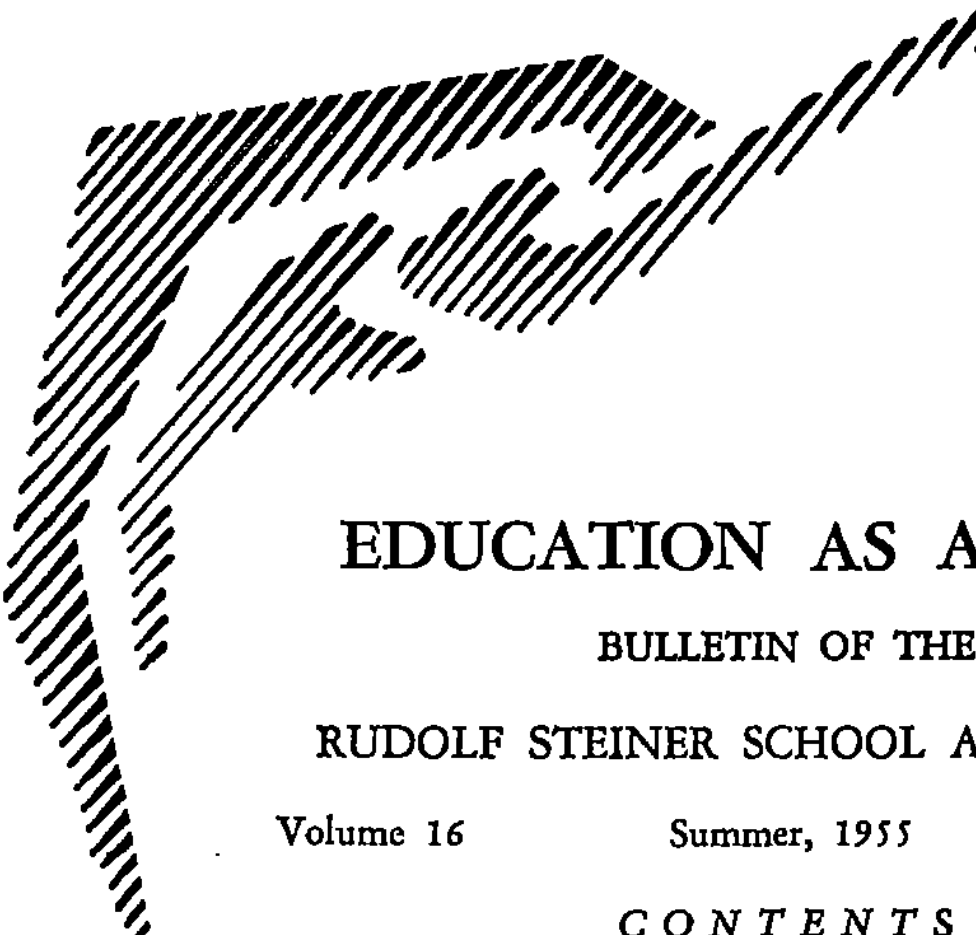




EDUCATION AS AN ART

BULLETIN OF THE

RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

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Notice to Members of the Association

SUGGESTIONS FOR SPIRITUAL EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

An Abbreviated Adaptation by Jeanette Eaton of An Article by Karl Magnus Broedersen, Teacher in the Rudolf Steiner School of Oslo, Norway.

Today in many western countries there is widespread fear of giving children any instruction bordering on religion. This is true of both public and private schools. Yet, on the other hand, many parents declare that without some sort of religious instruction education is far from whole.

Perhaps adults who shrink from this all-important element in the curriculum have had bad teaching in their youth. As I review the religious teaching given me as a boy in Norway, I find that in the lower grades it was good when it consisted of stories from the Bible, unspoiled by catachisms and moralistic preaching. In high school, however, it was uniformly bad because of a shallow attempt to reconcile science with religion. Such instruction aroused antagonism among students and blocked the flow of religious feeling into the life of later years. This is a tragic situation.

Small children can take into their hearts the magnificent pictures of great spiritual leaders. They can live and suffer with saints and heroes. We grown-ups may feel detached from those individuals, but never the children. They believe in them, not blindly, but with sure, sound instinct.

One of the greatest contributions to modern man made by Dr. Rudolf Steiner is his development of a vital system of education. It is intended to bridge the dangerous gulf which exists today between science and religion, and between spiritual and earthly knowledge. The goal of a Rudolf Steiner school is to develop each child's possibilities and talents. In this connection Dr. Steiner draws attention to three fundamental soul forces which need to be cultivated—love, gratitude and duty.

These can first be stimulated in the home. If the members of the family are hospitable to guests and grateful for gifts and favors, a child will also respond in the same warm fashion. The repetition of Grace before meals and the morning and evening prayer lead the child's thoughts to higher beings to whom we constantly owe gratitude. Such habitual expressions are important. Even if a child cannot each time put his heart into a prayer, he learns the language of gratitude which must come before understanding.

The school's task is gradually to evoke a more conscious feeling of gratitude. It is easier, of course, to teach the Psalms to a child than to awaken gratitude, love and duty. What then does Rudolf Steiner suggest?

According to his curriculum, in the first class the imagination of little children is stimulated by fairy tales. Something always comes into the story that is of another world, incalculable, yet decisive. Later, when they are ready to appreciate direct description, children learn about heroes and about the saints who were so filled with the light of the spirit as to overcome evil forces. From about the ninth year on, narratives from the Old and later from the New Testaments play an important part.

In the story of Paradise and the banishment of Adam and Eve children experience the tragic results of disobeying God's commandments. The sorrow they feel arouses a longing for some alleviation of the wrongdoer's suffering. Therefore the heart of a child is filled with gratitude and joy at the coming of the Christ Child, sent by God to open again for all people the doors of Paradise. In Rudolf Steiner schools all over the world the Christmas celebrations play a great role in deepening this feeling of gratitude. In England and in most schools on the continent the teachers enact some of the old Christmas dramas as a gift to the pupils. In Oslo and in some other schools, the children themselves present such plays. In any case, a mood of quiet reverence, of inner joy and thankfulness, pervades the entire school. Children brought up in differing faiths join happily in the celebrations.

Emphasis on love and charity is particularly important as a child advances in years. With the changes in his growing body comes the beginning of awareness of himself. He has a feeling of separateness from the rest of the world. He begins to find that life isn't consistent and that grown-ups make mistakes. At this stage a child might easily become self centered. If he is allowed to remain so, he will be lonely and impoverished in later life. What a child needs from parents and teachers is a combination of love and authority. Moreover, his heart must be stirred by learning of outstanding examples of unselfishness and compassion. The life of Buddha influences children deeply from about eleven or twelve years on—the pleasure-loving young prince who left his palace to learn how other men lived. When the Buddha found people suffering from sorrow, illness and poverty, he took their pain into his own being. After a lonely period of searching for the meaning of such afflictions, he could teach human beings to feel compassion for one another and to turn to the spiritual world for true happiness.

At about the same school period, or preferably a little later, children can enter on a study of the mighty tale of Parsifal. It serves as counterpoint to their study of the later Oriental cultures. What came to western people from the Arabs was the kind of abstract thinking demonstrated in Algebra. Parsifal on the contrary offers a living picture of man's search for the spirit. As the children follow the knight's trials of strength, courage and staunch perseverance, they see that it is only his higher nature that could help him to succeed. When at the castle of the Grail he stands before the old king for the first time, he forgets to ask why the king is grieving. Compassion

has not yet been awakened in Parsifal and he must go forth again to learn the meaning of compassion. Even if the entire significance of Parsifal's story is not clear to a child, it has a profound influence upon him.

Other means of inspiring love, gratitude and duty are used from the very beginning in a Rudolf Steiner school. Music plays a vital part in this educational method. The youngest pupils learn folk songs from many lands. They sing them, play them on recorders and enjoy rhythmic games to the lilting tunes. No child can remain aloofly self-centered while such gladness fills the class-room. Singing at all stages develops a social quality. When part singing is introduced to older children, each must sing his part to blend with the others. The same result comes from playing with the school orchestra.

When we consider the element of duty in education, it must be remembered that only obedience can be expected of young children. They naturally resist the small duties of every day. They are more apt to be engrossed in the thing that pleases them or to dream of heroic deeds and sacrifices. But through obedience dutiful habits are formed. The sense of duty requires education of the will and that training begins with learning how to handle details of every day. Children must learn to hang up wraps and clothes instead of flinging them on the floor. Even the youngest children are taught to put paints and toys carefully away. In more advanced classes note books must be exquisitely neat as well as accurate. Finally a child learns that the desire to do a deed arises from within and that then a true sense of duty means at the same time liking the task which is undertaken—the very opposite of cold compulsion.

Eurythmy, the new art of expression in movement given by Rudolf Steiner—which is not to be confounded with "eurythmics"—offers direct training of the will. Each lift of the arms, each step, expresses either spoken sound or musical tone. Every child in a Rudolf Steiner school is taught Eurythmy throughout each year and acquires exact knowledge of the relationship of movement to speech and tone. He learns that in Eurythmy the use of the whole body becomes a spiritual exercise. As the wish to perfect this art is aroused, a sense of devoted duty awakens toward all other class work.

Here one can but briefly suggest the means of guiding the complex and mysterious forces of the will. The teacher must recognize that the struggle to master self is the important element in education. Work in a Rudolf Steiner school is based on the conviction that man has his origin in the spiritual world. Each individual is unique. To help a child prepare to fulfill his destiny is the aim of our teaching; this is only possible if the best that is in him becomes guide and master of his life.

A PRE-SCHOOL NURSERY CLASS FOR FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

The Problem: How to give our 4-year-old girl (our youngest) one year's education following, at least partially, the lines of Rudolf Steiner's pedagogy, before she must enter an ordinary public school kindergarten. (The location of my husband's job and therefore of our home precludes sending the children to a Rudolf Steiner School.)

Our Solution: We live in a residential, one-family-house, urban community with more than 30 children on our block alone, of which six are in the same age group as our youngest. We did not want to isolate Barbsie from her playmates, a problem we had run into when grandfather taught the older ones. On the other hand, whatever we undertook would have to be done in such a way that I could handle it and still be able to fulfill my

duties as housewife and mother. After serious consideration my husband and I decided to try for a class, to meet Monday through Friday from 10-11:45 A.M. I went around, talked to the mothers of the 4-year-olds on our street, and, with the exception of one boy, got them all signed up at \$2.50 per week per child. This amount proved to be the maximum I could ask, but with 4 paying children (or \$10 per week income) for 30 weeks I felt I could clear enough to cover materials and house-remodeling expenses.

Next, my husband and I went into our cellar, which runs the full length and breadth of the house, with the chimney, staircase and furnace making a $\frac{3}{4}$ partition roughly in its center. We looked around and found ourselves confronted by quantities of firewood, lumber, boxes, suitcases, trunks, etc., but also by plenty of potential space. Two weeks and umpteen work-hours later the larger half of this cellar was converted into a nicely white-washed room with yellow curtains on its three small windows and glass-panel garden door, a shelf for flowers under one window, a large, home-made table (2 prs. Sears Roebuck saw-horses with $\frac{3}{4}$ " plywood top) and two benches, all painted yellow, two double, 40" fluorescent lights attached to the rafters, a coatrack nailed to the chimney and plenty of space left over for games and eurythmy. Since we had to install a new furnace for the house we took a larger one with 30,000 extra BTU's to keep the cellar warm. Except for the installation of the furnace we did all the work ourselves, including mounting the electric fixtures and installing additional water faucets, to save labor costs. Total remodeling expenses, including the "extra" on the furnace: \$200. This left me \$100 for paints, paper, crayons, clay, Christmas extras, eurythmy costumes, etc., a sum which would amply cover the needs.

Then, on Monday, October 4, class started. Down the cellar stairs came Barbsie and in through the cellar door, laughing and waving their smocks and sneakers, came Meredith, Peter, Carol and Rickie. After the outdoor clothes are removed and the smocks and sneakers put on (we use sneakers for eurythmy because of the cold cement floor, but this is an emergency expedient only. Wherever a wood floor is available the soft, leather-soled eurythmy slippers should be used), we all line up for cookies. To eat these we sit down and when all the children have finished we get up, make a circle, sing our morning song and speak Rudolf Steiner's Morning Verse for Small Children.

This completed, we tackle the day's project. First comes either eurythmy or singing, the songs chosen to fit the season, the poems for their rhythm (iambic, anapest), but all of elementary simplicity. Then comes the main item of the morning: A fairytale! For this we sit down, and must sit very still so that we can really listen. We hear about Snow-White and see her among the 7 dwarfs on the pictures in the beautiful book (Grimm's fairy tales, individually retold and illustrated by Hilde Langen), or we go with Marianne and follow the golden Footprints through the woods to hear the song Mother Sun sings (The Golden Footprints and other stories, Adonis Press, N. Y.), or, during Advent, we hear the Christmas stories, how the angel came to Mary, how Mary and Joseph traveled to Bethlehem, how the Christ-child was born; how the angels appeared to the shepherds and these in turn found the babe and brought him gifts; how the wise men saw His star in the East and traveled through the 12 holy nights to worship the King of kings.

Following the story we either paint with water colors (twice a week), model with clay (twice a week), or crayon (once a week). This completes the daily lesson. (For painting we use white paper, one-inch wide brushes, and 3 colors: alizarin crimson, lemon or cadmium yellow and ultramarine

blue. These are purchased in tubes and the paste squirted into appropriate little jars (BV glasses for instance), and dissolved in water. A tight screw-on lid is desirable so that the paints can be safely stored between uses. For modeling the ideal medium is colored wax. This is used in the Rudolf Steiner School. However, because it must be imported from abroad I used the substitute medium: regular grey water-clay, available in any art store. At this stage the children's work rarely warrants keeping, so the clay is returned to the bin after use, covered with a wet rag, the lid tightly replaced, and then re-used next time. The crayons are regular five-and-dime-store ones, except that I removed the black from each set, black representing not a color but darkness.

For Christmas we worked up a short program for the parents. We were stars and angels (white dresses with gold headbands and stars attached), and entered singing: "Ding Dong, ding dong, Christmas coming," ringing bells and carrying candles, which we lit and put into holders in front of a tiny, live, potted pine tree decorated with a golden star. Next we formed a semi-circle and speaking to the town of Bethlehem at our feet we recited: "O little town of Bethlehem." After this we took up our positions in the pentagram and accompanying the a-cappella singing with simple eurythmy vowel movements we did: "Twinkle, twinkle, little star," walking out the pentagram. Then came: "Over Suns and Stars a-wand'ring," done with eurythmy movements on a simple form and, to close, we reformed our semi-circle and sang: "Away in a Manger." I helped the children in the singing and speaking but the eurythmy they did by themselves. There was no feeling of "performing" among the children, but rather one of awe and wonder at the Christmas happenings and the desire to present their program to the very best of their ability so their parents might also participate in this event.

As part of our handwork each child made a manger for Christmas. The manger proper, its floor, backdrop and the star on its rooftop were made of colored cardboard, the star a golden glue-on one. The figures of the holy family and the angel were made of colored crepe paper and cotton (heads and arms). We did not have time to make the shepherds before Christmas, so after vacation, but still during the holy nights, we made three kings.

Continuing the work after Christmas, I introduced more difficult eurythmy exercises: the "waterfall" and the "Qui" with copper rods as well as the iambic and annapest, also with the rods. The children loved these exercises. They had to work hard to learn them, but once mastered, the pride of achievement on their young faces was wonderful to behold! The additional finger dexterity acquired through these exercises as well as the rhythmic coordination they helped produce could be clearly seen in the children's modeling. They were able to give better form to their work and imbue it with the rudiments of movement and gesture. In their painting the effects of the stories became ever more visible: clearer colors and more light.

To close the season we gave a second program for the parents in spring. This consisted of parts of a regular lesson. We opened with our morning song and verse. Next came the eurythmy: waterfall exercises with the rods in 3 parts: first in standing, next walking into the circle and back to one's place and third around the circle on the regular wave-form. Then came the "qui" in standing, an annapest on an in-and-out-going spiral, and last the children did A. A. Milne's poem: "Nobody Knows" on a form with simple vowel movements. To complete the program I told the story of the "Golden Footprints" and the children recited the "Song of Mother Sun." At the very end each child received a hand-written report card, rolled and tied with

a ribbon. The children wore pastel-colored eurythmy dresses and matching ribbons and flowers in their hair.

I have given a rather detailed description of a very tiny venture in the hope that it may serve as an incentive to those many friends, scattered across the country, who find themselves in a similar predicament with regard to their children. However, in reading the descriptions given here it must be borne in mind that I am *not* a teacher trained in Rudolf Steiner's pedagogy but only an alumna of that school. For those of you who contemplate a similar project, may I suggest that you contact experienced teachers.

Maria Renold

THE BUTTERFLY AND THE FLOWERS

The Sun stands at the back of the stage. In front of him, in a circle, the Flowers and the Caterpillar are curled up so that they all resemble seeds. In a larger, concentric circle are seated the Gnomes.

All sing: Out in the glistening air small birds are singing.
Down in the valley there church bells are ringing,
Echoing everywhere, sounding and swinging.
Where the brown fields lay bare, green plants are springing.
Where earth grew cold with care, wonder is winging!

Sun: I am the sun, the golden one!
I bow my head low all winter long.
Now it is spring and my warm light grows strong.

Flowers: We are the seeds of flowers and weeds.
Cuddled cozy and deep in the earth we sleep.

Gnomes: We are the gnomes. Underground are our homes.
We break the earth so tender seedlets may grow.

Sun: Wake up Gnomes! Wake up Seeds!
Now has come the time for deeds!

Gnomes, rising and acting out their words as the Flowers put up green arms like sprouts before their faces:

Hack, hack, hack! Tick-a-tick tack!
The earth crumbs crack. Stand back! Stand back!
The little brown seeds uncurl, unfurl.
Each pointed sprout is peeking out.
Let's dance and shout! In and out and round about!
They see the caterpillar.
Look out! Look out! What's this seed about?

Caterpillar: From my small egg out I creep
At the wide, wide world to peep.

Gnomes, each in turn:
Here's a funny kind of sprout. Why it's a root that wriggles.
No, it's a stem that wiggles! It's just a nice, green, ugly worm.
Good morning, Mr. Caterpillar! Have you had your daily squirm?
Will you take us for a ride?
Come on, old gnome, let's jump astride.
Clumpity clump! Humpity hump!
Bumpity bump, and off we dump!

They fall off the Caterpillar's back, run to their places and fall asleep.

Caterpillar: From leaf to leaf I make my way
And taste the sunlight warm and sweet

In every juicy bite I eat.
Sun: Hour by hour I send down my power
 In a glistening shower to make the fields flower.
All sing as the sprouts unfurl their leaves and disclose flower faces:
 The sun's light is shining, its beaming entwining
 The heavens and earth.
 The wide air is glistening. The earth's heart is listening.
 Green leaves are unfurled.
 And golden-eyed flowers pour back the sun's powers
 At springtime's birth.
 While shining and showers build up rainbowed hours
 Encircling the world.
Caterpillar: The sun is so golden that I am beholden
 To follow his ways all the rest of my days.
Flowers: We flowers too would follow him like you
 But we can neither soar nor creep for our feet are rooted deep.
Caterpillar: If you will listen to a homely worm like me
 I promise I'll make a song for you of all I hear and see.
 As I follow the sun-road day by day
 I treasure away every glistening ray.
 From the east into the west, above, below and over, under,
 I will follow without rest, learning this way how to spin
 Warp and woofing out and in. *Enter Boys.*
1st Boy: Come boys and watch this wiggly fellow,
 Spots of black and stripes of yellow.
2nd Boy: Eek! What a squashy little beast! See how fat! He's had a feast.
3rd Boy: He eats every leaf he sees until he's ruined all our trees.
4th Boy: The stupid thing always chopping and chewing!
 But now what in the world is he doing?
5th Boy: He's got a bright thread. Just see how it's growing
 Right out of himself. He's spinning and weaving.
 However he does it there is no knowing.
Caterpillar: Dazzling light strands I stored from the sunbeams
 I spin them about me, within and without me.
 Sometimes a thread breaks and bursts into rainbows.
 Then like a castle of star sparks my house glows.
 Ugly worm though I may be,
 All the colors of heaven shine round me!
 Here without fear, deep I shall sleep.
*The boys cluster about him concealing his exit. When they again move
 apart, a large white cocoon is disclosed. The Gnomes wake up, stretch, and
 run about looking for the Caterpillar.*
1st Gnome: Mr. Caterpillar! Where are you hiding?
2nd Gnome: You are our horse and it's time to go riding!
They see the cocoon.
3rd Gnome: What is this—a great white bud? Or is it a shroud, or a bed?
5th Boy: It is the caterpillar's house.
 He's sleeping inside as still as a mouse.
2nd Boy: Wake up, wake up you sleepy-head!
Gnome, listening: No stir, no moan. No breath, no tone!
All: Alas, our friend is dead!
Gnomes: The caterpillar's dead. We'll dig him a bed.
 Lay grass at his feet, a stone at his head.

Flowers: Ai, ai, we flowers cry. We hang our heads, our grief is sore.
The caterpillar is no more!

All: O great sun, tell us! Is this the end
Of our ugly, crawling friend?

Sun: Listen to my sunbeams sing as to him their gifts they bring!
They send him crown and rainbow wing,
Dust of starry jewels and metals,
Bones of air and skin of petals.

All: Now the caterpillar boy bursts his skin for very joy!
As the caterpillar, transformed into a butterfly, breaks the cocoon,
they sing: Shake the tears out of your eyes
For with joy and great surprise
This little friend will surely rise.
His tiny crystal bed will break.
In the sun he will awake
As the whole world glints and sings
He shall spread his shining wings!

Caterpillar: O sun, and flowers and great blue sky,
Can you tell me? Who am I?

All: You have become a butterfly!

Caterpillar: I cannot stay. I must take flight
All new and true on wings of light—
Or are these petals from a bower?
Am I a rainbow or am I a flower?

All: You are called a butterfly.

Caterpillar, speaking to the Flowers:
Whatsoever is my name, we look so very much the same!
Now, flowers, I know that I am your brother.
I fly to heaven. You stay with earth mother.
You give me honey. I'll sing you sunny
Songs from the sky to cheer you. Just listen!
And watch where I glisten!

All: Behold the plant! It is the butterfly
Held prisoner by the earth.
Behold the butterfly! It is the plant
By the whole cosmos freed!*

The butterfly leads the others off the stage as they sing "The light of sun is flooding the realms of space. . . ."

Christy Barnes

Music for the songs has been composed by Irene Laney

NOTICE TO MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Be sure to let us know your change of address immediately as this bulletin, sent by third class mail, will not be forwarded.

THE RUDOLF STEINER SCHOOL ASSOCIATION

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*A poem by Rudolf Steiner translated by A. M. E.