

BLÁTHÚ Newsletter



An update for members and friends

Advent 2021

My will is filled with fire and might;
As days grow shorter, it burns bright!
I face the world; I have no fear.
And many things become more clear.
For though there's much
that I don't understand as yet,
I seek for light.

Second week in November,
In the Light of a Child, by Michael Hedley Burton

Editorial

By Fiona Coady

Many years ago I took part in a personal training and development course with a company called Landmark Worldwide. In one programme, we discussed the "phenomenon of time". The idea that when we are young, we develop a specific belief system about time: "there is never enough time", "my time will come, when the circumstance is right", "I'll do such and such when I get the time" etc. And that then is how time lives for us throughout our lives.

Towards the end of a year-long training, we were invited to consider transforming our relationship to time, simply by making a declaration: "THIS IS MY TIME". Not like it is the truth! But as a place to stand.

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Our circumstances may be difficult, but they are difficult circumstances in "MY TIME". I may not have a lot of time, but the time I do have is MY TIME. To make this declaration, to stand in "THIS IS MY TIME", a whole new view appears. There are openings for action that we could not see before. There are endless possibilities.



We in BLÁTHÚ have spent the last year working on our Strategic Plan, developing a structure for expansion and growth. We all as a community, along with the rest of the world, have come through a tunnel of darkness into the light of a newfound understanding for what the world needs, what we need, what our children need. There is a window of opportunity, to move into that space.

In this time of seasonal darkness, I would like to plant a seed. This seed is the declaration that “THIS IS OUR TIME”. This seed will sit in the

cold, dark earth in the coming months. There is nothing for us to do with it right now, except maybe to think of it, and wonder about it, and offer up a possibility for that seed. In the new year, when the spring comes, and the earth warms up and we move again into the light, we may be very surprised and delighted to see what has grown!

We hope you enjoy our offerings to help you celebrate the upcoming festivals and look forward to all that the new year brings!

The Board and Staff of BLÁTHÚ



FESTIVALS – NOURISHING SOUL, BODY AND MEMORY

by Ulrike Farnleitner

Part of our culture in Steiner Kindergartens in Ireland is the celebration of the Christian festivals. However with the wonderful mix of cultures in our days we have the task of considering the different cultures and religions of the families from which the children are attending our kindergartens and schools. Imagine when we think of India and their 22 languages and 6 religions, which means that that there are festivals celebrated each day. And so different foods are prepared to respect and celebrate their rich cultural heritage.

In order to not forget our own heritage, our festivals are also celebrated. In the course of the year, we look forward to and create the festivals with all the preparation that leads up to them, as well as the less visible, more internal preparation that is needed to carry out the work in the best sense. Each year, in each season, we experience this special time anew and notice how it deepens in ourselves. Many of our festivals we do not like to miss. We notice the increase of importance for oneself and the family/community involved.

It is not only beneficial for the children to delve deeper into their seasonal events, it also brings some healing impulses for the adults. We all can experience: we are at home here on this earth! At the same time, it has never been more important than it is now to develop a better understanding of and care for nature and the environment. To live with the cycle of the year brings interest, a sense

of belonging, a nourishing aspect and joy and happiness.

A festival gives food for the body, soul and spirit. It has to be designed differently for children than for adults. It has to tie in with something that is familiar to the child and at the same time bring something special to everyday life. A festival has a preparation time, a climax, and an aftereffect and brings joy into life. The child learns to anticipate the festivals over years and this cultivates security and a sense of the coming and passing of time. All of this gives the kindergarten year both rhythm and structure. The festivals are connected with the course of the year and its natural events. Stories, songs, verses and finger games and many activities will be done throughout the year in light of celebrating the changing seasons.

When adults remember their childhood, they remember what made them whole and warm, filled them with wonder and anticipation, laughing and feeling a sense of adventure and of the familiar. For example, a lit lantern, to be allowed to stay up late or to go for a walk in the dark woods, singing. The smell of damp wood, the crackling sound of amber in the bonfire, the memories of bare feet on summer meadows, the crown of autumn leaves in our hair, the glow of the advent candles on the wreath and the smell of beeswax. The multitude of sensual experiences are treasures of our childhood, never to be forgotten.

ST. MARTIN - LANTERN FESTIVAL

Ulrike Farnleitner

In many countries this festival is well loved and well known by children and most of the adults. The tradition says, create your lantern and walk through the dark, sharing the light in reverence of St. Martin of Tours. In those days 336AD half of all possessions of a soldier belonged to the Caesar. Martin filled with compassion when meeting a beggar gave everything that he owned and therefore he cut his mantle in half. Later on he converted to the Christian faith and became a bishop, but this deed of selflessness was never forgotten. For this day we make lanterns with our children and bake moon-shaped sweet bread that is shared on the 11th of November. From then onwards we light the candle every evening for the children's bedtime story until Advent.

This tradition gives the children a sense of confidence and security and a festival that they can look forward to in the course of the year. This brings another festive experience into the long dark winter.



RUNE OF HOSPITALITY

I saw a stranger yestreen
I put food in the eating place
And drink in the drinking place
And music in the listening place
And with the sacred name of the triune god
He blessed myself and my house,
My cattle, and my dear ones.
As the lark says in her song:
Often, often, often,
Goes the Christ in a stranger's guise.



The "Rune of Hospitality" is taken from the Carmina Gadelica, a collection of traditional prayers, hymns, incantations, blessings, runes, poems and songs collected by Alexander Carmichael from Gaelic speakers in the Western Isles of Scotland between 1855 and 1910.

St Martin's - in Irish Folk Tradition

By Ruth Marshall

11th November is the date of old Hallowe'en, before the change to the Gregorian calendar. Because of this, it is perhaps quite appropriate for there to be a lantern festival on this date - as jack o'lanterns made from hollowed out turnips (not pumpkins) are an important part of the hallowe'en tradition.

As this time of year is about going into the dark, the cold, the earth, and remembering recently deceased family members, it is significant that it is a *root* vegetable that is hollowed out - and this takes effort. It is hard work, but well worth it in the end. Now that we have pumpkins (not native Irish or traditional here), of course these are a lot easier to hollow and carve, and they do look great. But if we choose to buy a pumpkin, we should also be aware that these are usually mass produced to feed the consumer market. Hallowe'en was never a time for buying - whether disguises, masks, decorations, pumpkins - but rather for using seasonally appropriate local fruits and nuts - apples, hazelnuts, turnips - and making our own simple masks and costumes.

St Martin's in Ireland

Many of the early Celtic saints of the 4th, 5th, 6th centuries, visited the monastery of St Martin of

Tours and took this as a model when founding their own ascetic communities. For example, St Ninnian of Whithorn, Scotland; Nendrum in Co Down; St Senan of Scattery Island, Co Clare.

If there should be a few days of mild weather in early November, this was known as "St Martin's Summer" because God was said to be so pleased when Martin gave his cloak to the beggar, that they caused the sun to shine for a few days until Martin received a new cloak.

St Martin's in Ireland was a time for blessing the home, but we might consider the traditional ways a little gruesome - and they are definitely not for the kindergarten! Generally, a chicken, goose or pig would be butchered and a little of its blood sprinkled on the threshold and in four corners of the house as a protection from ill luck. The rest could be used to make a black pudding, and the bird itself cooked and eaten.

Any activity that involved turning a wheel, such as grinding grain, spinning yarn, driving a cart, was to be avoided on St Martin's Day, as it was said that St Martin had been crushed between two millstones, nor would fishermen put out to sea on St Martin's Day.

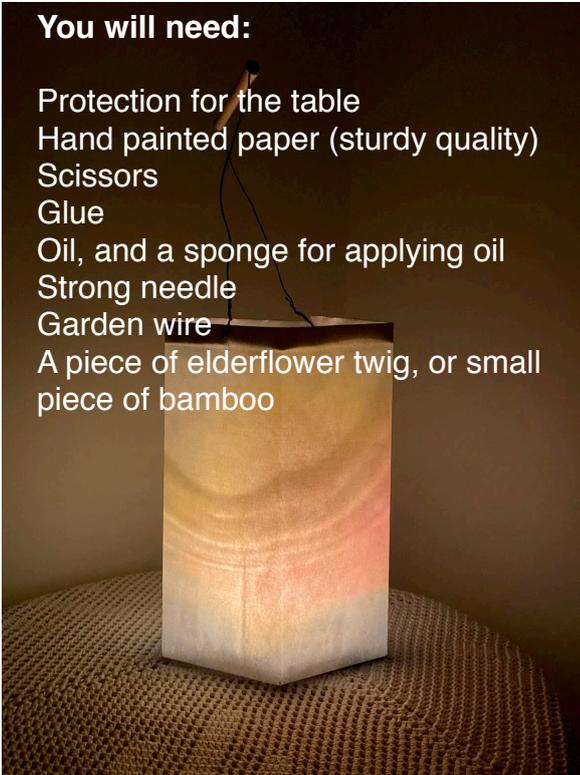
FOR THE SEASONS - CRAFT

St. Martin's star-shaped lantern

Easy to make and enjoyable to look at and walk with

You will need:

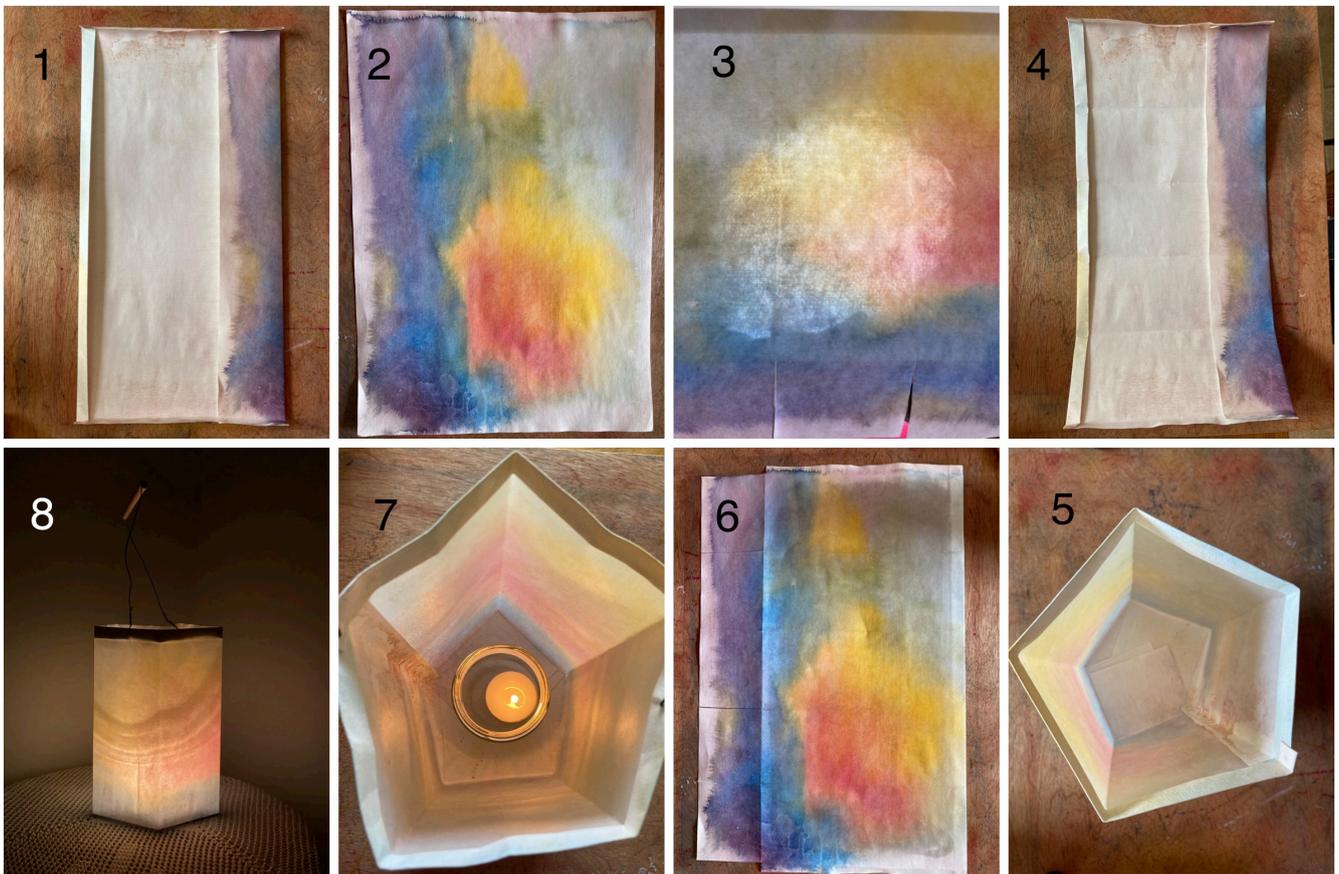
Protection for the table
Hand painted paper (sturdy quality)
Scissors
Glue
Oil, and a sponge for applying oil
Strong needle
Garden wire
A piece of elderflower twig, or small piece of bamboo



INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Fold the top of the painting twice 1.5cm and the bottom approx 6 cm
2. Fold the sides once approx 1.5 cm
3. Measure and divide by 5, fold the five parts. Cut the bottom folds
4. Oil the painting, but avoid areas where you want to glue it (ie the folded sides and bottom part) as glue will not stay where oil is applied.
5. Glue bottom parts and sides together.
6. Pierce with needle the holes for the wire, wire it and thread the handle into it.
7. Find a fitting glass jar, fix it into the lantern with hot glue gun, add the candle and light it with a taper.
8. Enjoy your star-shaped lantern

Sing your songs and walk in the dark with your lantern.



ADVENT

by Marguerite Devane

Advent is a very special time to celebrate with our children – a period of expectant waiting and preparation for Christmas. It begins on the closest Sunday to November 30th and lasts for those 4 Sundays and up to Christmas Eve. Advent, “to come” or “the coming into being” prepares the way for the light of the world to incarnate on the earth. In the darkest winter month the light of hope, joy and love is born, and this is worth celebrating.

The Advent Spiral on the first Sunday of ADVENT sets the tone for this whole period. A red apple with a candle is given lovingly to each child – they place it on a spiral of greenery already prepared in a dark room. With each candle added the room becomes brighter, each one lightens the path for the others. This is the reality of the Advent deed.

The Advent Calendar, which helps with the countdown to Christmas, each day a door is opened or a tiny present from a string of presents is revealed, or an angel descends step by step down to earth bringing the baby. These gestures strengthen the child’s inner expectation that life has order and harmony and their innate trust in the world is nourished and sheltered.

The Advent Wreath made of greenery and holding 4 candles, one for each week so that only 1 lights the first week, 2 the second, 3 the third week and all four on the final week. Acknowledgement is given to the mineral, plant, animal, and human kingdom with each passing week – then we arrive on Christmas Day, and now the Christmas Tree becomes the focus.

The mood of Advent can be created by using blue drapes, it brings peace and calm and expectation, an enclosed space. The reading of “Mary’s Little Donkey” by Gunhild Sehlin which tells the Christmas story from the donkey’s point of view. It never fails to warm the hearts of all of us who hear it each Advent.

We celebrate the Christmas Festival with all the children and parents together. This too gives focus and meaning to Advent days, and we would wish that festivals such as this will enrich and enliven all of us the days of our lives.

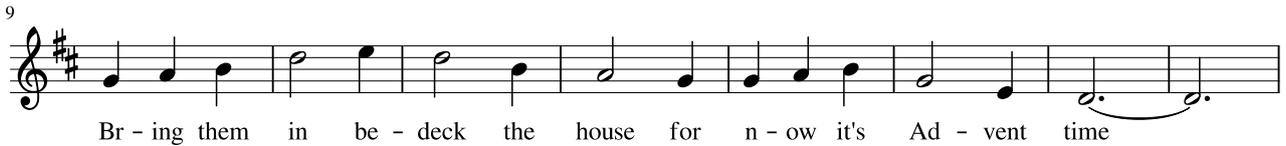


Angelus Silesius, 17th century mystic said:

***“If Christ were born a thousand times again,
Unless he’s born in you, his birth would be in vain”***

Advent Song

"bring the boughs of fir and spruce and pine"



From the forest bring the boughs of fir and spruce and pine.
Bring them home, bedeck the house, for now it's Advent time.

Chorus: Bring the boughs, bring the boughs, for now it's Advent time.

Light the candles, one by one, count off the days in rhyme.
Ev'ry day a task well done, for now it's Advent time.

Chorus: Bring the boughs, bring the boughs, for now it's Advent time.

On the Earth a fire lay, of oak and yew and pine.
Drive the winter chill away, for now it's Advent time.

Chorus: Bring the boughs, bring the boughs, for now it's Advent time.

Tune the lyre and the flute, oh let the music chime.
Sing we all, let none be mute, for now it's Advent time.

Chorus: Bring the boughs, bring the boughs, for now it's Advent time.



FOR THE SEASONS: STORY

A STORY FOR ADVENT

Far away in the East there lived a very good man called Bishop Nicholas. One day, he was told that there was a city in the West where everyone was starving, even the children. He called together all his servants and said, "Bring me the food from your gardens and your fields so that we can stop the children from starving".

The servants brought apples and nuts in baskets, and on top they placed honey cakes. Others brought wheat grain in sacks. Bishop Nicholas had all the food loaded onto a ship with white and blue sails, as white as the clouds and as blue as Bishop Nicholas's coat.

The wind blew the sails and the ship moved quickly over the water. When the wind was tired, the sailors pulled at the oars and rowed the ship to the city in the West. They travelled for seven days and seven nights.

When they arrived in the city, it was evening. There was no one in the streets, but lights burned in the windows of the houses. Bishop Nicholas knocked at

the window. The mother in the house thought it was a late wanderer, and her child opened the door. But there was no one there. The child ran to the window, but there was no one there either. But a basket was there, filled with apples and nuts and honey cake. Next to the basket was a sack with golden wheat grains spilling out. Baskets with apples, nuts and honey cake and sacks with wheat grains stood in front of the doors of the other houses too. The people of the city ate the presents and became healthy and happy again.

St. Nicholas died a long time ago. But every year on his birthday he makes a trip back to earth. He orders his white horse and rides from star to star, bringing gifts to children. Where Nicholas cannot go himself, he lends his voice to good people and asks them to deliver, in his name, apples, nuts and honey cake.

From: **Autumn and Winter Nature Activities for Waldorf Kindergartens** by Irmgard Kutsch & Brigitte Walden; Floris Books ISBN: 978-178250-667-6

RECIPE: HONEY CAKE

Contains no eggs or dairy!!

Saint Nicholas leaves this delicious cake, along with nuts and apples at the doors of kindergartens and children's houses, all around the world.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup soy margarine (or butter)
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 2 cups whole wheat flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp cream of tartar
- 2/3 cups water or soya milk (or any other milk)



Method:

- Preheat oven to 325degrees
- Beat butter, honey, vanilla, and salt together
- Combine flour, soda, cinnamon, and cream of tartar
- Stir dry ingredients into beaten mixture alternately with hot water or milk
- Pour into well-oiled 9-inch square baking pan and bake for 30 minutes or until done

FOR THE SEASONS - BOOK REVIEW

Autumn and Winter Nature Activities for Waldorf Kindergartens

By Irmgard Kutsch & Brigitte Walden, Floris Books ISBN: 978-178250-667-6
Reviewed by Fiona Coady

This is another wonderful book full of resources and ideas for activities with children, following the rhythm of the seasons of Autumn and Winter. The perfect accompaniment for their other book "Spring and Summer Nature Activities for Waldorf Kindergartens". The more I learn about Steiner Education as a parent, the more I notice how I am interweaving ideas, joining up the dots, and creating a flow of energy with each activity, and how, over time, small simple activities join up into wonderfully satisfying results!

In this book, there are short activities which give an immediate sense of achievement, and there are much bigger, long-term ideas, which will take patience and time before having that exhilarating experience of "Look what we did".

Below are examples of both! If you are a well-established Kindergarten, you may already know how to do each of these activities. If you are less experienced, and looking to build your skill set, this book gives you the know-how for all of the above. Either way, this book is a worthy addition to any home or Kindergarten Library!

AUTUMN AND WINTER NATURE ACTIVITIES FOR WALDORF KINDERGARTENS

Engaging nature activities for Waldorf kindergartens, from harvesting fruit to making Advent wreaths.

About the Book

Encourage children to engage with the seasons as they craft willow hanging baskets, work with clay, care for birds and create Christmas scenes.

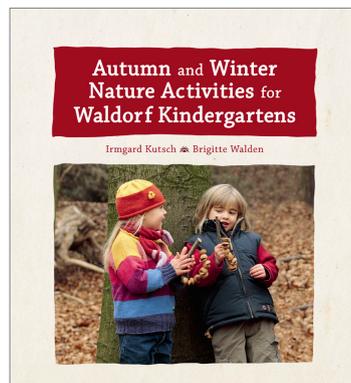
As well as fun nature activities – both indoor and outside – for children, this book also includes advice for teachers and valuable background reading, on topics such as biodynamic farms.

All the activities in this book are based on practical experience from the Children's Nature and Garden Centre in Germany, and are fully tried and tested. This is the companion book to *Spring and Summer Nature Activities for Waldorf Kindergartens*.

About the Author

Irmgard Kutsch trained as a vet before working with children with special needs. She established the Children's Nature and Garden Centre in Reichshof in 1994.

Brigitte Walden worked as a Waldorf teacher for 15 years. She is a carer at Haus Hohenfried in Bavaria, Germany, a centre for people with special needs.



MAKE A CHRISTMAS SCENE

A Christmas scene is a wonderful way to present an overview of annual themes in nature and is therefore ideal for helping children to understand the end of the calendar year. Every morning during Advent, children can collect objects to be added to the scene: mineral, plant and animal, and coloured beeswax can also be used to make Christmas figures. Building a Christmas scene is a communal project: people must listen to each other, and in doing so, they experience the real meaning of the Christmas season.

The following is one that will take a little more patience!!! If you're able to plan a year's worth of activities leading up to the making of a Christmas scene, you might find this schedule useful:

SCHEDULE - planning a year's activities leading to making a Christmas scene

- In **January**, create human and animal figures out of wool. They appear in the Christmas scene as Mary with the child, Joseph, the shepherds, and kings.
- In **February**, build the stable from round sticks. Candleholders and vases can also be made from clay.
- In **March**, sow the grain from the rattling walnuts. Use straw to make stars for the dark pine branches.
- In **April**, designate the area in the garden where the poinsettia will grow
- In **May**, use natural plant dyes to dye the cloth for the base and backdrop.
- In **June**, fill a pot-pourri bag with rose petals and save the nicest butterfly cocoons.
- In **July**, when you're on country walks, collect beautiful objects from the mineral, plant and animal worlds
- In **August**, harvest the straw for the cradle
- In **September**, choose a few fragrant winter apples from the tree
- In **October**, weave a small cradle basket or build a simple hut from natural materials to serve as a stable
- In **November**, make beeswax candles to light the Christmas scene.
- In **December**, bring everything together. An entire cycle, in which the children have been actively involved, comes to an end before their very eyes.



REFLECTIONS ON THE IASWECE COUNCIL MEETING, OCTOBER 2021

Ulrike Farnleitner

We had an invitation to travel to Lithuania to meet all our international colleagues for five days but under the ongoing travel restrictions we only could meet online, nevertheless it was an extraordinary journey with this feeling to be connected to over thirty international colleagues, most of us had met in person at other meetings. Each time we meet we work artistically, in conversation groups, in mandate groups and of course in the big circle to deal with finances, donations, projects and internal structural questions of the ongoing development of IASWECE.

The theme of cultural diversity had been for years really important for this international association. Even in times of zoom meetings we kept this theme and worked in artistic and thoughtful ways with each other. I heard the first time of a flower called Parijat. This delicate flower is well known in India of its divine scent and the message that it brings, it the only flower that can be gathered up, once fallen, as a gift to the Gods.

When my South African colleague Mary-G reflected on the last day about what we had done, these images felt so alive that with her permission I would like to share that with all of you: “We gathered together these past few days – some before the birds and some with

the owls – spanning the world time zones and hemispheres some in spring some in autumn.

We travelled to India where our Indian colleague shared a glimpse into the incredible journey of the Waldorf teachers there - finding anthroposophy in their own culture and their own culture reflected in anthroposophy. She spoke about the importance of the connection and relationship to nature, and all her gifts, which support the incarnating child and the need for the adults to be fully present in their own bodies to be able to support the developing child..

We entered a world of ancient mythology – of pure love, utter devotion and transformation where change brings something new. We heard Hindi spoke for the first time in our circle.

The journey went on to New Zealand where we encountered the world view of the Maori peoples - the tender deep connection to land, mountains, waters and ancestors...and the relationship to time – so different to time as measured by the clock. Our colleagues on this island shared the deep searching question; How do we ensure that our Maori families see themselves reflected in our early



Parijat flowers



childhood spaces . How do we embrace the uniqueness and value of this ancient culture?

Our Brazilian and Israeli colleagues lead us further on through stories and art work, painting and drawing, building images of all these words and stories that were depicted

always with early childhood in our minds and hearts.

We then were reminded of the wise words of Helmut von Kugelgen:

“In our midst, spread across the earth, in all zones and climatic conditions, there lives a folk that cannot express its message, whose people communicate with one another though their activity, in play, without a need for translators – the children. The belief, love, and hope of all human beings connect themselves to them wherever they appear....

Children do not fight for their rights and living space. They appear again and again with ever-renewing trust, with an immense hunger for love, and they assume that we adults are wise and good and that we possess what we need to learn from the children – selflessness.”

Sanskrit Blessing

ॐ सवऽ भवऽ सु(खनः
सवऽ सऽ निरामयाः ।
सवऽ भऽणि पऽऽ मा कऽिद् दुः खभाःवेत ।
ॐ शा(ऽः शा(ऽः शा(ऽः ॥
om sarve bhavantu sukhinah
sarve santu nirāmayāḥ
sarve bhadrāṇi paśyantū mā kaścidduḥ
khabhāgbhaveta |
om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ॥

May all sentient beings be at peace,
May no one suffer from illness,
May all see what is auspicious,
May no one suffer.

BLÁTHÚ WELCOMES CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR READERS

The preschool year of 2020 to 2021 has been like nothing any of us has experienced before. Family celebrations that normally punctuate the calendar of a Waldorf Kindergarten were non-existent leaving us floundering as to what to work towards with the children.

Children came to us anxious - some having no idea what was causing the worry and some 4-year-olds who could have given a class on virus transmission! 3, 4 and 5 year olds had been warned to meticulously wash their hands as if they were surgeons preparing for theatre!

It really was a relief to come back to Kindergarten on August 31st knowing that we could once again plan our festivals and workshops which have always been the beating heart of the Waldorf Kindergarten. The difference has been very positive up to this half term and we have never before seen so much investment by parents in our school activities. As Waldorf teachers it has also given us a renewed sense of purpose and enthusiasm and brought the joy back to Kindergarten!

Carol Brogan

Spiritual Development – a snapshot of practices across a range of Irish National Schools

In 2020, as part of a Master's programme, I undertook research to probe the question of the spiritual development of children in Irish National Schools. The National Curriculum, which informs teaching and learning throughout the country asserts that it is 'designed to nurture the child in all dimensions of his or her life – spiritual, moral, cognitive, emotional, imaginative, aesthetic, social and physical'. Note that the word 'spiritual' is placed first in this list, yet it is probably the least understood concept. Indeed, scholars throughout the ages have never fully been able to agree on a definition of the spiritual. Society values the spiritual however, and schools and teachers are mandated to nurture the child on this level.

So, without a universal definition of the spiritual, the research sought to find out how teachers provide for this in a range of educational settings throughout the country. The participating primary schools included large, urban Catholic and Educate Together schools, and small, rural Catholic and Community schools. Teachers were given a quantitative survey with a range of questions, which aimed to gather hard data, while also offering the teachers an opportunity for wider expression.

The first section of the survey questioned teachers on the skills, attitudes and life experiences they considered that children need in order to live a spiritually rich life. The top scoring experiences in this section were 'Reflection on life', 'Being part of a community', 'Being in nature' and 'Caring for someone or something'. The experiences that scored lowest were 'Imagination' and 'Story'.

The research discovered that in general, teachers take their responsibility for the spiritual nourishment of children seriously. They frequently teach and

reinforce specific vocabulary, giving children a spiritual language with which to express their personal experiences. Teachers see the value of nourishing children on this level, and the majority viewed spirituality as supporting the 'holistic development of the child', as well as allowing them to 'consider the moral viewpoint'.

Teachers were next asked to consider the subjects of the National Curriculum in terms of their suitability for supporting the spirituality of children. It was found that SPHE, Visual Arts, Music and Drama lend themselves very well to this area, while Maths, Gaeilge and Science were considered to be largely incompatible. The researcher followed this up with recommendations that might help to bridge this gap.

Finally, teachers were asked about their own level of confidence in providing for the spiritual nourishment of children. The majority of teachers felt that their training in this area has been insufficient. Yet, most expressed a moderate level of confidence in being able to provide a rich spiritual experience for children in their class.

As is typical of a Master's Thesis, this research has not been peer-reviewed. Therefore, it can only be seen as a snapshot, merely giving us some hints at a wider experience. The sample of teachers and schools was small and so, generalisations cannot be drawn from the research. However, I was very glad to have undertaken a project that was well supported by participants. Due to their generosity of time and expression, it was possible to make strong recommendations for the ongoing development of teaching and learning of spirituality.

Fiona Bury, M.Ed.

BLÁTHÚ WELCOMES CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR READERS

The beginning of the new school year is always so busy. Those first days are filled with preparations, welcoming children, adapting to the new routine, and finding teacups (*where did I leave my favourite one last year?!*).

For the last few years, I was trying to find a perfect 'new school year' story; one that would be sweet and seasonal and short enough to keep the attention of children who would hear a story in the kindergarten for the first time. Even though I found some interesting ones, none of the stories

reflected utterly the early September mood of 'everything new' And this is exactly how the "Pinecone's new friends" came about.

BIO: *Urszula is a Kindergarten Teacher in Dublin Steiner School. She is a storyteller, fibre artist and passionate gardener. When she's not teaching, she enjoys hiking in the wild, cooking vegan meals and fermenting veggies. Follow her journey on www.instagram.com/thehiddenbloom*

Pinecone's New Friends

by Urszula Sawicka Gamarra

Once upon a time there was a little pinecone who lived in the woods, near an old tree trunk. She spent her days laying down on soft moss, looking at the sky, admiring the big green trees. And there was so much to see around! Spiky pine needles and flying birds, ants making their way back home, some mushrooms growing under the moss, and leaves, and sticks and stones and branches... Then one day a child was passing by on their walk, picked up the pinecone, put it in the pocket and took it home.

'Where am I?' said Pinecone. She had never been in the pocket before. It was very narrow there; it felt very soft and cosy. Pinecone was bouncing a little bit up and down, like it was moving somewhere but she didn't know where to. It was very strange to be in this new place. But before Pinecone had a chance to think about where she was and where she was going, the child took her out from the pocket and placed her in a wicker basket.

Pinecone looked around and said 'What a quiet place! It looks nothing like the woods but there are some things that look remarkably similar!'. There were sticks, short and long; stones and leaves of many different colours. So many things that resembled wood but did not look like a tree at all. And in the wicker basket there were many, many different pinecones.



There was a big one with huge scales, and a small one all closed in. There was a bright one, a long one and an old one. All of them were so interesting! 'Hello, big one' - said Pinecone - 'I love your big scales.' 'Hello, old one' - said Pinecone - 'You must be so very wise.' 'Hello, bright one' - said Pinecone - 'Your colour is so beautiful.' 'Hello, small one' - said Pinecone - 'I love your tiny size.'

'Hello Pinecone' - said all the others - 'Welcome to our basket. We love that you're here and we can wait to play with you.' And they all rested and waited for the child to come and play with them.

BLÁTHÚ WELCOMES CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OUR READERS

Reflection on the Foundation Year

by Ann Marie Murphy

On an early Autumn evening a weekend was to be a very special for all students present. It marked the conclusion of the Foundation Year in Anthroposophy www.soulscape.eu the final weekend in the course. It was to be a celebration of what was created collectively as a community of individual human beings. It was to be a sharing of the learnings and wisdom that had been gained along the way. And it was to be the deliberate nurturing of every human soul who was present.

The evening began with a carefully selected verse, read aloud, followed by eurythmy. Each one present slowly moving alone but with each other, as if unifying all. Easing the individual in each one of us back into this collective community. Welcoming us back to this shared familiar place. It felt good to be here again.

We would all play our part. In preparation, all were asked to create a story, a fairytale, a myth or legend that reflected how the course impacted on us. What did we learn? What were our own true discoveries? What were we taking with us back out into the world?



As the weekend unfolded, everyone shared their story. Each story delivered in a creative manner of their own choosing, offered a deeper insight into the human being behind the story, their journey, their growth and their life. This weekend, like the entire course, had been consciously crafted. At every turn, it offered an experience in learning and living one's true self. It offered an experience in the joy of just being. What a gift this has been. The course was ending but the community created was just beginning its work.

Eurythmy4you – When I met eurythmy4you the first time, I wondered how it would work online?

But after the first tutorial with Theodor, I realised, it is possible. Since then I have grown very fond of it. What does it do? All these exercises that are given by Rudolf Steiner are health giving when done regularly. I recall a child saying after a eurythmy session: “this movement makes me really happy, if only my arms would not be so tired afterwards”. What he captured in his remarks made me smile, for it is true. One needs to rest afterwards. During the tutorial Theodor gives us a chance to rest. He tells us to become aware of the effects that eurythmy is having on our energy levels and on our body.

Eurythmy for millions Try out Happy Heart from October and find the exercise that is good for you.

The Happy Heart is very easy to use - on the PC at home, everywhere on the mobile phone. When the wheel lands on a picture, it shows you a short sequence of eurythmy exercises that you can experience right away. In the instructions you will find how you can add the page to the home screen of your mobile phone.

[Try out our Happy Heart](#)

Orientation Course Prospectus 2022

“Exploring Anthroposophy as a Foundation for Life” www.soulscape.eu

What is Anthroposophy?

This course aims to provide an approachable, yet rich and immersive introduction to some of the basic aspects of **Anthroposophy**, a way of understanding ourselves and the world developed by Rudolf Steiner, and upon which Waldorf/Steiner Education, Biodynamic Agriculture, Anthroposophical Medicine, Eurythmy etc. are based.

Who is this Course for?

This course will be of interest to anyone interested in developing and deepening their existing knowledge of anthroposophy. It is also a foundation year for anyone planning to do further anthroposophical studies, e.g. Steiner kindergarten teacher training, Steiner teacher training etc.

This course aims to engage and educate our whole being, not only our thinking but also our artistic and practical abilities through lectures, discussion and group work; social, artistic and craft learning activities, singing, eurythmy and collaborative learning, experiences with meditation and inner work.

Delivery

This new Orientation Course in Anthroposophy will be offered by Soulscape Training from January to October 2022 in nine modules, and will be based in the Kilkenny area.

Aim

It is our hope that this course will enrich your understanding of the world and your place in it; that you will gain an enhanced empathetic appreciation of the other, and support on your own journey of self-discovery and realisation. We aim to give you tools for developing confidence, creativity, resilience and self-knowledge together with skills which can be applied in your life and work.

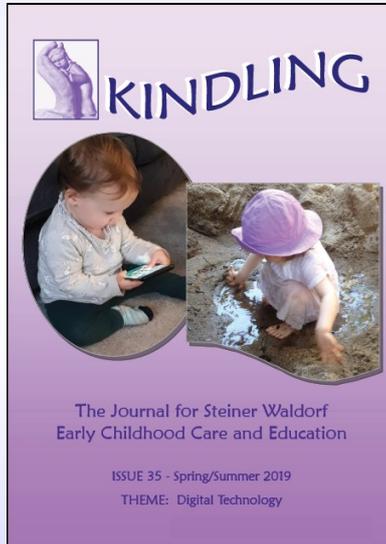


How to apply

You will find many answers on the website www.soulscape.eu and of course please write to us and ask your specific questions: thesteiner.training@gmail.com

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Web: www.blathu.org

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Design and layout : Ruth Marshall

Tel: 087 6945060 Email: ruth.a.marshall@gmail.com www.ruthmarshallarts.weebly.com