

PRIMARY GRADES SCHOOL PROGRAMS (Kindergarten, First, Second and Third Grades) **9112** (1987)

Primary grade children are active, alert, and keen observers with vivid imaginations. They learn best by "DOING," by becoming involved with their hands, feet, and body. The primary child is a pretender and imitator who is easily influenced by the behavior of adults. The image you portray can make a lasting impression on him.

The interest span among the groups varies considerably so you should plan your program length, class size, and course content accordingly. Do not try to present too many ideas. Use one or two simple themes and consult with the teacher before your presentation.

PRESENTATION TECHNIQUES **9112.1** (1987)

The kindergarten and first grade child will require short, easy lessons no longer than ten to fifteen minutes. The second and third graders may accept an interesting, well-illustrated program of no longer than twenty-five minutes. Indoor programs should never go beyond one school period for any primary class.

The ideal group size for these grades is one classroom (20-30 children). This should be the rule for kindergarten and first grade. The diction you use must be appropriate to the age level you are teaching. The seven-year-old second grader can grasp the meaning of some words that are foreign to the kindergarten five-year-old.

In all cases, use short, correct sentences. Pronounce words clearly, speaking loudly and clearly. Above all, do not use baby talk. You may wish to introduce new words or terms that are descriptive and appropriate to the subject. Describe them in simple terms and have the children pronounce them with you. Observe the children as you talk. If you see that they do not understand, repeat your thoughts in different words. Help the meaning of your words with illustrations; show pictures of Smokey, draw on the blackboard, use charts.

Encourage the children to ask questions about the subject you have covered. Questions help you gauge how well you are presenting your program and if it is being understood. Questioning also allows the children to participate and put ideas in their own words. Use the "open" question technique. For instance, say "From what we have just talked about, can someone tell me how we can have erosion problems if a fire has burned the grass off a hillside?" Avoid "closed" questions that can be answered only with "Yes" or "No." For example, "Don't you all agree that we must be careful with the use of fire?" This will get you a chorus of "Yes." Don't overlook a "No" that comes from someone who may not understand what you have said. Be sure you give an answer. (Don't be surprised at a wisecrack "No." Take it in your stride). Never ridicule a question or permit it to be ridiculed by members of the class.

We have mentioned that the primary grade child learns best by doing, by actively participating, so have them become involved in your presentation. After a brief introduction of your subject, let them take part by holding articles, touching and feeling simple exhibits, or by assisting you in passing around educational aids. They will remember more of what they do and say than what you do and say. If you have any handouts, save them for last.

TYPES OF PROGRAMS

9112.2

(1987)

Films available through CDF and other sources can help you tell your story. Use them as you would any other visual aid; that is, only as part of your presentation.

In keeping with what has been said, children in these age groups assimilate better by first-hand knowledge. If you can arrange a field trip to a fire station, a nursery, a lookout, or other department facility, you can show more.

SPECIAL TECHNIQUES

9112.3

(1987)

As always, there are special techniques that can make your presentation easier for you and more understandable to your audience. Identify with the group. For instance, put yourself in the place of the primary child and you can readily see that hovering over them, you can appear as a large, overwhelming person. Get down to their level by sitting on the floor or a small chair. Meet them eye to eye. You may want to pass around your badge so they can lose their fear of it and the person wearing it. These are all impressionable children who will hold on to your every word and action. So be careful what you say or do.

Sometimes there may be little problems, but if you are well prepared and make your presentation interesting, you should not have too many problems. Sometimes, no matter how hard you try, the showoff or the noisy busybody will try to steal your thunder. Do not lose your composure or let things get out of hand. Make the problem child your helper. Let him hand out material, sit next to you, hold up displays, or draw on the blackboard.

POST PROGRAM

9112.4

(1987)

When you conclude your presentation to the class, provide materials to the teacher so he/she can continue with your subject matter during the school year.

Materials available to assist instructing primary grades in fire prevention and conservation education are continued in CDF's Five Point Program. To convey the, "don't play with fire" message, the team-teaching program is the most effective tool to use in these grades. Other general fire safety programs appropriate for this age group are "Stop, Drop, and Roll" and "Exit Drills in the Home" (EDITH) which involves parent participation.

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