

Compass Bible Church
Compass KIDS
Characteristics of Children
4 Years Old to Kindergarten

Because the 4 and 5 year olds are like this:

Physically

Very active, restless, on the go but still tires easily. Large muscle and corresponding motor skills are developing rapidly. Runs and jumps moving quickly. Small muscles and corresponding motor skills are developing at a slower pace. Cutting, coloring and printing skills are developing, yet still experiences difficulty in this area. Proud of their growth and may view themselves as a “big” boy or girl but keep in mind they are still little.

Mentally

Curious. Asks many questions. Has an increasing vocabulary and is able to put thoughts and ideas into words. Attention span is still relatively short, 5-6 minutes. Cannot distinguish between fact and fantasy. Does not understand symbolism and has limited concepts of time, numbers and space. Learns best through imitation, play and using their senses. Forgets easily.

Socially

Imitates adults. Can play in small groups and learn to share. Still self-centered, aware more of their own needs rather than the needs of others. Tends to conform. Wants the approval of adults but may “test the waters” to see how far they can get with their behavior. Needs boundaries to feel secure.

Emotionally

Appears more confident by emotions may be intense and near the surface. Expresses anger, love, laughter and tears easily. Adult approval is very important. Needs affection and security as fear is a main emotion. Picks up easily on the emotions of others around them.

Spiritually

Developing concepts of right and wrong but may blame others for wrongdoing. May confuse God and Jesus as a friend. Influenced by external rewards and punishments. Can pray. Spiritual maturity directly related to the child’s emotional maturity.

Teach them like this:

Provide lots of space to move about and large sturdy equipment and materials. Change activities frequently interspersing opportunities for rest and slower paced activities. Encourage the child to participate in things they are big enough to do but provide help as needed. Encourage experimentation with materials but avoid criticism of the child’s efforts or undue requirements for the “finished product”.

Teach them like this:

The child can memorize but does not easily understand the meaning so use verses and stories that are literal rather than symbolic. Take time to help the child understand the meaning of the verse or story. Be patient with all the “why” questions the four and five year old asks. This is an important way they learn. Provide a variety of sensory learning experiences: touch, taste, see, hear and do.

Teach them like this:

Be a good role model. Couple Bible stories with contemporary stories to help child begin to understand the needs and feelings of others. Provide group activities where all children can get involved. Encourage the child by praising their efforts. Be firm with the child when needed but be fair and consistent with your discipline.

Teach them like this:

The child needs a calm, secure, unhurried environment to help keep their emotions in check. Don’t rush the child through an activity. Show attention equally to all children. Do not show favoritism. Encourage all the children, especially the shy ones but don’t focus attention on them. Do not show your own emotions to an extreme as the child quickly imitates the same emotion.

Teach them like this:

Let the child know that doing what is right pleases Jesus. Use stories that emphasize the difference between right and wrong. Help the child understand Jesus as a personal friend they can talk with. Encourage prayer as a time of talking to God as they would a friend. Let the children know you can forgive them when they do wrong because God forgives us.