



Teaching All Children

Children are introduced to more complex ideas and concepts as they progress in school. As catechists, we show our respect for God's creation by accepting all children as they are and mentoring them as they grow in their personal relationships with God. As catechists, we recognize that each child is unique. We know that developmental age does not always coincide with chronological age. Furthermore, we recognize that some children have special needs. *Finding God: Our Response to God's Gifts*[®] effectively links faith formation to children by using lessons and activities designed to appeal to many different learners at various developmental stages.

Although no two children are alike, some general characteristics apply to many children ages six and seven. This is often a time of many changes. Physically, children are growing rapidly. They are often enthusiastic, industrious, active, competitive, and curious. They like to explain their thoughts and ideas, especially to adults. They can be bossy and may begin to challenge authority. They may often appear restless and easily distracted, and they tire easily. As they form friendships beyond their immediate families, they begin to develop important social skills and may start having best friends.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Children in first grade often

- ▶ experience a striking increase in cognitive development.
- ▶ have vivid imaginations; enjoy hearing stories, poems, and songs as well as reading simple stories and poems.
- ▶ begin to think logically; love to ask questions.
- ▶ learn best by doing, such as participating in games or activities.
- ▶ have short attention spans.
- ▶ require structure and routine.

MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Children in first grade often

- ▶ realize when they have done something wrong.
- ▶ determine a right course of action simply as the one that allows them to avoid punishment.
- ▶ seek fairness; they may fight or squabble if they can't work out a solution among themselves.
- ▶ are easily influenced by significant adults.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Children in first grade often

- ▶ develop friendships that compete with those of family and teachers.
- ▶ are truly the center of their own worlds.
- ▶ tend to work better in pairs than in groups.
- ▶ like to spend considerable amounts of time alone.
- ▶ are engaged in their own thoughts and activities.
- ▶ can be grumpy and pout.
- ▶ need a great deal of affirmation, security, and structure.
- ▶ rely heavily on parents, teachers, and other important adults.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Children in first grade often

- ▶ have a sense of the sacred and are open to spiritual realities.
- ▶ are comfortable with prayer and capable of taking simple prayers to heart.
- ▶ have a sense of wonder and awe.
- ▶ respond to a quick reparative measure and forgiveness better than a long overdone punishment.
- ▶ think of God as a provider and protector.
- ▶ seek an atmosphere of warmth, protection, and gentle teaching.