

# 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.

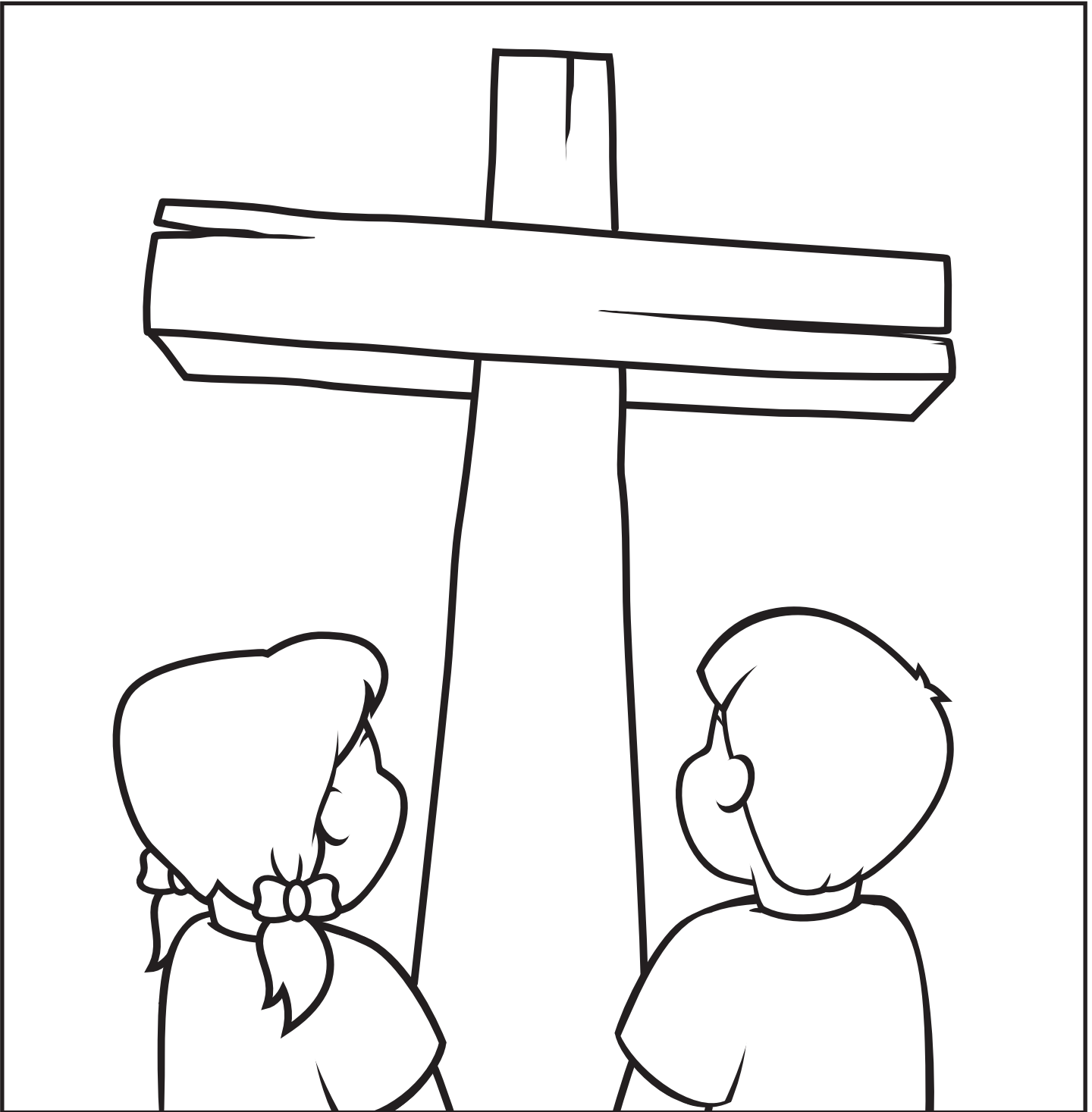
Spring is the perfect time to plant flowers with your Cubbie! Not only will you have fun together, but you can teach your preschooler a little about gardening too.

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.







**Parents,** here's a craft your Puggle may do in club, but you can do it at home too. It's perfect for Easter!

1. Cut out the coloring sheet and glue it onto construction paper.
2. Place little squares of multi-colored tissue paper in a small cup.
3. Let your child color the picture.
4. Help your child put glue on the cross and place the tissue squares onto it.
5. Let the craft dry thoroughly.
6. While the craft is drying, review 1 John 4:8, ... *God is love*. Say that God showed us His love when He sent Jesus to be our Savior.