

ParentPause

Ideas to Grow Your Preschooler's Faith at Home

APRIL 2011



When Cubbies Grow Up

(Part Two)

Brian Hartsell made the most important decision of his life at the tender age of 4 while sitting on the couch with his mom at his family's home in Edwardsburg, Michigan.

"I was asking about heaven and hell. My mom sat down with me and walked through the Romans Road (a method for presenting God's plan of salvation)," Brian recalled. "I received Christ and remember it clearly to this day."

Brian's parents and his participation in Cubbies® prepared him to place his trust in Christ, and then sent his young faith soaring. He grew to know and love Christ more as he kept

attending the Awana® programs at Community Baptist Church. He also made several close Christian friends, and still stays in touch with most of them today.

Brian completed each book from Cubbies through Journey™ (the Awana high-school program), and in 1999 he earned his Citation Award, the highest achievement in Awana. "Earning the Citation Award was really fun for me," Brian explained. "I have my Citation plaque hanging on my wall as a reminder of the impact Awana and Bible memory have had on my life."

After college, Brian joined a local church in Dayton, Ohio. He also started his first job as a financial management specialist at Wright Patterson Air Force Base.

"The Lord has really placed on my heart to be a businessman of integrity in the secular world. I want to make an impact for the Lord," declared Brian.

Brian is impacting children at his church too. He has served as an Awana leader for 13 years, and he is currently a Truth & Training™ (third- to sixth-grade) leader at his church in Dayton, Ohio.

"I love Awana and desire to be involved with it in some way for the rest of my life," said Brian, now 27. "I'm a firm believer in Scripture memorization. I may have been motivated by candy bars and arrowheads back then, but it has totally stuck with me."

Parents, what messages will "stick" with your child 15 or 20 years from now? Often the first messages a child hears become the ones that shape him the most as an adult. Continue to let those first messages be the gospel and a love for Christ and His Word. Your participation with your child's progress in Cubbies and Puggles® is an excellent start in this direction! Keep it up!



Family Devotions for Holy Week

Looking for new ways to celebrate Christ this Easter? Use the devotional guide below to walk your family through the most important week in Jesus' life. Do it every day, or just pick the days that fit best with your family plans.

Read or summarize each passage from your Bible or a children's picture Bible. Invite family members to discuss the reflection questions and do the activity. Add your own special songs and prayers. Be sure to share what Jesus means to you!

Palm Sunday — A Kingly Welcome

Reading: Matthew 21:1-9

Reflection: What did the crowd do to welcome King Jesus? How would you have welcomed Jesus?

Activity: Give each family member a palm branch (real or homemade from green paper). Wave the palms together as you shout Hosanna ("save us") to the King.

Monday — A House of Prayer

Reading: Mark 11:15-17

Reflection: Jesus was angry that people were not praying in God's house. The Bible tells us to pray all the time and everywhere. What can our family do to pray more?

Activity: Give each family member (over age 3) three coins. For each coin they will say a sentence prayer to God.

Tuesday — A Sweet Gift

Reading: Matthew 26:6-13

Reflection: This woman (Mary) gave Jesus a beautiful gift that was worth a lot to her. She also prepared Him for burial. What will you give Jesus to show your love for Him? (E.g., time, money, toy, songs, prayers, artwork, etc.)

Activity: Burn a fragrant candle. Before you meet, ask each person to bring a special offering for Jesus.

Wednesday — A Cruel Betrayal

Reading: Matthew 26:14-16

Reflection: We may not betray (or turn against) Jesus, like Judas did, but we all sin (disobey God's Word). When have you disobeyed God in the past week?

Activity: Cut a cross out of poster board and give a note card to each person. Ask each one to write or draw his or her sin on the card. (Help young ones.) Stick the cards to the cross and tell them they will soon learn what Jesus did to pay for our sin. (Keep the cross for future devotions.)

Thursday — A Special Supper

Reading: Matthew 26:26-29; John 13:1-5

Reflection: Jesus came to help others. What can you and I do to serve others?

Activity: Take turns serving bread and grape juice to each other. You might even wash each other's hands or feet or give backrubs.

Friday — A Dark Death

Reading: Mark 15:16-20

Reflection: What was this day like for Jesus? Why did He choose to die? Thank Jesus for dying for us.

Activity: Bring visuals, such as a piece of purple cloth, nails and a crown made from thorny branches, as you tell about Jesus' pain. Show the cross from Wednesday and explain that Jesus died to pay the punishment for our sin.



Saturday — A Sabbath Rest

Reading: Luke 23:50-56

Reflection: How did Jesus' followers feel when Jesus died? How would you have felt?

Activity: Spend a quiet, reflective family day at home. With the kids, create a tomb and stone out of modeling clay. Wrap a small toy figure in tissue and place it inside. Boil cinnamon and cloves in water to remind you of the burial spices.

Sunday — An Easter Surprise!

Reading: Mark 16:1-8

Reflection: What would you have done at the empty tomb? Why are you glad that Jesus is alive? Who can you tell about Jesus?

Activity: Before sunrise, move the stone away from the clay tomb and take the toy figure out (leaving the tissue). Wake the kids up to look inside the tomb. Take the "sins" off your homemade cross together and decorate the cross with flowers. Talk about forgiveness and new life in Christ.

Spring is the perfect time to plant flowers with your Cubbie! Not only will you have fun together, but you can teach your preschooler a little about gardening too.

Try these few flower-growing tips to enhance your experience:

1. Pick hardy flowers, such as marigolds or nasturtiums. You can grow them inside (in cups or flower pots near your window sill) or outside in your yard.
2. Let your child pick the packet of flower seeds at the garden store to build excitement and ownership.
3. Purchase soil with fertilizer already mixed in, so the seeds will grow faster. (But make sure to wash hands after touching the soil to get rid of any chemicals.)
4. Show your child how to dig holes and bury seeds in the dirt. Give him kid-size gardening tools. (Old plastic kitchen utensils can work well.)
5. A water spray bottle makes a perfect, light-weight watering can for children.



CALENDAR

April 5:

- Our Awana Theme: Twice Dice
- Cubbies: we will be doing Bear Hug 21
- Tonight is **Costume and Pajama Night** for Cubbies: Cubbies can wear either their pajamas or a costume to club tonight

April 12:

- Our Awana Theme: Two Shoe
- Cubbies: tonight we will be doing Bear Hug 22

April 19:

- Our Awana Theme: Double Bubble
- Cubbies: we will be doing Special Day 4 (Easter)
- Tonight Cubbies will be doing an Easter Egg Hunt

April 26:

- Our Awana Theme: Seconds
- Cubbies: we will be doing Bear Hugs 23 & 24

If you are looking for more details about our Awana themes for each night, check out the newsletters for Sparks or TnT's.

CARNIVAL

Carnival is a special reward for our clubbers to honor a year's worth of hard work. After working hard to finish sections, books, and reviews, this is our way of saying "well done."

If you have never seen Carnival in action, picture the gym packed from end to end and side to side with Carnival games. The work done by clubbers earn them Awana Shares and the Shares pay for the games. Clubbers earn tickets for playing the games and can redeem the tickets for a variety of prizes.

In short, it is a whole bunch of fun! There are two things that clubbers can do in April to help be ready for Carnival. One, they can keep working hard to finish their Handbook because the more they finish, the more Shares they will earn. Two, we ask clubbers to bring in Double Dues in April to help pay for the Carnival. If you can help with that just drop your dues in the Sparky Dues Guy in the church lobby.

WE NEED HELP

For the Carnival to be a success, we need the help of many parents. We will have sign-up lists available if you are able to help us by running a game or working in the kitchen or assisting with set up or take down. Any and all help is appreciated.

EASTER EGG HUNT

Cubbies will be doing an Easter Egg Hunt during club on April 19. Please send 6 plastic Easter eggs filled with candy for us to use in the hunt. Cubbies will be able to find 6 eggs to bring home with them (probably not the same ones that you send in, though).

SECTIONS FOR HOPE

We have completed our spring contest. Backpacks for Hope provides meals for children who normally don't have much to eat on the weekend and they also supply the children with basic hygiene supplies. Participating schools are Ben Franklin, PJ Jacobs and the alternative learning school. We will announce the final totals of how much was raised at club on April 5.