



The weekly newsletter article of Parkside Chapel

# LIFE NEWS



by Gordon Lanpher, Children's Pastor  
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AWANA is known... and not known. AWANA (***Approved Workmen Are Not Ashamed***) is a children's discipleship and evangelism program that has been running for over six decades. It serves over 4 million children across the globe every week in 100+ nations in 47,000 churches. Their goal is threefold: "***Reach Kids, Equip Leaders and Change the World.***" They accomplish this by high relational engagement (family, mentors) and high Scriptural engagement (teaching, Bible reading, and memorization). Where these two meet, they call it the great connection... meaning when you have both aspects present, you begin to life change.

This is all well and good, but you must be thinking how this plays out here at Parkside. Children are separated by age group into ***Puggles*** (3 year olds) ***Cubbies*** (3-5 yrs. old), ***Sparks*** (K-2nd grade), and ***Truth and Training*** (3rd-6th grade). Each of these clubs has dedicated leaders to help them, and there are three parts to their evening.

The first part is game time. Children have lots of energy and rather than working against their natural tendency, we have fun and engage them in games. They can be kids! While participating in game time, they are building community with their friends, learning cooperation, and the different aspects of what it means to be part of a team.

The second part of AWANA is large group time. This is where a leader has an engaging and interactive teaching experience that helps them deepen their knowledge of a core Bible truth. This is done with all the clubbers together. Presenting truths and Scripture in creative ways allows clubbers to ask questions and fall in love with Jesus and the Word of God.

The last part of a clubber's night is handbook time. This is the real strength of AWANA. Each clubber has a handbook with 32 sections where they walk through a Scripture passage and truth. They dig deep into a passage, answer questions about it, and memorize a verse associated with it. During this handbook time, they work with their peers and mentor small group leader. This high relational touch is where the discipleship happens. We have adults pouring into children and children working together as a faith community. Heart transformation happens in these small group times.

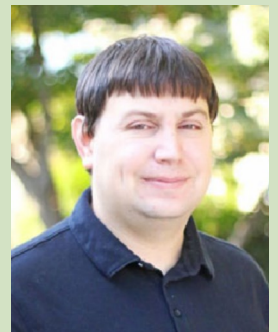
A quick side note, all clubs used to move through their book at each child's pace. However, what AWANA found was that the quantity of verses wasn't transforming kids, and kids were getting left behind. Now all clubs (except Sparks) move together through the sections. AWANA has found moving together, children don't get left behind as much, and it is easy to catch when they miss a section. Moreover, by not

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memorizing as many verses and doing a deep dive into each passage, children are moving from a quantity of head knowledge to heart and life transformation. Some children finish faster than others, but then they can help their friends, thus building community and friendship. In short, we are after heart transformation, not transmission of information. AWANA may be an old organization, but it still provides us a venue to disciple our children at Parkside.

We just wrapped up AWANA for the school year. This year we had 40+ kids attend AWANA, and 30+ of them finished their books! This year we saw kids come to know God more, not just with their heads but with their hearts. We had children accept Jesus for the first time. We had others want to get baptized. All the kids experienced the life-changing power that comes through the Bible by the Holy Spirit. God moved among our kids.

P.S. If you want to be a part of this life-changing ministry next year, let me know! We have spots for adults to come alongside kids.



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