Tarremah Steiner School

MAY 9 | ISSUE 6, 2025

Tarremah Times

Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives. The need for imagination, a sense of truth, and a feeling of responsibility—these three forces are the very nerve of education. *Rudolf Steiner*

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Diary Dates:

Fri 9 May
ECC Lantern Walk

Tues 13 May
Secondary Parent/Teacher Meetings

Wed 14 May
Class 10 Cake Stall

Wed 14 May
P&F Meeting

Thurs 15 May
Secondary Parent/Teacher Meetings

Thurs 15 May
Steiner Education–online talk

Fri 16 May
TSO visit for Primary Students

Wed 21 May
National Simultaneous Storytime

Thurs 22 May
Steiner Education–online talk

Fri 23 May
Parade of Lights

Thurs 29 May
TSSF AGM

Learning to read and write

Fables Main Lesson Class 2

The Class 2 children immersed themselves in our recent Fables Main Lesson with interest and enthusiasm. In our planning meetings, Ina and I share what we will bring to the children and we discovered that we share many favourite fables! Our retelling of the Fables (which is great fun for the storyteller as well as the listener) offers students an opportunity to learn about various human virtues as told through the portrayal of animal qualities such as *The Lion and the Mouse* and *The Crow and the Fox.*

As always, the children relished the opportunity to share their creative flair during this learning experience, by illustrating and writing recounts of the Fables. They are continuing to build a bank of sight words and are revising (and some mastering) a variety of phonic patterns through word families. Their main lesson books are a delight to behold!

Having chosen a Steiner Education for your child, you will appreciate that the approach to learning to write and read does not always align with the mainstream approach in the early years of schooling. If we follow the beginnings of humanity, spoken language developed first, then people drew pictorial representations to communicate their ideas, followed by symbols such as hieroglyphics and finally the abstract letters of our modern alphabets. Once there was a written language, people learned to read. If you stop to think about it, this is exactly the sequence in which children master language, and it also is the sequence in which reading is taught in Steiner schools.

Having taught in Steiner schools for almost thirty years, along with choosing the education for our own family, I have had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the benefits of the deep, gradual approach that sets the foundation for reading. We begin in early childhood with a rich oral tradition with rhythmical story telling. In class 1, the alphabet is formally introduced in an imaginative, pictorial way.

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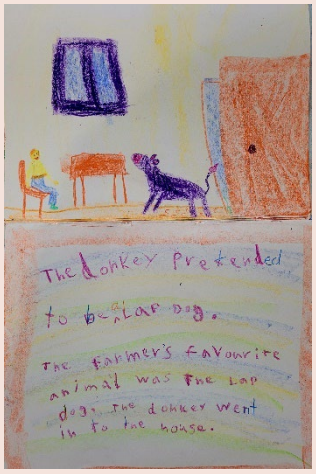


This develops a living relationship with each letter in the child rather than going straight to the abstraction of the alphabet letters. The first texts the children learn to decode are their own in their beautiful main lesson books. Being able to decode words is essential for beginning readers. Decoding is not just about sounding out words though. It involves taking apart the sounds in a word ("segmenting") and blending the sounds together. Another important skill for beginning readers is learning to recognise words at a glance. Children need to build up a large group of "sight words." and this takes time.

One of the most important things about this approach (that also acknowledges readiness as vital) is that children who read when they are ready are well placed and supported to maintain a passion for stories and love of reading and literature throughout their lives.

How you can best support your child's literacy at home:

One of the most effective things you can do at home to support your child's literacy development is to provide a reading-rich environment; read aloud to your child regularly, make reading interactive and fun for you and your child, and encourage writing and reading their own writing when they show interest. You can model a love of reading for pleasure yourselves. The Class 2 children especially love library time at school; they can choose from a large variety of books that interest them.

Tracey O'Leary
Class 2 Teacher

The Bard That is Sam

Next time you see Sam (our maintenance man) you might ask him to recite a ballad or two. As part of our Class 9 Australian Literature Main Lesson Sam came and shared his amazing oratory ability by reciting Banjo Paterson's *The Geebung Polo Club*.

It was somewhere up the country in a land of rock and scrub,
That they formed an institution called the Geebung Polo Club.
They were long and wiry natives of the rugged mountainside,
And the horse was never saddled that the Geebungs couldn't ride...
It was somewhere down the country, in a city's smoke and steam,
That a polo club existed, called the Cuff and Collar Team.
As a social institution 'twas a marvellous success,
For the members were distinguished by exclusiveness and dress...

We all sat there gob smacked as Sam brought this wonderful poem to life. It makes such a difference to hear poetry read well. Written in the late 19th century, Paterson does such a great job satirising the differences between rural and urban life. With a posh accent for the city slickers and a broader drawl for the country folk, Sam nailed it.

A big thank you to Sam for giving his time to help Class 9 prepare for their oral presentation work on a poem from the literary canon of Australian verse.

Sharon Clarke
Secondary English Teacher

Creating Fire

Since November of last year Class 10 have been working on a firestick routine for the Parade of Lights on 23 May.

Last November, Diane Tatum worked with the class to show them the possible elements they could include in the firestick routine and the class took up the challenge to do the choreography.

But, their creative energies didn't stop there. They decided to make the most of the fact that within the class is a student, Arielle, who is interested in composition AND a number of students play instruments outside of school, to a very high level... SO... Arielle took a piece of music by *Coldplay,* called *Clocks,* and arranged it for piano (Christian), 3 violins (Ru, Arielle, Miri) and Cello (Sophia). They had a very short turnaround time to rehearse it before Christian and Ru headed off to Bhutan to attend school there for 6 weeks (I know hey!).

Big thank you to Rachel Meyers (Miri's mum) who pulled it all together in record time and to Finn Clarke for doing the recording session.

When Diane came back this week to work with Class 10 again they had a choreographed routine and their own music ready to go. Diane's commitment to ensuring the very best from the students and attention to detail, has enabled the students to polish their choreography. Thank you Diane. We are so grateful.

Class 10 are looking forward to "lighting up" on the night. It has been an amazing journey to get to this point. We hope you enjoy the night.

Sharon Clarke
Class 10 Guardian

National Simultaneous Storytime

National Simultaneous Storytime (NSS) is an annual event in Australia that celebrates the joy of reading and promotes literacy across the country. Organised by **Simultaneous Storytime** (an initiative of the Australian library community), the event aims to engage children, families, and educators in reading a selected picture book at the same time across various locations throughout Australia on Wednesday 21 May 2025 at 12:00pm

NSS has grown into a highly anticipated event, with libraries, schools, and families looking forward to the annual reading celebration.

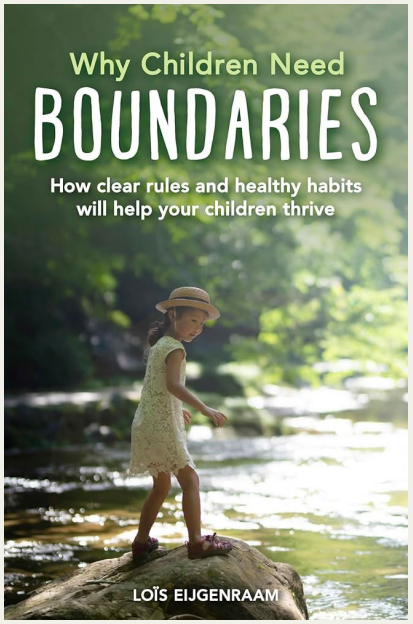
The Primary School will gather on the day to listen to this year's book ***The Truck Cat.***

Abbey Vincent
Librarian Technician

Tarremah Steiner School
Foundation Inc
Annual General Meeting

Music Room,
Tarremah School
27 Nautilus Grove,
Huntingfield

Thursday 29 May – 6:00pm



Book Review
Why Children Need Boundaries.

An insightful and practical book with a Steiner – Waldorf view of child development

During the recent break, I read this book written in 2020 by Lois Eijenraam and available in our Library.

We can often think of the many boundaries in our lives in a negative manner. Our very culture has increasingly encouraged us to contemplate a world without boundaries.

Dare I say it though, boundaries are what provide us with a feeling of being safe. Understood and used wisely they help us develop inner strength and confidence, as we gradually extend out into the bigger world. These boundaries are not fixed but grow and match the different developmental stages of childhood.

The past few centuries have seen radical shifts from being part of a close community with a community awareness, to a culture of individuals often lacking the close connections of grandparents, with a clearly defined sense of self – essentially self-centredness.

What we need from boundaries for the lives of our children is a gradual awakening of individuality. As Steiner is quoted in this book:

"We lay the foundation so that, when children begin to awaken around puberty, then can form their own moral judgements by observing life".

This development will likely be a potholed road and for it to unfold in a healthy way, we, the adults, must offer safety and security to our children as we travel its lengths.

Children will encounter a variety of social situations and it will be necessary to demonstrate the accepted boundaries of those situations according to the family, the culture and community we are part of. In learning how to act in those situations our children will be impacted by how they see us deal with our own emotions. How we handle our own disappointments and how resilient and considerate we show ourselves in their eyes, will help them develop respect, help them handle their 'social collisions' and form good lifelong habits.

The author uses 'elasticity' as one of her 12 golden words. Healthy boundaries are not rigid-sometimes it is important that the stretch is minimal and as the child moves through adolescence, the rigidity of the band will ease. Another 'golden' word used in this book is that of relationships. There seems to be a misconception that first and foremost a parent should be friend. While we are all equal as human beings, the life experience I have and the fact that I have accepted the responsibility of parenting, are what has me, the parent, at the helm and not as an equal.

Many of the current generation of parents is keen to do things differently in child rearing and our society especially with the prevalence of media, is in search of the 'prefect' parenting style. Eljgenraam discusses these 4 styles and states that there is no such thing as the perfect parenting style.

You would be hard pushed to find any parent who has not struggled, who has not felt lost or unsure about their relationship with their child. Chapter 9 has a lovely section about how to re-connect with your child. Sometimes we find it hard to find the strategy for coping with negative experiences. Parents are given all sorts of 'shop floor advice 'when their 2-year-old child, who wants to do everything for themselves, doesn't respond well to our help or, is adamant they must have the red pack of cereal and NOT the blue packet!! On offer then, we have the tantrum, which may be from sheer overtiredness, illness, or a learnt style of attaining control. If it is possible to avoid those 'prime times, in public places'- well and good, but I learnt that if an emotional outburst was to be, I was not going to 'bribe, yell or threaten my way out of it 'to avoid embarrassment in a public place. There is little harm that can come of a full-blown tantrum in the early years…it may well prevent aggressive outbursts or a life of entitlement later.

It is crucial to refrain from providing moral judgement on the incident as your child thrashes about. It is a time to be still, to be next to your child, to be there to keep them from harm and to be connected in that when they are ready,

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you will be there to pick them up and move on. Speaking is not recommended; nor is any reference necessaryto the 'misdemeanour' afterwards. They may well be so emotional they exhaust themselves and you may need to quietly support them after the event, but, generally when the child realises the limits in place by the adults, they will learn to accept the situation and learn that power struggles are not going to work.

Sometimes parents are so 'worn down' and sometimes the parenting style involves so much freedom that the child is given everything they want, every interaction is a negotiation, or a discussion. To help your child develop as a well-rounded individual will take a lot of strength and self- care as the parent, the leader ... to lead, guide, adjust, watch, trust, adjust etc. Having it clear in your home who has what role is crucial and will allow the adults more 'space' for self-care.

Children need to have only the right amount of choice making at the right time and the most of a 'compromise or choice that should be negotiated with a 3-year-old is which of the two pair of socks laid out for the day- the red OR the blue. Some parents worry that children do not have enough control over their lives and believe that giving choices gives them this. Young children are not ready for making decisions – that is a skill from a higher developmental phase.

As your child tries to learn new skills, you will need lots of sensitivity – they may need some support eg holding the puzzle board still while they fit the piece in-without damaging their independence. They need advance notice of eg bedtime in 10 minutes, tea will be in 5 minutes at the table etc. They need us to support them in 'tidy time', to have a sense of humour with them and give them room to solve small problems.

There is a lovely chapter in the book regarding over-indulgence and parenting, and reference is made to W DeJong and his 4 points in recognizing over-indulgence:

Is the child hindered in tasks most their age can do?

Is a disproportionate amount of time, money, energy, attention etc given to the child?

Do the parents benefit more from their actions than the child?

Is the child's behaviour damaging to others in the community?

In the long -term depriving children of healthy ways to develop will impact their ability to persevere, their frustration levels and habits appropriate to age and stage of development.

Eljgenraam/de Jong suggest that all children need a captain to guide their ship of life; It is the adults who must have the compass and the vision and not let the wishes of children land them on rocky headlands.

Chapter 12 asks the reader to consider raising children as a process made up of seven phases. She speaks to raising children as a long-term investment and that we too must grow with our child. With experience, inner trust and the safety that clear boundaries give; parenting need not be a drain, but will provide the guidelines for a lifelong loving, relationship.

Sue Bottrill
Primary Learning Support Teacher

Melanie Deefholts' Term One Community Talks – some rememberings

Melanie Deefholts has been supporting parents and teachers in various schools through adult education for the past 13 years – she has been visiting Tarremah each year since 2018. She specialises in understanding child development through observations of daily life and how to work with this in a living way within the home and the classroom. She regularly works in various Steiner Schools in NSW, Vic, TAS, Qld, SA and WA with Developing the Self, Developing the World. This is a social initiative based on the work of Rudolf Steiner, offering school health and wellbeing programs for young people.

At the end of last term, Melanie visited Tarremah, to work as part of our personal care and development program. She worked directly with Classes 3-10, and in an observational capacity with Class 1 and 2. Melanie also had time to work with teachers and TA's in the care and support of our students. In the evening, she held four different talks with the wider community. It was wonderful to see over 30 people at each talk. Below I will share some of the takeaways from the evenings working with parents from Classes 3-8.

Classes 6-8

Over time, Melanie has been able to observe the different cohorts of students at Tarremah. She shared that she observed that this group seemed quite young developmentally. While this is lovely, she reflected that this still gives us something to work with. The students themselves demonstrated that they feel quite independent and grown up, (yet they are quite far from that!). Melanie advised that they of course need some independence and that an opportunity for this is to be encouraged to 'weigh up their deeds'. She cautions that independence at this age does not equate to adult independence, and not to see their growing confidence as a sign that they are ready to tackle anything.

Melanie shared a phrase coming up in the mainstream, the idea of 'lawnmower parenting' and how it is posing a particular challenge for children today. Parents want to smooth out all the 'bumps', so that their child never experiences any difficulty. She asked us to consider, what happens for our children when they do eventually encounter some of life's 'bumps'? Following this train of thought – we can look to support them as they encounter their own difficulties and see them as an opportunity for growth and development.

At this age, the children are becoming conscious that their inner thoughts and feelings are different to those around them. Melanie reminded us that the children look towards the community – they ask themselves: how are things done around here? How do we make the rules? With this new capacity, they increasingly look at how the adults around them are living their lives. What are our triumphs and shortcomings? The children bring our attention to things we don't have our eye on. Whatever gets under our adult skin is showing our weaker spots.

There is a protective quality to helping the children understand their own inner life. When they don't 'give it away' to others, they will have an inner authority e.g. not everything just happens to us, we have an inner strength which we will come to recognise as our adults help us find it. If our children tell us, 'So and so did this' ask them how they feel about, don't presume. Let it be their experience, and not our idea of their experience.

Melanie touched on the adult need to avoid pushing for a particular outcome when working things through with our children. She suggested really allowing some time to ourselves, to consider, reflect and ponder what works for our children. When we interact with them, we are setting up what is 'normal' for them in their intimate relationships. We aren't trying to avoid difficulties but maintain wholeness. It is normal to experience feelings of isolation and loneliness. Feeling left out is a normal part of growing up. Can we help the children get through this themselves? When our children are sharing, we could ask ourselves, "Am I listening or giving a suggestion'? Wait until you are invited or ask if you can give a suggestion.

Classes 3-5

For this developmental stage, it is again important that the adults surrounding the children, are living in a moral way, rather than moralising the child. There is a danger that the children may rebel against the moralising forces rather than take them up. Melanie reflected that in the case of our responding or behaving in a way that was less than ideal, it is fine to tell the children "I lost my way." That way they can see we are striving to do better.

Melanie cautioned that we should consider the importance of the imagery we are sharing with the children, what are we awakening in them? Rather than images or documentaries detailing the damage to the earth, we could show them beautiful images and places, inciting an interest in protecting the earth, giving them something to strive toward, rather than a feeling that all is lost and hopeless.

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Following this thought, everything that goes into the soul, is like food that goes into the body. Are we giving the children healthy soul food? Today there is a lot of junk activity going into the soul life of children. Melanie speaks with the children in classes about what they are 'consuming' on a soul level. The words we share with children need to be considered, not an autopilot response. As they 'cross the rubicon (traditionally around 9 years) and begin to experience themselves as individuals, the children start to recognise they have different feelings from their adults. The children want to know where we get our authority from. Can we show them we have thought through our words so that they land in a beautiful way? Do we stop our moralising with the children to answer the phone sweetly? How do the children experience this?

The children shared with Melanie that the most significant factor holding them back from sharing tricky situations with their parents was the fear of getting in trouble or losing their privileges. This was a great insight, and I sensed many people in the room (me included!) noted the importance of working with this to ensure our children keep talking to us.

Overall, the talks were a fantastic invitation to consider our children in their fullness, and look at how we speak, respond, question and role model. Thank you to Melanie for bringing this opportunity each year and stimulating many conversations for our community. Words on a page of course can't really capture the full essence of the talk. On the evening of her visit, Melanie gave many examples of her own interactions with her children and humbly reflected on the challenges that they have overcome (or not) in her family. I appreciated the opportunity to reflect on my own family, and the consciousness that I strive to bring to my own parenting. I hope this brief sharing has jogged your memory or given pause to have a chat with others that were there – it was well worth it.

Mandy Silversides
Education Facilitator

P&F Meeting

Honeysuckle Room

Wednesday 14 May
6:30pm – 9pm

Agenda

1. Welcome and acknowledgement of country
2. Confirmation of previous minutes
3. Report from school exec
4. Update on previous actions
5. Treasury report
6. Other business
7. Confirmation of next meeting
9. Close

'May the fire be in our arms and hands, so that we may be of service and build up love.'
-Burnum Burnum,

The Parade of Lights Invitation

Friday, 24th May

In the last weeks of Autumn, as the light around us grows shorter, and the chill of winter looms like a dragon, we each must find the iron will within us to stand resolute and true in the coming darkness.

You are invited to attend Tarremah's Parade of Lights, on Friday, May the 23rd.

Please take your child directly to their class at 6:00pm. There will be hot drinks for parents in the hall foyer while they wait for the school to assemble in the amphitheatre for a 6:30pm start. Please dress your child appropriately for a cold evening walking close to candles.

At 6:20pm the students will group in classes at the amphitheatre for a story and sing-a-long. We will then light our lanterns and begin our parade down and around the oval, and the evening will conclude with a fire stick display by Class 10.

If you would like to participate in the lantern parade, can you please bring a lantern, and join your child in the parade. If you prefer you may watch the parade from the edge of the oval near Class 6.

If there is rain or winds, there will be an sms sent out to all, rain-checking the event to the *next* Friday (the 30th of May.)

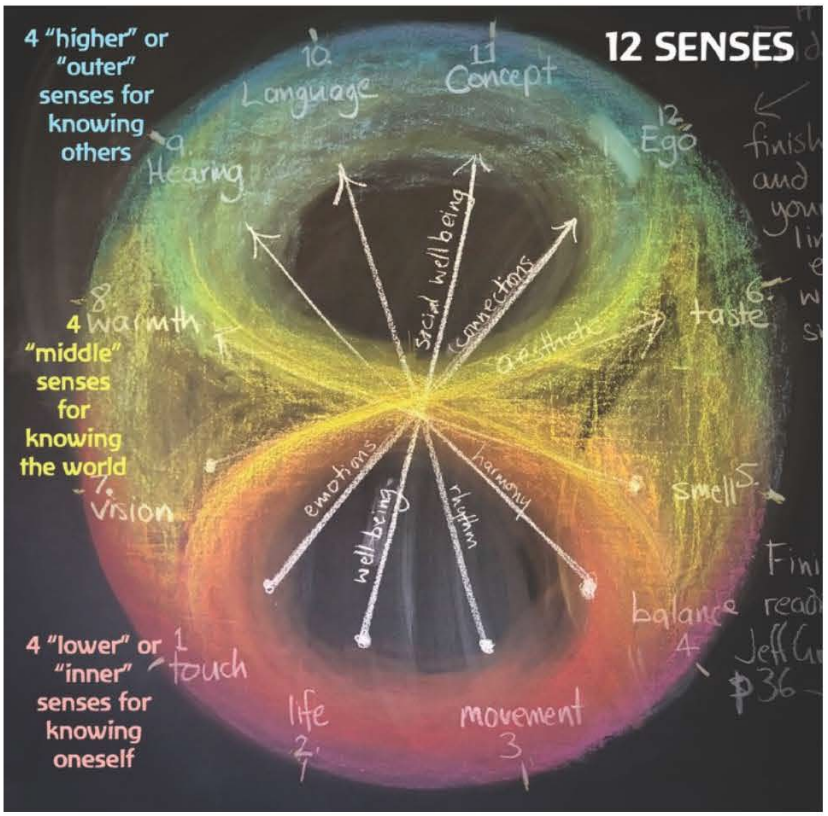
We look forward to gathering together as a community, as we celebrate the warmth and light within each of us, by sharing the beauty and significance of the Parade of Lights.

We hope to see you there!

Working with the transformation of the 12 Senses to support free thinking

through the K-12 Steiner Curriculum

With Sophia Montefiore

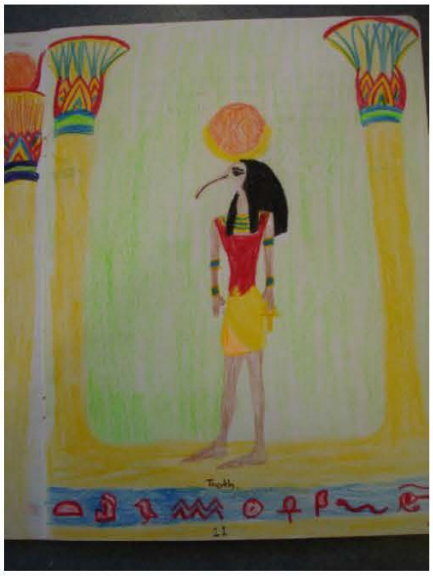


The Steiner Curriculum brings a health-giving consciousness to support the human journey through birth to adulthood. Individual free thought, discernment, and independence are nurtured by subtle transformations of sense-life experiences. Join us in exploring the way Steiner Main Lessons work with the 12 senses to harmonise the developing inner life of our young people.

Sophia Montefiore is currently a teacher and Senior School Coordinator at the Newcastle Waldorf School in Australia. She has taught and mentored across a range of subjects including English, History, Mathematics, Projective Geometry, Art, and Philosophy. Sophia is also the artist behind our Steiner Parent Education Initiative Logo!

Thursday May 15, 7.30pm AEST on Zoom

Booking: https://events.humanitix.com/the-12-senses-schools/tickets



Myths and Mysteries

The human story as a context of meaning for life

With Bernadette White

In our time, young people are increasingly experiencing a loss of meaning in their lives. In this series of online presentations, Bernadette White will look at the temple wisdom, art, and mythologies of ancient and medieval cultures to unfold the hidden currents of history and in particular the role of the ancient Mysteries. We will explore how new spiritual impulses entered the stream of human evolution and how, through these Mystery teachings, the future has been prepared.

Having worked as a class teacher, teacher educator, story-teller, and student of history, Bernadette will show how this unfolding of the human story can give a context of meaning within which we can find direction and hope for our lives. Particular examples will be given from the Steiner school main lessons devoted to ancient mythologies and histories. **We begin with Ancient India and Persia and continue through 2025 with Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, the Middle Ages and beyond.**

Session 2

Ancient Egypt

Thursday May 22, 7.30pm on Zoom

Bookings: https://events.humanitix.com/myths-and-mysteries-egypt-schools/tickets