



HANDBOOK

Grace Church
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Stewartville, MN 55976

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WHAT IS AWANA?

Awana is a kid's club where they learn to know, love, and serve Jesus. Awana is a world-wide nonprofit ministry focused on providing Bible-based evangelism and discipleship solutions for ages 2-18. For more information, see the Awana website at www.awana.org.

AWANA CLUBS

The Awana Ministry at Grace Church offers the following clubs:



3-4 year olds
Must be potty trained.



K - 2nd grade
Must be at least 5 years old.



3rd - 6th grade

The staff at Awana are volunteers. Each club consists of a Director, Club Leaders, and Helpers. Listeners are volunteers who work with Sparks and T&T clubbers. If you are interested in learning of volunteer opportunities, contact an Awana volunteer.

THE GOSPEL

Grace Church Awana exists to "know Christ and make Him known". This includes children and youth. To do this, we will share the Gospel message as often as we can. It usually will take place in Song and Story time, but it may also take place during Handbook Time and even Game Time.

AWANA MEETING TIMES

The Awana Ministry at Grace Church is held on Wednesday evenings. Please do not drop off children before 6:20 as many volunteers will be just arriving from work. Opening ceremony is at 6:30pm and the evening ends at 8:00pm. For the safety of the clubbers, parents are required to come inside the church to pick up their children after Awana.

COSTS

Grace Church views Awana as an outreach program to children in the greater Stewartville area. The dues, initial uniform, and handbook costs are provided by Grace Church. However; if a clubber loses their uniform or handbook, the replacement cost must be paid to receive the replacement item(s).

DRESS CODE

Children, youth, and volunteers attending Awana should wear their uniform, modest comfortable clothing, and tennis shoes in order to participate in the activities held on a typical evening. Clubbers will receive their name tag at the beginning of the night and turn it in at the end of the night.

Volunteers are required to wear the Grace Volunteer t-shirt and Awana name tag. The first t-shirt is provided free. Additional t-shirts may be available for purchase for \$10 each.

INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY

If Stewartville School District cancels school/school activities because of the weather; Awana will be cancelled as well. When the weather is inclement you can find out if Awana activities are cancelled by the following:

1. Visit the Grace Church Awana Facebook site.
2. Email Alert – an email list will be compiled from the registrations and all known email addresses of Awana families will be contacted if Awana activities are cancelled.
3. Contact an Awana Leader.

INFORMATION / REGISTRATION

All children who participate in the Awana ministry at Grace Church must be registered with the Awana Secretary. Parents can register their clubbers online at: grace-free.org/ministries/children.

PICKING UP CLUBBERS

Parents of children in Awana **must** come inside the church to pick up their children at the end of the Awana night in the lobby. This is for the protection of the clubbers. Parents should return to pick up their child no later than **8:00 PM**. We will notify parents when a child is sick, fussy and not adjusting to the Awana night, or in rare instances for disciplinary reasons. Awana staff will be in the lobby to greet parents.

WHAT TO BRING TO AWANA

Clubbers should wear their designated uniform and comfortable shoes for playing games, Bible and Awana Handbook. Clubbers should not bring other items with them. If a clubber does bring something which does not pertain to Awana with them and a Leader sees it, the clubber will be asked to put it away and keep it out of sight. If a Leader sees the item again, the Leader will confiscate the item until the end of the Awana club night.

There will be some nights where a special theme is being used and clubbers will be asked to bring a certain item(s). When this is the case, clubbers will bring information home with them that will have basic information about what they should bring.

A TYPICAL NIGHT AT AWANA

Each club will have its own schedule. Based on changes in the Awana program, we have had to adapt to these changes. Be sure to check the Awana calendar for special theme nights.

Please recognize there may be some tweaking as we progress through the year.

SPECIAL NIGHTS AT AWANA

From time to time there may be special nights for each of the different clubs. Any movies shown will be from Odyssey, RightNow Media, Storybook, or Veggie Tales. Any others must be approved by the Awana Director. Any events will have advance notice and permission forms (if applicable) sent to parents.

AWANA STORE

Each night, clubbers have the opportunity to earn Awana bucks. Bringing a friend, passing handbook sections, wearing their uniform, having their Bible and handbook, participating in the theme night, etc. are ways they can earn Awana bucks. Several times during the Awana year clubbers will have the opportunity to purchase items from the Awana Store.

WELLNESS POLICY

As we all know, sickness can keep going around with children, affecting not only the other children in a clubber's Awana group, but families and friends as well. Here is our health policy for the Awana ministry.

Children and volunteers SHOULD NOT attend Awana if they have any of the following symptoms:

1. Fever – 100 degrees or higher within the last 24-hours
2. Vomiting or diarrhea within the last 24 hours
3. Runny nose if accompanied by other symptoms and/or colored discharge
4. Bad Cough – coughing increases the chance of infection being spread to others
5. Any rash that is suspected to be contagious

6. If the clubber/volunteer is prescribed an antibiotic, they must have been on the antibiotic for a minimum of 48 hours prior to attending Awana.

Volunteers please contact your respective director if unable to attend.

INTERACTION WITH CLUBBERS

We encourage volunteers to be in contact with clubbers throughout the year, not just on Wednesday nights.

STAFFING

Volunteers are **never** to be alone with a child. There should **always** be another Leader/Helper in a room. This is for the protection of clubbers, the volunteers, and the church. In addition, we will attempt to abide by these minimum ratios:

Cubbies 1:7 Sparks/T&T 1:9 to 1:11

VOLUNTEERS

All volunteers must complete the *Volunteer Ministry Application* and training prior to volunteering. Those volunteers 18 years old and over are required to have a criminal background check performed prior to serving in Awana.

PHYSICAL TOUCH

Volunteers must be careful when and how they touch children. Holding a child's hand is acceptable for reasonably limited periods of time. Hugging a child should be a side hug and should be limited to short, quick hugs. High fives, pats on the back, and handshakes are encouraged as long as they do not hurt the child.

If anyone witnesses or is made aware of any abuse done by anyone on Grace Church premises, this abuse must be reported immediately.

DISCIPLINE

Awana uses two counts, one for an individual and one for the group.

The "5-Count" is used to bring the group to order. As the Leader counts down from 5, the children and volunteers are to become quiet and still.

The "3-Count" is for an individual. The child is given a "one" the first time they have misbehaved and their action is discussed so they understand the inappropriate behavior. If the child continues to misbehave, then they receive a "two". The child now sits down with the Awana Director to discuss their behavior. If the child continues to misbehave or be disruptive, they receive a "three". When the child receives a "three", the parent(s) are called to pick up the clubber. The Leader or Director will discuss with the parent the reason for this action.

Awana volunteers are not permitted to spank, strike, or use physical discipline. A child out of control may have to be physically restrained in extreme circumstances.

There are many family situations that may affect a child's behavior. We encourage parents to communicate with their child's Awana Leader if there is any situation that affects their child. This helps the Awana Leader to potentially minister to the child as opposed to just viewing a situation or action as a discipline problem.

Volunteers are encouraged to be firm with the rules from the beginning. They are to provide clubbers with clear boundaries and clear consequences. It will be much easier in the long run.

FIRST AID

Any injuries are to be reported to a Leader. A first aid kit will be kept in the Awana closet. Parent(s) will be contacted in the event of serious injury or illness.

OTHER CLUB RULES

All of the rules of Grace Church's Awana program are based on the Golden Rule from Luke 6:31:

Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.

1. We show respect for one another in our words and how we treat one another.
2. Clubbers are to remain with their Leaders at all times.
3. Volunteers and clubbers will not use foul language or gestures before, during or after club.
4. Cell phones, iPods, cameras and other electronic devices are not to be brought to Awana. Such devices will be confiscated and returned to the clubber at the end of the night. A telephone is available in the Awana office for children to use in case of an emergency, but only with permission.
5. Clubbers are to show care and respect for property that is not theirs (including the church's).
6. Clubbers are not to push, shove, or play roughly.
7. Clubbers should not be in unauthorized areas of the church.
8. Clubbers should not bring gum or candy to club.
9. New clubbers will receive a uniform and a handbook upon registering for club (if they do not have one already). After completing the entrance booklets, new clubbers will be awarded the handbook and a uniform upon completion of required sections.
10. Visiting children are welcome at Awana and are allowed to visit 1 time during the club year. After 1 visit, they will be welcomed as a clubber.

COMPLETING HANDBOOK SECTIONS

A core activity of Awana is Scripture memorization. Clubbers are to understand what the Scripture verses mean as well as recite them.

Per Awana guidelines, clubbers may have up to 2 helps per section (not verse). A help may consist of 1-2 words. Of course, special consideration should be made for those who have a disability or struggle to complete sections even with hard work. For those clubbers not prepared to recite their verses, they are to write the verses to help them memorize them.

Keep in mind, there are different learning styles. Some may need to act out the verse, some may put the verse to a song, while others recite the verses over and over again. If a clubber does not complete a section for two weeks in a row, the Leader and parent may have a conference to discuss the clubbers progress.

Volunteers are not allowed to sign off on sections for their own children. Volunteers may help their child study, but they will need to complete the section with another Leader/Helper.

INCIDENT REPORTS

In an attempt to prevent future mishaps and to document incidents, an *Incident Report* will be completed by the volunteer most involved. The *Incident Report* is to be completed in the event of injury/first aid, count "2" misbehavior, any type of abuse witnessed, or any volunteer ignoring any of these policies. Incident reports will be reviewed by Awana and Grace Church leadership.