

THE CELEBRATED
VOLUNTEER



CONSORTIUM FOR
RETENTION

APPROVED WORKMEN ARE NOT ASHAMED

Volunteer Retention Tips from Commanders and Other Experts

Start at the End of the Year

Retaining leaders begins at the end of the ministry year. Approach each leader and personally ask their intentions for the next year.

1. Are they coming back to serve again?
2. Will they be at the leader appreciation dinner?

Debra Sims
San Diego, California

Parent Relationships Create Dedication

Involving parents in all aspects of Awana helps retain leaders. It keeps excitement high, encourages parents to support their children's efforts and helps develop personal relationships between the workers and parents. Many parents remain after picking up their child to talk to the leaders and just enjoy hearing about what has happened that night. The leaders enjoy these times as well because they view the children as their own. When both parties have the common goal of developing the child's spiritual walk with the Lord, everyone benefits.

Jim Ewing
Lancaster, South Carolina

Information Leads to Ownership

Keep volunteers informed as much as possible so that they take ownership of their group of kids. With a large group it may not be possible to keep up with all the leaders. So commanders should pour themselves into their directors. Encourage them to do the same with their leaders.

J.P. Morgan
Northern Illinois Awana Missionary



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Leaders' Dessert Encourages Re-enlistment

Hold a leaders' thank-you dessert the week after Awards Night. Provide a message just for them and hand out their service awards and individual gifts. Ask them to fill out a survey about what they liked and disliked about the past year and what could be done better.

Also on the survey, ask if they would volunteer for next season and in what position. Don't discourage switching around. You want them serving where they'll be happy instead of not serving in Awana at all. This gives you a head start in recruiting. You only have to fill a few holes, not recruit everyone all over again.

Kim Myers
Maple Valley, Washington

Potluck Roundup

Round up all the leaders and directors for the upcoming year. Schedule a potluck "game day" before club starts. This lets you know how many are coming back. Plus, you'll have a great time of fellowship.

Rob Wright
North Bend, Oregon

Praise Your Volunteers Publicly

Share what great things God has done this past year in club during the Sunday services and your leadership meetings. Recognize and appreciate your leaders in front of the church on a Sunday morning.

Ron Ryba
McHenry, Illinois

Give Them Thanks

Break the bank now and then and show your appreciation in a tangible way. Do whatever you need to do to find a few extra bucks and show volunteers how much they're appreciated. People want to know they're doing a good job and are valued. Tokens of appreciation can be small like a \$5 gift card to Starbucks with a note that says, "Thanks a latte for all you do."

Ryan Frank
9 Things They Didn't Teach Me in College About Children's Ministry



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Expect Excellence

One of the things that drives volunteers to leave is lack of leadership. Unclear directions, poorly defined roles and the sense that no one knows what he/she is doing will cause good volunteers to look elsewhere. Do not be afraid to expect excellence from your volunteers.

Meridian Swift
The Volunteer Shelf Life

Show up a Minimum of 30 Minutes Before Everyone Else

Always have everything you need to do done before the first leader gets there. Being late is not the sign of a leader. I tell those I lead, "If you can't be on time, be early. Early is on time for a leader." The best way to get others to come early is for you to get there earlier. Have it all set up ahead of time so you can speak to people as they come in.

Jim Wideman
Stretch

Help Struggling Leaders

If you have leaders who are struggling, ask confident leaders to come alongside them. Team new leaders with more experienced ones until they feel confident in their roles. Make a practice of rotating through club rooms to see how things are going. Be available to instruct and assist leaders in presenting the gospel to clubbers. Being visible and willing to pitch in goes a long way to encourage your workers. Always be on the lookout for leaders who appear discouraged. Don't avoid conflict or let problems fester. Jump right in and be willing to help in any way you can.

Keep Christ Central

Try to keep the goal of reaching kids with the gospel of Christ at the very center of everything you do. Give them a note of encouragement and thanks at the end of the year with a service pin attached. Don't hesitate to tell them often that what they are doing is ultimately for the kingdom of God and will always be worthwhile. We never know how we touch the lives of children or other leaders by what we say or do.

Becky Loughridge



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Download the Thank-You Party Pack

Thank your leaders for all their hard work by throwing them an end-of-year thank-you party! Download your free kit from the You Belong site. It contains everything you need to help your volunteers feel recognized and appreciated. Be sure to show the leader appreciation video by Awana President/CEO Jack Eggar, too. Just add the food and you have a winning combination!

Training Inspires Commitment

When you train your leaders, you send the message that they are important and worth investing in. It's essential that your volunteers feel like valued staff members. Basic Training is the first step for new leaders. Ongoing training through regular meetings and the annual fall Awana Ministry Conference is a must for keeping volunteers engaged. Download the role sheets from the You Belong site and give each leader the one that applies to his or her position.

Clear direction, understandable rules and structure will help your leaders feel competent in their roles. This type of security encourages leaders to stay for the long haul.

If you have ideas on how to encourage leaders to return next year, please send them to youbelong@awana.org. We'd love to hear from you!



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