

## Reflections on Family Foundations Course

By Elise Nienow

I attended the monthly parenting course offered by Sound Circle Center one Saturday a month, from October of 2010 to May of 2011. What a gift it was been to step away once a month, from my day to day life with my child, and be surrounded by a community of mindful parents and insightful teachers. Each class of the Family Foundations course focused on one year of life from birth to age 7 and the forces that we draw upon during each of these years – light, warmth, rhythm, citizenship, a moral realm, thinking, and integration. A sense of intuitive parenting is strengthened by actively and intentionally working with these forces every day. By nurturing these qualities in our children, we are gently forming them through each developmental stage.

In addition to the formative forces, we explored essential aspects of childhood—from the role of play and meaningful work to the importance of rhythm and seasonal awareness and celebration. We were given the space to ask questions and share experiences of our own joys and challenges in parenting. We also explored these concepts artistically, through wet on wet watercolor painting and a bit of charcoal drawing. The visual representation of the concepts really made them come alive and I loved being able to bring home my paintings to share with my two year old son, giving him a glimpse into what I'd been doing while I was away. One of my paintings found its way onto our fridge and became the inspiration for a little story I would share with my son during snacktime.

There are so many little gems that I have received from this course that I have worked to incorporate into our daily life: anchoring my child at different points in the day,

working to create smooth transitions, warming -up a new situation or environment for my child, connecting with my child's guardians and asking for help, unfolding the day in my mind using pictures and setting out my intentions, tuning in to my child's life sense in both chaotic and peaceful moments, using stories and imagery to re-visit difficult moments from the day, being present and letting my child feel truly seen.

In addition to these gems, I received concepts and that will provide insight in years of parenting to come. The Family Foundations course has truly been a gift of time and space to reflect and look inward, to deepen my understanding of child development in light of anthroposophy, and to appreciate the way my child and I are undergoing a beautiful transformative process together. Many thanks to our dear teachers, Susanna, Flora, Johanna, Mary and Holly.