

*What is it for a child to stand before an altar?*

*What is it for a child to hear stories with deep content and uplifting images?*

You may know about Waldorf education and Biodynamic agriculture, but did you know that Dr. Rudolf Steiner, the one who stood as the creating guide behind both these movements, also worked towards the renewal of religion? *The Christian Community* is a worldwide movement for religious renewal that seeks to open the path to the living, healing presence of Christ in the age of the free individual.

## ***The Children's Program at the Christian Community –*** Stories, Singing, Standing before the Altar, Learning to Seek Higher Beings

For children in grades one through eight.

Held at our chapel in Brookline, once or twice a month, Sept through May.

Also monthly in Wilton, NH and three times a year in Freeport, ME.

Typical schedule in Brookline:

Confirmation class (grades 7 & 8) - Sunday at 9:30 am

Story (grades 1- 6) - Sunday at 10:00 am

Children's Service - Sunday at 10:30 am

The content of the Story / Religious instruction time is tailored towards the age of the children currently attending the program. Children in 8th grade receive a preparation leading towards the Sacrament of Confirmation.

For more information call or email:

Rev. Lisa Hildreth at 717-333-6917 or [lahildreth@yahoo.com](mailto:lahildreth@yahoo.com)

## ***The Meaning of the Sunday Service for Children***

A letter to Parents from Rev. Jim Hindes, priest at The Christian Community in Denver

Dear Parents,

Children are like grapevines. The roots of grapevines go deeper into the earth in relation to its height than any other plant. Regularly 60 to 75 feet, some have been found as deep as 150 feet. A child's roots in a spiritual sense are the karmic roots that extend back in time over thousands and thousands of years. In this sense, these little ones are just like us only we are 20 to 60 years ahead of them in this life time. These roots guarantee that the children have gifts that have yet to

unfold, have friends and others who have yet to meet them. They all have a rich, unique destiny awaiting them.

Like all plants, grapevines need sunlight in to have the energy to transform that part of the earth in which they grow, in order eventually to become fruitful. The fruit of the vine is very special, containing as it does so much iron, which is so necessary for human presence of mind and energy. Anemia can keep a person from fulfilling his or her destiny. One is just too tired to face it. A similar fate is caused by a lack of “spiritual iron.” Then we are in danger of “being lived” instead of living our own life. “Spiritual anemia” is an ongoing illness of our time.

As adults, we are free to lift ourselves up to the spirit at any time, and in many ways: prayer and meditation, both personal and in communion with others, nourishes us in this deep way strengthening us for life. But children do not have this freedom; they are dependent upon their parents.

Without the support of wooden stakes the grapevine lies on the ground; so also its fruit. Grape stakes expose the vine’s leaves to the sun light. Children also need to be exposed to the light, spiritual light. Religious instruction and the Sunday Service for Children lift children up into the realm of the spirit on a regular basis giving them an orientation and grounding for life’s big questions: Work, Love, Responsibility, Sacrifice, Meaning itself. Especially between 6 and 14 children can receive something that is later metamorphosed into a kind of “spiritual spine” that will support them especially during life’s most difficult times. Whether or not they choose as adults to practice their religion in a church with others they will have been equipped with a deep abiding faith that we are all here on earth for a reason.

Dear parents, think of your children’s lives in 15, 20, 30, 40, or even 50 years from now. Imagine their marriages, their work careers; their children, the political and social world they will be living in when they are grown and their destinies have unfolded. The most important gift we can give our children now is to share our own faith with them. When they see what we do, how we pray, how we worship God we are giving them the gift of faith.

Sincerely,

Rev. Jim Hinds