

Cubbies Tips

Club Operation

Apple Acres

Cubbies begin their year with the Apple Acres Entrance Booklet. It's a great tool to get the salvation message into unchurched homes and to help Christian parents in teaching their children. There is no formal award upon its completion. New Cubbies get their uniform vest and all children progress to this year's handbook, which is Jumper, for the 09-10 ministry year.

Cubbies Commitment Magnet

Consider using the Cubbies Commitment Magnet as an award this year for completion of the entrance booklet. Fill in your name and phone number so parents have your contact info at their fingertips, or probably more accurately, on their refrigerator! If possible, ask parents to come a few minutes early to pick up their child so you can recognize them in front of the other children, leaders and parents.

Personalize Handbooks

Why is there no "This book belongs to _____" on page one of the Cubbies handbooks? Well, we've all seen the cute picture frame that Cubbie Bear is holding on the front of the Cubbies handbooks. It cleverly frames Ern E. Elephant and Luv E. Lamb. But that cutout was made to tape the picture of the Cubbie owner on the inside cover. It not only looks real sharp, but leaders and Cubbies alike can easily find their OWN handbooks. So get out your digital camera and printer, computer, phone or even an old snapshot or Polaroid camera and personalize all those Cubbie handbooks!

Clubbers Love Bear Sitting!

A church in California sends the Cubbie Bear stuffed toy home with a different clubber each week. It's an honor to "bear sit" Cubbie, then bring him back along with the group snack the next week.

Special Name Tags

Divide your clubbers into groups by using colors, shapes or Cubbies characters. Make corresponding name tags for the children and leaders. You can also match the name tags to the group's assigned tables. Get some ideas from our clip art page.

Conquer Fear by Giving Cubbies a Preview of Sparks Game Time

Leaders in one church noticed that first-year Sparkies were intimidated by the games at the start of the club year. To aid in the transition, Cubbies are taken once or twice a month into the Sparks Game Time during the second half of each club year. They watch for the final five minutes, and if time allows, get to run around the empty game circle. Usually, leaders run with them, holding their hands. This ensures that they keep outside the four pins. It not only acquaints the children with circle games but also teaches them to wait their turn and line up on a color line.

Puppets Inspire Fun Goodbyes!

At the end of club, as parents pick up their kids, have a leader stationed at the door with one of the Cubbies finger puppets. Have the puppet say “goodbye” to each child using his or her name: “See you next week, Jimmy!” We remember best what we heard last, so using each child’s name will leave a pleasant impression on parents and children. Try using a different character each week.

Candy ‘Cherry Tree’ Inspires Verse Completion

Mount a tree made out of construction paper on a cork board. Hang red Lifesaver® candies from the tree using pushpins. When a child recites his verse correctly, he may pick a “cherry” from the tree.

Play Time With a Purpose

We all know that Cubbies Play Time is a non-competitive, age-appropriate activity. According to the *Cubbies Leader Role Book*, there are several objectives. One is to develop motor skills and thought processes. Can you list others? Check page 40 of the book. Better yet, review the whole guide as you begin a new year of ministry with the little ones entrusted to your care.

Singing and Jumping

Add this new twist to the “Cubbies Theme Song.” Tell Cubbies to jump every time they sing the word “Jesus” or “Cubbies.” Sing the song first without jumping, so the children are used to singing and don’t get too distracted. Then enjoy watching clubbers and leaders jump up and down!

Child Protection

For your own protection, ensure that you are not isolated with a child at any time. Check your church’s child protection guidelines regarding supervision policies.

Be Allergy Aware

If you serve snacks, be aware of any food allergies your clubbers have. Request this information from parents at registration. You could note them on the back of each Cubbies’ name badge or post them in your club room.

Check up on Bear Hugs

Since Cubbies is a program in which all the children are working on the same Bear Hug each evening, it’s easy to overlook a Bear Hug when a Cubbie is absent. Make it a point to check the handbooks (or the record cards) of the children in your group. If any of them have uncompleted Bear Hugs, encourage them to make them up. This may take an additional session, such as before or after club, which needs to be arranged with the parent ahead of time. This will insure that all Cubbies will receive their book completion awards at the end of the club year.

An Easy Way to Attach Badges to Vests

We now have a solution to the problem of moms having to sew Cubbies emblems on the vests. Badge Magic, a new type of fabric adhesive, comes in sheets with pre-cut

circular shapes. It's been tested in multiple washings and beats any iron-on of the past. See the catalog or online store.

Fun Ways to Move Cubbies From Place to Place

- Use the buddy system, moving two by two. Ask the pairs to hold hands.
- Move single file, telling Cubbies to keep one hand on the wall beside them. Make sure touching walls is allowed in your church.
- Use a “walking song” that will keep your Cubbies occupied and add fun to a routine part of the meeting. Always use the same song so it becomes associated with walking to another location.
- Tie several loops along a section of soft rope. Each Cubbie holds a loop as two leaders, one on each end of the rope, guide them along.
- If appropriate, have the children make train sounds as they walk!

Teaching Tips

Family Activity Books Take Cubbies ‘Above and Beyond’

Your Cubbies club is always on the same page—literally! With each Bear Hug, there is an Under the Apple Tree extra-credit section. Because Cubbies do not finish their handbooks at their own pace like the older kids’ clubs, you usually don’t need additional curriculum.

For those parents interested in supplemental family activities, alert them to the *Character Builders* books. If parents feel they have enough just keeping their Cubbies current in their handbooks, encourage use of *Character Builders* as a summer activity

Get Cubbies Acquainted With Your Pastor

Invite your pastor to join you for an evening in Cubbies. Have him arrive early to greet parents and participate in the story, games or any aspect of club. Give him an orientation to Cubbies beforehand so he knows what to expect. Getting young children acquainted with your pastor at an early age will help them feel comfortable when they observe their parents interacting with him.

Make Music With Your Verses

Cubbies love music! One mom told us that she often turns the verses into songs, which helps her Cubbie remember them quicker and aids in retention. Sometimes, they even film her daughter singing the Scripture songs so she can watch herself and review the verses later.

Music Adds to Club

Music can add so much to your club! Have songs playing throughout Coming in Time. The *Cubbies Handbook Music CDs* can be used in Starting Time, Celebration Time, Book Time and even Play Time, when appropriate. Use music in a different segment from week to week. Awana music is now available on iTunes, too.

Parents

Parents Make Good Leaders

Most clubs are concerned about attracting new leaders. At the Cubbies age, parents are always involved, so why not ask a parent who is not a leader now to help with Awards Night? Maybe it's decorations, refreshments or assisting with the children, etc. Tell them how much you appreciate their help and invite them to join your Cubbies leadership team next fall. Follow up in a week or two. Don't let the summer go by before they hear from you again!

Invite Parents to Club

Go through the church directory or whatever other sources you have to determine who has children who are two years away from starting school in your church. Call each family and invite them to your Cubbies VIP (Very Important Parent) night. Personal contact is always best and starts your relationship with the parents on a firm foundation.

Ask Questions About the Children

Coming-in Time is an ideal time to get acquainted with parents. One of the roles of a Cubbies leader is to focus the conversation on their children. Concentrate and work hard to ask about their Cubbie. Is he feeling well? What did she do today? Does he still nap?

Similarly, in the case of visitors (or people you don't know very well), you are naturally in a welcoming and orientation mode. But again, concentrate on asking questions about their Cubbie. This will strengthen your leadership bond with both the children and the parents.

Engage Parents Using Postcards

Send out reminder postcards to parents encouraging them to have the children finish the year and to make up any Bear Hugs they may have missed. Address them this way: To the Parents of: (name of Cubbie). This greeting includes both the parents and the children and will inspire interaction about the Cubbies program.

Parent Newsletter

The monthly newsletter *Parent Pause* is a great resource to assist parents in interacting with their children. Easily accessible on the ART home page around the 15th of each month, this free four-page newsletter is available in color or black and white. It has age-appropriate articles for parents to read and share with their children. Add your own club news to the blank page at the back and remove the Puggles page if your church does not use that program.

One idea is to hand out the newsletters to parents as they pick up their children on the last meeting of each month. Or put them in the kids' handbooks or Cubbies bags. Don't forget to mail them to any absentees. Address them: To the parents of _____. Or you can e-mail them to those who prefer to receive electronic communications.

Connect With Parents

You can build relationships with parents in the following ways:

- Talking with them at the beginning and end of club nights
- Phone calls, visits or e-mails
- Connecting at special events throughout the year

To maximize your ministry, all Cubbies leaders should actively seek to nurture Cubbies and their parents throughout the year.

Awards

Award Placement With a Purpose

The first-year awards go on the silk-screened “C” on the Cubbies’ vests and the second-year on the “A”. Ever wonder why? It’s because the awards are more visible on the “C” on these small children, so they are displayed for a longer time. Even at this young age, use the uniform and awards to encourage and motivate children to learn the truths of God’s Word.

Orderly Awards Night

Before presenting your Cubbies with their book completion awards, bring them up to the platform to sing the “Cubbies Theme Song.” Everybody enjoys seeing Cubbies “shout and jump for joy!” This also saves time, as all the children are already up front to get their awards. Be sure to have parents join their Cubbies to receive their parent diplomas.

Year-End Gifts

At the end of the club year, think about some gift you can give each of your Cubbies. We suggest the Cubbies Zipper Pull. Give them to the Cubbies like an award. Fasten them right on the zipper of their jacket, garment or other item (such as a book bag). This will remind them of the good times they had in Cubbies and help them look forward to next year.