
And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor!  
Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

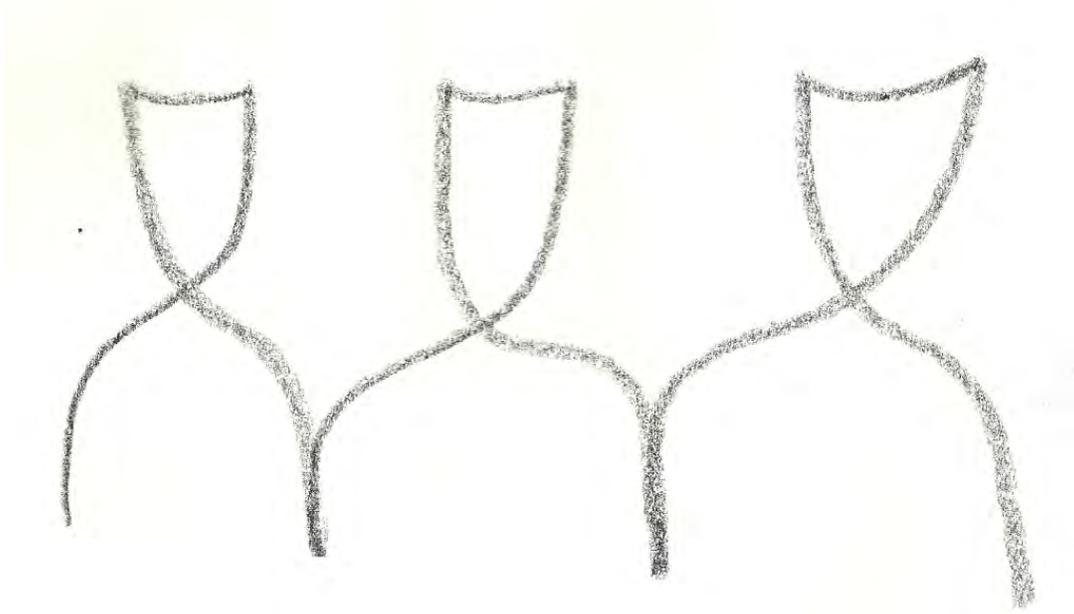
Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars;  
In the heavens you have made them, precious and beautiful.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air,  
And clouds and storms, and all the weather,  
Through which you give your creatures sustenance.

Be praised, My Lord, through Sister Water;  
She is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure.  
Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire,  
Through whom you brighten the night.  
He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong.  
Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother Earth,  
Who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs.



This week's form drawing:



### **Saint Jerome, Part 1**

*Today tell the story and then bring art into your lessons. Remember, you have access to art instruction in TFW.*

Long ago lived a man named Jerome. He was a kind man and people say that children and angels were always around him, listening. Jerome was a very smart man and people came from hundreds of miles away to visit him. He was a doctor, a philosopher and a historian. Jerome was also a priest; he roamed the hills near his village to observe plants and be with the animals. Jerome was a lot like Francis; he could talk to the animals and they didn't fear him.

One day while walking, Jerome came upon a monastery. "Curious," he thought as he walked through the gates, "The gates are open but this place seems abandoned. Where could all the monks be?" Jerome searched and before long he heard whispers.

"Father Jerome, is that you? Take care; a lion roams the grounds!"

Jerome walked toward the sound of the whispering. "How did a lion get into your keep?" asked Jerome.

"We usually take great care to lock the gate each evening but three days ago we were tending to an ill monk and we forgot to lock the gate. The lion appeared in the night," explained the frightened monk. "He is terribly angry and very fierce."

Jerome took leave of the monks and went to the chapel to pray. "God give me the strength to find a peaceful answer for the lion and my dear brothers, the monks."

Jerome left the chapel in search of the lion. While he searched, he whispered the words, "God give me strength." Jerome finally spotted the lion. He was angry, but Jerome noticed he was limping. Looking closer, he saw a large thorn in the lion's paw.

"I am Jerome," he began, "I am a healer and I love to help beasts in need. Will you allow me to look at your paw?"

The lion seemed to understand him and bowed before him, raising his paw. With the greatest of care, Jerome pulled the thorn from the lion's paw. While the lion yelped, he seemed grateful to have the thorn removed. He nuzzled Jerome while Jerome patted his mane. Jerome realized that the lion wasn't there to hurt anyone; he just wanted someone to help him with his paw. He assembled the monks and introduced them to the lion.

"This lion is now my friend. He wishes to remain here at the monastery to protect you from invaders."

The monks all circled around the lion, groomed him and brought him some food. The lion lived at the monastery for many years protecting the monks and helping them in their daily tasks.



## **Saint Jerome, Part 2**

Today have your child recall the story and together compose a summary. Have your child write it in their main lesson book.

## **Saint Christopher, Part 1**

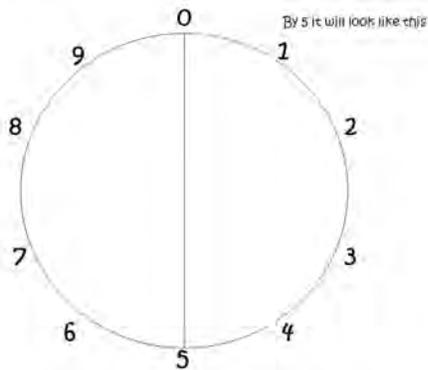
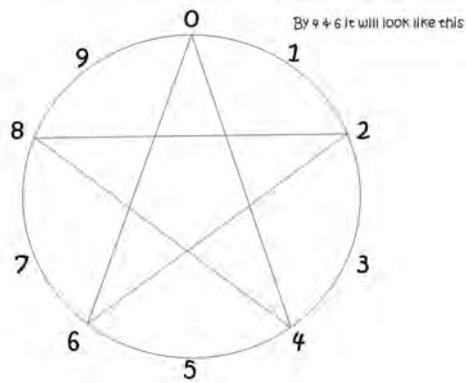
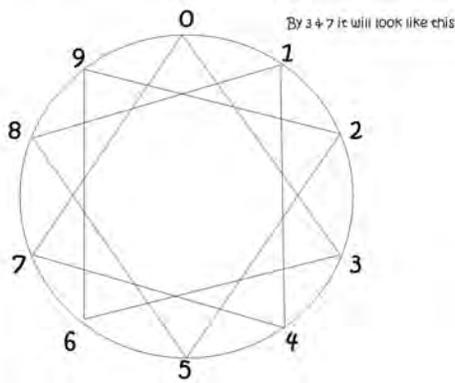
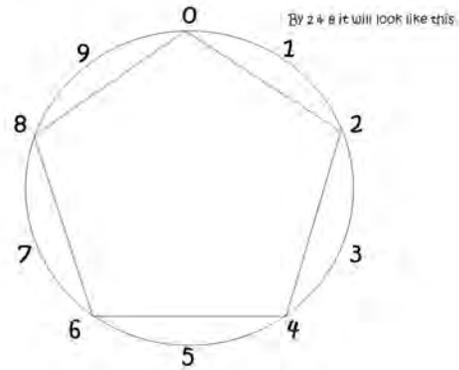
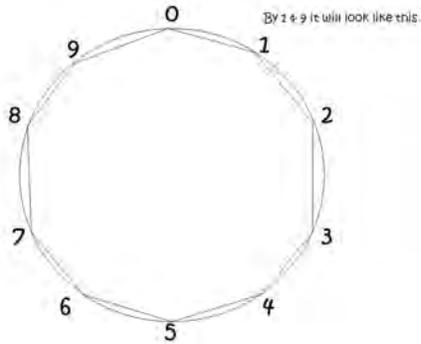
*Saint Christopher's story is a true story of striving and searching. He really wanted to serve the most powerful; what a mirroring of some of the behaviors of our children during this time period. As they begin to head toward the nine year change, it might feel like they are challenging every authority they can, and it can be tiring for parents. Stick with it and reach out if you need help.*

*Today, present the story and draw or paint from it together.*

Long ago in a far distant land there lived a boy who was taller and stronger and braver than any of his companions, and he was called Offero, which means bearer, because he could carry the heaviest burdens on his broad shoulders without stooping under their weight. His was the grandest kind of strength, too, for it was not only strength of body, but strength of heart and soul besides. As Offero grew into manhood he began to tire of being first only in games and play, and he longed to use his strength for some real end, feeling sure there was work in the world waiting for his hand.

## Times Table String Art

Today's order is for beautiful math pictures! These are some pre-geometry skills and will likely delight your child when they see the magic come to life on the paper before them. It can also be fun to draw these out on a piece of wood and have your child make them into string art. Today we'll just focus on main lesson book work. Remember to keep it fun!



I haven't shown the 10's table because it really is just a blank circle, but you can have them put one in their book if they'd like. You may also want to do this as one circle and use different colors for each table and see what your result would be.

## Handwork

The most important thing to remember when bringing handwork to your child is to be consistent. It is more important that the process is observed and enjoyed than it is to produce project after project. I try to keep projects confined to a month or so in duration so we have a goal to strive for, and it is often a blessing when we can be working toward the project being a birthday or holiday gift for someone.

Some Waldorf teachers introduce crochet to the second grader. I like to save it until third grade, giving them a full two years to really get the hang of knitting. Also, our goal at home is to master these skills, not just dabble. Often the classroom handwork teacher doesn't know if the child will continue with the skills. At home, we have the opportunity to keep these skills alive year after year.

Last year the focus was on the knit stitch and this year we will introduce purling. With this introduction, a whole world of knitting patterns opens up to them. I like to also begin to introduce more shaping techniques, knitting two stitches together, increasing, etc. We have included a few patterns here; these can be made again and again. Washcloths are great for gifts with a bar of homemade soap, a scarf can be a great service project and easy to create again and again, and a stuffed horse is a welcome gift to a younger sibling.

Remember that your child is most likely to enjoy knitting if you are knitting as well, so continue to build your skills. If you are just learning to purl yourself, then work on it for a few weeks before bringing it to your child. As you introduce this new stitch to your child, you may want to begin with a small 3" (about 8 cm) or 4" (10 cm) square to introduce the concepts before beginning a project.

For extra fun, I like to dye yarn with my children for their projects. It lends an extra bit of ownership when you have that step in there and imagine the pride from your child when they hand Grandma a pot holder that they not only knitted themselves, but one where they also dyed the yarn themselves.



## Waldorf Curriculum, Major Themes Grades 1 to 6

There is a more complete chart on our website in the Resources section.

<p><b>Grade 1</b> History, literature and LA * Learning to read and write with the help of the fairy tales as a base for stories Mathematics * Counting, introduction to the four processes through stories Geography and science * Home surroundings Languages –foreign languages can be taught, through song and culture, no tapes or TV Art and music * Painting, drawing and modeling from lesson work * Knitting simple projects * Penny whistle or recorder and singing</p>	<p><b>Grade 2</b> History, literature and LA * Fables and saint stories to continue the reading journey, local folklore Mathematics * Continue with times tables, time and money, extending skills with the four processes Geography and sciences * More home study surroundings, observing animals from their fables work Continue language study Art and music * Continue painting, drawing and modeling from lesson work * Begin knitting more complicated projects * Continue with instrument and singing</p>	<p><b>Grade 3</b> History, literature and LA * Biblical stories as part of history. * Full introduction to parts of speech, begin sentence structure Mathematics * Continue times tables, begin measurement, place value, carrying and borrowing Geography and sciences * Cycles of the year * Farming, homes and dwellings, clothing, etc. Continue language study Art and music * Continue painting, drawing and modeling * Begin crocheting * Continue with instrument and singing</p>
<p><b>Grade 4</b> History, literature and LA * Stories from Norse myth, local history * Poetry, deepen grammar work, spelling Mathematics * Long division/multiplication, fractions, averaging, proofs, factoring Geography and science * Zoology, man and animal and their relationships * Local geography, being aware of local plant life Continue language study Art and music * Continue painting, drawing and modeling, more complex * Sewing, embroidery, cross stitch * Continue with blowing instrument and singing * Orchestra or string instrument</p>	<p><b>Grade 5</b> History, literature and LA * Stories from ancient cultures and history, India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, up to Alexander the Great * Writing longer compositions Mathematics * Geometry as part of drawing * Decimals, fractions, metric system Geography and science * Botany, plant and earth relationship * Zoology, a continuation * Geography of your own country Continue language study Art and music * Continue painting, drawing and modeling, more complex * Four needle knitting * Continue with blowing instrument and singing * Orchestra or string instrument</p>	<p><b>Grade 6</b> History, literature and LA * Rome, Life of Christ and Muhammad, Medieval society * Writing is more in depth Mathematics * Geometry * Business math, pre-algebra Geography and science * Geography of Canada, Latin America, and countries being studied * Physics, geology, more botany Continue language study Art and music * Continue painting, drawing and modeling, more complex * Sewing * Continue with blowing instrument and singing * Orchestra or string instrument</p>

# Child Development

BIRTH TO TWENTY-ONE



melisa nielsen



## Waldorf Essentials

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