

Frequently Asked Questions

Does my family have to attend Westerly Road Church in order to come to AWANA?

Your family does not have to be attending Westerly Road Church in order to come to AWANA; in fact, it's ok if you don't go to a church right now too. We welcome anyone who wants to learn more about Jesus and have fun. 😊

Why does my child have to wear a uniform?

Uniforms are a great way for children to take pride in being part of the club. We ask that they are worn if your child would like to take part in the flag ceremony. It is also important because when your child receives an award, it is put directly on their uniform. Uniforms also help the children remember that they should behave well while we are together at the club.

Why does AWANA collect dues and what are they used for?

AWANA does collect 50¢ per week, or \$15 for the whole year, per child. These dues help us to offset the cost of the awards. We also use this money to help with celebrations throughout the year.

My child is not able to bring a visitor. How can we finish this part of the handbook?

Several of the handbooks require that children bring a visitor. This is included in our program because we want to tell others about how great Jesus is too. We realize that since our club is held in the evenings, sometimes it's hard to bring a friend. If your child can't bring a friend to club, one option is to ask them to come to one of our two outings per year. (see below) A second option is to hand out invitations telling 3 friends about our club. These invitations are available from your club director. Even if none of your friends can visit our club, your visitor requirement will still be completed.

My child is not able to come to the Sparks outing. How can we finish this part of the handbook?

Another section in several of the handbooks is to attend an outing with your club director. The purpose for including this is to make sure children have an opportunity to be outside and enjoy God's creation. It's also a great way for everyone in the club to get to know one another better, and have fun! Again, we recognize not everyone can attend these events, and in this case, you are free to take your child on an outdoor walk or hike with the family. Once your child performs the activity associated with this section (e.g. collecting rocks, drawing a picture), then that requirement will be complete.

What is the Pinewood Derby/Grand Prix?

This event goes by both of these titles. The Pinewood Derby is quite similar to the Boy Scout Pinewood Derby race. Children purchase kits at the club to make cars from small blocks of pine. A few weeks before the race, we host a Build Night, at which time the children can bring their block of wood to have it shaped by our woodworking volunteers. There are many different shapes possible, anything from a standard looking car to a banana to Noah's Ark! Many ideas are available on the web. After the car is shaped, children will paint or decorate it, attach the wheels, and then it's ready to go! We get together on a Saturday, usually in March, for the Pinewood Derby. We have a track that has 4 different lanes, and the children can race their car against several different competitors. In the end, we award small trophies for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in speed, and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in design. However, we recognize that there are many different angles to an award winning car, and so smaller awards are available as well and no child goes home empty handed. The Pinewood Derby is a fun event for children, and a great experience to have together as a family.

What is the Winter Contest/Can Do Contest?

Beginning in January, AWANA hosts a contest to encourage children to continue to working hard during a historically slow time. The contest typically runs between 6 and 8 weeks. During the Winter Contest, members of the Sparks club receive small prizes for each section of their book they complete each week. We also track the amount of sections completed by the entire club during this time, usually represented on our bulletin board by jewels, stars, or another item. For the Can Do contest, members of the TnT club earn a can of soda for every 5 sections they complete.

What are shares? Where can my child spend them?

Shares are paper money which children can earn while they participate in the club. Shares can be earned for coming to club prepared (e.g. wearing your uniform, bringing your handbook and/or Bible, bringing dues) but they can also be earned by bringing a visitor, attending an outing, or being on the winning team during Game Time. Often a "secret" share will be awarded to one boy and one girl during the club for good behavior.

Children accumulate their shares throughout the year, and are given a chance to "spend" them at our AWANA store. Three times a year, we assemble a collection of gently used and donated items which the children can buy with their shares. Store nights are always quite exciting and they are often the source of Christmas presents for Mom. ☺

What about closings for bad weather?

If we need to cancel the club for bad weather, we will do so by 4pm on the night of the club. You will receive a call from your child's handbook group leader. Also, after 5pm, there will be a recording available on the church office phone line. That number is 609-924-3816. In the case where poor weather occurs after club has begun (e.g. thunderstorm or flooding) and you are delayed in picking up your child, you can be assured that a leader will always remain at the church until the last child is picked up.

Can I contact my child during club?

We do have a phone line in the church, 609-683-1430. However, there may not always be someone near it, so if you need to call, please let it ring until someone comes.

Can you tell me about game time?

Each week, children have a 30 minute game time. Games are a great way to teach teamwork and cooperation, and they are fun! Children are typically divided into 4 teams, each with its own adult team leader. At the end of game time, the team with the most points earns 1 share to spend at the AWANA store. Because most of our games involve quick walking or running, tennis shoes or tight fitting sandals must be worn for games.

Does the club have snack time?

Only our youngest club, Cubbies (ages 3 – 4), has snack time. However, we do have a few celebrations throughout the year at which we serve snacks. We have an AWANA birthday party each October, a Christmas party, and an end-of-the-year party. If your child has a food allergy, please let us know so that we can be sure to keep them safe. Many children with allergies bring their own special snack on these nights.

What is the Westerly Road Church business meeting?

Once a year, the Westerly Road Church has a business meeting for all the members of the church. It is always held on a Wednesday, and so on this night we do not hold club. It is usually the 2nd or 3rd Wednesday in January.

Who leads the club?

The AWANA club is overseen by Mary McCormack, the Director of Women's and Children's Ministry at Westerly. AWANA is comprised of 4 different age groups, and each group has its own director. In addition to group directors, there are several adult and teen leaders in each group. Each adult has been screened before working with the children in our club.

How can I communicate with the leaders of the club?

You are always welcome to come and talk to us in person. You will also receive emails throughout the year, containing updates and reminders about events, and can talk with any of the leaders via email. Occasionally, letters are also sent home. You can also call the church office, which can help put you in touch with your child's leader.

What is Parent's Night/Awards Night?

At our last meeting of the year, we invite parents and family members to join us as we celebrate all the children have accomplished during the year. If your child has finished their handbook, they will receive the award for that book. Children who are not able to complete their books still will receive an award recognizing their hard work. We end the night sharing some ice cream together. This is always a fun and joy filled event, so please be sure to come!