**Ninth-Twelfth Grade Developmental Overview**

Parents who have immersed themselves in the Waldorf philosophy will be aware that by age 14, your off-

spring have ceased to be children and pass into adolescence. They have entered what is known as the third “7-year cycle,” the period from 14-21 years of age.

From birth to 7 years of age, children were just beginning to develop the skills to use their physical bodies in the world. The Waldorf curriculum teaches the very young children primarily through imitation, giving them wholesome experiences for coordinating the body, getting hands and feet to work together, laying the foundation for wholesome neural pathways. The guiding principle for this age group is “the world is *good.”*

From 7-14, children are working on their etheric bodies, as they begin to develop health and vitality in the body. Through building good habits, the healthy growth of their inner organs is supported. The Waldorf curriculum guides them through the magical journey from 1st through 8th grade, carefully helping them find their way into the world by leading them through the journey of human evolution, all the while cultivating a sense for aesthetic quality. The guiding principle for this age group is “the world is *beautiful,”*

From 14-21, youth long to feel confidence that “the world is true.” It is now clear to every parent that their offspring are able to weigh and balance thoughts in a manner that simply was not possible earlier. Fourteen year old children may seem to be unknowingly intoxicated by their own new mental capacities, and may be newly argumentative in a way that surprised themselves and their parents. The Waldorf curriculum meets them with subjects like black and white drawing, and the study of revolutions in a much deeper way than they first met it the eighth grade.

The parents of middle school parents may wonder why the Waldorf school curriculum is not more academically rigorous in the lower grades. In my experience, in lower school the teachers prepare the mind of the child as the farmer prepares a garden bed. In middle school, seeds of understanding are sown and begin to sprout. Now, in high school, the mind of the student shows the vigorous healthy growth of a well-prepared garden. Students are able to think critically, comparing and contrasting theories and concepts with lively and ope minds. Through the four years of high school, the students will be confronted with ever more academic subjects, and they will be ready to struggle and meet them. They will also meet the questions of *good and evil,*  and wrestle with the quest to discover the *meaning of life.*

In eurythmy, I can see that the high schooler is now able to really feel things deeply and consciously. They can create their own feelings and train themselves to listen accurately to the inner dynamics of poetry and music, letting these experiences flow into the arms and legs in beautiful etheric gestures.

For this reason, I have chosen to offer nearly all of the eurythmy warm-up exercises, rod challenges and spatial forms in the high school curriculum I have also included several of the more beautiful prayer-like sequences, including “I think Speech,” and “Halleluiah.” Although these should never be forced upon any high schooler—lest they develop and unhealthy antipathy to eurythmy and to their own bodies—those students who are able to make a deep connection to eurythmy will be able to draw great strength and nourishment from these exercises.

I have thus chosen to bundle all of these possibilities into one large eurythmyonline package for high school students. In many cases, the youth themselves can choose which of the exercises they would like to work on and internalize. They will now be ready to listen to the videos that describe how they should make their own practice, how often to practice, how to work in attentive silence, and the like.

What is, admittedly, missing from these high school curriculum is the opportunity to work deeply on eurythmy poetry and music. It is my deep hope that parents and children will find a way to study in live classes with me or with other eurythmists to learn the gestures of sounds of language and how to integrate them into beautiful poetical pieces!