

January



The Homeschool Journey Newsletter

Christopherus Homeschool Resources
Waldorf-inspired Parenting and Education

*I look into the world of stars----
I can understand their splendor
If I can behold in it
God's wisdom guiding the world.
I look into my own heart
I understand my heart's beat
If I can feel within it God's goodness guiding human beings.
I understand nothing of the beat of my heart
If I see not and feel not God.
God has led my soul
Into this life,
And He will lead me to ever new life:
So say all who can rightly think.
And every further year we live,
Speaks more of God and the soul everlasting.*

-Rudolf Steiner

Dear Friends,

For Christians and non Christians alike, the picture of the Star guiding our life is a moving and powerful reminder of our spiritual origins. Here on Earth, the Star can help us find our way along our path, illuminating, with its gentle light, the way through the Darkness. May each of you remember, seek and find your Star—and be emboldened to follow it as you wend your way through life's joys and sorrows.

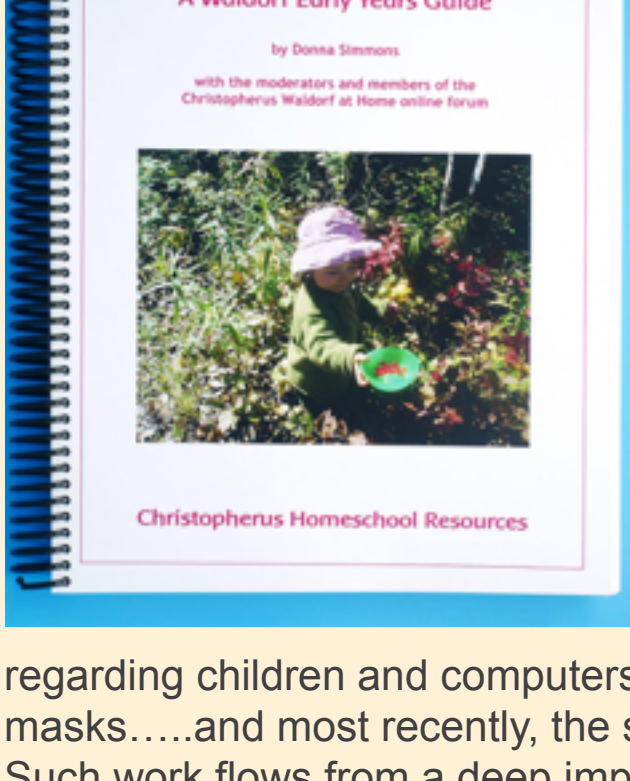


This year, 2023, is the twentieth anniversary of Christopherus Homeschool Resources—we plan to mark the exact anniversary—April—in some way. More details in the Homeschool Journey over the next few months.

Christopherus was born out of my desire to bring the healing impulse of Waldorf education to homeschooled children. The health—emotional, physical, mental and above all, spiritual health—of children has always been what determines everything we do at Christopherus. Our emphasis on slowing down; on the importance of the family as a whole; on prioritizing homelife over the busy-busy heavily scheduled adult-driven life; the need for play well into the teens; the importance of so-called late reading and other academic pursuits....and so on. Such priorities shine through all of our materials, from the early years into the middle grades.

Foundational to the health of every child is the spiritual health of the parent(s)—there is no substitute for the love of a committed, centered, nurturing, empathetic parent who knows how to set boundaries, both for himself and for his child. Parents, even when they make a mess of things, are irreplaceable. I shouldn't even have to mention this but for far too many people in our seriously messed up world, parents are increasingly seen as impediments to children, not as the primary source of guidance and love in a child's life.

I considered launching a project called the Madonna Project at one point—some of you old timers might remember that. This was about the special healing link, the etheric link, between mother and child. Many Christopherus folks shared how they experienced this and that as fathers and also as adoptive parents how they could also develop this special bond. That particular Project was never fully launched but much of the knowledge around that work is available in our massive early years parenting book, [The Journey Begins at Home](#).



The verse from Rudolf Steiner at the beginning of this newsletter is about the stars that guide us. If we have the peace within that allows us to listen to our Star's still small voice, it can guide us through our lives, helping us live in harmony with the Light. For me, this Light of Conscience guides my work with children. And part of that is taking a stand regarding the well-being of children. As I take stock during this anniversary year, I commit to always prioritizing my conscience in the work of Christopherus.

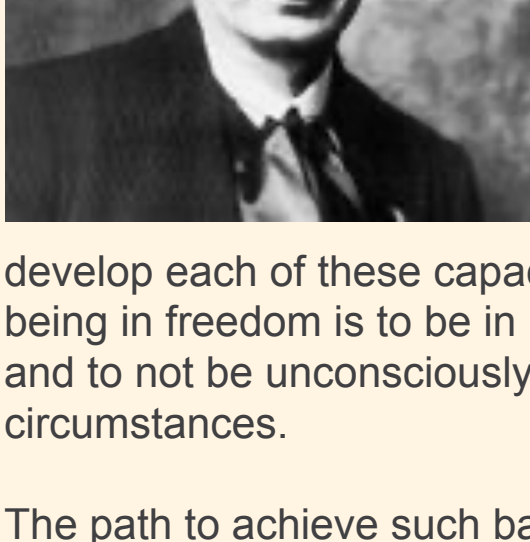
Many of you have written to me and expressed deep gratitude over my words regarding children and computers, children and Zoom, children and masks.....and most recently, the sexualization of children (more on that below). Such work flows from a deep impulse I have which compels me to speak out, no matter how unpopular my opinions are with the majority....I feel such gratitude toward those of you who have shared how I and Christopherus have helped them. Such kindness supports me in what I do.

Over the next 20 years I hope that Christopherus can become a voice of sanity in the crazy child-abusive world we have created or allowed to be created. This will of course lose us many customers as a large part of the so-called Waldorf world has somehow been convinced that the universalism, spirituality, and non materialism of the freedom-loving philosophy of anthroposophy runs counter to what human beings and especially children, need (see feedback from an unhappy ex-reader below).

I wrote the following a few years ago. Some of you might like to share what I wrote with friends who you think might benefit from exploring our work (and don't forget our [free audio downloads](#) which any parent might find useful).

One of the core aims of Christopherus Homeschool Resources is to create curriculum materials grounded in the essence of Waldorf education. Having been a student, teacher, parent educator, Waldorf school parent and homeschooler with over 35 years' experience of working with children (now 40+) out of my own ever-deepening relationship to anthroposophy, I feel uniquely positioned to bring the riches of Waldorf education to homeschoolers and, increasingly, Waldorf teachers.

Anthroposophy ('anthropos' – the human being and 'sophia' – wisdom) is the science of the spirit brought to us by [Rudolf Steiner](#) (1861 - 1925) an Austrian scientist, philosopher and educator. Anthroposophy is not only the basis of Waldorf education, but also of forms of medicine, architecture, agriculture and gardening, curative education and eurythmy (a form of movement with artistic and therapeutic applications). Steiner also lectured extensively on the importance of new economic relationships based neither on capitalism nor on state socialism. Anthroposophy has also enriched Christianity, with a new church called The Christian Community working out of Steiner's indications.



The core of this wisdom of humanity is the recognition that human beings are spiritual beings, descended from the spiritual worlds, who incarnate on this earth and face, out of a weaving between their personal karma (in anthroposophy karma is not seen as something fixed and unchanging) and their freedom, choices in how they feel, act and think. These abilities are of course in situ in every human being: but the task that challenges us, and which anthroposophy can be aid in, is to develop each of these capacities to their fullest. To stand upright as a human being in freedom is to be in balance between one's thinking, feeling and willing, and to not be unconsciously swayed by them nor reactive to external circumstances.

The path to achieve such balance is long – and is well beyond the scope of this article to even touch on. But it seems important that when a parent or teacher is considering their own relationship to Waldorf education that they become aware of what lies behind it, is its foundation and its strength. By understanding the foundations of Waldorf education – even if one decides that anthroposophy is not the path that one wants to take – one can then 'make the curriculum one's own' so to speak, and work gracefully as an educator and parent.

Speaking to the first teachers at the original Waldorf school (established in 1919 at the request of Emil Molt, a German industrialist who wanted a good school for the children of the workers at his factory) Rudolf Steiner said that there were three things each individual needs to commit to become a Waldorf teacher:

1. Anthroposophical knowledge of child development
2. Understanding of the individual children one is working with
3. Unending commitment to spiritual development – or self-development

For homeschoolers, it is obvious that these three points are important as well – though of course if Waldorf education is not one's chosen path of education for one's children, then the first becomes irrelevant. But every parent wants to base what s/he does in terms of education and parenting on a sound understanding of child development. And every parent strives to understand her own children. As for self (spiritual) development, although some people might side step this point, in my experience, it is absolutely essential for a parent to take himself (gently!) by the scruff of the neck and commit to working on his inner life. Without this crucial step, all the tangles and messes inside oneself just burst out whilst one is trying to parent and to educate one's children. Even just striving to determine what is one's own 'stuff' and what is one's child can be a major step toward the kind of self-development that eases the challenges of parenting and educating.

And if it is indeed so that human beings are spiritual beings, then the three steps Steiner speaks of must have a spiritual basis – or else any talk of a holistic approach is sorely misleading, missing its basis and its rationale. This is where anthroposophy can be such a valuable tool, giving those who study it a vista from which to survey and – essentially – to understand the human journey between the Cosmos and the earthly realm, over time, and across religion, culture, nation and peoples.

In terms of parenting and educating children, this is where Christopherus can come in handy. In all our materials – books, syllabuses, talks and videos – the purpose is to help people who wish to deepen their relationship to Waldorf education to do just that. The approach I take is to explain aspects of the Waldorf curriculum and to point out how they mirror the developmental stages children pass through. Why stories of saints in second grade – and why does Christopherus uniquely expand this to include both saints and heroes? What is happening in the soul of the child at age 8 (second grade) that is fed by such stories? Why at age 11 (fifth grade) does Greek Mythology and the grace of geometry speak so deeply to a child? What is happening at age 11 when the curriculum turns from a mythological consciousness to historical consciousness? Why (again uniquely to Christopherus) do we have lessons focused on time, on making sundials and water clocks just at this age? And so on, from the earliest years right into the high school years.

At Christopherus we explain *why* something is done, *how* it is usually done in school and, critically, *how* one might work with it at home. We aim to help empower parents so they can make the curriculum their own – and to move beyond what they find in our materials to create their own unique homeschools – based on their own understanding of child development, of their own children and enriched by their own unique path of inner growth. Our rich basis in anthroposophy helps enormously with this goal.

Christopherus is also completely pragmatic – 'make it work' can be said to be our motto! As homeschoolers are found on every part of the globe, have every imaginable family constellation, come from widely differing cultural, religious, spiritual, racial, and economic backgrounds, a 'one-size fits all approach' would be a nonsense. But, since each human being basically follows the same lawful progression of human development whilst at the same time being a unique individual, anthroposophy can help a parent gain rich insights into understanding their child's developmental needs and how to meet that appropriately though the riches of Waldorf education. Our sincere wish at Christopherus is to aid parents achieve this understanding to the level that they feel comfortable with.

Feedback from fellow homeschoolers

This person objects to my stance against the genital mutilation of children and teens, of the sexualization of children (any kind of sexualization). She obviously did not take in that I included a video of two trans people speaking against transitioning children. But then in a world where Black people voting the 'wrong way' makes them 'not Black', I guess trans people saying that children should not be involved in transitioning, makes them 'not trans'.

I am a teacher and homeschool coordinator. For many years I have recommended your site and resources to my homeschool families. However, after reading your newsletter this summer about sexualization and looking back to your views on both LGBTQ+ and Black Lives Matter, I am unsubscribing.

It is not sexualization to highlight and feature the accomplishments and struggles a portion of the community that truly needs our support. We must stand up to protect people from the hate and violence that is occurring.

My families also have funds to purchase curriculum and I am taking you off our vendor list and alerting parents and the site based teachers and administration to your hateful rhetoric. It saddens me that you are using your company to spread hurtful philosophy and are working against supporting the downtrodden and those that need our love and support at this time.

JH, teacher

Hmmm...not sure how she could possibly take what I wrote against the sexualization of children and turn that into an attack on 'highlighting and featuring the accomplishments of a portion of our community...' I wrote back and asked her to please supply an example of my 'hateful rhetoric' but got no response.

[Here is a link to our Homeschool Journey newsletter archive.](#) The two issues in question are August and September 2022.

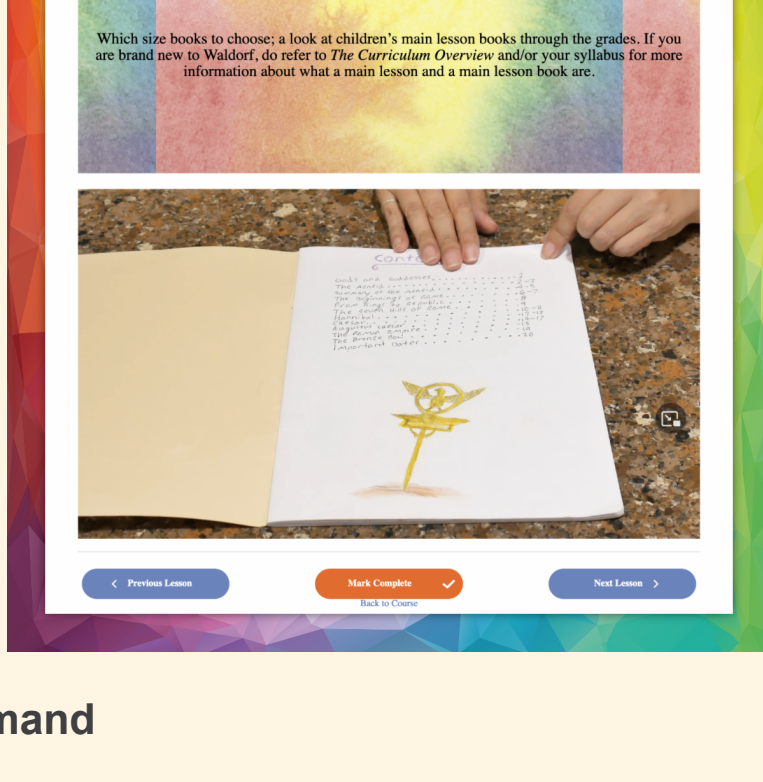
And another, more cheerful response to our last issue which focused on humor:

Thank you so much for this newsletter and the resources you offer at Christopherus. I wanted to share that your story of the provocative beachgoers reminds me of a time when my young son and I were walking down the street and passed a car wash. A young lady was standing out front in a bikini holding up a car wash sign trying to attract customers. My son, who was in Waldorf grade 3 or so at the time, turned to me and said, "mom, some people will do anything for money!" We had a good laugh and went about our day. Humor definitely helped in that situation.

JV

Self Study Course coupon

Keeping all of this in mind, here, I hope, is a bit of help with the parenting and educating journeys you each have embarked upon. Until 31 January, you can use coupon code **E9CX3** to get \$50 off [our Self Study Course](#), which you can read all about here.



More titles available for print on demand

Last bit of news...we have more publications available via Lulu so that means those of you outside the US will be charged domestic postage rates and not the outrageous international rates that otherwise apply. [Find out which titles are available here.](#)

May the Star that guides each of you shine bright and may the stars of all people illumine the darkness that presses ever closer.

Til February,
Blessings on your Homeschool Journey