

deeply into his own imaginative and thinking powers and present it in a heart-warmed and lively way to the children.

As much as possible, this is also your goal. But home is not school and parents should neither try to make it like school or berate themselves if – when – they fail. Different approaches for different situations!

And so you will need to read aloud to your child as well as look at books together. Especially for a child of this age, this is quite appropriate. Also, my strong feeling is that conversation takes the place of much of the presentation that is part of the classroom method. I expand upon this in our *Waldorf Curriculum Overview*.

You will have to decide how much you read to your child and how much he reads himself. It might work best for you if you give him, for instance, *Gilgamesh the Hero* to read himself. Think about the flow of lessons and how much time you have allotted to this part of your study. While I am not a big fan of the “30-minutes a day for reading” approach (I much prefer free-range reading as it encourages depth and breadth), it is important that you keep to schedule. So you might have to say things like “Please read the next two sections of *Gilgamesh* while I am working with your brother.” When you and your fifth grader next meet, whether it is a bit later in the morning or the next day, he should tell you what happened during this latest installment of the story. And it goes without saying that you should read the whole book yourself before giving it to your child so you know which parts you wish to emphasize or explain to your child.

Or it might work best for you to read aloud to your child. Either way is fine – as long as sufficient conversation happens so that a shared learning and teacher/student relationship continues.

Think through the role of conversation in your lessons. Refer to the following section for ideas on themes for conversation during this main lesson. As a teacher, I generally weave between a time of lecturing, questions and conversation with my students. If I have a particularly lively (read: hard to control) group, then I might set strong time limits and boundaries on this.

At home, you also need to find a balance between out-breath (questions, making points, interjection, lively exchange) and in-breath (listening, taking in, considering, being still with something). Both are necessary parts of learning. You will need to judge when your child is just to listen to your presentation, and when it’s fine for her to ask questions or add her thoughts. There is a fine but important balance here. This is discussed further in the *Fifth Grade Syllabus*.

We always suggest a four-day week for homeschoolers. However, from fourth grade on, we suggest that your child also “do school” on Day Five (which might or might not be a Friday depending on your own schedule) but that he works independently. He can finish written work; copy work into his main lesson book; do a drawing; and so on.

Do note that there is further time laid out in our fifth grade schedule for Extra Main Lesson during some afternoons. This is common practice in Waldorf schools in recognition of the fact that there is such an enormous amount of work to get through in some main lessons. You can, for instance, model with your child during this time instead of trying to squeeze it in during main lesson. Since much of what you will be doing with