

Waldorf Essentials

A Journey through Waldorf Grade 3

SAMPLE



*By Melisa Nielsen
Edited by Erik Nielsen*



Grade 3 is for the child that is about 9 or 9 years old. If you need assistance with placement please drop us a note at waldorfessentials@gmail.com
Struggling with the topics in grade 3? Hop over to our blog and download our free podcasts on the subject.

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Chapter 2

Ages and Stages: The Nine Year Change

“Something especially important happens to children between the ages of nine and ten. Speaking in an abstract way it can be said that children learn to differentiate themselves from their environment...”

The nine-year-change is such a pivotal time for children. It is often the first real hurdle that parents encounter when they may ask themselves “what am I doing wrong?” The answer is “nothing.” Just as you were starting to feel comfortable and confident in your parenting and homeschooling abilities, your child then comes to this place where you might feel like you don’t know them. Children that were very close to us might begin to show distance or they might want to stick to us like glue. The nine-year- change is different for many children; some get very bossy, others get fearful easily, some become overly critical – or you may see all of these behaviors. I have always felt that this age group is the one that keeps me on my toes more so than others. Sure the little ones exhaust you and the adolescents have their own shenanigans to watch for, but these nine-year-olds, they will catch your every mistake. This age can have us really wondering how to parent effectively. Should we turn to punitive punishments? Should we yell? Ground them? Or show them only love? The answer is a mixture. Steiner recommends that we continue to show the presence of authority in our parenting and if we haven’t been holding that space, then it is time we step up to the plate.

In *Kingdom of Childhood* Steiner relates:

“For the child has now come to a crisis regarding the principle of authority. If you can meet the situation and can preserve your authority by the warmth of feeling with which you deal with these particular difficulties, if you can meet the child with inner warmth, sincerity, and truth, then much will be gained. The child will retain its belief in your authority, and that is good for the child’s further education, it is also essential that just at this age between nine and ten then child’s belief in a good person does not waver. Were this to happen then the inner security that should be the child’s guide through life will totter and sway...This is of great significance and must constantly be remembered. In handbooks on education you find all kinds of intricate details laid down for the guidance of teachers, but it is of far greater importance to know what happens at a certain point in a child’s life and how you should act with regard to it, so that through your action you may radiate light onto the child’s whole life.”

Holding authority may be a hard thing if you have previously not done so. We often think authority and authoritative mean the same thing – not so. To hold authority means to command the space of parenthood that you are walking, it means you are emotionally prepared for each day and that you have taken the time to do your inner work so you are happy and secure in who you are as Mom, Partner and Teacher. This is a tall order; it takes a lot of work on your part. (Our first and second grade curriculum detail many ways that you can gain a good inner work life, these suggestions are also available in our series *Coming to Waldorf Late*.) You will not be perfect at holding authority, but striving is a good thing. Knowing how you will approach situations and also being sure that your child(ren) understand boundaries and limitations. Often holding authority can be a challenge if this is our oldest child and thus far we have led through imitation and not needed to assert our authority (at least in outer ways) – right now, your child needs you to be the boss. For many of us that have followed the Attachment Parenting model for parenting, this might feel wrong or sound wrong – it isn’t. Holding authority *is not* mean spirited or spiteful or angry or even rude, it *is* being firm, being impeccable with

your word, it is knowing what values and virtues you hold dear and impressing those upon your child. It is also giving an expectation and being confident they will rise to it. Holding authority is loving. I can't think of a more loving gesture than to give your child boundaries and chores, all the while modeling yourself a home filled with peace and unity. How does it look? Well Johnny might be having a moment of anger and frustration because his friend (perhaps even another Waldorf child) has more privileges than Johnny, maybe this child gets television or computer time that Johnny really wants to have. Do you give in? Do you allow your values to be trampled? A good response would be to stand your ground and then take the time later to discuss with your partner Johnny's changing needs and whether that should change your values for him. If Johnny doesn't want to do his chores, do you make him? It will of course be helpful if he sees you doing your chores, Dad carrying his weight and everyone contributing, but that isn't always enough for this age group – they will balk and fuss and make you wonder why God gave us ears! This is not the time to be Johnny's friend, he needs a mother. We will discuss the role of authority more in depth in the next chapter.

What behaviors are normal during this nine year change and how can you meet your child and help them feel supported? Normal behaviors I have noticed are things that may seem silly to us on some levels. Your previously confident child may suddenly have irrational fears of strange things, they may also become obsessive about some things. You might see them arguing with you more or with siblings – most often that things are not fair or that some grave injustice has been lobbied upon them. They might be outspoken or angry. Steiner says that during the ninth year the child experiences “a total transformation of his being, which points to a significant transformation of his soul-life and to a significant transformation of his experience of the bodily-physical.” These are big changes and they are likely to show themselves in big ways.

In the book *Encountering the Self*, Hermann Koepke says:

“Fundamentally, every child follows this path through the crisis of aloneness. We notice it particularly in the child's eyes. We no longer see the merry, roving, starlike eyes, but rather a look that is much steadier and tinged with a touch of melancholy. Nightmares can occur at this age, and the children often complain about physical symptoms, such as headaches and stomach-aches. Thus, you can see that the child experiences an absolute crisis. But in this crisis, the child comes to experience that he or she bears an *I* within.”

He goes on to discuss the need for the Waldorf curriculum to support this emerging sense of self. The stories of the Old Testament and the teaching of occupations can help the child experience how the world came to be and how humanity has grown and changed since the beginning of time. The stories given are a comfort to the child – if we let them be.

This is echoed in a 1977 *Waldorf Clearing House Newsletter*:

“Children at this age are coming to the end of an epoch. They are emerging from early childhood and getting ready for childhood proper, which is represented by the intermediate grades of the elementary school. Fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, and eight grades will be a foreshadowing of adolescence, just as the primary grades were an echo of pre-school babyhood.”

This is also a time for us to really be careful what they may be watching on television or in movies. Keeping their viewing age appropriate is important, too much violence may have them acting out, so we are impressed more than ever to understand what they are watching or desiring to watch (and

read). This is an age when many parents begin allowing some media, we just have to be mindful that what we are giving them will support their emerging senses rather than have them more frightened, more angry, etc.

Chapter Six

Grade Three Overview

Who is ready for third grade? As we have discussed in earlier chapters, the third grade is a time of great change in your child. The development occurring in and around the ninth year is often very hard for your child – they have left Eden and now are questioning... “is this it?” and “why?” and often the accompanying feelings of utter frustration for things that are not seeming fair, that sense of justice is awake. The stories and activities of this year are so important for the child of this age. They are like little pioneers just itching to know about life and consequences.

In the book *Education Towards Freedom*, the author puts it so well:

“When the children wax indignant about Adam and Eve, or tremble on account of the Flood, sigh with relief when Abraham is spared the command to sacrifice Isaac, or wonder at the revelation on Mount Sinai, rejoice with David, or clench their fists against Goliath and the Philistines, then they experience in great pictures the problems with which they are wrestling more or less consciously within their own souls – the new Covenant, which at their stage they have to enter into with their fellow beings, the experience of both reverence and resentment, of obedience and willfulness, and, not least, the dim awareness that something new is happening in their own development. This is the crisis at the age of nine, the “new age of defiance.”

To be properly placed in grade three, your child should be nine-years-old or nearly nine. A good rule of thumb is that December-February birthdays are generally fine in this year, March and April become a gray area, and anything later should most likely wait for the next year. You want a situation where they are nine, ideally for more than half the school year. This isn't always easy to explain to extended family or to government officials if you are doing reporting. As a homeschooler, I encourage you to call it what ever grade you would like and think less about what grade Johnny is in and more about his soul development. Steiner's work is so different than anything else and having a good understanding of human development will help you in this process. If you are new, our *Coming to Waldorf Late* series will really help you with this work.

Coming to Waldorf late, what should I know? If you are new to the method, it is tempting to go back and try to cover all the stories you may have missed in the first two grades, it is a magical time and if you have missed it then you might feel a bit robbed. Don't. The entire curriculum is magical. If you have younger children then you will have the opportunity to experience it through them and if this is your youngest or only child, put your energy to making their years magical now. If you want to use the first and second grade stories as bedtime or extra story time then you can, these also become great readers for those that are ready.

As far as technical or academic work that may have been missed, you will want to catch up on form drawing, which shouldn't be very hard, you can easily catch up with a little work. You may also want to review Waldorf math and how it is introduced as it is fairly different from other methods. Picking up on art and other aspects of the curriculum can come in time with a little work and good planning. If you need help integrating the material in slowly, please let us help you or see our *Coming to Waldorf Late Series*.

Movement, circle time and music. While eurhythmy is an important part of the movement curriculum in Waldorf schools, it can be a tough act to follow at home if you don't live near a school for lessons or know eurhythmy yourself. Do not let this discourage you, there are plenty of things that you can do at home. The third grader is ready for fairly complicated clapping games.

Barbara Bresette-Mills, a eurhythmy teacher in Texas has some wonderful suggestions:

- Third graders enjoy a challenge and one can do more complicated clapping games or stepping of rhythms that alternate foot and arm movements, that change tempo or directions in space. This helps with coordination and accuracy in execution of the movements.
- It is [still] helpful to bring movement in relation to the stories or material you are studying.
- Listening exercises that involve bringing a rhythm into stepping or clapping help with the relationship between our senses and limbs.
- One could bring simple group dances that involve contraction and expansion of the circle, changing partners etc.
- Moving mirror patterns with a partner.

Circle time might really be changing for your child, especially if this is your youngest. There may be a lot of balking or your child might feel like it is time to give up those songs and finger plays that once echoed through your home. This might be a time of mourning for you more than them! Changing your focus to more anchoring activities is appropriate for this age. You likely made some changes last year already, this year you will continue as you turn more toward times tables and poetry or verses. Playing spelling games and practicing the recorder or pennywhistle during your anchoring times is also appropriate. I would encourage you to step up the reverence in your morning anchoring activities and either begin with a prayer or a verse that brings to mind our relationship with the Divine.

Music can be intimidating or overwhelming if you don't have a music background – or even if you do! There seem to be so many factors that come into play, like all things, we are determined to get it right. Release yourself from this idea of creating the perfect Waldorf homeschooling experience and instead strive for an achievable goal and then set your sights a bit higher the next time. If you have been with Waldorf from the beginning then you are probably either comfortable with a musical instrument or you are using your voice regularly to enrich your schooling experience. This year is an extension of that.

Steiner writes about the child of this age and music:

“All the child's forces, now that he has passed through the change of teeth, strive towards what is inwardly plastic and pictorial. And we support this picture-forming element, when we ourselves, in everything we impart to the child, approach him in a pictorial way. For between the ninth and tenth years something remarkable happens. Now, much more than formerly, the child feels the need to be gripped by what is musical, to be gripped by rhythms. When we observe how the child takes in music up to this stage of life between the ninth and tenth years – how what is musical also lives in the child as something essentially plastic, and how this plasticity naturally becomes an inner formative force of the body, passing over extraordinarily easily into what is dance-like, into movement – then we must recognize how the inner grasping of music as such comes into being only between the ninth and tenth year. This will be quite clearly apparent. Of course, these things are not clearly separated from each other; and those who have insight into them will also foster the musical element before the ninth year,

but in the right way – tending more in the direction which I have just characterized. For the child between nine and ten would get a shock if the musical element were suddenly to take hold of him, before he was inwardly ready and accustomed to being gripped in this strong way.”

So what instruments would be appropriate for this age to bring about music the way Steiner suggests? In the first schools he recommends recorders (a blowing instrument) or violins along with daily singing. This age is perfect for learning to read music and will generally pick it up rather quickly even if they haven’t before.

In the end, keep in mind that while striving to bring your child all the best parts of Waldorf, you first must bring them the best parts of you! Work to integrate in only what you can handle and do those things well before taking on another portion. Remember the old saying “jack of all trades, master of none?” This should not be your mantra! Keep school simple, keep it alive and above all, enjoy yourself.

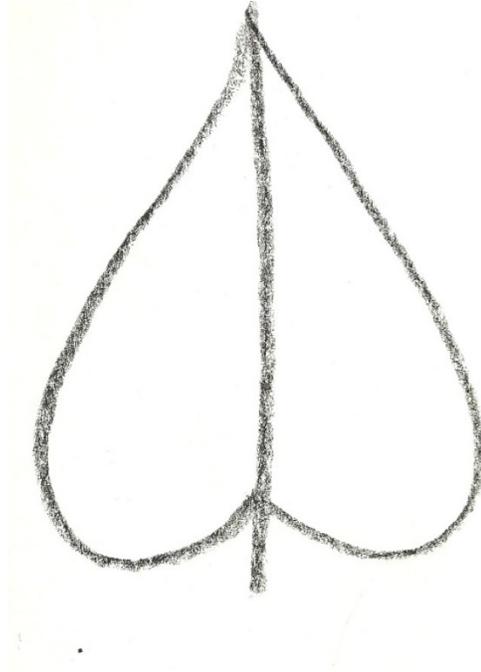
A SAMPLE FROM THE YEAR-AT-A-GLANCE

September	October	November
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 2 weeks review: math & form drawing <input type="checkbox"/> 1 week: who are the Hebrew people? What is the Torah? 7 Days of Creation (review of verbs) <input type="checkbox"/> 1 week Rosh Hashonah 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 week: Sukkoth (building) <input type="checkbox"/> 3 weeks: Old Testament stories, grammar review and punctuation introduction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 1 week: Noah & his math <input type="checkbox"/> 2 weeks continued Math main lesson, linear measure <input type="checkbox"/> 1 week holiday break

A SAMPLE FROM THE DAILY LESSONS

October	**In planning for this month, be sure to find out when Sukkoth is celebrated this year and place it appropriately in your schedule.
<p>Week 1 – Adam & Eve. Review nouns and adjectives. To prepare for your lessons, be sure to practice your drawing, painting and modeling as well as your form drawing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 17 – Form drawing. The creation of Eve and the naming of the animals. Noun review. Draw, paint or model from your story. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 18 – Retell and summarize your story, continue noun review. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 19 – The Fall. Draw, paint or model from your story. Introduce adjectives if you didn't in second grade, otherwise review them. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 20 – Retell and summarize your story, continue your review. 	<p>Week 2 – The descendants of Adam and Eve. Introducing punctuation. To prepare for your lessons, be sure to practice your drawing, painting and modeling as well as your form drawing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 21 – Form drawing. The story of Cain and Abel. Draw, paint or model from your story. Introducing the period. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 22 – Retell and summarize. Introduce the comma. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 23 – Tell the story of Jabel, tamer of the animals. Draw, paint or model from your story. Introduce the question mark. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 24 – Retell and summarize. Introduce the exclamation point.
<p>Week 3 – Descendents of Cain. Building a sentence like a house. To prepare for your lessons, be sure to practice your drawing, painting and modeling as well as your form drawing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 25 – Form drawing. Tell the story of Jubal, bringer of music. Draw, paint or model from your story. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 26 – Retell and summarize your story. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 27 – Tell the story of Thubal-Cain, inventor and black smith. Draw, paint or model from your story. <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 28 – Retell and summarize your story. Tell the story of how the brothers came together to build houses for the first people. Build a sentence together. 	<p>Week 4 – Sukkoth. Prepare to build a Sukkoth and celebrate the week together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Lesson 29 – Form drawing, prepare for Sukkoth. <input type="checkbox"/> Lessons 30-32 – build a Sukkoth, discuss how the early Hebrew people may have lived. Continue to read other Old Testament stories together, stop when you get to Noah.

Lesson 4 – Today will be another review of the four processes, get a bit more aggressive in stretching them and helping them remember. Some children may not need this much review, others will still seem as they are struggling. No matter where your child is, it is okay, everyone learns at a different pace.



$$\begin{array}{r} 3 \\ + 4 \\ \hline 7 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 3 \\ \times 4 \\ \hline 12 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 3 \\ + 6 \\ \hline 9 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 3 \\ \times 2 \\ \hline 6 \end{array} \quad \begin{array}{r} 5 \\ + 4 \\ \hline 9 \end{array}$$

What is 10?

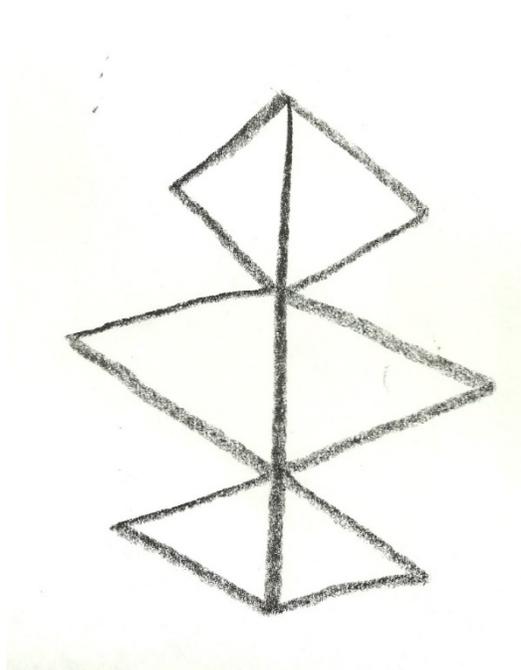
What is 20?

$$\text{III} \times \text{IV} = \text{XII}$$

$$6 \overline{) 24} \begin{array}{r} 4 \end{array}$$

$$5 \overline{) 30} \begin{array}{r} 6 \end{array}$$

Lesson 5 – Today your review will be to practice great than, less than and equal to. Have fun with this, remember these first two weeks are to get back in the groove of things after the summer break. By the end of this week, your review should be complete so you are ready to start on new material.



This is from our second grade curriculum, perhaps your child will remember the story! Be sure to draw, model or paint from your lesson.

Times and Minus on a Walk by Melisa Nielsen

Minus is always so grumpy and today was like all others. If it isn't enough to have robes with holes in them, one of the root gnomes had left some fertilizer outside his cave door and Minus stepped right in it. Seeing that Minus was having another one of his bad days, Times decided to try and cheer him up by taking him on a walk through King Melchizedek's gardens. It was such a pretty day, the sun was shining and the birds were singing. The garden was full of blooms just waiting to be picked. Minus could be very competitive so he challenged Times to a flower picking contest, Times always loving a good contest agreed. They went off running and for a short time Minus appeared to be enjoying himself, he even laughed a time or two. When they reached the big oak tree at the center of the gardens, they fell down laughing with arms full of flowers. Minus decided that he wanted to start counting his right away. After enjoying the breeze, Times sat up under the tree and counted hers as well. In the end it was a tie! They had both gathered the same amount. Times was thrilled for she really just wanted to enjoy an afternoon with Minus in the garden. Minus however was furious and stomped off yelling "silly flowers, I never get things my way." On the way back to the mushroom doorway (this is the doorway between our world and theirs) he tripped over a garden rake.

$5 < 7$

$10 > 6$

$12 < 15$

$3 > 1$

$4 = 4$

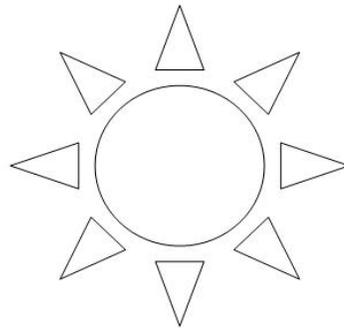
$4 < 6$

$10 + 2 > 4 + 6$

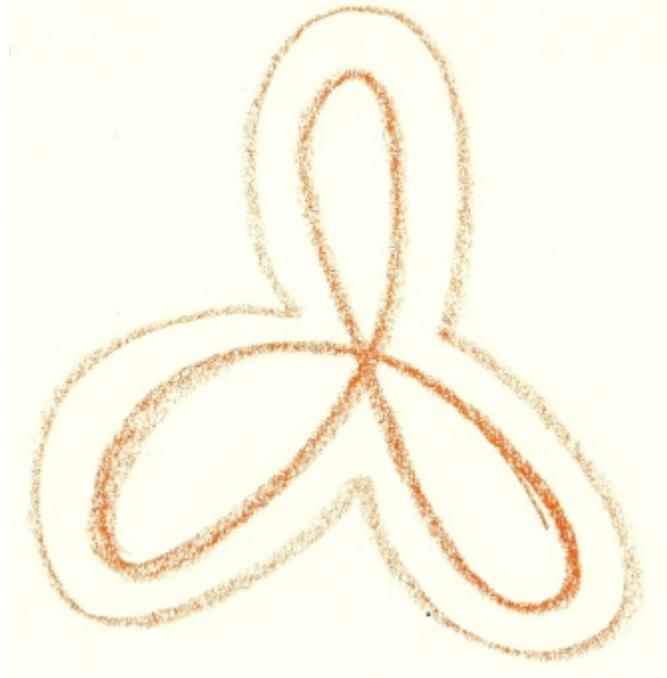
$15 - 2 < 20 + 5$

$11 - 3 < 15 + 6$

$15 - 4 = 14 - 3$



Lesson 17 – Today's focus is Adam and Eve, as well as a review of nouns through a writing exercise. From your chosen resource, tell the story of Eve's creation and their time together in the garden, refer to Bereshit or Genesis, chapters one and two. Draw, paint or model from the story.



Writing exercise, noun review. In your story today, Adam was given dominion over all the Earth and sets out to name the creatures in the garden. For your noun review, write sentences together that follow that thread.

Adam named the dog, the cat and the goat. He named the lion and the cheetah.

Go on in this manner, naming all the animals you can think of.