

# CAMPING AND OVERNIGHTS

*As Awana leaders, we devote much time and effort for each club meeting. Yet at a Christian camp, the opportunities are multiplied many times over for a one-on-one ministry between a clubber and a leader. Statistics reveal that more decisions for Christ are made at camp than at any other place. In a place away from familiar surroundings, kids are often more receptive to the gospel message. Take advantage of these opportunities. Encourage your clubbers to attend a Christian camp and participate in club overnights. After all your hard, diligent work and dedication in weekly club meetings, a Christian camp may be a wonderful climax.*

*Overnights and camping trips can be lots of fun. Yet to be successful, they require careful planning, prayer and hard work. Leaders who omit overnights and camping from their program are missing a marvelous opportunity to extend their personal ministry. There is no better way to get to know and influence your clubbers than to live with them for a day or more.*

## **Overnights**

Overnights range from church sleep-ins and camp-outs at a forest preserve to full-scale weekend retreats.

Purpose –Begin by looking at your club objectives. Each of the following emphases or goals should be considered for an Awana outing. Choose those which are most needed in your club situation to fulfill the Awana objectives of evangelism and training. In some instances, the emphasis may be a prerequisite for eligibility to participate in the ot4ing (i.e., complete entrance booklet, bring two visitors, etc.). At other times, the emphasis may be maintained and emphasized during the entire outing.

- Fun and publicity
- Club attendance
- Developing friendships and understanding of one another
- Club achievements –passing handbook sections
- Appreciation for God’s creation
- Challenge to Christian service
- Winning the unsaved to Christ
- Reaching parents through interest shown in and accomplishments of children

Destination—Overnights can be held on the church premises for a sleep-in/slumber party, in a park or backyard for a camp-out or at a rented campsite with food service and program staff. Inexperienced leaders should choose simple situations such as a church basement or parking lot, backyard or a campsite with complete facilities and staff. Experienced leaders can use forest preserves or primitive camp settings.

For all sleep-ins, particularly at a home or the church, decide clubber boundaries and clearly explain off-limit areas. Then stick to them. At a definite time (possibly 10:00 p.m.), the home or church should be locked. Under no circumstances are clubbers allowed

to leave during the night. If an overnight is for both boys and girls, set up and maintain separate areas with proper supervision for each after lights out.

If you choose to camp outdoors, obtain a list of camping areas from your State Conservation Department, Department of Natural Resources, Christian Camping international or American Camping Association. If you've never been to a site and are unable to check it in advance, talk to someone with firsthand experience. Descriptions of trails, campsites, etc., can be found in guidebooks, but verbal descriptions are usually more detailed. Contact the district ranger for information on fire permits, camping regulations, weather conditions and maps. If your plans are for the local woods or beach, check with the local police. Leaders experienced in outdoor camping may add an exciting dimension to overnights by using tents or tarps for sleeping accommodations.

If a campsite with full facilities, including food service, cabins and program staff, fits your needs better, visit the site before your retreat. Become acquainted with the camp and its layout. Meet the camp director and staff. Discuss the camp rental agreement, menus and program details.

### **Overnights – Personnel and Leadership Responsibilities**

Recruiting leaders for your overnight is as essential as planning your schedule. Get a solid commitment from each leader for the entire outing, including preparation and cleanup time. If you find yourself without adequate, willing leaders, seriously consider rescheduling the outing for another date.

Leaders should be assigned definite duties, such as being responsible for grocery shopping, gathering firewood for cooking and camp fires, teaching crafts, assisting with activities, helping with cleanup or dishwashing, building evening camp fires, etc. If this is a leader's first overnight experience, assist him or her in the assigned responsibilities. Teen leaders might be assigned, for example, an hour and a half of games or the noon meal. Use teens especially for activities late in the evening when older leaders energy is about gone!

### **Overnights – Preparation**

**Promotion** –Promotion for your overnight or camping trip will determine how many clubbers participate. Good promotion excites, while poor promotion reduces interest drastically.

Most important in promotion is honesty. Don't mislead! Promote your outing for exactly what it will be. Give specific details of the schedule, program and activities. Pictures and slides featuring last year's outing add great appeal as do spot announcements and testimonials from former campers.

Promote with your overnight goals in mind. For example, a promotional piece might read:

“Great camping trip out in God’s beautiful creation. Fun, sports, good food, Bible study and a super time together with friends and leaders.

Involve leaders in promotion –posters, fliers, club announcements or phone calls. If your purpose is to reach fathers (or mothers) and you’re planning a father/son outing (or mother/daughter activity), make sure parents are contacted and invited by club leaders. Prepare informative, attractive fliers to send home with each boy or girl several weeks in advance.

Numbers –Determine as early as possible an approximate count of clubbers who will be attending. Plan to have two leaders for every 12 clubbers. Large groups should be split into smaller groups (if coed, have proportional men and women leaders).

Determine the cost per person –Sometimes the most exciting outings are those which don’t cost much. Basic costs are food, transportation, insurance, equipment, rental of facilities and miscellaneous supplies. Figure the cost on a per clubber basis, taking into account how much your Awana club budget will cover. Do not charge leaders who are already paying for other incidental expenses.

A cancellation policy may be necessary if you attend a camp which requires reservations. If applicable to your situation, consider requiring full payment in advance with no refunds or cancellations. You may choose, however, to refund fees for emergency cancellations only, if the camp allows some deviation from the final reservation count.

Brief parents and obtain permission slips –Send home permission slips which must be signed by a parent and returned a week or two prior to the outing. Include information on how parents can reach children in case of emergency. In addition, give each clubber a list of items to bring. A sample list for clubbers on a one-night, one-day outdoor overnight follows:

1. Sleeping bag (or blankets) and pillow
2. Toothbrush, comb, etc.
3. Warm clothes (extra, if wet weather), hat
4. Swimsuit and towel
5. Bible, notebook, pen
6. Sports gear (fishing pole, bat, etc.)

Plan transportation –Are you using the church bus? Leaders’ cars? Rental buses? Make transportation arrangements several weeks prior to the trip. Then a few days before you plan to leave, confirm your arrangements. Confirm your return trip plans also. Be sure to return promptly, as parents will greatly appreciate not waiting or worrying.

Acquire and pack equipment –Gather cooking gear, tents, personal supplies, first-aid kit, repair tools, game equipment and other needed items.

First-aid supplies –A first-aid kit is a must for an overnight camping trip. The bother of bringing it is nothing compared to the benefit of having a bandage or aspirin when needed. Here’s a suggested list of first-aid supplies. Add or subtract as needed in your particular situation.

1. Box of bandages
2. Box of butterfly bandages
3. 15 sterile gauze pads 4” x 4” and/or 2” x 2”
4. A roll of 1” adhesive tape
5. A roll of gauze
6. Antacid tablets
7. Aspirin
8. Small scissors
9. A moleskin (for blisters and potential blisters)
10. Antiseptic

Ask one leader to assume responsibility for maintaining and administering the first-aid kit. Impress upon him or her the importance of keeping it clean and dry (plastic bags help). He or she should be available to the clubbers at all times. Make sure clubbers understand whom to see and what procedures to follow for first aid.

## **Overnights –Cooking and Eating**

Much of your campers’ evaluation of an overnight depends on how they liked (or disliked) the food.

But before you plunge into planning menus, consider your various choices.

1. Food service (as part of the camp agreement) takes care of all meal planning and cooking. Talk with camp foodservice personnel in advance so both of you know what the other expects.

2. Experienced cook plans and prepares meals. Whether at a campgrounds, the church, or your backyard, this person heads up all cooking and meals. Food is either prepared on site or beforehand at a home or church kitchen.

3. Awana leadership at overnight prepares meals. The rule of thumb is START SIMPLE! Don’t attempt anything for the first time on an overnight. Prepare whatever you do best, whether sandwiches and chips for lunch or the “works” prepared over a campfire

## **Cooking Equipment**

The cooking equipment you bring on a camp-out depends on how fancy or elaborate your meals will be. One-pot meals are usually the most convenient. For a group of 15 or less (and depending on your menus), bring:

1. A large, lightweight pot, approximately 2 1/2 gallon capacity
2. A large, long-handled spoon
3. A spatula
4. A lightweight frying pan
5. Cans with wire handles for making hot drinks
6. A large (5 gallon) water jug (if water isn't readily available)
7. A grill for placing pots over a fire (if gas camp stove is not available)
8. Liquid soap (for use on bottom and sides of all pots put over an open fire for easier cleanup). Cleanup is always easier if you remember to bring soap and scrub pads. While campers are eating and relaxing, heat water over fire for washing dishes. Large pot cleans easily when filled with water to soak.

## **Stoves or Fires**

Check the rules governing the area in which you plan to camp. If fires are allowed, bring a saw (axes or hatchets are dangerous with groups of kids). Also bring a camp stove in case of rain or limited firewood. If you are not experienced cooking over an open fire, use a camp stove.

## **Overnights — Spiritual Highlights**

Spiritual growth and decisions at an overnight or camping trip are the most exciting results of all! These are the things that will last and count for eternity. Prepare enthusiastically and prayerfully as you plan a Bible challenge to climax the evening activities. In addition, your program schedule should include the following ingredients. (For sleep-ins at the church, modify guidelines to fit your particular situation.)

Prayer upon departure and before meals –Before you leave, pray as a group for safety and God's leading. Let clubbers know that you as leaders have put the overnight in God's hands. Pray before eating –even if meal times seem hectic. Many clubbers from unsaved homes are not accustomed to praying before meals. They need to see Christian life in action.

Campfire and/or devotions –Campfire memories linger in clubbers' minds for years. Devotions can include singing, testimonies, skits, a film (if indoors) and a Bible lesson.

Cabin or tent devotions –After everyone is settled in his or her sleeping bag, briefly discuss the evening message and what it meant to individual clubbers. Although this time

should only last 10-15 minutes, encourage each clubber to share his or her thoughts. Close with prayer, again encouraging each child to participate.

Morning Bible study –After breakfast, give the announcements for the day, then spend some time in lively singing and prayer. The Bible study should be a continuation of the thoughts shared at the campfire the previous night.

Follow-up of spiritual results –This must begin immediately. The spiritual impact on clubbers' lives should be noted, recorded and followed up with care. Plan follow-up before the overnight, just as you would for a club-night decision. Always counsel a child who accepts Christ as Savior or makes a lifelong decision to serve Him. A clubber should receive prompt attention by an adult who cares specifically for his or her needs.

### **Overnights –Considerations**

Leader and clubber responsibilities –Everyone should know his or her responsibilities and behavior requirements ahead of time. Each leader should be alert for opportunities to share his or her life and the Word of God with clubbers. Assign at least one counselor (leader) to every sleeping area. The overnight will not accomplish your intended purpose if leaders and clubbers sleep in separate areas and do not play and eat together.

Establish a lights out and all quiet policy –Around 10:30, if separate areas for sleeping are available, sleepy (older?) leaders may take younger and/or tired campers to their sleeping area. But many clubbers won't want to go to bed early. Use your teen leaders to really tire out clubbers with active games. By midnight or a previously agreed upon time, all campers should be in their sleeping bags. Once clubbers are settled down to sleep, allow for only a few minutes of talking. (Leaders must exercise discretion when a group is conversing about spiritual matters. Consideration, though, must also be shown those who are already sleeping.) If clubbers are allowed to stay awake and talk long after their normal bedtime, they will be less alert the next day.

Evaluation –If your overnight is properly planned with specific goals, its ministry should continue long after the outing is over. Evaluations need not be lengthy. But they give a good start for planning the next overnight. They also allow each person to feel a more responsible part of the group. Sometime during the last day of the overnight or during the ride home, schedule a time for evaluation. This can be done through a written questionnaire about likes and dislikes or even by a show of hands. Ask specific questions such as: What was your favorite meal? Which activity did you enjoy most (and least)? How many of you liked breakfast this morning? What did you learn in our Bible lessons?

### **Planning Guide –**

1. Purpose
10. Transportation

- |                       |                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 2. Personnel/jobs     | 11. Insurance               |
| 3. Program            | 12. Equipment               |
| 4. Place              | 13. Permission slip         |
| 5. Date               | 14. items to bring          |
| 6. Budget/cost/person | 15. Camper list             |
| 7. Other requirements | 16. Departure/arrival times |
| 8. Promotion          |                             |
| 9. Food               |                             |

## Options for Overnights

Girls' slumber party at church  
 Overnight at a farmer's barn or field  
 Plastic tent overnight at a state park  
 Small group (team/handbook group) overnight in a leader's backyard  
 Small group overnight in a leaders family room  
 Overnight at a retreat center  
 Overnight at a Christian camp  
 Overnight at a county park or forest preserve  
 River float trip and overnight  
 Winter overnight in heated cabins at a Christian camp  
 Handbook finishers' overnight  
 Boys' church gym overnight  
 Canoe trip overnight  
 Handbook camp overnight (see details later in this section)  
 Kite marathon overnight  
 Mother/daughter overnight  
 Father/son overnight  
 Bike trip overnight  
 Contest winners' overnight

## Overnights –Sample Schedules

Outdoor Overnight

### Friday

3:00 p.m. –Two or three leaders leave for site (one hour away) to begin preparing dinner

4:00 p.m. –Clubbers and leaders meet at church  
5:00 p.m. –Arrive at campsite, set up camp, eat dinner, cleanup  
6:30 p.m. –Group activity  
8:30 p.m. –Night hike organized by forest ranger or leader who knows area well  
9:00 p.m. –Campfire, devotions, snack  
10:30 p.m. –Bedtime for clubbers and leaders who choose to retire early  
AND  
Late-night active games (indoors, if possible) planned by teen leaders for clubbers who want to stay up  
12:00 (midnight) –Everyone in tents/cabins  
12:30 a.m. –ALL QUIET

### **Saturday**

7:15 am. –Two leaders begin preparing breakfast  
8:00 a.m. —Breakfast  
8:45 a.m. –Morning Bible study  
9:30 am. –Softball, soccer, volleyball, etc.  
OR  
Fishing, canoeing, boating  
OR  
Free time (OR any combination of above)

### Church Overnight

### **Friday**

6:00 p.m. –Game time  
7:30 p.m. –Handbook section passing  
8:00 p.m. –Group activities and games  
9:30 p.m. –Campfire (fireplace), devotions, snack, film  
10:30 p.m. –Early bedtime for clubbers who choose to retire early  
AND  
Late-night active games planned by teen leaders for clubbers who want to stay up  
12:00 (midnight) –Everyone in sleeping areas  
12:30 a.m. –ALL QUIET

### **Saturday**

7:15 a.m. –Two leaders begin preparing breakfast  
8:00 a.m. –Breakfast and morning Bible study  
9:00 a.m. –Group activities and/or crafts  
10:30 a.m. –GO HOME

### **Overnights –Activities**

Plan games and activities for your overnight to be even more exciting than those on a regular club night. Remember, you are not restricted to the typical club night time limit. Instead, take advantage of the lengthy game periods and activity slots. Use the outdoors



and wide-open space to the fullest. And use teen leaders to their highest potential by training and challenging them to conduct games. This gives leaders a chance to catch their breath and work on other necessary details.

Most importantly, **PLAN MORE ACTIVITIES THAN YOU THINK YOU NEED!** Fit activities generously into your schedule. It is better to have too many planned than not enough!

Fun and mixer games –Such events help clubbers relax and enjoy each other and should be played early in the outing.

Free time –Offer clubbers a choice of boating, swimming, hiking, volleyball or just fooling around. Make sure each area (especially the lakefront and archery) is well supervised by competent adults.

Lakefront activities –If the weather is warm and your outing is held at an appropriate location, schedule an afternoon water carnival. Look in *The Best Awana Games Ever!* for water games. Do not attempt waterfront activities without sufficient adult swimmers/lifeguards.

Handbook activity time –Set up stations with prepared leadership at each. Clubbers, with their handbooks, rotate stations that feature handbook sections they need to complete.

Group activity sports –For keen competition and interest, keep the same teams together throughout the entire outing. Look in *The Best Awana Games Ever!* for outdoor game ideas.

Here are some suggestions. Look In the *The Best Awana Games Ever!* book for additional Ideas.

- **CAN YOU FOLLOW DIRECTIONS?** –Plan this funny game to get things going! It’s a great icebreaker.

This is a timed test. You only have five minutes.

1. Read everything carefully before doing anything.
2. Write your name in the upper right-hand corner of this paper.
3. Circle the word “name” in the second sentence.
4. Draw five small squares in the upper left-hand corner.
5. Mark an “X” in each square.
6. Sign your name under the title of this paper.
7. After the title write, “Yes, Yes, Yes.”

8. Draw a circle completely around sentence number seven.
9. Print a "5" in the lower left corner of this paper.
10. Draw a triangle around the "5" you just printed.
11. Add 703 to 66 on the back of this paper.
12. Draw a rectangle around the word corner in sentence four.
13. Loudly call out your first name when you get this far along.
14. If you have followed directions carefully to this point, loudly call out "I have."
15. On the reverse side of this paper, add 8,950 to 30.
16. Draw a circle around your answer and put a square around the circle.
17. Count from 10 to 1 backwards in your normal speaking voice.
18. Punch three small holes with your pencil in the top of this paper.
19. If you are the first person to reach this point, LOUDLY call out, "I AM THE FIRST PERSON TO THIS POINT, AND I AM THE LEADER IN FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS."
1. Now that you have finished reading everything carefully, do only as suggested in sentence two.

• **CONFUSION** – Provide an instruction sheet and any needed items (bubble gum, pencil) for each leader and clubber. Instruct clubbers that all the following items must be completed by someone not on his or her own team. Involve as many leaders and clubbers at one time as possible.

1. Have a clubber do five push-ups for you. Have that person sign his or her name here \_\_\_\_\_
2. Play "Ring Around the Rosy" with someone and sing out loud. Have that person sign here \_\_\_\_\_
3. Do 25 "jumping jacks" and have someone count them for you. Have that person sign here \_\_\_\_\_
4. Recite the "Pledge of Allegiance" to the flag as loudly as you can. Ask someone to listen to you and sign here \_\_\_\_\_
5. Leapfrog over someone five times. Ask that person to sign here \_\_\_\_\_
6. At the beginning of the game, you were given a piece of bubble gum. Chew it up (if you haven't already) and blow a bubble. Find someone who will watch you and have that person sign here \_\_\_\_\_
7. Get 10 different autographs (first, middle and last names) on the back of this sheet.
8. Unlace someone else's shoe, lace it up and tie it. Have that person sign here \_\_\_\_\_
9. Have someone remove a hair (over four inches long) from his or her head and give it to you, and have that person sign here \_\_\_\_\_
10. Get someone to do a somersault, and then sign his or her name here \_\_\_\_\_

**CIRCLE BASEBALL** – This game includes a home plate, one base and two teams. A batter stands at home plate. The pitcher, a leader from the same team as the batter, stands anywhere. Each player gets only one pitch. When the ball is hit, the player runs to the base. He or she is either out or gets a hit. If he reaches the base safely, he or she scores a run and goes to the dugout. If a fielder catches the ball on the fly or throws the batter out at the base, the batter is out. Maximum of three outs, or five runs, per inning. There are no foul ball rules.

**INDOOR SCAVENGER HUNT** – Clubbers hunt for the following items. (The team that finishes first wins. Restrict the activity to areas not off-limits.)

1. 2 left shoes without laces
2. 1 pair of white socks
3. 1 pair of blue socks
4. 1 handkerchief
5. 1 quarter
6. 1 penny
7. 2 strands of hair (at least 4")
8. 2 combs
9. 1 belt
10. 1 nickel
11. 1 dead fly
12. 1 pair of shoelaces

- **ULTIMATE FRISBEES** — Ten clubbers from each team play on the field at once. Substitutions may be made at any time. This game is a combination of football and soccer. Players pass a flying disc such as Frisbee® to teammates in order to advance down the field toward their goal. To score a goal, players must pass the flying C disc to a team member across the goal line into the end zone. Players cannot run with the flying disc. Once a player catches the flying disc, he or she must stop immediately. The flying disc changes teams if it is intercepted by the opposite team, if a pass is incomplete, or if the flying disc is caught out-of-bounds. One point is scored for each goal.

- **GUESS THE DRAWING** – Set up two tables on opposite sides of the play area. Supply each table with scrap paper and pens, markers or crayons. Prepare slips of paper with various items written on them. Divide players into two teams positioned around their respective tables. Each team sends a representative to the center of the room. A leader shows both clubbers a card with an item written on it. Without talking, the two clubbers return to their tables and begin illustrating the item on a piece of paper. The first team to identify the item wins. Play again with a different artist. Be prepared with an ample number of cards. Use a combination of abstract concepts (i.e., Council Time), proper nouns (i.e., Mrs. Smith), and ordinary objects (i.e., award badge).

- **BALLOON BLAST** –Mark boundaries and place an equal number of water balloons at opposite ends of the playing area. Plastic garbage cans or kiddie pools are ideal for water balloon storage. Divide clubbers into two teams of at least five players each. Each team chooses a captain. Players from each team (including captains) start with one water balloon each. All team members (except the captain) place one hand on another player’s shoulder, forming a continuous circle around their captain, and hold a balloon in the other hand. When the whistle blows, teams maneuver in any manner they choose. The ring of protection around the captain, however, must never be broken. Then the captain is the only shooter on the team. He or she throws balloons at the other team. When he or she has thrown the balloon, players in the ring supply him or her with a new one. At any time, a team may return to its home base and pick up more water balloons. Each player, however, is still only allowed to carry one balloon. A point is scored each time a captain directly hits the opposing captain. Mere splashing of water on the captain does not count. The water balloon must break upon hitting the opposing captain. Once a direct hit on a captain has been made, both teams return to reload. Play resumes with a change of captains on both teams. Team members may block incoming balloons in any way possible. At all times, however, all players must keep one hand on another player’s shoulder. If a player lets go of the player in front of him or her for more than a brief momentary slip, the opposing team gets one point.

### **Christian Summer Camps**

Christian camps are unique! Your clubbers have opportunity to observe Christianity in action through godly leadership 24 hours a day. Through carefully selected Bible lessons about God and His love, your clubbers are motivated to live for Christ. Christian camps offer new experiences in outdoor fun and an ideal place to establish lifelong friendships. Many missionaries, pastors, Sunday school teachers and club leaders ministering around the world today made their decision to serve Christ at a Christian camp.

Try the following ideas to promote camps in your club.

**Camp wonder box** –Buy wonder box prizes that kids can use at camp. Include a flashlight, a can of insect repellent, a sleeping bag (if funds allow), a fishing pole and other similar items. When a clubber turns in his or her camp application, he or she can choose a prize from the wonder box.

**Camp rally** –Plan this event as a joint church effort to get your former campers together. Invite parents, too. Make this club night something special with skits, songs, and pictures from previous camping seasons and refreshments. Be sure to tie the evening together with camper and leader testimonies and a salvation message. Encourage parents to register campers with a \$5.00 discount for early registration.

Camp contest –Develop a theme and contest board, so clubbers can watch their progress toward camp. Display prizes that can be used at camp: baseball glove, camp T-shirt, flashlight or camp jacket. Develop a scoring system and run the contest for five to six weeks. Award bonus points to clubbers who turn in their camp registration and fee during the contest.

Home visitation –Many parents know very little about camp. Visit your clubbers’ homes with a photo album of snapshots to help both parents and clubbers understand what camp is like. Many times, prospective campers can be registered on the spot. If there is more than one prospective camper in their family, consider reducing the rate for the second camper.

Displays –Use your Awana showcase as a camp promotion. Display camp pictures, samples of camp crafts, awards and short testimonials. List the names of all clubbers who have signed up for camp.

Poster contest –Distribute printed contest rules for designing camp posters. Include the size of the poster, the camp name, theme, dates and the deadline for submitting the poster. Select several leaders as judges, and award prizes to winners.

Stunts –Have a leader portray a typical camper. At the sound of reveille, the camper, dressed in a pair of hilarious pajamas, climbs out of his or her sleeping bag. He or she makes his or her way to the latrine, wipes the cobwebs from his or her eyes and looks through an empty picture frame as if it is a mirror. He or she pops a zit, wipes off the mirror and sprays underarm deodorant on his or her feet. At the conclusion, the leader looks through the make-believe mirror and invites the kids to spend a week at camp.

### **Awana Scholarship Camp and Canadian Adventure**

Scholarship Camps are conducted each summer in numerous locations across the United States and Canada. In Ontario, Canada, Canadian Adventure offers special wilderness camp sessions for high schoolers.

Eligibility requirements for Awana achievers may be obtained from your Awana missionaries.

Fun! That’s why kids go to camp! It’s a positive Christian environment, away from the routine, problems and influences of family and neighborhood friends. Most young people come knowing few others. In this different setting, they are able to drop their masks and discover God’s love in a new way.

Christian friendships –The caliber of campers is high. They’re all award winners. As campers laugh, cry, pray, study and strive together for excellence, they develop strong friendships which continue beyond the week of camp.

New experiences –Campers participate in wholesome activities which they’ve never experienced before. Guided participation in sports, stunts, water fun, four-team competition, music and Bible study provides memories which last a lifetime.

Christian adult counselors –Awana missionaries, pastors and trained leaders make up the Scholarship Camp staff with a low adult/camper ratio. Each youth receives individualized attention and benefits from mature Christian adults. Few camps offer the leadership which the Awana Scholarship camping program affords.

Spiritual growth –Because campers have already attended Awana club for several years, most have accepted Christ as Savior. The motivation for spiritual growth is high. An important part of each camp day is the morning Bible study and the evening meeting of inspiration and teaching. Personal workbooks assist clubbers in their private study of God’s Word. A distinct achievement system encourages each clubber in personal Bible study and memorization.

FOR MORE INFORMATION –Contact your Awana missionaries for specific information regarding the coming Scholarship Camp season. They will gladly provide you with dates, locations and camper (and counselor) applications.

### **Preserving the Fruits of Camp**

The following article, used by permission of Camping Guideposts (Duluth, MN), comes from the experiences of a pastor. As a camping specialist, he shares his keen insights with us all.

Everyone who enjoys fishing also knows some of the fisherman’s frustrations. Imagine bringing a really good fish up to the boat only to lose it through inept handling of the fishing net! Or worse yet, have you ever experienced the feeling of exasperation of trying to land a fish without a landing net? While I don’t want to push the theology of this parable too far, there are striking similarities. Preserving decisions made at camp demands serious, consistent attention. It’s called follow-up!

Follow-up begins with the counsel given to campers as they respond to invitations. Whether the decision is for salvation, restoration, dedication or life commitment, every positive response of a camper should be recorded and reinforced. Information about that decision must be sent to the camper’s home church in a clear, concise manner. It’s good

to know that Jill was a happy camper, but Jill's commitment to a life of service for Christ is the vital information.

What haunts camp leaders is the knowledge that some churches ignore camper reports. How easily we fall into routines! We are pressed to maintain programs, and we forget why we're in business. I know, I'm a pastor.

Follow-up: Who? Every pastor should pray mightily for people to share the burden of ministry. One person should be responsible for camp follow-up. I want to know about the decisions my campers make. But I have a few dozen kids. You may have more! We need help.

News concerning camper decisions should filter down to everyone concerned with that person – Awana leaders, Sunday school teachers and youth leaders, parents (when appropriate) and surely, the pastor.

Follow-up: How? All Bible teaching is follow-up. Sometimes we duplicate efforts and overlook what is already in place. We don't need to create new activities to do a better job than we're already doing. The Sunday school, worship services and prayer meetings are follow-up for new converts. I try hard to preach meaningful, Bible-teaching services that touch all ages. I would hope that campers who have made new beginnings would be encouraged to attend church services regularly.

A caring friend is follow-up. The person responsible for all camp follow-up should see that some mature Christian takes a camper as a special prayer and friendship concern. The follow-up counselor becomes a model as well as a teacher of Christian truth. Most of us learn more readily from models than lectures. A disciple is a follower, implying a leader. Christ, of course, is the ultimate Leader, but it takes time for young Christians to follow Him unaided.

Part of follow-up is the camp report time when campers are urged, even coached, to share their experiences. Nothing so strengthens a new convert than that first testimony, no matter how faltering.

Follow-up: How long? No formula can determine how long a youngster (or adult) will need personal help. How can we tell when a person is secure in the gospel? That's the genius of the church. The members of the body never relax. They always stand by to help a Christian brother or sister, no matter how young, to keep growing in Christ. The camp cannot fulfill its purpose without the church. The church is the only practical means of maintaining the spiritual momentum begun in camp.

Follow-up: Why? It seems frightening that camp follow-up is listed as a problem (or worse, is neglected) for follow-up is at least one-third of the Great Commission. Take a look at Matthew 28:18-20.

First, we must recognize that all spiritual work relies on God's power, and all power was vested in Jesus (v. 18). The church, the camp and all other gospel efforts stand or fall on that power and our faithfulness and obedience to His Word. Without the power of the Holy Spirit, Christian camping would be nothing but wholesome adventure,

Jesus gave a three-part command. His followers were to get going. As they went, they were to make disciples – learners. Obviously, a learner must be exposed to learning – subject matter. And a learner must be placed in a learning setting.

Make disciples, baptize and teach: the three factors in the evangelism equation. Never allow yourself to think that the job ended with a decision for salvation! The theology of the Great Commission forbids it. The last part of the Commission requires continuing, disciplined effort for teaching anyone to.. *observe all things whatsoever* [Jesus] have commanded you (Matthew 28:20). That is a lifetime proposition.

Follow-up; Keep climbing! A few years ago I sat in a dimly lit chapel at a small camp in Alaska. Seated with me were three Indian girls who had just written in their New Testaments: “Tonight I received Jesus as my Savior.” Soon, they would pack their few belongings into duffel bags and climb into a small plane that would fly them back to their village. There was no missionary in that village, no pastor, no gospel fellowship.

I lay awake a long time that night, thinking and praying. A simple plan formed in my mind. We had studied lessons on the life of Jesus. The girls and others had made spiritual beginnings as I taught and told Bible stories. How could we keep them climbing? This title stuck: Keep Climbing. I traced the six stories I had told, then thought of brief, additional Bible passages that led a bit higher. A simple format fell into place: six mail-back studies based on the camp experience.

However you do it, follow-up is vital to both the camp and church. Your local church is the logical place for follow-up to take place.

Yes, several times I've hit a stream or taken off in a boat without my landing net. I've watched sadly as a big catch swam away. The fault was not with my fishing skill, but with my absence of equipment for holding the catch. Sometimes after camp the same sadness comes over me. I ask myself, *What will become of those lifetime decisions to serve Christ? What will become of their commitment to follow Christ? Will we hold them or lose them?*