

The Child of Ten - source unknown

The ten-year-old has reached the prime of childhood - a plateau of growth, an emotional balance, and the peak of childhood capacities. It is a period of rest before the sudden change of adolescence, and an age when he is apt to be most likeable to the adult because he causes so little trouble and co-operates so wholeheartedly.

He is like the nine-year-olds in many respects but can make better use of his potentialities. He can do more things better because of developed motor co-ordination, mental skills, and wider experience. He has a wide range of interests and wants to talk, to look, to read, to listen more than he wants to work. "He prefers to cover the whole terrain with little rootlets." (Gesell, *Youth*, p. 53) He is capable of deep religious feeling.

His Physical Self

He is more like the nine-year level than the eleven-year-old in physical growth. He has good control of gross motor muscles. He is not as fidgety as at eleven, but likes to move about. Usually, his health is very good. This age is not as conscious of sex differences as at eleven; sex lines are often crossed in play and activities. Girls are of about the same average height as boys, though more developed and poised. The growth spurt which will temporarily put the girls ahead of the boys in size is yet to come.

His Emotional Self

He is especially popular with adults because of the agreeable balance of his emotional self. He is happy to be what he is, and adults regard him as friendly and agreeable. He is amenable, co-operative, sincere, poised, unselfconscious, easy-going, quick to admit his errors. He seems to have found himself as a child and is content. He does not worry about himself, is not over-anxious, and enjoys life.

Like the nine-year-old, he may revert to ways of a younger child but is not as apt to burst into tears. Though he may explode into sudden anger, he quickly gains equilibrium.

Curious and sharp-eyed, he likes to collect. (Cf. Havighurst, *Human Development and Education*, pp. 51, 52) He finds this activity emotionally satisfying in itself and is not inclined to analyze, systematize, or display his collections. Girls have some idea about future marriage; boys have ideas on the occupation they would like to follow. (Gesell, *Youth*, p. 54 and p. 376) At ten girls and boys are separating their interests.

His Intellectual Self

The ten-year-old, as before, is concerned with the specific and concrete; he is not yet ready to conceptualize or generalize very widely. He likes to assimilate facts and to memorize. (Gesell, op. cit., pp. 39, 40) Pictorial material appeals because he likes to grasp things visually. He sees and listens well, which makes this an optimal age for TV education. The ten-year-old will need guidance, however, in selecting worthwhile programs.

He enjoys oral work, talking, and discussion - a characteristic which is generally utilized for education at this age level. Ten works out problems in play, for example, girls with paper dolls, boys in pretend play and gangs. He can do creative work, such as writing poems, and songs; drawing and painting, and making up stories. Certain studies indicate that about the age of ten children acquire some of the time concepts needed for the study of history. (Cf. Russell, *Children's Thinking*, p. 133)

He is more aware of what is wrong than what is right and, therefore, needs help in making ethical decisions in the face of his impulses. He is concerned about the reasons for some of the tragedies and evils of life.

His Interpersonal Relationships

He is particularly open to close family companionship and activities, perhaps in part because he is still very much a child, and is not as distrustful of his abilities nor as concerned about his status as in later years. He likes to talk to mother, likes to pal with father, likes family doings, and feels his home is ideal. (Gesell, op. cit., p. 38) Mother is important as the final authority. Criticism of mother's behavior does not usually occur to him. He is affectionate toward her and confides in her.

He makes friends easily. He likes to be in groups for play and activity and his school classes are often characterized by warm friendliness. He prefers comradeship to competition, and does not want to stand out from the group. (Gesell, op. cit., p. 52) Why is he so pleasant? Perhaps because he is not apt to resort to conflicts with others to obtain status as he will in later

years.

He is increasingly able to make responsible contributions to group activities and he enjoys doing so. He feels closer identification with other groups beyond the family and enjoys participating in their activities.

He tries to be good most of the time. His standards for others are high. He likes to help people and animals.

Implications for Christian Education

While many of the same implications listed for the nine-year-old apply at this age, the ten-year-old, of course, can bring more skill, experience, and reasoning to his learning activities.

This seems to be a strategic time for Christian education to utilize the influence of the family and the active participation of the child in family life. He needs to see Christian faith and worship as a natural part of his family life.

He is educationally amenable and responsive, hence this is an important age for dealing with basic facts about the Bible and for completing [a general] factual framework in understanding the Christian heritage.

His liking for discussion and oral work and his ability to do creative [] should be utilized in Christian education.

He can be helped to understand more fully the meaning of [Christian] stewardship and to assume more stewardship responsibilities.

Since he is able to think more deeply, he needs to develop a [concept of] God as an invisible spirit and to gain a Christian understand of the [tragedies] and evils of life.

He can be helped to feel more and more a part of the church family [and] to enjoy attending the church schools and participating in their [activities.]