

Characteristics of a Second Grade Student

It is always risky to describe the “typical child” of any age. Actually, there is no typical child. Differences within an age group are at least as great as the variation of one age group from another. It is important to remember that such variability is found within every area of development. With this caution we shall attempt to outline what might be expected in children seven to eight years old.

Physical

- ♦ growth rate slows down but is steady
- ♦ needs to wiggle and move around but tires easily
- ♦ developing small muscle skills but variation among children in small muscle control
- ♦ still very active but can be more purposeful in activities
- ♦ body language will be a clue to a child’s self-concept

Mental

- ♦ curious, likes to see what is happening
- ♦ can see differences
- ♦ likes to compare
- ♦ learns by progressing in steps, going from the known to the unknown
- ♦ thinks concretely
- ♦ memorizes mechanically, not logically
- ♦ has strong imagination
- ♦ memorizes words more easily than thoughts

Social

- ♦ can be a paradox in that they may be friendly one minute and antagonistic the next
- ♦ some rivalry for they are beginning to like to be best, first, the winner; also may be self-conscious and unwilling to speak or read in front of others
- ♦ ownership becomes important
- ♦ like to have a best friend and have more of a “gang” spirit
- ♦ growing in awareness of the world and one’s relationship to it
- ♦ likes children his/her own age and likes pets

Emotional

- ♦ may be insecure and fearful and worried
- ♦ sevens are sometimes called the “eraser age” – they strive for perfection so continually make corrections
- ♦ enthusiastic
- ♦ attitudes may be expressed by bodily movement

Spiritual

- ◆ seeks love, security, and assurance
- ◆ forgiveness is important and needed
- ◆ curious and eager to learn more, will ask questions, will believe exactly what they are told
- ◆ thinks of God as a friend and companion
- ◆ needs to hear truths repeated and explained, which means patience on the part of parents and teachers
- ◆ can begin to realize he is personally responsible for actions
- ◆ conscience is awakening to discern differences between right and wrong and between precept and practice

Effective Methods of Teaching

- ◆ Tell the story using concrete language; explain new words, don't avoid new, theological, faith-related words, but be sure to define them in terms the child can understand.
- ◆ Help children visualize the story with pictures, flannelgraph, or props.
- ◆ Encourage children to express their ideas and tell what they are thinking.
- ◆ Vary the pace of activities.
- ◆ Give directions carefully and patiently; express encouragement, praise, and appreciation.
- ◆ Plan a drama together (act out a story).
- ◆ Have children draw pictures relating to the story. Discuss the story while they draw.
- ◆ Do not underestimate the child's ability to reason.
- ◆ Repetition and review are a must; make them meaningful and enjoyable
- ◆ When using charts and awards, be sure to involve all students.
- ◆ Plan class time allowing children to move, participate, act, choose, etc.
- ◆ Provide and use a variety of activities and teaching techniques to meet the individual needs of the student. This age learns by doing, and they generally enjoy working with their hands in lessons and activities.
- ◆ Learning Center ideas (change "center" activities from time to time):
 - match verses with their references (addresses)
 - memory verse puzzles
 - make a poster of/for a commandment
 - provide additional reading options: devotionals, Christian magazines, and books
- ◆ Make worship services more meaningful by explaining the altar, pulpit, and order of service during your class.
- ◆ Music should be a vital part of the teaching program. Use a theme hymn as a teaching tool by incorporating it into the lesson.
- ◆ Bulletin board ideas (change periodically):
 - correspond with commandment being taught
 - seasonal: fall, winter, spring
 - correspond with the church calendar events
 - have students design and put up the board. Have them work in small groups, or if you have a small class, work with students individually to design a board. They will appreciate the personal attention, and you will have opportunity to talk about Jesus and His love while you work together.