

How to Get Started with Waldorf Homeschooling

Welcome to *How to Get Started with Waldorf Homeschooling!* In case we haven't met yet, I'm Jean, homeschooling mother of three children. I homeschooled for about 25 years, and now my kids are all in their 20s! Two boys and a girl. We homeschooled from the beginning, one went to public high school and the other two homeschooled all the way through.

To give you a little picture of the early days with Waldorf homeschooling, we started officially with grade one in 1996. Just a snapshot, there were no online groups, no Facebook or Pinterest, there was no curriculum to purchase. In August of 1991, the World Wide Web went live to the world. But we didn't use it for research until much later than that. Yahoo Groups were the first online communities that formed and that was in 2001. So the pioneer days in a sense.

Today, we have so much access to information and each other. To community – something I didn't think was possible to nurture in the beginning but it certainly is! But nowadays, we almost have too much information. And it's hard to sort it all out and not get overwhelmed. Almost the opposite problem from my early days of homeschooling.

In those early days, what we did have were books and Waldorf school teachers to learn from. I wanted to start here because I think the Waldorf homeschooling movement is FINALLY coming into its own, out from under the shadow of the Waldorf school movement.

And that's VERY exciting to me. Here's why.

1. I really believe what Alan Whitehead author of the Spiritual Syllabus curriculum series now out of print...but in his book *A Steiner Homeschool?* He states that Waldorf homeschooling is the "best of the best." The best approach to learning, as well as the best setting of homeschooling because we can truly teach children to become independent thinkers. Steiner – education for freedom... "Our highest endeavor must be to develop free human beings who are able of themselves to impart purpose and direction to their lives." We have a better capacity to do this in a homeschool setting.
2. Rudolf Steiner said to his first teachers 100 years ago to "look at the children before you and bring them what they need." As homeschooling parents, we are also in the best position to fulfill this directive. We know our children best and we are working with a much smaller teacher-student ratio than in a classroom!
3. We are in a much better position to "innovate responsibly." This is a word that is being discussed a lot lately in the broader Waldorf movement. Because after 100 years, some of the classroom practices have strayed away from Steiner's original intentions. And have also become quite fixed and dogmatic – implying that there is only one way to bring this method. When that is quite the opposite of what Steiner wanted. He never

even wrote down a curriculum because he wanted each teacher to design her own curriculum to suit those children before her.

So that's all very well and good, but there's still the question of How Do We Get Started with Waldorf Homeschooling!?!

What I'd like to do today is start with your questions. There's a mainstream teaching technique called KWL – this is something you might even consider using with your older children (say grade 5+). KWL stands for Know, Wonder, Learn.

We'll start with what you already Know about the Waldorf approach. Look at what you'd still like to know, or what you Wonder, and come back to what you Learn in this workshop at the end.

Let's zoom out for just a moment and look at the unique aspects: Rhythm, Lively Arts, Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum.

In my keynote, I'll be talking about the 3 Essential Elements of Waldorf Homeschooling: Rhythm, the Lively Arts, & Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum.

As you start planning for your lessons, you first choose your blocks for the year, then decide which days you'll have lessons (4 days a week?), then look at your upcoming block and choose your source of stories.

On the day of your lessons, you do some warm up activities like we did in circle. And then, read the story. Memorize if you wish, but in a homeschool setting not necessary because you a much smaller group than in a classroom! Next you draw a picture into the main lesson book. The next day, you do some warm-up, review the story verbally & write summary on paper.

That's the basic process!

I have a lot of resources on my website that might interested you. You can go to this page: [Resources for Waldorf Homeschooling](#).

All the best to you on your homeschooling journey and let me know how I can help.