

Volunteer Motivation Tips

Prayer

- Prayer is vital to our efforts to motivate and inspire volunteers. Satan wants to derail our work in the lives of children, youth and families. Realize that many of our battles are spiritual. Keep yourself armed with prayer. Encourage your volunteers to do the same. Working together against a common enemy will help connect you as a team. React with prayer to burdens, open doors, opposition and challenges. God will use it to bless your leadership.
- Your team members need to know that prayer is your first response. Live this out in front of them in team meetings and one on one. Pray for your volunteers regularly in person and privately. For example, make sure to start each meeting with a few minutes of prayer. Have all volunteers gather together prior to kids' arrival.
- Start a two-minute thank-you prayer time. Ask and encourage clubbers to help you thank and pray for fellow leaders at the end of club time once a month. Stop and pray in the moment for requests as you feel led.
- Create an Awana leader wall in your ministry area. Display pictures of each Awana volunteer along with their name and role within your Awana children's or youth ministry chart. Feature a blank piece of paper where a role needs to be filled. Post a prayer needs sheet asking church members to pray for volunteers. Relationships
- Connections among team members are crucial to the health and success of your ministry. The more your fellow volunteers feel a part of your team, the more they'll want to stay. In fact, the best ministry teams become like a second family to the volunteers over time.
- As new leaders come, pay close attention to their needs and really make them feel connected and welcome to the ministry. Use their first name frequently.
- Have a location in your church where all team members go to either check in or out. Make it an appealing spot where they'll connect with each other over time. Stock it with refreshments, couches, chairs and soft praise music to create a warm, inviting atmosphere.
- Use social media or club tech to connect with your team throughout the year. Get connected with other Awana ministry volunteers through the Awana Facebook page.
- Build camaraderie through team events at and away from church. Create a list of events everyone would like to participate in and try to do them throughout the year.
- Recognize birthdays, holidays and special achievements.
- Give leaders the opportunity to pair up and work as a team. Combine handbook groups at times to encourage connectedness.
- Pair up each youth leader with an experienced adult volunteer (of the same gender) who serves as a mentor.
- Commanders: Step out as mentors to your club directors. Club directors: mentor a couple of leaders in your program. Consider who you see as potential future commanders and club directors. Ask leaders to mentor student leaders.

- Remind volunteers of the impact they're making in the lives of youth and families. Share victories and celebrate God's work through members of your team. Let your volunteers find personal meaning in the ministry.

Volunteer Input

- Encourage leader involvement and ownership. Let each leader develop a plan for a specific month. For example, you could assign one or two leaders to select and plan out the theme nights for the month of November.
- Make a suggestion box where volunteers can submit ideas for improving your ministry.
- Survey your leaders at mid-year. Ask if there is anything you can do to help make their service more effective.
- Invite leaders to your home occasionally and provide refreshments. Give them the opportunity to offer ideas and feedback.

Rewards and appreciation

- When you recognize the worth of your volunteers, they gain value. The more they feel valued, the more meaning they find in ministry and the more in sync they will be with God and who God made them to be. As John 12:26 says, Whoever serves Me must follow Me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves Me.
- Put the name of each leader in a box and draw one or two names per week. Give them a small but meaningful gift such as a gift card to a local coffee shop or restaurant.
- To save money, create a leader-of-the-week T-shirt, crown or whatever is fun to your leaders and clubbers. The leader of the week needs to wear it on club night. You can always make up a funny "thank you" song that all the clubbers can sing and merely requires swapping in the name of the leader.
- Encourage parents to thank their child's leader.
- Use awards to encourage your team. Have an appreciation dinner. If there's time, recognize every single one of them. Use titles, recognition, awards, special treatment or outings. And don't forget to express heartfelt thanks in person on Awana club and youth ministry nights throughout the year.
- Appreciate fellow team members for their uniqueness. Realize you may need to reward them differently based on their personality types. Consider using personality tests during training so you know how to communicate best with each volunteer. One example is the five love languages assessment found at 5lovelanguages.com.
- Affirm leaders who go above and beyond during leader meetings and in front of the kids, such as during Large Group Time.
- Whether post-it notes, emails, Facebook wall posts or text messages, leave short notes of gratitude and encouragement for a couple of volunteers each week.

- Place a Thank Your Leader Box at the check-in table. Encourage parents, kids and fellow leaders to submit notes of gratitude to team members. Spiritual focus
- Look for spiritual victories, ask others to watch for them and encourage leaders and children to share them in Awana and in leader meetings.

Family

- Get families serving together in ministry by creating opportunities for them to work side by side in your ministry. For instance, a dad and mom could serve as Puggles, Cubbies or Sparks leaders while their tween or teen works in the same club with them as a student leader. If a family has a child in club, the parents could serve as that child's handbook group leaders. A husband and wife could also serve as game directors and their teen or tween could assist them. If needed, create new positions within your ministry so that families can serve together.
- When you encourage families to volunteer together in Awana, you're also creating a tighter bond between the family's parents and their children. Serving together in ministry gives a family a spiritual activity in common that brings the family closer together. An added bonus is that volunteers are more likely to remain committed to your ministry when they serve alongside family members.
- During a leadership meeting, ask families to share why they serve in Awana together and how they benefit.