

Grade 3 Curriculum Summary

(The text that follows is adapted from the websites of member schools of the Alliance for Public Waldorf education and the San Francisco Waldorf School.)

As the children in the third grade enter their ninth year, they start to see the world differently. No longer are they content to be a part of life without doubts and questions. A nine-year old can feel him/herself growing up and separating from his/her parents, and becoming part of the outer world. The child becomes more independent, and begins to question all that was previously taken for granted. This can be a time of loneliness and insecurity for a child as well as a time of new self-confidence. The third grade curriculum is designed to meet the child's new interests and concerns at this age.

The curriculum provides the student with the opportunity to learn about three essential, practical requirements for all of humankind—how we work with nature to provide ourselves with food, clothing, and shelter.

Farming and gardening lessons instruct the child in the importance of the natural systems that support our lives, in the use of farming tools and farming and gardening processes, and how food has been grown over the centuries. These lessons give the child an opportunity for direct involvement in growing his/her own food and begin to establish a foundation for their appreciation of our partnership with nature and an interest in fostering, protecting and preserving the world around them.

The provision of **clothing** is addressed in the textiles unit, usually beginning with the shearing of a sheep and culminating in a woven or knitted garment from that sheep's wool. The child is involved in every practical aspect of the making of the garment.

Many types of **shelter** are presented, modeled and discussed with the students, and some shelters are constructed by the children with the teacher's guidance. A lesson block on building a modern house teaches the critical importance of cooperation amongst architects, contractors, and construction workers as they meet the wide variety of human needs for shelter.

Mathematics. In third grade, the child begins to develop a basic awareness for practical applications of mathematics. Measurement of all types is covered: length, weight, and volume; money, and time. All of these measurement systems are put to use in practical activities by the children themselves. In the study of time, money, and measurement, the historical background of the methods, tools, and practices is taught imaginatively before modern methods are explained.

Mathematics and movement go hand in hand. Rhythm is an integral part of the approach to arithmetic and is a significant aid to memorization. For example, the times tables are practiced while jumping rope, tossing bean bags, or bouncing a ball. This increases the child's ability to memorize and retain the information.

Language Arts. The importance of words and the beauty of speech underlie the entire language arts curriculum. Through the daily telling of stories, the teacher creates in the child the capacity for inward picturing, setting the stage for conceptual thought. Reading, writing, the fundamentals of grammar, spelling,

listening and speaking and penmanship are developed in an artistic manner which speaks to, empowers and inspires the whole child.

Stories from the Hebrew Bible serve as a metaphor for the children's inner experience at this age. From the wonder stimulated by the creation story to the challenges faced as Adam and Eve had to leave the Garden of Eden, the third grade children see that they, too, must one day leave the parental nest and make their own way in the world. This need for the child of this age to experience providing for the basic necessities of life is met in the curriculum through the hands-on study of farming, gardening, food preparation, house-building, and making clothes.

An emphasis on the dramatic presentation of stories culminates in the production of the class play, which echoes a familiar theme from the year's curriculum.

Music is an important focus in the curriculum. The third-grade child is ready to experience the complexity and structure of the full diatonic scale. After two years playing the pentatonic flute, the third grade child learns how to play a soprano recorder. This instrument will be used throughout the grades. The children are ready to assert their new independence by learning to sing separate parts in rounds, introducing them to harmony among individual parts and an awareness of rhythmic unity in variety.

In handwork, the third grade child graduates from knitting to crochet, completing three or four useful articles for her/himself. Painting and modeling beeswax are weekly activities that sharpen the child's powers of observation and expression.

In the third grade the changing nine year-old is given an opportunity to make new relationships: with nature through farming and gardening; with others through a class building project; and with themselves through drama, music, and art.

Grade 3 Curriculum Components

- **Math:** Higher multiplication tables; division; weight, measure, money and time; review of all four processes; multiplication; problem solving; place value to 10,000s; estimating; mental math; word problems
- **Language Arts:** Elements of grammar (nouns, verbs, adjectives); continuing cursive; punctuation; spelling; compositions; stories from ancient history; decoding and sight word recognition; building fluency through regular practice (oral and silent reading); comprehension through story recall
- **Science:** Continuation of garden and nature studies
- **History & Social Studies:** Study of practical life (farming, housing, clothing); stories from ancient history
- **Handwork:** Crocheting (mathematical patterns, working in the round)
- **Foreign Language:** Continuing foreign language study with oral dialogue, dramatization, songs, games and simple written work
- **Visual & Performing Arts:** Form drawing; painting; beeswax modeling; singing; drama; introduction to the recorder
- **Movement/Physical Education/Games:** Balance, running and chasing games, song and movement