



Dear friends,

One of the most powerful examples parents can set for their children is to let them witness them as reverent people who pray and who actively relates to the spiritual worlds. We live in dark times and often one can feel there is little or nothing one can do: yet no matter what, God---by whatever name we call Him---is there, listening to us. And if we take the time to 'go into our inner room', into the quiet peace of our hearts, we can develop, over time, the eyes to see and the ears to hear and open ourselves to His guidance.

By saying a blessing before we eat; by making our day of rest a special day; by letting our children see us pray and be included in our prayers as they grow; by teaching them to pray; we empower our children not through exhortations or moralizing, but by living example, to develop their own relationship to God. Thus the crippling spiritual alienation so many young people feel can be alleviated or avoided.



An important part of this is being mindful of one's Guardian Angel, the ever-present, ever-patient companion through our life. Though we may not acknowledge him or be aware of him, he is always there. Years ago there was a rather hokey movie starring Nicholas Cage about angels. Its premise was ridiculous but there were several wonderful moments in the film where one could perhaps discern that through the silliness, some truth shone forth. One such scene was in a huge public building (maybe a library) where, since the movie was from the point of view of the angels, we could see people walking about, doing their various tasks, each with an angel walking beside or behind her. An even more powerful scene occurred in a robbery: here was the armed robber and here was the terrified shop keeper. And next to each, witnessing and sorrowing for the pain and fear, was each man's angel.

Angels do not interfere. They, not being free, have respect for our freedom. As human beings, as free beings, that freedom means we can choose to do great things. It also means we can choose to do great harm. Our angel's task is to accompany us as we stumble and grope our way through our life, making poor choices and good choices. Our angel is always there, no matter what. Even if we reject him or deny his reality, yet he is there, waiting for us to acknowledge his presence and accept his comfort.

A child who grows up knowing that she has a Guardian Angel to whom she can always---always---turn, grows up with a sense of security beyond mere earthly reassurance.

Small children have a naturally strong connection to the spiritual worlds from which they only recently arrived here on earth. Some see beings, some hear them. Prayers and verses said with and for them speak to their souls with a resonating familiarity. Unless meddling adults or unfortunate circumstances have ripped them from that sense of Oneness (precocious intellectualism, screens, and self awareness all contribute to this) they can move into the next phase of childhood preserving something of that connection.

Eventually, as a rightful progression of development takes its course, many children will reject and 'forget' their angel. If this happens, then it is even more important that a child experiences the assurance of his parents' spiritual surety, again not by what they say, but by what they do. Often a child's rebellion fades and a new and freer relationship to the spiritual worlds develops---this is how it should be.

Some of you might find the following two verses written by Adam Bittleston, a Christian Community priest (the church inspired by the work of Rudolf Steiner), helpful:

*Every pain endured  
Every word I speak  
Every wish and fear  
Every sense of joy  
My angel shares with me.*

*May your gentle warmth, angel,  
Live afresh  
Ever with new strength  
From Christ who goes Himself  
As angel through the world.*

The above verse could be appropriate for older children---perhaps from about 12 upwards. They themselves are becoming aware of the pain in the world and the anguish that they might feel. Having a verse to say, reaching out to their angel, could be of inestimable help to them.

You could recite the following verse over your little one before she goes to sleep. From about the age of 6 or 7, she can be encouraged to say the words with you:

*May you grow in joy  
Before the wonders of the world  
In grief over the pain of others,  
Beginning to hear  
the call to help and heal  
According to the gentle light  
Of the angel who guards you.*

### Training with Donna Simmons



Each summer, before they start the new year, most Waldorf teachers attend training courses. You, as a homeschooler, don't need what Waldorf teachers require, but you might find it helpful to work with me, in our Take Hold Grades webinars this summer. In addition to carefully going through the Christopherus curriculum, we will also cover the developmental needs of the child so that you can not just follow the curriculum, but make it your own, speaking to the unique needs of your family.

Parenting issues, discipline, particular skills, strategies for creating and carrying lessons, understanding how to teach...and much, much more will be covered.

I have taught in Waldorf schools, been a homeschooling parent, worked as a trainer of Waldorf teachers and guided countless homeschoolers on their journeys. I would like to extend my enthusiasm, knowledge and creativity to each of you who would like to join me this summer in one or more of these grades webinars series.

[Please click here for more information.](#)

### New Webinars

Our webinar series have been going quite well---you can [click here to read about and purchase](#) webinars I have done over the past few months.

Coming up we have webinars on: *Being Artistic* (with slides and lots of ideas to help one be artistic---not be an artist, but to dig up those artistic elements each of us has within); *The Four Temperaments* (always popular, this webinar will guide your understanding of your child's temperament, an invaluable pedagogical and parenting tool); *Embracing Being a Homemaker* (how to joyfully embrace the undervalued role of ensouling and carrying the home); *Prayer, Meditation and Steiner's Six Exercises* (no matter your religious/spiritual path, cultivating your inner work makes homemaking and homeschooling possible).

[For more information and to register click here.](#)



### Free Webinar

I am also offering a free webinar on *The Six Yr Old Child*. I have been a Waldorf teacher, parent-educator and homeschooler for 40+ years and if anything, I believe, based on my observations and experience, that later is better. The Waldorf curriculum

is exquisitely crafted to meet the developmental needs that each child incarnating onto this earth follows---though of course each child is completely individual. In 40 years I have never met a single parent who regretted waiting until their child was 7 for at least 1/3 to 1/2 of first grade though I have met many who regretted (usually several years later) beginning early, with a child who was 6 for all of first grade.

So at Christopherus, we feel that the best way to strengthen and prepare one's child for eventually entering our difficult, dark world is to sloooooow down and honor the precious early years., to shore up the foundations as it were Yet, of course, a 6 year old kindergartner is very different from a 4 or even a 5 year old kindergartner. We will look together at how to meet the 6 year old's needs.

Join this free webinar, scheduled for 8pm Eastern time on Sunday 5 May to find out more about the developmental needs of six year olds; the problems with the first grade readiness evaluations in Waldorf schools; and how to parent and be at home with your 6 year old kindergartner. We will also look at how to mediate things for those who began first grade early and wish to slow it all down and for those whose children have awkwardly timed birthdays!

[Sign up here](#)

### Christopherus Fifth Grade

Our extended, improved and updated *Christopherus Fifth Grade Curriculum* is almost ready...with luck and no glitches, it should be available at the end of this month or the beginning of May.

I am especially pleased with the entirely new botany section---I have re-written it so that parents need far fewer external resources. I also think it is deeper and far more user-friendly than the old material. There are loads of activities and it is written so that folks can adapt it to their circumstances, no matter where they live---city, countryside, by the ocean, up a mountain, in the North woods.



Included with *Fifth Grade* will be recordings for a few of the stories of the Ancient Mythology block. This will provide a gentle transition to sixth grade, which includes recordings of main lesson material for your child (and hopefully you!) to listen to as well as text book/main lesson books. Such an approach helps your child take a step toward independence and also alleviates for parents some of the burden of the heavy preparation load required by the middle grades.

Back to *Fifth Grade*, I also have written new material for the Ancient Mythology section so that again, as with botany, you do not need to use as many other books.

### Private Consultations with Donna Simmons

I have slowly, over the past year, been easing back into consulting work. I have space open to work with more people---[here is more information about consulting with me](#). Need a short conversation to talk something through? Need ongoing support? Here I am!

Til May,  
Blessings on your homeschool journey,  
Donna