



Operated by MIND

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From the Academic Director,
Pam Ferguson

The Five Great Lessons

The Great Lessons are an important and unique part of the Montessori curriculum. These lessons are bold, exciting, and are designed to awaken a child's imagination and curiosity. The child should be struck with the wonder of creation, thrilled with new ideas, and awed by the inventiveness and innovation that is part of the human spirit.

The Five Great Lessons are traditionally presented in lower elementary (grades 1-3), and are presented every year so that children see them more than one time. Unlike the 3-6 year old environment, where the child is introduced first to "small" ideas that gradually widen into larger concepts, the elementary child is introduced right away to large concepts - the largest of all being the beginning of the universe. Then they can be shown how all the smaller ideas fit into the larger framework. Traditionally, there are Five Great Lessons that are used to paint a broad picture before moving to more specific study. They consist of:

- First Great Lesson - Coming of the Universe and the Earth
- Second Great Lesson - Coming of Life
- Third Great Lesson - Coming of Human Beings
- Fourth Great Lesson - Communication in Signs
- Fifth Great Lesson - The Story of Numbers

First Great Lesson - Coming of the Universe and the Earth

The First Great Lesson is the most memorable and is often done on the very first day of school. It involves the use of a balloon and gold stars to tell the story of the beginning of the universe. This lesson also includes some demonstrations using solids and liquids to show how the continents and oceans first came together.

This lesson leads to the study of:

- Astronomy: solar system, stars, galaxies, comets, constellations
- Meteorology: wind, currents, weather, fronts, erosion, water cycle, clouds, glaciers
- Chemistry: states of matter, changes, mixtures, reactions, elements, atoms, periodic table, compounds, molecules, chemical formulas, equations, lab work, experimentation
- Physics: magnetism, electricity, gravity, energy, light, sound, heat, friction, motion, experimentation
- Geology: types of rocks, minerals, land forms, volcanoes, earthquakes, plate tectonics, ice ages, eras of the earth
- Geography: maps, globes, latitude/longitude, climates, land/water form names, con-

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DATES OF INTEREST

FEBRUARY 8
Professional Development Day

FEBRUARY 14
Project Love

MARCH 17-25
Spring Break & Easter Holiday

MARCH 26 Prep Day
Term 3

MARCH 27
School Begins

“Only practical work and experience lead the young to maturity.”

Maria
Montessori
The Absorbant
Mind



continent and country research

The Five Great Lessons of the Elementary Curriculum

Maria Montessori was devoutly religious, and brought many of her beliefs into the Great Lessons.

These lessons came about back when religious beliefs were an accepted, natural part of everyday life (including schools). Things are different today, and if you are teaching at a school, you'll probably want to stick to a factual account of the beginning of the universe (see the end of this post for some resources); if you're at home, you can feel free to tailor the lesson to your own family's religious beliefs. The story is inspirational to children no matter which version they hear.

The Second Great Lesson: Coming of Life

The Second Great Lesson involves the coming of life. This lesson revolves around the Timeline of Life, a long chart with pictures and information about microorganisms, plants, and animals that have lived (or now live) on the earth. The great diversity of life is emphasized, and special care is paid to the "jobs" that each living thing does to contribute to life on earth.

This lesson leads to the study of:

- Biology: cells, organized groups, five kingdoms, specimens, dissection, observation, use of microscope
- Botany: study of plants, classification, functions, parts of plants (seed, fruit, leaf, stem, root, flower), types of plants
- Habitats: location, characteristics, food chains/webs, symbiosis, adaptation, ecosystems, conservation
- Ancient Life: eras of the earth, evolution, extinction, fossil records, excavation
- Animals: classification, needs, similarities/differences, human systems, nutrition, hygiene
- Monera, Protista, and Fungi Kingdoms: what they are, classification, observation

The Third Great Lesson: Coming of Human Beings

The next Great Lesson is the Coming of Human Beings. This lesson involves a timeline with a tool and a human hand to talk about the three gifts that make humans special: a mind to imagine, a hand to do work, and a heart that can love. This lesson will lead children to study the beginning of civilizations and the needs of early humans.

This lesson leads to the study of:

- History: timelines, prehistory, ancient civilizations, world history, history of specific countries and continents
- Culture: art, artists, music, composers, dance, drama, architecture, design, philosophy, religion, grace and courtesy
- Social Studies: current events, government, economics, commerce, volunteering & charity
- Discovery & Invention: scientists, inventors, scientific method, inventions, simple machines



The Fourth Great Lesson: The Story of Writing

The Fourth Great Lesson is the Story of Writing, sometimes called Communication in Signs. In this lesson, the story of the development of the written alphabet is told, with an emphasis on the incredible ability that humans have of committing their thoughts to paper. Included in the story are pictographs, symbols, hieroglyphs, early alphabets, and the invention of the printing press.

This lesson leads to the study of:

- Reading: literature, poetry, non-fiction, myths and folk tales, authors, reading comprehension, reading analysis, literary terms
- Writing: elements of style, function, voice, composition, letter writing, research, study skills
- Language: origins of spoken language, foreign languages, history of languages, speech, drama
- Structure: alphabets, bookmaking, grammar, punctuation, sentence analysis, word study, figures of speech

The Fifth Great Lesson: The Story of Numbers

The last of the lessons is the Fifth Great Lesson: The Story of Numbers, also called the History of Mathematics. This lesson begins with the earliest civilizations, who often only had "one", "two", and "more than two" as their numeric system. It continues with a look at different numbering systems throughout the centuries, culminating in the decimal system that we use today.

This lesson leads to the study of:

- Mathematics: operations, fractions, decimals, multiples, squares, cubes, percentages, ratio, probability, intro to algebra
- Numbers: origins of numbers and systems, bases, types of numbers, scientific notation, mathematicians
- Geometry: congruency, similarity, nomenclature of lines, angles, shapes, solids, measurement, theorems
- Application: story problems, measurement, estimation, graphs, patterning, rounding, money concepts

The Great Lessons as a Unifying Theme

Clearly, these five stories encompass an enormous amount of information about the origins of the world around us. When each story is shared, it should never be left alone - there should always be further study open to the children so that the story becomes the springboard but not the focus. The stories can be referred to throughout the year when new topics are introduced, as a way of providing unity and cohesion to such a wide variety of studies.



From the Primary Classroom. . .

Well, it is February and this is telling in the Primary Class...no matter snow days or school closures, the children are quick to return to work and fervently passionate about each and every activity!

The Year Three's are studying volcanoes launched from the Introduction to the Time Line of Life, from Montessori's second great lesson entitled "The Coming of Life". This provides the foundation for research writing, creating bibliographies and Tables of Contents,

The Year Two's are continuing on their study of the earth which has led into Rocks and Minerals and the Year Ones are finishing their study of the Solar System, both of which were launched from the first great lesson called "The Story of the Universe". As always, mapping with Cathy proves to be a highlight for all children!

Our virtue of the week is graciousness and as part of the lesson Cathy described the *art of greeting* and how important it is to look into a person's eyes while shaking hands firmly with confidence. She challenged the Primary children to determine the colour of Pam's eyes and they were eager to report several shades of blue, green and brown only to find out that the REAL colour is aqua-marine! The extension of our study of virtues is to encourage writing development through paragraph mapping and it is amazing to see how effective this tool has been. The progress and volume of the children's writing using this technique is heartening for their Cathy and me as we believe this work both is so very important.

From the Preschool/Kindergarten Classroom. . .

This term in the Preschool/Kindergarten classroom, the children have been introduced to the Montessori Bells. This material is new to our classroom this year, and are true to the Montessori nature of materials with their precision of tone, and aesthetic beauty. The Bells are an intricate part of the preschool curriculum. They are found in the Sensorial area of the classroom but link to both the language and the music programs, in that they prepare children to distinguish the gradation of chromatic tones and semi-tones over an octave.

Music prepares children with skills to decipher fine language sounds, such as digraphs, diphthongs, consonant and vowel blends. Pam has given two group lessons with very clear and distinct steps to match pairs of tones, and to grade tones through the pentatonic scale. The children are provided with time to practice individually between weekly lessons, and are so excited to integrate the bells into their repertoire of Montessori materials.



From the Intermediate classroom. . .

MUSIC

Every Monday the intermediate class has music in the morning. In music we have started playing guitar. Guitar can be challenging but we're almost playing the song, "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star". I love going into music knowing I'm going to go and do something I like especially for school.

By Heather Pincombe

THE SNOW

On Tuesday it snowed. My dad told me to get dressed, but I was sure that it was going to be a snow day so I didn't bother. It was a snow day. Later went tobogganing at Diefenbaker Park. I threw snowballs at people, I will not mention who. I also made lots of snow angels. I wrote a message to people flying in planes. This is the message: HI!!

The next day we had to go to school (sigh...). We got to play in the snow at playtime. I tried to make a snow bunny, but my hands were so cold that they felt like they would fall off. The garden by the swings had flooded and frozen.

We had fun walking on the ice, but eventually it cracked. Some people fell in. The water was EXTREMELY cold. That was all in January. It has been exactly one month since New Year's Day.

By Lucy A. Ferguson

REFLECTIONS ON JANUARY

I enjoyed the math test because it was really fun and we got lots of pages, yea! But there was one page that was really hard, that page I didn't like. We got lots of snow but one day there was so much snow that we got to miss a day of school that was great. I enjoyed having spelling quizzes with Eileen. We also had art with Ali and it was really fun. We made doors; I made an old fashioned door.

By Kama Sood

JANUARY 1-31, 2008

In January a lot of things happened for starters. There was the most snow I've seen in years. I even made a snowball bigger than all of the kid's heads. I then threw it into the ditch so it would release its magic into the sky so it would snow the next day and surprisingly the next day we had a snow day. The year 6&7's also went to UBC. It was a fun experience; we learned about rocks and saw the tornado machine. Lunch that day was tasty. In retrospect this was a GREAT month, all things considered.

By Levi Loughlin

JANUARY

January was fun. During January it was great to play in all the snow. Also in January we got Hap do Sol. In Hap do Sol we learned wrist escapes and we did races. It was nice.

In Art we were drawing doors and we got an hour and a half to work, which was awesome. With the introduction of the subject Etymology, the study of language, January has been great.

By Curtis Larsen

HAP DO SOL

I have really enjoyed this month. We have done so many different things. Hap Do Sol has been a very interesting experience. We have learned self-defense at a whole other level. We learned to defend ourselves against people that may hurt us. I myself am starting to like Hap Do Sol more. Our teachers, Mr. Jackson and Mr. Wallis are very careful and tell us what we can and can't do so we don't hurt others. We have so many privileges to go places and learn things and for that I thank the teachers and school.

By Cara von Ende

JANUARY

One of my favourite things to do was writing my creative writing stories for language. I loved art because Ali is such a good teacher and because I got to finish my painting of a door. Not to brag or anything but I really like my painting and everyone else's.

By Ryan von Ende



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*“The child has other powers than ours,
and the creation he achieves is no small
one; it is everything.”*

Maria Montessori
The Absorbant Mind

Characteristics of Montessori Education at BBMH

- ♥ The child's inherent desire to learn and perfect his/her skills is nurtured by the stimulating and dynamic Montessori environment.
- ♥ The child develops a lifetime love of learning
- ♥ Each child works at his or her own pace and receives a high degree of individual attention.
- ♥ Student teacher ratios at BBMH are 9:1 in Pre-school/Kindergarten and 18:1 in Elementary.
- ♥ A well structured, prepared environment, with learning materials that are self-correcting.
- ♥ Respect for each other, the self and the environment are taught within a peace
- ♥ curriculum that is multi-cultural and non-denominational.
- ♥ With these opportunities, the child is empowered to fulfill his/her own potential thereby fostering:
 - Independence
 - Self-discipline
 - Self-esteem
 - Self-motivation
- ♥ The child is honoured in this caring, community-minded educational environment where parents are invited to participate.

CALENDAR 2007 2008 * SPRING TERM 2

FEBRU- 8 Professional Development Day

14 Project Love

25 Professional Development Day

MARCH 17- Spring/Easter Break

26 Prep Day Term 3

27 School Begins

April 14- Observations

19 Fundraising Gala

22 Earth Day

28 Professional Development Day

DELTASSIST SPONSORSHIP A GREAT SUCCESS!

A sincere thank-you to all who donated towards the sponsorship of our Deltassist family for Christmas. Your generosity was very much appreciated by the young family of four and Deltassist. We collected over \$390.00 in cash donations and an abundance of non-perishable food items. We were able to donate excess food items to fill additional hampers for the local community. A special thanks goes to the volunteer parents who made time to purchase the gifts and stocking items for the individual family members: Carol Ywan, Adriana Suarez-Blanche, Jennifer Sthankiya and Diana Nesbit.

The Family Advisory Committee