

## Classroom Tips GRADES K-2 (Early Elementary)

Thank you for volunteering to share your time and experience with JA students. The following information will help you prepare to speak to students in kindergarten to second grade, ages 5-8.

### General Student Profile

- Kindergarten, first, and second graders are imaginative, friendly, and talkative. They are curious, honest, enjoy hearing stories, and like engaging in hand-on activities.
  - Young learners love to play. Play creates important meaning for young students as it involves imaginative, active involvement in the physical world. Play promotes independence and a spirit of adventure and stimulates the development of language.
  - Young learners learn best with activity. Activity is as a natural way of learning for this age group as it creates knowledge through social interaction and the use of materials. Activity provides discovery, promotes hands-on learning, and adds purpose to learning.
  - Young learners also learn best by explaining what they hear and with writing and drawing. For kindergarteners, the assignments should be short, simple, and lead to a sense of well-being and success.
- Attention spans can be short for this age group: 3-5 minutes for a talk or presentation, 12-30 minutes for engaging seat work.
  - Even with ample time, young children may have a hard time finishing what they start.
  - Keep in mind, too, that children this age will need active movement breaks to help “get the wiggles out.”
- Logic (the use and study of reasoning) becomes more established as young children mature.
  - With practice and guided instruction, first graders can often complete puzzle and riddle worksheets independently.
  - Second-grade students can use clues they discover in games, quizzes, and worksheets to determine correct answers.
- Lastly, students this age rely on adults for help and reassurance.
  - New routines, expectations, or classroom visitors may cause young children to feel insecure and anxious. Gently explaining or demonstrating what fun things you plan to do may give fearful students sufficient time to adjust and find their comfort zones.

## Planning Suggestions

 Organize

- What are the most important ideas you wish to communicate? Write them down. Try not to overwhelm young learners with too much information.
- Ask yourself, "If I were to teach a friend what I know, how would I do it?"
- Prepare your materials.
- Wear appropriate attire; look like an "expert."
- Bring an ID to school.

 Connect

- Introduce yourself. Talk about your job and why you like doing it.
- Be relational. Use your own learning experiences (appropriate for the age level) and give examples.
- Share: What helped you learn in school?
- Share: How did you develop a talent, interest, or skill?
- Make eye contact.

 Check In

- Give learners' time to process the information you present. Pause and watch them think.
- Ask open-ended questions. Give clues if students don't at first respond.
- Don't answer your own questions!
- Listen to what students have to say. Refrain from criticizing or rejecting wrong answers. Try saying, "Lots of people feel that way, too, but I have learned...."
- Be flexible! Expect the conversation to stray from the topic at times.

 Reflect

- Leave time at the end of your presentation to wrap up what you want students to remember most.
- Thank the students for being good listeners. Tell them you enjoyed your time with them.
- Ask students to share something they remember from the program.
- Answer last-minute questions.