

Compass Bible Church  
Compass KIDS

**Characteristics of Children**  
2 & 3 Years Old

***Because the 2 and 3 year olds are like this:***

***Physically***

Large muscles continuing to develop. Although extremely active will tire easily. Activity. Limited to one movement at a time. Small motor skills not developed so has difficulty with scissors and crayons. Vocal cords not fully developed.

***Mentally***

Attention span is 2-4 minutes. Memory abilities are limited. Learns best through repetition, imitation and asking questions. Literal thinkers therefore do not understand symbolism, time, distance or space. Have limited personal experiences and limited vocabulary.

***Socially***

Self-centered. Typically plays alone even in a group. Possessive of toys and may physically protect them. Sometimes timid. Desire attention and wants to please. Can help with supervision. Relies on others to help them as they are just learning to do things themselves.

***Emotionally***

Easily frightened and upset by noise and confusion. May have many fears and cry easily. Familiar people, surroundings and routines provide needed security. Actions based on their feelings. May “act out” in an attempt to get what they want.

***Spiritually***

Beginning to develop concepts of right and wrong and ask questions about God. Can begin to pray simple prayers. Responds to external motivation. Developing trust therefore believes what teacher and parents tell them. Does not understand religious symbolism but can learn simple Bible truths.

***Teach them like this:***

Provide a variety of learning experiences balanced between active and quiet activities. Pictures hung on the wall, chairs and tables should keep in mind the height of the child. Toys and movement should focus on large motor skills. Do not encourage loud singing.

***Teach them like this:***

Repeat Bible stories, songs, etc. often. The child does not tire of their favorites. Use pictures to illustrate let the child tell what is happening in the picture. Do not combine biblical and fictitious characters within the same story, as the child cannot distinguish between the two.

***Teach them like this:***

Focus on individual activities with a limited amount of time devoted to the large group. Introduce concepts of taking turns but don't expect the child to share easily. Encourage the child to do things on their own but be ready to assist them as needed. Show appreciation to the child for helping. Let them know Jesus is pleased when they do good things.

***Teach them like this:***

Arrive early to be well prepared so the child arrives to a peaceful, calm room. Overall consistency is important. Make effective use of transition times. Soft music helps to set a peaceful mood as the child arrives. Avoid loud talking. Minimize any fearful elements in the Bible story. Reward appropriate behavior with an appropriate touch, smile or praise. This minimizes “acting out”. If the child “acts out”, remove him/her from the room until he/she calms down.

***Teach them like this:***

Since the child is easily moldable and looks for “models” to imitate, the child learns love for God, respect for the church, the Bible and other concepts from the teacher. Use simple prayers that the child can repeat. Answer questions simply and honestly avoiding confusing religious symbolism or Bible verses beyond the child's understanding. Do not use statements like “Jesus won't like you if you do that.”