

October 2022



The Homeschool Journey Newsletter

Christopherus Homeschool Resources
Waldorf-inspired Parenting and Education

Dear friends,

The topic of this month's newsletter is 'being green.'

My starting point is that there are few ways of living which are potentially 'greener' than homeschooling can be. And this has less to do with the tangible, popular signposts of greenness such as recycling, for instance. Rather it has to do with a chosen orientation to life, one which Waldorf education (not necessarily as how it is practiced in schools) can be of enormous help.

One of the most important things to consider when we are auditing our life for its 'green' orientation, is to begin with our spiritual life. This is never featured in main stream newspapers or magazines or by the majority of activists. Indeed, often those of us who are religious, especially if we are Christian, are blamed for the worst of our Earth's woes.

Now we don't have the space to go into the theology of this question---suffice to say that when human beings separated from God at the Fall, they discovered their ability to choose, to be free. And choice necessarily means the choice to do wrong, to be destructive and, relevant to our discussion, to exploit the Earth.

But if separateness from God is the issue---and this is of the deepest and most devote concern in all religions---then overcoming that separateness, being in harmony with God AND His Creation, is the goal. And neglecting or being a blot on the Earth cannot be a part of that.

Waldorf education emphasizes reverent attention to the seasons and to the festivals that flow from the cosmic rhythms of the Earth's turning. To help children become aware of the changes in Nature around them and also to the reflection of those changes within, is to place growing human beings in their rightful place as microcosms reflecting the macrocosm. Awareness of this (which needs to be kept unconscious and thus able to work deeply in children) engenders reverence.

Here are further suggestions:

* **Reverence** has already been mentioned. **Gratitude** is another expression of finding one's way back to God by thanking Him for food, for the day that has passed or the day to come. **Awe** helps the growing human being not get sucked into narcissistic self-obsession. The changing colors of the leaves, the rushing roar of a waterfall, the sight of a baby bird in its nest---these are the kinds of things that can engender awe---as well as reverence and gratitude in every human heart. By leading a life filled with these qualities of soul, the destructive powers of narcissism cannot get a hold. Narcissism is self-obsession with the lower self, with those impulses not raised up to God. Knowing God lives within, in the humble gratitude, reverence and awe that such a realization calls for, can never be narcissistic and is thus healing to the human being. What is healing to the human being is healing to the Earth. The most destructive nihilistic attitude prevalent today is that the Earth would be better off without human beings. Such an attitude defies any moves toward Cosmic wholeness as it denies the reality of God's purpose.



* Related to this is my caution to never regard Nature in any way as a commodity or as a source of entertainment. Buying kits with butterfly eggs, going on tours which are not respectful of the whales or manatees or dolphins to be viewed, marching through Nature with a checklist mentality---none of this helps in overcoming that separation from God's Creation which is at the heart of human destruction on Earth. One can ask oneself 'is this action filled with awe, with reverence, with gratitude?'



* An enemy to a 'green life' is the illusion (or reality) of there never being enough Time. To overcome this shortage of Time, we find ourselves drawn to what is 'convenient'. Whenever one sees or thinks that word, one should immediately be wary. Convenience foods are rarely wholesome for the land or consumers; convenient forms of technology draw one in and actually eat up Time; convenient

modes of transportation rarely allow us to be able to slow down, have a chat with a neighbor and just smell the flowers (by the way, if you don't know the book *Ferdinand*, it is one of the greatest treasures you can share with your child, a clear picture of a peaceful relationship to Time).

* You all are undoubtedly aware of the benefits of eating and shopping locally. Not only can small businesses be supported that way, but one has a living experience of the seasons through the foods that are available at local farms or the farmer's market. The anticipation of the first summer berries and of apples in the fall helps a child learn to look forward to something and not fall prey to the addictive mentality of 'must have this *now*.' If there is one aspect of consumerism that is soul destroying for our children, it is the self-gratification of having to have it now! (Actually, inbuilt obsolescence is up there in the worst characteristics of consumerism as well---our garbage landfill sifes around the world would be far smaller if we could all find a way to overcome this issue).

* Picking up on this obsolescence thing....this feeds addictive behaviors as well as the neurosis of ungrounded (separated from God) people who must have the latest and newest this, that or the other thing. Throughout all of our curriculum, I spend endless amounts of time talking about how important it is to never, ever feed a child's addictive tendencies---something we all incarnate with, to a lesser or larger degree. It is impossible to live lightly on this Earth if one has constantly to find the new thrill---and that can include the self-righteous thrill of activism as well.

* It goes without saying that the biggest threat to children, teens and adults in their striving toward God and a healthy relationship to Nature is media. I cannot say this too strongly. No child under 16 should have access to a phone/computer and even then, this life-changing form of technology requires a parent's loving guidance and support. Almost all of the shocking threats to our children's integrity as human beings---as reflections of God---come at them via the internet. And no matter what it is they are viewing, the nature of such technology is to be addictive and to create onlooker consciousness. Onlooker consciousness is separation---I am over here and God or Creation is over there. While objectivity is hugely important, it must not get in the way of lovingly entering into whatever it is we are experiencing (see our *Nature Stories to Natural Science* book linked below for more on this). Go anywhere in nature these days and you will see adults and children stumbling along trails focused on their phones. A beautiful sight comes into view and what do they do? Take a picture of it. We must help our children to learn to take in views and wonders by effort of their own senses and to place them in their hearts, not in their files. Having a store of memories within the human heart builds up a worthy human life, not having a series of pics in a file on one's phone. To have a pic is to own whatever it is---to have it in the heart is to be part of it. If we are talking about overcoming separation from God, it is obvious which road is more imperative to walk. And as ever, the first step is for parents to tackle this issue and really think it through---and act consistently upon their decisions.



To wrap up, I need to say that of course one can send one's child to school and parent in such a way as to live as green a life as possible---but that the nature of homeschooling makes such a striving far easier. By living simply, getting rid of gadgets and doing more things by hand, by walking and being in Nature, by regarding Time as a friend and not an enemy (and cultivating an orientation to life which allows one to do this), one can find the green lifestyle to be a no-brainer. And, as children are spiritual beings recently arrived from the Cosmos, a life in tune with God and Creation is one that nurtures their growth as a human being. Children need time---time to day dream, to be bored and to get over it, to just be. And that goes for teens as well. Technology and an overloaded schedule (which can definitely plague homeschoolers as well) are not green because they do not allow a person to live mainly within himself, to listen for that Still Small Voice and discover ways to overcome separation from God. Children need this as well---though it should never be brought to their consciousness (under 9's), by allowing them to just be, is to honor them as children, as creatures of God. Driven stressed out human busyness and do-do-do attitudes are as destructive to living in harmony with the Earth as a use-it-once-and-throw-it-away attitude is.

It would be lovely to have feedback on what I have written here---how do you all strive to overcome separation and live respectfully with the Earth? How do you find homeschooling supports that---or does it?!

I need to say that our book, [From Nature Stories to Natural Science is a must-have](#) for any homeschooling parent who wishes to explore practical ways to live lightly on this Earth with one's child from earliest years through 8th grade. Specific lessons and help to just cultivate a reverential attitude toward Nature fill the book, with ideas to use your own yard (or parks or other possibilities in cities) as the basis for many of your lessons through the years.

And lastly, [Joyful Movement](#), with its emphasis on the twelve senses and cultivating learning through and via the body can be of great help to ensure that one's child is able to overcome addictive tendencies.

[Here is a link to our free audio downloads and videos](#). Subjects such as cultivating silence and issues around computers and children are dealt with there.



From Paypal to Stripe

Those of you who have made recent purchases from Christopherus may have noticed we have severed our relationship with Paypal. We now offer Stripe as a means of paying. Unlike Paypal, Stripe does not see itself as the arbiter of what a business or individual may or may not think or say. As government digital currencies start to make inroads into our lives, this issue will become increasingly urgent.

Print-on-demand

Christopherus is gradually moving all publications over to print-on-demand (Lulu). This process will take quite some time as we will be updating publications as we go along.

One of the most important considerations for switching to print-on-demand is that Lulu has printers in many countries outside the US and this means that postage will be calculated on a domestic rate for sales in those countries!

This will save those of you in places such as Australia, New Zealand and the UK an awful lot of money.

[We have a number of titles for sale in this way](#). As new titles are sold print-on-demand, we will let folks know via an email like this or here via our newsletter. Obviously, until we have gone through the process of setting up each publication on Lulu, we cannot sell other materials this way: those non Lulu publications will be sold the same way as before, ie as an international purchase from us.



Topic for next month: Humor!

Til November,
Blessings on your homeschool journey,
Donna