

## Kindergarten Teacher's Creed

The creed speaks in simple language to the deep mysteries of life and learning. Each of us contains within our innermost self the secret of life. In our spirit lives the seed of life, the spark of greatness and grandeur that promises an ever unfolding future of possibility. The children who come into our lives carry in their hearts the innermost secret of themselves, and we truly shape the future in what we do in the garden of young souls, so rightly named the *children's garden*.

The kindergarten is also a metaphor for the larger life of which we are a part. Life is a garden in which we are always planting seeds. The seeds are the thoughts, actions, hopes and longings which we sow in the fields of our endeavors. Life gives back to us in like measure to the seeds we have planted; we reap what we have sown. In the measure that we give, so life gives to us in return—we take out of our lives what we put into them. In our work with the children, our deeds and our example are living seeds broadcast into the fertile fields of their minds and their hearts. Our gifts to them, like living seeds, will grow and produce rich fruit for their future lives.

The kindergarten is a temple of our own unfolding as well as that of the young ones in our care. We need the high temperature of the flame of love as well as the intense pressure of a high intelligence for our innermost selves to become fashioned into the likeness of the great individualities who have walked this earth before us. Through contact with these young hearts and minds we find ample opportunity to smooth out our own rough edges so that the indwelling splendor of our deeper self may shine forth. Wonder is the beginning of all true learning, and as educators we may draw forth the inner magnificence sleeping in the children by preserving a sense of wonder for the mystery of each child. The origins and destiny of each human soul is immeasurably profound.

We give the children the gift of a life-long love for learning when we plant in their hearts a sense of wonder. This we do through the artfulness of the picture language of the soul. By drawing upon the rich imagination of tales of enchantment and beauty we can sway the child's growing mind so as to love goodness and to embrace beauty. From the child's own inner sense for beauty she chooses to love the best and brightest and to follow the path of light, truth and friendship.

Making joy and happiness the object of our striving, we place before the children the example of kindness and loveliness. This draws out their enthusiasm for living. The teacher opens her heart each day as a vessel to contain gratitude for the gifts and lessons of the day, and for the chance to work among the special young souls who look up to us in spontaneous openness and admiration.

Through our earnest striving to embody the loving potential in our hearts, we become worthy examples for the children. By kindling their enthusiasm for play, and by sparking their imaginations with the gift of heartfelt words and wisdom-filled stories, they grow in strength, grace, skill and enthusiasm for learning. The task before us makes us grateful, and opens the inner portals of inspiration, for gratitude is the secret of finding joy in living.

—Emory Michael