

## PROLOGUE

This 5<sup>th</sup> teacher/parent manual in the Spiritual Syllabus Series outlines 10 Language unit lessons for Class 3 and 4 – for 9 and 10-year-olds. The Language stream is essentially taught in the morning main lessons, for the first 2 hours of the day. There are 3, 3-week Language main lessons a year, or about 90 hours teaching.

There is also a corollary stream, the Literacy, which is presented as 3, 3-week middle lesson units per year. These occupy the 1 ½ hours between break and lunch. The time scheduled being some 70 hours teaching over the year. The first of these, Foreign Language/s, is dealt with in the companion volume to this, The Genii of Language.

So Language/Literacy has a 160 hour allotment every year, right through the 7 years of primary school. This does not include a Drama middle lesson each year, which is included in the Performing Arts stream, and not included in this book – although there is a Drama Studies *Main* lesson.

The miracle of words calls on the ego forces of writer, speaker, listener and reader – it calls on the Self. The potential in children for self-expression is enhanced by a comprehensive, consistent and creative Language education. This small manual is directed to these high ends. The following is a *suggested* curriculum structure emphasizing the faculties of the human being awakened by the various Language paths – aspects detailed in the articles to follow:

CLASS 3		LANGUAGE – EGO		CLASS 4	
LANGUAGE – HEAD	SENTENCE YEAR		MAIN LESSONS		STATEMENT YEAR
	BODY	SOUL	SPIRIT	BODY	SPIRIT
	WRITING	EXPRESSION	READING	WRITING	EXPRESSION
	PUNCTUATION PAGE 13	THE STORY PAGE 20	THE SENTENCE PAGE 30	PARTS OF SPEECH PAGE 54	HISTORY OF WRITING PAGE 74
	MIDDLE LESSONS				
	WILL	FEELING	THINKING	WILL	FEELING
LITERACY – CHEST	FOREIGN LANG.	ORAL	WRITTEN	FOREIGN LANG.	WRITTEN
		HISTORY OF LANGUAGE PAGE 38	SPELLING PAGE 46		VOCABULARY PAGE 83
					LETTER WRITING PAGE 90

## A HOST OF GOLDEN LIBRATES

### Learning to Read

“I wander’d lonely as a cloud  
That floats on high o’er vales and hills,  
When all at once I saw a crowd,  
A host of golden daffodils...” William Wordsworth

The instructions on the packet of daffodil bulbs says to plant in late summer for an early spring flowering. So why not plant in *early* summer to expect a mid-winter display of sunny yellow...?

Of course you’d be disappointed; if the daffodils flower at all, it will still be in early spring. Everyone is aware of this self-evident fact; then how come many are blind to the same logic in education?

Both children and daffodils are subject to the eternal wisdom of the cosmos as it expresses in *timing*. A time to be born, a time to die, a time to blossom – a time to learn to read! The child, being more complex than a flower, has an individualize rather than collective biological clock. Children *naturally* learn to read from about four to 12 years of age; but the optimal time for most is between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> year. A pernicious sophistry asserted in our intellectual age is that the earlier a child learns to read, the more advantaged s/he will be in university. Actually the reverse is more often the case, the more precocious readers being burnt out as early as late primary school.

In fact, all methods of “accelerated learning” have been revealed, in the fullness of time, to be among the most venal frauds visited upon childhood. Steiner homeschooling regards correct *timing*, rather than speed, as the most precious element in content presentation.

For instance, there is no attempt at *formal* instruction at all, especially reading, before the 7<sup>th</sup> years. From the first main lesson in Class 1, child and teacher embark on a reading adventure which culminates in nominal fluency at end Class 2 early Class 3.

When Rudolf Steiner began his first school in Stuttgart in 1919, he admitted to the officials that in junior primary, his children would be less able readers than their peers in other schools. He further requested that his children’s reading standards not be assessed until middle Class 3; when he gave the assurance that they would actually be *ahead* in their reading levels. And so it came to pass; and has been the case for eight decades.

From Class 1 there are six major Language units per year, beginning with the highly imaginative, hence perennially popular, *Capital Alphabet* main lesson. This launches the children on their 12-year literacy odyssey. The 12<sup>th</sup> Language main lesson, at end Class 2, is *Reading and Library*. Here the eager 8-year-olds are primed with the promise that at last they will officially learn to read – even though many of them already can. Of course the previous 11 units – each taught sequentially for 3 weeks – have built the literacy foundations block by painless block.

Even if fluency is not achieved by some of the children in this Class 2 lesson, a remarkable thing usually occurs. Due to the *timing* of the unit at the end of the year, the children soon after enjoy their long summer break. Often, without any overt effort, the child, on beginning Class 3, has mysteriously crossed the reading fluency Rubicon. And as Steiner predicted, 6 months later most of them have become veritable bookworms!

Not only do they read well, but they read wisely, exhibiting an advanced level of *library* – far more important than mere literacy, library is the skill of reading discrimination and assimilation.

Alas, some recalcitrant hold out even into Class 3, and beyond to Class 4 ... and 5! If the child is still not reading, in spite of years of gentle persuasion, by Class 6, emergency measure must be put in place. First we assert – threaten – that there is no way we will permit the child to enter his/her 13<sup>th</sup> year illiterate. This is our mission.

Hence we demonstrate that we have faith in them even if they themselves are consumed with self-doubt. All resources are employed to teach the child to read; we now place this goal above all others.

If we haven't used them already, we wheel up the biggest guns of all – other children! The most under-utilized teaching aid is the child's own peers, whether classmates or siblings. Children are infinitely more effective as teachers of other children than we adults. They use the same argot, share the same thought patterns, hold few unrealistic expectations, are non-intimidatory – and so on and so forth.

A child can convey a concept to another child in an economic and seamless way we adults can only regard with awe. So, a program (that *is* our job) is instigated where everyone in the hapless non-reading child's community is rostered every day to apply irresistible force to this seemingly immovable object. The child may lose some play and recreation time; all the more incentive to get this reading thing over and done with! No child in my experience where this Class 6 pressure tactic has been – humanely – applied has entered high school with a "reading problem", let alone as an illiterate.

So why did the child fail to respond to five years of imaginative and creative blandishments for which Steiner Education is so renowned? For a start, we totally reject the cop-out concept, let alone the reality, of ADD and other fictions. Again, we regard it as a *timing* issue. That particular individual's development was not determined to master the cognitively complex task of reading until a later age than other children. Predicated on no mental handicap, every child can learn to read by the 12<sup>th</sup> year. By then, all the 'daffodils' are flowering!

Another Wordsworth cloud utterance is that all children come into the world "... trailing clouds of glory." The inference here being that we all arrive from a pre-earth existence, and by logical extension, continue on post-life. It certainly casts light on one of Steiner's most beautiful canons of childhood:

“We must have veneration for the child’s past, protection for their present, and optimism for their future.” In the galactic scale of this mosaic of existence, reading is a very small piece indeed.

vv uuuu uuuuuu at the top it is uuuuuu  
uu uuuu. When masked at the  
bottom the result is easy to read

### What does this say?

This example indicates the relative visual importance of the tops and bottoms of the letters used in romance languages. In English, and other languages using the same alphabet, more information is conveyed in the “top coast line” of letters than the “bottom coast line.” Thus, the figure speaks for itself by covering either the bottom or the top of the letters in the sentences. It says, “When masked at the top it is harder to read. When masked at the bottom the result is easy to read.”

### THE VISION OF THE YEAR; COMMUNION WITH THE CHILD

The whole 12 years of Steiner Education is a Grand Vision, one which can immeasurably enrich a child’s life. Within this are 12 separate visions, one for subjects taught every year. As well, each annual vision jewel has 12 facets, the 12 nominal subjects taught every year. The 12 are: Language; Math; Social Studies; Science; Eurythmy-Recreation; Dance; Drama; Technics; Practical; Visual Arts’ Craft; Music. Games/Sports is a 13<sup>th</sup> subject, but as it relates only to the earth, is separate from the Holy 12. To manifest the vision in any given year requires three steps:

1. PROGRAMMING. This is described in my book *A Steiner Homeschool?*. Programming is equivalent to the *Physical Body* of the vision – its structure, or scaffold. The book shows the teacher or parent, at the beginning of the school year how to draw up the blueprint, to behold the vision, of the coming 12 months. This places the 12 Subjects in a balanced, intelligent and appropriate way.
2. THE CURRICULUM. Of the 12 subjects, which aspects are to be taught in the year? Not just *Math*, but *4 Operations*; not just *Music*, but *Recorders* – and so on. This process is equivalent to imbuing the vision with *Life Body principles*. Full curriculum information is found in my books *La Pleroma* for Primary (Class 1 to 7), and *A Steiner High School?* (Class 8 to 12). The full 12 (13) subject curriculum for Class 3 and 4, the years covered in this book, follows.
3. PREPARATION. The broad curriculum is activated in both the spiritual and practical sense in this 3<sup>rd</sup> step, the preparation for the actual 3-week unit to be taught. This is hugely aided by the relevant chapters in all the books in the *Spiritual Syllabus Series*, and other corollary titles. Preparation is the *Sentient Body*, the actual content or soul, of the vision. Special information on the higher aspects of Preparation can be found in *World Within, Child Without*.

The *Ego* or Self-hood, of this wonderful learning pageant is when the teacher or parent actually begins *teaching*. Here one enters into a holy communion with the child. This is where the true Spirit-inspired creativity of *all involved* can be expressed and liberated. A blessing on your sacred educational endeavors.

### Class 3

Main Lessons - 2 hours x 15 days each

LANGUAGE	MATHS	SOCIAL SCIENCE	SCIENCE
12 POINTS OF PUNCTUATION	LINEAR MEASUREMENT	ZONAL GEOGRAPHY / HISTORY	COLOUR & LIGHT
THE (LOVE) STORY	SYMBOLS - TERMS OPERATIONS	2 - FOLD MAN	AGRICULTURE
7 SENTENCE TYPES	BORROWING	ANCIENT PERSIA	THE 12 SENSES

Middle Lessons - 1 1/2 hours x 15 days each.

LITERACY	NUMERACY	DISCOVERY	PERFORMING ARTS
FOREIGN LANGUAGE	MEASURE THE WORLD	AIR CYCLE STORIES	FOLK DANCES
ORIGIN OF LANGUAGE	FREE - FORM DYNAMIC DRAWING	EARTH STORIES	THE STORY OF MUSIC
SPELLING	TIME - DISTANCE - SPEED	CREATION STORIES	PUPPET PLAYS

Afternoon Block Lessons - 1 1/2 hours x 12 days each.

VISUAL ARTS	CRAFT	TECHNICAL	PRACTICAL
WET - ON - WET COLOUR FAMILIES	ENAMELLING JEWELLERY	MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS	CONSERVATION PROJECTS
MASK MAKING	STRINGCRAFT	PAPER & INK MAKING	BUSH COOKING
COLOURED PENCIL DRAWING	PUPPET MAKING	BOATS & RAFTS	ANIMAL CARE

Games 1 1/2 hours per week

WATER SURVIVAL  
KITES/FRISBEE

FIELD BALL GAMES  
ROLLER SKATING

ABORIGINES  
TRAMPOLINE

*Class 4*

Main Lessons - 2 hours x 15 days each

LANGUAGE	MATHS	SOCIAL SCIENCE	SCIENCE
9 PARTS OF SPEECH	AREA MEASUREMENT	AUSTRALIAN MARITIME DISCOVERY	SOUND STUDIES
DRAMA STUDIES	HISTORY OF NUMBERS	BUILDING PRINCIPLES	PLANT & EARTH
HISTORY OF WRITING	FRACTIONS	ANCIENT EGYPT	MAN & ANIMAL

Middle Lessons - 1 1/2 hours x 15 days each.

LITERACY	NUMERACY	DISCOVERY	PERFORMING ARTS
FOREIGN LANGUAGE	MAN THE MEASURE	FIRE STUDIES	BUSH DANCES
VOCABULARY	FREE-HAND GEOMETRIC DRAWING	TORRID ZONE ECOLOGY	MUSIC NOTATION
LETTER WRITING	NUMBER SYSTEMS	AUSTRALIAN FOLK LORE	FREE DIALOGUE PLAYS

Block Lessons - 1 1/2 hours x 12 days each.

VISUAL ARTS	CRAFT	TECHNICAL	PRACTICAL
WET - ON - WET SINGLE COLOURS	LAPIDARY	MECCANO CONSTRUCTION	SURVIVAL
WOOD CARVING	SOFT TOYS FELT	BOOKMAKING	MEAL PREPARATION
COLOURED PENCIL SHADING	CANE CRAFT	BUILDING	BEE KEEPING

Games - 1 1/2 hours per week

SWIMMING GAMES  
DISPLAY GAMES

COURT BALL GAMES  
ICE SKATING

HORSE RIDING  
TABLE GAMES

## *Eurythmy*

This Life Movement art was initiated by Rudolf Steiner. It is taught to the Under-7s by their teacher on a daily basis; through storytelling, drama, music – and a host of other soul-nourishing activities.