



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.

Getting to Know a Third-Grade Child (Ages 8–9)

Although no two children are alike, some general characteristics apply to many children ages eight through nine. This is often a time when children work diligently at increasing their skills in everything in which they are involved. Although they are still quite imaginative, they may begin to prefer realism and logic. They may begin to worry about the world, friends, families, and issues such as death and dying, moving, or changing schools.

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Children in third grade often

- ▶ are capable of handling increasingly complex concepts and solving problems.
- ▶ have a growing vocabulary and a great capacity to read and comprehend.
- ▶ are extremely curious and seem to want an explanation for almost everything.
- ▶ are eager to apply their imaginations to learning.
- ▶ are expanding their abilities so quickly that they may have difficulty knowing their own limits.
- ▶ engage in a wide variety of learning activities, especially puzzles, crosswords, and games.
- ▶ are interested in the natural world and understanding how things work.

MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Children in third grade often

- ▶ begin to make their own moral decisions, although inconsistently, based on internal judgments.
- ▶ judge the goodness of an act based on reward and punishment.
- ▶ begin to see that rules can be flexible.
- ▶ begin to consider the viewpoints of others.
- ▶ begin to feel guilty about negative behavior even if no one witnesses it.
- ▶ respond to clear and direct instruction as well as the opportunity to observe sound moral behavior in the lives of significant adults (in their own lives and in the lives of saints and holy people).

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Children in third grade often

- ▶ consider it extremely important to be part of a group, generally of the same gender.
- ▶ begin to engage in gossip, which can actually help establish group norms and values.
- ▶ are beginning to learn desirable social behaviors such as cooperating, sharing, comforting, and forgiving, so they can make and keep friends.
- ▶ are very outgoing and are defining what they need a friend to be.
- ▶ have a well-developed sense of humor; like jokes, riddles, and puzzles.
- ▶ have a great interest in stories about people from other cultures and areas of the world.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Children in third grade often

- ▶ begin to see prayer as not entirely centered on the self.
- ▶ are capable of praying for broad concerns and begin to see connections between events.
- ▶ are capable of praying spontaneously in a conversational style.
- ▶ enjoy ceremonies, rituals, and symbolism.
- ▶ enjoy quiet and reflecting for short periods of time.
- ▶ are capable of taking relatively complex prayers to heart.
- ▶ respond to a sense of belonging.