

Class Six | Learning Journey & Curriculum Map

Class Six | Child Development

The twelfth year of a child's life is a kind of limbo; he is no longer really a child, but he is not yet a teenager, and adulthood is still a long way off. After the challenge of the tenth year, comes the struggle to establish some balance and order, which is more or less achieved during Class 5. Then comes puberty, bringing another onslaught of emotions and physical changes that are difficult to deal with, both for the children themselves and the adults around them. What they have learned from their earlier experience is that the situation needs to be controlled, so, in Class 6, this is their response. But, as with everything at this age, it is somewhat heavy-handed and naïve. As always, this finds its reflection in the curriculum. Think of the Romans marching in uniform stride across the known world, everywhere encountering rebellious tribes with their varied and colourful histories, cultures and traditions, not engaging with them, but offering only two choices: surrender or be crushed. There you have a picture of the situation in the child's soul life at this time. Each one is a Roman emperor trying to maintain control of the realm of his own feelings by laying down the law. The world, other people, himself, everything is categorised and labeled: 'Things I like', 'Things I don't like', 'Things that are cool', 'Things that are rubbish', 'Things I will never do', 'Things I must do', 'Things I am good at', 'Things I am bad at', etc. In true Roman style, once the categories are fixed (and at this point he sees no reason why they would ever change) he compares his list with those of his peers, for reassurance, and adjusts it as necessary. Belonging to the group matters, and there is no room for variation in the group; its judgements are absolute. In this way, he finds a safe place for himself in the world. His question, for the moment, is 'Who are we?', not 'Who am I?' Although this is uncomfortable for us, (from our adult perspective, our children are submitting to peer pressure) it is just as it should be and we have to understand that they will come through it. Once the twelve-year-old has found where he fits, he believes that he has grown up - that he understands how the adult world works and that he will get older, but otherwise life will go on just as it is now. For some, and at times for all, this brings reassuring stability. Confidence comes from knowing what the rules are and abiding by them. But for everyone there is an underlying feeling of disappointment - a feeling of 'Is this really all there is?' At this moment, we take a file of something boring and familiar off the shelf (of course they groan as we do it), blow off the dust and open it up. They get ready to add some dull facts to their collection, resigned to the prospect of spending their remaining school days in this way. But instead we take them into a completely dark room, turn on a torch and they can't see it; how is that possible? They find that they can hear the difference between cold water and hot water; but temperature is something you feel, not

hear! That a small piece of wire can ring like a church bell, as long as the sound doesn't have to travel through the air; so everything we hear is muffled?? We show them that everything they thought they knew is just a signpost to something greater and more fascinating than they could ever have imagined. We start to open up the familiar world so that it fills again with the wonder it held for them when they were very small and everything was new; to plant the seed of a thought in their minds: 'There is no end to what I can discover. I could go on being surprised and delighted by the world for the rest of my life!' All of this is a background to the curriculum in the Middle School - Classes 6, 7 and 8 - but it is this bringing, at every stage, of things to which the children can relate directly out of the experience of their own inner lives that makes Steiner Waldorf education unique and powerful. After the twelfth year, the faculties of judgement and objectivity develop as a counterbalance to the emotional turmoil of adolescence, and we can look with clarity at the physical world. In Class 6, we do this through Physics, Geometry and drawing from observation. We also consider the different ways in which people have dealt with the world, worked with it, changed it and thought about it through History, Geography, Art, Literature, Maths. These examples and experiences model for the children how the world can be interpreted and the many ways in which it is possible to enter into life.

Class Six | Humanities

| Active Learning Intention | Active Teaching Implementation | Active Environments Impact |
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| <p>Geography</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands the connection between landscape and geographical features and the development of human culture, economy and society • Knows the names and can identify the continents and oceans • Understands the relationship of the tides to the moon and the relationship of the seasons to the earth's orbit • Describes and understands some key aspects of global physical geography, e.g. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give a presentation to the children on contrasting countries / regions in Europe, using story, folk song, food, maps, and images such as photographs • Colleagues or parents from other countries in Europe could be invited in to the class to talk about their experiences living there • Talk about and model using the vocabulary of comparing and contrasting • Use story, images and movement to | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant maps, atlases and reference books on display • A globe • A display of children's artwork related to the topic • A selection of vocabulary as deemed relevant and useful for the topic and the class • Provide the chance to experience elements of regional European culture (e.g. food, costume, folk music) |

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| <p>young folded mountains, tropical rainforest, savanna, salt deserts, the great rivers etc</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Describes and understands some key aspects of European physical and human geography ● <i>Describes and understands some large scale impacts of human interactions with the natural environment—forest clearance and soil erosion, mineral deposits and trade relations, transport routes (e.g. The Suez and Panama Canals)?</i> <p>History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understands and can describe aspects of the Roman Empire and its history ● Describes the impact of Roman history on modern society—civil justice, civil engineering, federal administration etc ● Understands the spread of Christianity in the Roman Empire ● Has a concrete conceptual understanding of linear time ● Understands the foundations and development of European culture through the impact of significant individuals and events through history from the Decline of Rome to the Middle Ages. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● help explain the tides and the seasons ● Look at some key aspects of physical and human geography in the context of the countries or regions studied ● Help children to begin a project on a country of their choice, to be completed independently <p>History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use stories of individuals to enliven the teaching of history ● Create drama activities to illustrate or reinforce understanding of characters and events in history ● Demonstrate drawing and other artwork techniques (e.g. mosaics) ● Illustrate chronology with practical activities such as creating a class timeline of the historical events studied ● Relate current British Values to aspects of Roman legacy ● Create spatial representations, i.e. sequences of generations to illustrate linear time ● Teach the chronology of the Decline of Rome, the Huns and Goths, migration of European peoples, the Middle Ages, Mohammed and the spread of Islam, the Franks, Charlemagne and the re- | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learn songs and poems in different European languages ● An opportunity to share and present their independent projects <p>History</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Class Trip connected to Romans and Middle Ages (eg.Hadrian’s Wall) or Geology (eg. Jurassic Coast/ Cheddar Gorge) ● Day trips to museums and geological/ historical sites. ● Provide biographies of significant individuals to illustrate historical events ● Dress in costume and re-enact historical experiences ● Learn songs and music from different historical periods ● Learn epic poems and ballads of historical events and characters |
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| | <p>establishment of the Roman Empire, the Norman Conquest, monastic culture, the Crusades, Frederick II (meeting of East and West), the beginnings of city culture, the Battle of Agincourt, technological innovation of the Middle Ages.</p> | |
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Class Six | Humanities | Curriculum Narrative

European Geography comes in Class 6. It is important that the children don't focus straight away on nations and political borders, but that they first see Europe as a single land mass whose mountains and rivers run together and have a relationship with each other. Then they are able to understand better why at least some of the cities and boundaries between countries are where they are. To become familiar with the shape and landscape of Europe, they can be asked to sketch it freehand, from memory. This is very informative for the teacher and reveals, in some cases, that they know it fairly well and, in one or two, that they really have no idea what it looks like! More importantly, the process makes them aware of what they know and what they don't. They can then look at a map and see the parts they didn't know. The next day, as recall, they can instruct the teacher while s/he draws it on the blackboard and together they will come up with a very good map, which they can draw in their Main Lesson books. Later in the block, they can model the continent with clay, again from memory, putting in the mountains as best they can and, in most cases will be pleasantly surprised by how successful they are. The next step is to look at where the first cities were situated and why and how human life is related to the landscape through the need for water, food, shelter and security. Then the children can study a particular country as a project and present it to the class. In this way, a picture of Europe is built up, spreading a little beyond its borders into Asia and Africa, so that it forms the stage for the history blocks to come: Alexander's epic expedition east to India and the inexorable westward expansion of Rome. In the Minerology main lesson we start by looking at the land and how it is formed, what supports the plant and animal life, and the landscape features of hills, cliffs, mountains, valleys and water. We then observe different rocks and consider questions such as: where did they come from, how were they formed, and what were they made of? This leads to a comparison of Limestone and Silica and to the three kinds of rocks: igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic. We look at where limestone and silica are found (caves - stalactites and stalagmites; volcanoes)

as well as where they are found within the human physical body. This is followed by studying volcanoes and earthquakes. The value of minerals in practical life is taken up, including oil drilling, coal mining and gas production. Finally, we consider metals and precious stones: what they are, how they are formed, and what they are used for. The main aims of this Main Lesson are for each child to understand more of his/her own nature through the study of the mineral world and to develop a feeling for the place of the mineral kingdom in nature and its importance to our modern way of living.

The two stories of ambition and empire that form the history curriculum in Class 6 reflect the children's personal experience at this age perfectly. There is a difference between them, however, that illustrates a monumental shift in the development of human civilisation, the repercussions of which are still felt today. Both Alexander and the Romans were ruthless in their desire to conquer and dominate everyone who tried to stand in their way, but, whereas Alexander was also hungry for knowledge and understanding of other cultures and devoured and immersed himself in everything he encountered, the Roman gesture was to replace everything with Rome. All over Europe, little replicas of Rome were established, regardless of geography, climate or local traditions, and because what the Romans built - physically, socially, morally - was intended to endure for all time, two thousand years later, much of what they established still exists and the world has had to develop around it. There is usually a trip related to Roman History in Class 6. Hadrian's Wall is a popular destination. Some classes have also gone to Nîmes in the south of France. The Roman sites in this country have a very different feeling from those in France. 'The Romans in Britain' is an interesting subject in itself, but to understand how incredibly powerful the Roman empire was, France offers a grander experience. The Pont du Gard is the most amazing piece of engineering. An aqueduct built to bring water from the river Gard to Nîmes, its stones held together for 2000 years without being cemented. When you stand on it, you feel the Romans' understanding of the laws of physics; that their grasp of everything to do with the material world was awe inspiring; that they could have achieved anything they set their minds to in this field. It is a monument to human will.

After Zoology and Botany, Physics is the next part of the science curriculum to be brought as a separate subject. We move from the study of living things, to which the children can relate through their feeling life, to that of natural phenomena, which they come to understand more through direct experience and thinking. We look at the nature of Sound, Light and Heat, considering also their counterparts, Silence, Darkness and Cold. We also experiment with Magnetism and Electricity. Phenomena are experienced and characterised through language and art as well as through experiments to discover their nature and how they behave. This is not about proving known theories, as so much science education is, but about getting them to use and trust their own senses to learn about the world; we do not tell them what they ought to see or hear, but ask them and help them to be aware of what they actually experience. A lack of trust in our own ability to learn from direct experience leads to a dependence on authority in all its forms, and thereby to a lack of freedom to think, judge and decide things for ourselves, so the way in which these lessons are conducted has a value and importance beyond the bounds of scientific investigation.