

Chalkboard Drawing in the Waldorf Classroom

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Project Reader

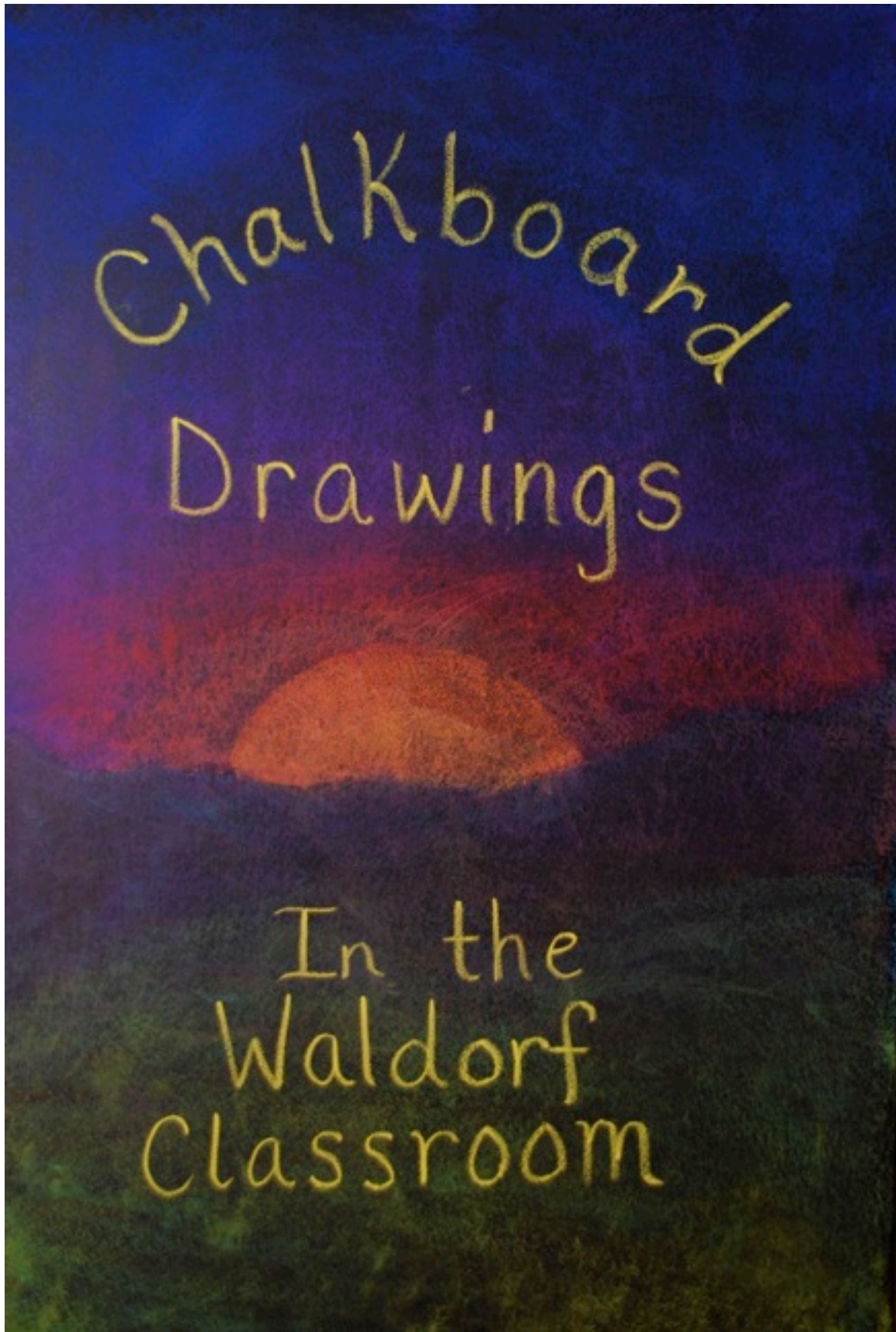
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Abstract

This research project explored “Chalkboard Drawings in the Waldorf Classroom.” As a focal point in the classroom, chalkboard drawings are done by Waldorf teachers around the world, yet there is very little indication made by Rudolf Steiner about this. The research involved looking at what Steiner did have to say about an artistic presentation of material given in the classroom as it pertains to the developing child. Another aspect explored was the Waldorf curriculum for grades one through eight in an attempt to seek the essence of each grade and how it can be presented artistically. The project includes an instructional section on chalk drawing technique. Finally, several chalkboard drawings were done and many were used in grades classrooms. The end product of the research is to make available to Waldorf teachers a resource for information and inspiration regarding doing chalkboard drawings in the classroom. The project is available online at www.chalkboarddrawing.org. The website also includes an extensive photo gallery of chalkboard drawings not included in this paper, as well as a way for other teachers to submit their own drawings for sharing with the wider Waldorf community of teachers.



Chapter One - Why Do We Do Chalkboard Drawings?

I never knew why we do chalkboard drawings in the Waldorf classroom. My first exposure, like many, was upon visiting a Waldorf school for the first time. There, and distinctly so, the soothing classroom had its focal point: a beautiful drawing done in chalk at the front of the room. There is no mistaking a Waldorf classroom from any other. As a matter of fact, wherever you go in the world, you will have the same sense of “home” that is distinctly a Waldorf classroom.

When I became a class teacher I followed suit. Yet, I will never forget my first chalkboard drawing experience for my class. I had picked up a second grade, and Saint Michael was the story for the first day of school. I had never taken an art class, done much drawing or painting, and the only colored chalk I had ever handled was a chunky piece of sidewalk chalk during play with my own children. I was intimidated and completely overwhelmed to say the least. A wonderful mentor simply said to me, “Here, this is the gesture of Michael,” and she stood firmly on the ground with one arm extended toward the sky and the other pointing down to the earth. Okay, simple enough. But really, in its simplicity, the gesture is the crux of the chalkboard drawing.



I began to draw, first covering my intended space with a heavenly blue background and gleaming golden sun. Out of the clouds came our hero Michael, slaying the dragon and banishing him from the heavens. I couldn't believe I was getting paid to do this. Not only that, when something didn't quite look right, I simply drew over it again and mistake gone. With practice and delightful stories to work with, not to mention delighted students, the drawings became much less intimidating and overwhelming.

After a few years of doing these drawings with and for my students, I began to have a deeper understanding of why we do these chalkboard drawings. The stories and accompanying artwork settle so deeply in the students that the pulse in the classroom is palpable. The students can't help but glance toward the front of the room upon entering to see if anything has changed on the

board. I still have a lot to learn, and will continue to stay open to answers as they come, but my desire is to inspire Waldorf teachers to enjoy this gift that we bring to the children under our care and tutelage.

First and foremost, it is in the storytelling that the first images come. Here the child lives into their imagination and creates for themselves a picture with detail and feeling. Through the art of speech the teacher first imbues the child's imagination with age appropriate stories that serve to educate the whole child in their head and heart, as well as their hand. Then, through the artistic activities that follow a review, the child is allowed to live into the story again and to forge upon it the feelings that allow a true connection to the content of the lesson. The importance of the deliverance is given by Rawson and Masters (2000):

One of Steiner education's main aims is to educate the whole human being in thinking, feeling and will i.e. head, heart and hand. *Make everything into a picture* - means that the material should not be defined in concepts but portrayed in vivid descriptions - a fountain, river, a cliff, a tree, a flower, the North Star, or even the physical law of gravity and the principles of chemistry. Ordinary everyday life can be portrayed in meaningful pictures and images. The teacher must fill with inner conviction and warmth the pictures he/she presents to the souls of the children. They can derive strength for the whole of their lives from lessons that stream from heart to heart rather than head to head. (p. 12)

The teacher will then give the example for the students to render and then allow them to embellish their work with details of the story that spoke to them. In this work, the teacher is given the

gift of insight into the child's very soul being and has been a part of fostering the further development of that soul. The teacher brings the example to the students, encouraging imagination and artistic freedom and in return the students will take up ownership of the material presented and make it their own, deeply embedding it. Steiner (2000) remarks:

Children are more receptive to authority in teaching through art. Consequently, we can accomplish the most in this sense during this period of children's lives using artistic methods. They will very effortlessly find their way into what we wish to communicate to them and take the greatest delight in rendering it by drawing or even painting. We should make sure, however, that they avoid merely imitative work. (p. 9)

It is through the lessons, which come in the form of stories in the early years and still in the later years woven with factual information, that the students begin to make connections - strong connections - to the world in which they live. In the online mission statement of the Alliance for Childhood, it is stated that they "act for the sake of the children themselves and for a more just, democratic, and ecologically responsible future." This statement also includes that the Alliance "promotes policies and practices that support children's healthy development, love of learning, and joy in living." Today's world is in need of inhabitants that can recognize and understand the world they live in, be open to cultural differences and be able to conceptualize solutions for the challenges that they will face in their adult years. Found in the appendix, Finser (1994) adds an article supporting this idea, written by Joan Almon, director for the Alliance for Childhood titled "Educating for Creative Thinking: The Waldorf Approach,"

One of the tasks of the Waldorf elementary teacher is to present the curriculum in such a way that it stirs the imagination and feelings of the students, creating a context in which they can experience sympathy and antipathy, joy and sorrow, anger and tranquility, and much more.” Further on she states: Through mythologies, great stories, and stirring biographies, the children’s own moral impulses are awakened, and an idealism begins to grow in them that will flower in adolescence. (p. 231)

Rudolf Steiner (1997) firmly believed that through an artistic education, children would develop into the very moral human beings able to impart upon the world we live in a much needed social renewal. Almost one hundred years ago he realized that the world was abandoning this approach and what was needed was a reformation of the educational system. That ideal is becoming more of a reality as Waldorf education spreads globally. He speaks of the second stage of a child’s development, the first eight grades of elementary school:

In this second stage we are no longer obligated to merely accept passively everything coming from our environment, allowing it to vibrate in us physically; rather, we transform it creatively into images. The child demands everything in a creative, artistic way. The teachers and educators who encounter the child must present everything from the perspective of an artist. Our contemporary culture demands this of teachers, and this is what must flow into the art of education; at this point, interactions between the growing human being and educators must take an artistic form. In this respect, we face great obstacles as teachers. Our civilization and the culture all around us have reached the point where they are geared only to

the intellect, not to the artistic nature.” (p.29). Whatever lives in our thoughts about nature must fly on the wings of artistic inspiration and transform into images. They must rise in the soul of the child. (p.30)

Although Steiner mentions a chalkboard in very few places, he does speak endlessly about imbuing each lesson with artistic elements and beauty for the child to devour in the realm of their feeling life. Jack Petrash (2002) wrote a whole section on teaching through art. Here he states:

“The teaching of any subject, from science to history, can be enlivened and enhanced by incorporating art into the instruction.” (p. 60)

Later on he quotes, “Evidence from the brain sciences and evolutionary psychology increasingly suggests that the arts (along with language and math) play an important role in brain development and maintenance.” (Sylwester, 1998, p. 32) (60).

In providing the students with a beautiful environment conducive to learning, the Waldorf teacher is fostering the child’s development and ability to know beauty in the world around him.

In Rudolf Steiner’s (1996) own words:

Much can be done with the simplest resources, if only the teacher has the proper artistic power and energy for work - these are among the lifelong results of the proper cultivation of a feeling for beauty and art. The moral sense is also being formed in children during these years through the pictures of life placed before them, through the authorities whom they look up to - this moral sense becomes

assured if children, from their own sense of beauty, feel that the good is beautiful, and also that the bad is ugly. (p. 35)

There is much written in Steiner's literature, Waldorf Education resources and mainstream research as well to support the arts in education. But, the true testament comes from the words and reactions of the students when they enter a Waldorf classroom where their class teacher has given them the gift of art. It is something that they look forward to upon entering the classroom each morning. And a gift like this that is given in love will be received in love - regardless of the talent or skill level.

Chapter 2 - The Essence of Grade One

*The sun, with loving light,
Makes bright for me each day,
The soul, with spirit power,
Brings strength into my limbs.
In sunlight shining clear
I reverence, O God,
The strength of human kind
Which Thou so graciously
Hast planted in my soul.
That I, with all my might,
May love to work and learn,
From thee come light and strength;
To thee rise love and thanks.*

~Rudolph Steiner

The first grader, genuinely eager to enter a wider world, showing all signs of readiness, takes on with his new capacities a new and more organized group experience. To him first grade is a leap into a new world of adventure and learning. No longer is he driven by only play and imitation, this new exploration calls upon all that he has established in himself through his first phase of childhood. He has worked into his physical body and is now prepared to enter the realm of learning through his feelings. Over the next seven years he will further develop his thinking capacities by not only having his whole being engaged in learning, but also by tying his learning to his feeling life in order to penetrate and enliven the world for him.

Art and all things of beauty and goodness are the way to the child's feeling life. If the teacher will endow every aspect of her subject matter with beautiful images, whether seen or heard, the child will fully engage this bridge from play to work. It is the *process* in which this new learning

takes place that counts the most. The child at this age lives into his imagination, and with this understanding the teacher presents the lesson material through stories that appeal to their imaginations. To the first grader, the world is a beautiful and safe place. Good always prevails. Each story, often the archetypal fairy tale, brings an opportunity to the child for deepening his understanding of the people and world around him which he will later encounter and relate to in adulthood. It is in this that the human gesture plays the largest part on the stage of the first grade curriculum. Through the human gesture the child feels deeply into his being all that first grade has to offer. Skills in writing and arithmetic are almost passively acquired, yet deeply ingested. Steiner (2000) relates the teaching of writing with art:

So we begin to teach writing by using art and by drawing forms; we use the forms of consonants when we want to reach back far enough that the children will be moved by the differences in the forms. It is not enough to tell the children merely through speaking, which is exactly why people are the way they are today. By removing the shapes of letters from the current convention and showing their source, we move the whole being of the child, who thus becomes very different than would otherwise be the case if we appeal only to the intellect. We must not allow ourselves to think only in abstractions. Instead, we must teach art in drawing and so on, teach soul substance in arithmetic, and teach reading and use art to teach the conventional in writing. In other words, we must permeate all of our teaching with an element of art. (p.5)

In the chalkboard drawings for the first grader the human gesture and beauty of the natural world are of great significance. Whether in form drawing, fairy tale, seasonal drawings, or characters in the arithmetic lessons, capturing the beauty of a simple gesture will soothe the soul of the first grader. The child will “feel” the gesture and recognize in it the goodness that lives around him.

The drawings need not be overly detailed; in fact, the simplest drawing leaves space for the child to embellish his own drawing with details that live within him from the story you have told. In allowing the children this creative freedom one must remind the children to stay true to the story. They may ask if the character can have red pants or a purple dress. As long as there was no significance to the story the child may use any color he wishes. Other details, such as flowers, trees, decorative aspects on a house, should be encouraged if the child wishes to add these. Some guidance may be needed if the picture becomes too “busy” and detracts from the main idea of the story.

There are many ways the first grade teacher might go about presenting a drawing of the story on the chalkboard. She might do the drawing ahead of time so that the children enter the class in wonder of what story they may hear. Or, the drawing may be covered up until it is time to put the picture into the main lesson book. In either case, the teacher would guide the students through the drawing on a piece of paper, like theirs, in the front of the room. I have heard of complaints from students feeling a deep dissatisfaction with classmates who peek under the curtain to see the drawing before it is revealed. A real injustice is felt in this situation, and one may want to take this into consideration if there will be an unveiling of the chalkboard drawing. On the other

hand, some teachers choose to draw the picture on the board in front of the class when it is time to guide them in their rendition. There are many acceptable points of view on this and ultimately it is in the gesture of the teacher putting forth the effort to bring beauty to her students that is most relevant.

Nature drawings could also be left up on the board and take the place of the story drawings. In this case the story drawings would be led exclusively on paper if there weren't enough blackboard space. Either way, it is always nice to have something seasonal on the board. For instance, one could draw trees on either or both sides of the board that change with the seasons, have changes in weather, critters and flowers coming and going. You may also have your characters, often told about throughout the year in a pedagogical story, depicted on the board through their various journeys and adventures. Bringing in seasonal and festival themes offers a way to bring beauty and reverence to the aesthetic of the classroom. The drawing on the board can change almost daily. These are the things that the students get very excited about as they wait for the door to open in the morning. If the changes don't happen daily, the children learn the valuable lesson of delayed gratification and are all the more excited to see something new in the drawing. It also gives the child the opportunity to heighten his skills in observation. The teacher should feel comfortable in bringing these drawings to the children and not get caught up in feelings of inadequate drawing skills. If it is brought with love, it will be received with love.



In the drawing from the story, “The Fisherman and His Wife,” you see something quite simple and attainable. First, the sky and water are drawn. Next, the boat and fisherman. The fisherman has a gesture that shows his pleading and taking from the fish, but could also be interpreted as a gesture of giving when he agrees to let the fish go. The fishing rod is in the back of the boat, again simply drawn. Next, the fish is called into the drawing. In this lesson one could cover two letters, the “F” and the “W.” The fish is wearing a crown signifying his enchantment, as he is really a prince. The crown is gleaming with magic. The children could add beautiful scales on the fish, a rocky coast, the fisherman’s cottage, storm clouds, whatever they took away from the story. You will often see the temperament of the child shine through in what they choose to add to their drawing.

Chapter 3 - The Essence of Grade 2

Much of who the child is in first grade continues on in second grade, but now with more form and ability. The second grader is still very much connected with the world as a whole and sees herself as part of her natural surroundings and her loving community. Yet, at times there will be signs of something else in the midst. The child seems to be between two polarities. On the one side a deep connection still to the infallible spiritual world lives in her soul. She still sees the world as good and true and maintains a connection to her higher self. But, at times, she will begin to show her human folly as she may lash out at a friend, hide a truth, or play the trickster. Here she finds turmoil in the separation from the spiritual realm and the discovery of the lower human traits. The second grade teacher brings a balance to this in stories of saints and legends, exemplifying the higher human self, and in the animal fables, often depicting the lower human traits. Here the child is gently ushered into the transition from first to second grade. The fables also appeal to the second grader's deep interest in the animal kingdom. Here the animals should be depicted in their true character. For instance, what makes a fox foxy? It is sly, quick-witted, cunning and proud. These elements should be brought into the picture. Whereas in fourth grade the animal is drawn much closer to its reality, in second grade it is important to bring out the character and quality of the animal. This is what the second grader will be able to relate most closely to. I will never forget a particular evening when I was driving home with my daughters. A fox trotted across the road, and I said, "Oh look, a fox!" One of my daughters said, "Oh yes, you know Mr. Fox; he's probably up to some kind of mischief." This is a perfect example of the way the child of this age relates to the animal kingdom. In their eyes animals can do all the

things we humans can do: play, eat, seek shelter, raise their young as well as talk and relate to one another!

The chalkboard drawings in second grade still invoke the human gesture within. Whether drawing humans or animals, it is the gesture that remains the vital element in the drawings.



In this simple drawing of Saint Francis, his gesture is one of reverence towards the birds he is speaking to. He is praising them for their beautiful voices and ability to fly. He is also reminding them to be thankful for these blessings. He has a heavenly light shining behind him that also lights up the trees that frame the picture. The students have the opportunity in this drawing to embellish it with as many birds as they would like as well as flowers, butterflies, etc.



In this chalkboard drawing of “The Fox and the Stork,” the fox is seen in an almost mocking gesture toward the stork who stands above the succulent dish of broth unable to share the meal with the cunning fox, yet maintaining composure and honor. The wispy aroma floating off the dish will appeal to the phlegmatic!

Chapter 4 - The Essence of Grade Three

Third grade is a big year of transformation. The student begins to feel a separation and loss of the kingdom of early childhood as he enters into a more conscious state of who he is as separate from the people and places around him. These changes may have already begun in second grade, and may also not come around until fourth grade. Yet, on the whole, this is the experience of the nine year old. In the Waldorf school we name this the “Nine Year Change.” It is a time of awakening, the second time in the child’s life that he discovers “I.” The first time was around the age of three when he first used the word “I” to refer to himself. Now he finds that he stands alone amongst his family, teacher and peers. He begins to notice that he is separate from those around him. He may experience fears that seem to be unfounded to the adult. He may also experience intense moments of grief and sadness, almost a mourning of some great loss. I had a student in my class that cried nearly every day, with no apparent cause, for almost a year and then quite abruptly stopped. Nightmares are often common at this age, especially with a theme of dying. Doubt and questioning can also pervade the relationship he has with his teachers and parents. It is not unheard of for a nine year old to wonder if his parents are really his or if maybe he was adopted, or for him to question the genuineness and authority of his teacher. For an excellent book written on the nine year change, see Hermann Koepke’s Encountering the Self.

The answer to all of this lives in the brilliant Waldorf curriculum. As A.C. Harwood (2001) states:

Steiner recommended a sequence of the better known stories of the Old Testament. It is not only that you have here the legend at its highest and grandest - Noah with the animals, Elijah with the ravens, David with his sling, and Joshua with his trumpet - but that the whole story is one of the journey of man from paradise to the earth, that journey which the children themselves are in the act of making. (p.91)

The third grade Waldorf curriculum gives the nine-year-old the gift of meeting the world that he has come to acknowledge with the tools he will need to live in his new home, the earth. The student will learn the practical skills of farming and gardening, house building, measurement and time. They will also learn about clothing and fibers, cooking and weaving. These kinds of activities are just what is in order and turns this year of turmoil into a rewarding experience. The third grader goes forth with gusto, tools in hand - literally, to conquer the world. By the end of the year the third grader has the confidence in their abilities to navigate their way through life. A true sense of knowing that, if need be, they could make it on their own.

Koepke (1989) speaks of the nine-year-old and his relationship to the arts:

Up to the ninth year art is a servant to children, but that after this time children should become a servant of art. This change results from the liberation of creative forces that had until then been active unconsciously in building up the body but that can now slowly and gradually be used to give expression to the ego. The creative core in the human being is now being addressed; through art it can reveal the spiritual in matter. For this reason, the artistic element is of central importance in Waldorf pedagogy. (p. 89)



In this drawing of “The Sower,” the children are given a bright and colorful landscape where the gesture is one of moving forward with an uprightness and with the arm scattering seeds onto the fertile land.



Drawing by Lynn Harroff

Here, the chalkboard drawing was added to each day that the students learned about another type of dye. The original drawing consisted of the woman stirring the purple dye vat with all the others empty without fire beneath them. As plant and animal dyes were introduced and used in the classroom on different fibers, in the drawing the pots were filled with the color of the dye that was used, and on the line hung the fabric or fiber that was used with that dye was hung on the line in the drawing as well. This drawing was not done by the students in their main lesson books. Instead, their book entries consisted of each dye and fiber that were used on a particular day.



This drawing was done in the winter months and used as part of our Grammar block. Each day, or there about, a new element was added to the picture, and the students used the drawing for the content of their daily writing. In this way, they could choose what to write as they practiced using the parts of speech. For instance: The black cat sat in the window on a crisp, clear winter evening.

Chapter 5 - The Essence of Grade Four

The fourth grader has arrived. With the nine year change behind him, he is ready to embrace the world around him beginning with his place in the world. Local geography is brought in such a way that the student's awareness is heightened to what lies about him. Beginning with the immediate surroundings of their home, they will make maps of their bedroom, home and classroom. They will then look out further to where their home is in relation to where they go to school, the city or town they live in, to the state and bordering neighbors. This work helps the child have a sense of being grounded here on the earth and in this life. The geography lessons come alive through great descriptions of the land. This is carried through the grades with the first introductions coming in the fourth year. Steiner (1997) discusses the importance of the teacher's depiction of beautiful images in the geography lessons and the significance of this influence on the child

When you make your geography lessons truly graphic, when you describe the countries clearly and show the distribution of vegetation, and describe the products of the earth on the different countries, making your lessons thoroughly alive in this way, you are not likely to find your students dull in this subject. And when you further enliven the geography lessons by first describing a country, then drawing it - allowing the children to draw it on the board and sketch in the rivers, mountains, distribution of vegetation, forest, and meadow land, and then read travel books with your pupils - when you do all this you find that you usually have very few dull scholars; and what's more, you can use your geography les-

sons to arouse the enthusiasm of your pupils and to stir up new capacities within them. If you can make geography itself interesting you will indeed notice that other capacities are aroused also in your pupils. (p. 107)



Local Geography - State Map



State History - State Seal of Tennessee

Also new to the fourth grader is another creation story. This is the time for the Norse Myths. Unlike in the previous year, when the god of the Old Testament stories was immortal and omnipotent, the gods of the Norse Myths are not quite immortal and make many human-like mistakes. They are fallible, jealous, mischievous, hurtful and short tempered. Yet, they must right any wrong they inflict as is customary to uphold their honor. The fourth grader is intrigued by these gods and lives deeply into the stories as they recognize their own folly in the characters. These stories are colorful and rich and can easily be portrayed pictorially in both story and drawing.



The Three Norns - Fates of Destiny

Form drawing reaches a new level in the fourth year. Here the lines of running forms, braided forms and knots go over and under one another as they disappear only to reappear again. This, too, the fourth grader can relate to. It requires skill and concentration and brings an added level of challenge to the budding independent child.



Man and Animal - Zoology

In the fourth grade year, a new connection to nature is established. The first of several connections to be made in the upcoming elementary years, the animal kingdom is studied. The study of animals is brought to the students through imaginative pictures and descriptions of how the ani-

mal is seen in relation to the human being. The children learn all the various ways animals have adapted to their environment and how they have become specialized in one or a few particular areas. Below the Great Blue Heron is depicted with its sharp eyes, long fishing bill and lengthy legs for wading in water in search of its next meal. This was an animal chosen as well for its presence in this particular geographic location, easily relating to local studies.



Zoology - Great Blue Heron

Chapter 6 - The Essence of Grade Five

*I look into the world
Wherein there shines the sun,
Wherein there gleam the stars,
Wherein there lie the stones.
The plants they live and grow,
The beasts they feel and live,
And human beings to spirit give
A dwelling in the soul.*

*I look into the soul
That dwells within me.
God's spirit lives and moves
In light of sun and soul,
In heights of worlds without,
In depths of soul within.*

*Spirit of God, to Thee I seeking turn,
That strength and grace and skill
For learning and for work
In me may live and grow
~ Rudolph Steiner*

The fifth grade year is known to be one of balance and harmony. Now on the other side of the nine year change and not yet in the throws of puberty, the child is at a golden height in their childhood. Equipped with a more enhanced consciousness, the students are now accustomed to standing alone and seeing the world with a new perspective. Where history was more pictorial and personal last year, this year they learn through stories of mankind's deeds and strivings. There is an inner stirring that allows the child to relate her own humanness through this experience. She is led further and further into the world through the study of geography, yet brought in toward herself through the history of the ancient peoples of India, Persia, Mesopotamia, Egypt

and finally Greece. She is led through more creation stories and mythologies, exposed to more of the world's cultures, ending the year with Greek history. It is here in Greece, where harmony and balance are prized, that ancient history ends.

The gestures of each of these cultures can be captured through the student's artwork. The gesture of the ancient Indian is a dreaminess. In Persia, we see an impulse for transformation of the earth and for conquering the spirit of darkness. The cultures of Mesopotamia begin to express themselves with written language, and the Egyptians with their tremendous adaptability in the Nile River Valley. They were driven to achievement leaving a lasting legacy in the construction of monumental pyramids, the field of mathematics, agricultural techniques and medicine to name only a few. Finally, with ancient Greek history, the student comes to find herself at home, in harmony and balance with herself.

Below is the creation story of Gaea, the earth, and Uranus, the sky, as they meet and fall in love. It is left to the students to add more detail to the picture from their recollection of the story. The drawing may be adorned with more trees, plants, or flowers as the children see fit.



Greek Mythology - Gaea and Uranus

New to this year is the study of the plant kingdom. In their botany lessons, the fifth graders discover the secrets and potential hidden within the seed - something they can relate to on an unconscious level. The inner burning and desire to grow out into the world are something the child can understand in the seed's potential. Being freed up from the physical realm, the child has a special relationship with the plant kingdom where her astral forces are at work. Steiner (1997) proposes that once again we relate to the plant world through its relationship to the human being.

The plant has something like an instinctive longing for the sun. The blossoms turn toward the sun even before it has risen. Point out the difference between the life

of desire in animals and people, and the pure effort of the plant to turn toward the sun. Then give the children a clear idea of how the plant exists between sun and earth. At every opportunity mention the relation of the plant to its surroundings, especially the contrast between plants and human beings, and plants and animals. Talk about the out-breathing and in-breathing of the plant. Allow the children to experience how “bad” air is the very thing used by the plant, through the power of the sun, to build up again what later serves as food for people. When speaking of human dependence on food you can point to the importance of a good harvest, and so on. With regard to the process of growth it should be made clear that each plant, even the leaf, grows only at the base and not at the tip. The actual process is always concealed. (p.115)

*Behold the plant within the seed,
Enchanted form as yet unfreed,
Growth gently pushes root and shoot,
Forming leaves and flowers and fruit.
Gaily adorned with color fair,
Ornamenting earth and air,
It develops, it unfolds,
All that once its heart did hold. ~ Unknown*



Chapter 7 - The Essence of Grade Six

There is a burning flame deep inside the sixth grader. Much is stirring. Feet firmly planted on the earth now, the sixth grader is very intentional as he steps out into the world before him. His physical body is hardening and begins to take swift steps towards puberty. As they are increasingly aware of the physical changes of their bodies, it is a ripe time to learn about the physical body of the earth they stand so firmly on. In fifth grade the study of botany brought their gaze to the ground, and now in sixth grade the study of geology will take them to the deepest depths of the earth, to another inner burning flame.

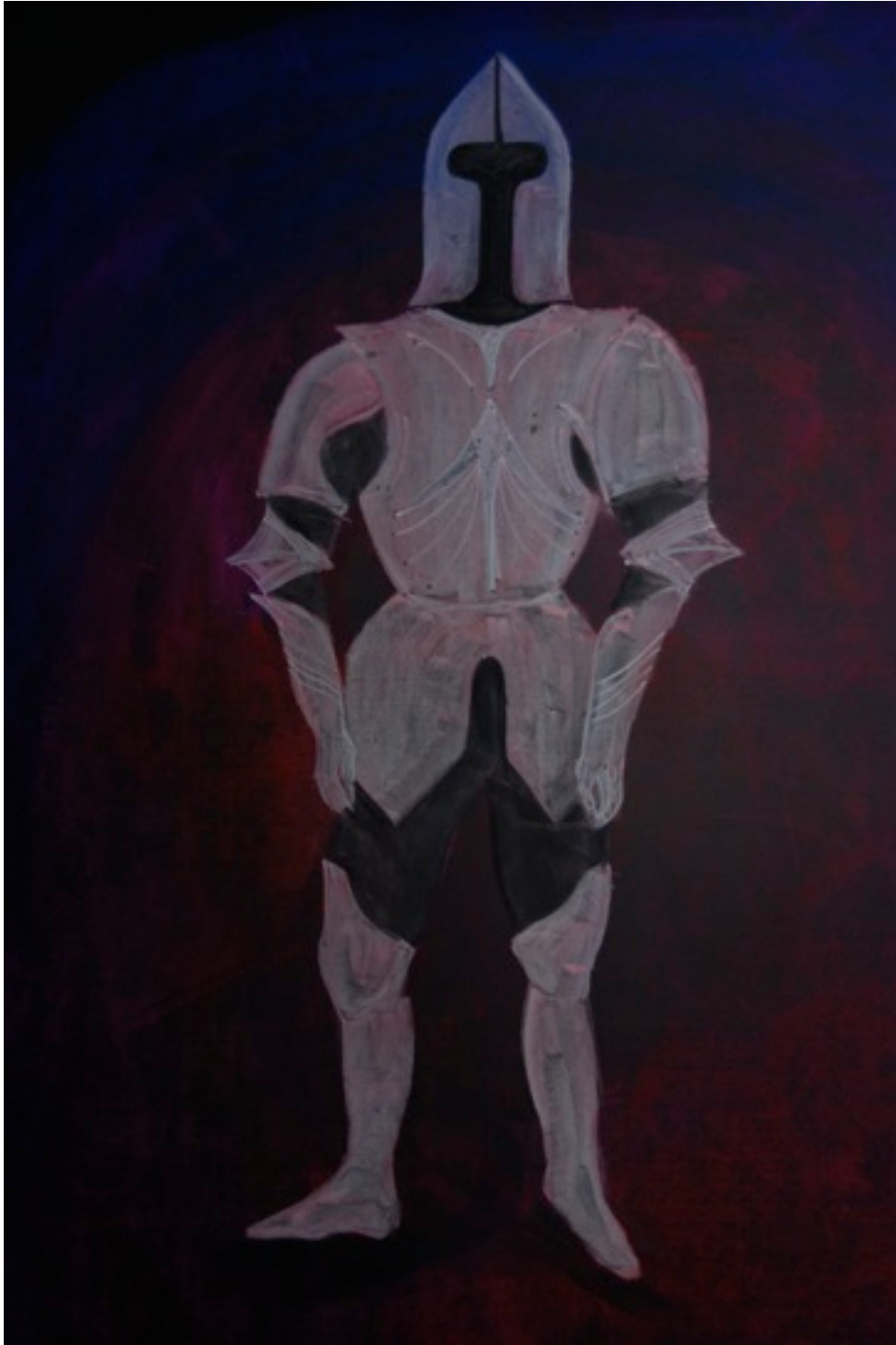
They will also gaze upward to the heavens to discover the earth's relationship to the other bodies of the solar system in their study of astronomy. Here they are between the firm earth below their feet encasing treasures untold and the sparkling heavens that induce a sense of awe from above. Building on their natural interest in the laws of nature and the physical world, this year introduces the study of physics. Optics and acoustics are observed through concrete experimentation and observation. Theoretical discussions may follow at an introductory level only, waiting until high school to more deeply explore theories.

Continuing to discover the wider world, the sixth grader studies the changing map of Europe from a historical perspective. Where the ancient civilizations ended in fifth grade, the curriculum now transitions from ancient history to modern history following the decline of Greece and the rise and fall of Rome. Just as the sixth grader dominates their own physical body, the Romans

more than any other ancient civilization dominated their physical world. Their determination and ability to set out on conquests matches the ability of the sixth grader. Divide and conquer is a strong theme at this age. The many accomplishments of the Romans in their cities, roads, aqueducts, as well as their conquests of the Western world gift the students with a historical example of how excess can lead to destruction. The fall of Rome is quite sobering. Yet, there is light at the end of the tunnel. Here the sixth grader has left behind childhood as he has known it and is beginning a new journey into the life of discovering himself.



Here Caesar is crossing the Rubicon, passing the point of no return.



Bringing a balance to the concrete study of laws pertaining to both physics and social order, the study of medieval times brings the heart of the sixth grader to acts of chivalry, as in many Waldorf schools there is a ceremonial knighthood to partake in.

Chapter 8 - The Essence of Grade 7

The seventh grader is on a path of self discovery. Their spirit of inquiry, exploration and questioning are well matched to the curriculum this year as they find kindred spirits in the explorers, discoverers, and reformers. The Renaissance mimics the seventh grader's respect of boundaries in that the only boundaries to be acknowledged are those boundaries to be crossed! Here they can experience for themselves great figures that were resolved to see for themselves, do for themselves and not trust authority for its own sake. The Age of Exploration ushers the seventh graders into their own self-realizations by revealing individuals who went beyond the limits and created a new perspective for the world. It is a wonderful time for biographies of great explorers and conquerors of the unknown.



Magellan

Perspective drawing, chemistry, physics and human physiology challenge the students on many levels, holding their interest and offering them the opportunity to continue seeing the world with awe and inspiration. This year is a critical year in which the students should feel that the adults in their lives can maintain their authority and authenticity, while at the same time allowing the seventh graders to bump up against the boundaries and feel their way through a year of their own exploration.

In the Waldorf curriculum, each subject of study is brought by beginning and ending with the human being. In the study of chemistry this year, combustion is no exception. Marjorie Spock (1985) makes this point:

It is not a long step from such a picture [the story of Prometheus] to a study of combustion in the human organism. Combustion is found to be a process whereby substances are digested and changed into other forms. This same digestive process, which in the human body changes the form of the foods one has eaten and releases warmth and energy, can be observed externally in the breaking down of substances by fire. Fire is literally a digester. (p. 101)



Geometrical and perspective drawing is continued in seventh grade, including the study of great artists and their changing perspective in paintings from the Renaissance period. This turning point in the evolution of human consciousness is echoed in the development of the seventh grader.

Chapter Nine - The Essence of Grade 8

In the last year of elementary school, the eighth grader is well on his way to an understanding of humanity in the world in which he lives. This has been brought to them through years of instruction that have nurtured their souls and created a space for them to act out of their own thinking, feeling and willing. They have been engaged by a curriculum that meets the developmental needs and soul mood of the child at each step along the way. Having had this freedom in education, they are now met at the threshold of their next journey, toward adulthood, with a curriculum that embraces their new capacities for logical thinking and independent judgement. Now they learn about human strivings where these capacities emerged into ideals of human freedom in revolutions of nations all over the world. Within the eighth grader is a strong feeling of needing or seeking new challenges. He is eager to feel part of the educational process not just the recipient of prescribed plans. Here he is willing to venture out and seek what he is capable of, and what his limits are. By the end of another rich year he is finally ready to enter into the next phase of his development and welcomes the changes on the horizon.

Without going into a general overview of the eighth grade curriculum, it would be more appropriate to sum up with an auspicious excerpt from Marjorie Spock (1985). Here she forms an accurate description of the elementary years of the growing child and the culmination of these life-long formative experiences:

In the light of the Steinerian principle of metamorphosis the development of the human being from birth to twenty-one falls into three great growth phases, each one of which requires a different type of education. In the first phase, lasting until

the onset of second dentition, the world is the child's teacher. He lives wholly imbedded in his surroundings, learning by imitation and drinking in impressions with keen, wide-open senses. At this age it would be presumptuous to instruct him. It is enough to provide him with impressions of a human world of goodness, truth and beauty. For the rest, nature herself cares for him as no human being can. In kindergarten he will be endlessly content to play there with a few simple play things. Though he asks endless questions, learned answers enter his ears as so much empty air or at best as a kind of soothing music. He does not want to be taught. He is too busy learning to welcome interruptions, and his keen senses perceive far more than we know how to teach him.

With the maturation that takes place at five or six, however, the child begins to withdraw from the world into the fastnesses of his own being. Slowly the world becomes a riddle to him. Now he has a real need of knowledge. At this period we do well to offer him instruction, to bring the world to him provided we can do so as artists in pictures that speak potently of reality.

The second phase of childhood corresponds approximately to the eight year period of elementary schooling. It is the task of elementary education to give children in the second phase of maturation an understanding of man and the world they live in, to offer them knowledge so rich and warm as to engage their hearts and wills as well as minds. Such an understanding is the basis of all real efficiency in later years. Children educated in Rudolf Steiner's sense are genuinely practical as well as finely artistic human beings.

With the completion of the eighth grade the children should have a well-rounded general picture of man and universe. This last year should not only bring all previous experiences to a new peak, but enable the children to enter fully and potently into the life of their own times. (p.109)



Meteorology - Storm over Taos, NM

Chapter 10 - Tips and Techniques

There are many ways to begin a chalkboard drawing, but most importantly start with a clean surface. The aesthetics of the chalkboard, like everything else in the classroom, should be one of care and beauty. There is beauty in something as simple as cleanliness. To draw on a board that has streaks of old chalk wiped all around detracts from the time and effort you are putting into your next drawing. Also, the chalk tray should be as free from dust and pieces of chalk as much as possible. Start with a clean slate!

It may be helpful to keep your chalks organized by color. Anything can be used for this such as origami folded boxes, small baskets, organizing trays made for bolts, screws or crafts, cardboard jewelry boxes, etc. This makes it easy and saves precious time when you are looking for a particular color. It also enhances the tidiness of your work area and keeps the chalk from being marked up by all the colors next to it.

For cleaning chalkboards, a couple of priceless tips may serve useful. One is that I have found that a microfiber furniture polishing cloth will easily wipe away chalk without leaving any streaks. This is perfect for times when you aren't able to actually wash the board between drawings or when erasing daily work from the board. They are inexpensive and long lasting. I have found them for just over two dollars at home improvement stores. The dust can be shaken out of them before they need to be washed. A second tip is to always wash the chalk tray first. This pre-

vents you from picking up more chalk with a wet cloth or sponge and dragging it back over the board.

In order to preserve its integrity, the way you wash your chalkboard should depend on the type of chalkboard you use. If your chalkboard is a painted surface, like wood, you will want to wash it with as little water as possible and dry it immediately. This also applies to chalk boards that are framed in wood. After as much chalk as possible has been erased with a cloth, use another clean cloth or soft sponge to wash the board. Make sure to have a clean bucket of water to rinse your sponge out frequently. This will decrease the number of times you have to wipe the board, which will help preserve it, and will more effectively and economically wash away any remaining chalk dust.

Getting Started

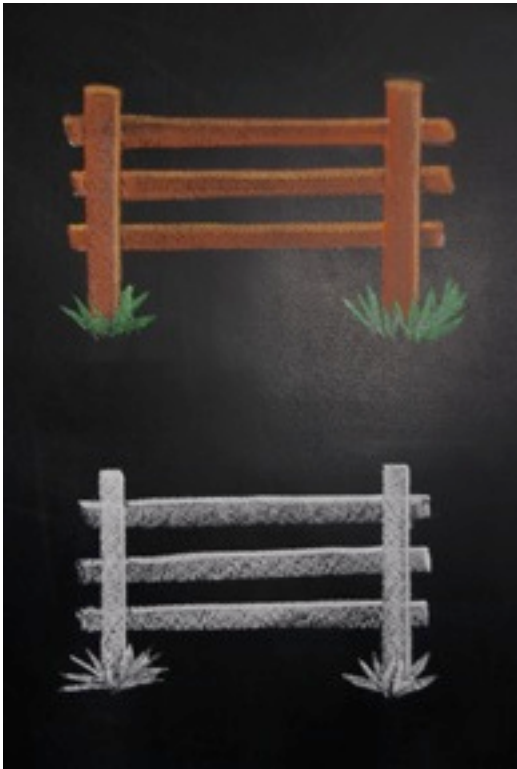
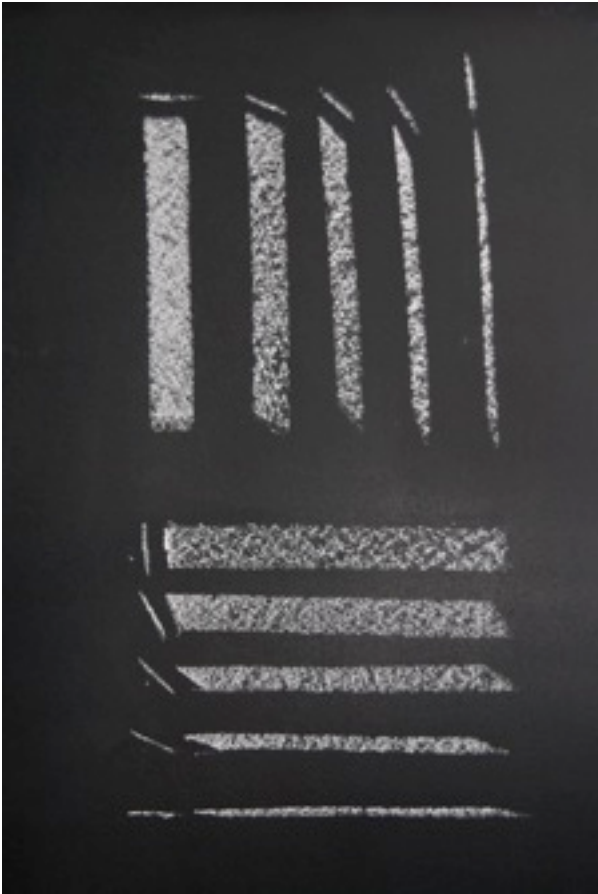
If you have a tendency to let your drawings take over the whole board, and you share your board with subject teachers, you may consider first drawing a border around the area you are allowing yourself. For some this also helps to keep perspective and spatial awareness. It can also be useful if you are doing the picture for the students while they do theirs to give them an orientation to follow.

Once the space you are using is established, lay down a background color. Keep in mind that if you are doing this drawing in front of the children they will not have the same capabilities to

color over with their crayons as you do with chalk. Let's assume you are preparing this drawing ahead of time and will guide the students during class on paper. It gives your drawing more depth when colors are blended to make up the background. Consider the overall mood of the picture. Is it a warm and sunny day? Is it underwater with rays of light shining through? Is it stormy? The stroke of the chalk is very similar to the stick and block crayons that the students use. Keep this in mind when guiding the students through the drawings, especially in the lower grades of first through fourth. Chalk is also very forgiving. If it isn't what you were trying to achieve, simply draw right over it!

Some of the following exercises can be found in Blackboard Sketching by Frederick Whitney (1908). This book was incredibly helpful to me as a beginner, not having had any formal training in the arts. The examples given are easy to follow. This book can also be found online at <http://www.kellsraft.com/BlackboardDrawings/BlackboardSketchingContentPage.html>.

When using the chalk, don't be afraid to break it into a smaller piece to achieve the stroke you are working for. You can also change the angle at which you are holding the chalk to achieve varying widths to your stroke. A lighter or darker tone is produced by varying the pressure placed upon the chalk. Also, holding the chalk more at one end, rather than in the middle, allows more pressure to be applied to the side you are holding resulting in a graded stroke from side to side. With the practice and use of only a few strokes of the chalk, one can achieve a great many things in chalkboard drawings.



When a texture is needed, as in drawing a woven basket, place the chalk in a vertical position and then pull it across the board, varying the pressure frequently to give it the effect seen below.



The same technique that was used above in varying the tone can be applied when drawing grass. Using short strokes with the chalk held at an angle, move the hand up and down with a slight curve at the bottom. You can also use the point of the chalk to add accents. The trunk of a tree is achieved using the same technique of applying more pressure to one side. Use this technique where there may be light shining on that side of the tree. The apples are achieved using a short curving stroke, first to the left, then to the right. Use the point of the chalk to add stems and leaves.

In drawing plants, an entirely different stroke can be used. Holding the chalk in a horizontal position, drawing it downward, twist the chalk as you go until it is in a vertical position. In this way you will show the curvature of the bending or twisting leaves. Practice the strokes in different directions. When drawing leaves such as palm leaves, draw first very delicately the leaves in the background then adding more pressure to the chalk for the leaves more up front.



Another technique for drawing plants like a fern is to first draw in a few main lines for foliage and then, holding the chalk horizontally and swinging it back and forth, the strokes should get shorter and twist gradually to a vertical position. Using the same technique, beginning at different angles, more foliage can be drawn in. The same technique can be used to draw in the foliage of a tree. Use lighter and darker shades of whatever color you are using to show more depth and character.



Using the strokes already demonstrated, obtain the effects of snow, rocky terrain, a sunny or cloudy day, by simply varying the tone or amount of pressure on the chalk.



To achieve a horizon line, use a horizontal stroke accented at the lower end of the chalk with increased pressure. This will give a definitive line for the horizon as well as allow other colors to be blended moving further up. A darker color can be used for the land or water below the horizon line. Using the point of the chalk, wavy strokes can be drawn for the sea. Land, rocks and cliffs can be drawn in by applying pressure to one side of the chalk.



Spend a lot of time observing trees to help with drawing them. They vary greatly in size and shape. Look at the how the branches extend from the trunk. Notice the direction of the limbs, do they splay outward or all point to the sky? What shade and texture is the bark? These are details that will help give an appreciation for your subject. Begin with a sturdy trunk that branches off with a twisting stroke of the chalk. Using the side of the chalk again, add smaller branches, working your way out until you have the desired shape. To add the foliage look at the type of tree you are drawing and decide whether the strokes should be flat and curved (as in the elm), up and

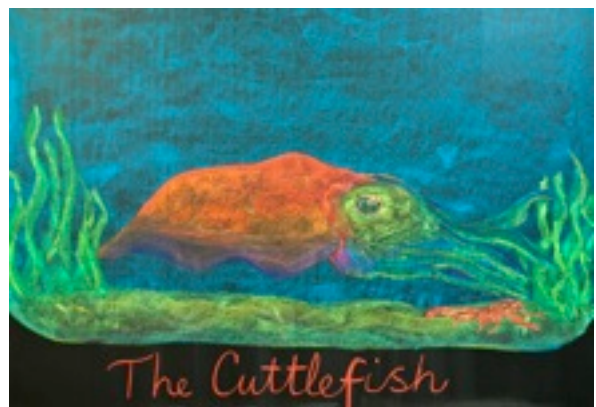
down (for the poplar), back and forth (as in the pine) or an irregular and slightly slanting stroke for the oak or apple. After the tree has been drawn, highlight it with lighter colors and additional branches for more details. It is best if the background and sky are drawn in first to avoid the difficulty of trying to add it in afterward going around the strokes of the leaves.



Materials

There is no right or wrong in chalkboard drawing. Everyone will develop their personal style, preference and technique. Where I usually give myself boundaries for my drawings to avoid their taking over the whole board, some may like their drawings to emerge more organically without limitations. It is much the same with the materials that are used. There are several manufacturers of chalks and boards to use and one can make do with whatever is available.

Some of the chalks used most widely in the Waldorf schools are those made by Mercurius (TM) and Prang (TM). I have found Prang Ambrite chalks to have the most vibrancy in color as well as lower dust production. Mercurius also has a few colors that I prefer to use for particular needs. There are some nice white chalks on the market as well. Chalkboards can range from large classroom slate boards to handmade plywood boards painted with black or chalkboard paint. Each will produce a different texture in the drawing as shown below.



The drawing on the left is done on a painted plywood surface; whereas a slate blackboard is used on the right. The plywood board has more tooth to grab the chalk and give the drawing more texture; the slate blackboard produces a smoother finish. Both have an interesting effect.

For erasing, almost anything will do. A preferred cloth is a microfiber furniture polishing cloth. It removes the chalk easily, as well as most of the dust. It is a great replacement for washing the board if you are trying to preserve the integrity of the board's surface or are short on time. Washing the board is much the same. Almost anything will do. If the surface is made of wood, it is best to wash with as little water as possible and then dry immediately with a separate cloth.

For inspiration, it is up to the beholder to find this. Many teachers will use various resources such as books, postcards, original works of art, photographs, their own imagination, direct observations of nature and internet images.

Other special tools for chalkboard drawing can be found as well. For teaching geometry lessons beginning in sixth grade, compasses designed for use on a chalkboard can be extremely useful as precision is imperative.

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Appendix - Student Work



Balder's Death - student renditions from chalkboard drawing



Appendix - Student Work



Brunelleschi's Dome - 7th Grade Renaissance ~J. Castle

