

# COMMUNITY DRIVEN: VBS

**H**ave you ever noticed around the month of June that you start seeing church Vacation Bible School (VBS) signs all over the community? Todd Yoder, Youth and Children's Pastor at **Calvary Baptist Church** in Staunton does VBS a little differently than most churches, and they have found it to be impactful for the Kingdom of God.

"If one takes a moment and looks at our country and the local community, there are a lot of sports being played," said Yoder.

For the past decade, Calvary has done a Mega Sports Camp because it is not only evangelistic, but also relational. "We use it as a means to mentor and disciple the volunteer leaders, and I love that it gets as many people involved as possible, and that they take ownership in the VBS," said Yoder, so he opted for Mega Sports VBS. He found that many families can be reached through a VBS approach such as this.

Following the opening rally, each child chose the elective they want to participate in throughout the week. For the Staunton area, hunting is very popular, so they tailored the electives to include hunting as well as other sports such as volleyball, baseball, basketball, soccer,

and, even, karate. Choices also include painting, jewelry making, creative dancing, and cooking. During these electives, the head coach teaches the fundamentals while the assistant coaches and the team moms and dads reinforce the message in a relational manner. This approach offered the church the opportunity to share the Gospel daily.

The closing rally included a high school or college student athlete sharing their testimony, which correlated to the night's theme. This encouraged the student athlete to grow spiritually.

"It was such a privilege to share a bit of my journey in martial arts and how it correlates with my relationship to Jesus Christ," said Aspen Cash, a member of American Freestyle Karate. "It is a journey that is not always easy, but always worth it."

Because of Cash's testimony, several kids accepted Christ. "Leading these children to a faith in Christ was one of the most amazing experiences of my life," Cash shared.

Calvary also provides a time of offering for missions each day. There is always competition between the girls and boys to bring in donations of coins to partner in missions giving. According to Yoder, they have raised more than \$4,500 in one week for a local ministry.

"To be clear, it isn't about which VBS a church selects, but it is about seeking what the Lord wants you to do and be obedient to Him to bring glory to God," Yoder said. For now, Calvary serves the Lord through sports, and brings the Gospel message to children excited to come to VBS. ■