

Characteristics of the Young Junior

The nine-year-old is no longer a young child but neither is he capable for the abstract thinking of older juniors. Juniors are active, lively, and interested.

Some general characteristics of juniors and especially 4th graders are listed below. This is not intended to be a comprehensive list of characteristics or study of the nine-year-old child.

Physical

- ♦ Energetic describes this child. He is on the move, likes to do things, likes action and action stories. They should not be expected to sit still. Instead direct their energy by participation.

Mental - Emotional

- ♦ Heroes are important but they need help from parents and teachers in discerning good heroes and heroes in harmony with God's principles for living.
- ♦ Take charge – this child doesn't always want or need directions.
- ♦ Talks and giggles!
- ♦ Thinks more carefully but still in concrete terms. He can think back in time, likes facts, events, etc. and can begin to put them in sequence. The teacher should use charts, maps, activities, and extra reading with this age group. Take advantage of their active bodies and minds in positive activities. They will enjoy doing things and participation will keep them out of trouble.
- ♦ Use this time to develop the habit of Bible memorization. Teach the meaning and practical application of verses they memorize. What about rewards? Keep the following points in mind when using rewards with memorization.
 - rewards should be given for a job well done
 - all rewards should be within reach of everyone, even if it takes longer to achieve it. If only the first one to memorize a verse or larger portion of Scripture receives the prize the others will quit and the purpose for memorization is lost

Social

- ♦ Nine-year-olds like to have a special friend but they also need acceptance by the group. It is important that parents and teachers guide and instruct children in being kind, considerate, and forgiving toward other people. Do not accept teasing and making fun of others.
- ♦ This child likes the group and group activities so use this wisely in contests, in memory work, attendance, etc.
- ♦ Praise them. Instruct, do not criticize. Be firm, fair and caring in your instruction because juniors believe in justice.

Spiritual

- ♦ They recognize sin as sin in stories but it is harder for them to see their own fault. Give them help in making practical applications to their own lives.
- ♦ Juniors are interested in spiritual things and responsive to the gospel. God is becoming more real to them as a person for now they can connect Him with real people, places, and events.

- ◆ There are many spiritual concepts they can understand and are also able in a limited degree to grapple with some abstract ideas if they are carefully taught. They can understand:
 - God is almighty, wise, omnipresent
 - God is creator
 - God the Holy Spirit is a person who indwells the believer
 - Jesus is the Son of God, the Savior
 - The salvation message
 - The Bible is the true Word of God
 - Satan is an evil angel who tempts Christians
 - There are good angels
 - Heaven is a place prepared for Christians

Reading References:

Childhood Education in the Church, edited by Roy B. Zuck and Robert E. Clark. 1975 by The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.

Teaching Juniors Successfully, edited by Eleanor L. Doan. 1962 by Gospel Light Publications, Glendale 5, California.