

## SOCIETY OF CHILDREN

The "society of children" is the term used to represent the subculture in which school-age children develop. Another term for it is a "gang." Unfortunately, the term gang, in today's society conjures up negative and fearful feelings.

During the school-age years, children begin to rely on peers. This often leads to groups of children playing or "hanging out" together. They may begin to use their own special language (like pig Latin or ubby dubby) and dress codes (like certain shoes or wearing bandannas).

The following is a list of some of the common items from of the society of children. List them slowly and allow your students to discuss and reminisce:

1. Opposite day
2. Jelly shoes
3. Time out words--Kings, Curses, Creams, Pax, Nix
4. Firecracker cheer "Firecracker, fire cracker, boom, boom, boom. . . ."
5. "Liar, liar pants on fire, hanging on the telephone wire"
6. I swear
7. Cross my heart and hope to die
8. "Cry baby, cry baby, stick your head in gravy, wash it out with bubble gum and send it to the navy"
9. Club houses with signs reading "Boys only or "Girls only"

This is also a time when certain games or pieces of playground equipment become favorites. Students will probably remember when the swings were their favorite activity. They would race outside each day during recess or after school to be sure to get a swing. Then, suddenly, they stop liking the swings (after months and months) and turn to the monkey bars, etc. Jump rope and all the rhymes that go with them are a favorite sometime during the school-age years. (Have the students tell some of the jump rope rhymes they know, or share one of your own.)

During the school-age years, children become very interested in the rules of games. In fact, they may spend more time on setting up teams and the rules of the game than they do playing it. (Have students share some of their team picking rhymes or share one of your own; for example, "Enee, meenee, minee, mo, catch a tiger by the toe. . . ."

Discuss how games and the society of children help the school-age child learn social skills, develop a positive self-image, and gain a sense of industry.