

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 him/her/everyone and loves him/her/everyone.

The kindergartener is 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.

This child relates to the concrete, to experiences of his/her 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 they live.

Faith Development Needs

The five-year old child, in order to develop holistically (spiritually, emotionally, physically, intellectually, socially), needs to be recognized, valued, praised, and accepted for the unique and special person he/she is.

This child 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 kindergartener needs to see and experience how to share. He/She needs models from real-life: Scripture, the lives of saints, and especially from familiar adults in his/her 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 catechist helps the child to choose the good for its own sake. (prudence)

The five-year old learns best by doing rather than listening. He/She needs to participate in activities like role-playing, storytelling, singing, and celebrating.

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 to them.

Implications

As a prime role model for the children, the catechist needs to develop 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 urged to encourage in the children an awareness of the needs and feelings of others and to see the entire world as a gift. We do this by providing opportunities for the children to share their time, talent and treasure with others. By doing this, we give them an opportunity to be caretakers of God's creation.

To cultivate virtue in the children, a catechist needs to know and understand the moral virtues and how they work to balance the natural powers of reason, will, and the senses.

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).