

## **YOUR HIGHSCHOOL EURYTHMY EXERCISES**

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### **Notes on the videos**

In these lessons I am offering fundamental exercises for you to offer your motivated high school students. Please begin by watching the Introduction to Eurythmy for Homeschooling Video, to orient yourself to the purpose and scope of this exciting opportunity.

### **Ninth-Twelfth Grade Developmental Overview**

Parents who have immersed themselves in the Waldorf philosophy will be aware that by age 14, your offspring 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 1<sup>st</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> 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 open 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 an 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!

### **High School Eurythmy**

The high school student is well on the way to becoming a unique individual. We no longer expect them to follow our lead: we now need to create challenges to help them stretch in all directions, and to deepen their efforts and their inquiries. If you have been on this journey since first grade (and birth!), you can really appreciate the goals of Waldorf education, as penned by Rudolf Steiner:

*To wonder at beauty,*

*Stand guard over truth,  
Look up to the noble,  
Resolve on the good,  
This leadeth us truly  
To goals for our lives,  
To right in our doing,  
To peace in our feeling,  
To light in our thinking,  
And teaches us trust  
In the working of God,  
In all that there is,  
In the widths of the world,  
In the depth of the soul.*

*If we have led them well, the students will have internalized these virtues as a way of life.*

*It would be wonderful to be able to offer live eurythmy classes to all the home schooling youth. The online courses will serve them well, nonetheless, to align them and to challenge their coordination.*

*The high schooler has new capacities for putting soul into their movements. They can do threefold walking now with maturity and grace, in a way that wasn't possible earlier. Thus, although many of these movements were offered to your young children, they will be able to do them with the maturity of adults by this time, if they choose to.*

*High school students are now capable of doing complete artistic performances in eurythmy. They can perform symphonic works and great pieces by Shakespeare.*

*Of course, all of these pieces build upon the skills that are developed through the integrative skills of rod exercises and learning to move in etheric space. Every choreographed movement in eurythmy engages the complete body, mind and spirit in harmonious relationship.*

*I don't offer eurythmy artistic pieces of poetry and music online: these need to be developed in live classes. I have, however, included two most beautiful and inspiring exercises in your curriculum offering. Additionally, if you or your student want to go deeper with eurythmy as a meditative path, you can sign up for the study of the vowels and the consonants in eurythm. These carefully created lessons will open up the doors to doing eurythmy as a personal practice.*

*A special addition to the high school eurythmy curriculum are two beautiful exercises:*

*I think speech, and Halleluiah*

*Both of these can be considered movement meditations, and are deeply centering and inspiring.*

### **How do I learn the exercises?**

At this age, your motivated high school student might be ready to learn the exercises by themselves, or at least side by side with you. If you feel your child is ready, you can let Alternately, if your student is movement-challenged, you may want to learn them first and then guide your student as they learn them. In that case, consider this your own path of eurythmy, your own journey for self-development! (After all, as a homeschooling parent, you get to work on your own skills as well as on your child's!)

And remember: we don't speak while moving. We silence the mouth and throat, so that we can be fully mindful in our limbs. This is one more way that eurythmy encourages and supports mindful movements.

### **How do I teach my child?**

If you are working *with* you high school child, you can stand either in front of them or beside them, as you find appropriate.

When you are teaching your child, stand in front of him or her, about 3 feet away. Speak gently, expect participation, and work with a light touch. Be sure that you do the exercises correctly, but don't correct the child. A standard guideline in eurythmy is that you should only correct 1 in 9 mistakes. Don't hesitate to repeat each exercise up to 7 times, but never pedantically.

Don't expect your child to be able to master everything at once. Build skills sequentially, starting with the easier exercises in the first weeks of eurythmy. Practice each one about 20 times (that number is flexible), with good will and fun. Add verses or poems if you can, to make the movements more engaging.

Once an exercise can be done smoothly, only do it about seven times, and then move on to the next exercise. Encourage engagement, but avoid boredom!

### **How long should we do eurythmy?**

With these high school exercises, you have enough to work on throughout the year. In the younger grades, I recommend doing eurythmy it every week, all year long, or else in blocks, alternating it with other opening series. In that case, I would recommend doing it for 7 weeks in the autumn, 7 weeks in the winter, and 3-7 weeks in the spring.

However, the high school student who is being home schooled will be most motivated by following their own interest, and they may want to work intensely on their eurythmy for the whole year, or perhaps only do one block a year.

What is key is to realize that we are building etheric forces through repetition. These exercises are powerfully integrative and health-bringing, so if you and your child can find the right level of interest in doing them, they will be a great addition to your curriculum.

If the child had an opportunity to work with a trained eurythmy teaching, they would have lessons all year long, and learn a multitude of musical and poetic pieces, building on the spatial skills you are learning here.

### **The High School Eurythmy Exercises**

Your curriculum package includes videos and pdfs for threefold walking, the peace exercise, all of the geometric form exercises, all of the rod exercises, I think Speech, and Halleluiah.

It also include videos and pdfs describing the reason behind learning to move in space fluidly ("How to move in etheric space") and how we use rod exercises ("About Copper Rods"), as well as General Guidelines for how to do eurythmy at home.

If you are interested in purchasing more curriculum items from [eurythmyonline.com](http://eurythmyonline.com), you could learn all the sounds of language. I offer a 50% discount to all Bearth customers: add the discount code Bearth at check-out.

### **To close your session:**

At the end of every eurythmy experience, stand very quietly for 15-30 seconds or longer. You should now be standing straight, tall, and centered.

### **What is essential?**

To be a eurythmy teacher, we have to learn to pay attention to what is essential. The *learning process itself* is more important than immediate success. It is fine to make mistakes in the beginning, as the child learns to coordinate the unruly limbs, and to move smoothly with beauty, grace and style. Confidently, firmly but gently repeat the exercises often enough (perhaps 20 times when learning, and then 7 times once learned), until the child has "mastered" them and can do them well.

Remember, we are *building etheric strength through repetition!* Practicing the integrative movements of eurythmy is analogous to playing a piano: one has to repeat things often enough until the body can do them skillfully. Thereafter, the soul can build upon the foundations to *feel* and *bring self-perception* to them.

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