

Awana Parents' Guide 2011--2012

What is Awana??

Awana stands for Approved Workmen Are Not Ashamed.

Awana is an international organization that offers resources to help the total ministry of the local church with community outreach, discipleship and leader development. It is structured similarly to Boy Scouts as a club and encourages both non-churched and congregational children and adults to grow in their relationship with Christ through Bible stories and heavy emphasis on Scripture memorization. *The club appeals to children of all ages because of its exciting games, awards system and special events.*

Awana is reaching 1,300,000 children around the world with 10,000 "Awana" Churches in the U.S. and another 3,000 in other countries.

Awana not only has a "heart" for supporting the local church and ministering to children and adults, but is foundationally interested in promoting the strength of each family unit. Families are encouraged to be involved in Awana programs through participation in the Awana evening, helping children to do their handbooks and memorize each week, and with an invitation to observe Opening and Closing ceremonies each week along with other special events and Awards Night. Awana gives the local church an avenue to reach out to community families.

To find out more about Awana, the International Organization, or how FPC operates our Awana here in this local church please visit our website at www.fpcniceville.org and from there you will be directed to more information.

Midweek Gathering

Awana runs from 6:30 to 8:00 with an optional dinner hour from 5:30 to 6:30.

Every Wednesday evening throughout the school year (generally following the school calendar with holidays off) First Presbyterian Church offers a catered dinner for a reasonable price, served in the Fellowship Hall at 5:30 p.m.

Non-church member families who would like to join us for supper need to let the church office know by noon on the Monday of each week they plan to attend so enough food and supplies can be provided.

T & T age children may join us for the meal without their parents if their parents have made arrangements for another adult (could be a FPC Awana volunteer “sponsor”) to be responsible for the child in question. ***No child should be dropped off for the dinner hour without adult supervision of some kind.***

Awana Club Meeting Times

Starting at 6:15, registration and check-in occur in the church front foyer for Sparks and T & T children. For Cubbies, parents need to accompany children to the educational wing and check kids in with the secretary in the Cubbie Room.

Promptly at 6:30 p.m. Awana clubs meet in the Sanctuary for Opening.

Please try to have children there 5 to 10 minutes earlier so attendance recording, rewarding kids with Awana shares along with registration of new visitors can take place.

Parents are invited to attend Opening Ceremony from 6:30 to 6:40, in which children receive awards merited from accomplishments done the week before and ***Closing Ceremony in the Fellowship Hall from 7:55—8:00***, in which announcements will be made. Cubbies are to be picked up in their Cubbie room.

Awana Clubs by Age Group

The following clubs are offered at FPC:

Cubbies	3 and 4 Yr. olds
(Please Note—the child’s 3rd birthday should be on/before September 1st)	

Sparks	K5—2nd Grade
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Truth and Training	3rd—6th Grade
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First Presbyterian Church also offers youth group activities for junior and senior high (separately) during the same time frame as Awana clubs are meeting.

A nursery is provided for babies and toddlers of adults who are participating as approved volunteers by FPC in its Awana program.

Information/Registration

All children who participate in Awana at FPC must have completed a **registration form** and a notarized medical release to be on file with the Secretary of Awana for FPC. The **medical release** is mandatory for any and all trips that may be occasionally planned for off campus. Also, we request that you fill out a **Photo Permission Slip**, allowing us to use photos that are taken of Awana children in publicity type venues. Any concerns or caveats to our doing that should be expressly stated.

Please watch for announcements in the form of flyers and other information coming home with the clubbers throughout the year. Approximately once a month children will have a chance to dress up for a particular theme and will be rewarded according to their level of participation.

Older children (Sparks and T & T) will be assigned to different color teams at registration time. Sometimes it may be necessary to reassign children to different handbook groups and/or different color teams throughout the year.

Drop-Off and Pick-Up Procedures

Parents are responsible for their children and any friends that their child/ren bring until these are put into the care of Leaders or a Secretary at the registration stations, even during the dinner hour, if children and parents have arrived early for the meal.

Children, Sparks or Cubbie ages must be picked up at Closing Ceremony in the Fellowship Hall or Cubbies room by a parent listed on the registration form or by a friend or relative if prior coordination is made. Please be prompt at 8:00 as many of our Leaders have children of their own who need to get home on this school night.

Parents of older children (T & T) do not have to escort them to club meeting, but **parents are responsible to insure that children and any friends their children bring are not left unattended either prior to Opening or after Closing.** As mentioned before, older children are welcome (along with their families) to attend the FPC catered dinner and the older kids may be accompanied by someone other than their parents, but **parents will be considered responsible for the care of their children until they are handed off to Leaders or a Secretary at Registration.** And, if parents are not eating at the church and they want their older children to get a meal there then they need to make arrangements for another adult to be in charge of the child. After Closing, T & T clubbers are either to proceed directly to their parent's car or a prescribed meeting place or with their ride after Awana finishes each evening.

No Awana clubber will be permitted in the hallways without leader supervision or permission.

Parents will be notified when a child is sick, fussy, or not adjusting to the Awana evening and, in occasional instances, for disciplinary reasons.

What does Awana cost?

Awana, as a club, does cost the church a significant sum to offer which the church takes on as a ministry. There are a few costs which FPC passes on to clubbers, but these have been kept to a minimum.

*Initial Dues collected at Registration: \$15.00

*Handbook \$10.00

*Uniform \$12.00.....Cubbies/Sparks
\$14.00.....T & T

(5th and 6th grade Truth and Training children have an option this year of ordering the "Ultimate Challenge Uniform" with its new challenge award emblems, going along with the look and format of a more mature-aged T & T handbook.)

Uniform and Handbook Dues collected when individual child has completed the entrance booklet for their club (at least 2 weeks after starting).

There are items available to assist in memorization if you feel your child needs extra help, please see their leader or Louise Grider.

If you have any questions or are interested in a payment plan, please contact our Head Awana Secretary.

Note: FPC will not allow money to be the reason any child cannot attend its Awana program. If a child does not have the resources to provide for these costs, then please see the Secretary of Awana at FPC to see what arrangement may be made.

What are clubbers responsible to bring/wear?

*Awana Handbook

*Awana Uniform

*Bible (NIV Version is the one in which their verses will be written)

*Shoes for running

*Jacket for cooler weather (since most games will be played outside)

Your child should not bring other items with them that haven't been pre-approved by their Leader (for example: on Silly Socks and Slippers Night, kids can bring funny socks and slippers that would be appropriate for that.) However, if your child does bring something which does not pertain to Awana with them and a Leader sees it, your child 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 and turn it in to the Awana Secretary or Commander and the child will have to see one of them at the end of the evening in order to retrieve it.

Dress Code

In addition to the Awana uniform and running (gym) shoes that clubbers should wear, children should come dressed in comfortable and tasteful clothing ready to participate in running games. Some activities may be difficult to participate in while wearing skirts, heels, flip-flops, sandals, dress shoes, etc. As stated before, jackets should be worn for games outside during cold weather. Awana uniforms should be kept neat and clean and all awards worn and displayed correctly.

Note: Badges and awards that need to be sewed on uniforms may be done by volunteer seamstresses if a child does not have another adult capable of doing that. See the Awana Secretary for more information about that possibility.

Health Policy

As we all know, sicknesses affect not only the individual child, but also the other children who are exposed to an ill child and subsequently, the family and friends of those children. In order to keep illnesses from spreading, our established policy for health among Awana clubbers is as follows:

Children should not attend Awana if they have any of the following symptoms—

- *Fever (100 degrees or higher) within the last 24 hours
- *Vomiting within the last 24 hours
- *Diarrhea within the last 24 hours
- *Runny nose if accompanied by other symptoms and/or colored discharge
- *Bad cough (since coughing increases the chance of infection being spread to others)
- *Rash that is suspected to be contagious
- *Taking an antibiotic prescribed within 48 hours of starting that antibiotic

Why do kids love coming to Awana?

- *Children will hear Bible, missionary, and other life-lesson stories.
- *At Awana they will play exciting games.
- *Kids learn Bible verses and do handbook work in order to earn awards (usually merit badges to be worn on their uniforms) and Awana shares to be saved and spent on items in the Awana store.
- *Also, the earned shares become part of a point system that leads to friendly team competition among the older children (Sparks and T & T).

What is the Awana Store?

Children can earn shares (Awana money) for

- *Attending,
- *Bringing friends
- *Completing handbook sections,
- *Winning games,
- *Winning team competitions points, and for
- *Bringing and wearing the four things for which they are responsible—
(Bible, Handbook, Uniform, and Gym Shoes)

*And at times for being extra quiet, obedient and for extra special acts of kindness or service.

Children will have the opportunity to spend their earned Awana shares one night each quarter (every 7 to 9 weeks) on items provided at “Store Night.”

Leaders will keep Awana shares earned by children each night in special individual storage pouches under the Leader’s keeping so that kids won’t misplace their earnings.

Discipline

Generally speaking, Awana clubs stress a certain level of discipline for all members, whether children or adult, but this does not pertain only to negative forms of advocating self-control. The positive side of learning discipline (to behave and conduct one’s self in a responsible and kind manner) is something Awana encourages through its system of awards and shares and team ideals and of which all its Leaders and adult volunteers have received ample training.

Our Awana ministry is very exciting and we expect that seldom will we have serious discipline problems. However, we realize that there are many family situations that may affect a child’s behavior. We encourage you to let your child’s Awana Leader know if there is any situation that may help us in ministering to your child.

There are two practiced forms of discipline of which children at Awana receive instruction and of which you, as parents and guardians need to be aware. One is meant to enforce group control and the other is directed toward individuals.

The 5-Count is used to bring the group to order. As the leader counts slowly and clearly down from “5” (5, 4,..1), the children are expected to become quiet and still, facing toward the person who is counting. Normally, this occurs by “3” or “4”. Color groups may at times get awarded extra shares for being the first recognized group to come to order!

The 3-Count is used to help with the discipline of an individual. The child is given a “1” count the first time he/she misbehaves and the action in question is discussed so the child understands the inappropriate behavior. If the child continues to misbehave, he/she is given a “2” by the leader or director and then is escorted outside to talk with the Leader or to the Awana Commander or Secretary to discuss his/her behavior. Upon receiving a “3”, the child is taken to the parents by the Commander or parents may be called so that the child misses the club evening. The parents need to talk with the Leader before the child can be admitted back to the club the following week.

There are only a few guidelines pertaining to personal behavior:

- *Honor Christ in your work and play
- *Keep your hands to your self
- *Obey the Awana leaders and other adults
- *Speak to others with respect

Events

Occasionally, Awana children will be allowed to take part in special events, some of which may be put on by Awana Clubs at other churches in the area. Sometimes FPC will host activities as a church that we think Awana children and their families might be interested in participating. We will always notify parents of these opportunities and make sure that parental permission is granted to take part if the occasion is out of the ordinary schedule.

Why does First Presbyterian Church do Awana?

FPC is a church whose leadership is committed first and foremost to serving Jesus Christ and to helping others to “see” Jesus for who He is and encouraging relationships with Him is the key to meaningful human existence.

FPC has a strong dedication to minister to children, both those who attend our services on Sundays and those who do not but who live in our community. We believe that Awana Clubs help kids in many ways and provide families with

evenings that are not just full of entertainment, but also provide spiritual and social training that promote the building up of families and the nurturing of the individual.

FPC offers many other ministry opportunities in keeping with our desire to serve Christ and to reach out into our neighborhoods. If you would like more information, you can contact the church office at 678-2521.

You are invited to attend our worship service on Sunday mornings at 10:45 and we offer Kids Connection for children of all ages, junior and senior high youth, and several adult classes of different types and on differing subjects, changing usually once each quarter year.

Kids Connection starts at 9:15 a.m., ending at 10:15 with three different Biblically strong, interesting and fun formats for various age groups. During the half hour in between classes and worship service we offer a chance for visiting and fellowship, and we provide some light snacks—pastries, fruit, coffee and juice at “The Gathering Grounds” in the Foyer from 10:15 to 10:45.

Other offerings include Junior Church for preschoolers during the second part of the adult worship service and at various times throughout the year other youth events and activities for junior highers and senior high students, besides the regularly scheduled Sunday School classes and Wednesday night youth groups.

Church Contacts

Senior Pastor	Joe Grider	joe@fpcniceville.org
Children’s Coordinator	Louise Grider	louisegrider@cox.net
Awana Head Secretary	Kerri Beekman	kerrigaymon@yahoo.com

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