

Helping Slow Learners

Children who attend Awana have a variety of learning abilities. Those who are academically strong generally do very well with the completion of their handbooks. However, there are many children, though very intelligent, who struggle with memorization and handbook sections. Below are some strategies to assist leaders. The *Awana Ministry Catalog* also has resources available for assistance.

One-on-One Time

For clubbers who have difficulty with handbooks, one-on-one time with a listener, leader or parent can be very helpful. During Handbook Time, it is extremely helpful to have an extra leader available to float around providing additional help to clubbers who need it. It's also helpful if a leader can schedule some time with the clubber to work one-on-one, perhaps before club, to provide assistance. Make sure all leaders follow your church's child protection policies at all times.

Lower the Bar

Some children get discouraged with trying to complete sections. For these children it can be helpful to break their memorization goals into smaller pieces to make it more manageable. You might want to adjust the number of helps for children who have special needs. Children need to feel some

Recognition and Reward

Children who struggle with handbook sections need to be recognized and rewarded often. Once they have reached a milestone, it's important to praise the child. Some children especially like public praise while others prefer private praise. Special rewards can be established as incentives for these clubbers. However, seek permission from the parent or guardian before establishing the special reward.

Biblical View

Our culture defines success in terms of abilities, talents, accomplishments and achievement. When we examine Scripture we see a different model of what success is, from God's perspective. It is important that children with special needs or learning disabilities understand that not only is Jesus here to help us, but Christ's power is perfected in our weakness. Our deficits of any kind are opportunities for God to show His power and be at work. See the following devotional

Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10

Bible View:

... Therefore I will boast all the more gladly in my weaknesses..

(2 Corinthians. 12:9b, NIV).

Overview:

Paul, an apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, had been tormented by a thorn in the flesh. We don't know what the ailment was, but we do see how Paul was able to cope. Even though he had asked the Lord three times to take the thorn away, Paul learned that Christ's power is made perfect in weakness.

Life View:

1. We all have a pretty good sense of what success looks like, at least from the world's perspective. Paul knew success from the world's view, and he learned a much different perspective from Christ. In our culture, weaknesses and disabilities are generally looked down upon. Paul challenges us to trust in God and correct our wrong thinking of success.
2. All disabilities are difficult; however, the non-visible ones have a unique challenge. Children who have a learning disability can feel shame when someone notices their challenge. Sometimes children will do whatever possible to keep their learning disability a secret.
3. What a wonderful perspective if we can help children see their dis-ability as a gift. It's an opportunity for God to make His power perfect. We should help children to know that when they are weak, Christ is strong. Oftentimes, God does more from brokenness than wholeness.

Worldview

Our worldview needs to include *for when I am weak, then I am strong ... (v. 10b).*

This is a radical change from how the world views our shortcomings and disabilities. Let's instill in all children a "Christ view!"