



Dear Commander,

The new Awana year is now here, and your life has suddenly become a lot busier. I know it can be a hectic time, and you need all the help you can get. We have put this CD together with a variety of information to try to help you plan a little better and also to help you work more efficiently in your clubs.

There are some things I would like you to remember as you go through this year. First and foremost is why you are doing this job. You may be Commander because no one else would (or you missed the meeting and got voted into it!) You may have wanted to serve and thought this was the best way to accomplish that goal. Whatever the reason remember there is one reason why God has you where you are, and that is to reach boys and girls with the Gospel of Christ. Grab onto this vision, and make it your own, and all of your work will never seem to be in vain. Pass it on to your leaders, and remind them of who they are and what they are doing, and your work might just become easier.

Remember you are not alone. There are at least 250 other Commanders in Oklahoma who can be great resource for you. We also have almost 20 Ministry Team members who have volunteered to help any way they can. My wife and I are also here to give you as much assistance as possible to help you and your club grow. All of our contact information on this CD as well as on our website, www.oklawana.org. Thanks you for your dedication and all of your hard work.

***James Cavanaugh
Awana Missionary to Oklahoma***

Ten Standards of Excellence for Awana Children's Clubs

These are the ten standards of a successful Awana children's club. The characteristics beneath each standard illustrate a well-run club and can serve as the pattern for a church's orientation and evaluation. These standards are based on Awana training materials.

1. We reach boys and girls with the gospel of Christ and train them to serve Him.

Our hope at Awana is that all children and youth throughout the world will come to know, love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. To realize this hope, leadership of each Awana club must share the gospel with clarity and urgency, and model a godly life.

Clubs exhibit this standard by ensuring that:

- A. All leaders are ready to present the gospel and know the steps to lead a child to Christ according to the standards set in the training materials.
- B. Unsaved clubbers regularly have the opportunity to trust Christ as Savior.
- C. In Council Time, there is clear, age-appropriate teaching on the plan of salvation.
- D. Leaders are prepared to use the Awana handbooks and verses to help clubbers understand the plan of salvation.
- E. Directors organize special promotional efforts to bring unsaved children into club.
- F. Clubbers and their parents hear a clear presentation of the gospel at special activities.
- G. Directors set high standards and goals for leaders to establish and maintain relationships with clubbers through home visits and other contacts. These steps are always taken with parental knowledge and according to the guidelines of the church.
- H. Leaders strive to reflect Christ-like character in their lives.
- I. Leaders know each child and help those with special needs.
- J. Club leadership provides opportunities for children to put their faith into action.

2. We recruit, train and motivate leaders to serve the local church.

The effective operation of an Awana club will not only enhance a church's outward ministry to its community, but also introduce and promote the opportunity for individuals to serve the church through leadership in Awana and other ministries. Serving in Awana fosters a strong commitment to God, church, leaders and clubbers.

Clubs exhibit this standard by ensuring that:

- A. Basic training is organized and all leaders pass the basic training test.
- B. Leaders are encouraged and motivated to participate in leadership conferences.
- C. Leaders continue to develop through advanced training.
- D. At least once a month, club leadership meets to pray, plan and assign tasks.
- E. Leaders are frequently challenged regarding the goals of Awana and the particular objectives of their club.
- F. Everyone is motivated to set an example of punctuality and responsibility.
- G. Directors recognize success, correct problems and encourage continual improvement.
- H. Club leadership supports the activities of the local church as active members.
- I. The commander or program director meets with the pastor regularly for reporting, planning and evaluating the development of the club.
- J. The pastor participates formally in a club activity at least once a year.

- K. At least once a year, the entire club makes a presentation to the church celebrating what God has done through the club.
- L. Leaders and others who work with the club are recognized and honored to encourage their continued participation.
- M. Leaders are screened during the recruiting process according to the church's child protection policies.
- N. Leaders are trained in the child protection policies and practices of the church and actively implement those policies and practices.

3. We use positive discipline and maintain order throughout the entire club meeting.

God is a God of order and we seek to reflect this part of His nature in Awana club meetings. A fun and exciting, yet orderly, atmosphere is the means to maximum impact in the life of a child, and also serves as a strong testimony to parents, neighbors and other community members.

Clubs exhibit this standard by ensuring that:

- A. Clear and positive standards of behavior are established, communicated and applied.
- B. A set schedule is established that provides an environment for positive behavior.
- C. Both leaders and clubbers are encouraged and motivated to wear their uniforms.
- D. Clubbers are supervised before and after club.
- E. The opening ceremony begins on time, the club schedule is followed, and club finishes on time.
- F. Each club meeting or activity is planned in advance.
- G. Changes are announced ahead of time and leaders follow through on their promises.
- H. A system of positive points and special awards is established to motivate good behavior.
- I. The "five-count" is used consistently to control group attention.
- J. The "three-count" is used with prudence and firmness for cases of individual rebellion.
- K. Leaders are examples of good behavior and attitude (sportsmanship) during Game Time.
- L. Clubbers are trained to win and lose graciously.

4. We attract children with games and activities.

Ask children what they like about Awana, and chances are you'll hear one answer: "The games!" There's a reason for that. Awana games are as fun as they are unique, and – along with creative theme-based activities – they keep children coming back to hear the gospel and learn Scripture.

Clubs exhibit this standard by ensuring that:

- A. The club year includes a variety of creative, well-planned activities.
- B. Club leadership promotes special activities in advance to build anticipation.
- C. An exciting and fun point system motivates clubbers.
- D. Game Time is exciting and beneficial for all clubbers.
- E. The game leader uses a variety of games, directs the flow of each game, and enforces discipline consistently.

- F. Team leaders are familiar with the games, help to keep order, encourage clubbers and assist the game leader.
- G. Clubbers are motivated and encouraged by team spirit.

5. We encourage memorization, understanding and application of Scripture.

Scripture memory is a distinctive of the Awana ministry. Children memorize God's Word in Awana, learn to understand and apply it, and see the benefits of Scripture memory firsthand. Our focus on memorization, set in a positive and encouraging context, also plants the seeds of this essential discipline that many carry forward into adulthood.

Clubs exhibit this standard by ensuring that:

- A. Club leaders always have their Bibles with them and try to see that every clubber has one.
- B. Bibles are used in Handbook Time and Council Time.
- C. Leaders help clubbers establish personal goals in order to complete their handbooks.
- D. Clubbers display an understanding of the verses and biblical truths they have learned.
- E. Leaders encourage clubbers to apply what they have learned in club to their lives.
- F. There are enough leaders and listeners to attend to all clubbers.
- G. Leaders spend time with all clubbers as they work in their handbooks.
- H. Awards and the point system are used to give special emphasis to the sections completed each week.
- I. Additional Scripture challenges are provided for highly motivated clubbers.
- J. Leaders are encouraged and motivated to set an example by completing the handbooks.

6. We use the elements of Council Time effectively.

While Awana is well known for games and a focus on Scripture memory, it also provides a unique opportunity to lead children in worship and instruct them in biblical truth. This may be the only such experience some children have each week! These precious times of "rightly dividing the word of truth" are amazing opportunities that should motivate Awana leadership to plan and prepare diligently.

Clubs exhibit this standard by ensuring that:

- A. Directors carefully plan Council Time activities and delegate assignments to leaders.
- B. Leaders sit with their clubbers during Council Time and encourage them to participate appropriately.
- C. A continual and systematic plan of Council Time teaching is designed and applied, with messages clearly based on Scripture passages.
- D. The Council Time teaching is appropriate for the age of the clubbers, both in content and in length.
- E. The message is presented in a creative and varied manner that speaks to both the unsaved clubber and the young Christian.
- F. Worship through songs, personal testimony and group prayer is taught and practiced.

- G. Announcements inform clubbers and motivate them to participate in upcoming club activities and church events.
- H. Club leadership stimulates a missionary vision through Council Time activities and presentations.
- I. Following the church's supervision policies, time is allowed for personal counseling with the children before club is dismissed.

7. We motivate children through incentives.

Awana has developed a system of simple, yet effective, incentives to motivate and encourage children in Scripture memory and handbook achievement. These external motivators help children grow to a place where their own spiritual maturity motivates them to learn and memorize.

Clubs exhibit this standard by ensuring that:

- A. Clear and precise goals and priorities are set for clubbers.
- B. Progress toward club goals is evaluated and communicated regularly.
- C. Team awards are planned in advance.
- D. Earned awards are presented as soon as possible and displayed correctly.
- E. Efforts and achievements are recognized with enthusiasm and praise in a public, personal and sincere manner.
- F. Clubbers are recognized for regular attendance at club and church.
- G. All clubbers are recognized for their participation in club each week.

8. We manage God's resources with faithfulness and integrity.

The resources entrusted to the leaders of an Awana ministry are precious in God's sight. Club leadership has a responsibility to plan and organize in such a way that people, their time, money and other resources are utilized to maximum benefit. Through these efforts, club leadership heeds God's call to be good stewards, and presents a testimony above reproach to those inside and outside the church.

Clubs exhibit this standard by ensuring that:

- A. The Pastor and Commander annually renew the Awana Ministry Agreement and the registration fee before the specified date.
- B. A determination is made of what resources are needed and available.
- C. A yearly budget, work plan and activity schedule are designed at the beginning of the year.
- D. The materials inventory is kept up-to-date and future needs are anticipated.
- E. The secretary is encouraged to keep an up-to-date record of awards, inventory and attendance.
- F. Everyone recognizes the value and impact of the Awana ministry and helps raise resources for the clubs.
- G. Club leadership encourages all volunteers to make full use of their God-given talents and abilities and seeks to match them to the correct position.
- H. Club leadership plans for the future, seeking to develop and train someone to take his or her place in the ministry.
- I. Proper planning occurs before all meetings to make the best use of everyone's time.
- J. Children are physically and emotionally safe in the club environment.

9. We minister to parents and family members.

*Awana is always about reaching children with the gospel, but it must be about **more** than reaching children. In fact, focusing on families of the unchurched children who attend can be a church's most effective outreach! When family members observe how excited a child is about Awana, they notice and often want to know more. Club leaders must be not only prepared, but **purposeful**, about connecting with families and sharing the truth that motivates the ministry.*

Clubs exhibit this standard by ensuring that:

- A. Immediate follow-up takes place with clubbers who make decisions for Christ, reaching out to families when appropriate.
- B. When appropriate, club leadership contacts the parents or guardians of all clubbers, including absentees and newcomers.
- C. Special activities are used to attract parents and relatives.
- D. Parents are integrated into the teaching and learning process of their children when appropriate.
- E. Time before and after the club is used to relate to clubbers and parents informally.
- F. Parents or family members who are involved with or help the club are recognized.
- G. Family members are attracted to the ministry through people showing genuine concern and love for their children.
- H. The church experiences growth from the attendance of clubbers and their families.

10. We magnify the impact of our church's ministry through cooperation with the national Awana ministry.

The immediate impact of the Awana ministry is on the local church, but our hope is for a far greater impact. By developing a strong relationship and good communication with the national Awana ministry, churches enhance their effectiveness in reaching the world for Christ. Ministry efforts are strengthened when talents, wisdom, blessings, and even struggles are shared with others.

Clubs exhibit this standard by ensuring that:

- A. Club leadership participates in Awana activities organized at the local, regional and national level.
- B. Club leadership tries, as much as possible, to encourage their church and club to financially support their country's Awana ministry.
- C. Club leadership cooperates in the growth and development of other clubs, both locally and internationally.
- D. Club leadership communicates with the missionary or national office on major progress or problems.

Helpful Hints



Check out the online Handbook Pacing Calendar on the Awana website:

<http://www.awana.org/powerup/calendar>. This helpful tool allows you to set your start and end dates, plus include any dates that you will not be having club in order to determine how many sections a clubber will need to complete each week in order to complete their current handbook in a single club year.



Have questions or need ideas? The Oklahoma Missionary and Ministry Team are here to help, but did you know that you can also get answers from leaders from across the country? Check out what's happening on the Awana Forums: <http://www2.awana.org/cs/Forums/Default.aspx>. Not only can you converse with other Awana leaders, but there are blogs started by various staff members at Awana Headquarters that can be very interesting and from which many times staff members get feedback about various undertakings and ideas for future endeavors.



Awana Ideas, *Parent Pause*, *Sparkles*, *KidsPrint*: What do all of these publications have to do with each other? They are all free newsletters published by Awana for your use. *Awana Ideas* contains tried and true methods of doing all sorts of activities – many of which are submitted by leaders from across the country. *Parent Pause*, *Sparkles*, and *KidsPrint* are all downloadable newsletters that you can print for your clubbers and their families. They have stories and activities for the kids, and there is a place on the last page for you to share any announcements with parents.



Looking for ways to engage parents? Have you heard *KidMatters*? It's a one-minute parenting spot sponsored by Awana on many Christian radio stations. If you do not have it in your area, don't fret – you can also hear them on the Awana website. Just click on *KidMatters* at the top of the homepage.



You have a child that has just flown through his/her handbook, reviewed the material perfectly, *and* completed the workbook / silver & gold sections. There are still several weeks of club left. What do you do? Awana website to the rescue with more extra credit opportunities!! http://awana.org/leader_resources/default.aspx?id=124 You can also have clubbers to complete Take It to Heart or do some peer tutoring.



Can't figure out where that award is supposed to be displayed? (*Hmmm, let me guess – go to the Awana website??*) You got it!!! Check out the Leader Resources page for your particular club. There will be a drop down menu at the top of the page. You can also find clip-art, announcements, and ideas on the Leader Resource page.

Club Descriptions w/ Ministry Team Contacts

Puggles: Nursery ministry for ages 2-3. This is a wonderful opportunity to introduce toddlers to Scripture and Biblical concepts. There is no memory component; only a Bible lesson and a weekly take home card with ideas for parents to implement at home on a daily basis. For tips on implementing a Puggles Ministry, contact Paula Cavanaugh at (918) 286-3343 / jamesc@awana.org.

Cubbies: Preschool Ministry for children one to two years prior to entering Kindergarten. Each section combines basic Scripture memory with parent-child activities to help a child grasp a simple biblical truth. In addition, all memory verses are presented at a level appropriate for 3- and 4-year-olds. For tips on implementing a Cubbies Ministry, contact Pam Darnell at chudarnell@sbcglobal.net.

Sparks: The aim of the curriculum is to take youngsters a step deeper into God's Word while giving unsaved boys and girls regular opportunities to hear the gospel and come to faith in Jesus Christ. The Sparks ministry is firmly grounded in Scripture featuring basic truths about God, Jesus Christ, salvation and the Bible. Sparks club meetings combine learning with fun to create an atmosphere of irresistible excitement for churched and unchurched kids alike. Along the way, Sparky, the friendly firefly, encourages boys and girls to learn verses and complete assignments. For tips on implementing a Sparks Ministry, contact Terry Arjay at terryarjay@familynet.net or Alan Wilson at alan4awana@aol.com

Truth & Training: T&T is the ministry that trains the leaders of tomorrow — today. Evangelism and discipleship go hand in hand in our third- through sixth-grade program. By the time a child has completed T&T, he will have learned and reviewed approximately 310 verses, Studied dozens of passages from the Old and New Testament, regularly heard and read the gospel message, discovered the Bible's response to questions like "How does God want me to live my life?" and memorized verses to back up these answers, and completed missions projects that help him see the world through God's eyes. For tips on implementing a T&T Ministry, contact Carol Adams at okcfam@hotmail.com.

24/7 Teen Ministries: While the younger Awana clubs focus on obtaining and nurturing a relationship with Christ, Awana's teen ministries (Trek and Journey) focus on how that relationship with Christ affects their relationships with other people. It prepares them for the trials and pitfalls that inevitably come in life and reminds them where to turn. For tips on implementing 24/7, contact Carol Adams at okcfam@hotmail.com.

Rorheim Institute: The Rorheim Institute is a leader and parent development network from Awana. Our goal is to equip churches with Awana leaders, other kids' ministry workers and parents who have cultivated a sound biblical worldview. Our central focus is to develop parents and leaders who possess the shepherding skills necessary to infuse this worldview into the young people in their sphere of influence. For more information about Rorheim Institute, contact James Cavanaugh at (918) 286-3343 jamesc@awana.org.

Awana Missions Opportunities

Vision Teams: Looking for your next church missions trip? How about joining an Awana Vision Team? Awana International will connect your church with a national Awana missionary in the country you desire to visit. Awana will suggest ministry activities for your church to conduct that will bless the national Awana ministry and your church. The following trips are currently on the schedule:

Liberia: October 2007 **Cost:** TBD
Ministry: Basic Training, National Leadership Training Conference, post-war launching of Awana Liberia

Philippines: June 2008 **Cost:** TBD **Ministry:** TBA

Cameroon: June 2008 **Cost:** TBD
Ministry: Leadership Training Conference, Teach Basic Training courses to new churches, train leaders on AwanaGames™, VBS in villages, Build Awana game circles, Teach (volunteers and some leaders) English as second language and teach volunteers and pastors how to use computer and Internet

Liberia: June 2008 **Cost:** TBD
Ministry: Training workshops for ministry teams and national board

Nepal: October 2008 **Cost:** TBD
Ministry: National missionary and coordinators conference, Awana leadership conference, advance training and Awana kids camp. Bible Quizzing, crafts, puppet show, Bible story and gospel message included in kids camp, distributing gospel tract and children's' Bibles to kids.

Bangladesh: November 20 – 28, 2008
Cost: TBD
Ministry: ESL, VBS

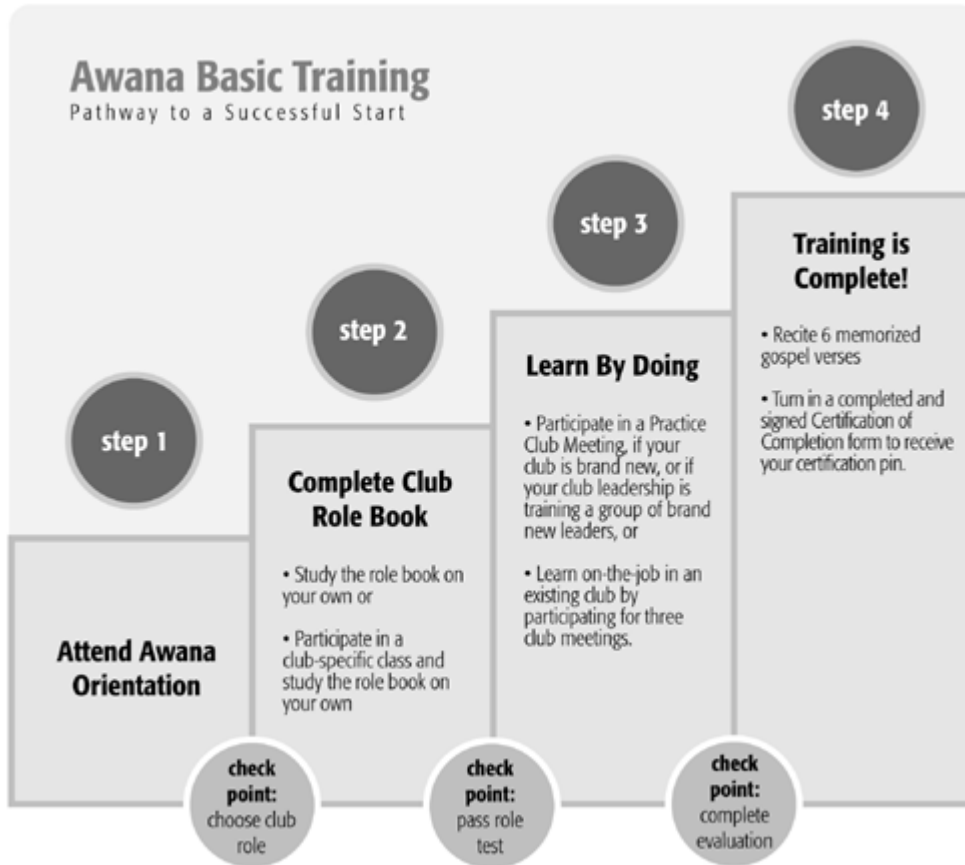
For more information, Contact Awana Vision Teams at (800) 222-9262 or e-mail vision@awana.org.

Adopt a Club: *Thousands of churches overseas see Awana as an extremely effective means for leading kids and families to Jesus Christ. But there are many more that can't afford to start and run clubs.*

Individuals, churches, clubs and families can meet this critical need through Adopt-a-Club. For just \$20 a month, or \$240 a year, you can provide 10 or more children with Awana materials that enable them to participate in Awana. Many clubs do this through simply collecting coins on a card that adds up to the support necessary to fund one of these sponsorships.

For more information, E-mail: adopt-a-club@awana.org.

Basic Training



Basic Training is available for all churches on a first-come, first-serve basis. Simply check the Ministry Calendar at www.oklawana.org to find an available date, and contact us to reserve the time. Regional Basic Trainings will be offered on a quarterly basis once the Ministry Team has grown large enough to cover them. For more information, please contact us at jamesc@awana.org or (918) 286-3343 / (918) 200-4644.

Commander College

Commander, How Well Did You Get Trained?

By Jack Eggar, CEO, Awana Clubs International

Last year, Awana conducted a focus group of Awana commanders from the Chicago area. We asked them to share their joys and frustrations. One thing we learned is that the commanders didn't get a lot of training to prepare them for their pivotal role. One commander remarked that the only training he received about his role was when the departing commander took him aside and instructed him to "show up early and unlock the door, then stay late, turn off the lights and lock the door on your way out."

How about you, Awana commander? Were you mentored into your current role, or did you "learn it on the fly?" I suspect that for the most part, Awana commanders are neither

made nor born - they are picked out of a hat and thrust into a role with a minimum amount of preparation, and those who do receive some training usually are schooled in the mechanics of running an Awana club, but not so much in regard to equipping and inspiring a cadre of Awana leaders to pour themselves into the lives of children in an effort to see them come to know, love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. You were most likely forced to fill in the blanks on your own. Am I right?

It's my desire to rectify that situation, and one way we'll do it is by offering "Commander College" again. We did a test in January and February with two groups of Awana commanders who came to Awana headquarters (braving bone-chilling temperatures in the process) for several days to learn how to be true children's ministry leaders and advocates within their churches. All told, more than 80 Awana commanders left the meetings energized and with a renewed vision and passion to reach kids for Christ. The test confirmed that Commander College can meet a deep need for commanders across the U.S.

In order to better meet the need for Commander training, Commander College has been rolled out to the field in the form of a Regional Commander College. We will be hosting one of these weekends in Tulsa, OK on February 22-24, 2008. This event will be open to Commanders from Oklahoma as well as from Kansas, Missouri, and Arkansas. For more information and/or to register, visit www.awana.org/commandercollege/