

You're Not the Boss of Me! Baking Bread with Children The Apple Pie that Papa Baked

by Stephen Spitalny

When I began as a Waldorf kindergarten teacher, there were not many books available to support my work. I remember being at the bookstore at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland in 1991 and seeing the wealth of books about early childhood all written in German. I was sorely tempted to buy some and hope to find someone who would translate them for me. Of course there were many Steiner lectures in English, but not much specifically for the early childhood educator from a Steiner approach. My main fountain of practical and philosophical support was the Waldorf Early Childhood Newsletter (now called *Gateways*). Well the times have sure changed. There is a veritable cornucopia of books available for English-speaking early childhood educators!

WECAN, for one, has been publishing up a storm in recent years. Many of these titles would have been lifesavers for a drowning beginner teacher. One of the newest titles from WECAN, ***You're Not the Boss of Me! — Understanding the Six/Seven-Year-Old Transformation*** (Ruth Ker, editor), is excerpted in this issue. It offers a wealth of practical activity and developmental background for working with older children in the kindergarten. So many aspects of this work are addressed, and the best part is that various perspectives are presented. Different authors, most of them experienced kindergarten teachers and doctors, have written about the same themes out of their own research, experiences, and thinking. This allows readers to digest the content and come to their own expanded perspectives. Subjects include: the role of the teacher, developmental changes in the child, social working in the kindergarten, working together with parents, and stories and circle times. There is even a section of useful handouts for the parents. This is an excellent resource for both rookies and experienced kindergarten teachers. Thanks to all the contributors for sharing their experiences and thoughts with us. And a big thanks

to Ruth Ker for pulling this all together. It is of great benefit for our movement!

Another publisher dishing out delicacies for the Waldorf early childhood teachers is Hawthorn Press. Of their many recent titles, one in particular jumped out at me: ***Baking Bread with Children***, by Warren Lee Cohen. His book is filled with recipes, songs, poems, and ideas about baking and baking-related activities. Mr. Cohen also looks into the deeper aspects of nutrition in relation to child development as well as in historical context. Organic and biodynamic food receives attention, as well as certain types of wheat sensitivity. This is a book you will cover with dough fingerprints and dog-ear the pages so you can bring some of these wonderful songs and stories to the children.

The Apple Pie that Papa Baked by Lauren Thompson, illustrated by Jonathan Bean (Simon and Schuster Books, 2007), is simply a wonderful picture book. It will be a welcome addition to a kindergarten or home with young children. The illustrations remind me of those of Wanda Gag, but with some color added. The story is cumulative, bringing in all the elements that participate in the creating of an apple, from the clouds and sun above to the earth below. It is a warm and imaginative picturing of the living processes that lead to apples, and then the making of a pie. Aside from the wonderful presentation of the story in this illustrated book, this story itself is ripe for making into a puppet show, or even for simply telling in the kindergartens and nurseries in our movement. Give it a look at your local bookstore!

*This is the tree, crooked and strong,
that grew the apples, juicy and red,
that went in the pie, warm and sweet,
that Papa baked.*