

Characteristics of Fifth and Sixth Graders

Children are individuals. They grow and develop at their own rate. Therefore, there can be a wide range of growth and development even among children of the same age and grade level. However, there are general characteristics that have been observed and documented by child development experts which can be applied to most children in a given age-range. The wise teacher will be aware of the general characteristics of the students being taught but will also strive to recognize the students as individuals who are at different levels of development. Here are general characteristics of children ages 10-12 years old:

Generally

- ◆ Love animals and the outdoors
- ◆ Interested in factual material, but becoming capable of abstract thinking.

Physical

- ◆ Experiencing slow and steady growth in height and weight.
- ◆ (Girls) May experience a growth spurt—onset of early adolescence.
- ◆ Thrives on physical activity; can tend to be restless.
- ◆ Can be physically aggressive; may experience difficulty with bullies and bullying.
- ◆ Enjoys snacking and has an increase in appetite.
- ◆ Tends to have poor posture, sometimes due to insecurity and being self-conscious of body changes.

Cognitive

- ◆ Increased ability to memorize.
- ◆ Generally, enjoys reading.
- ◆ Can easily be motivated by a challenge or competition.
- ◆ Still thinks in concrete terms, but is increasing in ability to think abstractly—becoming better able to analyze, compare, sort, order, etc.
- ◆ Likes rules, logic, order.
- ◆ Enjoys maps, charts, puzzles, games.
- ◆ Feels a great sense of accomplishment for a job well done (either academically, athletically, musically, etc.).

Social

- ◆ Identifies with the parent of the same gender.
- ◆ Tends to be cooperative.
- ◆ Quick to point out unfairness.
- ◆ May be quick to anger but also quick to forgive.
- ◆ Generally, works well in groups.
- ◆ Interested in and loyal to friends, groups, clubs, sports teams, etc.
- ◆ Becoming more independent; able to handle more responsibility.
- ◆ Increasing in awareness of and concern for the ideas and beliefs of others (family, friends, etc.).
- ◆ Experiencing a heightened sense of peer pressure.
- ◆ Developing a more mature sense of right and wrong.
- ◆ Gaining ability in problem-solving.
- ◆ Becoming more self-confident; increasingly talkative.
- ◆ Can be cruel to others.

Spiritual

- ◆ Tends to struggle finding Scripture references.
- ◆ Understands right and wrong, good and evil.
- ◆ Adopts the morals of his/her parents.
- ◆ Very capable of experiencing genuine repentance for sin.
- ◆ Understands God's love and forgiveness.
- ◆ Able to memorize and understand personal application of Scripture.
- ◆ Can be self-disciplined enough for personal daily devotions.

Needs

A fifth grader needs to be . . .

- ◆ Complimented for a job well-done.
- ◆ Listened to and talked to.
- ◆ Thanked for helping.
- ◆ Reminded that they are unique creations of God.
- ◆ Taught respect for those in authority.
- ◆ Challenged through games and competitions.
- ◆ Aware that his/her actions have natural consequences.
- ◆ Taught to understand that he/she needs to admit a wrongdoing towards God and towards others (confession) and ask for forgiveness.