



The Homeschool Journey Newsletter

Christopherus Homeschool Resources
Waldorf-inspired Parenting and Education

Welcome friends!

This month's topic is *music*. No recording this month as there is so much to read in this newsletter!

Before we go any further, I would like to ask for your help: as many of you know, we have left mainstream social media outlets in protest at their restrictive and politicized policies. We are therefore not as easy to find—so we depend on friends and customers to help spread the word about Christopherus. If we have been of service to you, if we have helped you on your family journey in parenting and education in any way, please consider spreading the word about Christopherus. Thank you.

[And here is our group—do join us!](#) It is, at this point, the only way folks have of accessing me—I try to get conversation going and am happy to respond to what folks post.



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Music



One of the most wonderful things about Waldorf schools is the fact that throughout school, every day, from earliest years right through high school, the children sing. They sing and sing and sing—in small groups, in classes, as a whole school community. They sing to enrich their main lessons; they sing as part of celebrations and festivals; they sing to perform and they sing simply for the joy of singing.

Music surrounds the children: in most kindergartens there is occasional lyre and/or recorder played for the children; they learn to play a recorder or wooden flute in first grade; they play another instrument from third grade onward. There are school choirs and there are school orchestras. Music is a major part of the Waldorf curriculum.

But perhaps even more important than singing and playing an instrument is *musicality*. When a teacher—or homeschooling parent—understands musicality, then some of the deepest secrets of the therapeutic application and grounding of anthroposophical education of children becomes apparent. For musicality is the rhythm of life which carries and forms everything from questions of discipline, to knowing how to teach. Musicality breathes life into parenting and into teaching.

At home, music as music can be very challenging—or it can be the basis for how one lives one's life. Those families who fall in the latter category are those to whom singing and playing music together is as obvious as breathing—it's just what one does. Those for whom music does not come naturally, however, must make a bit of an effort. Fortunately, there is grace for a number of years, as little children do not care how badly a parent sings and anyone can strum a lyre or even guitar and make pleasant sounds; the challenges come when the child no longer hears the voice of the angels when his parent sings and when the time to learn an instrument comes. Each homeschooling family has its limitations and strengths. Like those who have real problems with math or with science, like those who cannot sew or knit or cook—well, one just has to get some help!

But all homeschoolers can work with musicality, with the in- and out-breath of life. Anyone who is serious about penetrating the depths of Waldorf education will take this notion of musicality very seriously. And anyone who needs help with this might [consider purchasing our self-study Course](#): understanding and applying rhythm and a sense of musicality in one's homelife is a major focus of this Course.

Overview of the Christopherus Music Curriculum

Here is an overview of the Christopherus music curriculum for those who would like to see how we work with this core foundation of education through the first six grades:



First Grade

As in the early years singing is paired with movement/activity: singing during transitions, household chores, festivals etc. The child takes up recorder or pentatonic flute and also learns to listen, to hear tempo and beat as well as melodies. The key point is to develop a sense of musicality.

Second Grade

Builds upon last years foundations, emphasizing training of the ear and voice, working on creating a harmonious, joyful and rhythmic experience of being musical. This is done through continued singing and recorder/pentatonic flute playing and possibly the lyre which can be taken up by both parent and child. Not only is the lyre soothing to children in our fast paced world, but the ethereal quality of the instrument also calls to the child's higher abilities of grace and reverence.

Third Grade

This year the emphasis continues on with developing a sense of musicality through:

- beginning to work with musical vocabulary
- getting a feel for quarter, half and full notes and rests in preparation for learning musical notation next year
- becoming acquainted with minor and major scales and with various beats, tempo, mood and rhythm
- learning to hold a part in singing and on the recorder
- taking up the study of an instrument such as the violin or piano

Fourth Grade

Throughout the last three years, the goal has been to develop a sensitivity to mood, tone, beat, and rhythm. This year, the task is to make all of this more conscious and to enable the child to begin to understand the effect of rhythm and how it can be used to influence the music he/she is singing or playing. The goals this year include:

- increased knowledge of musical vocabulary
- taking further steps with the recorder and possibly the lyre
- carrying on with the chosen instrument from last year
- expanding awareness of meter, rhythm, beat and tempo through exploration of percussion instruments and a variety of music
- learning to sing and play more rounds; learning call and response songs
- learning some long songs such as ballads
- beginning to learn musical notation

Fifth Grade

This year we urge families to

- continue with music lessons in violin, piano, guitar or whatever instrument the child studies
- play recorder emphasizing part playing and increasingly complex pieces.
- consider having another family member play the tenor recorder to increase range and complexity of family music
- help one's child to read music through instrument practice

Any possibilities for group music playing are encouraged! Much will depend on your own musical ability as the parent, what is available in your local community and what your child's interests are.

Sixth Grade

A major part of the physics main lesson this year is the study of sound and includes making a musical instrument. Like last year, so much depends on family circumstances in terms of development of music in your family. If yours is a musical family, where playing a variety of instruments and singing together is just what you do, then this is a non issue! But if that is far from your circumstances continue music lessons with a trained teacher and seek out any possibilities of playing or singing together with other people.



Last month the topic of our newsletter was 'food' and two of our readers offered feedback, both on that topic and this month's topic of 'music'.

Food and the focus with living foods and gradually moving away from the processed flours and sugars of the traditional Waldorf education worked well for us. To top it my kids had great health as a result, combined with a lot of outside and indoor activity.

That leads me to contribute with our over 10 years of Waldorf based and nature based education that music was a strong foundation. It wove its way into so many dimensions of family and learning life. It is truly an essential for holistic living. Natural living.

Our circle times were natural to us. Humming, new instruments, singing, right into movement and dance were incorporated every day. I had some music training as a child. Using this with the joy of the education presented by you and others...that natural joy nurtured me and my children. With confidence.

I cannot imagine going through raising my child...or most children... without accepting our natural need for discerned sound in a home. It brings us together and is soothing.

We as a family often sing while we do jobs, to soothe our children and bedtimes of course. Sometimes we make music (although I'm not sure some would call it that) and dance and make up silly songs about one another. We value and make music even though as parents, neither of us received much formal musical training (I don't necessarily think training is a prerequisite to making music). I did do piano as a child and some things stuck but for the most part I have can't play much on the piano.

We value the entertainment that others give us through music and give to buskers in our community. After repeated occasions of us giving to buskers, one day my daughter asked for our ukulele. She sat down with it, found a "hat" and some "coins" and asked us to put the money in the hat while she sang. Such is the power of imitation!



Our friends at [Bella Luna Toys](#) have some lovely instruments for sale. Here is what they say:

Making music builds children's brains and [Bella Luna Toys](#) is proud to offer families a large selection of acoustic instruments to help develop a child's sense of rhythm and melody. Our unique collection includes rhythm instruments for babies and toddlers; pentatonic flutes and harps; glockenspiels and xylophones; kalimbas; ukuleles; and more. Making music provides many benefits for children but best of all, making music brings the joy of self-expression!

Please use code **CHS2021Musical** for 10% off our musical instruments collection. Promo codes cannot be used in conjunction with our loyalty program.

Code must be entered at checkout for discount to apply and can not be applied retroactively. Can not be combined with other discounts or Star Coins. Limit one use per customer. Code valid from May 28 at 9am EST through June 4 at 9am EST. No raincheck, no adjustments.



As you might know, playing the lyre is an important part of our curriculum (second and third grade). Our friends at [Harps of Lorient](#) make beautiful lyres and kits. This is what they have to say:

The Kinder Lyre/Pentatonic Lyre was created over 20 years ago by Raphael Weisman, founder of Harps of Lorient. It provides a relaxing sound and vibration that is a joy to the heart!

The Kinder Lyre is hand-crafted and made in the USA of carefully chosen planks of domestic cherry wood. It comes with a tuning key, songbook, and stringing information.

You can buy a finished Kinder Lyre, or make your own from our kits. The cherry wood blank is shaped and pre-drilled. You finish sanding it, put on your finish of choice and fit the tuning pins, bridge and strings. No woodworking skills are needed. The kit comes with full instructions, materials, hardware, tuning key and songbook.

\$10 discount will be applied to your Kinder Lyre purchase through the next two weeks.

Email harps@lorien.com and ask for Christopherus discount

TO ORDER VISIT https://www.harps@lorien.com/kinder_lyre.html

Each month we provide articles for you on the newsletter's topic for your consideration. Here are this month's links.

[Here is information from our website](#) focused on advice about choosing a recorder/flute; information about the lyre; and choosing a music teacher.

The first two arise out of Waldorf pedagogy. [This article is about the importance of singing with children.](#)

[Here's an interesting article](#) written by a Waldorf teacher about listening and hearing—and how music helps develop the subtleties of each.

And these are from conventional educators showing the benefits of music to learning:

[Study shows strong links between music and academic achievement – Music Education Works](#)

[Children who regularly play a musical instrument have better memory and attention span – Music Education Works](#)

[Clapping in time may boost literacy in children learning to read – Music Education Works](#)

[Music training can improve decision-making, focus and impulse management – Music Education Works](#)

Join the Christopherus Homeschool support group
Alternative social media

Next month's topic is play—we welcome any feedback on this month's issue and we welcome any contributions to the subject of next month's issue. Thank you!

Til June,
Blessings on your homeschool journey,
Donna