Leader Handbook Training

Welcome!
Thank you for volunteering to serve in Awana-Sparks. Awana is a worldwide ministry that has a huge heart and vision to reach kids with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We pray that during the Awana-Sparks season God will use your life to make an eternal difference in a life of a child!

We’re looking forward to another GREAT year in Sparks!

-The Sparks Leadership Team
What’s our goal?
• To **assist** parents in laying the spiritual foundation for their children
• To **introduce** and present the gospel to children
• To **teach** children to love the Word of God by memorizing it and learning how to use it every day

*II Timothy 3:15, “And how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.”*

Why Awana?
The statistics are staggering. Only nine percent of Christian youth and one-third of born-again adults believe in absolute moral truth—the stakes could not be higher for our kids and the future of the church. As researcher George Barna warns, “The church must focus on children and children’s ministry. We have virtually lost a generation. We cannot afford to lose another one.”

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/her learning.

What is Awana?
Awana stands for “Approved workmen are not ashamed’ (2 Timothy 2:15). Awana was founded in 1950 as an international, nondenominational Bible-centered children’s and youth ministry. The ministry is committed to evangelism and the discipleship of children and youth. It is an effective way to spread the gospel to the homes of unsaved and/or unchurched families. Awana is dedicated to the training of parents to fulfill their role as the spiritual leaders of their children.

The 5 principles of Awana:
1. Awana is centered on the **gospel**
2. **Scripture memory** is a key element
3. Awana is **exciting** and **fun**
4. Children and youth are trained to serve
5. Awana is built on **volunteer leadership**

“Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you - they are your life...” -Deuteronomy 32:46-47

A key feature of Sparks, and all of Awana, is Scripture memorization. We want children to commit Scripture to memory so it is, as we read in Psalm 119:11, hidden in their hearts. The intent is for our children and youth to learn and live God’s Word. They are equipped to do so because they have heard it, read it and, through Awana, have memorized it.

Five reasons to memorize Scripture:
1. The Bible is true and flawless (Ps 119:160; Ps 18:30)
2. The Bible’s truth will last forever (Prov 30:5; Is 40:8)
3. The Bible shows us how to live (2 Tim 3:16-17; Ps 119: 105, 130; Mt 7:24)
4. The Bible strengthens our faith (Rm 10:17; Rm 15:4)
5. Knowing the Bible pleases God (Prov 7:1-3; I John 5:3)

YOU are a key person in this endeavor. You can just listen and sign handbooks as children recite words **OR** you can engage a child in figuring out what God’s Word means and how He wants us to live. The handbooks contain definitions of words that are used in the memory verses. Take time to talk to a child about what the words mean and how they apply to them personally. What a privilege it is to share God’s life-changing Word with these young children!
The Sparks team includes:

**Director:** Responsible for the full Sparks program. Moves pinch hitters around to fill needs, assists with discipline issues as they arise & checks rooms throughout the night. Reports to the Commanders.

**Class Secretaries:** Makes sure all the handbook room leaders have everything they need to be successful. Responsible for distributing supplies, handbooks, and crafts. Monitors the treasure chest and refills when necessary. Collects “we missed you postcards” and gives to record keepers. Reports to the Directors.

**Record Keepers:** Keeps track of clubber’s progress in their handbooks, marks record cards and distributes shares, awards jewels and emblems. Addresses “we missed you” postcards and delivers to the Awana store. Prepares book awards for awards nights. Reports to the Directors.

**Table Time Leader:** Is assigned 5 to 6 children and listens to their verses, signs students’ books when sections are finished. Leaders do one-on-one with the Sparks, helping them to understand what they are learning. Leaders are to build relationships with their students and encourage their walk with the Lord. Assists the kids on their line as they play games, watches for and responds to discipline issues as they arise & encourages sportsman-like behavior in our Sparks.

**Game Leader:** Responsible for planning the games for each night and leads the game volunteers. The game leader builds fun and excitement into the games and sets the tone for Sparks games & is always conscious of safety issues. The Game Leader reports to the Commanders.

**Tech Leader:** Responsible for making sure power point and songs are set for the night, sets up and maintains the power-point, microphones, sound system. Tech Leader reports to the Director.
What does a Table Leader do?

The goals of the Table Leader are:

1. To help children commit scripture verses to long-term memory
2. To make sure children understand what the verses mean
3. To make sure each child understands and has a chance to respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You will have 4-5 children you will meet with each night of Awana so you can build a relationship with each of them. Plan on having 5-7 minutes with each child. During your time with the child, try to do the following:

• Listen to each child recite his or her verses. If they stall, you may give them a prompt: “Do you know the verse from *book* that begins *first two words*?”
• Say encouraging words or offer a high five
• Ask them how their week is going
• Pray for them if needed
• Make sure they understand the verses they said
• Help explain future verses
• If they are not Christians, continue to share the gospel
• Send them to get their award if an award is listed below line that was signed.

Table Leader Skills & Standards

Leading a child to Christ

If a child does become a Christian, please tell your director so we can celebrate with you and follow up with the child and the parents.

Handbook Verse Recitation Standards

Encourage parents to write notes on stickies and put them in books to help with communication. Our goal is long-term memorization of God’s Word.

• Child has no memory? Prompt: “Do you know the verse from *book* that begins *first two words*?” ex: Do you know the verse from Peter that begins ‘But grow’?”

• Verse and reference must be recited
• 2 (two) helps allowed per section the first time through the book
• 0 (zero) helps when doing review through the book

Please stick to standards, but realize in some cases where children are not supported at home you might have to be creative with helping them and show mercy.
Standards for Completing Books

• When a student finishes their book, they need to go to the recording secretary for their award. At that point the child can choose to review the full book or move on to the Frequent Flyer.

• If a child is in 1st grade and just completed HangGlider book, they can continue to the WingRunner book without doing any form of review. If a child is in 2nd grade and just completed WingRunner, they can continue to the SkyStormer book without doing any form of review.

• If a child has more than 3 sections to pass in a night, they can do 3 and then wait till you have listened to all your other students. If you have time, you may go back and listen to more, but please remember - the goal is NOT getting through the book quickly, but knowing the Word of God!

• Only approved leaders from any Awana club program (Cubbies, Sparks, & T&T, Trek and Journey) can sign books. Awana leaders who are parents or relatives of Sparkies cannot sign their own children’s books.

Handbooks according to grade:

Kindergarten: HangGlider & HangGlider Frequent Flyer
First Grade: WingRunner & WingRunner Frequent Flyer
Second Grade: SkyStormer & SkyStormer Frequent Flyer
Handbook Awards

**Flight 3:16 Entrance Booklet:** All Sparkies start with an entrance booklet. Every new or visiting child should receive one. It contains our Sparks key verse (John 3:16), which introduces them to the gospel message. This is an ideal opportunity to get the gospel into an unchurched home. When a child completes Flight 3:16, she becomes a member of the Sparks club and can purchase a Sparks vest.

All kids begin with their Sparks vest. This is their uniform that is to be worn each week of Awana. Once the 1st portion of the Sparks handbook is completed, the child earns the rank emblem. **Pilot wings** are given out when the first jewel is earned. **Blue jewels** are given for club attendance. **Green and red jewels** are awarded after each completed section in the handbook(s).

**Children are required to progress through his/her handbook in order. The only exception to this is the “Bring a Friend” section. This section may be completed anytime during the year.**

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If a student completes a book early, they have two options:

1. Students can earn a review emblem (left). Students review the completed book’s verses again, but in sections. The emblem is earned once all sections have been recited and signed.

2. Students can also complete a Frequent Flyer. These mini-books, or cards, are tailored to each Sparks book and are purchased separately.
SPARKS SCHEDULE

4:30-4:45pm | Volunteers Arrive, Check-in people in place
Leader kids come in; check-in people in place, all other volunteers to 1205/6/7 (K) or 2400 1 & 2) for pre-club activity.

4:45-5:00pm | Pre-session Game/Activity
Doors open! Must have Spark leaders in the rooms at this time. As children are coming in, there will be interactive games in the rooms.

5:00-5:05pm | Flag Ceremony/Worship
Pre-club leaders will lead kids in pledges, Sparks song, prayer and announcement

5:05-5:30pm | Handbook Time
Takes place in classrooms.

5:35-6:00pm | Game Time
Kindergartners In Community room A, 1st grade in Community room C, 2nd grade in the Rock.

6:05-6:30pm | Large Group
Large group speaker will give the Bible lesson. ALL Sparks leaders are expected to sit among the kids, listen and help kids focus during this time.

6:30-6:45pm | Ending Time
Any upcoming events and handouts are shared. Handbook awards are presented. Dismiss from Community room A. Two Sparks Leaders should be at each door to check name tags and claim stickers

ABSENCES  ABSENCES  ABSENCES  ABSENCES  ABSENCES  ABSENCES  ABSENCES

PLEASE let us know when you will be absent!! You are valuable to our team and will be missed!

Contact your directors - Kindergarten – Julie Sokol | krolka@yahoo.com
1st & 2nd grade – James and Maggie Bailey | jbailey@armedia.com
mbailey@armedia.com
General information

VOLUNTEER APPAREL

Uniforms, for both leaders and Sparkies, are an important component of the Awana ministry. Uniforms encourage an orderly and disciplined club and as leaders, you set the tone for the club. A leader wearing their uniform is the best way to show Sparkies the importance of wearing theirs. Uniforms also help us to distinguish who is a leader and who is a loiterer!

- Did you know?? Statistically clubs with a higher % of handbook finishers and major award recipients have a high % of Sparkies in uniform.

NAME TAGS

All volunteers should also check in at the welcome desks and get a name tag.

PLEDGES

I pledge allegiance to the Awana flag, which stands for the Awana clubs, whose goal is to reach boys and girls with the gospel of Christ and train them to serve Him.

SPECIAL ASSISTANCE

If you have a child who needs special assistance due to lack of support from home, let your Director know and he/she will set up a system to help this child during Sparks

FRIENDS

Clubbers are “encouraged” to bring a friend to have the friend section signed off. This section can be done anytime during the year. Since clubbers do not have much control over bringing a friend, we do not deny them their book award at the end of the year if they don’t complete this section. But please encourage them to keep asking friends right up to the end of Awana, remembering our goal is to reach boys and girls with the gospel of Christ.

ADOPT-A-CLUB

Adopt-a-Club money can be given at the Awana store on the second floor near the cafeteria.

9/2013