

March 2023



The Homeschool Journey Newsletter

Christopherus Homeschool Resources
Waldorf-inspired Parenting and Education

Dear friends,

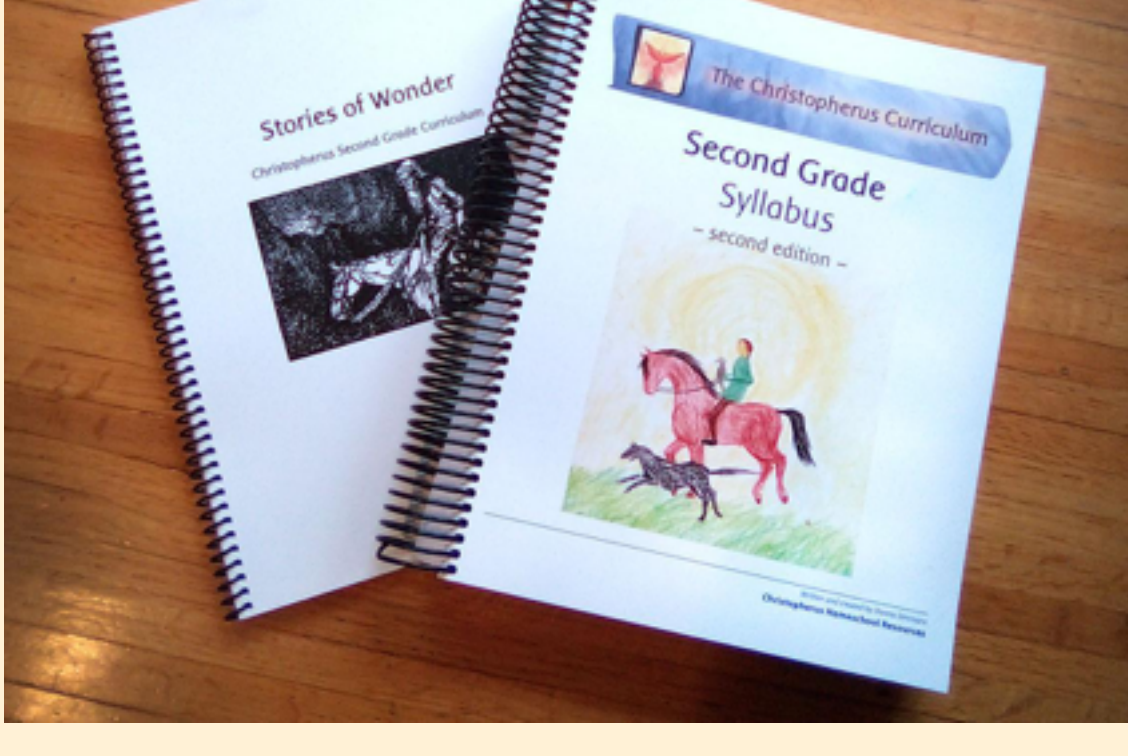
Happy Birthday to us next month!
April marks 20 years of Christopherus as a company, devoted to bringing anthroposophical (Waldorf) education to homeschoolers!

I would love, love, love to fill the April edition of this newsletter with words from you all regarding how Christopherus has helped you in your homeschooling and/or parenting. Some of you are teachers, grandmas, uncles, ...how has Christopherus helped you meet the needs of the children in your lives?

Can I hope that lots of you will send emails and that I can fill the April newsletter with your words? Please? It would mean a lot to me!

[Eighth grade electricity and magnetism materials now on sale.](#) Remember, as with our other 8th grade materials, it is written to encompass 9th graders who did not study this subject.

[Our Christopherus second grade has now been updated](#), with new material and is now available via Lulu so all of you outside of the USA will make a considerable savings on shipping.



Newsletter feedback

Here are some of the responses to last issues' topic. So glad to get feedback on what I wrote. [Here is a link to our newsletter archive](#) so you can peruse past newsletters and read last month's in case you missed it.

My comments are in red.

Thanks again for an outstanding sharing in your newsletter!!! I'm sure your insightful and accessible commentary will be very helpful to folks new-ish to the Waldorf worldview of education, as well as a relevant reminder to those familiar with it. I so absolutely support what you do, what you bring and how you bring it! As a long time Waldorf educator (music specifically) and active ongoing student of anthroposophy, I applaud you and the good work of Christopherus.

Blessings,
Andrea Lyman

And thank you, Andrea!

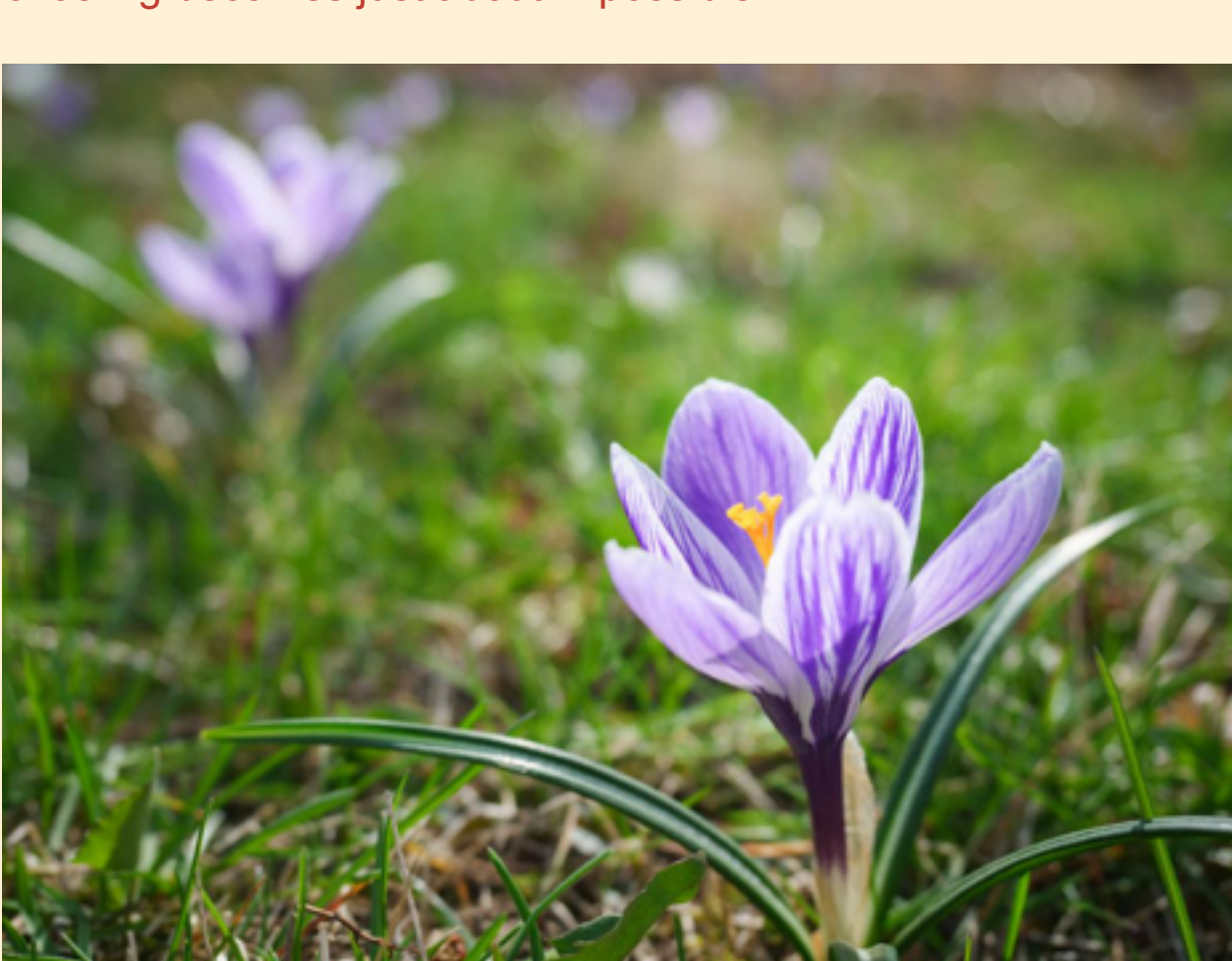
Thank you. These values you mention at the start gratitude, patience, truth, etc...are good to hear. Soon after I had my first baby...information came my way that brought my attention to these core values. That many might think they have...but learn that they may be skipping over key points... of the true becoming of these things. Being Patience. Being Harmony. Being Clear.

It was a key to being able to bring joy, enthusiasm, flexibility, creativity and the best I had to offer...and allow the children a space to be the best that they could be. This allows for the learning and personal growth for the whole family. As well a feeling of Wholistic health.

It could not be any less in my eyes...once I saw the true meaning of being present and humble in life like this. So much more enriching, interesting and even exciting at times.

Janet

Personal growth is a huge part of this journey. As I say in a number of places (including in our [Self Study Course](#) where I accompany parents on a journey of personal growth), Rudolf Steiner challenged teachers in the first Waldorf school to do three things: 1) to be immersed in anthroposophical understanding of child development 2) to really know the children they were teaching and 3) to commit to unending personal—spiritual—development. The only thing that will get you through the dark days of despair ('why did I think homeschooling my children was a good idea?') is to have shored yourself up with the qualities that Janet mentions. Understanding the curriculum—even understanding your child—is absolutely necessary. Yet unless you can remain calm, patient and keep your cool (AND know how to regain it when lost) then homeschooling becomes just about impossible.



Thank you for this newsletter and your helpful comments to Steiner's wonderful lecture.

I'm not in favor of being our childrens 'friends', and yet, I don't find it natural to radiate authority... probably because my mom was authoritarian, which I'm sure is not what Steiner means by authority.

It can help if one thinks in terms of being 'authentic', being the 'author' of one's life. Being authoritarian is as bad for children as just letting them do their own thing—the first hardens a child, the second does not allow him to find his 'spine.' Breathing between the two opposites, living in the middle realm of balance, is the goal.

In areas of life where I've been put through the fire and come out the other side, a natural authority does live in me, but it doesn't actually come from me, but from wisdom and capacities gifted as result of my trials, and i cannot claim them as my own. That is a wonderful authority that i long to allow to speak through me. This authority wants to bless, to gift things forward. I feel myself a happy servant of this authority.

But, in areas where I'm just a novice, I have no idea how to be an authority to the children. So, I'm inspired to see how I might grow in that area. I tend to lean on the authority of the humility I've learned the hard way, and love of learning with patient trust and enthusiastic diligence.

I would be most interested in your thoughts on giving authority to our kids when we feel insecure about a school subject or aspect of life.

The goal is to always act out of one's loving 'I' with children—children of any age. One does not give them authority per se—but from time to time, depending on the situation and the age of the child, one can step back and lovingly guide or stand behind—always ready to help but never ready to squash a child's initiative. It is a delicate balance, as with everything to do with human relationships when one person is in a position of authority. One needs to lovingly acknowledge one's own authority simply because you are the adult. The point is for a child to never experience the adult absenting her 'I'—that is way too scary for children and they then have to compensate. Sometimes this manifests as bad behavior, other times as timidity or lack of confidence. Sometimes a child over compensates and becomes self centered—we see that a lot in young people who cannot tolerate the words of someone who opposes them: they are self centered yet completely fragile at the same time because their true strong 'I' has not been allowed sufficient care and time to develop. A truly strong 'I' can tolerate no end of adversity—and the stronger that 'I' is, the more able that person can lovingly forgive those who might be doing her harm. A weak 'I' is one that attacks and screams and cannot tolerate any perceived wrongdoing in another person. Pushing a child into a premature sense of 'I' is the most damaging thing one can do to a child—all abuse is rooted in the damage of the 'I'.

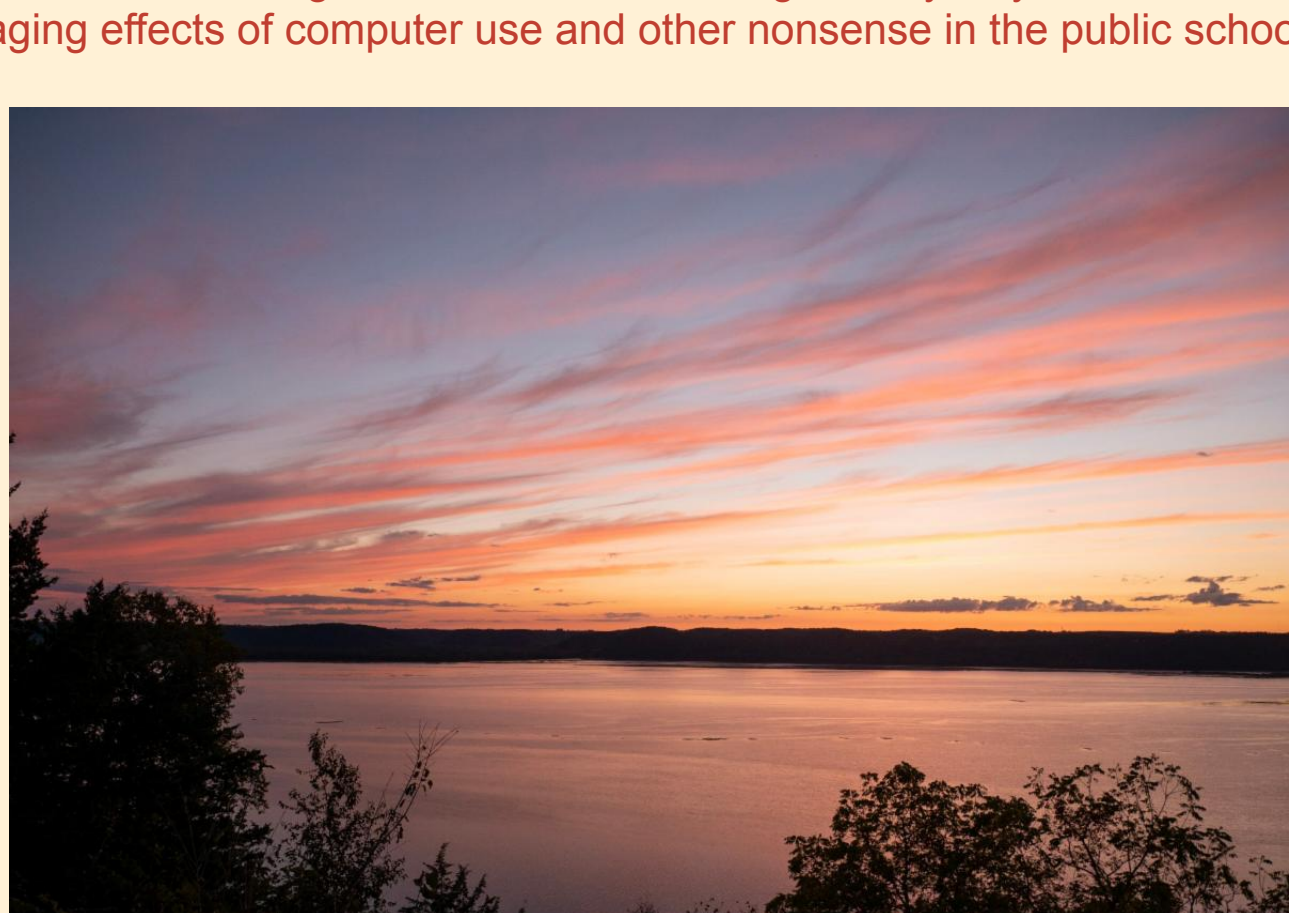
Oh...I'd never read Steiner talk about this: " bring the child things for which the full understanding will come when joyfully remembered in later life. There is something that constantly refreshes and strengthens the inner substance of life in this recollection".

But i have experienced this time and again, and it truly does refresh and strengthen and give much joy! You've inspired me to teach my nephews the times tables and help them memorize poems, neither of which they do in school. I'd be interested if in your newsletter you share a resource for making the times tables more alive and fun. I'm going to start with bouncing and throwing a ball, and reciting the tables in a cadence.

In gratitude for your work,
Guadalupe Munoz

I strongly recommend you get a copy of [Joyful Movement](#) to help you with the work with your nephews. Some of our [audio downloads](#) will also help. And do consider getting our [form drawing book](#) and [video](#) for you (not the boys!!!) to watch so YOU can teach them.

Anyone caring for children who attend public school should definitely consider getting these two publications (Joyful Movement and the form drawing book). This is not about doing school twice, but finding healthy ways to counteract the damaging effects of computer use and other nonsense in the public schools.



Thank you for this most inspiring newsletter.
As a home educator and mother who only experienced conventional schooling herself, I am finding, teaching my daughter the Rudolf Steiner curriculum most healing and soul nourishing for myself.
Yet, I also wonder if I am adequate enough to do so?

Blessings from Cape Town, South Africa,
Angela

It takes great courage to bring children into this world and it takes great courage to go against the flow and educate and parent them in the way you are doing. The fact that you have that courage means that even when you wobble, when you feel inadequate and alone, when you wonder if you are good enough, you will be able to acknowledge your doubts—and move on. Only the arrogant never question their abilities: the trick is not to refuse to feel doubt but to not get stuck in it.

It was good to reread this essay now. I've been homeschooling four children and dealing with increasing overwhelm each year as I try to fit in everyone's lessons with so little time to prep. It is hard to connect to so much material in a meaningful way and I've watched the joy leave our homeschooling time as my anxiety increased. At one point I realized it didn't matter what lessons I was teaching my children if what they were gleaned from me was stress.

Thankfully, I've been able to reprioritize the joy. This has meant letting go of some of curriculum (so hard with all of the excellent lessons for each grade) in order to connect more with each thing we do, including simply being outside together.

If what they are going to remember and take into their adult thinking is planted in the moments when I am fully present as their teacher and they can be creatively absorbed in their learning, then those are the moments to cultivate.

It's ironic that being so focused on presenting the Waldorf material was what lead me away from the whole goal of Waldorf Education. I appreciate the reminder of why we're doing what we're doing.

—JC

Not much for me to say, JC—you seem to have really cracked it. Without joy, why on earth would we be homeschooling? And I don't mean trivial 'fun'—I mean the deep satisfaction of joy which fills children when their lessons meet their developmental needs. This is clearly what you are speaking about. In terms of skipping lessons, it can be a balance—one needs to be able to keep things moving along...yet never rush. It can help to remember that no Waldorf teacher ever covers every lesson that he planned for his class!

Please can you give your criticisms or thoughts on unschooling? As long as you have you really, deeply thought about this... i was in love with the waldorf way of doing things (i still love steiner's theories) but putting them into practice was something i couldnt grasp deeply enough to let go and relax. i always felt like me and my kids were not doing things right. So i have now deviated from your curriculums to more follow what my kids prefer to do (not any straight line or curriculum). what i wonder if you could do, is to open up stieners ideas to an unschooled way of life, does everything need to be so controlled or prescribed? cant i be a waldorf unschooler?

Joanna

I'm afraid, Joanna, that we don't have the space to really go into this issue...but it is a good one. Twenty years ago, when I first started Christopherus, I was tangentially part of the 'Waldorf unschooling movement'. However, over the years, my experience with my own children, with the children of other homeschoolers I taught and worked with, and general observations on the development of children made me seriously rethink this position.

In a nutshell, children incarnate onto this earth to learn—no one is perfect, no one is completely self-aware. Children come to parents and they take 21 years to fully incarnate their 'I'. That is a lot of learning. It can be painful as well as joyous. It is the parent's role to teach their child what it means to be a human being—no child comes to earth knowing this. Only gradually does a child come into the social realm and only gradually, does s/he come into true knowledge of himself. Freedom takes many steps and my observation of children who are given so-called freedom from an early age is that their 'I' is weakened through the stress of coming into a developmental stage too early.

I recorded a talk on unschooling and Waldorf some years ago which you might be interested in. It's been a long, long time since I listened to it but it could be helpful to you!

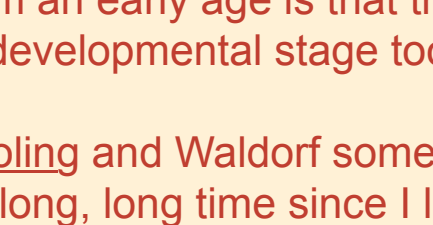
Til April and our birthday newsletter.
Blessings on your homeschool journey,
Donna

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