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Learning & Teaching Styles

Overview of Session:

Part I:	How Do People Learn?	(10 Minutes)
Part II:	Just My Style	(20 Minutes)
Part III:	Creative Teaching	(30 Minutes)

OBJECTIVES:

- Discover the various ways in which people learn.
- Identify learning and teaching tendencies.
- Explore creative teaching methods.

Part I: How Do People Learn?


If you've ever asked for directions in an unfamiliar area, you know how frustrating it can sometimes be. One person may give you a long list of street names and left turns. Another may point out fast food restaurants and other landmarks. Still others will take a sheet of paper and draw a map for you. Which method will best guide you safely to your destination? It all depends on your learning style.

Each of us processes information in our own way. We sift every bit of data through a unique filter of thinking mechanisms and personal experiences. No two people think in exactly the same way.

Some of us are very concrete thinkers. We tend to think about real, tangible objects -- things we can see and touch. We look practically at how things work, how things actually are. Others of us tend to be more abstract in our thinking.

We prefer to deal with emotions and ideas, feeling and analyzing the world around us. Some of us are very reflective. We like to listen and observe what is going on, allowing the information to sink in. Others need to be active, wanting to do something, applying principles, and trying things out for ourselves.

The majority of us, however, fit somewhere in-between these extremes. We may lean more towards one end of the spectrum, but there is some balance in our reasoning.



Because of this variety in our thinking, there is also variety in how we learn about God's world. Some of us take in and remember everything we read or hear. For others, unless we can see it, we don't understand it.

Since we want to give each young person an equal opportunity to develop skills, we must try to teach those skills in the most effective manner possible. However, for each young person at camp, there is a method or group of methods which are particularly effective in helping them learn. What works with one may not work with another. Does this mean that there is no common ground for teaching? Fortunately, research shows that there are some general tendencies.

As any parent will tell you, young children are very concrete, literal thinkers. They have very little ability to distinguish between what is real and what is pretend. Their imagination is limited to replaying situations they have seen or experienced. They understand only what they see and touch. As they grow older, their ability to comprehend abstract ideas increases. They are better able to grasp feelings, values, and hypothetical situations. Because of this gradual development, we must strive to teach at a level which matches our group's level of understanding.

The spiral represents an approach to teaching that begins by introducing an idea at a very simple, concrete level. As a child matures we reinforce his knowledge of that idea by building upon what he already knows.

We gradually expand the idea, giving more specific details at continually higher, more abstract levels of thought. The result is a stronger, more comprehensive understanding of the original idea.

Research also shows us what methods are most effective in teaching. In general, the more of our senses we employ, the more we are likely to remember. Most of us will only retain about 20% of what we take in by listening, either to lectures, sermons, or stories. We remember about 30% of what we watch -either from illustrations, photographs, diagrams, maps, or from personal observation. When we combine both sight and sound (for example, when we watch a movie) we hold on to half, or 50%, of the information presented. When we participate in simulations -- when we role play situations, go on field trips, or have something demonstrated for us -- we remember 70%. And when we are actively, physically involved in experiencing something, we retain about 90%.

Part II: Just My Style

While it is important to keep in mind the different ways that people in our group might learn, we must also remember that we will be the ones presenting much of the information. That information will be greatly affected by our own style of learning and our own preferences in teaching. Therefore, it is a good idea to be aware of what those tendencies are.

SCORING SYSTEM

Add up the total points for each A, B, C, and D response from your answer sheet in the boxes.

A _____ B _____ C _____ D _____

What It Means

Each letter A, B, C, and D corresponds to one of four learning styles. The number of points indicates the strength of an individual's tendencies toward that style. The maximum number of points for any one category is 40.

Learning Styles

"A" corresponds to the Innovative style.

"B" corresponds to the Analytic style.

"C" corresponds to the Common Sense style.

"D" corresponds to the Dynamic style.

Learning/Teaching Tendencies

The next two pages describe the *tendencies* of individuals in their roles as teachers and as students. No one style is better than another; they each have their strengths and weaknesses. However, keep in mind that each person is unique. Each of us has a personal learning or teaching style that is a complex combination of these four tendencies.

The Importance of Learning Styles

As leaders, we want to present information in a way that maximizes its usefulness to our students. To accomplish this we must incorporate our own strengths as teachers and focus them upon what works best with our students.

THE ANIMAL SCHOOL - Author Unknown

Once upon a time, the animals of the forest decided to organize a school to train their youngsters in the basic skills for survival. They adopted a curriculum consisting of running, climbing, swimming, and flying.

To make things easier to administer, they decided that all the animals would take all of the same subjects.

The duck was excellent in swimming -- better, in fact, than his instructor. He made passing grades in flying, but was very poor in running. Since he was slow in running, he had to stay after school and drop swimming to practice his running. He kept this up until his webbed feet were badly worn, and he dropped to being only an average swimmer.

The rabbit started out at the top of the class in running, but had a nervous breakdown because of so much make-up work in swimming.

The squirrel was excellent in climbing -- until he became frustrated in his flying class, where his teacher made him start from the ground up instead of from the treetop down. He also developed Charlie horses from overexertion, and then got a "C" in climbing and a "D" in running.

The eagle was a problem child and was severely disciplined. In the climbing class he beat all the others to the top of the tree, but insisted on using his own way to get there.

The prairie dogs got mad because there was no class in digging, and eventually joined the groundhogs and gophers in starting a private school of their own.

Part III: Creative Teaching

Let's suppose you are going to teach a group how to tie a square knot. How many different ways could you do it? You could begin by simply explaining the following procedure:

"To tie two pieces of rope together begin by holding the end of one rope in your left hand and the end of the second rope in your right hand. Bring the right end over and under the left end. Now, bring the left end over and under the right end. Pull it tight and you will have a square knot."

How many of you would be able to tie the knot on your own just by hearing this description? A few of you might, but chances are that most of us couldn't. We learn differently.

But what if, as you explain the procedure, you were to demonstrate it, showing your hands as you talked? *Hold the rope in front of you and tie the knot as you read the description.*


How many could do it now? A few more, but there are still other ways to do it. *Ask for a volunteer. Put the ends of the rope in his or her hands, then guide their hands through the process as you explain it again.*

Some of us won't get it until we actually see which way to maneuver our hands and fingers as the knot is tied. But there are still other ways to teach this. Perhaps we can run a relay race in which everyone must tie a square knot. Maybe we can practice knots using licorice laces. What are some other, more active, more creative ways to do this? *Brainstorm some other possible methods for teaching this skill*

We have discussed how our personality affects the way we teach. We tend to teach in the way we would want to learn. But we must remember that each person is different. Therefore, it is important that we employ variety in our presentations so that everyone has an opportunity to learn.

There are an infinite number of ways to teach any skill or idea. It all depends on how much creativity you are willing to use. Yet most techniques will fall somewhere into one of the following categories:

1. CREATIVE EXPRESSION is using the arts to help young people describe how they feel about issues in the world or about God. For example, you may have your group draw pictures of their families, keep a journal of happy memories, write a story about something scary that has happened to them, or write a song of praise to the Lord.



2. DRAMA can often be a tool to demonstrate real life situations and help young people think through the possible consequences of their decisions. Role play is a particularly effective way for youth to look at life from a number of different perspectives.

3. EVENTS are activities outside the normal activities of the group that can have a significant impact on young people. As we saw from the pyramid, we remember best those things we experience. We might spend weeks in a classroom pouring over brilliant photographs of robins and finches, listening to their calls on cassettes, reading about their nesting habits, and viewing videotapes from the National Audubon Society.

But none of these activities will have as much lasting impact on our learning as actually hiking out into the woods and immersing ourselves in the sights and sounds that occur in the living environment of these creatures.

4. GAMES can be an effective approach to reinforcing and applying information. Whether its playing *"Wheel of Fortune"* to discover the inventor of the printing press or pretending to be Forest Rangers trying to determine the best way to transport an injured hiker, "learning" doesn't have to be a synonym for "boring."

5. INTERACTION gives young people the chance to share their own ideas about issues and hear the viewpoints of others. While we, as leaders, may possess more information about a particular topic, our young people may also have experience. When we allow them to contribute and work together, we show them that their ideas have value and offer them a perspective that goes beyond the scope of a single person.


6. MEDIA resources allow young people to conveniently glimpse other parts of the world. They can read about families in Sri Lanka, listen to the songs of humpback whales, observe astronauts shuttling into space, or play checkers with people in other states -- all without leaving the building.

7. SENSORY activities may include tasting huckleberries during a hike, smelling the salty air of an ocean beach, touching the soft fur of a kitten, listening to the pluck of a guitar,

As our pyramid indicates, the more senses we use, the more information we retain. Every activity we plan should include a liberal combination of tastes, smells, textures, sights, and sounds.

8. STORIES help young people visualize situations in their minds and apply principles to their everyday lives. Stories may be factual accounts, current or otherwise, designed to pass along information. They may be case studies, presented to get youth thinking about the possible consequences of specific actions. Or they may be analogies that help simplify complex or abstract ideas.

9. STUDIES are a systematic approach to learning. Whether its investigating the history of the New York Yankees or delving into the Parable of the Lost Sheep verse by



verse, studies can help young people develop an deeper understanding of various subjects.

Being creative doesn't mean that we have to have the most dynamic personality and know all about the latest fads. We don't have to keep taxing our minds to come up with fresh, new, inventive ideas week after week. On the contrary, the key to creativity is the ability to . . . COPY.

This statement isn't suggesting that you break any copyright laws. It is merely a reminder to us that creativity isn't just innovation. It is often just taking old ideas and using them in new ways. I may plan a relay race one week to teach square knots and another the following week to teach the order of the planets in the solar system, but they're both still just relay races.

Being creative doesn't mean that we do things out of the ordinary just to break the monotony of our normal activities. Creativity is simply being willing to adapt our program to match the learning styles in our groups. It is putting the spiritual and educational needs of the individuals above our routines. Therefore, creativity has a purpose, and we must take care to utilize it responsibly.

When you consider new activities please keep a few things in mind:

- Activities are teaching tools, not time killers. Make sure there is purpose behind them. For example, when you watch a videotape, don't expect its meaning to be self-evident to everyone in your group. Discuss it afterward.
- Activities must not compromise the safety of our young people. Take proper precautions.
- Activities shouldn't interfere with other groups. Don't play those Christian rock lyrics at maximum volume with a prayer meeting in the room next door.
- Rehearse your activity ahead of time, to make sure it really works.
- As we prepare our lessons each week, let us remember that we run our programs for the benefit of our young people, and not the other way around.

Just My Style

Think about your own preferences in learning situations. Read each question below and rank each response as follows:

- Give a "5" for the response that is most like you.
- Give a "3" for the response that would be your second choice.
- Give a "2" for the response that would be your third choice.
- Give a "0" for the response that is least like you.

1. When I learn:

- A. I filter information through my feelings.
- B. I want to know the facts.
- C. I want to know how things work.
- D. I like to be doing things.

2. When I learn:

- A. I trust my hunches and feelings
- B. I reason things out
- C. I work hard
- D. I get involved

3. I work best with people who are:

- A. Friendly, loyal, appreciative, and fun.
- B. Dependable, honest, prompt, and accurate
- C. Quick, energetic, competitive, and realistic
- D. Creative, independent and risk taking.

4. When I make a decision I try to:

- A. Make everybody happy
- B. Make the correct choice
- C. Select the most practical alternative
- D. Discover a way to get what I want

5. I am:

- A. Emotional.
- B. Logical.
- C. Active
- D. Creative.

6. When I explain something I:

- A. Let people know how I feel
- B. Present information in a logical orderly way
- C. Tell it in a simple straight forward way
- D. Tell why it is important and try to be creative

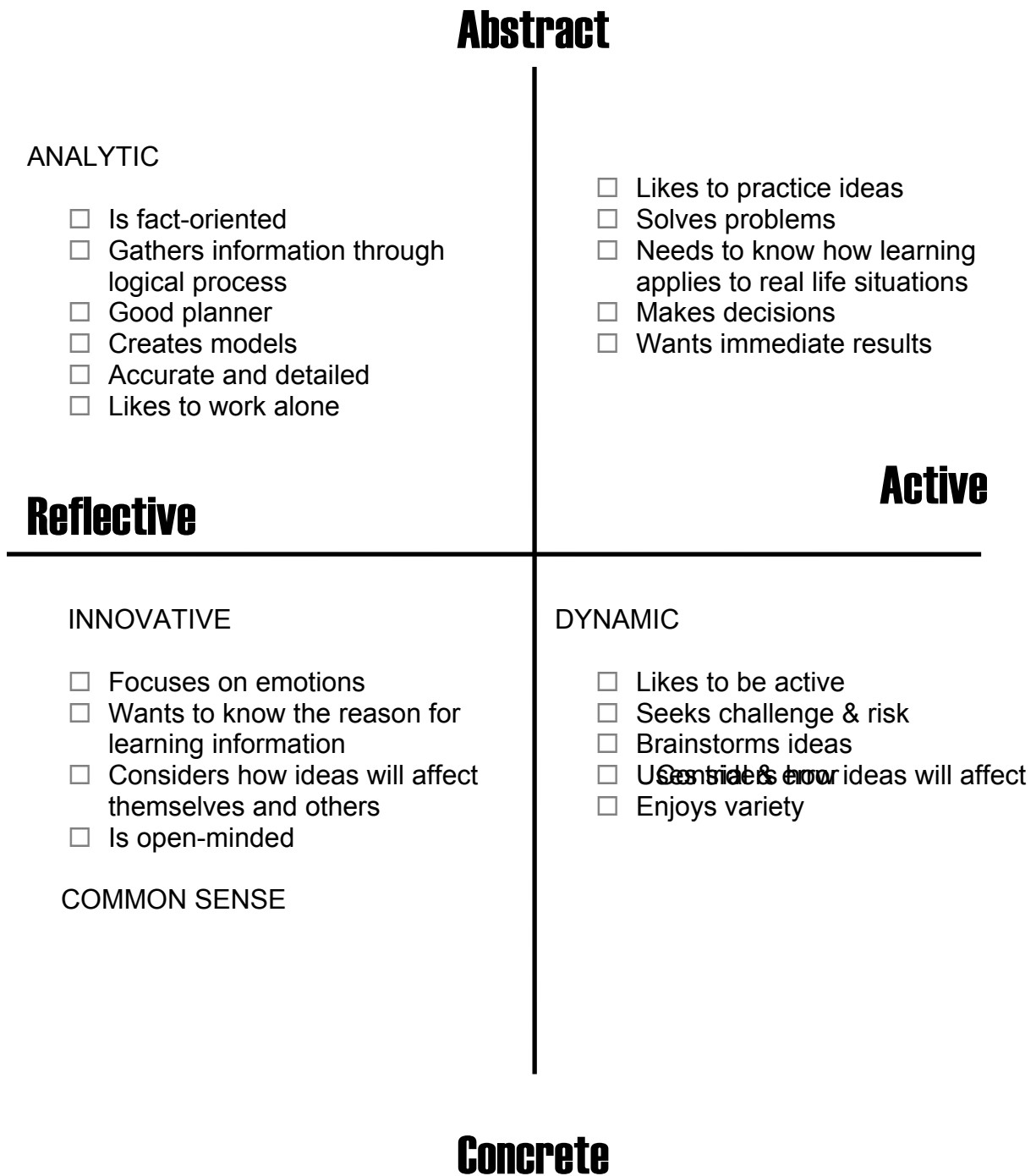
7. I learn best when:

- A. I work with other people.
- B. The information is given in a logical order.
- C. I can apply ideas.
- D. I try things out for myself.

8. I tend to be:

- A. Friendly
- B. Analytical
- C. Realistic
- D. Idealistic

Tendencies as a Learner



Tendencies as a Teacher

Abstract

ANALYTIC

- Focuses on factual information
- Takes a thorough, step by step approach
- Employs rule & routine
- Uses lectures, manuals, charts & workbooks
- Is calm & unemotional

COMMON SENSE

- Focuses on how information is applied
- Confronts issues directly
- Encourages independent learning, research, & reporting
- Gives rapid, brief overview of facts
- Uses concrete examples

Reflective

INNOVATIVE

- Focuses on people
- Encourages questions & discussion
- Gives Praise
- Uses group interaction, stories, & drama
- Creates friendly, informal, atmosphere
- Uses humor

Active

DYNAMIC

- Focuses on activity
- Focuses on big ideas, general concepts
- Uses brainstorming, analogies
- Tries new things, encourages variety
- Is a motivator
- Sets lofty goals

Concrete

Creative Techniques

Creative Expression

- Writing stories
- Writing letters
- Keeping journals
- Making scrapbooks
- Composing songs or music
- Drawing pictures
- Painting murals
- Sculpture
- Posters
- Singing

Drama

- Skits
- Role play
- Puppets
- Charades
- Choral reading
- Mime
- Producing a play

Events

- Field Trips
- Camping
- Parties
- Retreats
- Carnivals

Games

- Simulations
- Puzzles
- Problem solving
- Memory



Interaction

- Discussion
- Surveys
- Panels
- Debate
- Interviews
- Question and answer
- Brainstorming

Media

- Listening to music
- Making a video
- Watching a video
- Publishing a newspaper
- Writing computer programs
- Surfing the Internet

Sensory

- Tasting
- Smelling
- Touching
- Listening

Stories

- Telling or reading
- Analogies
- Object Lessons
- Case Studies
- Current Events

Studies

- Inductive Bible study
- Research

What is a Camper?

- A Camper is the most important person in any camp.
- A camper is not an interruption of our work – but the purpose of it.
- A camper is part of our family – not an outsider.
- A camper is not a cold statistic – but a flesh and blood human being with feeling and emotions like our own.
- A camper is a person who brings us his/her needs – it is our job to meet those needs.
- A camper is deserving of our most courteous and attentive treatment.
- A camper is a person of great worth and has a lot to offer.

Campers are the life-blood of this camp!

As a staff team member, one of your chief responsibilities is caring for the well being of campers. This is an awesome responsibility and opportunity! The families of our campers are counting on us to keep them **physically**, **emotionally** and **spiritually** safe from harm.

The contents of this training manual and the activities that you will participate in will help you to meet this challenge and prepare you for this rewarding job.

“No matter what my job at camp is this summer, I pledge to commit myself to being my best while representing this staff and The Salvation Army well. Above all this includes doing my part in helping to create an environment for campers and staff that are physically, emotionally and spiritually safe from harm (Safe being those things that fall within the scope and definitions of this manual and the training that you will receive).”

Name

Date

The Basics of Childhood Development

Children depend on us to help them put things into perspective, think things through and temper strong emotions. You cannot expect that they will always use good judgment. They are still learning and watch you for clues as to how they should act.

We are not going to look at some of the age groups you may be working along with some of the behavior patterns you are most likely to experience while working with the differing age groups. Please keep in mind that although these are generalizations and exceptions to occur, in general these have been considered consistent developmental patterns. A general awareness of these patterns will help you as you work with children and teens.

The Very Young (Ages 5-7)

- We are strongly attached to home and family.
- We generally have short attention spans.
- We are in self discovery mode and like to explore our world.
- We prefer imaginative play and to work in small groups.
- We like repetition and are easily upset by change.
- We play in coed groups easily.
- We are very dependent on adults for meeting our needs.

Illumination

“We respond best to counselors who look after our needs, pay a lot of attention to us, are fair, and capable of humor and imagination. Your personality is more important to us than the knowledge you may have or the skills you may possess.

In preparation:

1. What kinds of games can you play with this age group? (Try to think of as many as you can and share them in the large group)
2. What Biblical principles do you think would be most important to teach? How would you teach them based on the patterns of this age group?

My Notes:

The Basics of Childhood Development

Play (Ages 7-10)

- We have growing attention spans and are able to handle live away experiences better than 5-7 year olds.
- We are becoming more aware of the needs of others and are learning how to share.
- We have a growing desire to be accepted and to have close friendships within our own gender and age group.
- We are able to express ourselves through forms of art & play.
- We have a developing desire to compete and like group games and activities.
- We have a developing desire to do well and to develop skills.
- We have a maturing sense of fairness and justice.

Illumination

“We respond best to counselors described in the very young age group (ages 5-7) with a growing importance on a counselor’s activity skills.”

In preparation:

1. How can you use their maturing sense of fairness and justice for teachable moments? Provide actual examples of a teachable moment and how you could turn an event or incident into a positive learning experience.
2. What Biblical principles do you think would be most important or appropriate to teach this age group? How would you teach them?

My Notes:

The Basics of Childhood Development

Group Stage (Ages 10-12)

- In general we have a strong desire for live away experiences.
- We have longer attention spans than the 7-10 year olds, with more patience to work towards long term goals.
- Many of us want to be together in groups and teams but tend to form cliques and friendship with members of our own gender and age group.
- We seek attention through our skills and in the knowledge of grown up things.
- We have a growing concern with our physical size and appearance.
- We have an increased interest in the opposite sex.
- We tend to like to make, do, and collect things.
- We are more willing to take risks and are developing risk taking behavior.

Illumination

“We respond enthusiastically to counselors who can understand and guide our tremendous energy and risk taking tendencies. We also tend to idolize counselors who measure up to this task.”

In preparation:

1. How would you maintain a healthy balance in regards to the tendency towards cliques?
2. What Biblical principles concerning a person’s self image could you reinforce to those that may be struggling with their looks?
3. Can some risk taking behavior be healthy? Discuss.

My Notes:

The Basics of Childhood Development

Drive for Independence (Ages 12-15)

- We becoming less dependent on family ties and influence, but still desire their support and attention.
- We gravitate towards teams and engage competitively.
- We tend to be greatly influenced by those we idolize (celebrities, popular adults, teachers, coaches, a favorite family member...etc).
- We are concerned with our personal appearance and tend to be very self conscious.
- We have rapidly changing interests and ambitions.
- Our ability to be self-disciplined is maturing.
- Because we are still developing both physically and biologically, we tend to have intense expressions of feelings and emotions.
- We tend to be very idealistic about the world around and what should be.

Illumination

“We respond to counselors who exemplify our idealism. The intelligence and diversity of experience of the counselor becomes as important as their skills. Counselors have the potential of greatest influence at this stage of development.”

In preparation:

1. How would you help to guide their idealism with practicality without discouraging them?
2. What topics or concerns do you feel are most important to this group? How would you address them?
3. How would you engage this age group in a Bible study or devotional?

My Notes:

The Basics of Childhood Development

Want to be Grown-Up (Ages 15-17)

- We tend to cover our weaknesses with similar weaknesses of the group.
- We have conflicting interests of idealism and materialism.
- We tend to develop crushes with deep feelings.
- We tend to be overly critical of ourselves and rather focus on our strengths than on our shortcomings.
- We have expansive and changing ambitions.
- We enjoy earning money in order to become more independent.
- We have a growing pressure of increased responsibility and a need to be treated more like an adult while also needing the understanding of adults that we are not their yet (we're still learning).
- We seek prestige and belonging.

Illumination

“We respond best to counselors with the ability to identify and understand our individual conflicts, concerns and ambitions. This is an awkward time for us between being a kid and coming to age as an adult.”

In preparation:

1. How can you tap into their ambition, sense of independence, and desire to be treated as an adult?
2. What type of questions might this age have concerning the Bible or spiritual things? How would you address or talk about these?

My Notes:

How well do you know kids between the ages of 5 thru 7?

“Respond best to counselors who look after their needs, show interest in them, and are fair and capable of humor and imagination. For this age group the personality of the counselor is more important than their skill.”

1. We are strongly attached to _____ & _____.
2. We have _____ attention spans.
3. We mainly are aware of our own _____ and _____.
4. When it comes to play, we prefer “_____” play.
5. We need lots of _____ because we easily forget and sometimes don’t understand things the first time.
6. We are just learning to have friends and like _____ groups to work and play in.
7. Please remember that I am still a young person and I still depend on you to meet my _____ and _____ needs.
8. We need your _____ understanding and _____ supervision.

Directions: Use the words below to fill in the blanks above. Some words will not be used. Words will only be used once.

PATIENT	FUN	LARGE	SMALL	PHYSICAL	EMOTIONAL
FRIENDS	LONG	HOME	SHORT	OTHERS	DESIRES
SELF	FAMILY	UNSUPERVISED	CLOSE	REPITITION	
MAKE-BELIEVE	FAMILIAR	IMPATIENT			

How well do you know kids between the ages of 7 thru 10?

Test Your Knowledge

In the box below brainstorm and write your answers to the following questions:

1. What kind of attention span will this age group typically have?
2. How important are friends and what activities do this age group like to do?
3. How do these young people respond to things they perceive as unfair?
4. Is peer pressure an issue for this age group? Why or why not?
5. Is this age group more or less likely to share than younger kids?
6. How are these young people likely to express their emotions and feelings?
7. Are these kids more or less likely to be home sick than younger kids?

Explain your answer and try to give some examples.

How well do you know kids between the ages of 10 thru 12?

Test Your Knowledge

In the box below brainstorm and write your answers to the following questions:

1. What kind of attention span will this age group typically have?
2. How important are friends and what activities do this age group like to do?
3. Would these kids be more or less likely to desire a live-away experience?
4. In what ways might this age group seek positive attention?
5. What area of themselves are they beginning to become concerned with?
6. Do you think this age group is more or less likely to display "risky" behavior?

Explain your answer and try to give some examples.

How well do you know kids between the ages of 12 thru 15?

Test Your Knowledge

In the box below brainstorm and write your answers to the following questions:

1. This age group is starting to grow away from family ties & influence yet tends to still desire adult reassurance, supervision, and attention. Why do you think this is?
2. Is conformity to their own peer group important to them? Why?
3. Would this group be more or less interested in shows like *American Idol* as compared to younger age groups? Why?
4. What things is this age group most idealistic about?
5. Does this age group tend to be “emotional”? Why? Anything in particular?

Explain your answer and try to give some examples.

How well do you know kids between the ages of 15 thru 17?

Test Your Knowledge

TRUE or FALSE

1. This age groups tends to be very critical of self? (TRUE/FALSE)
2. This age group tends to revert to childish behaviors? (TRUE/FALSE)
3. This age group needs to be treated as children? (TRUE/FALSE)
4. This age group feels pressure to be more responsible in increasing measures? (TRUE/FALSE)
5. This age group does not seek prestige or belonging? (TRUE/FALSE)
6. This age group tends to have expansive & changing ambitions? (TRUE/FALSE)