

## *Using the Guides with Ages 3 to 6*

The theme of the curriculum presented in the set of guides is based on Maria Montessori's Great Lessons, also called Cosmic Education. This begins with the study of the child and his or her body (external and internal parts of the body, physiology), senses, feelings, needs, time line of the child, family, classroom, and local environment. Then it expands to the greater picture of the universe and solar system. A return to earth to explore the elements of the earth, the earth geologic time line, time line of life, man's achievements and inventions through time, world geography and cultural studies. The child gains a sense of belonging in the greater picture of the universe and the world.

We begin with what the child knows and relates to, his or her own body and immediate environment. This gives the child the skills to care for herself and a broader understanding of herself and others.

The Montessori child learns at his or her own pace from the known to the unknown, the concrete to the abstract, the whole to its parts, and simple to complex.

The primary aged child, ages 3 to 6, has an innate or inborn way of learning that Maria Montessori called "the absorbent mind" where he is effortlessly absorbing knowledge from his environment. Everything is absorbed on the child's own level. He chooses work, guided by internal needs. The three-year-olds' work is very sensorial and tactile- sensorial globe, blocks, water work. She loves manipulating objects and putting things in a logical order, sorting and categorizing, sequencing, and naming things. The primary child loves to learn the names of things, even long technical words. The primary child has a natural love and interest in learning about animals. We explore animals through nature books and stories about animals, naming, sorting and counting animal models, land/water/air animal categorizing, matching cards, placing animal models on maps, and the observation and care of real animals. We use the study of human needs, plant needs, and animal needs to help the child realize the common bond he has with all the inhabitants of the earth. This also develops a sense of responsibility as the child cares for the plants and animals in the classroom and home environment. The primary child becomes a part of a small working community where they engage in purposeful activities. But maybe most importantly, the primary child is developing a sense of wonder and curiosity about the universe and everything in it that he or she will later use to explore the why's and how's at the elementary level. A sense of empathy and interconnectedness extends to the entire world through geography and cultural studies of each continent.

For the primary classroom I recommend *I Wonder What's Out There: A Vision of the Universe for Primary Classes* by Joanne DeFilipp with Aline D. Wolf, Parent Child Press.

Recommended book for homeschool~ Contains instructions and patterns for making materials. *Teaching Montessori in the Home: The Preschool Years*, Elizabeth Hainstock, Random House It is out of print but can be purchased from used book sellers or on amazon.com.