

Michaelmas—the festival of will

The first of the autumnal festivals is Michaelmas, which is the feast day of Saint Michael the Archangel. This is an ancient harvest festival that dates back to the sixth century. Legend tells us that England's patron saint, Saint George, was the Archangel Michael's earthly representative. In heaven, Saint Michael was the angel who threw Lucifer out for his treachery, and on earth, Saint George was famous for slaying dragons and rescuing princesses. During the nineteenth century, English harvest, or Michaelmas fairs, offered Victorian families a well-deserved opportunity to enjoy themselves after months of strenuous labor. These gatherings included food, music, dancing, games, and festive costume parades.—excerpt from *Mrs. Sharp Victorian Tradition* by Sarah van Breathnach

As the life forces of nature recede at this time of the year, the inner life of the human soul is awakening. It is a time of conscious selfhood, when we celebrate the building and strengthening of our inner life. May we gain insight, courage and truth at this Michaelmas time, to bring light to our inner selves, our community, and our world.

—excerpt from *Waldorf Education, A Family Guide* by Karen Rivers

How Our School Celebrates

The festival of Michaelmas will be celebrated in a variety of ways at our school, depending on the age of the child:

-In the kindergarten, children may sing a song and hear a story of bravery, or perhaps they will experience the hard work of sanding a wooden sword until it is smooth. Around this time, the kindergarten will often use marigolds to dye silks a beautiful golden color which the children proudly take home.

-The grade school will participate in a group challenge where the students are divided into teams consisting of one or more child from each grade. These teams work together to finish a series of tasks. The results of their group efforts are seen throughout the year, as we watch our children work and play together, both on the play yard and in the class room.

-The high school students will be coordinating the challenges for the grade school and creating the magical mood of this special day.