

## **Fundamental Human Needs Across Time and Space (transcript)**

Today we're going to discuss the next stage of the Fundamental Human Needs journey. This step is crucial in giving your child a vision of a whole, from which they can explore details and create a multi-step interdisciplinary research project. This kind of work ideally starts around the third grade, with 9 year olds or mature 8 year olds, but the first section that we're going to discuss in this video - the one titled Stages of Civilization - is appropriate even for six- and seven-year-olds. If you're feeling a bit overwhelmed by everything you're doing in homeschooling right now, then I suggest that you see this video lesson as inspiration for planning the coming semester. First get settled into the school year and explore Fundamental Human Needs broadly and lightly, and when you're ready, take the plunge. The approach we'll be discussing in this video and the next one requires adult guidance and involvement; our job will be to provide the scaffolding and structure, the resources and perspective, that will allow your child to be successful. So, if you're ready, let's dive in...

In the last video we talked about how to present the Fundamental Needs chart. Your child will hopefully be drawn to one fundamental need, and that will become your starting point for this stage. I'm going to make an important parenthesis here to point out that all fundamental human needs are of equal value. We need to be mindful of our own conditioning and biases, and notice our reactions if our child chooses a topic our society considers frivolous, like clothing or jewelry, or one that's considered destructive, like defense. Ball gowns, tiaras, and rifles have enormous value as topics of study, and are also the means for developing organization, research, and presentation skills. And just as importantly, they serve as gateways towards other areas of knowledge.

In the words of Dr. Montessori, "the details are only interesting when they are connected with the whole." Therefore, we need to start by giving our children a vision of the whole for their particular topic of interest. This starts with the Stages of Civilization work, and continues with the Horizontal Exploration of the need the child wants to learn about.

The Stages of Civilization work has two steps. The first step is a guided conversation down the branch of the Fundamental Needs Chart that your child is interested in. So, for example, if your child is interested in log cabins because they're reading "Little House on the Prairie", then the guided conversation will explore the Shelter column.

Your conversation should follow these four steps:

1. Describe the material/object (e.g. wood, stone, iron)
2. Briefly explain how humans used it (benefits and challenges)
3. Point out the human occupations (jobs) that came about due to this material
4. Emphasize how those humans worked hard so that others could satisfy their needs.

So, for example, in the Shelter column, I would say something like this: "The first man-made shelters used animal skins and wood. Humans used wood first as a skeleton to build temporary housing like straw huts, teepees and wigwams. Later it was used to build log cabins. Why do you think they chose wood? Because it was plentiful and free! Humans figured out how to turn tree trunks into homes, but they had to deal with certain challenges. As strong as wood can be, it's not perfect. Wood is susceptible to termites, rot and fires. But for a long time, despite these challenges, wood was the material of choice for human groups who were building shelters. Now, although we often think of construction workers when we think of someone building a house, they wouldn't be able to do their job without the work of loggers and millers. At first, people cut down logs and made their own log cabins. But eventually, houses became more complex and more people were needed. Loggers had to go into the woods, chop down trees, and take them to the miller. The miller was in charge of cutting the wood carefully, making sure that the planks were straight and sturdy. And then several people had to work together as a team to get the house built. And eventually, a new job appeared: that of the architect, who came up with the design for the house. Thanks to these hard-working individuals, civilizations were able to create strong shelters that protected them from the elements and from wildlife."

And then I would do the same for stone, brick, and steel. You don't have to give a huge lecture, just a brief but descriptive overview that highlights human work, paints a vivid picture in your child's mind, and leaves them wanting to know more.

The second step, which can take place in the same session or on the following day, is to pull out the historical picture cards that show the evolution of the need you discussed. (You can find these in the lesson notes.) It can be helpful to read the text cards prior to presenting the material, so you know what each card represents. Remember, you don't have to know everything, but it helps to be one step ahead of your child. Go through the cards one by one, in no particular order, briefly discussing the details in each image. And then invite your child to match the labels and text cards to the images they're now familiar with.

The next stage, which can be presented a few days later if your child has an understanding of the concepts of BC and AD, is the Horizontal Study. (If your child needs to learn about BC/AD, then please refer to the BC/AD and Timeline of Millenia presentations in your albums or in the Timeline). In the first step of the Horizontal Study, we ask the child to put the cards and labels in chronological order based on their knowledge, and then they can check the back of the cards, which should be numbered so the child can correct their own work. And then we highlight the Ancient Roman period as the dividing line between BC and AD. The value of this lesson lies not in your child's accuracy, but in the logical thinking and discussion that it inspires. And it's a great preparation for the work that comes next: sequencing the cards and labels on the Timeline of the Millenia. In this step, the same cards and labels are matched to the centuries when they were used by humans, giving your child a

powerful first impression of what life was like in ancient times and how human ingenuity has transformed our living conditions.

By the time you reach this point, not only will your child have an accurate picture of their area of interest, but more importantly, you will have given them the framework for exploring and understanding any aspect of human culture across time and space.

In the lesson notes, I'm including a link to a simple but free collection of Fundamental Human Needs cards that you can download and print. I'm also including the sample lesson plans for the Stages of Civilization work and for the Horizontal Study explorations. Remember to adapt them to your child's particular area of interest. And in closing, please keep in mind that this should be inspiring, uplifting, and collaborative work. Our goal is to broaden the child's perspective and help them develop an appreciation for human ingenuity. This work is not something to check off a list, but should be approached as a pleasurable and imaginative journey back in time. Forget everything you were taught about history - the dates, names, and places that seem so important to adults and yet mean so little to a child. Focus instead on the remarkable achievements of the ordinary men and women who, while working to survive, also ensured that we would thrive.