

4.1.e How can we reach students in Primary 4-6? P4-6—Teacher’s Delight or Teacher’s Despair?

How God made students in Primary 4-6

Westerners call them juniors—Primary 4-6—Ages 9-11, Grades 4-6, Upper Elementary Golden Age

Clarence Benson called it ‘the adult period of childhood,’ because ‘the maturity of the first division of life is reached and the child is at his best physically, mentally, and spiritually.’ (Benson, p. 147.)

God created humankind with built-in growth tables from His hand. The unfolding of those tables is also affected by training, by environment, and by interaction with others close to the child.

How did God make students in Primary 4-6? What do you think of each characteristic? Is it a Teacher’s Delight, or a Teacher’s Despair?

Enthusiastic

Insatiable learners, Want to know, Expansive-Learning & experiencing new things rapidly

Thinkers—Not challenging, but really thinking things through

Investigators

Open to new ideas

Loud, Boisterous, Talkers, Talk & Listen at the Same Time

Active, Likes to be outside. Loves nature

Strong & healthy, gain weight more than height

Spontaneous

Excited

Eager to share

Love to argue & to defend their point of view

Serious

Love Self-Directed Activity

Hate Chores & ‘Work’

Distracted

Practical & apt in applying Scripture to life

Explorers

Hero oriented

Social--Group oriented, Sometimes called ‘The Gang Age’

Skill-building years—Reading, writing, map decoding, computers

Amazing memories—memorize easily

Creative

Can-Doers

Can be highly motivated

Love to volunteer

Daring

Dislike between boys & girls

Control over emotions still developing—Incidents can be exaggerated

Art work can become quite detailed & realistic

Collectors

Interested in mechanics, how things work
Spiritually responsive
Like games & competition

What other group of children would show up an HOUR early ‘just in case you need me’? or volunteer BEFORE they knew what the job was?

How you can teach students in Primary 4-6 effectively

Need to go beyond Bible facts to Bible truths.

Build on facts to reach an understanding of underlying Biblical principles.

Helping them DISCOVER these is far better than TELLING them.

How to teach Bible truth as opposed to Bible facts;

Use visuals to teach the TRUTH or the PRINCIPLE.

Ask questions and provoke discussion oriented to the meaning.

Discuss possible applications.

Act out or role play the application.

Increasing need to understand and apply Scriptural truths.

Building on known truth to discover new truth

What concepts do they already have of key words?

How do they think and feel about those words & concepts?

IDEA: when introducing a new topic, gather the students into groups, and have them write down everything they’d like to know about it. Use this as a basis for developing lessons and applications.

Encouraging discussion

IDEA: Use ‘drawing out’ questions like these:

How do you know?

What would be an example of what you are saying?

Are you saying that.....?

Tell me more about that.

You’re doing well. Go on. Explain a little more.

IDEA: Do your best to accept something from each answer. Like:

Thanks for trying.

That’s an interesting thought.

Good point.

That’s a new idea.

Good try.

Lots of people do think that way, it’s true.

Yes, He’s a great Teacher, and even more.

How did Jesus teach? Have you ever considered how many thought questions Jesus asked as opposed to fact questions? Luke 10:36, , 13:15, 18:18-19

Chuck Swindool says the goal of train is to teach children to think for themselves. Not to give them all the right answers, but to train them to think for themselves.

Involving the students as much as possible

Passive, sermon-like teaching is death to Juniors!
Manipulative visuals

Helping students experience Bible truths

Planned experiences

Jesus sending out the 70

Life situation experiences

Jesus sleeping in the storm

Share your own personal experiences, including shortcomings and failures

Dramatic experiences—acting out stories, role plays

Memorizing

Good time to memorize hymns & creeds commonly used in worship as well as Bible verses

Conversion

Benson said peak of conversion was 13th year

80% of children slip through Sunday School without making a decision for Christ

Many mighty believers were converted during these years.

Polycarp the martyr—9

Matthew Henry—10

Isaac Watt the hymn writer-9

Jonathan Edwards-7

Spurgeon: ‘I have more confidence in the spiritual life of the children that I have received into this church than I have in the spiritual conditions of the adults.’

Special Issues in reaching students in Primary 4-6

Keeping things under control

Reaching juniors for Christ

Challenging juniors to service

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