

Conducting a Captivating Council Time From Start to Finish

1. **Start on Time.**

2. **Sit on Teams.**

Have a Leader assigned to sit with each team.

It promotes team enthusiasm and is a good discipline tactic.

3. **Welcome Visitors**

Introduce them or have the person who brought them do it. Give something to your visitors -- a bookmark, a pencil; include a letter that explains about your club.

4. **Song Time**

Sing your T&T song even if you don't have time to sing anything else. Choose an enthusiastic song leader. Let the kids take turns leading your song. They usually want a friend to share the responsibility. That's okay. It gives the kids experience at leadership, too.

If you want a regular song time but have no piano or accompanist, use taped music. Choose praise music or music that teaches Scripture or has a good gospel message. Make the words that you sing meaningful.

If any leaders or clubbers play an instrument, schedule them throughout the year for special music. Encourage your leaders and clubbers to serve the Lord with their talents.

5. **Review**

Council Time is a great time to find out what your clubbers are really learning. Jesus taught by asking questions. We can, too.

You can review in a variety of ways. Playing games is good way to review.

Even an occasional, well-planned Bible drill is beneficial. It helps clubbers to become familiar with the books of the Bible. But there are many other kinds of review games to do. Bible Baseball is a good one too.

6. **Testimonies**

Schedule leaders to give their testimonies. Let clubbers give one or two sentence testimonies. Ask for popcorn testimonies. Or have clubbers tell when and where they accepted Christ as Savior.

Some nights you could alternate singing a song with giving a testimony.

7. **Announcements**

Be enthusiastic. Be brief. Have handouts, if possible. Announce theme nights for the month on a calendar. Use colored paper. It's eye-catching and less apt to get lost. This is also a good time to announce how a contest is coming along.

8. **Prayer**

Always have prayer during Council Time. Do it in a variety of ways. Some nights you may have time for only a beginning and ending prayer. Other nights take prayer requests. But remember, the requests you get, even if it's about someone's dog ready to have puppies, should be prayed for wholeheartedly.

You might have clubbers write their requests on 3 X 5 cards and exchange them to be prayed for during the week. Or divide them up among the leaders.

Ask one or two clubbers to pray.

9. **The Bible Message**

Remember that your Bible message is a message from God. Many of your clubbers may not hear another word about God, in the right way, until they come back next week. Pray earnestly that your message will be His choice, not just something you can throw together easily.

Know your clubbers. Someone once said, "**Know your stuff and know who you are stuffing.**" If all of your clubbers have accepted Christ, you don't want to hit hard on salvation messages every week.

Be alert to your clubbers' needs. If you see a problem with fighting in your group, there's a good topic to cover during devotions. Don't do it in a way that clubbers feel they are being picked on. If you have mostly clubbers who attend Sunday school, don't use Sunday school type lessons. Be creative. Use life application messages.

Try to have some type of clubber participation. You might use a pencil activity to go along with your lesson. Use visuals. People remember much more of what they see and do than what they just hear.

I read that you will remember 10% what you hear, 50% hear and see, 80% hear, see, and repeat, and 100% what you hear, see, repeat, and do.

Use variety. Involve your clubbers and leaders in skits. Tell stories. Use object lessons. Do your message in costume. Awana has many helps for your Bible message time. * **[Show books]**.

Start your message time with some type of an attention grabber.

Your message time should be one minute per age plus 3.

Be sure to emphasize Scripture.

Remember the importance of the message -- to encourage those without Christ to accept Him as Savior, and to help saved clubbers grow in their relationship with Him.

You don't need to be Super Director and do it all yourself every week. Schedule some exciting special speakers. Utilize your youth pastor or a visiting missionary. Encourage your leaders to give devotions. We had someone in a church that was a member of the Indianapolis Police force come in with his bulletproof vest on and gave a lesson on the Armor on God. Another State Trooper gave away rulers and talked about God's ruler the Bible. Everyone has to have his or her first time. We are not only in Awana to train young people, we can also train adults. We've seen once hesitant leaders move out of state and begin Awana Clubs in their new church. We've seen leaders turn into missionaries. You may have some of those in your Club, too.

Of course, you need to be wise in your choice of speakers. They should set a Godly example.

Even if you have a special speaker scheduled, here's a tip. Have something prepared yourself and take it with you. Your speaker may be late. They may not even show up. Or they may call at the last minute and have to cancel. A good Awana Director's motto is: Be prepared.

10. Invitation

I don't always give a structured invitation. But always mention that clubbers can come to you and talk about spiritual matters. When you do give an invitation, give it five to ten minutes before the end of Club. This way, clubbers will not worry about having their parents or friends wait or that they'll miss the bus.

Also, during an invitation, try not to have clubbers just raise their hands or walk to the front. They might do this just because someone else does, or to please you. Encourage them to come to you or another leader individually.

Awana gives a strong word of caution here. When counseling with a clubber, try to have someone else in the room with you. Leave your door open. Don't get into a situation where you and a clubber are somewhere alone. It's awful to have to think this way. And honestly, I usually don't. But we should be wise to the enemy.

When dealing with a clubber, it helps to have verses in your Bible marked so they can be easily found and read. Write the reference to the next verse you want to use in the margin. That will help if you have a senior moment, like I've been having lately. **Romans Road**

Have a suitable tract to give to the one you've counseled with.

Fill out a decision card and give it to your Director or Commander.

Take the Clubber to another leader and have them tell the leader about their decision because they may not get any encouragement when they get home.

If you've brought your Bibles, let's turn to **Isaiah 55:10-11**. **[READ]** It's discouraging when we don't see any results. But remember, we are only responsible to give out God's Word. God the Holy Spirit is the One who convicts. In God's time He will bring forth fruit. Letter from Eva Bass.

11. Awards

There are all kinds of things you can award besides uniform awards.

Kids love extra points.

If it is near Christmas, give points to everyone who is wearing red and green.

At Valentine's Day, give points to everyone wearing red hearts.

Give team points to each person who is wearing their team color.

Membership badges should be given out the night they are earned

Other awards can wait until the next week.

There are five parts to an award presentation.

- Be enthusiastic.

- Give special recognition. Have them come to the front and line up with the others receiving awards.

- Shake their hand.

- Must be in uniform for uniform awards.

- Encourage cheering and applause from the audience

- You can also announce things like "Clubber of the Month". Or other special awards

Surveys say kids watch an average of 3½ hours of TV a day. Some spend more time than that on computer games. They are used to being entertained with colorful, fast-paced action. Keeping Council Time captivating is not only a challenge but also necessary if we want these kids to keep coming back. We need to make it as much fun as Game Time.

Look at the top of your page.

Council Time begins long before 8:00 PM on Wednesday evening. It should begin early in the week with **prayer and planning**. * **[Show Garfield]** This is a Club Director who has not prayed and planned. This is a prayed up Club Director.

When you are doing Council Time every week, began the weekend before. Prepared your lesson first, and then plan your schedule. Write everything down in the order you want to

do it. The rest of the week is spent reviewing, working to fine tune. Sometimes you might say it while you have a stopwatch going just to see how much time it took.

You don't have to do these twelve things in this order every week. Keep your Council Time exciting by changing things around. Some weeks you won't have time for testimonies or review.

If you can decorate your room, have your clubbers help make posters. Display the crafts they make in their Activity sections.

Give your leaders an opportunity to give the announcements or hand out awards. Remember this is a team effort. **Show the Team Poster**

12. Winning Team Awards

Of course we're not done with Council Time until the Winning Team Treats are passed out, whether it's a candy bar, an Awana share, or some other award.

Make this an exciting time. Don't just say, "The winning team is..." Be dramatic. Keep them guessing until the last minute. **(Get scores.)**

The Red team has _____ points. Let's hear it for the Red team.

[REPEAT, blue, etc.]

And the winning team is!!!!

Remember, don't let Council Time become routine; make it captivating from start to finish!