

What is the Awana Grand Prix?

The Awana Grand Prix is a special event in which clubbers race small wooden cars crafted by themselves with the help of a parent or other adult. The race is held in a large room with space for a track, the participating clubbers, officials and spectators.

The first Awana Grand Prix meet took place in 1970 and Awana first offered Awana Grand Prix products in the 1980-1981 *Awana Ministry Catalog*. Each year thousands of young people and their families attend a local race where they will hear the gospel message.

Purposes of the Awana Grand Prix

An Awana Grand Prix race is a proven way to accomplish several goals:

It brings family members into a church setting where they will hear the gospel.

It builds and strengthens relationships among the club leadership, parents, and clubbers.

It gets parents, grandparents, and other family members involved in the children's club activities.

It is a challenging, exciting event in the club year.

It can draw boys and girls back after the holidays or a drop in attendance.

Publicity and Promotion

Five weeks before your race day –

Announce the event in your club and church. Put the date on your church website.
Order car kits and trophies from Awana. Car kits come in a box of eight with everything you need, or in single kits. Consider getting shaped-car kits for children who need extra help preparing a car.
Hand out flyers with dates, rules, costs and instructions.
Display posters around the church to build interest.
Contact your local Awana missionary and request assistance; reserving a track, presenting the gospel, meeting with parents, or help with running the race.

Four weeks before your race day –

Encourage clubbers to purchase kits and begin building cars.
Allow clubbers to choose numbers for their cars for the purpose of identification on race day.
Make another announcement and answer any questions.
Schedule a Pit Party. Clubbers may need help with their cars. Some come from homes where there is no adult to help them; some do not have access to tools. Set up a time and location for leaders to help these clubbers. The location should allow for the use of all necessary tools and supplies. Clubbers can bring parents or other adults to help them. This gives you another opportunity to reach clubbers' families.

Three weeks before your race day –

Display the speed and design trophies during club night.
Announce a time and place for a practice run.
Contact your local paper and ask for a reporter to cover the race.

Two weeks before your race day –

Send out invitations asking family members to attend the race.
Post photos of previous races online.

One week before your race day –

Make the track available so clubbers can see how their cars run. There is nothing more disheartening to a clubber than a car that does not make it all the way down the track.

Check sizes and weights and be prepared to make adjustments on cars that exceed limits or need extra weight added.

Verify the names and car numbers of all clubbers who will be racing. If you are using a software program, enter the names into the computer.

Race day –

Take a lot of pictures. If your local paper has not sent a reporter, write an account of the event and submit it for publication. Save the best photographs for promotion of next year's race.

Supplies

You will need:

A four-lane track - Purchase one from the *Awana Ministry Catalog* or contact your area missionaries or a nearby church for a loaner. If you want to build your own track construction plans are available on the Awana Grand Prix CD.

Racing kits - Each participant will need one block of wood, four wheels, four axles, number decals and an instruction sheet. The kits are available in the *Awana Ministry Catalog*.

Scales and Gauge box. Use an electronic scale if possible and have a 5 ounce weight available to calibrate the scale. Many churches have an electronic postal scale, or you can purchase one just for the race. A gauge box will help check for length, width, height, and lane strip clearance. The gauge box must be constructed with inside dimensions that match the maximum allowable dimensions of the race cars.

Signs. Colorful signs should be used to identify each table within the racing area.

Check-In and Inspection table. Racers will bring their cars to this table first to verify the number, size and weight of their entries. Use an accurate scale and gauge box to measure cars for eligibility.

Repair table – Have tools and materials for last-minute adjustments available. Some cars will need weight added, some will need weight removed. A drill to remove wood from the bottom of the car will be needed, along with lead weights that can be added.

Pit table - Cars will be placed on the pit table after they have passed inspection and will remain there during the rest of the event, except when they are actually racing. Place a lip around the edge or ropes parallel to the edge to place the cars over to keep cars from rolling off. Corner molding also works well.

Spare parts - Have a supply of axles, wheels, and spare weights available. Lead fishing sinkers work well to add weight to cars. If the car is hollowed out on the bottom the weights can be secured with modeling clay.

List of drivers' names and car numbers. This list will be useful for design judging and determining the names of the racers in each heat. Some clubs give each racer a driver's license, name tag, or lanyard with their name and number listed.

Method to display racing order – Display the results and standings where spectators can view

them. Keep parents and spectators well-informed as the race progresses.

Option - Use a white board to display racing order and results.

Option - Purchase a software program that will display racing order and results using your computer, data projector and wall or screen.

Option - If an electronic finish line detector is available, use a software program to display race times. The Racemaster Electric-Eye Finish Line Detector is available from Awana.

Trophies for winners Decide if you will have 3 or 4 places, how many racing groups there are, and how many design categories. Have a set of trophies for each racing group. For example, if you have two groups (Truth & Traing and Teens) and you have three categories (speed, car design, novelty design) you will need 6 sets of trophies. Purchase participation ribbons for all competitors. All trophies and ribbons are available through Awana.

Refreshments (optional) - Refreshments can be served at the end of the race or throughout the entire race starting when the Bible message is finished.

Determine the cost of the entire event and divide it by the number of participants to determine a cost per kit. If you have a small club, you might have to spread the cost of the track over two or more years.

Construction of Cars

Design - The instructions are meant as a guide only. There are no limits to design or shape as long as the size and weight requirements are not exceeded. An internet search will yield volumes of advice about constructing a fast car or producing a memorable design.

Chassis - Any means can be used to shape the car including whittling, sawing, carving or sanding. Pre-shaped cars are available in the Awana catalog.

Crew - A clubber can build the car with the help of a parent, grandparent, older sibling, guardian or adult. If a clubber cannot find anyone, a leader should provide any needed help.

Axles and wheels - Axles should be mounted straight and wheels should be aligned properly. Axles do not have to be mounted in the slots provided. Wheels can be cambered (angled to be closer together at the bottom than at the top) or inserted at any location or angle. If the slots are used, tap the axles in gently with a hammer. Use a drop of glue to secure them in place. The chassis should not be lower than $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch from the ground to avoid scraping on the lane strips. Rough edges can be sanded off the wheels. Wheel bearings, bushings, washers and springs are prohibited.

Weight - The maximum allowable weight is 5 ounces. There is no minimum weight. If cars are lighter than clubbers wish, they can add to the weight by drilling a hole or holes on the underside and filling with lead or other weights. Make sure additional weights are secure so they do not fall off the car during a race.

Size - The maximum length is 7 inches. The maximum width is $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The maximum height is 3 inches.

Lubrication - Any liquid lubricant or powdered graphite may be used on the axles. Wipe off excess lubricant to keep the track clean and dry.

Paint and finish - Sand the car with medium-grade sandpaper, then add two coats of sealer. When the sealer dries, sand the car with fine-grade sandpaper. The best finish will be achieved by using several coats of paint and allowing sufficient drying time between coats. Additional luster can be added by waxing. Numbers can be added with paint or decals. The identifying number should appear somewhere on each car, but it can be written on the underside.

Extras - Clubbers can add additional decals, steering wheels, drivers, windshields, trim or anything else as long as the car does not exceed size and weight requirements. Starting devices are prohibited - cars must be freewheeling.

Competition Divisions

Speed racing – These cars are designed to be fast on the track. They are built for aerodynamics and speed factors such as weight, finish and lubrication.

Car design – This group is for cars that look like actual automobiles, race cars, or trucks. These cars may or may not compete in the speed race but they should meet all size and weight requirements.

Novelty design – These cars do not look like vehicles. Some examples are cars shaped like bananas, boats, planes, musical instruments, candy bars or anything imaginable. These cars may or may not compete in the speed race but they should meet all size and weight requirements.

Once racing starts cars will be moving between the pit area and the track, so design judging is best accomplished before the speed racing begins. Make sure that each car has an easily identifiable number so that the judges can make their choices.

Some clubs assign adults to determine the design winners and some clubs have the young people vote for design winners. If you allow the young people to select the winners have ballots and pencils available. After all cars are registered and in the pit area each racer takes the ballot and walks past the line of cars, voting for their top 3 or 4 choices by number. Do not allow them to touch the cars. Once the speed racing begins have some adults tally the votes and determine the winners.

If you use adult design judges select impartial people who cannot identify the owners of any cars. Do not allow them to touch the cars, and have them use the assigned car numbers to select the winners in each category. Awana encourages parents to be involved in building the cars so adult assistance does not eliminate a car from competition. However, the racer should have helped design and build the car.

Here are some design criteria if adult judges are used:

Creativity: how much imagination went into the car design? Is it original?

Construction: consider shape, paint, surface preparation, accessories.

Comparison: how does the car compare to others in its competition group?

You must decide if a speed winner can also receive a design trophy. Since the design judging is done before racing is complete, some clubs select the top 5-6 cars in each design category and then remove cars that later win in speed. This allows more clubbers to take home trophies.

Note that all the rules such as size and weight apply to design division cars as well as speed division cars. Local Awana Grand Prix Races may allow all divisions to race, while participation in state, area, or missionary finals may be restricted to divisions in which the cars earned

trophies at their local races.

Personnel

Race commissioner - This leader is in charge of the race. He or she should oversee the purchase and distribution of kits and the assigning of car numbers. This leader should be ready to answer questions about car building and race preparation. The commissioner should determine the number of lanes to be used in each heat to regulate the length of the meet.

Official starter - This leader operates the starting gate and determines if each race is official or requires a rerun.

Design judges - These leaders should determine finishers in the design competition. You can also have the clubbers do the design judging.

Inspection and weigh-in judges - These leaders should be equipped with scales and gauge boxes. As clubbers arrive, they check the cars for size and weight qualifications.

Track Marshalls – These leaders assist clubbers in getting their cars, moving to the track, and returning their cars to the pit area.

Finish line judges - These leaders determine the winner of each heat with the aid of an electronic or manual finish line detector. To keep the spectators involved, a flag should be raised to indicate the winning lane color.

Announcer - This leader announces the drivers and car numbers for each race. This person should add excitement to the racing through enthusiasm and a fun attitude!

Sound effects - This leader operates the sound effects CD to add excitement to the race.

Leaders may serve in more than one capacity. Some of the preliminary personnel responsibilities (design judges, inspectors) are no longer needed after the race begins.

Guidelines for a successful racing event

Cars raced in previous years are not eligible. All participating cars must be built specifically for this race.

Clubbers must use the axles, wheels and wood supplied in the kit. Additional features (windshields, weights, decals, etc.) can be added.

The wheels should not be inset into block of wood. The lanes strip width specification is $1\frac{3}{4}$ inches. If wheels are inset they will not straddle the lane strip and cars cannot race.

The Awana name must be visible on the side wall of the wheels. No modifications can be made to the car wheels to reduce the width, diameter or mass/weight.

The front of the car should not come to a point which would make it difficult to set behind the starting peg. The front of the car should be low and not slope upward so that the car extends over the starting peg. The front of the car should not be notched so that any part of the car extends past the starting peg.

The maximum allowable weight is 5 ounces. The maximum length is 7 inches. The maximum width is $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches. The maximum height is 3 inches. The chassis should not be lower than $\frac{3}{8}$ of an inch from the ground.

The car number should appear somewhere on the car, but it can be on the bottom.

After registration and check-in no alterations of the car are allowed. This means that final preparation and lubrication must be done before check-in. Once the car passes inspection it will be taken directly to the pit table.

All entrants must have participated in the design and/or building of their car. The car should not be totally designed and built by an adult.

As much as possible, the builder of a car should be the only person that touches it or picks it up. Allow clubbers to place their own cars on the track prior to a race and to remove them after a race. If the starter notices a car is not properly aligned prior to a race, he or she should call the clubber back to adjust it.

If a car jumps the track during the race, begin the race over. If a car jumps the track three times, it is eliminated. Begin the race again with the remaining cars.

Forms

The Racemaster Electric-Eye Finish Line Detector is available from Awana. Note - Software programs allow various ways to run the race. It will display current race and on deck

Awana Grand Prix racing play-off sheet

This form can be used as an alternative to software systems.

Awana Grand Prix racing car list and qualified car list

To make the racing car list, the racing commissioner should fill in clubbers' names and car numbers when the kits are sold. This list can be used to enter names into the software system or onto the play-off sheets.

For the qualified car list, the racing commissioner should fill in clubbers' names and car numbers when cars are placed on the pit table.

Getting Ready on Race Day

The track

Set up the track before contestants and spectators arrive.

Test it to make sure it is secure and level.

Rope off the area to prevent anyone from stepping on or bumping into the track.

Arrange the room so the spectators have a clear view of the finish line. Consider setting up a video camera and projecting each race on a big screen.

Award table

Set up the award table near the front of the room. Place the design and speed trophies on the table.

Inspection table

Set up the inspection table near the entrance and post a sign directing new arrivals to where to check in their cars. Appoint leaders to verify racer names and check size and weight of cars.

Build a box with inside dimensions of 7 inches in length, 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in width and 3 inches in height. Inspectors will attempt to place the cars inside this box to make sure they don't exceed the required dimensions. Have a lane strip built into the bottom of the box to make sure that cars have enough clearance to travel down the track.

Supply a scale that can accurately measure five ounces.

Repair table

Set up the repair table off to the side of the room, out of the main traffic areas and post a sign so racers can take their cars for repairs. Typical repairs include adding or removing weight; sometimes a car will be too low and drag the track, or too high for the finish line bridge. Each situation must be corrected before the car can race.

Supply tools such as electric drills, hammers, files, coping saws, pliers, sandpaper, glue, putty, duct tape, weights and anything else that might be useful. Fishing weights make inexpensive weight additions to cars. Holes can be drilled in the bottom of cars to remove weight, or you can rout a space for weights to be added. All added weight must be secured to the car.

Appoint a leader to oversee the use of the tools and to help clubbers (and parents) make adjustments to cars.

Pit table

Set up the pit table near the starting line of the track and post a sign showing racers where to take their car once it has passed inspection. Attach an edge to the table so cars don't roll off or use strips of rope or molding for the cars to straddle. The pit table should display numbers indicating where each numbered car should park; these numbers also help the design judges identify the cars.

Appoint a leader to make sure no one touches a car except the builder and to make sure all cars on the pit table are on the Awana Grand Prix qualified car list.

Race Day Schedule

Throughout the event, keep things moving. If you use an effective scheduling system for the racing plan on the race lasting 2 minutes per car per track. So, 40 cars on one track will take about 80 minutes.

Participants and spectators will get bored if leaders stand around discussing what to do next, or if there are dead times between races. Plan ahead and have fun.

The announcer and speaker should be constantly enthusiastic and attempt to create excitement whenever possible.

Before the race

Check in the cars. Give clubbers and their parents enough time for last minute adjustments at the repair table.

Establish the order and entries for each race.

Design judges should judge the cars and pick first, second and third place for design and craftsmanship. The winners' names should be sealed in an envelope and kept secret until after the race.

Welcome spectators and participants.

Play the national anthem and recite the pledge to the American flag.

Give a 10-minute gospel presentation. Remember that many of the family members may be unsaved. Have gospel tracks available.

Pray.

Explain the race rules.

During the race

The announcer calls out the numbers of the cars in the first heat. (If you have a small number of participants, you might use only two lanes at a time.)

The clubbers in the first heat should retrieve their cars from the pit table and place them on the

track in their assigned lane.

The announcer calls, "Start your engines:" Play an engine noise from the sound track CD.

Start the race.

After each heat the clubbers should put their cars back on the pit table or on a winners' table to wait for their next race. If cars are held in hand while waiting they may get dropped or damaged.

Continue through the heats based on the racing format you are using.

After the race

The announcer thanks the participating clubbers and those who helped them.

The announcer thanks the spectators for coming.

The announcer reads the names of the trophy winners and they come forward to receive their awards.

Award a participation ribbon to all clubbers with qualified cars.

Close in prayer.

Invite everyone to stay for refreshments (if you choose).

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Race Formats

There are two basic formats for determining the speed winners: elimination methods or cumulative time methods. Each has advantages based upon group size, equipment available, and time allotted. With most electronic finish line systems and racing software you can select cumulative time, which is a preferred method.

A recommended method is to race each car once on each lane and then add up the elapsed times, yielding the fastest cumulative time for each car within the group. The software system available through the Awana catalog is an effective way to conduct these races. Enter each racer's name into the software and the racing schedule will be randomly generated. Using a projector will allow you to show the schedule and results to all spectators and racers, allowing for a smooth transition between races. After all racers have completed four runs the software adds up the times and displays the results.

Elimination methods start with all cars in one group and eliminate them as they lose a race. This method applies the common tournament method of single, double, triple, or even quadruple elimination. The best practice is to have the same level of eliminations as the number of trophies provided. For example, if you have three trophies for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place you should use a triple elimination system. Racing can be conducted using paper forms, name slips, or a physical 'parking lot' system.

Paper racing forms are supplied on the Awana Grand Prix CD. Write all racers names on the first page and as they lose move their names to the appropriate spaces on subsequent pages. This is a simple system which allows for smooth racing. It does require effective record keeping, and the racers are not always aware of their progress in the race.

Using name slips is another effective elimination method requiring less record keeping. Write each racer's name on a slip of paper and place all the papers in a bowl. Pick out four slips and race those four cars. After the race, place the winning slip in a separate stack and the other three slips in another 'eliminated' stack. Pick four more names from the bowl and race those, placing the winner with the previous winners and the others into the eliminated stack. Continue until the bowl is empty and you have two stacks of slips: winners and eliminated. Put the winners back into the bowl and repeat the process until you have one car remaining. This is the first place winner. Next, put all the other slips back into the bowl and conduct the second round in the same way to determine the second place winner. Continue for 3-4 rounds until all trophies are earned.

Using a physical parking lot is just as effective and is more visual for the racers. It does require concentration by the race commissioner. Put a racing table near the starting line and place all cars near one end of the table. They are in the 'never lost' parking lot,

which can be identified with tape or with a sign. Announce four cars and have them race; bring the winner back to the 'never lost' parking lot and move the other three down the table to a 'lost once' parking lot. Continue this process until all cars have raced once, then repeat the process with the remaining 'never lost' cars until a first place finisher is determined. Once this round is complete, use the same method to determine the second place finisher, then the third place finisher.

Additional Points

Who should participate?

Grand Prix is best suited to third- through eighth-graders. If you have a smaller club or run races on separate nights younger or older participants can race. 40 racers will take 80 minutes to race, so you must decide how much time you can allow for racing.

Leaders and parents can participate in a separate race. Make sure this doesn't take away from the time and energy leaders and parents should be devoting to helping clubbers with their race.

How should the event be financed?

Figure your total cost for kits, track and trophies.

Divide the total cost by the number of expected participants and charge accordingly for the kits. Additional income can be generated by selling kits to leaders and parents for a separate race (without trophies). If the kit cost is too high, consider spreading the financing over two years.

Should clubs be combined for the event?

This depends on the size of your clubs. You don't want your Awana Grand Prix to pass too quickly or too slowly. You will need a separate set of trophies for each racing group.

How long should the event last?

Aim for an hour or hour and a half. If you have a small number of participants, use only two lanes for individual races.

Use the CD that was packaged with this book to add excitement to your Awana Grand Prix. It includes the following sound effects and other features:

Some clubbers may need a sponsor, a church member or grandparent that helps the clubber. They will then show up to the race to encourage the clubber.

Need more info on the CD

Sample ballot for design judging by the racers.

Design judging criteria.

Double or triple elimination paper forms.

Songs

1. "National Anthem"
2. "Awana Theme Song"

Attention Getters

3. The Crowd Roars
4. Car Horn
5. Gas Station Ding
6. Get Your Hot Dogs

Racing Sounds

7. Formula 1
8. Hot Bug
9. Pass By
10. Passing
11. Rev It Up
12. Shifting

Accident Sounds

13. Car Skid
14. Euro Police
15. Sirens
16. Alarm

Appoint a sound effects technician to play the appropriate sections throughout the event.

Suggested Message Outlines

The three ideas provided here are just outlines. Add your own personalized illustrations and examples to make the point. The purpose of all three is to present the gospel to unsaved family members.

The Wrong Course

It doesn't matter how fast you go or how smooth you ride if you're on the wrong course. You can build the fastest Awana Grand Prix car ever built, but if you only roll it across the floor, you'll never win a race.

It doesn't matter how much money you make, how talented you are or how well your life seems to be going. If you don't have Jesus Christ in your life, you won't make it to heaven.

Ephesians 2:2-5: Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved).

Works

You put a lot of work into your Awana Grand Prix car. In life you have to put a lot of work into anything you want to succeed at.

But with God, you can't accomplish anything by working.

Salvation is a gift. God offers it to anyone who believes that Christ died on the cross to pay for sin and rose again.

Ephesians 2:8-9: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.

Titus 3:5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Following the Directions

Did you follow the directions when you built your car?

What would happen if your car was too heavy? It would be disqualified. What if your car was too tall? It would hit the finish line detector. What if your car was too wide? It would bump other cars and be pushed off the track.

It makes sense to follow the directions. We have directions for life. God has given us a guide for

every area of life in the Bible. He's done this because He loves us and wants us to have the best.

Jude 24: *Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.*

Ephesians 5:1-2: *Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.*

Driving Blind

2 Cor. 4:4- Satan has a strategy to silence the gospel

What is the gospel?

Acts 20:24- most important task Paul had

John 17:20-God prays for you

Romans 1:12-Receive

Racing flags

Yellow= caution

Green =go

White= 1 lap to go

Checkered=finish

Black=disqualified

Block of wood

Mistake- forgiveness

Transform a mistake into a masterpiece

1. **Romans 12:2**

And be not conformed to this world: but be ye **transformed** by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

Romans 12:1-3 (in Context) Romans 12 (Whole Chapter)

2. **2 Corinthians 11:14**

And no marvel; for Satan himself is **transformed** into an angel of light.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 (in Context) 2 Corinthians 11 (Whole Chapter)

2 Corinthians 11:15

Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be **transformed** as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

2 Corinthians 11:14-16 (in Context) 2 Corinthians 11 (Whole Chapter)

Q. How many wheels are on a car?

Allow clubbers to respond

Well we 4 wheels and 1 you might have overlooked....Steering wheel

What do wheels do for a car?

First, they lift our burden

They allow us to go somewhere

To make progress in the race

And finish the race

Look at gospel wheel- Jesus lifts our burdens and puts us in the race

Trying to live the Christian life without Jesus is like trying to race with out wheels

How would you control a car w/o a steering wheel?

Our GP cars have a track that guides them to the finish line, without them our cars would likely crash

We live in the day of GPS to help us find our way to a location or plan a trip

We have white or yellow lines on the road to keep us in our lanes

But these items do not control the car

Some of you are in Jr High and it won't be long and you will be driving

Do you think you will be able to drive anyway you want?

Your car or life would be out of control and you may even make a wreck of your life if left alone. The Bible would call this sin

What guides us to the finish line? The Holy Spirit

God made us in His image, special, desiring to have a relationship with us

May we be people of faith, directed by the Holy Spirit.