



Leader Handbook

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!



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. Fewer and fewer Christian youth and 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**

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 and checks rooms throughout the night. Reports to the Commanders.

Table Time Leader: Is assigned 4 to 6 children and listens to their verses, signs child's book when sections are finished. Leaders work one-on-one with the Sparks, helping them to understand what they are learning. Leaders are to build relationships with the children and encourage their walk with the Lord. Assists children on their line as they play games, watches for and responds to discipline issues as they arise and encourages sportsman-like behavior in our Sparks. Writes "we missed you" postcards and gives to director.

Treasure Chest Leader: Responsible for monitoring and refilling the treasure chest. When children come with sparky bucks, the leader assists the children in picking a toy in a timely manner.

Record Keepers: Keeps track of child's progress in their handbooks and distributes jewels and emblems. Works with the Directors. The record keeper tracks the clubber's progress through their handbook electronically. After a clubber has recited their verses to their table leader, (remember those standards!) the leader signs their FULL NAME in the clubber's handbook, and the clubber goes to the record keeper, who will mark it in the computer. The record keeper can also see any missing sections a clubber may have.

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 and 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 several 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
- Make sure they understand the verses they said
- Help explain future verses
- If they are not Christians, continue to share the gospel
- If there are visitors be sure they go home with the Flight 3:16 brochure

Table Leader Skills & Standards

Leading a child to Christ

If you have the opportunity and privilege to pray with a child to receive Christ, please tell your director so we can celebrate with you and follow up with the child and the parents.

Section Standards

Reasons for Section Standards

- To ensure that kids are really learning and understanding the Scripture
- To ensure fairness for clubbers
- To ensure consistency among leaders

What are the standards:

- All parts of a section should be completed in one sitting including verses, questions and activities.
- Verses should be word perfect.
- Two helps per section (a help is a few words or even a gesture).

- Clubber must recite the Bible reference. Memorizing the reference will help them find that verse in the future and it is also a great way for them to learn about the bible.
- Sections should be completed in order.
- Review sections are said word perfect, including reference, without any help.

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 cannot sign their own children's books. Please have your FULL NAME in the signature space.

Remember the point is to get God's word into the student. It is not about awards.

We are doing a disservice to the student and to God if the student has no idea what the verse was about when they walk out of church.

Take time to make sure every student in your group understands the gospel message.

For students who seem to struggle you may need to work with them and help them be successful. Talk to their parents as well.

Every student is unique and learns at a different pace. Be patient, but consistent with the standards and your clubbers will succeed!

Special considerations should be made for children with disabilities or who have difficulties memorizing verses. Equally important, 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 will receive their award at either the red carpet awards or the closing awards. Please check with the director to determine next steps for the child.
- If a child is in 1st grade and just completed HangGlider book, they should 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:



Grade	Handbook
Kindergarten	HangGlider
1 st Grade	HangGlider WingRunner
2 nd Grade	HangGlider WingRunner Skystormer

Handbook Progression



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 complete 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.*

Book 1

Rank Patch

Pilot Wings

Book Award



Book 2



Book 3



If a student completes a book early, check with your director to determine which option fits your student.



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.



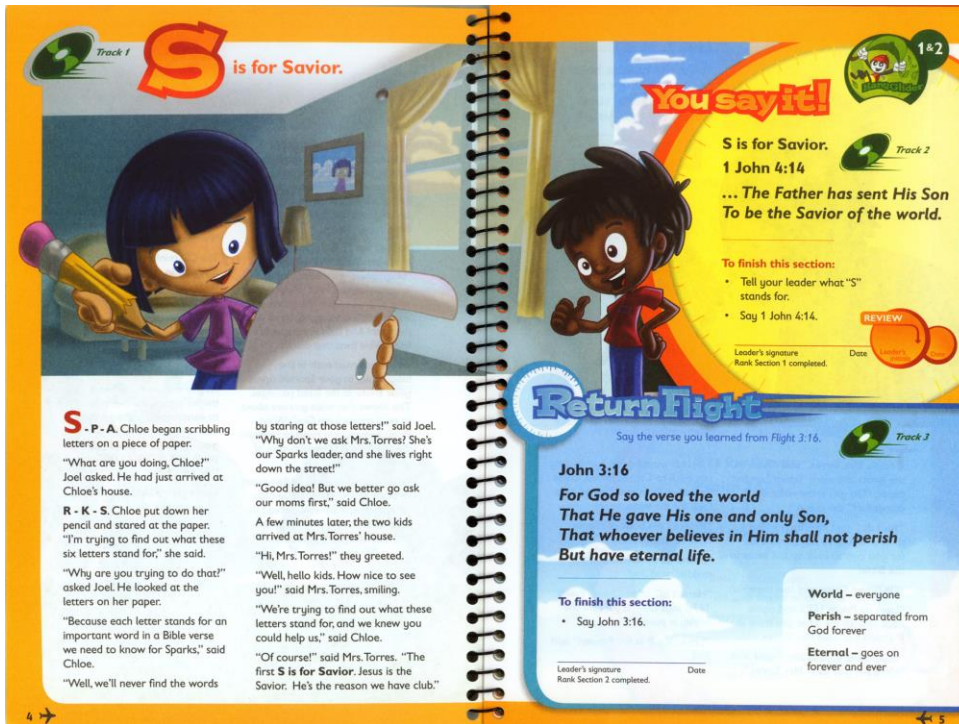
2. Students can also complete a **Frequent Flyer book (below)**. These mini-books, or cards, are tailored to each Sparks book and are purchased separately.





“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

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SPARKS SCHEDULE

	K	1&2
4:45 - 5:05	Pre-club in 1205/6/7 Opening sparks song/pledge/ prayer	Pre-club in Rock Opening sparks song/pledge/ prayer
5:05 - 5:10	in transit	Games in Rock
5:10 - 5:35	Games in A	
5:35 - 5:40		In transit
5:40 - 5:45	bathroom/ water break	Handbook in 2100 classrooms
5:45 - 5:50		
5:50 - 6:05	Large group in 1205/6/7	
6:05 - 6:10		
6:10 - 6:15	Handbook in 1103/4/5/6	in transit
6:15-6:35		Large group in A
6:35- 6:45	Closing and book awards parents pick up from classroom	Closing and book awards parents pick up from A
	K	1&2

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 – Nathanael and Ashley Kelly

Ashley Kelley: ashleynkelley@gmail.com 919-818-6311 (c)

Nathanael Kelley: nskelley@gmail.com 646-580-6283 (c)

1st & 2nd grade – Bennett Varghese bjvarghese@gmail.com 917-559-8423 (c)

Jocelyn Fischer jocelynafischer@yahoo.com 717-877-6143 (c)

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 Sparkies in uniform have more award recipients.*

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.



AwanaGO - money can be turned in at the Awana store on the second floor near the cafeteria.

PLEASE... PUT YOUR CELL PHONE AWAY!

MBC Child Protection Guidelines

McLean Bible Church (MBC) through Next Generation Ministries places the highest priority on maintaining a safe, secure environment for the participation of children in the ministries of the church. The purpose of this child protection document is to protect children during their time at MBC, and to protect volunteers from serious accusations and to provide guidelines of what to do in case of suspected child abuse.

Definition: 'Child abuse is all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including commercial exploitation, sexual abuse while in the care of parent (s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child" 'gopa.de/en/gopa0ploicies/child-protection-policy"

All employees, volunteers, and facilitators at McLean Bible Church are mandated to do everything reasonably possible to provide a safe environment for children. These instructions, although not an exhaustive list, are practical actions you can take:

- a. Awareness
- b. Prevention
- c. Reporting and responding to child protection abuse concerns.

General information:

- Volunteers who do not meet the screening criteria (ie: volunteer application, background check, and fingerprinting) won't be able to work with children.
- We are in a public building and children should always be supervised.
- Do not leave children unattended. Issues at stake include: children's safety from abduction and injury, church liability, food allergies, and consideration for those who clean and organize the rooms.
- Do not release a child to anyone who does not have the matching security ID tag or computer label. This is especially important for protecting children with custody concerns.
- Never promise a child or parent that you won't "tell". Because of legal obligations, immediately report any behaviors which seem abusive or inappropriate to your Director/Team leader, commander and a Staff member.
- Observe the environment and equipment for unsafe situations and remove children from any potentially dangerous conditions. Report problems to the Team Leader/Director.
- The recommended children to adult ratio is: 5 to 1. However, no more than two infants(non-walkers) per adult.
- Rosters are helpful in documenting attendance, counting children in an evacuation emergency, protecting children with custody concerns, determining a guardian's location, and keeping track of security ID numbers.

- Individuals serving with minors should be dressed modestly. Halter tops, bare midriffs, mini-skirts and similar revealing attire are not acceptable.
- Abstain from the use of excessive alcohol or illegal substance. Volunteers may not use tobacco, alcohol, or any illegal substance on MBC premises or at any MBC event
- Refrain from using profane language, curse words, or making crude/vulgar jokes, and never suggest anything sexual in nature to a minor in public or private
- Ensure your Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, etc. reflect positively on you as an ambassador for Christ and His Church
- Limit physical contact with minors- stick to high fives, handshakes, and fist bumps
- Positive attitudes only! No gossip, slander, or negativity

a. **Awareness:** “According to Prevent Child Abuse America, child abuse and neglect affects over 1 million every year” (2017). In Virginia, a child is abused or neglected every 75 minutes, and every 14 days a child dies from such mistreatment. The immediate impact of abuse or neglect on a child is tragic, but so, too, are the long-term consequences affecting children, their communities, and the Commonwealth as a whole. Child abuse is often hidden, may occur over time, and is usually preventable”.

https://vaperforms.virginia.gov/healthFamily_childAbuse.cfm

b. **Prevention:**

To protect our children, MBC has implemented procedures to minimize risks. All adults who serve in Next Generation Ministry need to fulfill the following requirements to fill out a volunteer application, pass background check and be fingerprinted.

Appropriate Conduct:

Adults are responsible for behaving in sexually appropriate ways. Common expressions of affection (a brief hug), affirmation (pats on the back), support (prayers or words of encouragement), or physical caretaking (changing diapers, etc.), are appropriate in our community of caring Christians. However, physical expressions of affection must not be excessive, or imposed upon another person.

Appropriate Touch:	Inappropriate Touch:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No demanding, gentle aware• Touching shoulders, hands, arms, head or back• Sitting a young child (under the age of 3) on your lap in a lighted room.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demanding or initiating hugs• Kissing a child• Sitting an older child on your lap• Sitting a young child on your lap in dark room• Wrestling or piggy-back rides• Carrying or picking up older children who can walk

Two Adults Minimum

Two adults are required in every classroom with children.

Corporal Punishment

Discipline is never to be administered through any type of corporal punishment. In addition, it is the parents' responsibility to deal with an unruly child.

Bathroom Guidelines for ages 0 to 2.5 years (STILL WEARING DIAPERS)

- Diaper changes are done by female volunteer only.
- Use disposable gloves.
- Never leave a child unattended on changing station.

Bathroom Guidelines for ages 2.5 years to 4 years (NOT IN DIAPERS)

- No adult may take one child to the bathroom alone.
- Non-verbal children should have two adults to go to the bathroom, in which case you should take a group.
- Adults may take a group trip to the bathroom. Please keep the size to 2-3 children at one time.
- If there is a bathroom in the classroom the adult should be positioned at the door.
- Children must go in groups of at least two children or with more than one adult to community bathrooms.
- Children may require assistance.

Bathroom Guidelines for ages 4 years to 6th grade

- No adult may take one child to the bathroom alone.
- Ensure an adult is with a group of at least two children
- An adult should be positioned so he/she can be near the bathroom door.
- Adults should not go into the bathrooms with older kids unless there is an emergency.

Prevention policies in relation to Teenagers

We adhere to the following guidelines as set forth by the Rock

- Never spend time alone with a student of the opposite sex
- Adhere to no communication with students of the opposite sex (texting, email), except a group text.
- Refrain from initiating texts with students from 9 pm to 8 am (unless an emergency)
- Abstain from the use of excessive alcohol or illegal substance. Volunteers may not use tobacco, alcohol, or any illegal substance on MBC premises or at any MBC event.
- Refrain from using profane language, curse words, or making crude/vulgar jokes, and never suggest anything sexual in nature to a minor in public or private.
- Ensure your Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, etc. reflect positively on you as an ambassador for Christ and His Church.
- Limit physical contact with minors- stick to high fives, handshakes, and fist bumps
- Positive attitudes only! No gossip, slander, or negativity.

c. Reporting and responding

- If you are concerned about behavior or appearance of either children or adults report immediately to your Director/Team Leader and a Staff member.
- Do not attempt to “ save or work through” problems independently.

Responding to the Victim

Because we live in a sinful world we pray that nothing wrong happens at Mclean Bible. However, in case a negative behavior occurs please remember to respond:

- a. Compassionately
- b. Seriously
- c. Supportively
- d. Without minimizing or explaining the behavior of others
- e. Immediately reporting any allegation or suspected abuse to your chain in command ie: Team leader/Director and Awana Commander
- f. Do not gossip.

Confidentiality:

All information concerning the children and families served by Mclean Bible Church is to remain strictly confidential. As an adult leader you must keep confidential any information you receive that is of a medical, privileged, confidential or non-public nature and must not disclose such information to any individual without proper authorization (Exception: share allergy alerts with all adults in the room when you are caring for a child with severe allergies).