



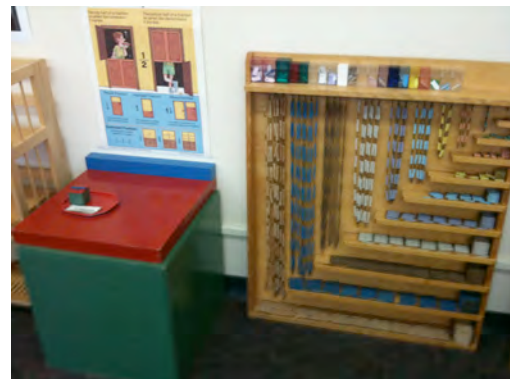
Q & A

What are the Great Lessons?

As our children enter Elementary School age (around 6), a number of changes take place on the physical, intellectual and social levels. Typically, the 6-12 year old is physically strong and healthy, leaving many childhood illnesses in the past. Mentally, they have great power. Montessori called this stage the Intellectual Period. Children are eager – in fact, hungry – to learn. And they particularly want to grasp the whole of knowledge, rather than just bits and pieces. Socially, the children begin to distance themselves from their families. They become more extroverted (readily apparent from the lively buzz often emanating from the elementary classroom!) and they want to be with other children and be like them.

At this point Montessori believed it was time to present the “whole universe” to the child. She designed the five Great Lessons in order to accomplish this. These lessons are presented every school year and are the “jumping off point” for what the children will study throughout the year.

Through the stories presented in the Great Lessons, all of the basics (and much more!) will be taught. Children will choose specific areas of interest to study after each story and will write reports or create time lines as they explore the whole universe. Because the elementary age is such a social age, there is less of the solitary work that can be observed in the primary classroom. The elementary classroom is filled with children working cooperatively in groups as they complete their projects.



What are Great Lessons? These five stories present in turn the creation of earth (and the introduction of geography), the beginning of life (and the introduction of biology), the coming of human beings (anthropology), and the tools of human communication: language and mathematics. Quite a curriculum for 6-12 year olds! Our children are not only up to the challenge, however, they relish it! Through the stories of the Great Lessons and the studies that follow them, our children are presented with the tools to learn all they care to about their universe – and to keep learning when their Montessori years are just a memory.