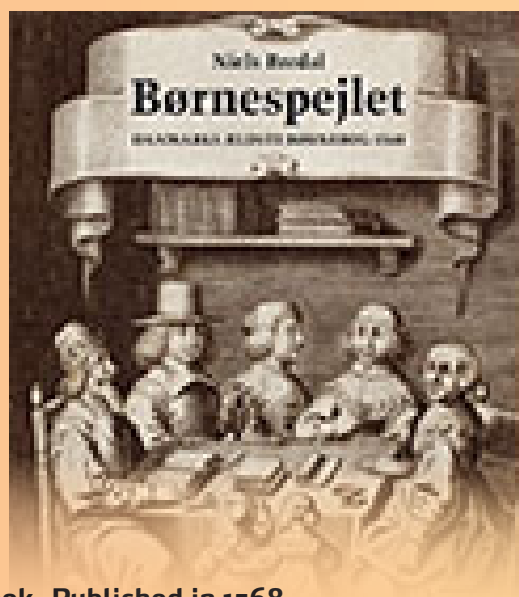


## Niels Bredel: The Children's Mirror (Børnespejlet)



### Denmark's oldest Children's Book- Published in 1568

Reprinted by Wornianum Press 2009, with a postscript by Kirsten Rykind-Eriksen.

### About The Writer

The author Niels Bredel lived in & around Vejle from 1500-1580. As a young man he was a monk in Vejle's Black Friars' Monastery. When the Vejle monastery closed down in 1529, he got married and taught children.

Hans Tavsén, who became Bishop in Ribe in 1541, established the following year, in 1542, a Latin school in Vejle. Here Niels Bredel became the first headmaster. He taught at this school with one other teacher and was at that time called a listener. Niels Bredel also worked as a vicar.

### About "The Children's Mirror"

"The Children's Mirror" is a book on ethics as it was 32 years after the reformation in Denmark. To know ethics was part of the behavioural education which was prevalent in the Renaissance period. Each and every individual had a self-value through having manners and spiritual development. The body and its movements could be cultivated. The costume worn could improve one's body ideal. The fork was invented, so you didn't need to eat with your fingers.

The "middle classes" raised their children with high manners so that their children could control their bodies the whole day including speech so you were seen to be civilised. Importance was attached to how you ate and slept, how you got up and went to bed, and how you slept next to the person you shared the bed with. Not least, importance was attached to saying your prayers. It was important how you were raised and educated so that you could show embarrassment and shame.

## Exercise:

Read the sources from

**Niels Bredal: "The Children's Mirror" – Denmark's first children's book (1568)**

### Text 1: How children must behave in the morning

In the morning you must arise at an appropriate hour  
and dress yourself immediately

Comb your hair, wash hands and mouth  
and then in all honesty serve the Lord.

Read the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer  
together with this prayer.

#### The Prayer:

I thank thee our Lord of heaven and land,  
the Christ, Your son, and the Eternal word  
to have me in Your high grace  
keep this night from harm and misery.

I pray that You will graciously forgive,  
all my sins, guilt and offences.

And further by the end of the day  
all sins and evilness will leave me  
thus both my life and all my doings  
shall please and truly satisfy you.

For I entrust my body and soul  
with all I have, in Your divine hand.

Let Your holy angel never yield away from me  
that the devil shall not deceive me.

### Text 2: How the children must behave in the evening

In the evening you must not stay up too late.

Eat your supper appropriately and in time.

Drink appropriately, later go for a stroll

then may you have a quiet and tranquil night.

Greet your parents and people with devotion.

Wish them good night and blissfulness.

Read the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer  
together with the above prayer.

Go to bed with honour and manners.

Lie down, in the Name of Jesus, comfortably and graciously.

### Text 3A: How children must behave in the church

When you enter the church,

Fall on your knees, bow your head and mind.

Be aware that you were a heathen like all of us,  
before the Lord mercifully called upon you.

Thank Him for all his good deeds  
thus regret all your sins.

Pray for mercy, do the penance,  
trust Him, as you must do.

He will sollicitude you in times of fear and despair,  
for the sake of His fault: torment and death.

Then arise, praise the Lord  
 with a true will in heart, soul and mind  
 When singing to honour and praise the Lord  
 do not let yourself outdo or better.  
 Whatever the vicar will preach at the altar,  
 let it take to your heart,  
 like when the Lord is present.  
 You shall not talk nor slumber,  
 be aware of the reason you have gone to church.  
 Not only shall you see and hear all,  
 you must follow the words.

### Text 3B

When going to Communion, have the intention  
 not to socialising, by habit or particular seasons.  
 But to go there with the pain of Christ  
 to confirm your faith in God.

### Text 3C

You shall enter the church  
 when the vicar is preaching.  
 Do not have meetings in the churchyard,  
 cursing and swearing, to open the gates to hell.  
 But respect the church and the cemetery,  
 as many remain resting here.  
 On Judgement Day they will arise  
 with body and soul to receive the Lord's judgment.

### Text 4: A short prayer

In the name of Jesus we sit by the table  
 to his blessing we eat and drink.  
 Praise the Lord and our health  
 We eat and drink in Jesus name  
 AMEN

### Text 5: Grace after meal

In the name of Jesus we have eaten,  
 we had enough food and beer.  
 Pray the Lord to enable us  
 To praise Your divine name.  
 AMEN



### Source exercise

#### Exercise: Text 1, 2, 3 and 4

Read the text (THE SOURCE) and look up difficult words

Use the Danish Language Dictionary on: <http://ordnet.dk/ods/>

	Title or the number of the text: .....
1. Who has written the text?	..... ..... .....
2. In what year was the text written?	..... ..... .....
3. In which book was it published?	..... ..... .....
4. What subject does the text cover?	..... ..... .....
5. To whom is the book written?	..... ..... .....
6. What was the purpose/ meaning of the text?	..... ..... .....
7. What could be obtained by raising children according to the text?	..... ..... .....
8. Is the text contemporary?  Why/Why not?	..... ..... .....
9. How does it appear that the text is written <b>after</b> the Reformation?	..... ..... .....