

From the Montessori Teachers Collective (MOTECO.ORG)

Closing Address - Maria Montessori, India First Course, 1940

Dear Friends and Unforgettable Pupils,

I beseech you, do not go around speaking of an educational method that has convinced you, nor of having studied the way to make culture for children easy, universal, and attractive.

Do not go around saying, 'We have learned the way to instruct the new Indian generation to bring them quickly to a loftier level of culture.'

Do not say these things - or if you do, point to them as a 'means' for attaining a more universal aim for it goes far beyond India, it involves the whole world. For the real aim is to really renew humanity while at the same time helping your beloved people, so sensitive to the new times.

Therefore speak to everyone of the child and of his secret; unveil the truth; reveal the powers of this 'spiritual embryo' of the human soul; proclaim him for what he is; the father of man, the builder of humanity, the creative and transforming energy which can act on the hearts of men and can offer new elements for the solution of social problems.

It is he, the child you must illustrate, for his image is still unknown to the heart of man: a mysterious and impenetrable darkness has hidden it.

How touching is the figure of the child full of love; how impressive the realization that just when he is in his first two or three years of life, he is fashioning the man adapted to his time!

Future peace depends on this task and remember well that peace brought about by the child does not consist of bringing to a mutual understanding adult men who are ever in rivalry, but of building a new society in which the individualities are protected during that original period in which they are constructing themselves. And this is the sort of peace that only the child can provide.

What I told you of what can be done with an education based on the powers of the child is true, but it is necessary first that human consciousness be prepared to receive this truth. Now therefore go forth and begin your task, dear ones, and keep in mind that your task must be more that of apostles of a truth than of a method of education, of being fighters rather than teachers. Go forth humble and non-violent, with a luminous faith in your heart. Go forth and preach all over India so as to prepare the way for the Kingdom of the Child.