

CHAPTER I
KINDERGARTEN

A. The Five-Year-Old and the Social Studies Program

No single child will conform in all respects to the picture outlined here. The description is provided as a general guide to the characteristics and needs of five-year-olds in the Social Studies Program in our schools, and to illustrate the cyclical and upward thrust of child growth and development with its periods of outwardness and activity and of inwardness and quiet. Certainly every child has a unique pattern of growth but that pattern is a variant of a basic ground plan. The concept of growth as an unbroken sequence is important to the teacher as he or she recognizes the value of understanding what has happened to the child in the previous stages of development, what is happening now, and what potentials for learning achievement will arise in the next stage.

The five-year-olds in our schools are characterized by activity, curiosity, and eagerness to explore. They are interested in solving problems, manipulating materials, dramatizing, and creating. Inquisitive, and with a store of mainly "what" questions, they have only a short attention span, mix fact with fancy occasionally, and talk more than they listen. Far-sightedness is characteristic of five-year-olds, fine hand-to-eye coordination is not well developed, and speech is sometimes faulty and infantile. Fives like to work and play in small groups but find sharing difficult. They seek attention, thrive on teacher approval, and respond to praise, encouragement, and consistent direction. On the whole, five-year-olds are delightful, friendly, and appreciative with an eagerness to please the teacher with whom they act more

"grown up" than they do at home.

Five-year-olds learn best by doing and interacting with their immediate environment, through directed observation, and by using visual and concrete materials. They need to begin to talk of time and spatial concepts - of today, yesterday and tomorrow, clocks, calendars, and so on, and to develop ideas of distance based on single, specific landmarks. The five-year-olds' experiences with the social studies are covered with language, play, art, construction, movement and music as they form concepts to sort out their world, a sorting out process that will happen gradually as the teacher helps the children to organize their thoughts and to be more convergent in their thinking. Five-year-olds need a good self-concept, formed by being accepted as individuals at their current level of development. Teacher approval of positive examples of behavior is an effective means of promoting values learnings in kindergarten.

B. Objectives of the Kindergarten Social Studies Program

The theme and areas of emphasis for social studies in the Kindergarten as explored in The Master Guide are:

Living in the Immediate Environment. Areas of emphasis include: home and family; church; school life and the school plant; awareness of the neighbourhood; seasons; weather; clothing; special days; safety; and the development of simple time, distance, and location concepts.

Expected Outcomes. Children begin to know themselves as worthwhile persons, and to internalize behaviors expected of them by home, school, and church; to share; to be considerate of others; to accept increasing responsibilities for their own actions; to resolve problems concerning weather, safety, etc.; to begin to know their place in family, church, and school, and to build beginning concepts of how peoples' needs are met by interdependence.

A balance of learning experiences within a theme can be provided for by focusing general objectives on each area of the social studies - knowledge, values, and skills. General objectives tell what the theme is to accomplish and lead to more specific instructional objectives conceived in terms of learning behavior. General objectives also outline the manner in which pupil accomplishment of the objectives will be evaluated.

The Kindergarten teacher should adapt the outline of objectives presented below to the ability, maturity, and experiential background of pupils.

THEME: LIVING IN THE IMMEDIATE ENVIRONMENT

MAJOR UNDERSTANDINGS, VALUES,
AND SKILLS

KNOWLEDGE, VALUES, AND SKILLS OBJECTIVES

Major Understandings

Knowledge of Objectives

The role of the individual in family, school, and church in the community.

Area of Emphasis: The Family at Home

The family, a social group at home, an integral part of the community, providing, sharing, caring and teaching.

MAJOR UNDERSTANDINGS, VALUES,
AND SKILLS

KNOWLEDGE, VALUES, AND SKILLS OBJECTIVES

A realization of self-worth through contact with others.

People are dependent upon one another and work together to satisfy basic needs.

Individuals differ from one another in personal values, attitudes, personalities, and roles, but, at the same time, the members of a group possess certain common values and characteristics.

Concepts of time, place, distance, and sequence of events.

Specifics

Children will know

members of a family

"my" family - immediate and extended family activities - what families do together

similarities and differences in families

families change

position in a family

home is where a family is

members of a family depend upon each other for many things

getting to school from "my" home

Area of Emphasis: School

The school, a social institution, an integral part of the community, a place for learning, for living together, for playing and for relating to others.

Specifics

Children will know

orientation to a new environment

name of school

location of the school in the community

their classroom, its features, its location in the school, etc.

the school plant and school grounds

helpers in the school (teacher, children, principal, librarian, nurse, etc.)

roles of school personnel

school rules

that they should keep the environment clean

MAJOR UNDERSTANDINGS, VALUES,
AND SKILLS

KNOWLEDGE, VALUES, AND SKILLS OBJECTIVES

Environment influences our ways of living; we can adapt to certain features of the environment and modify others.

Persons act in accordance with rules made to safeguard a person's rights and privileges.

Change is characteristic of the social and physical environment.

Change takes place in homes and families.

Seasonal change affects our ways of living.

Area of Emphasis: Church (To be developed at the discretion of school districts)

The church, a social and spiritual institution, an integral part of the community, where families and neighbours worship together.

Specifics

Children will know

location of church

why they go to church

helpers in the church

friends in their church

(other specifics to be selected by the School District)

Area of Emphasis: Special Days

Special Days, a way to begin to develop social understandings and a sense of time.

Specifics

Children will know

Special days, for example, Thanksgiving, Hallowe'en, Christmas Day, St. Valentine's, Father's Day, Mother's Day, Easter Day, each child's birthday.

MAJOR UNDERSTANDINGS, VALUES,
AND SKILLS

KNOWLEDGE, VALUES, AND SKILLS OBJECTIVES

Values, Appreciations, and Attitudes

Values, Appreciations, and Attitudes

sharing

honesty

truth

loyalty

trust

justice

respect for self

respect for others

self-discipline

Social studies confronts questions rooted in attitudes and values. As children learn about themselves and others in their immediate environment they can grow in

self-awareness, social awareness and self-esteem

an understanding that people need each other

an appreciation of others' help at home, school and church

a valuing of their immediate environment

ways of sharing, taking turns, trust, honesty, truth, and openness

respect for others

self control and habits of constructive play and work

responsibility for completing tasks

happiness and the joy of living

Skills

Skills

Skills are processes or ways of doing. To deal effectively with social studies content calls for a variety of skills. In Kindergarten, emphasis is placed on:

Language and Thinking Skills

language growth (listening, speaking, initial reading experiences, transferring thought to print in teacher-printed experience charts and art forms, etc.)

Information Gathering

listening and attending, observing, discussing, sharing

MAJOR UNDERSTANDINGS, VALUES, AND SKILLS	KNOWLEDGE, VALUES AND SKILLS OBJECTIVES
Social Skills	playing, sharing, group work, solving problems together, making plans, accepting decisions
Gross and Fine Motor Skills	manipulative skills
Temporal Skills	simple time, and the vocabulary of time expressions
Spatial Skills	relative location of various objects in the environment and the distance of objects one from another the representation of objects in space
Map and Globe Skills	the ability to use picture symbols making and reading simple picture maps and block constructed maps beginning to understand the fundamental purposes of maps and globes

C. Suggested Learning Activities

Learning activities cannot be listed as isolated experiences. They are planned as means of learning to foster the knowledge, values, and skills objectives which are being developed within a lesson or a unit of study, and therefore, are part of a particular lesson or unit of study. Learning activities should always develop reasoning in children. Each activity can be given the instructional emphasis required at the time - cognitive, affective, or psychomotor - but it is to be remembered that thinking,

valuing, and doing are not separate ways of knowing. Teachers will want to design and select activities conditioned by the nature and needs of the children in their classes as well as by the social studies objectives to be achieved. The following are samples of learning activities that can be used in social studies classes in Kindergarten.

Think, Value, and Do

Experience Charts. Social Studies charts dictated by pupils and printed by the teacher e.g., Our School, Our Trip to the Principal's Office, Our Hallowe'en Party, Christmas, etc.

Tours of school grounds and of places of interest within walking distance of school. Encourage children to discuss the tours on return to the classroom.

Bulletin board displays of children's drawings, pictures of children working in groups, a special bulletin board with each child's snapshot mounted on cardboard and bearing the child's name are helps to building a child's self-esteem.

Use Puppetry to help children explore behaviors e.g., courtesy, thoughtfulness, etc.

Dress, and enact family, school, or safety scenes.

Emphasize art. Experimenting with materials is as creative as any products which result.

Have a sandbox. Here the kindergarten child has spontaneous opportunities to share, to learn, to respect the territory of another pupil, and to plan cooperatively.

The child pretends to be lost and is questioned by teacher or classmates.

Where do you live? (street)

What is the name of the town or city in which you live?

What is your phone number?

Describe your house.

Have a beginner's globe in the kindergarten. Let the children handle it. Talk about the globe as "Our World". Show land and water on the globe.

Use and have children use, relative terms of orientation and direction, for example, over here, over there, this way, that way; under, over; below, above; up and down as differentiated from top and bottom; near, far; nearer, farther; blocks, steps; uptown, downtown.

Locate places in the school such as the cafeteria, the principal's office, the washrooms, etc.

Locate desks, play area, etc., on a classroom map made by the teacher.

To emphasize changes in the physical self, have baby pictures and recent pictures of children on the bulletin board. Compare.

To have child realize that he/she is a unique individual, have each child design and wear a "ME" button. A circle of cardboard is decorated by each child. "ME" is written on circle which each child wears as a broach or necklace.

Using blocks, have children construct a school, a church, and homes in the neighbourhood.

D. Pupil Evaluation

Pupil evaluation in the kindergarten Social Studies Program has, as its basis, the knowledge, values, and skills objectives of the program. When the kindergarten teacher has a clear understanding of the program's objectives, she or he makes use of a

variety of evaluative techniques - observation, listening, talking to pupils in and out of the classroom, oral quizzes, checklists, print and art expressions, etc. - to ascertain each child's growth in three areas: (1) the expansion and depth of knowledge; (2) their changed behavior in the area of values, attitudes, and appreciations, and (3) the development of skills in thinking, language, information gathering, social living and group processes, problem solving, and handling the tools of the social studies. The teacher is the judge of the techniques best suited for each activity. (See Chapter VIII for practical points for teachers on evaluation).