

TEACHERS AND LEADERS: 4TH & 5TH GRADE

FAITH DEVELOPMENT – STAGE TWO – “WHAT’S FAIR IS FAIR”

Ages from seven to twelve years

The material below is based on the work of James Fowler as it is described in the LEAD book Faith Passages and Patterns by Thomas A. Droege (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983).

At this age: People/children develop a sense of fairness. They are attracted by simple stories, but their understanding is literal and often limited to seeing only good or evil, justness or fairness. Their faith is often expressed as good people receiving blessings and bad people being punished.

Factors which affect this expression of faith:

1. Tend to seek justice and revenge (Old Testament stories are popular).
2. Attracted by “law” more than “gospel.”
3. Lack the ability to reflect on the spiritual meanings of stories; tend to understand only the literal story line.
4. Look to others as models of Christian behavior.
5. Have a need to belong.
6. Tend to focus on God’s as a loving Father for their own personal lives.
7. Are growing in awareness of the purpose of Jesus’ life.

Implications for leaders:

1. Tell stories that present a positive image of God’s action.
2. Present carefully concepts like forgiveness, stewardship, and concern for others who are not present.
3. Choose stories that have clear messages; avoid adding moralisms.
4. Tell stories about and invite people to class who do exemplary acts.
5. Involve them with many people of church community.
6. Provide opportunities for prayer, private devotions, and worship.
7. Teach carefully the distinction between God and Jesus.