

CHILDREN AGED 2 - 4 YRS

● Abilities

- Poor Coordination
 - Clumsiness can lead to injuries
 - May struggle and become frustrated with harder tasks (E.g. threading small beads)
- Short concentration span
 - Need short to the point lessons
 - Repeat one main idea rather than many
 - Easily distracted especially in bigger groups
 - Use one on one moments to reinforce lessons (E.g. playdough during free time, while doing their craft or having their juice)
 - Interrupts often (E.g. I saw a donkey...) Make time for them to share their stories later so you don't lose the group's attention

● Emotional development

- Insecure
 - Separation from parents is hard
 - We need to take on that role by providing a loving and safe environment
 - Need more leaders than older ages (2 per 15)
 - Do not cope well with disappointments
 - Make sure you have enough craft, biscuits etc
 - Reassure them if craft breaks or juice spills
 - Easily frightened
 - Avoid popping balloons, shouting, loud music
 - Introduce puppets and characters gently



- Need routine
 - Changing venues from playground to hall to classroom is hard for them. Especially when there are a lot of children
 - Physical boundaries, such their own mat to sit on or line they can't cross so everyone can see, helps them know what is expected of them

- **Social Interaction**

- Egocentric (The world revolves around me)
 - Play on their own
 - Have enough items so others can play alongside them
 - Find sharing and working with others difficult
 - They will agree people should be generous or love others but only because they think people should give them things and love them unconditionally. We need to create opportunities for them to be generous and show love to others.

- **How they learn**

- Use all their senses
 - They need big colourful simple pictures
 - They love to see and feel real items E.g. Even if they can't read the Bible they love feeling the book or looking for the page with the picture
 - Let them lift flaps to see what is hidden underneath
 - What they see is what they believe. If the leader acts like a mean tax collector, that leader becomes that person. Make sure to wear dress up items and tell them that you are pretending
 - Just because they are standing and staring at you does not mean they are not learning. They are taking it all in



- One simple thing at a time
 - Paraphrase stories so that they highlight the main message that they teach. They do not need all the details.

- **Lessons to teach**

- They cannot tell the difference between truth and made up stories
 - Make sure you are teaching them the truth
 - Basic knowledge of what the Bible is about such as who did what. Examples include Jesus' love for them; creation; true stories; life of Jesus
- Avoid abstract comparisons
 - Egg to explain the trinity. I am hungry. I don't like apples.
- They will have difficulty with parables linking it to the meaning.
 - For example, the parable of the woman who lost her coin. They think there was an actual woman who lost her coin and kept looking. They think they are physically lost and Jesus can't find them. Rather apply it and say "You know how the lady did not stop, well Jesus will not stop until you know Him and love Him."



CHILDREN AGED 5 - 7 YRS

● Abilities

- Learning many skills
 - Learn to read and write, cut and fold
 - Strength and physical ability improves
 - There can be a big difference in abilities within the same age group so be sensitive to those that are still developing



● Emotional development

- Crave approval
 - You will often hear them say “Look at me”
 - Avoid comparing things they cannot change
 - E.g. Avoid all hold up your craft
 - If struggle with the memory verse, then get everyone to do it with them then congratulate them that they got it
 - Can use comparison to help correct behaviour. E.g. “Can you see how everyone is sitting nicely on the carpet, that is what I expect of you”
- Emotional outbursts
 - Need help putting things into perspective and settling big feelings
- Put a lot of faith in adults
 - Take care to be a good example. Do what you say.

● Social Interaction

- Want friends but they don't always know how to be a good friend and so need facilitation
 - E.g. “You can't play with us” or “It's my turn”
 - Be aware of stronger personalities overwhelming others



- Enjoy playing games for the fun of it
 - Competition or purpose to the game is not needed
 - They enjoy E.g. Chased by the leader, collecting cards hidden

- **How they learn**

- Love to use all their senses
 - While they are doing the craft show a video or play an audio book or have a song that tells a story playing.
- Experiment and discover things on their own
 - Role-play
 - Let them act out parts of the story, or make sound effects.
Lions roaring in the den, following footprints
 - Choosing between options or searching for an object needed for the story
 - Putting the story in order
 - Guessing what will happen next
- They can learn things off by heart
- They learn through play
- They still struggle with abstract examples.
 - Object lessons must be easy to make the connection and use items they see every day

- **Lessons to teach**

- Stories of people, places and events from the Bible
- Highlight God's character of not only what He has done but who He is
- They beginning to understand what is right from wrong and so like to know what is expected as a Christian



CHILDREN AGED 8-10 YRS

● Abilities

- Coordinated
 - Can do worship songs with more complicated actions
 - Can play games that require skill (Obstacle courses, balancing)
- Becoming more Independent
 - Able to do more tasks on their own
- Intelligence has increased quite a lot
 - Able to challenge the type and amount of information taught

● Emotional development

- Self - expression
- Gaining more control of emotional outbursts
- Start to feel guilt, worry and stress
 - Bible principles on relying on Jesus and His forgiveness are important
- They have great faith
- They enjoy sharing their opinion and taking part in discussions
 - Make use of review questions

● Social Interaction

- Friends are very important
 - Look out for those on their own and find ways to integrate them
 - Only separate friends if they disrupt others
- They enjoy doing things together
 - Big group games
 - Small group activities and discussions
 - Junior Youth social events
 - Encourage them to invite friends
- They start to mimic the behaviour of peers and role models
 - Surround them by good role models
 - Take care they will mimic your behaviour
 - They can spot a person who says one things and does another



- Become aware of others in need and like to help
 - Making sandwiches
 - Praying for others
- They enjoy jokes and laughter

● How they learn

- Can now easily learn things off by heart
- They don't need as many senses to learn things
 - Can just learn by you speaking but pictures, items etc. engage them more, making learning an enjoyable experience and longer lasting
- They learn by teaching others
- They learn through applying it
- Their attention is easily kept when you add in interesting facts and details
 - E.g. When you sold land to confirm that the deal was final you would take off your sandal and give it to the other person. This is what Boaz did

● Lessons to teach

- Memory verses are important.
 - They will remember them and be able to apply them into adulthood if learnt now.
- Look at the characters of people in the Bible and the life of Jesus
 - This helps them to distinguish between heroes they should and shouldn't admire
- Let them find and read the stories for themselves in the Bible.
 - Encourage them to continue this outside of children's church
- Send them home with fun tasks to do
 - Bible detective questions to answer or verses to learn



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CHILDREN AGED 11-13 YRS

● Abilities

- Good concentration
- Retain and understand information easily
- Physically stronger and more coordinated
 - High energy levels

● Emotional development

- Self-conscious
 - Puberty means they are continually changing
 - Do not force them to contribute to discussions
 - Do not single them out
 - Make them feel safe and comfortable to share
- Have a deep need to belong
 - Reinforce the unconditional love of Jesus
 - That they are part of God's family and community
 - And that God has good plans for them
- Discovering who they are
 - Want to be adults but they are not yet adults
 - They want to be in charge and so can challenge authority
 - Gain respect rather than force your authority
 - They want independence but are not independent yet
 - They want responsibility but are not yet responsible
 - They begin to reject "childish" for fear of others thinking they are childish. But they still need to be children
- Become compassionate and empathetic
 - Can relate to people in the Bible or a situation

● Social Interaction

- Comparison with others
 - Help them celebrating their uniqueness and discovering who God has made them to be
 - Address bullying, teasing and negative jokes
- They become aware of the opposite sex



- Sometimes separating them to discuss certain topics can be beneficial
- Do not always separate them as can learn from each other
- It is at this age that the difference between boys and girls becomes very obvious
 - Girls commonly want to sit and chat while doing activities like beading and journaling
 - Boys commonly want to prove their strength and need an outlet
- Can be negatively influenced easily
 - Help them form strong friendship groups
 - Help them transition into Youth and high school
 - Welcome evening
 - Get to know the leaders

● How they learn

- Question everything
 - They have great faith but still want to know the facts and have proof
 - Become curious and want to know all details before drawing a conclusion
- Through being engaged
 - They like to look up verses for themselves, discover new information and confirm the facts
 - E.g. Feeding the 5000 is in all four of the Gospels but there was also a time when Jesus fed 4000 people
 - They like to solve problems, reason and work out puzzles rather than being lectured to
 - Prefer learning things that relate to their personal interests or experiences
- Group work



- **Lessons to teach**

- Aim is that they have a relationship with Jesus without you
 - Give them the skills they need to set aside times to pray, read the Bible and make Jesus a priority in their lives
- Application becomes important
 - Look up, read and apply verses and Bible stories to their lives
 - E.g. Daniel was told to pray to the king and no one else. Has anyone tried to make you do something you know God doesn't want you to do?
 - Modern day applications are good but remember to teach the story as it is. Straight from the Bible like the Bible says
 - Teach them how to live in way that pleases God
- Limit teaching only the basic facts of stories they have heard many times before. They love to know background information and the little details as well as how everything links together
- Do not limit them



Remember these are just general attributes and stages. No child follows them exactly. The most important thing you need to do is get to know the children standing right in front of you!

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