

# Age Level Characteristics

*Note: Describes typical development ONLY;  
students may develop at a different pace!*

## Infant & Toddler

(0–3 Years)

### **Faith Development**

- ☒ Beginning to trust
- ☒ Senses love of parents and those in the church community

### **Physical Development**

- ☒ Fast physical growth and changes
- ☒ Hand-eye coordination improving

### **Mental and Intellectual Development**

- ☒ Actions first based on reflexes
- ☒ Searches, imitates, learns from concrete activities and objects

### **Values and Ethics**

- ☒ Does what adults say is right and wrong
- ☒ Size determines importance, not intention

### **Interpersonal Relationships**

- ☒ Relationships with adults primary
- ☒ Dependent on parenting persons
- ☒ Self-centered
- ☒ Often shy with strangers
- ☒ Parallel play
- ☒ Develops relational skills through group experience

### **Hints for Leaders**

- ☒ Use free downloadable lessons at [CokesburyVBS.com](http://CokesburyVBS.com) to find age-appropriate lessons for the youngest in this age group.
- ☒ Consult the *Preschool/Kindergarten Leader* book for lesson plans for the oldest in this age group.
- ☒ Many students will not be ready for toilet learning until after age three; treat accidents calmly and matter of factly.
- ☒ With three-year-olds, use simple rhythm instruments and a variety of body movements with music.

## Young Child

(4–7 Years)

### **Faith Development**

- ☒ Imitates religious behavior of adults
- ☒ Begins to ask religious questions
- ☒ Expresses wonder, joy, thanksgiving, and praise
- ☒ Begins to use faith language

### **Physical Development**

- ☒ Talks more clearly
- ☒ Most can run, skip, jump, throw, catch, and climb

### **Mental and Intellectual Development**

- ☒ Episodic thinking
- ☒ Begins to differentiate reality from imagination
- ☒ Learns best from concrete activities
- ☒ Recalls, invents, begins to converse

### **Values and Ethics**

- ☒ Obeys to avoid punishment
- ☒ Understands the significance of intention
- ☒ Begins to see consequences of actions

### **Interpersonal Relationships**

- ☒ Relationships with adults primary
- ☒ Parallel play moves to relational play
- ☒ Develops relational skills through group experience
- ☒ Increasing empathy
- ☒ Sees “big” people as good

### **Hints for Leaders**

- ☒ Use the *Preschool/Kindergarten Leader* book for lesson plans for four- and five-year-olds.
- ☒ Use the Young Elementary material for six- and seven-year-olds.
- ☒ Provide opportunities for active play.
- ☒ Take students’ fears seriously.
- ☒ Encourage students to create and use their imaginations.