

Profile of a Kindergarten Child

Characteristics

The self-image of a child at this age is delicate, easily altered by people and situations near to him/her. A healthy self-concept is encouraged by positive reinforcement including the fact that God made each person and loves each person.

The kindergartner tends to be egocentric, absorbed in his/her impressions and sometimes fails to realize that others may not share the same perceptions.

A five-year old needs a strong sense of security and a feeling that he/she is loved and belongs. Improved socialization skills are a goal for the kindergarten year.

The kindergarten child involves his/her body and spirit as well as his/her mind in learning.

The child of this age relates to the concrete, to experiences of everyday life.

This child has a short attention span and needs a variety of activities and approaches to learning.

The kindergarten year provides a time for the child to acquire a sense of initiative, to experience opportunities to affect the world in which he/she lives.

Faith Development Needs

The five-year-old child, in order to develop spiritually, emotionally, physically, intellectually, and socially needs to be recognized, valued, praised, and accepted as a child of God, created in His image and likeness as well as being a unique individual with specific talents and gifts.

The child of this age level needs to feel loved by God and loved and appreciated by others. He/She needs to experience a sense of security and belonging, which is essential to growth and healthy expression.

The kindergartner needs to see and experience how to share. He needs models from real-life stories, Scripture, the lives of saints, and especially from familiar adults in his life. (Justice, Fortitude) (Moral training)

This child needs to experience a climate in which self-discipline (Moral training) is fostered by giving him/her real responsibilities and allowing him/her to experience that all actions have related consequences, either positive or negative. (Justice, Temperance)

The five-year-old learns best by doing rather than listening; he/she needs to participate in activities like role-playing, story telling, singing, and celebrating. (Prudence)

The catechist is encouraged to involve the child in group prayer and related religious activities. He/She can be introduced to brief moments of silence in which to communicate with God, to wonder and to imagine. He/She may describe what God has communicated in return.

Along with prayer and the memorization of prayers, understanding the major point of the teaching, as presented by the catechist, are essential for the students to grow in their friendship with Jesus Christ.

Children are to be helped to develop the Cardinal Virtues as habit in order to guide their conduct as a follower of Jesus (CCC 1805-1809).

<u>Prudence:</u>	Discovering our true good and choosing the right means of achieving it (Simplified definition) making a right judgment
<u>Justice:</u>	Giving the proper due to God and neighbor Being fair
<u>Fortitude/Courage:</u>	Firmness in the pursuit of good The courage to do what is right
<u>Temperance:</u>	Moderating the attraction of the pleasures of the senses that provides balance in the use of created goods Acting with self discipline or self control (CCC 1803-1809)

Example: The virtue of justice is exercised when children are fair in sharing their toys.
The virtue of temperance is exercised when children take one cookie instead of five.

Implications

As a prime role model for the children, the teacher of the Faith needs to have a strong relationship with God through prayer and active involvement with a faith community.

To encourage a positive self-image, the catechist should take opportunities to interact individually with each child recognizing him/her as a unique gift of God.

Children relate readily to symbols and gestures. The catechist can provide religious experiences that involve praising, thanking and celebrating God through various prayer forms.

To develop the sense of belonging to and being responsible for God's creation, the catechist is to encourage in the children an awareness of the needs and feelings of others and to see the entire world as a gift.

A catechist can guide the child in virtue by presenting situations in which a child learns that he/she has a mind (intellect) to know the good and a will to choose. Good actions help to form good habits (virtues).

The Profile of a Pre-school and Kindergarten aged child, including Characteristics, Faith Development Needs and Implications was adapted from the Diocesan Curriculum, Office for Catechesis, Diocese of Sioux Falls.