



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.

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. They may enjoy jokes, riddles, or puzzles. Although they are still quite imaginative, they may begin to prefer realism and logic. A third-grade child may begin to worry about the world, their friends, their 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.
- ▶ begin to enjoy reading books.
- ▶ learn primarily through their senses, so stories, crafts, and activities continue to be effective.
- ▶ are eager to apply their imaginations to learning.
- ▶ are expanding their abilities so quickly that they may have difficulty knowing their own limits.
- ▶ have a growing vocabulary.
- ▶ engage in a wide variety of learning activities, especially puzzles, crosswords, and games.
- ▶ are interested in the natural world and in understanding how things work.

MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Children in third grade often

- ▶ see things in terms of black and white.
- ▶ are motivated by reward and punishment.
- ▶ follow rules, especially if involved in making them and when they are clarified for the child.
- ▶ begin to consider the viewpoints of others.
- ▶ 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

- ▶ like being part of a group, both with friends and in organized activities such as religious education classes.
- ▶ learn to cooperate, share, comfort, and forgive, especially as part of making and keeping friends and feeling supported in their family life.
- ▶ can define what they need a friend to be.
- ▶ may begin to believe and spread gossip.
- ▶ have a well-developed sense of humor.
- ▶ are interested in stories about people from other cultures and areas of the world.
- ▶ are curious and seek explanations for many things.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Children in third grade often

- ▶ respond to a sense of belonging.
- ▶ express concern and gratitude for others in prayer.
- ▶ can pray for broad concerns, perceiving connections between events.
- ▶ pray spontaneously, in a conversational style.
- ▶ are interested in ceremonies, rituals, and symbolism.
- ▶ enjoy short periods of quiet reflection.
- ▶ can take relatively complex prayers to heart.