

What's My Role as an Awana Ministry Director

What Is Awana?

Welcome to one of the most exciting and rewarding leadership roles you can fill! Children and youth are the richest mission field in the world. Did you know that the probability of a person accepting Christ as Savior is highest between the ages of 5 and 12? And that a person's moral foundation is largely set by age 9 (*Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, George Barna, 2003).

God has given children and youth workers a unique opportunity to further the kingdom of God in our world by leading kids into a personal relationship with Jesus. What better adventure could we invite children and students to join us on than that?

Awana® is a global, non-profit ministry committed to the belief that the greatest impact for Christ starts with kids who know, love, and serve Him. Reaching over 2.8 million kids and youth each week with the gospel, Awana equips parents, volunteers, and church leaders with proven integrated programs, tools, and training in evangelism and biblical discipleship. Evidenced by stories of life, family, and community transformation, God is changing the world through the ministry of Awana. Today Awana ministry takes place in more than 30,000 churches and 100 countries worldwide with more than 400,000 volunteer leaders. We are so pleased that you are joining us on this journey!

The name Awana comes from the first letters of the phrase “approved workmen are not ashamed.” Look up 2 Timothy 2:15 in the King James Version to see why it is our key verse.

Awana began in the 1950s as a boy's club in a non-denominational church in Chicago. As the pastors, Lance Latham and Art Rorheim, saw the neighborhood children line up outside the local movie theatre, they asked “How can we get those kids as excited about learning God's Word as they are about the movies?” Using a combination of energetic games, Bible-based teaching, and small groups led by loving, well-equipped leaders, the church was soon bursting at the seams with children! Word quickly spread to surrounding churches. God has been blessing and expanding the ministry ever since.

Awana Mission

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The Awana mission is to reach children everywhere with the gospel of Jesus Christ and engage them in lifelong discipleship. Our prayer is that all children and youth throughout the world will come to know, love, and serve Him. This starts with equipping leaders. That's you. That's now. Congratulations on taking the first step toward becoming the leader God meant for you to be.

Let's look closer at what it means to lead a child to know, love, and serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

Know — Our desire is that each child will know who God is and know that they can have eternal life when they put their trust in the fact that Jesus died for their sins and rose again. See Philippians 3:10, John 17:3, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, Colossians 1:9-10.

Love — The Lord desires intimacy with us. Our desire is to disciple kids and students to grow in their love towards God and others. See Ephesians 3:19, 1 John 4:7-12.

Serve — Serving Christ is a supernatural by-product of loving Him. Our desire is that all believers will experience the joy of serving God and others. See Mark 10:45, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Ephesians 2:10.

Ultimately, children and youth will come to know, love, and serve the Lord Jesus Christ as the Holy Spirit works in their hearts. But God has invited us to play a role in sharing the good news of Christ with others. The Awana ministry is a tool that can help us to do just that.

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|---|
| LOOK UP: Matthew 28:19-20 |
| Are disciples made or born? |
| Where should we go? |
| Who will go with us as we make disciples? |

Instilling a missional heart in kids is an essential part of creating lifelong disciples. Awana encourages kids in this spiritual journey in a couple of ways. First, the handbook curriculum lays a strong foundation of biblical truths and introduces kids to missions. Next, Awana GO™ (Global Outreach) connects kids here with kids around the world through creative lessons and various activities that can make a huge impact for the kingdom. Children are both inspired and challenged to help reach more kids with the gospel of Christ and at the same time deepen their relationship with God.

The Principles of Awana

The Awana ministry can be adapted to fit the unique culture and needs of each church and community. While it may look different from church to church, it's proven to effectively reach kids for Christ when the following six principles are in place.

1. An Awana ministry is centered on the gospel.
2. It has high scriptural content.
3. It is fun and exciting for young people.
4. It is built on strong leadership.

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5. It trains children and youth to serve.
6. It strengthens the church/parent partnership.

Read Deuteronomy 32:46. This passage contains Moses' final directions to the children of Israel: *And he said unto them, "Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law"* (KJV).

Moses wanted the Israelites to remember their responsibility to obey God's Word and teach future generations to do the same. The content of Awana is God's Word. We seek to know God's Word and understand it, in order to change how we live. So each week children spend time memorizing the Scriptures and learning how to apply them in their lives.

The principles of Awana clubs are rooted in the idea that children can have fun while learning God's Word – that capturing a child's sense of fun enhances his learning. This is why we use games to attract children. Bible teaching and small-group interactions can be exciting and attractive to kids too, by incorporating high-energy songs, creative drama, object lessons, and by having engaged, equipped leaders who love the children. Awana is committed to providing you with a variety of learning opportunities to help you grow in your relationship with Christ and develop your ministry skills. These range from online training to books, conferences, and events.

In Awana, children of all ages learn about serving God. Our materials teach about missions and serving others. And your Awana ministry is a great place for kids to begin serving in the church.

As important as children's and youth workers are, parents have the greatest opportunity to influence the spiritual development of children. The Awana curriculum encourages parental involvement. Awana also offers biblical training resources so your church can come alongside parents and partner with them in this critical responsibility.

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Consistent long-term participation in Awana – between 6-10 years – accompanied by spiritual training from parents, reaps long-lasting results.

Awana alumni are

3.6 times

more likely to read their Bible
several times a week.

Nearly
70% witness to their friends
once a month.

92%

still attend church
weekly or more often.

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Awana Clubs Structure

Awana offers several ministry options to meet the needs of different churches and cultures around the world. At the core of Awana is Awana Clubs™. From ages 2-18, children and youth have fun playing age-appropriate games, learning God's Word through large-group Bible teaching, and memorizing Bible verses in a small-group setting.

Awana Clubs

Two-three year olds



Preschoolers



Kindergarten through second grade



Third through sixth grade



AwanaYM®

Middle school (two- or three-year option)



High school



While it varies from church to church, Awana club meetings typically run 90 minutes to two hours and feature three main segments:

Game/Interaction/Play Time – Fun, energetic time that engages children and youth right from the start. Typically consists of games (on or off the Awana® Game Square), art/drama, team building activities, worship, crafts for younger kids, or service projects for older students.

Large Group Time – Typically includes Bible teaching and announcements with options such as worship or testimonies.

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Small Group Time - Leader discipulates a small group of students by building relationships, discussing the Bible lesson, answering questions, praying for one another, helping students understand, and complete handbook requirements.

The leadership structure typically consists of a pastor who oversees the children's ministry, including Awana. An Awana ministry director, sometimes referred to as an Awana commander, is responsible for the Awana Clubs ministry. Each club has a club director, such as a T&T™ director who oversees a team of club leaders who serve a small group of children. There is also a game director, large group teacher, and secretary.

Serving Kids Matters

"That's what the Bible is for, to guide us and impact our lives."

Meet Koen.

Koen is 10 years old and attends Park Community Church in Chicago, Illinois. He likes learning about God in fun ways at Awana. He says, "Through the devotionals I am learning things that inspire me to get closer to God and also to read more of the Bible. That's what the Bible is for, to guide us and impact our lives." Even at this young age, Koen knows the truth of God's Word and has a vision for how he can teach people about God in the future.

How to Share the Gospel

What is the gospel? What do we mean when we say that Awana is centered on the gospel? It means that we believe there is nothing more important than inviting children and youth into a personal, saving relationship with God. Specifically, we are referring to the good news that Jesus died on the cross for our sins, was buried, and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures. First Corinthians 15:3-4 is the heart of the gospel. This is the message at the core of our Christian belief. When a child puts their trust in Jesus, they become a child of God and begin a lifelong adventure as a disciple of Jesus.

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes. (Romans 1:16a, NKJV)

From a very early age people can understand the gospel message and place their trust in what Jesus did on the cross for them. As an Awana leader, you have the privilege of presenting this truth to the children in your care. It may take several times of hearing the gospel message before a child's heart is prepared to respond to it in faith. People learn through repetition. That's why we present the gospel regularly and in all segments of Awana clubs, with clarity and urgency. Over the past 60 years, hundreds of thousands of Awana leaders have been used by God to bring this life-transforming message to children across our globe. As a result, lives, families, and communities have been eternally changed. We're so glad you are joining us on this mission of reaching kids for Christ!

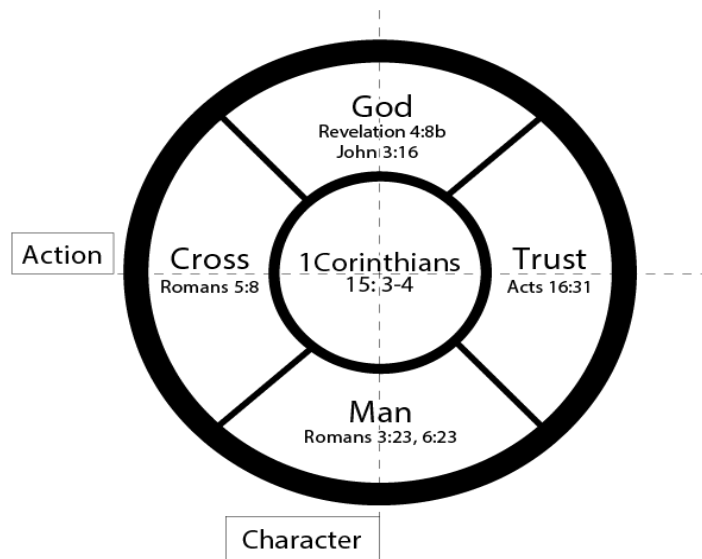
Children are at all different stages in their understanding of spiritual concepts. Some have already trusted Christ as their Savior. Still others may have never heard the plan of salvation. Still others have heard it but haven't yet made a faith decision. Listen closely to each child to gain clues about where he is in this faith journey. This will allow you to respond in a way that meets that child's needs.

The Gospel Wheel

The gospel is truly good news, yet still it's common to feel anxious or nervous or downright scared when it comes to sharing it with others. Prayer and preparation can overcome this fear. Awana created the Gospel Wheel as a simple tool to help you remember the basic

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truths of the gospel. There is an outline within the model but the real value is to prompt you to share the gospel using Scripture. In conversation, you can discern what segment of the wheel to start with based on the person's question. If you commit to memorizing the eight verses on the Gospel Wheel, you will be prepared to present the gospel to anyone, anytime, anywhere.



At the center is 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 which is a summary of the gospel. Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again.

The segments align themselves along two dimensions. The vertical axis could begin with a discussion of God's character. Understanding attributes of God is critical to accepting His free gift of salvation. The verses, Revelation 4:8b and John 3:16, describe a God that is holy and loving. On the opposite side of that axis is man's character. Romans 3:23 and 6:23 describe man as sinful and the cost of that sin is death. But there is hope! The horizontal axis describes the action of Christ. Romans 5:8 explains that Jesus' death on the cross provided for our salvation. The corresponding action of a person is to trust or believe that Jesus paid the price for our sins (Acts 16:31). Start anywhere on the wheel but get to the gospel.

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The following definitions of words from these Scriptures help explain the gospel to children.

Demonstrates:
shows, proves

Sin:
bad things we do; disobeying

Perish/death:
separation from God forever

Salvation:
freedom from the punishment of sin

Wages:
payment

Eternal/everlasting:
goes on forever and ever

Saved:
not being punished for sin

If you sense that a child is ready to accept God's free gift of salvation, you might ask "Do you believe that Jesus Christ died for your sins and rose from the dead, and therefore, will you put your trust in Him?" If yes, allow the child to pray in their own words to tell God they are trusting in Jesus to forgive their sins. Then celebrate! Be sure to tell their parents too.

Note: A common invitation in children's ministry is "Do you want to ask Jesus into your heart?" Because children are literal thinkers, this invitation can be very confusing and should be avoided.

Take a few minutes to pray for opportunities to share the good news with the children you serve and for the courage to follow God's leading as opportunities arise.

For more on sharing the gospel, there are online training modules at awana.org/leaders. Also download the Gospel Message app at awana.org/apps.

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Serving Kids Matters

"My friends and I have invited many people because I want them to know that Jesus loves them."

Meet Emily.

Emily attends Awana at Appleton Alliance Church in Appleton, Wisconsin. There, Emily heard the gospel and regularly shares that good news with her friends. Emily says, "My friends and I have invited many people because I want them to know that Jesus loves them. I pray that they can come and afterward I pray that they got a full understanding. I hope that through the kids that I bring that their parents will start learning from their kids and they'll want to check it out." Emily has a heart to reach others with the gospel.

Awana Club Basics

Curriculum Overview

Awana offers a fun, proven approach for early evangelism and discipleship. Scripture-based programs and exciting games attract families, promote Bible literacy, and help kids develop lifelong faith in Christ.

Puggles® recognizes the learning ability of 2- and 3-year olds by introducing biblical precepts at church and equipping parents to teach them at home. In Puggles, children are welcomed each week with play time, songs, and simple crafts and activities. Leaders present age-appropriate lessons using large, colorful teaching cards, finger puppet plays and more. Lessons teach and reinforce four basic biblical precepts:

- God Made Everything
- God Saw That It Was Good
- God Is Love
- Give Thanks

Cubbies® celebrates the spiritual potential of preschoolers (3- to 5-year-olds) by helping them develop respect for God, His Son, and His Word. At Story Time each week, preschoolers learn about God – the greatness of His love and His Word – and about His Son, Jesus Christ, the promised Savior. Non-competitive games build excitement and reinforce Story Time lesson themes. Cubbies helps lead children to God early so they will respect and trust Him for life.

Sparks® ignites the curiosity of early elementary-age kids to learn about the people and events of the Bible, building a foundation of wisdom for knowing Christ.

Sparks is divided into three years, each with a unique rank: *HangGlider®*, *WingRunner®*, and *SkyStormer®*. Each year, Sparks clubbers:

- Explore the biographies of people of the Bible from a new portion of Scripture
- Memorize Bible verses
- Complete handbook activities

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The handbooks, combined with Large Group Time lessons from the *WHO Do I Need to Know From the Bible* series, take your children on a journey through the entire Bible!

T&T engages third- through sixth-graders by answering their questions about God and the Bible, guiding them through this pivotal life stage to grow in Christ's grace.

Handbooks and large-group lessons deepen a child's knowledge about God and His Word and teach how to put that knowledge into action in everyday life.

T&T is different from other Awana programs. It is comprised of two clubs with distinct curriculum, uniforms, and awards:

- T&T Ultimate Adventure® for third and fourth grades
- T&T Ultimate Challenge® for fifth and sixth grades

Each handbook in both Ultimate Adventure and Ultimate Challenge answers four questions about God and the Bible that kids this age frequently ask. Kids learn eight answers to each of these questions along with verses to back up these answers. The handbooks include Bible studies and activities that allow children to go deeper into the subject matter.

Trek® features three years' worth of curriculum for middle school students (6th, 7th, and 8th grades). Trek resources are integrated with one another to challenge students to consider their destiny in Christ and pursue it through life application of God's Word. By focusing on one key passage of Scripture a week, students have the opportunity to dig deeper into God's Word through consistent large group teaching and small group discussions. Each study answers a crucial question about a student's destiny.

Journey™ establishes high school students as lifelong disciples through a deep study of God's Word, mobilizing them to live with godly perspective and evident faith. Four complete years' worth of material supports your 9th-12th grade high-school ministry.

Each year students will complete two Bible studies (chosen by your Journey director) to complete eight studies over four years. Bible studies may be completed in any order chosen by the church.

Engaging With Scripture

A key feature of all Awana ministries is its rich Scripture content. Children and youth learn about the Bible; how it's organized, books that make up the Bible, and why God's Word can

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be trusted. They hear stories of real people in the Bible. And they internalize God's Word by memorizing verses.

Children and youth commit Scripture to memory so that it becomes a part of who they are. When a verse has been committed to memory, God can use it to minister to that child when he needs it, immediately or even years later. When it's memorized, the child can share a verse with others in their times of need. Based on Psalm 119:9-16 and your own experience, what reasons can you think of for memorizing Scripture?

Then I would not be put to shame when I consider all Your commands. I will praise You with an upright heart as I learn Your righteous laws. I will obey your decrees; do not utterly forsake me. How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to Your word. I seek You with all my heart; do not let me stray from Your commands. I have hidden Your word in my heart that I might not sin against You. Praise be to You, O LORD; teach me Your decrees. With my lips I recount all the laws that come from Your mouth. I rejoice in following Your statutes as one rejoices in great riches. I meditate on Your precepts and consider Your ways. I delight in Your decrees; I will not neglect Your word. (Psalm 119:6-16, NIV)

Awana leaders have an opportunity to engage children and youth in the Scripture by asking them questions of understanding and how it might apply to their lives. Establishing a routine of asking kids questions about the Scriptures rather than simply signing off on the sections teaches them what it means to be a disciple of Christ, knowing and obeying God's Word. The handbooks contain definitions of words that are used in the verses to help explain the verses.

Motivation and Recognition

Throughout Scripture, awards are given in recognition of special achievement or obedience. Awards are biblical and motivating. That said, it's important to balance intrinsic and extrinsic rewards carefully.

Giving children awards offers them tangible encouragement, reminds parents of their child's progress, and provides a sense of belonging.

More kids will complete handbooks when they are rewarded for doing so. The result is that children will learn more Bible truths. Awards should be meaningful or have a sense of value to the receiver. The achievement required to receive an award should be clearly

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communicated and awarded with consistency. Therefore, keep good records of what each child has accomplished. Celebrate achievements regularly and publicly.

There are generally two types of awards in Awana, depending on the age group: individual and team awards.

Individual Awards

Throughout the year, children earn achievement awards as they progress through their handbooks. They can also earn patches and book completion awards at the end of the club year for finishing their handbooks. The goal is to complete one handbook per year.

At the end of the year, many churches host an awards ceremony where parents are invited to celebrate with their children as they receive their book award. A book award is given to each child or youth who has completed a handbook.

If your church does not use the Awana uniform and awards, be sure to substitute them with some form of visible award system to motivate and recognize their work.

Team Awards

Teams can earn weekly awards for achievement and good behavior throughout a club meeting by earning points. Positive points are awarded to teams for displaying positive behavior, achievements, and participation. See the section on discipline to learn more about positive points. Team awards are celebrated at the end of the meeting.

Uniforms

There are several benefits to having children wear the same apparel to club. Uniforms encourage an orderly and disciplined club environment. They provide a child with a sense of belonging and community. Uniforms also provide a place to display achievement awards. For leaders, a uniform identifies which adults are approved to be working with the children, which gives parents peace of mind. Leader lanyards can be used as nametags with picture identification and as a place to display leader awards.

Discipline

In our culture, the word *discipline* is often used negatively. Actually, discipline is meant to be a loving approach to teaching children appropriate behavior. It comes from the word

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disciple and literally means “to teach” or “to mold.” Children need discipline to become healthy, mature adults.

Read Hebrews 12:5-11 and then write a one-sentence summary of this passage. *And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by Him. For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and chastises every son whom He receives.” It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, that we may share His holiness. For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it (ESV).*

Many people confuse discipline with punishment. The chart below helps to clarify the differences.

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| Punishment | vs. | Discipline |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| Inflicts a penalty for an offense | PURPOSE | Training for correction and development |
| Payment for past offenses or misbehavior | FOCUS | Correct future behavior |
| Hostility, frustration, or anger | LEADER'S ATTITUDE | Love and concern for the child |
| Fearful, guilty, or shamed | HOW A CHILD FEELS | Secure and loved |

The correct use of discipline includes expectations, rules, consequences, and correction. When these are clearly communicated, understood, and enforced consistently, children and leaders will feel safe and secure in your club. Here are some practical ideas to instill discipline in your children's ministry.

- Set clear expectations using simple, specific, and realistic rules.
- Teach discipline methods at the beginning of the year and reinforce them consistently throughout the year.
- Catch your children doing good things and applaud them for it.

There are three primary methods of discipline used in Awana: positive points, the five-count and the three-count.

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Positive points

Positive points allow teams to earn collective points throughout a club meeting. It provides positive reinforcement of the behavior that you would like to see. Each child is assigned to a team. In each segment of club, teams have opportunities to earn points. In Game Time, teams earn points for being quiet when asked, cheering for their teammates, displaying good sportsmanship and winning games. In Large Group Time, teams can sit together and be awarded for paying attention, responding to questions, and participating in worship. Small Group Time allows opportunities for points as children finish sections, help others, and obey their leaders.

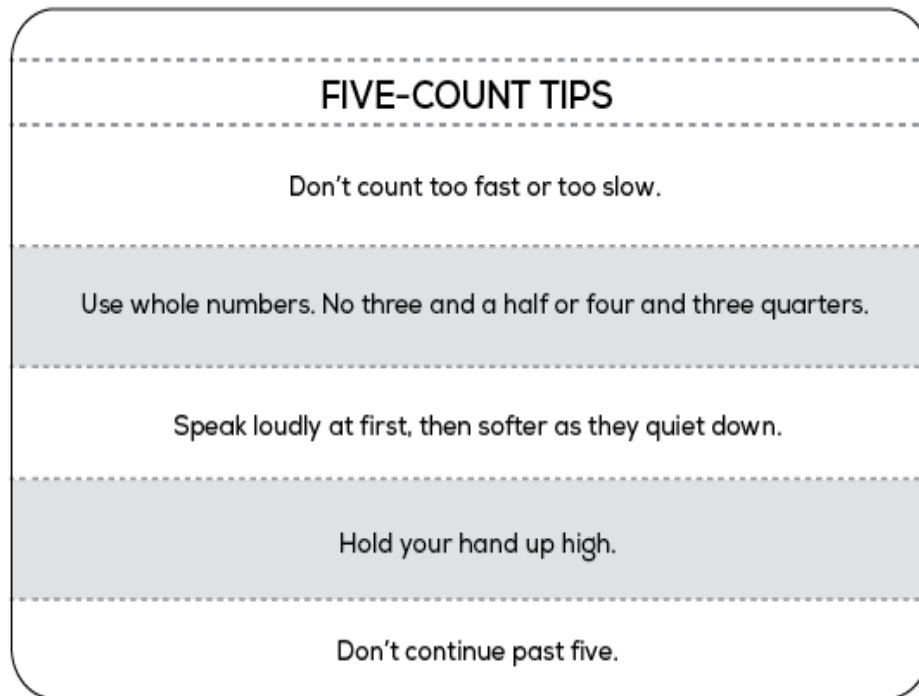
The key to positive points is that they are awarded for good behavior, not subtracted for negative behavior. Bring attention to good behavior, not bad behavior. Winning teams may receive small tokens such as candy bars, or earn special privileges such as being dismissed first. Winning teams can be announced and rewarded at the end of the club meeting for immediate recognition.

The five-count

The five-count is a proven, effective method for group discipline. The leader in charge counts to five slowly and loudly, while holding one hand in the air and counting on his fingers. Leaders and children respond by being quiet and still by the count of five. Use this in any club segment when you need to get the group's attention.

For the benefit of new children, regularly review the five-count and expected behavior.

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When a team responds to the five-count quickly, reward them with positive points.

The three-count

While the five-count is used in a group setting, the three-count is for an individual child who continues to misbehave. Generally, a gentle verbal reprimand is all it takes to get a child back on course. But when that hasn't worked, a three-count can help a disruptive child correct himself.

One count: Say something such as "Your behavior continues to be disruptive and disrespectful. You had previous warnings and still haven't corrected your behavior so this is your one-count. If you continue to misbehave by (fill in specific behavior), then you will get a two-count and be removed from the activity."

Two count: Bring the child to the director and together say something such as "Despite repeated warnings and receiving a one-count, you continue to (fill in specific behavior). Therefore, this is your two-count and you cannot participate in the activity now." The child

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will stay with the director or another pair of adults for supervision. He or she may return to the activity when the director feels the child is ready.

Three count: If the child continues to misbehave after returning to the activity, the child is removed again and the director speaks to the parents. In the presence of the child, explain the behavior, explain the club rules and the consequences if the child continues to act out. Approach parents with a spirit of mutual purpose, respects and love for the child, desiring to work together to train the child.

In the extreme case where a child is harming other children, he/she may be asked not to return to club. In situations with children who have problems beyond their control, use your judgment on the best way to reach them. Ask for help from your club director or pastor and the child's parents as needed.

Parent Partnership

As important as children's and youth workers are, parents have the greatest opportunity to influence the spiritual development of children. In Deuteronomy 6, God makes clear it is the parent's responsibility to pass their faith on to the next generation. Awana makes it easy for an Awana leader to help the parents of your Awana kids. The Awana curriculum is designed to encourage parents to work with their children in learning and memorizing God's Word. Challenge the parents to help their child complete handbook sections. Encourage parents to memorize along with their children. Host a parent night and invite parents to experience a club meeting. Get to know the parents when they drop off or pick up their children. Keep in communication throughout the year via email or phone to let them know how their child is doing. Together, in partnership, you can lead children to know, love, and serve Christ.

Child Protection

We live in a broken world. We know this, yet still we're surprised that we need to protect the children in our church. We like to think churches are safe from sexual predators but they're not – there are churches of all sizes around the world that share in this heart-breaking reality. If your church doesn't have a child protection (CP) policy, or doesn't enforce the one it has, encourage your church leadership to create one or enforce it.

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There are seven areas of child protection to address. Please understand that this is not legal advice. Awana is not able to give legal advice. Nothing can substitute for competent legal counsel from an attorney who knows your church.

1. Develop and follow policies and practices for child protection.
2. Screen workers.
3. Retain records.
4. Train workers in your policy.
5. Supervise workers.
6. Seek legal counsel and professional advice.
7. Report abuse and suspected abuse.

Scripture provides insight into the importance Jesus placed on children coming to Him: *...“Let the little children come to Me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these” Luke 18:16, (NIV).* It is imperative for your church to do everything it can to create a safe place for children to grow in the Lord.

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Serving Kids Matters

Jericho accepted Christ as his Savior and his life began to change.

Meet Jericho.

Jericho spends his time on the streets of his city in the Philippines. He and his friends steal metal so they can get money to buy something to eat. One day, while breaking into a home, he encountered a pastor who invited him to attend his Awana club. There Jericho heard that Jesus loved him so much that He died to take the punishment for his sins. Jericho accepted Christ as his Savior and his life began to change. Now Jericho dreams of becoming a pastor so he can share Jesus with other street children.

Awana Ministry Director Role

Now that you understand the basic features of Awana, you may be wondering what you're supposed to do when all those energetic leaders and children arrive. This section will give you what you need to get off to a good start.

It is of utmost importance that the leaders and kids in your care know that they are loved. 1 John 4:7a says: "*Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God.*" Although the ministry is ultimately about the kids, your primary focus should be on your leaders. If your leaders are loved and cared for, they will love and care for the kids in your ministry.

It is your job to set the tone for your ministry. Awana is an inviting ministry where people come to learn about God and be in relationship with God and others. People are drawn to a leader who exhibits an attitude that communicates "There is no other place I'd rather be than right here with you." Set this as the standard from the start.

Pray for Your Ministry

One of the greatest privileges during a club year is lifting up your clubbers, leaders, and families to God. Thank God for them and the great privilege you have to minister to and with them. Encourage all Awana leaders to do this.

What are some ways you can commit to praying for the leaders, kids, and families in your Awana ministry? Here are a few ideas to get you started.

- Contact your church's prayer team and request specific prayer for Awana clubs.
- Look for an Awana leader to be a prayer champion and develop a prayer chain for Awana leaders (find out what communication works best for leaders).
- Make specific prayer requests so others will be motivated and know how to pray.
- Provide each small group leader with a prayer journal to record the prayer requests and praises of the kids in their small groups. Encourage them to pray for and with their kids each week.

Establish a Gospel-Centered Ministry

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There is probably no single skill more important for an Awana leader, regardless of his or her position, than to be able to present the gospel clearly.

In what tangible ways can you make sure the gospel is a priority in your ministry? One way is to be sure all your leaders are trained on how to share the gospel and challenge them to memorize the Gospel Wheel verses. As you talk with leaders throughout the club year, remind and encourage them to share the gospel clearly and often.

Aside from training leaders, you can make the gospel a priority in your ministry by selecting speakers for Large Group Time or other Awana events carefully. Select individuals who understand and uphold the value and importance of clearly communicating the gospel as a core part of the message. You can give them the Gospel Wheel in advance as a reference tool. Ask them to submit their presentation notes in advance to avoid any surprises while they are presenting.

Lead Volunteers

When kicking off your Awana ministry there are three areas you should be particularly concerned with when it comes to leading your volunteers: Recruiting, equipping, and shepherding.

Recruiting

Identifying, attracting, and inviting volunteers is one of the most critical aspects of developing a solid club. As with other aspects of your role, this task requires a lot of prayer and wisdom.

A good number of leaders will help ensure instruction, safety, and fun. This will help children feel welcome, provide plenty of attention, and maintain discipline. The ideal ratio of clubbers to leaders is 10 children to two leaders.

Pray about the individuals to invite into your ministry and expect the Holy Spirit to lead you to some people you might not have thought of. Perhaps there are people in your church that need to grow or need to belong. We're not looking for perfect people to run a ministry; we're inviting people into an opportunity to serve Christ and, thereby, grow in their relationship with Him.

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What do you picture when you think of recruiting adults to children's ministry? Often, we fall into one of two wrong ways of thinking about inviting volunteers: one is that we're imposing, and the other is that thinking anyone will make a good leader.

If you think you're imposing, you may hesitate to ask people to serve because you feel guilty asking an already busy person. You may approach them by asking them to do you a favor by volunteering. In reality, you are inviting people into a serving relationship with God. Volunteering is a way for people to follow God's commands to obey Him and, thereby, love Him. You get to give people the opportunity to experience firsthand the joy of using their gifts to serve God.

Recruiting volunteers is not about asking people for help. It is about casting the vision and igniting the hearts of others to serve God in the ministry. Vision casting is sharing your heart and passion for what you, and everyone working together, can accomplish. Don't underestimate how critical vision casting is in recruiting and motivating leaders. Also, be clear about the expectations such as how much time it will require each week. Allow potential volunteers a chance to try it out for a few weeks before committing.

Once you have identified your volunteers, it's important to have a process of bringing them onto your team. This will ensure they all are screened, interviewed, trained, and acclimated to your ministry. Many churches have well-thought-out policies and procedures for selecting volunteers. Be aware of your church's policies before you start your process, especially as it relates to child protection.

If your church does not have set policies, here are some ideas for you and the church leadership to consider.

- Host a short informational meeting for anyone interested in volunteering.
- Ask potential leaders to complete an application form including appropriate child protection forms.
- Conduct background checks.
- Interview potential volunteers.
- Seek church approval for volunteers you approve.

Awana provides several resources to help you recruit great leaders including videos, ministry role descriptions, clip art, and more on awana.org/leaders.

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Equipping

Too often, new experiences are sink-or-swim. New leaders get thrown into a room full of children and told to do the best they can. At Awana, we believe that well-equipped leaders will reach more kids for Christ and enjoy their ministry experience much more than untrained leaders.

Jesus didn't think His job was done once He selected His disciples. He spent three years teaching, training, and equipping these 12 men for the most important job ever assigned.

We see a glimpse of His training in Mark 4:34. Jesus had just finished teaching parables to the crowds. The first part of verse 34 states: *He did not say anything to them without using a parable.* The verse continues: *But when He was alone with His own disciples, He explained everything* (NIV). Jesus took years to properly train His team.

One way we can honor God is to serve Him with excellence. Awana is committed to helping volunteers grow in Christlikeness and develop ministry skills to serve the young people in our care with excellence. Awana offers a variety of tools, resources, and training to equip volunteers.

Some training resources Awana offers are:

- [Hitting the Mark](#) — to launch strong Awana clubs.
- [Getting Started](#) — options include live class, role books, and online training
- [Mozo](#) — digital library of training, leadership development, tools and resources.
- [LEAD Experience](#) — to help leaders grow and develop
- [Awana Ministry Conferences](#) — annual regional conferences to inspire, motivate, and equip you for ministry
- [Equipped to Lead](#) e-newsletter
- [Awana Ministry Catalog](#)
- Visit awana.org/equip-leaders to learn more.

Shepherding

As the ministry director, you have a wonderful opportunity to influence your leaders in their own spiritual growth. You are a leader of leaders, and your greatest concern must not be the mechanics and organization of the club, but the spiritual quality. And that spiritual

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quality begins with the hearts of leaders. So how do you shepherd the hearts of your leaders?

1. Encourage them to be in God's Word. One way to do this is by sending your leaders a weekly email with a Bible passage, your thoughts, and a challenging question.
2. Help them grow in obedience. Give leaders opportunities to demonstrate the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). Ask some to share their personal testimonies in Large Group.
3. Create community. The more your leaders feel like they are serving together with their friends, the more likely they will return year after year.
4. Hold volunteers accountable. Be bold enough to share your expectations with leaders, and then lovingly encourage and follow up.

Align With Your Church's Mission

You've heard the question: "Are we on the same page?"

Meeting With Your Pastor

Assumptions often lead to conflict, so it's a good idea to make sure everyone's on the same page. The first and best way to do this, and to make sure you are listening for the Holy Spirit's leading in your ministry, is to spend time together with your pastor in prayer about the Awana goals and the goals your church has set for reaching your community.

Help your church leadership understand the Awana ministry's focus on evangelism and discipleship. Taking the time for this discussion will help everyone understand that Awana actively seeks to bring families into the church. Vision casting to your pastor is as important as vision casting to your volunteers.

Setting Goals

Good leaders set goals for their teams so they know if they're doing things well. Establish goals before the club year begins and communicate them clearly so everyone on the team and church leadership knows what the shared goals are and can help achieve success. For a

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healthy and successful Awana ministry in the church, it is best to ensure the goals for the Awana ministry align with the mission of the church.

Think about ways your Awana ministry can support the mission of the church. Ask yourself these questions as you plan your ministry goals and strategy to help align with your church's mission:

- What is my church's mission statement?
- Is there a specific demographic or geographic area that my church is invested in?
- How can we support those areas through missions fundraising and educating our kids?
- Where/How can our kids the serve the church and community?

Awana GO (Global Outreach)

Awana has many tools and resources to help your ministry make an impact beyond the four walls of your church. Awana GO™ missions curriculum can help your ministry set an area of focus for the year, educate your kids about missions, reach more kids by raising funds for Awana in your area of focus, and celebrate what God is doing through Awana around the world. Learn more at [Awana.org/GO](https://www.awana.org/GO)

Manage Club Logistics and Operations

Administration is a spiritual gift. 1 Corinthians 12:28 says: ... *And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration...*

(NIV). If you are not gifted in this area, be sure to find a volunteer who is and can help ensure that your Awana ministry is well-administered.

Club Policies

Policies keep children safe, adults organized, and clubs running smoothly. Examples:

- Discipline
- Child protection policies and procedures
- Volunteer qualifications
- Child pickup and drop-off procedures
- Facility use

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Once you establish policies, be sure to communicate them to Awana leaders, parents, and kids. Setting clear expectations up front will reduce confusion and conflict when you implement and enforce your club's policies.

Annual Registration

You (or the person you choose to delegate this responsibility to) need to renew your Awana registration annually. You will receive a renewal notice and you should pay according to the terms on the notice. If you have questions about how to complete the registration renewal, contact Customer Care at Awana headquarters.

Budgeting

Work with your pastor to establish a club budget. Most Awana clubs charge annual or weekly dues. Children and youth also usually pay for their handbooks and uniforms. These practices will help your church offset the cost of running your Awana clubs.

Budgeting tools including a Budget Planning Tool, Budget Spreadsheet, Uniform Financing Options, and Ordering Supplies are available in MOZO to help you plan.

Details on how to order products and manage product inventory are found in the *Getting Started As an Awana Secretary Role Book*. Make sure your secretary has this book and is able to refer to it when needed.

Calendar

Prior to the start of club, meet with your directors to plan the year. Events you might want to include are:

- Leader Training
- Theme nights
- Parent Nights
- Bring-a-Friend Night
- Special guest speakers (i.e., pastor, Christian illusionist, Awana missionary)
- Missions-focused nights
- Large Group Time speakers and topics
- Award Night
- Dates off due to holidays and school breaks

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You don't have to put your calendar in stone, but it's a good idea to communicate your calendar as far in advance as possible. This will help eliminate conflicts with other ministries in your church and give leaders and parents time to plan.

Growing As a Leader

The fact that you are reading this book indicates that you are a leader who is interested in doing your best to serve the children in your care. God will surely honor that! In their book, *The Secret*, Mark Miller and Ken Blanchard identify several practices of great leaders. One is that great leaders are constantly growing and learning, always seeking to improve.

In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul writes to Timothy: ... *and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also* (ESV). The word *faithful* implies that the teacher is strong in his walk with Christ. The word *able* implies the teacher has the skill to teach others. Awana provides you with the tools, resources, and training to help you grow in Christlikeness and develop the ministry skills you need to serve the young people within your sphere of influence.

Trust and Obey

The Christian life is a journey and we all continue to grow under the guidance and teaching of the Holy Spirit. Trust and obedience are two of the key ingredients for our walk. Look up Psalm 20:7. In whom do we trust?

Are you feeling a bit overwhelmed with the responsibilities laid out in this role book so far? Look up Psalm 56:4 and Proverbs 3:5-6. What are some of the benefits of trust?

In 2 John 1:6 God calls us to walk according to His commandments.

As an Awana leader you will help set an example for the kids in your ministry.

Deuteronomy 32:46-47 says: *"Take to heart all the words by which I am warning you today, that you may command them to your children, that they may be careful to do all the words of this law. For it is no empty word for you, but your very life, and by this word you shall live long in the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess"* (ESV).

Being in God's Word

While it's not required for Awana leaders to memorize Scripture along with the children, it's a spiritual discipline that reaps great rewards. And the children love it when they get an opportunity to listen to an adult recite verses. A great place to start is with the eight verses

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that make up the Gospel Wheel. Once these are memorized you will be prepared to share the gospel using Scripture anytime, anywhere.



Prayer

Staying in close contact with your heavenly Father is critical to a healthy, growing ministry. Pray for your club and for your children and their families. Pray also for your church and community – that many would come to hear the gospel and accept Jesus Christ as their Savior. What is your prayer for your spiritual growth and your role as a leader this year?

Grow and Develop

There are several ways you can continue to grow and develop your ministry skills as you serve God's precious kids.

Getting Started Training

By reading this Getting Started book, you are well on your way to getting off to a good start as an Awana leader. Other ways to get basic training include taking a Getting Started class

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or completing the Getting Started online training. Learn more about these options at awana.org/leaders.

Leaders who complete one or more of the Getting Started options, and memorize the eight Gospel Wheel verses are recognized with a Getting Started role pin.

Online Learning

These interactive online modules develop your basic skills and provide solutions to common club challenges. Training modules vary in length from two to 40 minutes and can be accessed via desktop, tablet, and/or smartphone. Learn more at awana.org/online-learning.

Mozo, technology built for Awana ministries, is a whole new way of doing leadership development, ministry management, and team collaboration. Among other features, Mozo offers a searchable online library of leadership training, teaching resources, digital record keeping, a centralized message center, and calendar. It's a must-have resource for every Awana leader. Learn more at awana.org/mozo.

Awana Ministry Conference (AMC)

These local Awana leadership conferences are held across the U.S. and Canada each year from August through October. Inspiring messages, practical workshops, idea sharing, and networking get you off to the best start of your ministry year! Learn more at awana.org/amc.

Blogs

Awana offers several FREE blogs that provide a regular stream of thought-provoking ministry advice, tips, humor, and practical support for your children's ministry. Subscribe at awana.org/blog.

Equipped to Lead

This monthly newsletter is designed to equip you to lead with excellence and keep you up-to-date on the latest news and resources to support your ministry. Subscribe on awana.org.

LEAD: Equip

To make big ministry impact, leaders need community, encouragement, and learning and development opportunities. New this year, LEAD is a leadership development experience

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designed to equip ministry leaders to make a bigger impact on the next generation. The LEAD: Equip experience combines social online learning with a two-day live event.

- Connect with and learn from other leaders like yourself.
- Gain key skills to advance your ministry to children and youth.
- Grow in your relationship with Christ.
- Ignite your desire to lead. Register at awana.org/lead.

Rock-Solid Series

This series of four books, [Rock-Solid Kids](#), [Rock-Solid Children's Ministry](#), [Rock-Solid Volunteers](#), and [Rock-Solid Teacher](#), help church leaders build a strong ministry modeled on scriptural teaching. Visit the e-store or ministry catalog.

Parent Handbooks

Designed for adults, parents, and leaders to gain a biblical worldview and develop spiritually by learning the same verses in the children's handbooks. Each book corresponds with a Sparks or T&T handbook. Visit the [e-store](#) or ministry catalog.

Additional Resources

Ministry Support and Care

A team of Customer Care representatives at Awana is dedicated to helping you with any questions you may have. They can be reached at 866-292-6227 or by live chat at community.awana.org.

Missions Curriculum

Awana GO™ (Global Outreach) inspires your club to go into all the world and make disciples and to see the world through God's eyes. These free resources provide large group curriculum to teach children about missions and give ideas for how you can engage kids in making a difference in the lives of others. awana.org/go.

Serving Children With Special Needs

[Awana for Me](#) — This book will assist you in welcoming and integrating special-needs children into your club. Order through e-store or *Awana Ministry Catalog*.

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Online Training Series: This FREE video-training series features author and speaker Barb Newman as she helps leaders understand how to serve children with learning, behavioral, and physical challenges. Visit our training library at awana.org/online-training.

Get Connected

Join our growing community of Awana leaders who are connected through the following social media outlets:

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Club Meeting Resources

Game Books

[The Official Sparks Game Book](#)

The official game book for Sparks, with nearly 100 game ideas for your Sparkies!

Features a number of new game ideas as well as time-tested games from previous Sparks publications. Game ideas are organized by several different categories for easy searching based on your game space, club size, etc.

[The Official T&T Game Book](#)

We've handpicked popular games from the book *The Best Awana Games Ever!* and added fresh, new game ideas in this convenient guide.

With unique twists on some of the most loved Awana game ideas ever, this is Game Time with T&T in mind! All 163 games are indexed for quick planning and come complete with easy-to-follow instructions. A section of AwanaGames™ event listing helps even the newest club compete successfully in regional events.

[The Official Awana Youth Ministries Game Book: 93 Exciting Games and Two Boring Ones](#)

These fun games were created with Trek students in mind.

This book is packed with a wide variety of interesting games to keep your students engaged. Games like Shaving Cream Wiffle® Ball, Slime Search and Human Pinball will especially appeal to today's youth. Outdoor games included.

The companion app puts the game book on your smartphone or iPad. Go to awana.org/gameapp to purchase.

Getting Started Pocket Guides

Give each leader a small, easy-to-read [Pocket Guide](#) with quick tips for successfully leading clubbers in Awana.

Each one includes teaching tips and other handy information to use during training and club.

[Gospel Message App](#)

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The Gospel Wheel goes digital with this exclusive free app for your smartphone or tablet. This versatile app includes three different versions that modify the gospel presentation for adults, teens and children. It also allows you the flexibility to start the discussion at any point on the wheel. For more information go to awana.org/apps.

Leader Guidebooks

These convenient [Leader Guides](#) tell you what you need to know to work with Sparkies through each section of the handbooks.

Also included are optional handbook-related activities for club time, memory tips and games.

Large Groups Lessons

Reach Kids on Their Level

The most burning questions your kids have about God and the Bible are answered in these books.

[WHAT Is Your Biggest Question About God and the Bible?](#) And the follow-up, [WHY Should I Believe the Bible Is True?](#) are the results of our poll of more than 1,000 kids. Both books feature lessons that include a thought-provoking introduction, a “look it up” feature, visual ideas and a challenge. Appropriate for both Sparks and T&T.

[WHO Do I Need to Know From the Bible?](#)

Reinforce what Sparkies are learning in their Bibles and handbooks and make your Large Group Time complete.

Each version of *WHO Do I Need to Know From the Bible?* Includes 30 interactive lessons, with biographies of biblical figures not included in the handbooks. Use with Sparkies of all ages as a stand-alone teaching tool. Make lesson time easier to plan and execute for your large-group teachers!