

Methods and Class Management: Suggested Methods and Strategies for Grades 4–6

Introduction

In order to be successful as a religion teacher, it is important to respect the cognitive, physical, and spiritual capacities of different age levels. In this segment, you will find some helpful suggestions for children in Grades 4–6. You may also want to view the video *Age Appropriate Catechesis Grades 4–6*. To get the most out of this session reflect on the first question. Then read the article and answer the reflection questions.

First Question

What kinds of methods or strategies do you feel help students in your class to understand God and faith?

Article

The *National Directory for Catechesis* says, “The Church’s catechesis—and even more so, the catechist—must take into consideration all the human factors of a particular age level in order to present the Gospel message in a vital and compelling way” (48). More specifically, “School-age children should receive formal and systematic catechesis in a parish-based catechetical program, a Catholic school, or a program of home-based catechesis in which the content of the faith and the experience of Christian life is presented authentically and completely” (48.E.2).

In order to help students understand the mysteries of faith, the catechist should use teaching strategies and methods based on the student's stage of development.

Characteristics of Children in Grades 4-6

- compare parents' views to the views of other adults that they respect
- belonging to groups helps to shape their identity
- can think abstractly
- have a strong sense of fairness; willing to act for justice
- involve all senses
- are experiential learners (hands-on, likes to “do” it to learn about it)
- have begun to conceptualize

Strategies

- Build mutual respect; affirm the faith shared in a Catholic home, or provide a way to imagine a faith-filled life.
- Use their need for group-identity to teach what it means to be disciples of Christ, Catholic.
- Help them move more deeply into understanding of faith through more reflective questions and role-playing.
- Provide opportunities to build or create things together as a group working on a common goal.

- Help them understand the demands of relationships and how to find opportunities to practice the Corporal Works of Mercy.

Reflection Questions

- Why do you think small group discussion and activities are important for faith development at this grade level?
- What kinds of activities will help young people in Grades 4–6 understand what it means to practice the Corporal Works of Mercy?