

# What Is Awana?

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 boys' club in a non-denominational church in Chicago. As 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**

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.

## *What's My Role in Sparks?*

**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.

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.
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 programs in Awana seek to follow this pattern in God's Word. We seek to know God's Word and understand it, in order to change how we live. So each

## *What's My Role in Sparks?*

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.

### **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.

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,

### **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



## *What's My Role in Sparks?*

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.

**Small Group Time** - Leader disciples 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.

# 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!

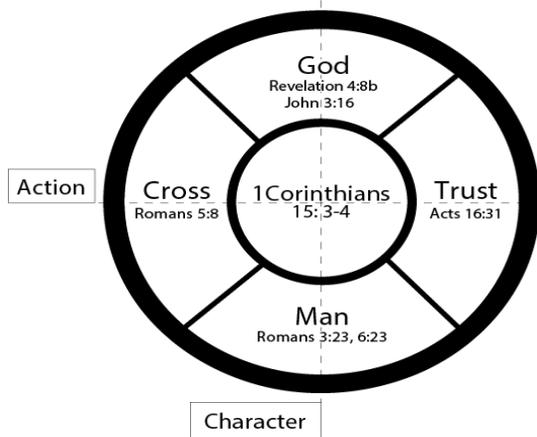
Children are at all different stages in their understanding of spiritual concepts. Some have already trusted Christ as their Savior. Still others may have never heard the plan of salvation. Still others have heard it but haven't yet made a faith decision. Listen closely to each child to gain clues about 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 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

## What's My Role in Sparks?

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.

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.

# Understanding 5- to 7-Year -Olds

So you're working with kindergarten through second graders! Whether you're a parent of an 5- to 7-year-old or haven't interacted with one in years, understanding their general developmental characteristics will help you to best serve them.

## Intellectually

- Understand rules and expectations.
- Rules and boundaries help kids know what is expected.
- Love stories and recounting events of the day.
- Arguing and reasoning are a part of many conversations.

## Emotionally

- Emotions are obvious and fickle.
- Can go from frustrated to extremely excited in a matter of seconds.
- Expression of feelings may come with animated gestures or actions.

## Socially

- Friendships are becoming more and more important.
- Love playing with others.
- Want to be accepted.
- Taking turns is not always easy.
- Sensitive and competitive about doing things well.

## Physically

- Have abundant energy.
- Animated and dramatic with their gestures.
- Enjoy games that keep their bodies busy.
- Balance is getting stronger, but still fine-tuning their coordination.

Here are some ideas on how to apply these characteristics to the spiritual development of Sparks® kids.

- Help kids know who God is and His great love for them by using every opportunity to tell them about what Jesus has done for them.
- Record decisions for Christ in the front of his or her Bible and handbook.
- Model prayer. Challenge the children to pray for one another.
- Reinforce what is being taught in Large Group and Sunday school.

## *What's My Role in Sparks?*

- Teach the difference between a wise and a foolish choice.
- Show pictures of Israel or other places where Bible events took place.
- Teach (and show by your own words) the importance of wisely chosen words.
- Be certain rules are clearly communicated and consistently enforced. Don't let lack of discipline be a barrier to a child hearing and responding to the gospel.
- Help them understand how the Bible is organized and how to find verses.
- Share your testimony and, for those who have accepted Jesus as Savior, encourage them to tell their story to others.

*What's My Role in Sparks?*

# Sparks Club Basics

## Curriculum Overview

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. To many children in kindergarten to second grade, Sparks is the highlight of the week! They love their red vests, the exciting games, and spending time with leaders and friends.

Sparks curriculum is comprised of three handbooks. Each handbook builds a foundation of biblical wisdom through memory verses, crafts, activities, and review of key doctrine and Bible facts.

The first handbook, *HangGlider*®, begins a sequential journey through the Bible, starting with Genesis and ending with Joshua. *WingRunner*® handbook takes Sparkies on the next leg of the trip from Judges to the birth of Christ. *SkyStormer*® handbook brings the curriculum in for a landing, exploring Gods Word from the ministry of Christ to Revelation.

Before working in the first handbook, *HangGlider*, all newcomers to Sparks will complete an entrance booklet – *Flight 3:16* – that centers on the gospel message of John 3:16. *WingRunner* and *SkyStormer* handbooks challenge Sparkies to learn about 15 more verses than the preceding book.

Each handbook includes an audio CD with readings of all the Bible biographies, memory verses, and character stories featuring Sparky the Firefly and his friends Chloe, Jacob, and Joel. Before you begin serving in Sparks, look through a Sparks handbook to become familiar with how it's organized. This will ensure you're prepared to help the children in your group navigate it.

## Engaging With Scripture

A key feature of Sparks, and all Awana ministries, is its rich Scripture content. Children learn about the Bible; how it's organized, books that make up the Bible and why God's Word can be trusted. They hear stories of real people in the Bible. And they internalize God's Word by memorizing verses.

Children 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,

## *What's My Role in Sparks?*

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 119:6-16 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)*

As an Awana leader, you have an opportunity to engage children 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 you explain the verses. Also, show the children that you value God's Word by reciting verses that you've memorized. Children this age love the opportunity to sign off on an adult's Scripture memory work!

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

There are two types of awards in Sparks: individual and team awards.

## *What's My Role in Sparks?*

### **Individual Awards**

Throughout the year, children earn emblems, pilot wings, and jewels to display on their uniforms as they progress through their handbooks. The goal is to complete one handbook per year. They can earn additional emblems and pins for extra credit, church attendance, and participating in missions activities. The last page of each handbook provides suggested placement of awards on the uniform.

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 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 the children.

### **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 *disciple* and literally means "to teach" or "to mold." Children need discipline to become healthy, mature adults.

Read Hebrews 12:5-11 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*

## *What's My Role in Sparks?*

*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).*

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.

### **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

## *What's My Role in Sparks?*

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.

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 can not participate in the activity now." The child will stay with the director or another pair of adults for supervision, then 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, respect, 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 or 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.

## *What's My Role in Sparks?*

### **Parent Partnership**

As important as children's and youth workers are, parents have the greatest opportunity to influence the spiritual development of their 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 you, as 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.

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.

# Sparks Leader Role

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

It is of utmost importance that the 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."* Children this age are watching the adults around them. They can tell if you want to be there or not. Kids 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." A loving leader opens the pathway to a child's receptiveness to hearing the gospel and willingness to learn more about the loving God that we serve.

Commit to praying for the children in your ministry throughout the week. Posting their names or pictures in a place that you regularly see will help remind you to pray for them.

Arrive to church early so you are there to greet the kids in your group by name as they arrive. Smile and let them know you are happy to see them! Say hello to the parents who drop off their children and thank them for bringing their kids.

Help with the check-in process as needed.

Some churches hold an opening time for the first few minutes of the club meeting. This gives an opportunity to establish discipline and officially mark the start of club. Activities may include reciting a key verse altogether, opening in prayer, saying pledges, recognizing achievement and making announcements.

## **Large Group Time**

Large Group Time is when all the kids and leaders join together for a Bible lesson. This time could also include worship, prayer, testimonies, award presentations, and announcements. Large Group Time should be fun and upbeat, with children participating at various times. Be creative!

What is my role during Large Group Time?

1. Sit with the children. Model good behavior and participate in the activities.
2. Listen to the bible lesson and announcements so you can answer any questions the kids may have.
3. Support the large group leader by encouraging the children who are well-behaved and addressing any discipline issues that might arise.

## *What's My Role in Sparks?*

4. Cheer on children who receive awards.

### **Small Group Time**

This is the segment when leaders meet with a small group of children to recite Scripture and discuss God's Word using their handbooks. This is the best opportunity for discipleship by getting to know the children, modeling Christ-likeness, teaching biblical truths, praying together and building community. We recommend a 2:10 leader to child ratio for small group. This means two leaders are assigned five children each, but meet in the same space. This allows them to back each other up when needed and is a good child protection measure.

During Small Group Time, children work through their handbooks at their own pace and are encouraged to work at home during the week so they come prepared to recite verses.

What is a leader's role during Small Group Time?

1. Open in prayer. Ask children to share prayer requests and praises. Share your own. Model prayer and encourage the children to pray too. Sharing in this way builds community and allows small group members to know and care for each other.
2. Help children memorize by suggesting various memorization techniques. Pay attention to each child's learning preferences.
3. Explain spiritual truths as you listen to children recite their verses. Ask what the verse means. Define unfamiliar words. Show the children where to find the verse in the Bible.
4. Listen to verses and sign off on handbook sections.

Awana recommends the following standards for passing sections:

- Allow two helps per section. A help is a few words or a gesture.
  - Kids recite reference so they know where the verse came from in the Bible.
  - All verses in a section are recited in one sitting.
  - Complete sections in order as the books are designed this way including review verses that were introduced previously.
5. Keep records of each child's attendance and achievement. Awana recordkeeping cards ensure that attendance is recorded and the date each section a child passes is recorded. It's very important to keep accurate records so that if a child loses their handbook, they can still get credit for the work they've completed.
  6. Be an encourager! raise good attendance, achievements, and behavior.

## *What's My Role in Sparks?*

### **Game Time**

This segment of the club meeting is when the children enjoy fun games, usually but not always, on the Awana® Game Square. The purpose of Game Time is to attract boys and girls to attend club and to want to invite their friends to join them.

If games are played on the Awana Game Square, children are divided into four even teams. Each team lines up on one side of the square. One or two adults, called line leaders, are assigned to each team. The game director prepares games in advance and ensures that the appropriate game equipment is available. He also leads Game Time. A scorekeeper keeps track of first and second place winners for each game and tallies up team points to determine the winning team.

What is a line leader's role during Game Time?

1. Build relationships with the kids.
  2. Listen carefully to game rules, then organize their team to play.
  3. Maintain order and individual discipline.
  4. Encourage participation.
  5. Model good sportsmanship.
- Support and help the game director as needed.

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

## *What's My Role in Sparks?*

### **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?