



Dear friends,

A full newsletter for you all this month!

First of all, let's acknowledge that Michaelmas, a great festival that has relevance for all religions, comes at the end of this month. Here is a link to a back issue of the [Homeschool Journey where I wrote about family festivals and about Michaelmas](#). As we enter a busy season of many festivals (for some of you) my words here might be of help.

[And here is a clarion-call toward the valor of Michael](#), a guide through the darkness of our times.



As many of you know, we are working on transitioning to being entirely print on demand: this is especially good news for those of you outside the US as in many places (such as France, India, Australia, the United Kingdom and Canada) your books will be printed locally--and therefore not only will there be no Customs, but shipping is charged at domestic rates!

This process will be finished by the end of the year. For the most part, the books have been slightly updated and fiddled with as they became print-on-demand publications but second grade and, by sometime in January 2024, fifth grade, have been thoroughly revised and improved, with considerable changes.

As of writing (September 2024), we are still working on [Earth Science](#) (for 6-8 grade), the [Third Grade Curriculum](#) and, as mentioned the [Fifth Grade Curriculum](#).

As of 1 October, the *Fifth Grade Curriculum* will no longer be available. Announcements on our homepage (box at the top right) and in this newsletter will be made when the new fifth grade curriculum is available. This should be in early or mid January 2024 (all being well).



Homeschooling Tips

Last issue Noola from the UK sent in her own homeschooling tips which was very much appreciated. Here is what Lindsay has to say.....

I am with Noola on your book recommendations. I stick to them almost exclusively now as they are well matched to each age. It's too bad my local library carries little to none of them and unfortunately my library is no longer an appropriate place for children to find books. Nevertheless, I really enjoyed Noola's tips and will use them. This is my first year teaching 3 ages at once and I'm holding my breath until we begin next week. My tips to add: (1) after purchasing various Waldorf homeschool planners that I failed to use, I made my own using a \$6 pressboard report cover with a 3inch capacity. I feel accountable to myself by it. (and 2) I like to listen to Donna's grade audios before planning using the syllabuses. I take notes about the child's development and academic goals for the year. This practice gives me an outward look before getting into the parts should I lose sight of the whole. Thank you Donna. I look forward to your tips. -Lindsay

And here is my list...one of my lists....a list which I have made for this issue of the newsletter but which, at other times might be a different list! Do know that all of the following are discussed in depth in many of our audio downloads, throughout every year's curriculum, and are a basis, along with artistic work, of [our Self Development Course](#). They are in no particular order.

I welcome comments, questions and additional homeschooling tips for our October issue of this newsletter.

1) **Get clear about parental authority**---you cannot hope to teach your child if he won't listen to you or regards your voice as one amongst many. You are the Mother (or Father) and your firm, gentle, clear and calm authority rests in the authenticity of your role as Mother or Father. You are not a school teacher---but in your family, one of your roles (whether shared or not) is as a teacher. But because this is homeschooling, without the structures of the school day, you need to create the forms that support this role: and the place to start is with your clarity about being a parent. And being a Mother or a Father is not necessarily the same as being a parent: this is for each family to work with in their own ways (the adults of course).

2) **Think carefully about beginnings and endings**---how do we begin and end our days, meals, play time, outside time, lessons, naps and so on. Many people are quite good at figuring out how they want to begin such things---but forget entirely that ending, bringing to a conclusion or a pause, is just as important. Without mindful and conscious beginnings and endings, one is in a situation akin to where one can breathe out....but isn't at all sure how to breathe in. Both are necessary for the hygiene and rhythm of your homeschool and family life to flourish.

3) **Less is more**---[here is a link to our free audio downloads](#) and this is one of the most important topics (that and 'silence'...oh, and the February pep talk...and the talk about imagination....hmmm....there are a lot of important talks there!!!) that I address. Do not feed your child's addictive tendencies, something that lurks in all people to a greater or lesser extent and which pull children (and adults) to look outside of themselves for solutions). By helping children to look inside to where the real riches lie and to not need more, more and more outer *stuff*, you will go a long way in helping your child become a centered and non additive adult who has confidence in her own path in life



4) **Don't compare what you do to what is done in school**---especially not to what happens (in theory or reality) in Waldorf schools. You will never, ever be able to do everything that they do in a Waldorf school, whether it's iron-forging or amazing painting or orchestra or eurythmy or ...whatever it is that you feel lacking, especially when it's One of Those Days. Focus on all the wonderful things you can offer your child: whole days noodling around on the beach or in the woods; cooking meals; reading aloud for a few hours or allowing your child to read to himself for hours; sacrificing something for a family member; making home be the most it can be; showing your child how people do not have to just learn from others but can do things themselves---and much, much more.

5) **Don't rely on other people**---this is a hard one---hard to say and hard to admit. But in 30+ years of homeschooling experience, I have to say that time and time again I have seen so many people disappointed by the unfulfillment of their expectations of other people: 'if only I could get just the right homeschool co-op'; 'if only we had a few families to do festivals with;'; 'if only we knew other children to play with---who have the exact same values as us....' As I say in the next Tip, homeschooling is about family. If you have a great co-op (and they certainly do exist); if you have families who celebrate the same festivals you do (either in the same way or in a way you can live with); if your children have others to play with (who, again, are children raised in such a way that they can actually play, are not foul-mouthed and are treated like children not mini adults by their parents)....well, that is wonderful. But the rock solid basis must be what you do in your family. Once that is solid and healthy, then if the rest is there, all well and good but if it is not, you will still be able to carry on.

6) **Homeschooling is about family**---follows on from the above and with the added reminder that a family is not just a collection of individuals. Yes, it is the basis for societal health and the place where karmic connections unfold. But the family is also a spiritual unity, having a life and needs of its own. Fundamental to this is the need for sacrifice, hard work, patience, and the kind of love that supports and does not 'own' the other. From such foundations true freedom can flourish---those in our society who wish to dismantle the family would do well to remember this.



7) **Work hard to establish good rhythms**---and not just for little ones! Even teens---even adults---need basic rhythms though of course part of experimenting with steps toward adulthood might include throwing family rhythms out the window. However, since the family is not just about what can become self-centered during adolescence, family rhythms need respect, especially if there are family members who need them.

8) **Home is the center of everything**---this also follows on from the above. Beware of gutting the primacy of home by, for instance, spending most of your time with your children in the car shuttling between lessons and activities. Being bored at home and needing to dive inwards to 'do something' can be more important for a child than oboe and Japanese lessons. Similarly, your main lessons should be the heart of your homeschool, no matter how amazing and wonderful that ex-Waldorf teacher is who is offering to teach. For older children lessons from other teachers are a necessity---for younger ones home is a necessity. Want contented calm children? Prioritize being at home. And teens also want to find and keep their center at home (whilst also perhaps experimenting with what it might be like not to do that---if they know it's there and available, that is a great balm).

9) **NO MEDIA**. None for children. No cell phones or computers. None at all. [More on this here](#).

10) **Do what you can to protect childhood**---and that means boyhood and girlhood and the innocence of being a pirate one minute, a princess the next, a dog the next....without adult agendas or consciousness. [More here](#).

[and responses from readers of the newsletter above here](#)

I love it when folks respond to what I write in these newsletters---and I know that many of you really appreciate reading the words of other Christopher homeschoolers....so get in touch! I should say I am unable to respond to individual emails (I try to print most here) but I do of course read everything sent in---and appreciate all of it!

Til October,
Blessings on your homeschool journey,
Donna