

THEMES TO ATTRACT CLUBBERS

Theme nights are a great way to keep kids enthusiastic about Awana. A given theme, worked through the regular segments of Game Time, Handbook Time and Council Time, provides excitement and variety, essential elements to avoid settling into a routine that can become boring. Anticipation of coming themes will also keep clubbers thinking about Awana during the week.

Specific theme nights should be scheduled only once during a club year. A general category, however (such as food-related themes), with a different specific theme each week (Goofy Grape Gulp, Hot Dog Honk, etc.) may be planned monthly.

Club commanders and directors should use the ideas in this book to stimulate their leaders' thinking during an initial brainstorming session. Then, well in advance of each weekly meeting, club directors can meet with their leaders to develop specific plans.

Many theme nights include a suggested Council Time message. If you choose to use one, be sure to give the idea to the selected speaker far enough in advance to allow for proper preparation.

Theme nights are most effective when the scheduled theme is carried throughout the entire evening. Special displays, decorations or announcements may be used to remind clubbers of the theme. Some themes are especially suitable for promoting interest weeks in advance. Other themes can be announced that club evening.

Remember, clubbers like to be surprised, but they are most comfortable following a weekly routine. Each club night, sandwich variety with enough familiar activity to give clubbers a sense of security.

As clubbers anticipate upcoming theme nights and surprises, they will invite friends to club. Leaders and clubbers alike will sense an air of excitement, and your club will begin to grow numerically. Most important, clubbers will be growing spiritually, too.

Make every club night exciting for both new and returning clubbers! First and foremost, each scheduled theme must be FUN! If your little third-grade girl clubbers won't enjoy Bombardment, don't plan it for them. If your fourth-grade boy clubbers will especially be attracted to Wheelie-dealie, promote it with great enthusiasm.

Animal Kingdom

The Week Before Encourage all clubbers to bring a stuffed animal to club. Announce that prizes will be awarded for the largest, smallest, prettiest, most unusual and most loved (the animal in the worst condition because it has been loved so much) stuffed animal. Play jungle sounds during the announcements.

Getting Ready Place one table on top of another to make a cage for the stuffed animals. Using crepe paper, tape bars between the two tables. Decorate the room as a zoo. Buy prizes (stuffed animals, animal-shaped candy, animal crackers). Display the prizes in cages.

Make it Fun! Look in *The Best Awana C Games Ever!* book for animal games. Hand out animal-shaped treats.

Make It Worthwhile! Ask someone in your church with an unusual pet to bring it and use it as an illustration for the Council Time message (perhaps on creation).

Extra Excitement Use this night to launch a contest with a prize of a trip to the zoo for all clubbers who accomplish a given standard.

Beat the Clock Night

The Week Before Have two leaders run to the front of the room. One should yell “Go!” and press a stopwatch. The other one should announce next week’s theme by speaking as quickly as he or she can. The moment the announcement is finished, the leader with the stopwatch should yell “Stop!” Both leaders should run from the room. **Getting Ready** Get a stopwatch for each leader.

Make it Fun! Look in *The Best Awana Games Ever*) book for clock and time games. Run regular games and keep clubbers’ times. Award prizes for fastest times. Time other activities throughout the meeting. Give points to the team that stands at attention quickest after you start the five count. Give points to the team that gets from Handbook Time to Council Time quickest.

Make it Worthwhile! Develop a message about “time.” Discuss 2 Corinthians 6:2b: *Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.* Time is running out to accept Christ as Savior. All Christians should be: *Redeeming the time, because the days are evil (Ephesians 5:16).* NOW is the time for us to serve the Lord. Jesus said, *I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work” (John 9:4).*

Extra Excitement Do Beat the Clock Night every year and post the record game times from past years. Challenge clubbers to beat the records and award prizes for those who do.

Bombardment night

The Week Before This game is very popular with boys. Consider running Bombardment Night once a month. Always announce it the week before to build excitement.

Getting Ready Make sure leaders know the rules. Post leaders around the game area to make sure everything is fair.

Make It Fun! Play circle games during the first half of Game Time, saving the last 20 minutes for Bombardment, described in *The Best Awana Games Ever!* book. Or play various dodge-ball games during the first half of Game Time.

Make It Worthwhile! Present a message on the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-18). **Extra Excitement** Have a midnight Bombardment marathon during a lock-in overnight. Let leaders play (but they have to throw underhand).

Chew..choo Night The Week Before Print the following poem on train- shaped construction paper invitations. Distribute them to clubbers the week before Chew-Choo Night. For emphasis, insert a stick of gum in each invitation.

*“You might have to chug-chug like a choo-choo,
Or chew-chew like a moo-moo;
But make sure you’re at club on
With a friend or two-tool”*

Getting Ready Buy bubble gum and train whistles for prizes.

Make It Fun! Look in *The Best Awana Games Ever!* book for train and gum games.

Make It Worthwhile! Idea 1: Because gum is sticky, consider basing a message on Proverbs 18:24. *A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother* Idea 2: Before your message, choose the three clubbers who passed the most sections to compete in a bubble gum-blowing contest. Award a small prize for the largest bubble. Then lead into your message with James 4:14b: *For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.*

Extra Excitement Take pictures of clubbers blowing bubbles and post them on the club bulletin board.

Choose Your Team Night

The Week Before Let clubbers know they can pick the team of their choice next week.

Encourage them to come early because when the quota is reached for any one team, boys and girls must select teams with openings.

K Getting Ready Estimate the number of clubbers who will attend club on this night.

Divide that number by four to determine the number of clubbers that may sign up for each of the four-color teams.

Make It Fun! –Club evening runs according to normal schedule. Clubbers, however, will not be achieving and competing on their regular teams.

Make It Worthwhile! –Expand the following thoughts; Choose to be on God’s team! In Joshua 24, Joshua encourages the Israelites to serve God. He lists the blessings God has given and reminds them of ways in which God has helped them. Today, we also have a choice to make.

Will you choose to serve God?... Choose *you this day whom ye will serve but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord* (Joshua 24:15).

Extra Excitement –Have Game Time for this night be coed with the girls’ clubs.

Dolls on Parade!

The Week Before –Plan this special theme night the first club meeting after Christmas.

Encourage each girl to bring her favorite doll to club. Announce that prizes will be given for the biggest, smallest, oldest, prettiest and most unusual dolls. Getting Ready –Buy an assortment of inexpensive dolls for prizes.

Make It Fun! –Give team points to each girl who brings a doll. Set an old rag doll P above the center beanbag to replace the pin. Play a game in which girls push their dolls around the circle on a dolly. Use old rag dolls as batons for regular Awana relays. Make It Worthwhile!— Idea 1: Little Flower had a very strange doll. The doll looked very much like a gingerbread boy –stuffed with dry kernels of corn. Little Flower was an Indian girl. She lived a long time ago. When she wanted a doll, her mother had to make one for her. There were no stores nearby where little girls could buy dolls.

Little Flower’s doll was not beautiful like dolls you have today. But still, Little Flower loved her doll very much. She played house and took her doll on walks just like girls do today.

One day, Little Flower and her brother Red Wing had a big quarrel. Red Wing had been carving out a little canoe. He was very carefully cutting the paddles when Little Flower bumped into him. She knocked the canoe to the ground, and several pieces broke off. Angrily, Red Wing cried, “Why don’t you watch where you’re going? Look what you did!”

“I don’t care!” answered Little Flower. But, of course, she really did care. *What- ever made me say that?* she wondered. Little Flower was so ashamed that she hurried outdoors.

I’ll fix her! thought Red Wing. Just then, he noticed her little doll lying on a mat. He picked up the doll and hurried out the door. He grabbed a piece of wood to use as a shovel. Then he ran around to the garden. In the soft ground at the end of the garden, nothing seemed to be planted. There he dug a hole and buried the doll.

“That’s the end of that! This will pay her back for breaking my canoe,” Red Wing muttered. “Nobody will ever know what happened to Little Rower’s doll.” But Red Wing forgot that God said: *He that covereth his sins shall not prosper* (*Proverbs 28:13a*) and: *Be sure your sin will find you out* (*Numbers 32:23b*). Red Wing’s mother had taught her children to be honest. She had told them about God.

Many days went by. Little Flower cried many tears, but no one could find her doll. It had vanished! But Red Wing was not as happy as he thought he would be. He began to feel he had done a very mean thing. Once he thought of digging up the doll. But he didn't know how he would explain why the doll was so dirty. He decided to leave it where it was.

A few days after a rain, Little Flower's mother was out in the garden gathering vegetables. She noticed fresh vegetable sprouts at the end of the garden. *That's strange*, she thought. *There is nothing planted down there*. She looked closer and saw green blades of corn growing in the shape of a little doll. Just as God's Word says, the hidden sin was uncovered.

Sin hidden in our hearts will just as surely be uncovered one day, too. What a sad thought for all who have not trusted the Lord Jesus as their Savior! Why not believe on Him as your Savior today? He'll forgive your sin and give you eternal life with Him.

Idea 2: Dolls come in all sizes and shapes. They wear all kinds of clothes and have many different hairstyles. But you are much more important than a doll. You are alive! You can smile, run, play, eat, talk, play Awana games and work in your handbooks. Best of all, you can grow!

We all grow physically. Was your favorite dress too short when school started last fall? Were your shoes too small? It's fun to get new clothes and shoes, isn't it? But it is also fun to grow and be able to do new things. We are able to run faster, jump higher, and skate or swim better. Real girls grow; dolls don't.

Our minds grow, too. We learn to read, spell and play the piano. We grow as we read the Bible and memorize verses in our Awana handbooks. Memorizing helps train our minds. It helps us learn other things faster.

We grow socially in our relationships with our family members and friends. We learn to be helpful at home. We learn to be concerned about other people, not just about ourselves. We should always be friendly and look for others who need friends.

But there's another way we can grow, and it's the most important. We can grow spiritually after we are born into God's family. Spiritual life is that special kind of life Jesus gives us when we accept Him as our Savior. Jesus said, "*I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly*" (John 10:10). Jesus also said, *For God so loved the world* ..(Ask clubbers to recite John 3:16 with you.)

Everlasting life is life that never ends! When our bodies are worn out and die, the real "us" lives forever in heaven. We can't even begin to imagine what life will be like in heaven. There will be golden streets, no need for sun or moon, no sadness or sickness, and no crying or tears. We will live forever with Jesus Christ who loves us and died for us.

Your dolls are cute. Yet you are much more than a doll. You are alive. Do you have everlasting life? Do you know for sure that you are on your way to heaven? Jesus offers this eternal life to you as a free gift. Trust Him as your Savior today.

Extra Excitement — Each girl designs a clothespin doll using the following items: clothespins, pieces of colored cloth, thread and needles, scissors, buttons, and felt-tipped pens.

Hairstyling Night

The Week Before — Encourage girls to restyle their hair for the next club meeting. Prizes will be given for the prettiest, ugliest and most unusual styles. Each girl will earn team points by coming to club with restyled hair.

Getting Ready — Buy barrettes, headbands and other hair items for prizes.

Make It Fun! — Do the hairstyle judging like a beauty contest. Have the girls walk out in front of the leaders and fellow clubbers and turn around to show off their hair. Each girl should come up with a name for herself:

Miss Awana, Miss Moon, Miss Iissippi, etc. An announcer can call out the name as each girl walks on stage.

Make It Worthwhile! — Study Proverbs 31 with your 4 girls, picking out the important traits of beauty in God's sight. It is not outward appearance, but rather beautiful, inner qualities which please God (1 Peter 3:3-4).

Extra Excitement — Stage a silhouette. Behind a white sheet, position your leader or clubber with the longest hair. Project a light from behind onto the sheet. Proceed with exaggerated gestures to cut off the long hair. Leaders in the audience should be "oohing" and "aahing" to get the girls reacting as well. When the haircut is finished, the participant comes out from behind the screen carrying a cut wig. Her own hair is the same length.

Penny Hike

The Week Before — Inform parents that clubbers will be leaving church. Make sure clubbers are dressed for the weather.

Getting Ready — Give leaders maps of the area. Inform them if there are places they should avoid.

Make It Fun! — Starting at church, all teams prepare to set out on a hike with a penny to provide their directions. The team leader starts by tossing a penny into the air. If the penny lands tails up, the team walks one block to the left. If penny lands heads up, the team walks one block to the right. At each street corner, the penny is tossed again into the air for new directions for the team to follow. The team arriving back at church first wins. After half an hour, all team leaders should note exactly where they are and then head back to church. Perhaps no team will have arrived back within the designated time. In this case, the team closest to the church wins. A leader must accompany each team, and teams must stay within set boundaries.

Make It Worthwhile! — Pennies are important to God. Tell — the story of the widow's mites recorded in Mark 12:41-44 and Luke 21:1-4.

Extra Excitement — if you have a large church building, do the penny hike indoors.

Runaway Night

The Week Before — Announce that everybody must arrive at club on time next week.

Why? Because you'll be running away!

Getting Ready – Park the church bus, vans or cars about two blocks from the church. Don't let the clubbers know where they are.

Make It Fun! – At starting time, the entire club is instructed to run to where the bus is parked. The clubbers are driven to another location for their meeting. This could be an outdoor spot, leader's home, local gym or other place of your choice. The club meeting then proceeds as usual. A few minutes before the end of club, clubbers should be returned to the spot where they were picked up. Instruct clubbers and leaders to run back to church.

Make it Worthwhile! – Tell clubbers the story of the runaway son (Luke 15: 1-32). Talk about why the boy ran away (he wanted to do his own thing, he resented his father, etc.). Explain that his poor choice of friends and activities probably seemed like fun at first. Even today the world's attractions look nice on the outside but lead to destruction once we get involved with them.

When the prodigal son finally decided to go home, he learned that his father still loved him and forgave him. His father welcomed him with open arms and a celebration. In the same way, God forgives us.

Ask clubbers how they would act toward one of their friends who had run away and then came back home. How would that boy or girl be treated? Talk about how the older brother in the story reacted. He resented his brother and was jealous of the attention he received.

You may be surprised to find some clubbers feeling sympathy toward the older brother. They may feel he was “ripped off” because he didn’t get a big party. Talk about the joy and fellowship this son could have had with his father all along. He didn’t need to rebel to see his father’s love. As we walk close to God in the way He plans for us, we are happy. We grow stronger in our relationship with God. To have fun, we don’t need to sample the sins which Satan tempts us with each day.

Extra Excitement – Use this concept to begin a mystery trip overnight. The clubbers run to the bus as part of the mystery.

Target Practice

The Week Before – Explain next week's theme during Council Time announcements. Have a leader shoot a rubber-tipped arrow or dart from the next room. Attach a special notice to the shaft explaining the theme.

Getting Ready – Set up a booth for pre-club activity.

Let clubbers attempt to pop balloons with darts or knock down cans with softballs.

Make It Fun! – Play games in which clubbers try to hit targets: darts, horseshoes, water guns and peashooters.

Make It Worthwhile! – Develop a message about *pressing toward the mark* in our Christian lives (Philippians 3:13-14).

Extra Excitement – Schedule this night for the final night of a contest. Chart clubbers' progress with arrows on a bull's-eye. Each succeeding ring is another point milestone.

Wheegie-dealie

The Week Before – Announce that next week your church parking lot will become WheeI City.” Instruct clubbers to each bring a bike, wagon, trike, scooter or other wheeled vehicle to ‘club. No motorbikes or skateboards allowed.

Getting Ready Lay out an Awana Game **Square on the parking lot.**

Make it Fun! Clubbers ride, **push, pull, etc.**, their vehicles around the circle. Vehicles of similar sizes and categories should race together.

Make It Worthwhile! Idea 1: Tell clubbers the story which resulted in Elijah's foot race against King Ahab riding in a chariot (1 kings 18:1746).

Idea 2: Tell clubbers the story of Elijah going to heaven in a chariot of fire (2 kings 2:8-12).

Extra Excitement Plan an obstacle course through which clubbers may race. Or run straight races from one end of the parking lot to the other.

Crazy Caps

The Week Before Each leader should come to club wearing a ridiculous cap he or she has designed. Encourage clubbers to come next week with hats they've designed. Prizes will be awarded for various categories (i.e., most beautiful, ugly, silly, original). All clubbers wearing a crazy cap will earn team points.

Getting Ready For prizes, buy a variety of hats that will appeal to kids.

Make It Fun! Position two caps in the circle replacing the usual beanbag and pin. Play clubbers' favorite games.

Make It Worthwhile! Look through the Awana Council Time books for an appropriate message for your clubbers.

Extra Excitement Take pictures of participating clubbers to show the church congregation during a Sunday night program.

Inside-out Night

The Week Before Encourage clubbers to dress for the next club night with their clothes inside out. Points will be awarded to clubbers dressed totally inside out.

Getting Ready Buy some goofy items for prizes.

Make it Fun! Plan games which require clubbers to run inside the circle pins instead of outside. Clubbers run backwards for some games also.

Make it Worthwhile! Give a message centered around I Samuel 16:7b: *For the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.* Expand the following thoughts: Sometimes we spend a lot of time making sure our clothes and hair look just right. Yet too often we neglect to spend time on things that are much more important because we think they don't show. Actually, what we are on the inside is much more important to God than what we look like on the outside. One day we'll stand before Him at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Each of us will be turned "inside out." God knows all our thoughts and will bring to light the motives of our hearts (Psalm 94:11, Luke 12:2, 1 Corinthians 4:5).

Extra Excitement Have Handbook Time and/or Council Time outside.

Layered-look Night

The Week Before — Plan this night during the cold weather season. Encourage clubbers to wear the “layered look” to the next club meeting. Instruct all clubbers to bring a big bag for carrying home their extra clothes.

Getting Ready — Buy inexpensive prizes.

Make It Fun! — Upon the director’s instruction, clubbers remove one layer of clothing at a time. Bottom layers should always be Awana uniforms. A prize will be awarded the boy or girl wearing the most layers of clothing. Plan games related to “getting dressed! For example, clubber must put on a coat, hat and scarf, run a lap, take off these articles of clothing as fast as possible and then run into the center for the pin or beanbag.

Make It Worthwhile! — Tell the story of Joseph’s coat of many colors. Joseph’s brothers were jealous because their father gave him a special coat. They were so envious that they actually sold him as a slave. Briefly tell about Joseph’s slavery, imprisonment and place of honor and responsibility in the Egyptian government. God had a plan for Joseph’s life — to save the lives of his family when they were threatened with famine and starvation (Genesis 42:5-7; 45:5-7).

Extra Excitement — Tell the story of Joseph and his coat in a skit with leaders acting the parts of Joseph, his brothers and the men to whom Joseph was sold.

Pajama Jam

The Week Before — Encourage clubbers to wear their pajamas to next week’s special club meeting.

Getting Ready — Call your clubbers to remind them to wear their pajamas. Play lullabies in the background.

Make It Fun! — Play games that involve pillows and blankets. Or you may prefer to play games in an entirely different setting, such as your Council Time room.

Make It Worthwhile! — Give a Council Time message on how Christians can rest in Christ. *Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28)*.

Extra Excitement — Instead of a separate Pajama Jam theme night, play pajama games during a lock-in overnight.

When I Grow Up

The Week Before — Encourage clubbers to dress up next week as the profession they would like to pursue as adults. Have leaders dress up to give clubbers’ imaginations a boost! Send a flier home with clubbers so parents can help their kids remember to dress up the next week. Award points to clubbers who dress up.

Getting Ready — Decorate the room with items from various careers. Have leaders dress as they do at their jobs.

Make It Fun! — Play games of your choice this theme night. You may want to develop some games centered around “careers”

Make it Worthwhile! Ask a leader to tell about his or her career and how God has worked in his or her life. The leader should tell of God's faithfulness through the years and emphasize that *all things work together for good to them that love God* (Romans 8:28).

Extra Excitement Sometime during the meeting, let clubbers tell what they would like to do someday and why.

Food-a-Rama

The Week Before Make large posters with magazine pictures of food. Display the poster at club the two weeks prior to the scheduled event. Announce that every aspect of next week's club will have to do with food. **Getting Ready** Buy or prepare a variety of small food items such as crackers, tiny sandwiches, brownies, miniature hot dogs, etc. Keep the cost of this and any other food nights down by asking parents to provide needed food items. Announce in advance that the upcoming food night requires clubbers to bring an extra quarter. Whenever food is served, be sure mops and paper towels are ready for quick cleanup. Set the food items out on a table.

Make It Fun! Look in *The Best Awana Games Ever!* book for food game ideas. For each point earned in Game Time and Handbook Time, allow clubbers to pick one food item from the table. **Make it Worthwhile!** Jesus says: "*I am the bread of life*" (John 6:30-35). He compares the manna God gave the children of Israel with the gift of God's Son, Jesus Christ. Emphasize to clubbers how Jesus can satisfy our every need. The manna in the wilderness could only satisfy physical hunger and had to be eaten again and again every day. The *bread of life* – Jesus Christ – satisfies our spiritual needs and gives us everlasting life. **Extra Excitement** Let the clubbers bring their favorite snack foods.

Fruity Night

The Week Before At the end of club, hand each clubber a banana with a reminder of next week's theme written on it. **Getting Ready** Purchase a variety of fruit to use in games. **Make It Fun!** Look in *The Best Awana Games Ever!* book for fruit game ideas. Use bananas for batons, pineapples for pins and grapefruit for bowling balls. **Make it Worthwhile!** Give a Council Time lesson on the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

Extra Excitement At the end of club, take everyone outside and serve watermelon.

Hot Dog Honk

The Week Before instruct clubbers to come to club next week without eating dinner. Announce that the session will begin with a hot-dog roast (either on a grill, around an open fire or on an indoor fireplace).

Getting Ready Find an appropriate place for a hot-dog supper: the church yard or parking lot, at a leader's home, at a local park, or at a forest preserve. Purchase buns, potato chips and drinks. Have leaders make salads and desserts.

Make it Fun! If club is meeting outside, run races or play baseball or Steal the Bacon. If club is meeting indoors, look in *The Best Awana Games Ever!* book for appropriate games. Use raw hot

dogs for batons. Play the Hot Dog Relay. Place a table in the center of the Game Square with the following items: One hot dog for each team, buns, relish, catsup, mustard and onions. Five clubbers and one leader line up by the team pin. At the signal, the first clubber on each team runs to the table and puts a hot dog on the bun. The first player runs back to his circle pin, gives the hot dog and bun to the second player who runs in and puts a second item on his bun. Play continues until all items are on the hot dog. The fifth clubber gives the hot dog to the leader, who eats it. The leader then runs to the center for the pin or beanbag.

Make It Worthwhile! Tell the story of Peter warming his hands at the fire as he denied Christ (Luke 22:54-62). This story isn't complete without also telling of the opportunity that Christ gave Peter to reaffirm his love for the Lord (John 21:1547).

Extra Excitement If you are cooking over a fire, give clubbers long sticks and let them cook their own hot dogs. Hand out marshmallows for clubbers to roast.

Topsy-turvy Night

The Week Before Plan this theme night after several months of regular club. Then clubbers will enjoy, not be confused by, the unusual event! Encourage clubbers to wear their clothes backwards (or inside out).

Getting Ready Hang all pictures and posters upside down. Also provide nametags for each clubber with names written backwards.

Make It Fun! Play regular Awana games but have clubbers run backwards in a clockwise direction around the circle.

Make It Worthwhile! Expand the following thoughts: *There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death (Proverbs 14:12)*. Many people think that the more good deeds they do, the more likely God is to accept them into heaven when they die. But his thinking is all backwards! We can't do anything to earn salvation from sin or earn a home in heaven. Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sins when He died on the cross. He offers eternal life and heaven to us as a free gift. After we are saved through faith in Jesus Christ, we do His will because we love Him and want to live for Him.

Extra Excitement Start club with a leader walking backwards to the front of the group to close in prayer! Proceed with activities which normally come at end of meeting. If you usually play games last, then tonight Game Time is first. End your club meeting the with flag ceremony.

Balloon Blast

The Week Before Prepare slips of paper inviting children to club and insert invitations inside small balloons. Distribute balloons in Sunday school or mail them to clubbers one week prior to Balloon Blast Night. To remove invitations, clubbers must blow up and break their balloons.

Getting Ready Make sure you are supplied with a lot of balloons and begin blowing them up before club starts.

Make It Fun! Look in *The Best Awana Games Ever!* book for balloon game ideas. **Make It Worthwhile!** Plan the Bible message of your choice. Ahead of time, write applicable Bible verses on slips of paper and put them into “marked” balloons. Then blow up the balloons. During your message, ask clubbers to pop specific “marked” balloons and read the Bible verses inside.

Extra Excitement Hand out balloon animals to the clubbers as they leave.

Indoor Snow Carnival

The Week Before Hand out reminders on snowman-shaped paper. Encourage clubbers to wear clothes with snow scenes. Consider running this theme night during the hottest part of the year.

Getting Ready Purchase snowman-shaped candy for prizes. Prepare newspaper snowballs. **Make It Fun!** Play Snowball Bombardment. Line up two teams on each side of a 20-foot line. Before the snow battle begins, allow a few minutes for both teams to wad up sheets of paper to make a huge pile of snowballs. Or you may prefer to make “masking-tape” snowballs ahead of time. At the signal, teams begin the bombardment. They not only throw balls from their own pile, but also return snowballs thrown from the other side. The baffle continues until time is called in three or four minutes. Judges rule which team has less snow in its territory. Losing team cleans up the mess!

Make It Worthwhile! Allow time for each clubber to cut original snowflakes from folded white paper. As a group, examine the different patterns and discuss the “no two-ever-look-alike” theme. God never made two snowflakes the same. Neither has He ever made two people exactly alike. Each of us is unique, and God has a special plan for each of our lives. He knows each of us completely. Close by having several clubbers read Psalm 139 aloud to the group.

Extra Excitement At the end of club, serve snow cones.

Blackout Night

The Week Before Encourage clubbers to bring flashlights for next week’s club.

Getting Ready Collect extra flashlights for clubbers who forget to bring their own. **Make It Fun!** Run relays and other Awana games by flashlight.

Make It Worthwhile! Conduct Council Time by flashlight. Clubbers turn on flashlights but are instructed not to play with them.

Idea 1: Imagine with clubbers that you are a small group of believers. You are located in a Communist country where Christians are prohibited from meeting together. Softly sing favorite gospel songs or choruses clubbers know by heart. Since all Bibles and Awana handbooks have been confiscated by the police, the only Scriptures available are memorized verses. Encourage clubbers to share Bible verses they know. Help them to see the importance of committing God's Word to memory. Remind boys and girls that God has not promised any of us that we will always have freedom of religion. Christians in many countries today are persecuted because of their Christian faith. As clubbers realize how difficult it would be to live in such a country, encourage them to share their feelings. Close the message with prayer. Thank God with the clubbers for the privileges and freedoms He gives us each day.

Idea 2: Plan a message around "light" as mentioned in the Bible.

Psalm 27:la: *The Lord is my light*

Psalm 36:9b: *In Thy light shall we see light.*

Psalm 119:105: *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.*

Matthew 5:14a: "Ye are the *light of the world.* '

Matthew 5:16a: "Let your *light so shine before men*

Acts 26:18: *turn them from darkness to light*

2 Corinthians 4:6: *God commanded the light to shine out of darkness*

Ephesians 5:Sb: *Walk as children of light*

2 Peter 1:19: *a light that shineth in a dark place*

Extra Excitement _Conduct the club outside at night on the church grounds or in a nearby park.

Pillow Party

The Week Before _Encourage clubbers to bring an old pillow in an old pillowcase to club next week.

Getting Ready _Mail announcements to clubbers on bed-shaped fliers. Promote the theme with sleep-related sentences such as, "Are you tired of the regular routine?"

Make It Fun! _Look in *The Best Awana Games Ever!* book for beanbag game ideas. Use pillows instead of beanbags.

Make It Worthwhile! _Pillows make us think of sleeping! Tell the story of Jesus' agony in the Garden of Gethsemane when He asked the disciples to watch with Him (Matthew 26:36-45). The disciples, instead of praying and watching, fell asleep. Jesus' command is still relevant today: *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak* (Mathew 26:41).

Extra Excitement _Use this theme during a lock-in overnight.

Carpet Capers

The Week Before – Encourage each clubber to bring a small “throw” rug to club next week. Team points will be awarded each clubber with a rug. Ask leaders to bring extra rugs for clubbers who forget.

Getting Ready – The week before, a leader announces the event while sitting cross-legged on a “flying” carpet.

Make It Fun! – Play games that involve rugs. Look in *The Best Awana Games Ever!* book for ideas. Here are two suggestions:

Rug pull: Player from each team sits on a rug. Another team member pulls him on rug around circle and into the center. Team member on rug must grab pin or beanbag from his sifting position.

Keep Afloat: One player from each team stands on his rug and holds a balloon. At signal, player bats balloon into the air. Player continues hitting balloon until he misses it or steps off rug. When player loses control of the balloon or steps off rug, he is disqualified. Variation: Two players from each team stand on their own rugs and bat a balloon back and forth to each other. Balloon cannot be hit more than once in succession by any player. No player is allowed to step off rug. Team continuing action the longest wins. Set time limit.

Make It Worthwhile! – Give a Council Time message on the following theme. It’s important to have something solid and dependable under our feet. As Christians, we need a firm foundation for our faith. We don’t want to slide around, wondering what to believe or whom to trust. We can trust the Lord in every situation, for He has promised to be our Rock. *The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer (2 Samuel 22:2b). He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings (Psalm 40:2).*

Extra Excitement – Whenever clubbers are standing or sifting, they have to remain on their rugs. Take points **off** whenever a clubber steps off his or her rug.

Tire Toss

The Week Before – Announce that next week will feature something tiring.

Getting Ready – Bring four car tires and four bicycle inner tubes.

Make It Fun! – Look in *The Best Awana Games Ever!* book for tire and inner tube game ideas.

Make It Worthwhile! – In Council Time, expand the following thoughts: Life often seems like an obstacle course, just like some of the tire games we’ve played tonight. Yet, things don’t just happen to a Christian. God is in control. Nothing can come into our lives, except what He allows. *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28).* When our attitude is right, hard times and places become stepping-stones to better things ahead in our Christian life. (illustrate this concept from situations in your own life or from the lives of close friends, etc.) Difficult experiences help us to learn to trust a loving God who wants only the best for His children. Because of these

experiences, God often uses us to be an encouragement and comfort to others in their trials and problems.

Extra Excitement – Serve chocolate donuts frosted to look like tires.

Birthday Jamboree

The Week Before – Plan this theme night at a time when there is no particular reason for a holiday party.

Getting Ready – Mail party invitations to clubbers and K invite them to their own “birthday party.” Announce that clubbers with a “golden birthday” this year will be especially honored. (Don’t tell them that a golden birthday is when a clubber’s age and the date he/she was born are the same.) Leaders should check their “one-year record sheet” for eligible clubbers. Decorate as you would for any birthday celebration.

Make It Fun! – Play birthday games, such as Pin the Tail on the Donkey, Drop the Clothespin in the Bottle, etc. You may choose to end Game Time with several Awana games.

Make It Worthwhile! – Tell the story of the necessity of the second birth Jesus shared with Nicodemus in John 3. Emphasize that Jesus said, ‘*Ye must be born again.*’ If possible, obtain a flannel graph aid for the story. Sing the Happy Birthday Song with these words:

*Happy Birthday to you,
Only one will not do.
Receive Christ as your Savior,
And then you'll have two!
Happy Birthday to you,
Only one will not do.
Born again means salvation.
How many have you?*

Extra Excitement – Serve punch and birthday cake decorated with candles.

Get wet Night

The Week Before – Plan this theme night during warm weather.

Getting Ready – Announcements and fliers should be sent home to parents to publicize this special theme night. Make it clear that all clubbers and leaders must wear clothes which they do not mind getting wet. Tell clubbers and parents that Get Wet Night does not include swimming (or events in deep water) as some clubbers may not come for that reason. Water guns, however, are welcome! Discipline on this theme night is important. If discipline is a problem in your club, obviously Get Wet Night is not an appropriate theme to pursue. But if clubbers follow instructions, and this evening is carefully thought through, a good time can be enjoyed by all!

Make It Fun! – Look in *The Best Awana Games Ever!* book for balloon game ideas.

Use water balloons.

Make It Worthwhile! Tell the familiar Bible story of Noah and his ark (Genesis 6-7). Stress to clubbers Noah's faithfulness in obeying God. Noah did all that God commanded him. He built an ark the size of an ocean liner, 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. The people of Noah's day had a choice of whether or not to obey God. They made their choice, but their choice brought them God's punishment of death. We, too, must make a choice. We can choose to obey God and accept Christ now as our Savior. Or we can choose to disobey God and refuse His forgiveness for our sin. The right choice means eternal life and enjoying eternity with Him. The wrong choice means spiritual death and eternity forever separated from God.

Extra Excitement For easier cleanup, schedule this activity outdoors. Or have a Get Really Wet Night sometime when it's raining.

Shoe Fly

The Week Before Announce a strange shoe contest for next week. Prizes will be given for the largest, ugliest and strangest pair of shoes.

Getting Ready Buy small prizes for the contest.

Make It Fun! Look in *The Best Awana Games Ever!* book for shoe game ideas. Replace the center beanbag with a large sock and the pin with a shoe.

Make It Worthwhile! Give a Council Time message on the importance of walking with God (Ephesians 5:8-10).

Extra Excitement For an end-of-the-night treat, have a baker create a shoe-shaped cake.

Picture Night

The Week Before Plan this theme night several months into the club year when clubbers have become well acquainted and will appreciate a team picture. Announce that next week a photographer will take team pictures. All clubbers should wear their uniforms and look especially neat.

Getting Ready Allow five minutes at the beginning of Game Time for teams to plan a special pose for their picture. Then ask your photographer to snap a few shots of each team. Somebody can take the film to a one-hour developer and be back before the end of club.

Make it Fun! Play games of your choice this theme night.

Make it Worthwhile! Give a Bible message along the lines of this theme: How we look in pictures is often not what we are really like. Sometimes people put on a certain face which really hides their true self. Many unsaved people try to fool their friends and make them believe they are Christians.

Extra Excitement This is the night to show all your pictures taken during the club year! If you have slides or photos from previous years, show them also.

Favorites Night

The Week Before – Plan this theme night several months into the club year when boys and girls are familiar with routine club format. Enthusiastically announce: “Next week we’ll be doing the things you like most. Come and play your favorite games and sing your favorite songs. You’ll have opportunity to quote your favorite Bible verse. Usually your leaders choose what you do In Awana club. But next week, you get to decide.”

Getting Ready – Allow time for each clubber to fill in the following questionnaire:

The thing I enjoy most at Awana club is:

My favorite game:

My favorite Awana song:

The Bible verse I like best:

In club, I wish we could:

Using the answers given, plan *your games* and songs for Favorites Night. During testimony time, ask clubbers to quote their favorite Bible verses. The first item on this list will help you discover what activities your clubbers have enjoyed in the past. The last item will give you ideas for future planning.

Make It Fun! – Play the games the clubbers chose.

Make It Worthwhile! – Give a Bible message with a title such as “Who’s Your Model?” Encourage clubbers to think why they have picked a certain person as a favorite friend or role model. Then stress that Jesus is the only person after whom Christians should completely pattern their lives.

Extra Excitement – Let clubbers pick the topic for the Council Time message. Have each clubber bring a dozen of his or her favorite snack.

Apple Night

The Week Before – Give each clubber a taffy apple with an announcement attached. **Getting Ready** – Purchase a supply of apples for Game Time.

Make it Fun! – Look in *The Best Awana Games Ever!* book for food game ideas.

Make It Worthwhile! – Base a message around Matthew 7:17-20: *Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.*

The fruit shown in a Christian’s life should be sweet (kindness, love, happiness), not sour like a lemon. What people see in our lives should attract them to Christ, not turn them away. When we allow the Holy Spirit to control us, He will produce the right kind of fruit in us. (See Galatians 5:22-23.)

Extra Excitement – Serve apple-flavored treats, such as pie, turnovers, crisp, etc.

Pig Night

The Week Before – Advise your clubbers to eat a light supper next week.

Getting Ready – Buy the food items you need for Game Time.

Make It Fun! – Look in *The Best Awana Games Ever!* book for food game ideas. Run games that involve eating food within short time periods.

Make It Worthwhile! – Give a Council Time lesson on the fruit of the Spirit or on the importance of moderation in all things!

Extra Excitement – Finish the night with banana splits, but no utensils.

Pie-eating Contest

The Week Before – Stimulate excitement for this theme by involving leaders in a pie-eating contest for all clubbers to watch.

Getting Ready – Purchase or bake pies for the contest.

Make It Fun! – This theme night is run as a regular club meeting with the games and Bible message of your choice. Save 20 minutes at end of club for pie-eating contest. Game director lines up players and leaders behind small individual pies or wedges of pie on paper plates. Hands are held behind backs. At signal, players begin eating pie. First player finished wins. (Any player using hands is disqualified.)

Half the fun of a pie-eating contest is watching others make a mess. Instruct one team at a time to eat its pies while the others watch. Use a stopwatch to record the times of winning clubbers.

When you have four team winners, they and the winning leader (from last week) compete for the championship. Award a pie as the prize.

Make It Worthwhile! – Give a Council Time message on the fruit that Adam and Eve ate in the Garden of Eden. Explain how their disobedience condemned mankind to death, but that the obedience of Jesus Christ brings life.

Extra Excitement – Take videos and photos to show during Sunday night services or later in the year during club.

Chocolate Kiss Night

The Week Before – Advise your clubbers that they will want to prepare a lot of sections for next week.

Getting Ready – Purchase a large supply of candy kisses.

Make It Fun! Play regular Awana games. Instead of counting team points, however, winners from each event grab a wrapped chocolate kiss from a bucket in the center of the Game Square. Play several all-team games so entire teams will win candy treats.

Make It Worthwhile! Discuss with clubbers the “sweet things,” such as kindness, thoughtfulness and a caring attitude, that influence our friends and families for Christ. *Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones (Proverbs 16:24).*

Extra Excitement Clubbers receive a candy kiss for each section passed. The clubber who passed the most handbook sections is rewarded as many chocolate kisses as he can hold in one hand. Distribute leftover candy among winning team members.

Pastor's Popcorn Night

The Week Before Announce this theme a week in advance or run it as a surprise special.

Getting Reedy Pop a lot of popcorn ahead of time or purchase ready-popped.

Make it Fun! if the pastor is “game,” let him move from team to team. As the situation arises, he may run as a relay member, tossing the beanbag in Beanbag Toss, etc. if he’d prefer not to participate so actively, place him in center of circle as the center pin. To gain first-place points, players must grab and squeeze one of the pastor’s hands! For second-place points, players grab the bag of popcorn at his feet. Use popcorn in every game in some way.

Make it Worthwhile! Pastor visits handbook groups, sharing with each a large bowl of popcorn. As time allows, he listens to sections. Clue him in beforehand with rules for listening to and passing sections. Pastor gives the Bible message of his choice. This is a good opportunity for a strong, evangelistic thrust.

Extra Excitement Plan Pastor’s Popcorn Night during the week of his birthday. Clubbers can surprise the pastor by bringing him birthday cards. Also present him with a birthday cake (to take home) at the end of meeting.

Nature Hike

The Week Before Tell the kids to dress for the weather next week.

Getting Ready Find a local forest preserve or park with guides that can point out birds, trees, animals and flowers. Or find an expert in your church to lead the hike.

Make It Fun! Award points to teams that can correctly identify trees, birds, animals, etc. The guide may have to identify the item the first time, but then clubbers should be familiar with it.

Make It Worthwhile! Tell the story of creation.

Stress that after each act of creation, God looked and saw that *it was good*. God made us a part of His creation when He created man *in His own image*. We shouldn’t criticize ourselves. Rather, we must let God work in our lives and make us more like Himself. (For study, consult Genesis 1:26-27, 2:7; Ecclesiastes 3:11; Philippians 1:6; Psalm 139:14-16, 23-24.) **Extra Excitement** Take the hike at night by flashlight.

Guys vs. Girls Night

The Week Before – For a month, run an attendance contest between a boys' club and a girls' club in your church.

Getting Ready – Encourage clubbers to make and distribute posters inviting others to club. Posters can include slogans such as “T&T girls are #1,” “T&T boy clubbers are great!” or “Go, guys, got” Each poster should include date, time, and other information about the Awana club meeting.

Make It Fun! – On last club night of month when attendance contest concludes, line boys and girls up on opposite team lines for Game Time. If this theme is scheduled for a few weeks before AwanaGames, plan some pre-Meet competition. Place girls' AwanaGames team members on line directly opposite boys' AwanaGames team members. (Non-team members face each other on other lines.)

Make It Worthwhile! – Ask one of your best storytellers to tell about Gideon's victory over the Midianites (Judges 6-7). It wasn't numbers, strength or man's victory that won the battle. It was God's power! In our lives, we have many struggles and much competition. We need God's wisdom and power to help us live victorious Christian lives.

Extra Excitement – The club (either boys or girls) with the most points earns a special treat such as ice cream sundaes served by the other club.

Bring a Friend Night

The Week Before – The focus of Awana is reaching boys and girls for Christ. Continually encourage clubbers to bring their friends every week! Occasionally, however, announce a special night on which everyone who brings a friend earns a candy bar for himself/herself and the friend.

Getting Ready – Purchase extra-large candy bars for clubbers who bring friends and for the visitors.

Make It Fun! – Elaborate the “friends” theme by using games played together by two clubbers.

Make It Worthwhile! – Tell the Bible story of two best friends, David and Jonathan, found in I Samuel 18-23. Or tell the story of the four men who brought their friend to Christ (Mark 2:1-12). The sick friend needed Jesus to save him from sin- Nobody else could forgive his sins or heal his body. Our friends also need Jesus because nobody else can take away Their sins (Acts 4:12).

Extra Excitement – Award candy bars again the next club night for visitors that return.

Calligraphy Night

The Week Before – Have a calligraphy expert write the announcements about next week's theme.

Getting Ready – Purchase calligraphy markers and plenty of **paper**.

Make It Fun! – Teachers show clubbers lettering techniques. Each teacher should work with a small group of clubbers. Each clubber will need a pen or felt marker shaped for calligraphic

writing. After each clubber learns to form letters of the alphabet legibly and attractively, provide more scrap paper on which he/she begins to practice lettering a Scripture verse.

When the clubber has mastered the technique, allow him/her to letter the verse on heavy bond paper or parchment. This makes a nice gift for parents or grandparents.

Make It Worthwhile! – Tell the Bible story of the handwriting on the wall (Daniel 5). **Extra Excitement** – If time allows, clubbers may make frames for verses. Have frame shapes already cut from heavy cardboard. Be sure frame size complements size of paper furnished for lettering. Clubbers wrap frames with yarn. Or clubbers cover frame with material such as denim or heavy cotton. Cover ends of frame and glue excess material to back. Before covering top and bottom, fold material under at each end to make neat corner. If material is folded on an angle, you have a mitered corner. The frame can be made even more attractive by adding padding between cardboard and material before gluing material to back of cardboard.

Show Your Talent Night

The Week Before – Announce Talent Night several weeks in advance so clubbers can decide what they'll do and then practice their performance. Suggest that they sing solos or duets, recite a poem or read a selection, play musical instruments, perform gymnastic feats, tell jokes, etc.

Getting Ready – All participating clubbers must sign up at least two weeks in advance so the club director can screen and schedule the performances. If a clubber's proposal is inappropriate, the club director should politely discuss objections with the clubber and suggest other possibilities.

Make It Fun! – To allow time for the Talent Night activities, shorten each club segment by seven minutes. Schedule the talent performances just before Council Time. (Optional: After everyone has performed, leaders huddle to decide winners in selected categories, and prizes are awarded.)

Make It Worthwhile! – Discuss with clubbers how we can use our talents for Christ. Although each of us has varied abilities, God expects all of us to be faithful in using what He has given us.

Relate the story from Matthew 25:14-30 of the three servants and how their master responded to them. Particularly point out the warning for each of us in the life of the man with the one talent.

Whether we have been blessed with five talents, two talents or one talent, it is God who has entrusted us with our ability (abilities). What a privilege and responsibility to use them for I-us glory! Not only did the one-talent man hide his talent and not use it, but he lost the talent itself and the opportunity to use it for the Lord. You might also refer to Luke 12:48 and remind your clubbers what Jesus said: *t. for unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required*. Emphasize to clubbers that we can all use our talents in helping others or being a friend to someone. God wants us to be helpful, encouraging, friendly and kind to our friends and our family.

Extra Excitement – Videotape the talent competition to show at a later date.

New Game Night

The Week Before Announce to clubbers at least two weeks in advance in order to build clubber anticipation and excitement.

Getting Ready Prepare a selection of games you've never played in club before.

Make It Fun! Look in *The Best Awana Games Ever!* book for new game ideas.

Make It Worthwhile! Expand the following thoughts: When we receive Christ as Savior, we become new creations (2 Corinthians 5:17). We are born into God's family (John 1:12) and look forward to a new home in heaven (John 14:1-6).

Extra Excitement Have a contest to develop a new game. The winner gets to have his or her game played by the entire group.

Field Day Night

The Week Before Run this night as a surprise theme.

Getting Ready Schedule this theme for a regular club night when the weather is warm and there are longer daylight hours. In the church parking lot or nearby park, set up activities such as running broad jump, standing broad jump, high jump, 50-yard dash, 100-yard dash and ball throw. Station leaders at each location to supervise and instruct.

Make it Fun! Clubbers may start wherever they choose and move from event to event. Award ribbons for winners in each event. List winners on a poster and display on the club bulletin board for several weeks.

Make it Worthwhile! Compare the Christian life to a race (1 Corinthians 9:24;

Philippians 2:16, 3:14; Hebrews 12:1).

Extra Excitement End the evening with a picnic supper.

Trike Night

The Week Before Run this event as a surprise theme.

Getting Ready Find four large tricycles for Game Time,

Make It Fun! Play games around Awana circle; use four tricycles, one for each team. Players ride trikes in individual races or relays. They can also push or pull one another on trikes in laps around circle.

Make It Worthwhile! Expand the following thoughts: The apostle Paul tells us to grow up in Christ (Ephesians 4:15). Little kids love to ride trikes. As they grow up, however, they don't want to stay on tricycles. They become excited about riding two-wheelers. We as Christians must grow up spiritually. Ephesians 4:15 talks about one way to grow up: *speaking the truth in love*. It's very important to be honest in all we do and say. This is part of growing up in Christ.

Extra Excitement Play outdoors.