

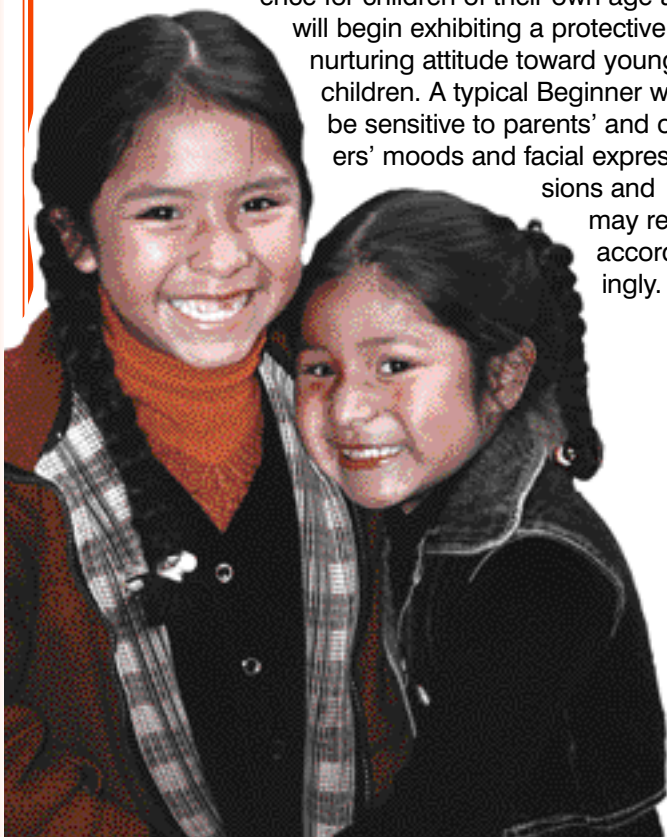
An In-depth Look at Kindergartners and Beginners



Your class of Kindergartners and Beginners comes in all sizes, shapes, colors, temperaments and personalities. Therefore, when you plan a lesson, the first and foremost thing to keep in mind is your students' individual differences. According to the guidelines for quality programs by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), each child should be viewed as a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth and development. The curriculum and adults' interaction should be responsive to individual differences in ability and interests. However, there are some typical behaviors you can expect to see in this age group.

In younger students, you will see them being assertive, boastful, seeking attention, and showing off. As they mature, they become more cooperative and obedient, with an increased desire to please adults and seek their approval. The children should be provided with opportunities to develop social skills such as cooperating, helping, negotiating, and talking with the person involved to solve interpersonal problems. Teachers should facilitate the development of these positive social skills at all times and be on a constant lookout for these "teachable moments." (Behavior guidance techniques will be discussed in detail in a later quarter.)

Kindergarten and Beginner children show a preference for children of their own age and will begin exhibiting a protective, nurturing attitude toward younger children. A typical Beginner will be sensitive to parents' and others' moods and facial expressions and may react accordingly.



Kindergartners will more readily seek help from their peers than will the Beginners, who still tend to seek help primarily from adults. Boys especially will want to work with a significant male role model, so it is important to include male teachers when at all possible for this age. We can expect to see a strong desire to "be first" with peers, with certain "bosses" emerging.

This is the golden age of "pretend" play. Classes should be structured to allow for children to learn from one another as much if not more than from the teacher. According to Willard Hartup (1992), the single best childhood predictor of adult outcomes is not school grades or classroom behavior, but the adequacy with which the child gets along with other children. Findings from research studies now show that children learn the most by observing grown-ups and other children and that, particularly if the person is nurturing and powerful, they will seek to be like the person and imitate his behavior. This age group continues to have an interest in housekeeping play with dolls, and this setting of symbolic play allows them to act out their fears, joys, and perceptions of life. They enjoy detailed and realistic models made with blocks, bricks and other materials. Because knowledge is constructed from meaningful experience, children benefit from real-life, hands-on learning experiences.

A recent study (Rushton & Larkin, 2001) found that children learn best when provided with choices, when they find the learning experiences meaningful, and when they are actively involved in decision making. Kindergartners are just beginning to grasp abstract ideas. As they develop a more defined personality, they will begin to protect themselves and stand up for their rights, showing a strong sense of "fair play" with peers. If an adult does not understand this process of development, a student's forward behavior can be seen as annoying or negative, rather than being seen as the student's need for becoming more independent. Students should be encouraged to come up with their own solutions.

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This age group is moving from being *process* oriented to being *product* oriented. For example, younger children just enjoy the act of stacking blocks, coloring, gluing, etc., but when they move into this age, they become more interested in the finished or final product that is actually made. The types of activities that are developmentally appropriate for Kindergartners and Beginners are:

- Planning and putting on their own plays and puppet shows;
- Block-building projects;
- Dot to dot sheets;
- Creating simple books about Bible characters/stories (they illustrate);
- Storytelling;
- Creative food activities (non-cooking);
- Music and movement activities with instruments (home-made when possible);
- Problem-solving.

Some standard props and materials for the classroom should include:

- Board games with simple easy-to-follow rules;
- Table manipulatives and jigsaw puzzles;
- Tapes/CDs;
- Dramatic play and dress-up costumes/props;
- Materials for art (soap crayons, play dough, collages, glove puppets, feathers, shells, felt, sticks, etc.).

When the children are engaged in an activity or playing with each other, some things you can look for are:

- Do the children appear relaxed and involved with each other?
- Do the children show respect for each other?
- Do the children usually cooperate and work together?
- When problems occur, do the children usually discuss their differences and work toward a solution?

The answers to these questions will be a good indicator as to whether or not the classroom expectations are being met. If you are still dealing with the “children should be seen and not heard” adage, this age group will make you think all of the students are self-centered, spoiled brats who need to be taught how to sit down and quietly listen as the teacher does most of the talking/teaching. In that case, both the teacher and the students will be the losers. Kindergartners and Beginners are students who must be actively involved in the lesson for it to take on meaning. Their *play* is their *work*. When you understand the best way for your children to learn is by typically using play scenes with one or several other children, you will not be intimidated by someone who may think you are not teaching anything if you “just play with the children most of the time.” Unrealistic expectations of a child’s behavior can hinder the learning process. By understanding what is or is not developmentally appropriate for your children, you can enhance their ability to truly learn the Bible lessons that will be meaningful and will stick with them for life.



Room Décor



Build a Tree

Thanks to Faith Tabernacle, La Marque, Texas for sharing these ideas.

Palm Tree

10 yards cheesecloth
1 box Rit fabric dye (brown)
1 carpet tube
Sand in a bucket, or 2 x 2 attached to a plywood base
Base—push tube into bucket of sand, or onto a 2 x 2 attached to a plywood base.

Cheesecloth—fold in half lengthwise, fold in half lengthwise again. Stitch down open side to form a tube. Dye cheesecloth brown in the washing machine and dry in dryer. Slip tube over carpet roll. Use large rubber bands to hold in place if needed.

Palm fronds (leaves)—use real ones or cut from green felt. Sew or glue a strip of green felt to the center back of the frond, leaving the bottom of the strip open. Straighten a wire clothes hanger and insert into fabric. Insert other end in top of carpet tube.

Cover base with crumpled paper.

Palm Tree 2

Cardboard or craft paper
Carpet tubes
Clear packaging tape or pneumatic staple gun
Base (same as above)

Cut cardboard or paper into 4” strips. Cut 2½ -3” slits on one side of the strips. Starting at the top of the tube, wrap the strips around the tube. Tape or staple each strip in place.

Palm fronds are made from wide paper twist. Untwist paper and cut desired shape. Tape a heavy piece of wire to the back of the frond (wire clothes hanger). Insert end of hanger in top of tube.

Cover base with crumpled paper.

Tree

Bucket of sand, or hall tree with top circle removed
3 carpet tubes
Brown paper
Green paper

Secure tubes in sand or in hall tree. Tape together.

Crumple brown paper. Wrap around tree lengthwise, stuffing inside with paper. Staple edges of brown paper together.

Cut a piece of brown paper 2 yards long. Put one person on each end of the paper and twist in opposite directions. Open and stuff with paper for larch branches, or hang as is for smaller branches. For suspended tile ceilings, tie the branches to the T-bar with fishing line. For sheetrock ceilings staple directly to the ceiling or tie fishing line around the branch and staple fishing line to ceiling. One end of the branch should be stapled to the tree trunk. Slit the trunk and slip the branch into the trunk before stapling if desired.

Twist narrower pieces of paper to form limbs and staple to branches.

When the branches and limbs are in place, crumple green paper and staple it to the ceiling above the branches (or tape to the T-bar). Staple leaves to the branches and limbs.

Resources



Subscribe today to the **Christian Educator**, a quarterly apostolic magazine created by and for Sunday school teachers, produced by the General Sunday School Division of the United Pentecostal Church International. Learn from those who have "been there done that." The magazine offers suggestions for discipline, outreach ideas, attendance boosters, and more. Order online at www.upci.org/ss/ss.upci.org/educator_order.htm

Books

The following apostolic books may be purchased online at www.pentecostalpublishing.com, or by calling 314-336-1818.

Build a library of children's books to keep in your classroom. These can be used for early birds or for those who finish projects early and need something to do. The books can be read by the teacher as a time-filler at the close of class.

Pansy Series

Dorcas Hord

Colorfully illustrated children's books with an accompanying CD-ROM. Children will fall in love with Pansy and her friends as each day they learn a lesson from God through ordinary daily events.



Tori and the Twins:

**Rain, Rain
Gone Away
Dare to Be
Different**

Diane Godair

Children ages 5-9 will love meeting the twins, Katie and Kyle, as they learn about making right choices. Classic stories come alive when Tori helps Katie and Kyle understand that biblical characters faced their same dilemmas.

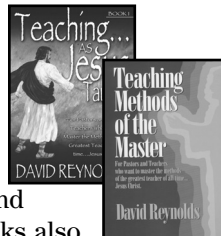


Teachers need books too, and these books will help you plan holiday programs, decorate your room, and enhance your teaching skills.

Teaching as Jesus Taught Teaching Methods of the Master

David Reynolds

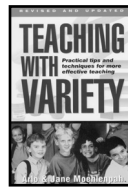
These two books analyze the methods which Christ used and applies them for us today. Teacher and student handbooks also available.



Teaching with Variety

Arlo and Jane Moehlenpah

Full of instructions for storytelling, asking and answering questions, leading discussions, using audio aids, charts, chalkboards, overhead projector, hand-puppets, and object lessons. CD-ROM and Spanish available.



Teaching in Perspective

Avis McMullen

Here is an excellent book on teaching methods for all age levels. It covers different developments of children, classroom discipline, and lots of teaching ideas.



Sunday School Attendance Boosters

Debbie Foster

Sunday school boosters are a fun part of Sunday school! They add excitement and something special for children. Boosters will get them to Sunday school and keep them coming. This book is full of ideas and how-to's that will enhance your Sunday school program.



Web sites

Visit these Web sites for additional helps. You will find decorating and craft ideas, books and supplies, as well as practical thoughts and instruction.

www.upci.org/wap for apostolic curriculum: all age levels, children's church, Spanish curriculum, links to other UPCI sites.

www.pentecostalpublishing.com for apostolic resources: books, music, literature, church supplies.

www.kidsprayer.com apostolic site for prayer: links for children and for adults; reports of prayers by children; resources for teaching children to pray.

www.upci.net/missionaries UPCI missionaries.

www.teachersparadise.com supplies: theme books, bulletin board art and borders, craft supplies (geared for secular education but lots of helps for church).



Seasonal Ideas



Thanksgiving Turkey Apple

1 small apple for each student.
Toothpicks
Colored miniature marshmallows
Jumbo marshmallows
Raisins
Red cinnamon candies
Candy corn
Corn syrup
1 small Styrofoam bowl for each student
Shredded raffia or tan paper

The apple is the body of the turkey. Stick five toothpicks in a line across the top rear of the apple body, leaving space between each to accommodate a marshmallow's width. Students spear marshmallows onto the five toothpicks to make tail feathers. Spear a jumbo marshmallow at the front for the head. A small dab of corn syrup will secure two red cinnamon candy eyes, one candy corn for a beak, and one raisin for the gobbler. Place turkey in a nest of raffia in a bowl to take home, or use as your snack for the day.

Doughnut Hole Acorns

Glazed doughnut holes (enough for each student to have 3-4)
1 can of chocolate frosting or peanut butter
1 pkg crumbled toffee or crushed nuts
Pretzels

Depending on the ability of your students, either frost the doughnut holes prior to class or allow the students to frost them.

Frost 1/3 or less of each donut hole with chocolate frosting or peanut butter. Roll in crumbled toffee (found in the baking aisle) or crushed nuts. Add a small piece of a pretzel stick for the stem.

Leaf Family

Variety of leaves
Tracing paper
Crayons

Gather several different varieties of leaves, either on a nature walk with your students or prior to class. Let each student select one leaf per family member. The leaves will be the body of the person. Place the tracing paper on top of the leaves and rub gently with crayons. Add arms, legs, eyes, etc., with crayons or markers; for a 3-D effect. Use google eyes, pompons, beads, etc. If the finished product is flat, laminate or cover with clear contact paper for a Fall placemat.

I'm All Ears

Yellow and green construction paper
Brown, orange, purple water-based finger paints

From yellow construction paper cut an outline shape of an ear of corn. Using brown, orange and purple finger paint, let students fill in the kernels with their fingerprints to create Indian corn. Cut and glue green leaves on each side of corn.

For a bulletin board near your story area create a cornfield and place a scarecrow for additional fall effect. Caption reads "Tell Us About Jesus—We're All Ears."

Option for a take-home craft: Write caption "Tell Us About Jesus—We're All Ears" on the leaves.

Pumpkin Patch of Pupils

Miniature/small pumpkin for each student.
Yarn (hair colors)
Google eyes (optional)
Water-based paints
Ribbon
Pipe cleaners
Permanent colored markers

Let students decorate a pumpkin to resemble themselves. Use appropriate hair color yarn and either google eyes (you can find colored ones at craft stores) or painted or marker eyes. Girls could add bows/ribbons. Freckles can be added with markers. Pipe cleaners work well for eye-glasses. Arrange your pumpkin patch of pupils on a table with fall leaves and decorations. (Use low heat glue gun.)

